



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3008358
Applicant Name: Tom Eanes for Freehold Group, LLC
Address of Proposal: 3443 Thorndyke Avenue West

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to change the use of an existing structure from warehouse to office, and expand the existing structure for a total of 20,213 square feet of office space. Surface parking for 51 vehicles is to be provided. Approximately 2,000 cubic yards of grading will be required for the proposed project.

The following approval is required:

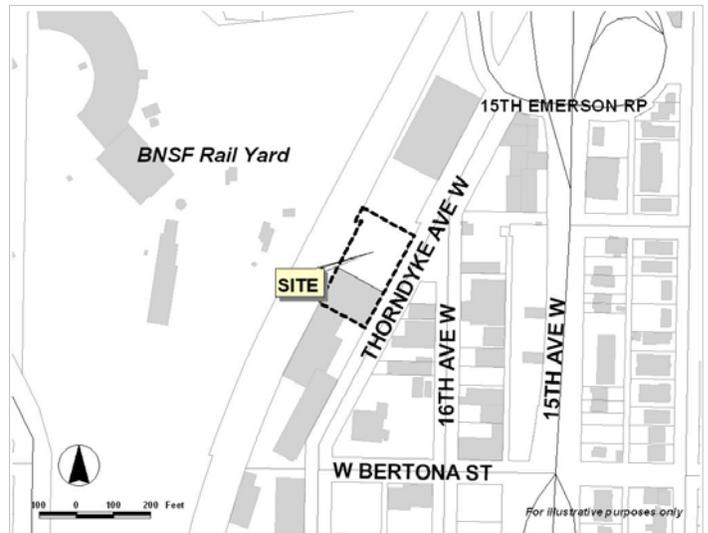
SEPA - Environmental Determination – Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

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

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

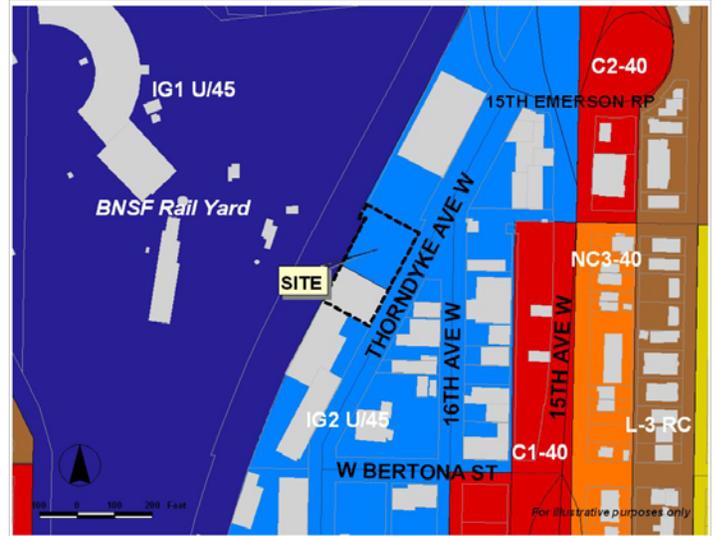
The subject site is a 39,905 square foot lot zoned General Industrial 2 with a height limit of 45 feet (IG2 U/45). The site is located on Thorndyke Avenue West, between West Bertona Street and the 15th/Emerson Ramp, in Seattle’s BINMIC neighborhood (Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing/Industrial Center). The irregularly shaped lot is developed with a single story, concrete construction building currently vacant and comprising approximately 15,000 sq. ft. The remaining portion of the lot to the north is vacant and consists of approximately 25,000 sq. ft. Immediately west of the site is the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks and right-of-way. The area includes a significant amount of vacant land



For illustrative purposes only

and buildings, and is characterized by a mix of industrial and commercial uses. Zoning north, south, and east of the site is IG2 U/45. West of the subject site the zone changes to General Industrial 1 with a height limit of 45 feet (IG1 U/45).

The site is entirely within an ECA Liquefaction area. Pursuant to ECA Section 25.09.100, the general development standards that apply to development on parcels containing environmentally critical areas do not apply to liquefaction prone areas. The property slopes gently toward the north-northwest, with an estimated elevation change of about 5 feet across the site.¹



According to the applicant’s SEPA checklist, the change of use and expansion to office space is part of a two-phase development project. A second phase is anticipated to be developed on the northern part of the site (at a future date to be determined). The second phase will include laboratory uses as well as underground parking for both the first and second phase uses. The subject site underwent a Lot Boundary Adjustment (LBA) in March, 2007 (Project No. 3005885). Additionally, a proposal was submitted to DPD for a change of use at the subject site, Project No. 3006181 (permit not issued). At that time the applicant submitted a geotechnical report, “Seismic Soil Classification Considerations”, prepared by Adapt Engineering, Inc., and dated March 15, 2007, which provides the basis for geotechnical site considerations.

