



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3006631

Applicant Name: Jon O'Hare, Allen & Associates
for the University of Washington

Address of Proposal: 4000 15th Ave NE (Business School)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 132,800 sq. ft., five-story structure (Business School, University of Washington). Ninety-five surface parking spaces to be removed or relocated. Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the University of Washington.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - to approve, condition or deny pursuant to [25.05.660](#) – Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter [25.05](#)

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS¹

 DNS with conditions

 DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

¹ The University of Washington Capital Projects Office prepared a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS), published September 2007. The University published its Final SEIS in February 2008.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The project is located in the University of Washington (UW) Central Campus, “historic core”. The development site is identified as 4C, the current site of the N3 west and N4 surface parking lots. The site is bounded by Memorial Way to the west, Stevens Way to the north, Denny Hall to the south, and Balmer Hall to the east.

From the University’s [Campus Master Plan](#) (pg 91):

The Central Campus consists of the original core and the surrounding central perimeter. Preservation and character enhancement are the primary concepts for the historic buildings and important open spaces found in the original core of the campus. These spaces include the Liberal Arts Quadrangle, Denny Yard, Memorial Way, Rainier Vista, Hub Yard, Parrington Lawn, and Central Plaza, Archery Range, Sylvan Theater, Hansee Hall Courtyards, Denny Field, and the Medicinal Herb Garden.

Proposal Description

The University proposes to replace and expand the Business School’s current facilities in two phases. The subject application and review are for Phase 1 (of two phases); a roughly 130,000 sq. ft. structure located on site 4C.

The proposal is to construct a five-story structure (four stories above grade, one story below grade plus a partial basement), with a building height of approximately 70 feet on the west side and approximately 100 feet on the east side, in a Major Institution Overlay (MIO) that allows base heights up to 105'. The project includes removal of parking lot N4 (79 parking spaces) and a portion of parking lot N3 West (10 spaces) during site preparation. N3 West would be relocated during construction and contain roughly 22 spaces.

Grading for the project includes about 30,000 cubic yards of excavation and about 10,000 cubic yards of fill. The project involves removal of up to 52 trees, including up to six located in the southern corner of “the grove”.

The UW anticipates that work on the project will last about two years.

Public Comment

DPD received no comment letters related to the project. Staff reviewed the comments of the City-University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC) to UW president Mark Emmert (March 6, 2008). The letter raised the following concerns and suggestions:

- The proposed Phase 1 building is out of scale with nearby Denny Hall.
- The project should be more responsive to its immediate context, should not detract from Denny’s position as a focal point, and should pursue alternative massing diagrams.

These concerns are discussed on page 6 under the heading CUCAC review.

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The University of Washington is the lead agency responsible for making the threshold determination with respect to this proposal. After a Determination of Significance, the UW conducted its scoping process from February 13 to March 6, 2007. The Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement updates the University's Final EIS for its Seattle Campus Master Plan, issued 2003. The University issued the Draft SEIS in September 2007 and the Final SEIS in February 2008. Information in these environmental documents, plans and other information submitted by the applicant and the permitting agency's experience form the basis for this analysis of impacts and application of mitigation.

The Seattle SEPA Overview Policy (SMC [25.05.665 D](#)) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part, "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" subject to some limitations. Under such limitations/circumstances (SMC [25.05.665 D](#)) mitigation can be considered. A more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is therefore appropriate.

Short-term (Construction) Impacts

The project is likely to have short-term adverse, construction-related environmental impacts with respect to vegetation, earth, noise, air, water quality, traffic, and pedestrian circulation. No other elements of the environment appear likely to be adversely affected, and no other elements have been identified in the Supplemental EIS.

Air, Earth, and Water. The project is likely to cause some minor soil erosion from grading and other site work while the earth is exposed. These include decreased air quality due to dust and other particulates produced by construction equipment and operations, and tracking of mud and dirt onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles. These air and earth impacts are expected to be minor in scope and would be limited to the period of site preparation, estimated to be about four months. Several adopted City codes and ordinances provide adequate mitigation. The Street Use Ordinance provides for watering the streets to suppress dust; the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides for mitigation of earth impacts related to grading and excavation, such as soil erosion and runoff and the Seattle Building Code provides for appropriateness of construction measures in general. (In a separate section below, this analysis addresses truck traffic associated with construction activities.)

According to the project's SEIS, the Phase 1 involves approximately 40,000 cubic yards of cut and fill. Soil stabilization will be assured by compliance with the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code, and the Building Code. Further, Director's Rule [2000-16](#) was developed to apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent erosion and sedimentation from leaving construction sites or where construction will impact receiving waters. The implementation of Best Management Practices, as contained in the DR [2000-16](#), is a standard requirement for permit approval.

Construction will result in localized, short-term increases in particulate and carbon monoxide associated with the removal of existing pavement, excavation, grading, soil compaction and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment. On-site activity and periodic traffic delays on adjacent streets could contribute to slight increases in localized vehicle emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide. It is not expected that increased suspended particulate or carbon monoxide emissions would cause violation of any local ambient air quality standards.

