



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

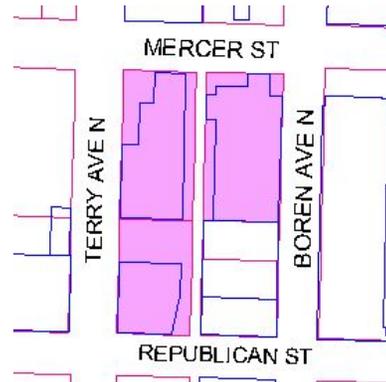
**Application Number:** 3007492, 3007493

**Applicant Name:** Dean Clark of LMN Architects for  
City Place III LLC

**Address of Proposal:** 1001 and 1021 Mercer Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to establish use for future construction of two five-story office structures with 40,571 square feet of retail located at street level. The project includes parking for 375 vehicles in a shared below-grade parking garage. Open space, landscaping, street trees, and other amenities will be provided as part of the development. The project requires demolition of existing structures and excavation of approximately 70,000 cubic yards of earth.



The following approvals are required:

**SEPA – to approve, condition, or deny pursuant to 25.05.660 – Chapter 25.05 SMC.**

**Design Review – Chapter 23.41 Seattle Municipal Code (SMC).**

**Development Standard Departure:** To allow HVAC venting along the alley façade within six feet of grade.

**SEPA Determination:**       Exempt     DNS     MDNS     EIS  
    DNS with conditions  
    DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Site and Area Description

The proposal is for development of two five-story administrative office buildings with ground floor retail uses on three tax parcels comprising the western half and the northeastern quarter of the block bounded by Mercer Street to the north, Terry Avenue N to the west, Republican Street to the south, and Boren Avenue N to the east. Currently, a 16-foot alley divides the block, running north-south from Mercer Street to Republican Street. The property is 76,273 square feet and is relatively flat, sloping gently southeast, from Mercer Street up to Republican Street.

The project site is zoned Industrial-Commercial with a 65-foot height limit (IC-65) and located in the South Lake Union Urban Center. A height bonus is available in the South Lake Union Urban Center that increases the height limit to 85 feet if compliance with certain conditions is met. Property to the south, east, and immediate west is also zoned IC-65. Property further west and to the north (across Mercer Street) is zoned Seattle Mixed with varying height limits: 40 feet to the north (SM-40), 65 feet to the west (SM-65), and 85 feet to the southwest (SM-85).

The current development on the property consists of three commercial warehouses and surface parking for approximately 52 vehicles. The project would result in a loss of two on-street parking spaces, 25 on-site parking stalls and 25 additional on-site stalls in the area of the proposed alley vacation. These 50 stalls are not used by the public; they are associated with the existing on-site businesses.

Surrounding uses include: commercial surface parking lot and a medical/dental office (to the west across Terry Avenue N); a gas/convenience store (to the northwest); a marine retail store and a gas/convenience store (to the north across Mercer Street); a fast-food corporate headquarters and office (to the northeast); a mattress storage warehouse (to the East across Boren Avenue N); accessory parking (to the southeast); a construction staging site and glass/theatre storage warehouse (MUP approved for Phase I of Amazon development) (to the south across Republican Street); and a bio-software office (to the southwest).

Project Description

The project includes two, five-story buildings with two levels of below-grade parking. The project anticipates construction of approximately 237,184 square feet of above-grade space for administrative office uses and approximately 40,571 square feet of retail space at grade (totaling 277,755 square feet). Parking for 375 cars will be located below grade. The project includes excavation of approximately 70,000 cubic yards of material. Vehicle access is proposed via a single curb-cut on Republican Street that serves both the parking entrance and the alley entrance.

Open space, landscaping, and other amenities will be provided for building occupants and the public, including a mid-block courtyard. The northern half of the existing 16-foot wide mid-block alley will be vacated and replaced by an L-shaped alley intersecting Boren Avenue N. The north-south portion of the alley will be widened to 18 feet and the east-west portion will measure 20 feet. Project design and landscaping will also include fixed canopies on portions of Mercer Street with tenant-supplied awnings on Terry Avenue N and a mid-block east-west pedestrian courtyard with movable tables and chairs. Construction of the project will require removal of the existing surface parking and demolition of the three existing structures.

