



City of Seattle

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:** 3012071  
**Applicant Name:** Eileen McHugh for the Northwest School  
**Address of Proposal:** 401 E Pike St

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to expand an existing institution (The Northwest School, 1415 Summit Avenue) and allow a 28,860 sq. ft. two story (45 foot tall) accessory structure for gymnasium, cafeteria and classrooms. Parking for 10 vehicles will be located at 417 East Union Street.

The following approvals are required:

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** - Chapter 25.05 SMC.

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

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Site Description

This 9,640.72 sq. ft. site is zoned NC3P-65' and is bounded by Bellevue Avenue on the west, Crawford Place on the east, and East Pike Street on the north. The site is occupied by a paved commercial parking lot. It is located in the Pike Pine Urban Center Village, the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay, a frequent transit service corridor, and is within 250 feet of the Summit School/Northwest School Historic Landmark at 1500 Bellevue Avenue East. The site has 100 feet of street frontage along Bellevue Avenue and Crawford Place, and 107.24 feet of street frontage along East Pike Street.

The Northwest School has been operating at its current site since the early 1980s in an historic school building constructed in 1905. The main school is located on Summit Avenue and is bounded to the west by Crawford Place, the south by East Union Street, and to the north by commercial uses on East Pike Street. The main school consists of one large building that includes classroom, library, and common space. It currently serves 474 students ranging from sixth to twelfth grade. Approximately 130 are middle school students in grades six through eight, and 340 are high school students in grades nine through twelve. The school employs approximately 130 full-time and part-time staff, about 89 at the main school building, 18 at the administration building, 17 at the school's dormitory, and 6 at the school's kitchen.

In addition to the main building, the school has an administration building located approximately two blocks to the west (1520 Bellevue Avenue), a dormitory that houses up to 48 high school students about one block to the west (1411 Bellevue Avenue), a cafeteria located two blocks to the south (111 Summit Avenue), and a fenced asphalt playground located to the west of the main school across Crawford Place (1412 Bellevue Avenue). There are a total of 10 parking spaces located on-site: 6 spaces in a small lot south of the school and 4 spaces adjacent to the school east of Crawford Place. They are predominantly used for parking 8 buses that belong to the school (one of which is equipped with a wheelchair lift) and for handicapped-accessible parking. Four of the buses are typically parked in the school parking lot and the other four are parked on the east side of Crawford Place during school hours and parking off-site outside of school hours.

### Area Development

Development in the vicinity consists primarily of a mixture of commercial and multifamily uses. The surrounding mix of new development, existing uses and conversions is highly eclectic, ranging from converted single-story garages to contemporary structures built to the current sixty-five foot high building envelope. The site is located within the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District where the historic auto row was located and a large inventory of commercial and residential brick buildings with a unique architecture is being preserved.

### Proposal Description

The applicants propose to expand an existing institution (The Northwest School at 1415 Summit Avenue) and allow a 28,860 sq. ft. two story (45 foot tall) accessory structure for a gymnasium, cafeteria and classrooms. Parking for ten vehicles will be located at 417 East Union Street. The Northwest School proposes to construct a new building adjacent to the main school site that would provide a new gymnasium, dining hall, and theater classroom for the school. The space that is currently used as the school theater classroom would be converted to a lecture classroom, and the school would no longer lease the existing cafeteria space. Project construction is proposed to begin in autumn 2012 and be completed by January 2014. No increase in student, faculty or staff would occur with the proposed project, and no simultaneous event will be held in the gymnasium and theater classroom. The project would remove an existing public parking lot located at the southwest corner of East Pike Street/Crawford Place. The lot has 26 spaces, of which 6 spaces are rented to Zipcar and the remaining are available for paid public parking. Field observation indicates that on a typical weekday this lot can be fully occupied.

## Public Comment

No comment letters were received during the comment period which ended January 25, 2012.

## ANALYSIS-SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant (dated December 20, 2011) 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.

## Short-Term Impacts

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and a small increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction workers’ vehicles. Existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: The Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code, would mitigate several construction-related impacts. Following is an analysis of the air, water quality, streets, parking, and construction-related noise impacts as well as mitigation.

The Street Use Ordinance includes regulations that mitigate dust, mud, and circulation. Temporary closure of sidewalks and/or traffic lane(s) would be adequately controlled with a street use permit through the Engineering Department, and no further SEPA conditioning would be needed.

The proposal site is located adjacent to a residential area where construction of this scale would impact the noise levels. The SEPA Noise Policy (Section 25.05.675B SMC) lists mitigation measures for construction noise impacts. It is the department’s conclusion that limiting hours of construction beyond the requirements of the Noise Ordinance is necessary to mitigate impacts that would result from the proposal on surrounding properties, because existing City ordinances do not adequately mitigate such impacts. This is due to the density of residential units in the area and the proximity of these structures to the proposal site. The proposal is, therefore, conditioned to limit construction activity to non-holiday weekday hours between 7:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

After the structure is enclosed, interior construction may be done in compliance with the noise ordinance. The department may modify this condition to allow work of an emergency nature or which cannot otherwise be accomplished during these hours by prior written approval of the Land Use Planner.

Construction is expected to temporarily add particulates to the air and will result in a slight increase in auto-generated air contaminants from construction 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). No unusual circumstances exist which warrant additional mitigation, per the SEPA Overview Policy.

#### Greenhouse gas emissions/construction

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 further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

#### 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 are typical of a mixed-use structure and will in part 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 (height; setbacks; parking); and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption). Additional land use impacts which may result in the long-term are discussed below.

