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:	3009030
Applicant Name:	Mike Mariano, Schemata Workshop for Waste Management of Seattle
Address of Project:	8111 1st Avenue South

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow one new 5,698 sq. ft. structure for a recycling facility. Project also includes a 7,304 sq. ft. addition to existing automotive retail sales and service (major vehicle repair) structure and a 575 sq. ft. addition to an existing recycling facility. Project also includes demolition of an existing 4,430 sq. ft. building. Site is located in an environmentally critical area. Parking and storage for 221 vehicles will be located on the site.

The following approval is required:

SEPA Environmental Determination - (Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code)

SEPA DETERMINATION: [ ] Exempt [X] *DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS

[ ] DNS with conditions

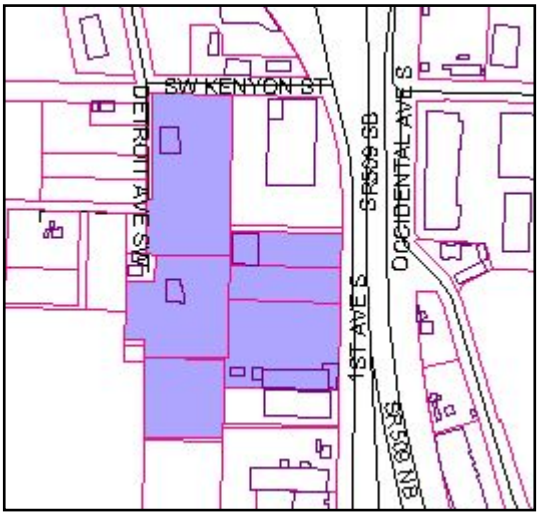
[ ] DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

*The Early DNS was published on June 17, 2008. Some of the square footage calculations have been slightly modified since the published notice.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site & Area Description

The approximately 126,456 square feet, irregularly shaped site is located between First Avenue South to the east, SW Kenyon Street to the north and Detroit Avenue SW to the west. The site is nearly all impervious surfaces with asphalt and concrete. The western portion of the site is zoned Industrial Buffer (IB U-85) and eastern portion is zoned General Industrial 2 (IG2 U-85. Abutting the site to the west, the zone changes to Single Family 7200 (SF 7200). Two existing buildings are located on the site, along with surface parking for 190 vehicles.



Proposal

The proposed project includes the following:

Demolition and Installation:

- Demolition of a 4,430 sq. ft. pole barn structure and existing cart shop;
- Installation of CNG equipment located on concrete slabs measuring 2,275 sq. ft.;

Renovation and Expansion:

- Interior renovations to the 10,847 sq. ft. existing office structure;
- Renovation of 5,601 sq. ft existing autoclave building to accommodate the relocated cart assembly and repair operation, along with the existing international waste sterilization (autoclave) operation. Renovation includes a 575 sq. ft expansion of the building footprint for a covered wash pad;
- A 7,304 sq. ft. expansion of the existing vehicle maintenance building;

Construction:

- Construction of a CNG fueling station and dispensers throughout the fleet vehicle parking area;
- Construction of a 5,698 sq. ft. area for recyclable and green waste reload structure;
- Construction of retaining walls to accommodate the recyclables reload building and to expand fleet vehicle storage area.

The subject site contains environmentally critical areas including potential slide, liquefaction, landfill and known slides. The proposal site is also located in an environmentally critical area due to the presence of a wetland on an adjacent lot and associated wetland buffer on the subject site; therefore SMC 25.09.240 is applicable. A wetland delineation report was submitted, reviewed and approved by the Department of Planning and Development. Any future building permit will be subject to the provisions of the Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Ordinance.

Public Comment

Public notice was published on July 17, 2008. The required public comment period ended on July 30, 2008 and no comment letters were received.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklists submitted by the applicants (dated June 20, 2008) and annotated by the Land Use Planner. The information in the checklist, the supplemental information submitted by the applicant 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 (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 such limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665) mitigation can be considered. 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 suspended particulates from construction activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction materials hauling, equipment and personnel; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts:

- The applicant estimates approximately 4,700 cubic yards of excavation. Excess material to be disposed of must be deposited in an approved site.
- 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 Street Use Ordinance requires watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way.
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency 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.

Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment. However, given the amount of building activity to be undertaken in association with the proposed project, additional analysis of air quality, grading, noise and traffic impacts is warranted and summarized below.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will generally provide sufficient mitigation. Additional requirements will be imposed to comply with Seattle Building Code requirements, as the project includes both approval of the Environmental Review and the building permit. No zoning or land use conditions of approval are imposed.

Drainage

Soil disturbing activities during site excavation for foundation purposes could result in erosion and transport of sediment. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides for extensive review and conditioning of the project prior to issuance of building permits. Therefore, no further conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Earth/Grading

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material. The current proposal involves excavation of approximately 4,700 cubic yards of material. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used, therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

The construction plans will be reviewed by DPD. Any additional information showing conformance with applicable ordinances and codes will be required prior to issuance of building permits. Applicable codes and ordinances provide extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Construction: Traffic

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allow the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with construction activities.