## **PUBLIC NOTICES AND MEETINGS**

The Notice of Application for the project was published on December 21, 2007. The required public comment period ended January 16, 2008.

The Magnolia/Queen Anne Design Review Board held one properly noticed Early Design Guidance meeting for the project on September 5, 2007. A properly noticed recommendation meeting was held on February 13, 2008.

## **ANALYSIS-DESIGN REVIEW**

### *Design Guidelines Priorities*

The initial ideas for the project were presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting on September 5, 2007. After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project. The guidance and recommendations made were agreed to by all of the Board members present, unless otherwise noted. While the notes below indicate the area the Board found most important, all of the Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings apply.<sup>1</sup>

***A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics - The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation, and views or other features.***

### *Board Comments:*

*The Board favors the applicant's preferred schemes for both sites with the open space crossing Project 2 site and being addressed by entry points on the Project 1 site. There would be a large scale "framing" of this open space by surrounding buildings.*

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<sup>1</sup> Early Design Guidance was conducted simultaneously for this project and the 1100 Republican Street Project (MUP #3007494). In the Board Comments, "Project 2" refers to this project and "Project 1" refers to 1100 Republican.

*The proposed “right turn” in the alley past the Project 2 site creates an edge condition between that alley and the large interior open space. Materials shown had a line of large vents or planters along this edge. The Board found this edge too impervious; too much of a wall. Instead an approach which allows penetration, both visual and physical, while still marking a boundary between conditions should be found. The “reeds treatment” at the EMP along the adjacent parking lot is a good solution for this kind of problem.*

*A setback expression along Mercer St. where the alley has been vacated may be an appropriate design expression.*

*The vehicle entry to the Project 2 site which is proposed to share space with the alley right-of-way needs further explanation. Explanation needs to be given as to both the necessity of a driveway which overlaps into an alley and of how this approach would be consistent with safe vehicle traffic in and out to the building garage and in the alley.*

Project Response:

The project has continued to develop in the siting and massing direction identified in the EDG meeting. It is composed of two buildings that define and reinforce the urban edges along all four street frontages. A landscaped courtyard positioned between the buildings provides a mid-block connector and a public amenity for the neighborhood. The following have been incorporated into the project in response to EDG priorities.

**Alley** – The large vents that separated the courtyard from the alley have been removed. The design now allows easy visual and physical penetration through courtyard planting areas to the alley while maintaining a reasonable separation between loading dock truck maneuvers and pedestrians. In addition, the design proposes to continue the courtyard paving into the east/west portion of the alley in order to strengthen the sense of connection.

**Mercer Setback** – The design includes a setback that extends along the entire fifth floor and down the center section of the façade.

**Vehicle Entry** – The building structure at the vehicle entry has been modified to allow the entry and exit lanes to join into a single curb cut at Republican. The entry lane provides access to both the parking garage and the one-way northbound alley.

**A-2** *Streetscape compatibility* - *The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

Project Response:

The buildings, particularly at the pedestrian level, have been designed to respond to the “grand boulevard” scale anticipated at the Mercer Street edge and the “pedestrian spine” scale anticipated as part of the Terry Avenue guidelines.

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street - Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

Project Response:

Building entries are located such that they address Boren Avenue, Terry Avenue, and the courtyard.

**A-4 Human Activity - New Development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

Board Comments:

*The applicants seem to understand these imperatives and are proposing uses and entry points along the streets in a manner which will encourage interaction with the pedestrian streetscape. The siting of the buildings appears to be on the correct tract to create a successful interaction with the surrounding areas, sidewalks, streetcar stop and internal uses. Some entries are proposed to face the internal courtyard; an appropriate approach for this site plan.*

Project Response:

Building entries, retail and retail entries, ground level building articulation and the courtyard are all designed to encourage pedestrian interaction at the street.

