



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development

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

Application Numbers: 3009149
Applicant Name: Laurie Bull (NBBJ) for Swedish NW Hospital
Address of Proposal: 1570 N. 115th Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 3-story, 70,000 sq. ft. medical treatment facility (NW Hospital Campus). An additional 31 surface parking spaces to be provided. Project includes 26,000 cu. yds. of grading. Existing structures to be demolished.

SEPA – Environmental Determination – SMC Chapter 25.05

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

[X] DNS with conditions

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

BACKGROUND

Northwest Hospital's campus, where the proposal is located, is located on a large piece of property between Stone and Meridian Avenues North, and North 115th and 120th Streets. It is subject to a Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP). Circumstances affecting Northwest Hospital have changed substantially since approval of its MIMP in 1991, not least including its absorption by Swedish Hospital. The 1991 Northwest Hospital MIMP thus has limited relevance in today's world, with considerable dialogue between Swedish and the City having transpired as to appropriate parameters for regulating ongoing development. The principal issues at the time of approval of the original MIMP regarded limitations on the gross square footage to be developed, and it is largely with respect to square footage limits that the evaluation below rests; the other major consideration is the status of the Council Conditions of Approval pertaining from the original MIMP.

In short, the original NW Hospital MIMP approved a substantial amount of square footage to be built in 5 new buildings (West Campus Medical Office Building (built), West Campus Parking Garage (built), Twin Tower (not built), Specialty Center Phase I (approved but not built). The

MIMP further contemplated but did not approve 3 other buildings: Specialty Center Phase II, South Campus Medical Office Building (MOB), and South Gateway Parking Garage. The square footage represented by the approved-but-not-built buildings (Twin Tower [150,000 gsf] and Specialty Center Phase I [73,000 gsf]) each exceed the square footage proposed for the new Proton Beam Facility (70,000 square feet), and in total far exceed the proposed Proton Beam Facility gsf.

To formally address many of these issues, Northwest Hospital, in association with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, applied for an amendment to the 1991 MIMP to address the proposal to construct a proton beam treatment facility on the Northwest Hospital campus. The structure would be located largely on the site of an existing building (the Northwest Professional Center; 14,000 square feet, to be demolished) just west of the main campus entrance on North 115th Street. The proposed project is expected to have a gross floor area of 69,800 square feet, including 34,100 square feet of “proton/MEP area”. It would be over 260 feet long, and nearly 60 feet high, with minimal modulation facing the street. Landscaping (numerous betula fastigiata trees) just off the building edge is proposed as bulk mitigation. 86 existing parking spaces will be eliminated, but 31 spaces will be replaced in the new structure. The “proton/MEP area” appears to be mechanical space devoted to components of the treatment facility; as such, it is reasonably included as comparable square footage to the amounts approved in the 1991 MIMP. For this reason the DPD has already determined the proton beam facility to be an exempt change from the approved MIMP, pursuant to SMC 23.60.035A. The issues remaining then, regard compliance with the conditions contained in the approved MIMP and with identification and mitigation of project-specific impacts – to which the analysis turns below.

COMPLIANCE WITH APPROVED MIMP CONDITIONS

The approved MIMP contains 49 conditions. Most of these have to do with other specific projects, or with the general operations of the institution with respect to traffic, parking, and sewage and waste handling. The only condition of substantial relevance to this project is a general condition pertaining to all new construction, Condition #35, which states,

35. NWH shall continue to use brick as the primary architectural theme in its major projects. Prior to making final design decisions, NWH shall meet with the CAC or other designated representatives from the community, as well as with DCLU and the Department of Neighborhoods to gather feedback on the proposed design.

The required CAC meeting was held on 7 January 2009. Minutes of the meeting are available in the DPD project file. The DPD representative present at the meeting added that, in his judgment, the CAC had adequately considered and approved the design of the building. One particular CAC comment was that the substantial setback (45 feet) was a key mitigating element. The proposed addition of birch trees along the building face, behind the existing mature prunus serrulata trees nearer the sidewalk will in DPD’s judgment provide adequate mitigation for the unusual bulk of the structure, which is necessary to house the exceptional technology.

The MIMP imposes construction phase limitations on hours of construction due to noise impacts as follows: “All exterior or outside construction and heavy landscaping activities shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.” This condition is carried through for this project below.

ANALYSIS – STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)

This analysis relies on the NW Hospital Final Proposal Master Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement 1990-2000, the project-specific SEPA checklist, the NW Hospital Master Plan Annual Report for 2007, the traffic and parking study specific to the project, plans which have been revised several times, and the many supplementary materials to be found in the project file.

The Seattle SEPA Ordinance provides authority to require mitigation of adverse impacts resulting from a proposed project (SMC 25.05.655 and 25.06.660). Mitigation, when required, must be related to specific environmental impacts identified in an environmental document and may be imposed to the extent that a given impact is attributable to the proposal, and to the extent that the mitigation is reasonable and capable of being accomplished. 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, SEPA Specific Environmental Policies). In some instances, local, state or federal regulatory requirements will provide sufficient mitigation of an impact and additional mitigation imposed through SEPA will not be necessary.

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 pertinent part that “where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation.” Under specific circumstances, mitigation may be required even when the Overview Policy is applicable. SMC 25.05.665(D).

Short-Term Impacts

Demolition and construction activities could result in the following temporary or construction-related adverse impacts:

- construction dust and storm water runoff;
- erosion;
- increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel;
- increased noise levels;
- occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
- decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment;
- increased noise;
- increase in greenhouse gasses, and
- consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts: The Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code. 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 debris to be removed from the street right-of-way, 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.

