



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: 3009221
Applicant Name: Rob Kiker for the Woodland Park Zoo Society
Address of Proposal: 5500 Phinney Ave N

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow three new one-story structures; a 2,140 sq. ft. ticket office and restrooms; a 998 sq. ft. visitor assistance structure and a 5,620 sq. ft. retail and storage building with public restrooms (Woodland Park Zoo). Project includes 48,640 sq. ft. of landscaping and site improvements.

The following approval is required:

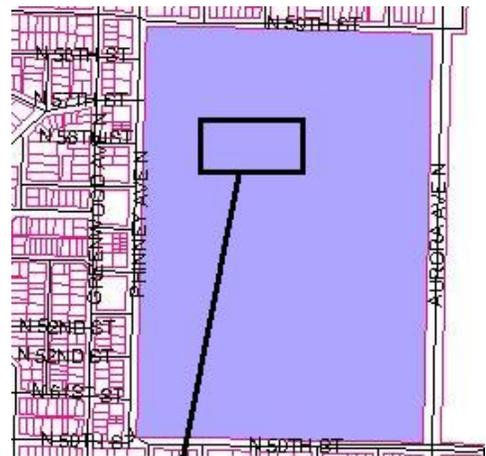
SEPA - Environmental Determination – (Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.)

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site and Vicinity Description

The subject property is located immediately west of Aurora Avenue North between North 59th Street and North 50th Street and Phinney Avenue North on the west. The site comprises 3,960,480 square feet (90.9 acres) of land zoned Single-family 5000 (SF 5000). Properties adjacent to the north are also zoned SF 5000. Zoning east of Aurora Avenue North is also zoned SF 5000 and contains the balance of Woodland Park. Properties west of Phinney Avenue North are predominantly zoned Lowrise



Approximate Project Location

3 (L3) and Neighborhood Commercial 2 (NC2) with a 40' height limit (limited to the northwest corner at Phinney Avenue North and North 59th Street. Properties along Greenwood Avenue North and further west are zoned SF5000. Zoning south of North 50th Street is a mixture of L1, L2, L3 and Commercial 1 (C1) with a 40' height limit.

The site is a mapped with several Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs). The property contains steep slopes, Eagle Habitat Buffer and contains mapped wetlands. None of the mapped ECAs are within the proposed project's area (with the exception of some wetlands that have been determined to be non-jurisdictional wetlands). The proposal has received a Non-Proximity exemption from DPD. The ECA regulations will not apply to this proposal. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife has provided a letter dated March 26, 2008, that states: "The chestnut and elm trees near the West Entry Project are neither within an eagle management zone nor are they considered eagle habitat under the Bald Eagle Protection Rules. In summary the trees in question may be removed and the construction activity associated with the West Entry Project can proceed without further WDFW consultation and without conducting mitigation procedures."

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to consolidate the west and north entries into a modernized entry system that reflects the existing southern entry. It is anticipated that the project will provide for shorter ticketing wait times, better customer/zoo society membership services (contained within a new 2,140 sq. ft. ticketing services structure and public restrooms), an overall enhanced customer experience prior to and as they are entering the zoo (the new penguin exhibit is located just as the visitors enter through the ticketing turnstiles) and responds to increasing customer needs (public restrooms that are accessible from the entry plaza and rental services for strollers, wheelchairs, etc). The new visitor assistance structure is approximately 1,000 sq. ft.

The proposal also includes a new zoo store with associated storage and new public restrooms (5,620 sq. ft.) accessible inside the zoo. The reorganization and consolidation of the north and west entries will provide a larger gathering area (the new plaza) that will require new pathways from the outer lying north and west parking lots. The new entry plaza area comprises approximately 14,000 square feet of new paving. New pathways to access the entry plaza from the northern and western parking lots will require approximately 7,000 sq. ft. of paved pathways. The plans show that the new pathway and supplemental landscaping from the northern parking area into the plaza area will reduce the existing employee parking area by 14 parking spaces. A condition of approval is required to demonstrate that the zoo will be maintaining the required minimum for employee parking. The new west plaza includes approximately 21,000 sq. ft. of new paving from the zoo store area to just south of the new penguin exhibit where the new visitor assistance structure will be located. Total new paved areas will increase approximately 42,000 sq. ft. in addition to the new structures.

In addition to the new pavement and structures, 14 existing trees will be removed to accommodate the new plaza area. The identified species are Horse Chestnut (4), Sugar Maple (4), Sawara Cypress (3), Red Alder (1), Ornamental Cherry (1) and Norway Spruce (1). One of the Cyprus trees is considered dead but the remaining trees are considered to be healthy. The trees slated for removal are not deemed to be native trees. The trunk sizes range from 4" to 40" measured at 4' above the ground. The lost tree canopy estimated by the zoo is 4,675 sq. ft. The zoo also has provided information that the proposed tree canopy will immediately replace 2,600 sq. ft. of tree

canopy and that within 3 to 5 years the lost tree canopy will be replaced what was lost. The zoo also estimates that at maturity, the replaced tree canopy will reach 20,000 sq. ft. at maturity (approximately 15 to 20 years).