**B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility - Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

**SLU-specific supplemental guidance**

- *Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.*
- *Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.*
- *Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.*
- *Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.*
- *Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as:*
  - *landscaping;*
  - *trellis;*
  - *complementary materials;*
  - *detailing;*
  - *accent trim.*

*Board Comments:*

*The proposed buildings would be tall, making use of the 65 foot zoned height and available bonuses. The proposed building in Project 1 is nearly a full block in length; the northern building on Project 2 is nearly a full block in width. Architectural measures need to be employed to limit the appearance of height, bulk and scale of the new buildings. The South Lake Union Design Guidelines provide direction to control height impacts through upper level setbacks where appropriate. The Board discussed whether to require upper level setbacks where additional height above 75 feet is obtained through available bonusing measures. Some members seemed to be in favor of this approach. The Board as a whole felt that measures should be considered along with the use of other building forms to limit the appearance of height, bulk and scale.*

*Project Response:*

The perceived building height and length are moderated by material changes and selective setbacks.

***C-1 Architectural Context - New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.***

*Board Comments:*

*The Board supports the applicant's stated objective to approach the development as urban infill. Each building should have a unique architectural character in order to avoid an obvious campus appearance. Diversity and unique character should be accomplished. The historic warehouse/industrial nature of the area is an appropriate context to respond to. Much of the new development in south Lake Union is looking a bit too suburban. The Board supports industrial looking buildings with multi-pane, large-format glazing; examples of which are the Shurguard, Sellen and SBRI buildings. Human scale is an important consideration. The Board does not support horizontal strips of glazing.*

*Project Response:*

The architectural character of Project 1 is unique from that of Project 2. The massing, materials, panel modules, window pattern, use of curtain walls, and relationships to open spaces in Project 1 are all different from that of Project 2.

***C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency - Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.***

*Board Comments:*

*This general principle of good design applies to these structures. There should, however, be differentiation between buildings.*

Project Response:

As noted in C-1, differentiation between buildings is proposed.

**C-3 Human Scale - The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.**

*Board Comments:*

*Each of the buildings is long. It is important that a human scale and a sense of comfort for pedestrians be maintained. Measures to accomplish this should be explored and might include articulation of the pedestrian zone with building modulation, varying canopy height and landscape measures. Be sure to show detailed drawings of these areas in addition to full façade representations.*

Project Response:

The project incorporates extensive pedestrian areas on Terry Avenue and in the courtyard that have human scale elements such as landscape plantings, lighting, bollards, and wayfinding elements. The sidewalks along Terry and Mercer will be animated by retail activity, possibly including sidewalk seating areas, and will have tenant-provided canopies with the opportunity to provide variety.

**D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances - Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

Project Response:

The primary building entries as well as the lobby that serves the parking garage are accessed via the public courtyard. This means that all building users will traverse some portion of the courtyard, which will help to enliven the open space.

**D-7 Personal Safety and Security - Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

*Board Comments:*

*These guidelines apply to both proposed open spaces. Besides being beautiful landscapes they need to be readily accessible from interior building spaces so as to increase their use and function. In addition a balance in designed form between vertical form, including berms, planters, trees and bushes and clear sightlines is necessary, both for security and in order to maintain a sense of welcome inviting entry from the public realm.*

Project Response:

Passive security, including balance in the landscaping of the open space between plantings and clear sightlines is a goal of the design. Physical and visual access into and through the courtyard will encourage public use, which will heighten security.

**MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

The applicant revised the design according to the Design Review Board's guidance and applied for a Master Use Permit with a design review component on December 12, 2007. The application was deemed complete on December 21, 2007.

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The Design Review Board conducted a recommendation meeting on February 13, 2007 to review the applicant's formal project proposal developed in response to the previously identified priorities. At the public meeting, site plans, elevations, floor plans, landscaping plans and a palate of proposed exterior materials were presented for the Board members' consideration.

Public Comments

No citizens made comments at the February 13, 2008 meeting.

Board Deliberation

The Board discussed the two-building expression with a publicly accessible plaza in the center offering their individual opinions and suggestions for design improvements. They all agreed that the overall design, while restrained, is refined and highly successful.