#### Greenhouse gas emissions/operations

Operation activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to 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 further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

#### Drainage

Rain water on roofs and on the driveways will be the major source of water runoff on the site. The rain water on the roofs will be collected in gutters and connected to the storm drainage system. No drainage will be directed to the adjoining streets. Verification of an appropriate stormwater control system and its proposed location of connection to the public system will be required to be shown on the construction plans. No additional mitigation measures will be required pursuant to SEPA.

### Height, Bulk, and Scale

Section 25.05.675H1 and 2 of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance provides the following: “Historic buildings, special historic districts, and sites of archaeological significance are found within Seattle. The preservation of these buildings, districts and sites is important to the retention of a living sense and appreciation of the past. Historic sites, structures, districts and archaeological sites may be directly or indirectly threatened by development or redevelopment project. Special districts have been established to protect certain areas which are unique in their historical and cultural significance, including for example Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square and the International District. These areas are subject to development controls and project review by special district review boards. It is the City’s policy to maintain and preserve significant historic sites and structures and to provide the opportunity for analysis of archaeological sites. For projects involving structures or sites which have been designated as historic landmarks, compliance within the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance shall constitute compliance with the policy set forth in subsection H2a above.” Any sensitive height, bulk or scale impact issues will be addressed by the development standards of the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District. Therefore, no additional height, bulk, or scale SEPA mitigation is warranted pursuant to the SEPA height, bulk and scale policy.

### Historic Preservation

In accordance with SMC 25.05.675H2d, the proposed project has been reviewed by the City of Seattle Landmarks Board Coordinator in the Historic Preservation Program of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. This project is located across Pike Street from the First Covenant Church, a Seattle landmark, and is also located across Crawford Place from the Summit School/Northwest School, also a Seattle landmark. The review of the impact of this project is based upon the plans and elevation drawings that the applicant submitted, as well as the materials board information provided by the applicant. Based on the review of this information by the Landmarks Board Coordinator, additional mitigation in the design of the project will not be required.

### Traffic and Transportation

A Transportation Impact Assessment was submitted with the application. The report said that addition of the on-site gymnasium would eliminate 4 to 6 bus trips per school day that carry students to and from off-site PE classes, sports practices, and home athletic events. Addition of the on-site gymnasium could result in a slight shift in neighborhood travel and parking patterns for 8 to 16 vehicles generated by home basketball and volleyball games, away from the current location at Seneca Street/Harvard Avenue and toward the school site, 20 times per year. Addition of the dining hall would eliminate student, faculty, and staff pedestrian trips between the main school site and the existing cafeteria located two blocks to the south. Replacement of the existing theater classroom with a new theater classroom is not expected to affect trip

generation, travel patterns, or parking demand. The Northwest School will not hold simultaneous events at the theater classroom and gymnasium. Potential localized changes in vehicle or pedestrian volumes that could result from the project would be slight and are not expected to increase collision rates or adversely affect safety conditions in the vicinity of the school. Traffic is moderate and nearby intersections operate at acceptable levels. The amount of traffic expected to be generated by the proposed project is within the capacity of the streets in the immediate area. Therefore, no SEPA mitigation of traffic impacts is warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675R.

### Parking

The Transportation Impact Assessment indicated that to accommodate additional parking required by the Seattle Land Use Code, The Northwest School will covenant 10 parking spaces at an existing lot located one block south of the main school site. The project would remove one 26 space public parking lot, at which 6 spaces are rented to Zipcar and the remaining would be available for paid public parking. It is expected that people who utilize this lot would use other public parking that is available in the area. Lots in the area include the First Covenant Church lot at 420 East Pike Street, the lot at the southwest corner of Summit Avenue and East Union Street, the Copperfield Apartment garage at 1321 Minor Avenue, and eight Diamond Parking lots located within 5 blocks of the school (at 1208 Pine Street, 1605 Bellevue Avenue, 1011 Pike Street, 1101 Pike Street, 501 East Pike Street, 714 East Pike Street, 1421 Harvard Avenue, and 1515 Harvard Avenue). Metered parking is also available along most streets in the area.

The parking policy in Section 25.05.675M of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance states that parking impact mitigation may be required only where on-street parking is at capacity as defined by the Seattle Transportation Department or where the development itself would cause on-street parking to reach capacity. Parking utilization in the vicinity appears to be below capacity and on-street parking can be found during the daytime or evening hours. Car utilization is anticipated to be lower than average due to the centralized location of the building, accessibility to transit, and proximity to downtown. Therefore, no mitigation of parking impacts is necessary pursuant to SEPA.

### SUMMARY

In conclusion, several adverse effects on the environment are anticipated resulting from the proposal which are non-significant. The condition imposed below is intended to mitigate specific impacts identified in the foregoing analysis, or to control impacts not regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

## **DECISION - SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of DPD as the lead agency of the 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 with respect to transportation, circulation, and parking. An EIS limited in scope to this specific area of the environment was therefore required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

## **SEPA CONDITIONS**

### During Construction

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

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at 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. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions shall be posted at each street. The conditions will 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 weatherproofing material and shall remain in place for the duration of construction.

1. In order to further mitigate the noise impacts during construction, the owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall limit the hours of construction to non-holiday weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. This condition may be modified by the Department to permit work of an emergency nature of to allow low noise exterior work after approval from the Land Use Planner. Interior work may proceed at any time in compliance with the Noise Ordinance.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: June 25, 2012  
Malli Anderson, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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