The Department's Director's Rule (DR) 6-2001 provides the procedures DPD uses to establish whether these trees slated for removal do or do not qualify as exceptional trees. The Department requested Bill Ames, SDOT Arborist (International Society of Arborists Certified Arborist #313A) to meet with the Zoo's Horticulturist on-site to evaluate the trees proposed for removal. Following DR6-2001 for Non-Native trees, they determined that the trees do not meet the required 75% rating under the American Forestry Association (AFA) rating system for the largest trees in the state as noted in "*Champion Trees of Washington*" by Robert Van Pelt. AFA ratings are based on a tree's circumference (or diameter), height and crown spread.

As a policy, the Woodland Park Zoological Society requires that 3 trees will be replanted for every tree removed at the zoo. Fourteen existing trees will be retained that are located around and within the proposed project area. Sixteen additional trees located at the north end of the proposed pathway from the northern parking lot which will lead to the new plaza will also be retained. These trees will provide visitors with an experience similar to walking through a forest as they make their way onto the path to the new plaza. The zoo has reported that since the mid-1980s over 4,700 trees have been planted throughout the zoo.

In addition to these existing trees to be retained, the proposed landscaping plan shows that 63 additional trees will be planted (a ratio of 4.5:1 trees planted vs. removed). These trees will be able to provide a multi-aged canopy structure within the project area. An additional benefit is that the proposed tree plantings and additional supplemental landscaping are proposed in areas that are currently devoid of trees and plantings (e.g. pony ring). This will provide additional rainwater absorption and transpiration to help offset the additional paved areas and rooftops.

The storm drainage system is proposed to collect the stormwater generated from the new paving and rooftops via a trench centrally located within the entry and plaza areas. This collection trench will then transfer the stormwater to a 24,000 gallon (approximate size) retention system located between the proposed zoo store and the penguin exhibit. This system is designed to infiltrate the collected stormwater into a sand lens that is located beneath the Vashon Till layer that would normally prevent stormwater filtration into the underlying sands. The system is designed to meet the city's stormwater code that requires designing to meet the 25-year storm event. When storm events are more intense (e.g. 50-year or 100-year storm events) the system is designed to bypass the retention system and will flow directly into existing stormwater detention tanks (2 tanks totaling approximately 50,750 gallons). These tanks are adequately sized to handle the overflow and may detain the water for treatment prior to or provide direct overflow release (depending on storm intensity) into the city's stormwater system within Aurora Avenue North.

The proposed uses within the new structures have been determined to be consistent with the Seattle Land Use Code requirements for parks located within single-family zones (SMC 23.44.006.C). The ticketing services, membership services, visitor assistance services and retail store have been addressed in a separate land use code interpretation request submitted by the zoo society. The uses and buildings have been determined to be customary activities related to zoo operations.

Public Comments

Public notice of the project application was published on September 4, 2008. The required public comment period ended on September 17, 2008. DPD received a request to extend the public comment period to October 1, 2008. DPD received 57 comment letters regarding this proposal. The comments provided a range of issues that included relevant concerns over the amount of open space being lost, trees that were being cut down, the amount new impervious surfaces being added, the size and location of the new structures, the structure's proposed use, the need for the proposed improvements and other issues not germane to the proposal. Response to the relevant issues will be addressed within the body of this report and decision.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts of the proposed project was made in the environmental checklist dated August 5, 2008.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) 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. Thus, the mitigation that may be required pursuant to SEPA authority is limited. A discussion of likely adverse impacts and how they may be appropriately mitigated follows below.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected; decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from 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; increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

City codes and/or ordinances apply to the proposal and will provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: 1) Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way during construction, 2) Noise Control Ordinance; and 3) Stormwater, Drainage and Grading Code (temporary soil erosion). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation and further mitigation by imposing specific conditions is not necessary for these impacts.

Traffic

A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was completed by The Transpo Group (Transpo) as part of the Final Revised Environmental Impact Statement (FREIS) for the Long-Range Development Plan dated December 2003. This report was part responding to the neighborhood's concerns in regard to the Zoo's proposed overall physical development which included the current proposal. The actual development of the West Entry Project is not anticipated to generate new traffic or create new demand that would increase zoo-related traffic.

The bulk of traffic-related impacts from this project will be short-term and confined to construction traffic impacts. The FREIS did address construction traffic impacts. Though this discussion was in anticipation to the construction of parking garages, the philosophy would be relevant here in regard to the proposed West Entry project. The FREIS (page 87) addressed construction worker parking and construction traffic management plans.