The Board recommended that a condition of design review approval be that the canopy running most of the length of northern, Mercer St. facing, façade be modified to make it less monotonous, less heavy, and more visually interesting, more delicate and refined, responding to the window wall system above it.

**DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

The Director finds no conflict with SEPA requirements or state or federal laws, and has reviewed the *City of Seattle Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings (January 2007)* and the *South Lake Union Design Guidelines (May 2005)* and finds that the Board neither exceeded its authority nor applied the guidelines inconsistently in the approval of this design. In addition, the Director is bound by any condition where there was consensus by the Board and agrees with the conditions recommended by four Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

Development Standard Departure

A development standard departure to allow HVAC venting along the alley façade within six feet of grade is added by the Director as implied from the materials provided in the MUP application and the presented design review graphic materials. This departure is necessary to provide for adequate garage venting without raising that venting up into the office façade areas of the building. Such venting arrangements are allowed in downtown alleys and would be an appropriate feature here.

## **DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW**

Therefore, the proposed design as presented at the February 13, 2008 Design Review Board meeting is **CONDITIONALLY APPROVED**. Design Review conditions are listed at the end of this decision.

## **ANALYSIS-SEPA**

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant on December 12, 2007 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, the supplemental information submitted by the applicant, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects forms the basis for this analysis and decision.

The Seattle SEPA ordinance provides substantive authority to require mitigation of adverse impacts resulting from a project (SMC 25.05.655 and 25.05.660). Mitigation, when required, must be related to specific adverse environmental impacts identified in an environmental document and may be imposed only to the extent that an impact is attributable to the proposal. Additionally, mitigation may be required only when based on policies, plans, and regulations as enunciated in SMC 25.05.665 to SMC 25.05.675, inclusive, (SEPA Overview Policy, SEPA Cumulative Impacts Policy, and SEPA Specific Environmental Policies). In some instances, local, state, or federal requirements will provide sufficient mitigation of a significant impact and the decision maker is required to consider the applicable requirement(s) and their effect on the impacts of the proposal.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, 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 specific circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be required.

The policies for specific elements of the environment (SMC 25.05.675) describe the relationship with the Overview Policy and indicate when the Overview Policy is applicable. Not all elements of the environment are subject to the Overview Policy (e.g., Traffic and Transportation). A detailed discussion of some of the specific elements of the environment and potential impacts is appropriate.

### Short-term Impacts

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and a small increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction related vehicles. Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as the Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code. Additionally, due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant per SMC 25.05.794. The following is an analysis of construction-related noise, drainage, earth, grading, traffic and parking impacts as well as mitigation.

### Noise

The project is expected to generate increased noise impacts during demolition, grading and construction. Compliance with the Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08) is required and will limit the use of loud equipment registering 60 dBA (not including construction equipment exceptions in SMC 25.08.425) or more at the receiving property line or 50 feet to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work after the exterior of the structure is enclosed. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

No SEPA policy based mitigation is warranted.

### Earth//Grading

An excavation to construct the below grade parking for the proposal will be necessary. Approximately 70,000 cubic yards of soil and existing material will be removed from the site, which could create potential earth-related impacts. Compliance with the Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code (SMC 22.800) will require the proponent to identify a legal disposal site for excavation and demolition debris prior to commencement of demolition/construction.

Compliance with the Seattle Building Code and the Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code will also require that Best Management Practices (BMPs) be employed during demolition/excavation/construction including that the soils be contained on-site and that the excavation slopes be suitably shored and retained in order to mitigate potential water runoff and erosion impacts during excavation and general site work.

According to the geotechnical study, on-site groundwater levels occur at depths 20 feet or greater below grade. Dewatering will likely be necessary during construction. A drainage control plan, including a temporary erosion and sedimentation control plan will be required with the building permit application. In addition, a Shoring and Excavation Permit will be required by SDOT prior to issuance of a building permit.

Based upon the above considerations it is concluded that no SEPA-based conditioning is necessary for the anticipated earth-related impacts.