Construction activities are expected to affect the surrounding area. Impacts to traffic and roads are expected from truck trips during excavation and construction activities. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allows the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with transportation during construction. The construction activities will require the removal of material from site and can be expected to generate truck trips to and from the site. In addition, delivery of concrete and other materials to the site will generate truck trips. As a result of these truck trips, an adverse impact to existing traffic will be introduced to the surrounding street system, which is unmitigated by existing codes and regulations.

It is expected that most of the demolished materials will be removed from the site prior to construction. During demolition a single-loaded truck will hold approximately 10 cubic yards of material. This would require approximately 470 single-loaded truckloads to remove the 4,700 cubic yards of material to remove the excavated materials and for the construction of the auto sales facility and auto service and warehouse facility.

Air Quality

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 unusual circumstances exist which warrant additional mitigating, per the SEPA Overview Policy.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated from the proposal: increased surface water runoff from greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased demand on public services and utilities; increased light and glare; loss of vegetation; and increased energy consumption. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope.

The long-term impacts will be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (stormwater runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface); Land Use Code (minimum lot area, vehicle access to parking); and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption). Earth-related impacts may result in the long-term and are mitigated by the Critical Areas Ordinance. An analysis of impacts associated with specific SEPA policies follows.

Air Quality

The subject site is located within 1,000 feet of a methane producing landfill. A report, Methane Mitigation Recommendations, dated July 19, 2008 was submitted with the project application. This report outlines three mitigation measures (sub-slab passive vent system, vent trench system and positive pressure heating, ventilation and air conditioning) for addressing the possible accumulation of sub-surface methane and recommends that one or more of these measures are installed in the existing and proposed structures. Additional construction precautions are also recommended on Page 4 of the report.

The number of vehicular trips associated with the project construction is expected to increase from the amount currently generated by the various sites and the projects' overall electrical energy and natural gas consumption is expected to increase. 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.

Earth

A wetland delineation report dated June 18, 2008, completed by Shannon and Wilson, Inc. was submitted with this application. The report analyzes the wetlands and riparian watercourse located on and near the subject site.

A site visit was conducted by the DPD Wetland Biologists who examined the site and found Wetlands E and F. These are both drainage ditches that were created to convey water that flows off of their adjacent roads. For Wetland F, this is SW Kenyon St. For wetland E, this is a continuation of the drainage from SW Kenyon that flows around the corner via a culvert from ditch F. Ditch F did have flowing water but there was no evidence either historically or during the site visit to indicate that this are had been a wetland or stream historically. Ditch E was bone dry and also had not historic or current evidence that identified wetlands or streams. These areas would not be considered jurisdictional wetlands or streams by the City.

Wetland B is located a considerable distance up the hill and has plenty of area for the required buffer to be left intact. Wetland D is as described in the report both in terms of size and classification. A portion of the eastern edge of the 60-foot existing buffer is a rock wall and asphalt parking lot. The proposed project impacts would include digging up this asphalt, installing some new pipes and re-installing the asphalt. The footprint of the existing asphalt would not change in this area. The City would not consider this a buffer impact to a buffer that is already degraded.

The City's database shows this site has no critical area resources within or nearby the property. A site visit verified that two small wetlands and a small riparian area exist west of the site. Two additional ditch areas that were intentionally created also exist north and northeast of the site. These are not jurisdictional wetlands or streams and do not flow to any downstream "Waters of the State". The project proposes to excavate a portion of the buffer of the wetland identified as "D" on the wetland report map. This buffer area currently functions as a parking and storage area for the Waste Management Facility. The project proposal is to dig up a portion of this asphalt in this buffer, install pipes and then re-install the asphalt. The impervious footprint within the buffer would not change.

The buffer in this area is currently cut off from providing any functions to wetland D. The proposed development should not cause any additional impacts or further alterations to the functions of the ECA. Therefore, an ECA exemption has been granted for this project provided no development or redevelopment is proposed within the buffer area. This exemption is only for trenching and installation of pipes for utilities and re-installation of asphalt in the same footprint.

Traffic and Transportation

A transportation impact analysis was submitted to DPD by Heffron Transportation, Inc dated October 2, 2008 evaluating the impacts of the proposed development to the surrounding street system.

The vehicular traffic generated by the project will be business-related and will likely peak during the weekday PM hours. As depicted in the traffic study, trip generation information was calculated using average PM peak hour trip generation rates. For both the existing and proposed development, trip generation rates were based on the specifics of the proposed operations for both projects, including staff, service customers, service shuttle, sales customers and deliveries.

The data shows that there will be approximately 43 additional AM peak hour trips and 55 additional PM peak hour trips. The level of service analysis shows that the proposed development (year 2013) would not degrade the level of service at study intersections to below a Level of Service C or better, which is an acceptable level in the City of Seattle. Therefore, this relatively low number of additional trips will not adversely impact the existing levels of service of surrounding intersections.

The estimated increase in trips during the PM peak hours is not considered a significant impact and no mitigation measures or conditioning pursuant to the SMC Chapter 25.05, the SEPA Ordinance is warranted.

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 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)

CONDITIONS

None.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: October 16, 2008
Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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