Any conditions to be enforced during construction shall be posted at each street abutting the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. The conditions shall be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of construction.

Air

The building demolition could result in asbestos release, and so is regulated by the Puget Sound Clean Air Authority (PSCAA). To ensure that this regulatory relationship is established, project approval is conditioned upon the applicant's providing DPD documentation that PSCAA has been notified of the proposal; documentation shall be provided prior to issuance of this MUP.

Greenhouse gases

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 given present knowledge. The biggest impact would be from the installation of the pavement, which the applicant estimates as contributing 1,190,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Noise

Adequately addressed by compliance with the MIMP condition discussed above.

Construction traffic

The proposal entails approximately 26,000 cubic yards of grading (cut and fill), with representing about 2600 truck trips. Spread over a number of weeks, this is a relatively small number of daily trips. Traffic impacts of the trips are expected to be negligible. No road closures are expected during the 2-year construction period. Parking needs are anticipated to be met on site, where excess parking presently exists.

Long-Term Impacts

The long-term impacts are typical of structures of this kind and will in part be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these include: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (stormwater runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface); Land Use Code; and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption). Only those environmental impacts that may result in long-term impacts and may require mitigation measures beyond those provided in existing laws and regulations are discussed below.

Greenhouse gases

Longer term impacts: Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide of

approximately 228,273 tons of carbon dioxide over the lifespan of the project. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant given present knowledge.

Transportation, circulation and parking

The traffic and parking study prepared for the project has been reviewed and approved by the DPD's transportation expert. There will be no adverse impacts in these regards warranting mitigation pursuant to SEPA.

Environmental health

The facility will generate proton beams, all of which related equipment will be shielded. Any materials that are irradiated would be held in the facility prior to proper disposal according to State regulations. No additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA authority.

Height bulk and scale

Condition #35 of the Final MIMP adequately addresses the likely adverse bulk impacts of the project.

Public safety

The proposed design has adopted the criteria of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED.) The key components of CPTED and the design response are as follows:

Natural Surveillance:

1) Lighting

The Proton Facility at Northwest Hospital will have landscape lighting consistent with the campus and the neighborhood. Lighting at the pedestrian pathway along 115th will match the level of illumination for the rest of the sidewalk along this street so as not to attract after-hours activity. Backlit translucent panels along the street-facing façade provide an additional indication of occupied space that will help to discourage crime.

2) Landscaping

Shallow planters with plantings no higher than 3'-0" and widely spaced, well pruned trees provide visual transparency along 115th. The landscape along 115th is sloped up toward the building, thereby eliminating any potential areas of refuge in which a trespasser may go unnoticed.

3) Windows

The use of both transparent and translucent glazing around the building helps to obscure the level of activity behind the facade. While the technical requirements for the program forbid occupied space on the south side of the building, translucent panels are used to help hide this reality, providing the suggestion of activity within. These same bands of translucent glazing are also mirrored on the north façade which provides a much more transparent connection between highly occupied spaces and the exterior. By using similar glazing materials, and repetitive design elements, the facility appears to have direct connection to the exterior on all four sides.

Natural Access Control:

1) "[Campus] with a defined entry point."

"Business with one legitimate entrance"

The facility is located adjacent to the main entry point for the campus and does not provide any means of secondary vehicular access onto the grounds. Both the primary

entry point (lobby), and the secondary (loading dock), face the center of campus ensuring that all vehicles have passed through the main campus entrance before accessing the property. There are no possible entry points along the street-facing edge of the building.

Territoriality/Defensible Space:

- 1) *“Clear transitions between private, semi-private and public areas.”*

Since all entry points into the facility face the center of campus, the only true public space is that which is located along 115th. By providing a parallel walkway along the street edge, the facility invites public use of the landscape without providing direct access to the building. The pathway is made clearly visible through an upward sloping ground plane that is bound on the street edge by the existing widely spaced trees, and bound on the building edge by shallow planters.

In addition to providing a secure public edge that meets the CPTED criteria of eliminating hiding places by using low-growing hedges, and high tree canopies, the planters add an identity to the street-edge that shows “ownership” by the community. The CPTED guidelines specifically cite the use of garden boxes or planters as a way of discouraging criminal activity by establishing a sense of community ownership.

- 2) *“Institutional architecture that respects the neighborhood.”*

The building uses materiality that is consistent with the hospital campus, preserves trees currently on the site, and consciously breaks down the mass of the building into smaller components that reflect the fabric of the surrounding residential community.

- 3) *“Broken Window” Theory*

The Seattle Cancer Care Alliance will maintain the grounds and landscaping in a manner consistent with the existing hospital campus. The possibility of graffiti or unkempt grounds becoming a lure for criminal activity is inconsistent with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance’s mission of providing a safe and welcoming facility for the treatment of cancer patients and their families.

By employing the CPTED standards for public safety, which appear integral to the everyday operations of the institution, the proposed design is likely to minimize risks to public safety. No further conditioning pursuant to SEPA authority is warranted.

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).

MAJOR INSTITUTION MASTER PLAN CONDITIONS:

During construction:

1. The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall ensure that all exterior or outside construction and heavy landscaping activities shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Prior to issuance of a temporary or final certificate of occupancy, and for the life of the project:

2. The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall construct and maintain the building envelope, and install and maintain landscaping (particularly the betula fastigiata and prunus serrulata trees on the south side of the building) per plan.

SEPA CONDITIONS

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

Prior to Issuance of Master Use Permit and for the Life of the Project

3. The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall provide documentation to the DPD Planner that Puget Sound Clear Air Authority has received all information necessary to assess and mitigate likely air impacts.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: April 20, 2009
Paul Janos, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

PJ:lc