Construction-Related Traffic and Parking

Under SMC 25.05.675.B.2, DPD has authority under SEPA to impose conditions to mitigate parking impacts related to the project. During construction, parking demand will increase due to construction personnel and equipment. Off-site parking during construction hours in the general vicinity of the project is limited. Truck trips could be generated during excavation, shoring, and foundation construction.

It is the policy of the City of Seattle to minimize or prevent temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities, including measures to address parking and transportation impacts during construction per SMC 23.05.675.B.1.g. Pursuant to this policy, the goal should be to maximize construction worker use of off-street parking and to minimize construction worker parking in the streets. Project approval shall be conditioned upon the following:

- To minimize on-street parking in the project vicinity due to construction impacts, the applicants/developers shall make available sufficient offstreet parking to satisfy construction worker demand and a free shuttle as necessary from off-site parking locations.
- DPD and the applicant shall periodically review construction worker parking to ensure that on-street parking by construction workers is minimized and will make adjustments as appropriate, such as increase promotion of parking availability or other actions that will encourage increased use of on-site parking. The initial review shall occur at the end of the first quarter following the date such off-street parking is established by the applicant, with subsequent reviews to occur as agreed but no more frequently than quarterly.
- The applicant shall, prior to issuance of construction permits, provide a month by month estimate of number of construction workers expected at each of the Vulcan/Amazon related construction sites in the South Lake Union Area during the construction period for this project.
- Prior to issuance of a street use permit, the contractor shall provide the City with a construction traffic plan. Site work shall be conducted in a manner that would minimize interference with vehicular, pedestrian, and other non-motorized forms of circulation. Temporary traffic control or pedestrian obstructions during construction (if any) shall be managed in accordance with the current City of Seattle Traffic Control Manual for In-Street Work and Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. In the event that work requires closure of an entire sidewalk or travel lane, a signage plan and traffic control plan shall be prepared for approval by SDOT.

### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased on-site bulk and scale, increased ambient noise due to increased human activity, increased demand on public services and utilities, increased light and glare, increased energy consumption, increased on-street parking demand, increased vehicle traffic, and demolition of three fifty year-old buildings. These long-term impacts are not considered significant.

Notwithstanding the Determination of Non-Significance, the following impacts merit more detailed discussion.

### Historic

There are no known or listed historical resources or any officially-designated historical resources on the project site. The existing buildings were built between 1950 and 1953, but do not appear to have any particular significance.

There is one designated landmark building near the site, the Van Vorst Building at 415 Boren Avenue North. Numerous older buildings exist in the South Lake Union area and may be eligible for consideration as historic resources. The project is not expected to have any impact on any of these structures.

### Archaeological

There is no surficial evidence to indicate that any archaeologically significant resources exist on-site and would be disturbed by the project. However, the project site is in an area identified as a historic fill zone near the former and existing shoreline of Lake Union. Historic records and previous limited archaeological excavations suggest that potentially historic archaeological resources may exist within such fill zones.

There is also potential for native surfaces to be preserved beneath fill. Prior to placement of fill in the South Lake Union area, a ravine formerly passed through or near to the project area and could have been used by native people as a travel corridor. Ethnographic sources indicate that a Native American settlement existed on the Lake Union shoreline to the northwest of the project area, and a trail from the southwestern edge of the lake connected the settlement to Elliot Bay.

Due to the potential for encountering both pre-contact and historic period archaeological deposits during project construction, an archaeological monitoring plan has been recommended in conjunction with final project construction plans. The plan will include an inadvertent discovery protocol to ensure that if resources of potential archaeological significance are encountered during excavation or construction associated with the Proposed Action, the following measures would apply:

- work that is occurring in the portion of the site where potential archaeological resources are found would be stopped immediately;

- the City of Seattle land use planner that is assigned to the project and the Washington State Archaeologist at the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAH) would immediately be contacted; and
- regulations would be adhered to pertaining to discovery and excavation of archaeological resources, including but not limited to, Chapters 27.34, 27.53, 27.44, 79.01 and 79.90 RCW and Chapter 25-48 WAC, as applicable or as revised.

Otherwise, the project will not have any significant adverse impacts on archaeological resources.

