



City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Numbers: 3009801
Applicant Name: Grant Faust Northwest Hospital
Address of Proposal: 1550 N. 115th Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 16,603 sq. ft. expansion to the surgery wing of NW Hospital. Project includes 4,515 cu. yds. of grading. Accessory administration building and adjacent walkway to be demolished. No change in parking.

SEPA – Environmental Determination – SMC Chapter 25.05

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 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) approved in 1991. 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]) total 223,000 gsf. Of this total, approximately 70,000 gsf have recently been committed to the new Proton Beam Facility (DPD MUP Application No. 3009149). The remainder gsf total 153,000 gsf.

Northwest Hospital requested that the present project be treated as an “exempt amendment” to its adopted MIMP. The fact deemed by the DPD to be determinative to that request is that additions constituting less than a 20% increase above the MIMP-approved expansion in size of an existing building are exempt. The NW Hospital MIMP includes an approved structure at 13,305 gsf at this location that has not yet been built. Thus, in the case of the surgery wing, any addition 15,966 gsf or less in size would be an exempt amendment to the MIMP. The proposed surgery wing addition, at 15,219 gsf as presently shown on the plans cover sheet is beneath that size. Hence, the proposal does not require a more formal MIMP amendment.

The Hospital is proposed an expansion on the back side of the existing surgical suite. This will include about 15,000 gsf of new space and the renovation of about 15,000 existing square feet of adjacent space. This will include 5 new operating rooms, entry, waiting and storage. The area where the new space will be built is presently a mechanical back space with a combination of some outdoor equipment storage, a temporary trailer, and the remnants of a covered hallway that provided access between buildings in the past. The proposed addition would in-fill this space and all of the temporary uses would be removed. The building height would be about 18 feet above existing grade, much lower than the height limit under the MIMP or even the underlying zoning. It will not be visible from any peripheral point at grade, though it might be visible from the upper levels of townhouses being constructed on the site periphery.

In short, the proposal has been adequately contemplated by the adopted MIMP. The land use permitting issues for the present application regard 1. assessment of compliance with the conditions contained in the approved MIMP and 2. identification and mitigation of project-specific impacts pursuant to SEPA. Analysis of these two types of issues follows below.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The one submitted comment letter, by the Aurora Avenue Merchants Association, was strongly supportive of the project.

COMPLIANCE WITH APPROVED MIMP CONDITIONS

Because the proposal must be limited to 15,996 square feet in order to comply with the adopted MIMP, a condition to that effect has been added below.

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 conditions of substantial relevance to this project are general conditions 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 28 April 2009. Minutes of the meeting are available in the DPD project file, and clearly show the CAC to have been made cognizant of Condition #35 and to have unanimously deemed the project consistent with it (with 3 of 12 CAC members absent; the alternate voted in place of one of the absent members).

The MIMP also 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, minutes of the CAC meetings regarding the project, and plans for the project.

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.

Noise

As discussed above, a condition limited hours of construction has been imposed under the final approved MIMP, adding an additional layer of mitigation.

Construction Traffic

The proposal is relatively small and there is little chance that it would engender such substantial traffic or parking demand as to adversely impact the surrounding area.

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 39,000 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 SEPA checklist credibly claims that the completed project would not increase vehicular traffic. Parking needs are anticipated to be met on site, where excess parking presently exists. There are no identifiable substantial adverse impacts warranting mitigation.

Height Bulk and Scale

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

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:

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall add the following note to the cover sheet:

“For the life of the project, the total size of additions to the Surgery Building (the building to which the subject construction is being added) shall be limited to 15,966 square feet.”

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.

