



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE BY  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3011963  
**Applicant Name:** Einar Novion  
**Address of Proposal:** 905 West Emerson St.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a two-unit townhouse structure in an environmentally critical area. Surface parking for two vehicles to be provided. Environmental review includes future unit lot subdivision.

The following approval is required:

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

**SEPA DETERMINATION:**  DNS  DNS with conditions  
 DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Zoning: Residential, Multifamily, Lowrise 1 (L-1).

Uses on Site: Vacant.

**Site Characteristics:**

The subject property is a 3,451 square foot triangular lot that fronts on West Emerson Street to the northeast. There is a 16-foot wide alley along the western property line. West Ruffner Street is to the north of the property. The property is zoned Lowrise One, Multifamily Residential (L-1). The site slopes up from West Emerson Street, with an elevation change of approximately 12 feet. The site is located within an Environmentally Critical Area, due to the presence of landslide-prone soils.

Proposal Description:

The applicant proposes to construct a two-unit townhouse. Pedestrian and vehicular access will be via the alley and West Emerson Street. Parking for two vehicles will be provided on the surface off of the alley. The proposal includes a future unit lot subdivision of the property.

Public Comment:

The comment period for this proposal ended on February 9, 2011. No public comments were received.

**ANALYSIS – SEPA**

The proposal site is located in a mapped environmentally critical area due to the potential for landslide, thus the application is not exempt from SEPA review. However, SMC 25.05.908 provides that the scope of environmental review of projects within critical areas shall be limited to: 1) documenting whether the proposal is consistent with the City's Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) regulations in SMC 25.09; and 2) evaluating potentially significant impacts on the critical area resources not adequately addressed in the ECA regulations. This review includes identifying additional mitigation measures needed to protect the ECA in order to achieve consistency with SEPA and other applicable environmental laws.

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant and dated January 20, 2011 and subsequently annotated by the Land Use Planner. A geotechnical report dated November 19, 2010 was submitted. The information in the checklist, the geotechnical report, 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 Department of Planning and Development has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file; and any comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered. As indicated in this analysis, this action will result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

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, and 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 and environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation*" subject to some limitations. Short-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposal. No adverse long-term impacts on the environmentally critical area are anticipated.

### Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: 1) temporary soil erosion; and 2) increased vibration from construction operations and equipment. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope (SMC 25.05.794).

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; 2) Building Code (construction measures in general); 3) Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, and 4) 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.

### Air Quality

Construction is expected to temporarily add particulates to the air and will result in a slight increase in auto-generated air contaminants from construction activities, equipment and worker vehicles; however, this increase is not anticipated to be significant. Federal auto emission controls are the primary means of mitigating air quality impacts from motor vehicles as stated in the Air Quality Policy (Section 25.05.675 SMC).

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment, 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.

### Earth

The ECA Ordinance and Directors Rule (DR) 33-2006 require submission of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction in areas with steep slopes, liquefaction zones, and/or a history of unstable soil conditions. Pursuant to this requirement the applicant submitted a geotechnical report (PanGEO Inc., dated November 19, 2010).

The construction plans, including shoring of excavations as needed and erosion control techniques will be reviewed by DPD. Additional information required showing conformance with the Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance will be required prior to issuance of building permits. The applicant has provided a Construction Stormwater Control Plan and a Post Construction Soil Management Plan.

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 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.

Long-term Impacts

Potential long-term impacts that may occur as a result of this project include: 1) increased surface water runoff from greater site coverage by impervious surfaces, and 2) increased demand on public services and utilities. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope.

The long-term impacts are typical of multifamily development and will be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (storm water runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface); and the Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas.

**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 43.21.030(2) (c).

**CONDITIONS - SEPA**

None required.

Signature: (signature on file)  
Molly Hurley, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

Date: June 30, 2011