### Housing Impacts

The City's SEPA policies encourage preservation of existing housing, especially low income housing. SMC 25.05.675.I. These policies require compliance with City Code provisions on housing relocation, demolition, and conversion for proposed development to be in compliance with the housing policy. SMC 25.05.675.I.2.C. The proposed project will demolish warehouses and replace them with offices and retail space. No existing housing will be demolished, relocated, or converted. Therefore, no mitigation to housing impacts is required.

### Traffic, Transportation, and Parking

The Transpo Group ("Transpo") completed a traffic study for the project which was submitted to the City as part of the application and review process.

For its analysis, Transpo utilized trip generation rates associated with ITE Land Use 814 Specialty Retail and LU 714 Corporate Headquarters Building, to estimate trips that would be generated for the project. All rates were obtained from the ITE 7th Edition (2003). The study estimated that the project would generate approximately 1,160 new trips per day, of which 154 new trips would be generated during the AM peak hour, and 163 new trips during the PM peak hour.

The project will include 363 parking spaces, and would displace the existing 52 surface stalls. The proposed 363 on-site parking stalls would exceed the minimum Land Use Code requirements of 1 stall per 1,000 square feet of office space and 1 stall per 500 square feet for general sales and service (the Code requires at least 287 stalls). Peak parking demand for the project is 315 stalls. Assuming an effective supply of 95 percent, (to account for the efficiency lost by circulating the garage in search of a vacant stall), or 345 spaces, the project can accommodate the peak parking demand. The urban site, served by the South Lake Union Streetcar and a number of Metro bus routes, can be expected to attract some number of employees and retail customers without cars. The number of visitors without cars would be expected to increase over time in this increasingly urban location.

The traffic study also evaluated transportation concurrency for the proposed project. The calculated v/c ratios for the four tested screenlines were determined to remain below the adopted LOS standard; therefore, the proposed project was determined to meet the City of Seattle concurrency requirements.

Transit service to and from the project vicinity is provided by King County Metro Transit, including routes 17, 70, 71, 72, 73, and 83, and the South Lake Union Streetcar. These transit options provide access to downtown Seattle and (via connections) destinations throughout King County.

Expected traffic and parking impacts of the proposal are not considered significant and while present are considered to be consistent with the density of uses envisioned for an urban center context. No SEPA-based conditioning of traffic or parking impacts is imposed.

### Transportation Mitigation

In July 2004, the Seattle Department of Transportation completed the South Lake Union Transportation Study with the help of consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff and Enviroissues. The study recommended a package of transportation improvements for the South Lake Union area which has broad support from a diverse group of neighborhood, business and community representatives. The improvements include a two-way Mercer Street, a narrower Valley Street, a streetcar, and a number of transit, pedestrian and bicycle measures. These improvements are intended to reconnect the South Lake Union area to the city, untangle streets that create barriers in the middle of the city, improve mobility, promote alternatives to single-occupant-vehicles, and continue a smooth flow of freight and people through the area.

As an alternative to mitigation measures that focus solely on minor improvements to nearby streets and intersections, DPD has determined that a more effective mitigation approach is for the applicant to contribute to the costs of the more comprehensive transportation improvements recommended in the South Lake Union Transportation Study. DPD has reviewed the projected transportation impacts of the project, as detailed in the February 2008 Transpo Analysis, and concluded that the transportation improvements in the South Lake Union Transportation Study would adequately mitigate those impacts.

DPD has considered the share of the transportation improvement costs that should be borne by this project. A portion of the improvement costs is attributable to existing deficiencies and must be funded with resources other than private developer mitigation payments. This project should bear its fair share of the remaining costs, based on the expected trip generation. Based on DPD's analysis of costs and allocation to this project, a payment of \$309,300 is appropriate for traffic impact mitigation.

### Plants/Animals

Any existing vegetation would be removed during the site excavation and construction. There is no known occurrence of threatened or endangered species on or near the site. There are no known exceptional trees as defined by Seattle code on the site.

