



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:** 3008549  
**Applicant Name:** Brett Cato  
**Address of Proposal:** 2001 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to change the use of a 318,067 sq. ft. portion of a building from office to utility services for a total of 394,504 sq. ft. of utility services use (Westin Building). Existing utility service, restaurant and retail to remain.

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

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

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Site and Area Description

The Westin Building is a major highrise structure with 34 floors and a basement located in downtown Seattle on the west corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Virginia Street. The site fronts on each of these streets and on a 15 foot paved alley to the southwest. Sixth Avenue is a five lane principal arterial and Virginia Street is a four lane minor arterial at the proposal site.



The building is located in a Downtown Office Core 2 zone with a 500 foot maximum height (DOC2 500/300-500). This zoning continues on all adjacent parcels and the blocks to the east. Nearby development consists of a mix of hotels, office, business support, restaurant, and commercial uses. The zoning changes to Downtown Mixed Commercial with a 240 foot height limit (DMC 240/290-400) one block to the southwest.

### Proposal Description

As tenants in the building turn over the applicant proposes to change the use of all of the existing Administrative Office spaces in the Westin Building to a Utility Service Use for the future installation of telephone/computer equipment (no transmitting equipment shall be installed) and arrays of internet disk servers. Air conditioning systems which would include ductwork and an array of backup batteries containing electrolyte are also proposed to be installed. All of this various equipment proposed to be installed would be located within the confines of the existing building.

SEPA review is required for this change of use because the change affects more than 4,000 square feet of non-residential area in a Downtown zone.

### Public Comments

The public comment period for this project ended on April 9, 2008. No written comment was received, nor was any request for extension of comment period filed.

### **SEPA ANALYSIS**

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated January 18, 2008 and updated March 27, 2008. This information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant (floor plans and details) 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 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between the 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 environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,*" subject to some limitations. Thus, the mitigation that may be required pursuant to SEPA authority is limited.

### Short Term Impacts

#### Construction and Noise

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality within the confines of the building due to suspended particles and dust from construction activities which will involve drilling of anchor holes on the existing floor for the computer equipment cabinets;

increased noise due to hauling of construction materials, equipment, installation and anchoring of equipment to the floor; increased traffic and demand for parking from the construction personnel. Conduits for power service connection to the computer equipment will be installed above the equipment cabinets and will be anchored mostly beneath the ceiling and above the computer equipment cabinets. Noise from the installation of drilled-in concrete anchors will be generated during normal construction hours. No noise would be generated during equipment operation.

Due to the fact that these activities are all within the confines of the building, the construction activities would not create significant adverse impacts to nearby building occupants. Several adopted codes and ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general. For this proposal, the Noise Ordinance adequately regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted.

### *Air Quality*

The construction activities themselves will generate minimal direct impacts and will be contained basically within the building. However the indirect impact of construction activities including construction 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. No potential short term adverse impact to air is anticipated and therefore air quality mitigation is not necessary.

### *Traffic and Parking*

Delivery of the telephone/computer equipment and other construction materials traffic in the immediate vicinity to the site may be temporarily impacted during regular work hours. Delivery activities before or after peak hours, and the use of the existing alley adjacent to the west of the site would provide adequate mitigation of traffic impact in the vicinity. Construction activities for this proposal would only require minimal number of construction personnel. The parking garage of the Westin Hotel to the south across Virginia Street with pedestrian access through an existing sky bridge serving this building facility and the Westin Hotel Building garage across the alley to the west are adequate to accommodate the temporary parking need for the construction personnel. Further mitigation of this parking impact is not warranted.

### *Long Term Impacts*

#### *Environmental Health*

This utility service facility proposes to use backup power for the computer equipment by utilizing an array of lead-acid batteries that will contain electrolyte, which will comply with the requirements of the Seattle Fire Code article 64. The Department finds that the limitations and requirements of the Fire Ordinance are adequate to appropriately mitigate the adverse health impact of the hazardous material including fire hazards associated with this proposal. No transmitting equipment will be used in this proposal, and no EMR or radio frequency emissions are anticipated, no mitigation measures are warranted pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Visual

No visual impact is anticipated associated with this proposal. All of the telephone/computer system, disk servers system, racks and cabinets, array of backup batteries and its containment walls, air conditioning systems and duct work, conduits and raceways for the electrical systems and all other related equipment for the proposal will be all located within the confines of the existing structure. No mitigation for visual impacts is warranted.

Air Quality

The number of employee vehicular trips associated with the project is expected to decrease to about one fifth of the current number due to the lower worker density for telecom/utility use. However the projects' overall electrical energy consumption is expected to increase due to the greater amount of electrical equipment to be installed in the space. Together these changes may 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.

Traffic

Traffic generated by the building will decrease because fewer people will be employed by the utility use than the existing office uses.

**DECISION**

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.

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

**CONDITIONS**

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: April 21, 2008  
Nora Gierloff, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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