



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

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

Application Number: 3008119
Application Name: Randal Ehm for Seattle Fleets and Facilities
Address of Proposal: 10503 Interlake Avenue North (Temporary Fire Station 31)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to install three modular trailers and two tents for temporary use as fire station (Station 31). Existing single family residence to be demolished. Existing play area to remain.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Chapter 25.05 Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: [] Exempt [X] DNS [] EIS
[] DNS with conditions
[] DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location: see map.

Zoning: Lowrise 2 and Single Family 5000.

Parcel Size: 19,216 square feet.

Existing Use: A single family home is located near the intersection of N. Northgate Way and Interlake Avenue North. A playground associated with the church is located behind the house to the west, on the southern portion of the site. The northern portion of the site is vacant.



Zoning in Vicinity: Single Family 5000 and Lowrise 2.

Development in vicinity: Residential, church and fire station 31.

Environmentally Critical Areas: None.

The proposal is to provide an interim or temporary fire station during construction of a permanent fire station. The permanent fire station is located to the south across N. Northgate Way. The project includes the installation of three pre-manufactured modular buildings (portables) and two fabric mesh tents. The modular buildings will be used for living quarters and equipment, and tents will be used for vehicles. The following provides more detail:

	Square Feet	Purpose
Portable	924	Storing gear, equipment, “dirty portable”.
Portable	924	Living quarters & bathrooms for 6 staff.
Portable	1,848	Living quarters & bathrooms for 4 staff, kitchen, dining room, living room, exercise and office space.
Tent	2,680	Parking for 2 vehicles & equipment.
Tent	1,340	Parking for 1 vehicle & equipment.

Nine uncovered surface parking spaces will be provided for the firefighters on site. Eight of the spaces will be accessed from the alley and one from Interlake Avenue N. Access to the emergency vehicles will be provided from Interlake Avenue N. The existing play area used by the church will remain in use. The existing single family home will be demolished.

Public Comments

No public comments were received during the comment period which ended on November 15, 2007.

Related Action- Temporary Relocation of Police and Fire Stations

Pursuant to SMC 23.42.040, the Director may grant, deny, or condition an application for temporary use authorization for uses not otherwise permitted or not meeting development standards in the zone. Additionally, in SMC 23.42.040E, for temporary relocation of police and fire stations, the Code states that, “A Master Use Permit, issued for a period of twelve (12) months or less not involving the construction of a permanent structure may be authorized subject to the conditions of subsection A of Section 23.42.040...”. Criteria found in subsection A are as follows:

- a. The use shall not be materially detrimental to the public welfare; and
- b. The use shall not result in substantial injury to the property in the vicinity; and
- c. The use shall be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the land use code.

Pursuant to SMC 23.76 which describes procedures for Master use Permits, temporary relocation of police and fire stations are considered Type I decisions. Type I decisions are administrative, non appealable decisions made by the Director.

DPD is currently preparing legislation to revise the duration of time for temporary relocations of Police and Fire stations. The legislation would likely allow up to 24 months in lieu of 12 months that is currently allowed. The time frame for construction of the facilities typically exceeds 12 months; therefore, the permit duration needs to be lengthened.

Fire stations are essential for protecting lives and property and must be sited so that they can rapidly and adequately respond to emergencies. The current fire facilities and their distribution are inadequate to maintain the desired response time to existing development and future development. In most cases, remodels or construction of new fire stations requires the siting of temporary stations close to existing stations to retain adequate emergency response times. In light of that, the temporary stations are integral in achieving the goal of upgrading fire stations which will ideally protect public welfare and property.

The proposed fire station does not involve the erection of permanent structures. The purpose of the Land Use Code, in part, is to “achieve an efficient use of land without major disruption of the natural environment and to direct development to sites with adequate services and amenities” (SMC 23.02.020). The use of this site as a fire station on a temporary basis during which time a permanent fire station is constructed is appropriate, and is consistent with the Land Use Code. The site is located in the Aurora-Licton Springs Residential Urban Village, will not disrupt the natural environment, and will have minimal impact on the built environment and character of the neighborhood. The use will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and will not result in substantial injury to the property in the vicinity. All the applicable criteria are satisfied.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklists submitted by the applicant dated October 15, 2007 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 23.05.665) discusses the relationship between the City’s code/policies and environmental review. 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 limitation”. The Overview Policy in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, states that in limited circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts.

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, Plants and Animals and Shadows on Open Spaces). A detailed discussion of some of the specific elements of the environment and potential impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected; decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from demolition, grading and clearing and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; temporary soil erosion; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise; increased height, bulk and scale, and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general. Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the City.

Most short-term impacts are expected to be minor. Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, some impacts warrant further discussion.

Air Quality

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos or other hazardous substances during demolition. The applicant will acquire an environmental survey to identify all hazardous materials requiring abatement, and is required to obtain permits from PSCAA to ensure proper handling and disposal of materials containing asbestos. The survey will disclose the presence of asbestos and lead in interior paint within the structure, and provide recommendations with respect to demolition. The Seattle Fleets and Facilities Department will work with the contractor to identify best management practices for appropriately removing lead paint from the structure and acquire appropriate permits from PSCAA, if necessary. The permit standards and regulations administered by PSCAA, and the best management practices utilized by the demolition contractor will sufficiently mitigate any adverse impacts to air quality; therefore no further mitigation is necessary pursuant to SEPA 25.05.675A.

Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition, grading and construction. The duration of construction is only expected to take about 8 weeks because of the nature of the structures proposed. However, these impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The Seattle Noise Ordinance permits increases in permissible sound levels associated with construction and equipment between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends. The surrounding properties are developed with housing and will be impacted by construction noise. The Seattle Fleets and Facilities Department will require contractors to limit periods of construction activities (including but not limited to grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 6pm; therefore, no SEPA mitigation is needed.

The project is expected to generate operational noise from fire alarms and sirens from emergency response vehicles (fire engines, ladder trucks and aid vehicles) when leaving the site. The site is close to residential uses, and alarms and sirens could be especially adverse in the early morning and in the evening. The Seattle Noise Control Ordinance exempts sounds created by fire alarms and emergency vehicles. Noise associated with sirens and alarms are an essential function of a fire station and are unavoidable.

In an effort to reduce sound associated with alarms, the Seattle Fire Department does not plan to install audible alarms in the apparatus bay tents or outside of the modular buildings. However, noise from radios, alarms inside the buildings and sirens will likely be heard by neighbors before and during emergency responses. These noises will be intermittent and are unavoidable; therefore, SEPA mitigation is not appropriate.

Traffic

The existing fire station located on the south side of N. Northgate Way at Interlake Avenue will be closed during construction. The temporary station will replace it during construction. An existing traffic light is located just west of the existing fire station on N. Northgate Way which is used to stop traffic when emergency vehicles are entering or exiting the apparatus bay and for pedestrians. The traffic light will remain in its current location and another one will be installed east of Interlake Avenue North to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles onto N. Northgate Way from Interlake Avenue North. The same number of vehicles and staff will be located at the temporary station; therefore there will be no new traffic impacts. Distribution of the impacts will slightly change in that staff parking will be utilizing the alley; however, emergency vehicles will be impacting the same intersections. No SEPA conditioning is necessary.