Frontage improvements will include street trees. Landscaped open spaces will be provided in the public rights-of-way and in the mid-block courtyard open to the public.

Impacts to plants and animals are not considered significant and no mitigation is warranted.

Energy and Natural Resources

Natural gas and electricity would be used as the principal source of energy for space heating. Electrical energy would be used for lighting and operating appliances. It is not expected that the height and configuration of the proposed structure would interfere with the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties. Building construction would comply with this and other requirements of the Seattle Energy Code, at a minimum, to be reviewed at the time of Building permit application.

Long term impacts to energy and natural resources are not considered significant and no mitigation is warranted.

Height, Bulk and Scale

The subject proposal has been through the Design Review Process, previously discussed in this decision. A project that is approved pursuant to the design review process is presumed to comply with the City's height, bulk and scale policies. This presumption may be rebutted only by clear and convincing evidence that the height, bulk and scale impacts documented through environmental review have not been adequately mitigated. SMC 25.05.675.G.2. Measures employed to mitigate height, bulk and scale impacts, as incorporated into the building architecture, were reviewed by the Design Review Board and found sufficient.

Long-term height, bulk and scale impacts have been addressed through the Design Review process. No additional SEPA mitigation measures are warranted.

Public Services and Utilities

The change of use, increase in development on the site, and type of development (office and retail) are expected to result in an increased demand for public services. There are no existing deficiencies in needed services or utilities to the site. The project would comply with applicable codes and requirements of the Seattle Fire Department for fire protection and fire suppression, to be reviewed at the time of Building Permit application. All exterior entrances to the building would be well-lit and equipped with security gates.

All utilities required to serve the proposed mixed-used residential/commercial development are located within adjacent street frontages. Only side service connections should be required for each utility service. Overall, the impacts to public services and utilities are not considered significant and no mitigation is warranted.

Existing and Projected Land Use; Comprehensive and Neighborhood Plan

The site is currently occupied by three warehouses. With the redevelopment proposal, the site would be redeveloped into a commercial office building with ground-floor retail uses. The land use of the site would thus be changed with the proposal.

The proposed project is compatible with surrounding uses and is located in an area of mixed Industrial-Commercial and Seattle Mixed zoning. The site itself is zoned Industrial-Commercial (IC-65). The redevelopment proposal is consistent with the IC-65 zoning of the property. Office and retail uses are permitted outright in the IC zone. The proposal complies with development standards applicable to commercial office and retail development within the IC-65 zone.

The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan designates the site as an Industrial Area, and it is located in the South Lake Union Urban Center. The proposed commercial office and retail development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation.

In addition, the proposed project complies with the South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan. This Plan is one of 37 neighborhood plans prepared with the participation of people in the neighborhood to articulate a vision for growth and change over the next 20 years, which identifies actions to be taken to help achieve this vision and further implement the Citywide Comprehensive Plan. The Plan adopts several neighborhood specific goals and policies. The project is consistent with the following policies and goals:

- SLU-G1: A vital and eclectic neighborhood where people both live and work, where use of transit, walking and bicycling is encouraged, and where there are a range of housing choices, diverse businesses, arts, a lively and inviting street life and amenities to support and attract residents, employees and visitors.
- SLU-G3: A neighborhood that serves as a regional center for innovative organizations and that supports a diverse and vibrant job base.
- SLU-G6: A livable, walkable community that is well served by transit and easy to get around by foot, bike or transit.
- SLU-P9 Support the growth of innovative industries in South Lake Union including biotechnology, information technology, environmental sciences and technology, and sustainable building.
- SLU-G10: Parks and open spaces provide an obvious and inviting purpose, accessible to and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse neighborhood as it grows and changes.
- SLU-P31: Use visual and physical connections between open spaces, adjacent streets and surrounding activities to stimulate positive social interactions.

The proposal conforms to the above-stated goals and policies. The new office space is designed to accommodate users who support the goals cited above. The site is in close proximity to transit facilities and residential areas. The tenant for this building is Amazon.com, a company which will add to the neighborhood's burgeoning reputation as a center for innovation and creativity. Users such as Amazon.com will help to create the vital and eclectic South Lake Union neighborhood sought by the Plan. The planned mid-block courtyard and street landscaping will provide open space and improve physical connections in the neighborhood.