Construction activities including worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

Noise. Short-term noise from construction would be generated during working hours. Noise levels during construction would be expected to comply with University standards and the City of Seattle noise ordinance.

Circulation and Traffic. Primary construction access to the site would likely be from NE 45th Street to the construction site. The proposal would result in a large amount of material to be exported from and imported to the site. The proposed import material is expected to require as many as 27 round trips by trucks (assuming a 15-cubic yard per load truck capacity) per day at the peak period of excavation and grading. A temporary increase in parking demand in the project areas will also occur during construction. City codes do not adequately address construction-related traffic impacts.

The University of Washington and the contractor for the project will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR-520.

Long-term (Use-related) Impacts

The following long-term or use-related impacts were identified in the SEIS and supporting documents: plants and animals, land use patterns, aesthetics, light and glare, historic resources, and transportation. Elements of the environment not discussed below are not adversely affected and/or are adequately mitigated by existing codes and ordinances and/or mitigating components of the proposal itself.

Plants and animals. Site preparation and construction of Phase 1 would result in the removal of up to six trees in the southern corner of “the grove”, a triangular wooded area comprising 43 trees and sited just north of the Foster Library and the Executive Education Center Plaza. The project will likely result in the removal of understory along the edges of Clallam Lane. Phase 1 construction would also require the removal of up to 46 trees in the N3/N4 parking area, as well as possibly the removal of an additional seven trees at the periphery of the construction area.

As mitigation, the SEIS identifies the replanting or replacement of up to 53 trees on campus, possibly in the vicinity of the N3/N4 parking area. The study notes that such planting is in excess of City of Seattle tree replacement standards. The plan further adopts tree preservation strategies to be consistently applied during construction.

DPD considers the identified measures to be sufficient, and determines that no further mitigation is required.

Land Use patterns. The SEIS outlines direct impacts and the project's relationship to surrounding uses. This involves the conversion of the existing surface parking lot and vegetated areas. The intensity of the proposed new use and its interaction with existing surrounding uses appears to be within the accepted framework of the Campus Master Plan and the 1998 City-University Agreement, as well as the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code.

Aesthetics. The SEIS identifies several points from which the project will be visible on the campus and its near vicinity. Views to the site would substantially change to reflect a large academic use facility. The design employs a range of techniques to address the project's apparent height, bulk, and scale. Shadows to nearby sites and adjacent open spaces are not likely to result in significant impacts. Phase 1 is sited to preserve the majority of mature vegetation in "the grove, and would preserve trees along Memorial Way. Light and glare from the project are likely to be no greater than impacts already caused by use of nearby structures, and the SEIS proposes mitigations related to its proximity to the Observatory. As such, DPD considers these impacts to be appropriately mitigated.

Historic resources. The University of Washington contracted with BOLA architecture and planning to prepare a Historic Resources Addendum, incorporated as Appendix C in the SEIS. It identifies nearby historic resources and open spaces, including the Observatory, Denny Hall, Hutchison Hall, Balmer Hall and Denny Yard, and provides a background synopsis for each resource.

While the SEIS determines that the project is not likely to cause the identified resources to experience significant impacts, it outlines a range of mitigation measures intended to minimize adverse impacts. DPD staff has reviewed the proposed mitigations and determines that no further conditioning is warranted in this regard.

Parking. As proposed, Phase 1 results in the elimination of 89 parking spaces. As mitigation to other university departments, the UW plans a system of reassigned parking permits. The EIS for the UW Campus Master Plan addresses mitigations related to the redevelopment of the site and administration of the institution's broader parking strategy. Therefore, no further mitigation pursuant to SEPA authority at SMC Section [25.05.675 R](#) for long-term traffic impacts is warranted.

CUCAC review

CUCAC (the City University Community Advisory Committee) has reviewed the project and has submitted comments primarily related to compatibility with nearby Denny Hall. Committee members also noted serious concerns that the Final SEIS contained only build and no-build alternatives. DPD has reviewed CUCAC comments in the context of the historic resources analysis contained in the SEIS, and considers that the University has appropriately addressed the identified concerns.

CONCLUSION - SEPA

In conclusion, DPD finds several effects on the environment resulting from the proposed project. However, proposed mitigating features together with the conditions imposed below are sufficient to mitigate specific impacts identified in the SEIS, its studies, and the foregoing analysis to lessen or prevent impacts not regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

The other impacts noted here as mitigated by code or conditions are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

DPD approves the project, subject to conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Grading or Construction Permit(s)

1. The University of Washington will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers, for Review and approval by DPD. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR-520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 3:00 – 6:00 PM, Monday – Friday.

During Construction

The following condition(s), to be enforced during construction will be posted in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions will be posted at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans (or with the demolition permit if it is issued separately). The placards will be laminated with clear plastic or other weatherproofing material and will remain in place for the duration of construction. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that the sub-contractors are informed of the conditions listed below.

2. The University of Washington and/or other responsible parties shall implement the approved construction traffic plan.

Signature: (signature on file)
Scott A. Ringgold, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: September 22, 2008

SAR:ga

H:\Doc\Current\3006631UWBusinessSchool\3006631dec.doc