Proposal Description

The current proposal is to change the use of the existing structure from warehouse to office, and expand the use for a total of 20,213 square feet of office space. The proposal includes surface parking for 51 vehicles. Approximately 2,000 cubic yards of grading will be required to construct the surface parking and detention tank. Minor grading in the adjacent right-of-way will be required to construct street improvements.

Design changes to the building include the following:

- The addition of a mezzanine.
- Skylights on the north and south aspects of the bow roof.
- Glazing along the east and north building façades.
- New parapet along the west elevation.

¹ *Seismic Soil Classification Considerations*. Geotechnical report prepared by Adapt Engineering, Inc., for Thorndyke Avenue, LLC, March 15, 2007.

Public Comments

Public notice of this application ended May 15, 2008.² No public comments were offered. Project documents, supplemental SEPA checklist, and related materials are available for review and can be found in the project file folder; City of Seattle Public Resource Center (PRC), www.seattle.gov/dpd/prc/overview.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

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

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the annotated environmental checklist (dated April 25, 2007), and supplemental information in the project file submitted by the applicant's agent. The information in the checklist, the supplemental information, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review (SMC 25.05.665 D). 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 such limitations/circumstances mitigation can be considered (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7). Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during construction; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; and increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope.

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. The ECA Ordinance and Director's Rule 33-2006, *General Duties and Responsibilities of Geotechnical Engineers*, regulate development and construction techniques in designated ECA areas with identified geologic hazards. The Building Code provides for construction measures and life safety issues. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment and no further conditioning pursuant to SEPA policies is warranted.

² Original notice of Project No. 3008358 ended January 23, 2008. The project proposal was modified, and re-noticed from May 15 to May 28, 2008.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts anticipated by the proposal would primarily consist of site stability and increased traffic and vehicular volumes. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope. However, the impacts warrant further discussion and review.

Earth/Soils

The ECA Ordinance and Director's Rule 33-2006 require submission of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction in areas with landslide potential and/or a history of unstable soil conditions. The applicant has submitted "Seismic Soil Classification Considerations", prepared by Adapt Engineering, Inc., and dated March 15, 2007 (Project No. 3006181).

The construction plans, including shoring of excavation as needed and erosion control techniques, are receiving separate review by DPD. Any additional information showing conformance with applicable ordinances and codes (ECA ordinance, The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code, Director's Rule 33-2006) will be required prior to issuance of building permits. Applicable codes and ordinances provide extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure that safe construction techniques are utilized; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Parking and Traffic

The applicant proposes entirely office use(s) on the subject site, with an anticipated employment projection of 60 to 100 people. The project includes 51 surface parking spaces accessed via Thorndyke Avenue West, located in the northeast corner of the lot. Peak parking demand for the project was determined based on peak parking demand rates in *Parking Generation* (Institute of Transportation Engineers [ITE], 3rd Edition, June 2004). Sixty-eight percent of the trips are expected to be made by vehicle. Peak parking demand for the site is estimated to be 31 parking spaces, during midday for one hour between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The proposal of 51 surface parking spaces will accommodate the anticipated demand.

The project site is located to the northwest of the intersection of West Bertona Street and 17th Avenue West. The site is bounded by Thorndyke Avenue West and 17th Avenue West on the southeast, and the BNSF Railway's "Balmer" Rail Yard, a sorting/storage/classification yard, on the northwest. King County Metro provides two major routes on 15th Avenue West, with transit stops located approximately ½ mile southeast of the site. Trip generation for the proposed development was determined using rates in *Trip Generation* (ITE, 7th Edition, 2003). This information was compared with the *Port of Seattle North Bay EIS* and was found to be consistent with 68% of person trips being made by vehicle, 18% by transit and another 14% by walking or bicycling.³

The project will generate approximately 130 off-site vehicle trips per day. Peak volumes are expected to occur during the morning peak hour, totaling 18 trips; during the afternoon peak hour, the project will generate 17 trips. Project proponents are working with SDOT on transportation improvements in the area. Improvements relate to build out of the entire Dravus Street area between 15th Avenue West and the BNSF railway rights-of-way.⁴

³ Port of Seattle North Bay Project, <http://www.portseattle.org/business/realestate/development/northbay/>

⁴ Environmental (SEPA) Checklist, dated April, 2007. Submitted by Tom Eanes, Hewitt.

Pursuant to SEPA policies the level of increase in parking and traffic volumes does not warrant conditioning to mitigate environmental impacts.

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 requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- 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 2c.
- 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 2c.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Master Use Permit Issuance

1. Update cover sheet language *and* plan set sheets (i.e., A0.001, etc.) to reflect the proposed project located at 3443 Thorndyke Avenue West.

Signature: (signature on file)
Catherine McCoy, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services

Date: July 17, 2008