It is the City's SEPA policy to ensure that proposed uses in development projects are reasonably compatible with surrounding uses and are consistent with adopted City land use policies. The subject proposal is compatible with surrounding uses, zoning, and City policies. The proposed mixed use project is consistent with the South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan and the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. No mitigation resulting from land use impacts is warranted.

Summary

In conclusion, no significant adverse impacts on the environment are anticipated to result from the proposal.

**DECISION - SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).
- [ ] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

**CONDITIONS - SEPA**

Prior to Issuance of Demolition, Grading, or Construction Permits

The owner(s) and/or responsible parties shall:

1. Prior to issuance of a construction permit, the contractor shall provide a construction traffic plan to SDOT for review. Site work shall be conducted in a manner that would minimize interference with vehicular, pedestrian, and other non-motorized forms of circulation. Temporary traffic control or pedestrian obstructions during construction (if any) shall be managed in accordance with the current City of Seattle Traffic Control Manual for In-Street Work and Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. In the event that work requires closure of an entire sidewalk or travel lane, a signage plan and traffic control plan shall be prepared for approval by SDOT.
2. The applicant shall, prior to issuance of construction permits, provide a month by month estimate of number of construction workers expected at each of the Vulcan/Amazon related construction sites in the South Lake Union Area during the construction period for this project.
3. A drainage control plan, including a temporary erosion and sedimentation control plan, will be required with the construction permit application.
4. A Shoring and Excavation Permit shall be required prior to issuance of a construction permit.

During Construction

5. Construction workers shall limit parking in residential neighborhoods and will utilize the on-site parking garage when it becomes available. Until the on-site parking garage is available, and to the extent off-street parking is available in the area, construction workers shall park in off-street locations in the area and, if necessary, a shuttle shall be provided to transport them to and from the construction site.
6. Comply with the limitations imposed by SDOT in regard to construction-phase transportation.
7. To minimize on-street parking in the project vicinity due to construction impacts, the applicants/developers shall make available sufficient offstreet parking to satisfy construction worker demand and a free shuttle as necessary from off-site parking locations.
8. DPD and the applicant shall periodically review construction worker parking to ensure that on-street parking by construction workers is minimized and will make adjustments as appropriate, such as increase promotion of parking availability or other actions that will encourage increased use of on-site parking. The initial review shall occur at the end of the first quarter following the date such off-street parking is established by the applicant, with subsequent reviews to occur as agreed but no more frequently than quarterly.
9. Debris and exposed areas shall be sprinkled as necessary to control dust; and truck loads and routes shall be monitored to minimize dust-related impacts.
10. Use well-maintained equipment to reduce emissions from construction equipment and construction-related trucks and avoid prolonged periods of vehicle idling.
11. Use electrically operated small tools in place of gas powered small tools wherever feasible.
12. Trucking building materials to and from the project site shall be scheduled and coordinated to minimize congestion during peak travel times associated with adjacent roadways.

Prior to Building Permit Issuance

13. The applicant shall pay a transportation mitigation fee of \$309,300 to SDOT, to be apportioned among South Lake Union transportation projects.

Design Review Conditions

14. The building constructed shall substantially conform to the one represented to the Design Review Board and which received a recommendation of approval.

15. The applicant shall explore modifying the canopy running most of the length of the façade facing north towards Mercer Street to make it less monotonous, less heavy, and more visually interesting, more delicate and refined, responding to the window wall system above it.
16. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site must be submitted to DPD for review and approval of the Land Use Planner (Scott Kemp, [scott.kemp@seattle.gov](mailto:scott.kemp@seattle.gov)). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.
17. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, Design Review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project, or by the Design Review Manager.
18. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least three working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
19. All of the conditions contained in this decision must be embedded in the cover sheet for updated MUP permit plans and for all subsequent permits including any MUP revisions, and all building permits.

Signature: (signature on file)

Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development  
Land Use Services

Date: June 12, 2008