The FREIS identified a lower gravel parking lot in the Lower Woodland Park area. This area is deemed suitable to use for construction worker parking to keep them out of the surrounding neighborhoods if the employee parking area located just north of the proposed West Entry is not available for construction-related parking. This will be reflected as a condition of approval to be evaluated prior to issuance of construction permits and will be included as a part of the overall Construction Traffic Management Plan discussed below.

There will be transportation of excavated materials off-site as a result of this proposal. Additional construction traffic will also be added as a result of the significant paving within the entry plaza and delivery of construction materials to construct the proposed structures. This traffic can pose a significant impact to the surrounding neighborhood and Phinney Avenue North traffic. A Construction Traffic Management Plan was contemplated within the FREIS as part of the proposed parking garage proposal. It also discussed the potential need for this plan for other projects contemplated by the zoo. It is appropriate for the zoo to develop this plan to avoid or reduce these identified environmental impacts.

This plan shall be devised and implemented to minimize traffic-related conflicts to the surrounding northern residential neighborhood and Phinney Avenue North. This plan will limit hours of excavated materials hauling and delivery of construction materials to weekday non-peak hours, identify specific truck hauling routes, identify additional strategies if visitor, employee and volunteer parking is displaced due to construction staging areas, location of construction employee parking and other measures as needed. This plan shall be provided to DPD and SDOT for review and SDOT approval prior to issuance of construction permits.

Air Quality

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with development come from multiple sources; the extraction, processing, transportation, construction and disposal of materials and landscape disturbance (Embodied Emissions); energy demands created by the development after it is completed (Energy Emissions); and transportation demands created by the development after it is completed (Transportation Emissions). Short term impacts generated from the embodied emissions results in increases in carbon dioxide and other green house gases thereby impacting air quality and contributing 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 specific project. The other types of emissions are considered under the use-related impacts discussed later in this document. No SEPA conditioning is necessary to mitigate air quality impacts pursuant to SEPA policy SMC 25.05.675A.

Noise

Due to the potentially significant number of truck trips associated with the construction activities, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhood from construction truck traffic and on-site construction activities. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), additional mitigation is warranted.

In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of associated construction truck trips on nearby properties, activities shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:30 A.M and 5:00 P.M. On-site construction activity will be permitted to start at 7:00 A.M. and must conclude by 6:00 P.M. on non-holiday weekdays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby neighborhood commercial and residential establishments, only low noise impact work shall be permitted on holiday weekdays and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased height, bulk and scale on the site; increased demand for public services and utilities; increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and increased light and glare.

Long-term impacts such as this are typical of this type of project and will be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these are the: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Codes; and the Land Use Code (aesthetic impacts).

Other impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes or conditions are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

Air

Emissions from the generation of greenhouse gases due to the increased energy demands and existing transportation may be adverse but are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of emissions from this specific project. The other impacts such as but not limited to, increased ambient noise, and increased demand on public services and utilities are mitigated by codes and are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

Aesthetic Impacts

The project's design was reviewed by the City Design Commission. The Commission unanimously approved the project design on August 7, 2008. The Commission's comments and concerns as enumerated within the meeting minutes have been responded to by the applicant. There was a concern about a lack of green within the plaza and recommended trees at gathering areas and the commission found value in a centrally located tree much like the existing tree located at the south entry. The applicant has responded to the recommendation by providing two trees near the plaza's center. These trees will provide a shady canopy during the summer months which will help to cool the pavement and to help capture rain water. The trees will also help to further define the plaza as the trail leading from the north widens from 10' to around 30'. The architect also feels that other Commission concerns have been adequately addressed with adjustments (e.g. fully developed plant list, the pergola's relationship to the ticketing structure and the zoo store canopy) to the proposal prior to submitting this application. No further mitigation is required.

DECISION - SEPA

The responsible official on behalf of the lead agency made this decision after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the 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.

- 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).

CONDITIONS - SEPA

Prior to the Issuance of Construction Permit

1. Prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for DPD and SDOT review and SDOT approval. The approved CTMP must be provided to the zoning reviewer prior to the construction plan's zoning approval. Components of the plan must include at a minimum: construction traffic ingress/egress points, employee parking location and alternative methods and incentives for arriving/leaving work (transit, car or van pool, etc), truck queuing within North 59th Street right-of-way (if necessary), construction materials delivery ingress/egress, pedestrian circulation, and time limitations during construction. Other CTMP components may be added as relevant and/or required by SDOT.
2. Provide a parking calculation for the employee parking area that demonstrates that the code minimum parking is still provided within the employee parking area.

During Construction

The following 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 the construction.

3. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M. Construction truck traffic may only access or leave the site between 7:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. to avoid conflicts with neighborhood residential traffic. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby

