



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: 3013333
Applicant Name: Sandy Gurkewitz of Seattle Department of Transportation
Address of Proposal: 530 Dexter Avenue North

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to demolish a 25,960 sq. ft. structure. Project includes 3,011 cu. yds. of grading.*

*Note – The project description has been revised from the following original notice of application: Land Use Application to demolish a 25,960 sq. ft. structure. Project includes 5,065 cu. yds. of grading

The following approval is required:

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

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

[] DNS with conditions

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site and Vicinity Description

This approximately 30,166 square foot (sq. ft.) site (Parcel “A” of Lot Boundary Adjustment (LBA) #3011433) is bounded by Dexter Avenue North to the west, Mercer Street to the north, 8th Avenue North to the east and commercially-zoned property to the south. This site is zoned Seattle Mixed (SM-65) located within the South Lake Union Urban Center.

Existing development on the site consists of a three-story with basement commercial building (“US Bank”), attached covered drive-through banking/ATM kiosk and accessory surface parking. Most of the existing building’s footprint and five surface parking spaces are situated on the Mercer Street right-of-way due to an angled portion of the block being conveyed to the City of Seattle in association with the Mercer Street Alignment Project managed by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).

Vehicular access to the surface parking area is via curb cuts along Dexter Avenue North, Mercer Street and 8th Avenue North. All three streets are improved with curbs, sidewalks and gutters. Dexter Avenue North and Mercer Street are classified as arterials and Class II Pedestrian Streets, pursuant to SMC Chapter 23.53 and 23.48 (Map B).

The topography of the site is relatively flat. It is not located within any identified or designated Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA).

Surrounding properties north, south, east and west of the proposal site are also zoned SM-65. Existing development in the vicinity of the project property are newly constructed research and development buildings (UW Medicine), and a variety of aged commercial buildings with retail, office and warehouse uses.

Proposal Description

The proposal is to demolish one commercial building and attached canopy containing approximately 25,960 sq. ft. of floor area. This demolition is part of the Mercer Corridor West Phase transportation improvement project to replace the existing Mercer Street and Roy Street couplet with a two-way Mercer Street right-of-way. The building is currently situated on both public (Mercer Street) and private property (“Parcel “A”).

SDOT estimates 2,080 tons of construction debris will be removed from the site. Hazardous material will be removed from the building by professionals and disposed at an approved waste facility. Grading consisting of approximately 367 cubic yards (cu. yds.) of material to remove the building’s basement foundation and walls, and infill of 2,644 cu. yds. of material is planned. Appropriate shoring will be installed in the building’s footprint to prevent unintended collapse.

Demolition of the building and improvement of the streets necessitates the removal of several mature trees in concrete planters on the property and street trees. Landscaping enhancements inclusive of street trees and plantings within the right-of-way are intended.

Once demolition is complete, the private property (Parcel “A”) will be used as construction staging for the new Mercer Corridor roadway improvement. Currently, no development proposal is planned after the roadway improvement has been completed. Consequently, the private property will be fenced off to prevent access and usage as principal parking.

Public Comments

The public comment period for this project ended June 20, 2012. DPD received no written comments regarding this proposal.

SEPA ANALYSIS

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle 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 dated May 4, 2012. 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 pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered. As indicated in the checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

City codes and/or ordinances apply to the proposal and will provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808), the Grading Code (SMC 22.170), the Street Use Ordinance (SMC Title 15), the Seattle Building Code, and Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas (SMC 25.09).

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. Under such limitations or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate. Short-term and long-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposal.

Short - term Impacts

The following temporary demolition-related activities on this site could result in the following adverse impacts: demolition dust and storm water runoff, soil erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and increased vibration from construction operations and equipment. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope. Further discussion of additional short-term construction related impacts follows.

Air Quality

Demolition on this site will result in localized short-term increases in air particulates and carbon monoxide which could temporarily affect the quality in the vicinity. Demolition/construction activities that would contribute to these impacts include excavation, grading, soil compaction, and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment (i.e., generators and compressors). Compliance with the Street Use Ordinance (SMC 15.22.060) will require the contractors to water the site or use other dust palliative, as necessary, to reduce airborne dust.

In addition, compliance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations requires activities which produce airborne materials or other pollutant elements to be contained with temporary enclosure.

Regarding asbestos, Federal Law requires the filing of a Notice of Construction with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (“PSCAA”) prior to demolition. Other potential sources of dust would be soil blowing from uncovered dump trucks and soil carried out of the construction area by vehicle frames and tires; this soil could be deposited on adjacent streets and become airborne.

During demolition of the structures, on-site activity and periodic traffic delays on adjacent streets could contribute to slight increases in localized vehicle emissions but it is not expected that these emissions would result in a violation of any local ambient air quality standards.

There is no indication of unusual short term adverse impacts. Current codes are adequate to provide mitigation and pursuant to the Overview Policy (SMC Section 25.05.665) and Air Quality Policy (SMC Section 25.05.675A). Therefore, no further mitigation is warranted.

Construction-Related Streets, Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

Building demolition and grading (export and import of approximately 3,011 cu. yds. of soil) are proposed. This material would be trucked to and from the site. Per the submitted drawings, construction vehicles would enter the project site from a temporary construction entrance situated near the northwestern area of the property via the existing curb cut on Dexter Avenue North. Demolition activities and roadway improvements will necessitate planned closures of adjacent roadways and sidewalks.

It is the City's policy to minimize or prevent adverse traffic impacts which would undermine the stability, safety, and/or character of a neighborhood or surrounding areas (25.05.675 R). The Street Use Ordinance includes regulations which mitigate dust, mud, and circulation. Any temporary closure of the sidewalk and/or traffic lane(s) is adequately controlled with a street use permit through the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT.). The City Planner has verified that SDOT will require the contractor performing the work obtain a Street Use permit reviewed and approved by SDOT Traffic Management and Street Use Staff that includes preliminary detours, traffic control plans (TCPs), haul routes and hours of operation. Parking demand for demolition personnel can be accommodated on the site. Therefore, no further mitigation will be required.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Demolition and construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacturing 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 the 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

Some long-term impacts are expected as a result of the proposed building demolition. Compliance with applicable Building Code standards will provide adequate mitigation for potential safety-related issues. Compliance with other applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment. However, due to the age of the proposed structure, impacts associated with the preservation of historic buildings warrant further analysis.

Historic Preservation

Section 25.05.675.H of the SEPA code describes the City's policies for protecting historical sites. *"It is the City's policy to maintain and preserve significant historic sites and structures and to provide opportunity for analysis of archeological sites.....For projects involving structures or sites which are not yet designated as historical landmarks but which appear to meet the criteria for designation, the decisionmaker or any interested person may refer the site or structure to the Landmarks Preservation Board for consideration.....On sites with potential archaeological significance, the decisionmaker may require an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site."*

SEPA provides authority to mitigate impacts to historic buildings (SMC 25.05.675.H.2.c). In this instance, the existing commercial building addressed as 530 Dexter Avenue North is not designated as a historical landmark. However, because this proposal involves the demolition of a building which is more than 50 years old, as required per a memorandum of agreement between the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and DPD, historical information concerning the aforementioned property (prepared by the applicant) was referred to DON for review. The Historic Preservation Staff declared in a memo dated October 1, 2012, *"We reviewed the information submitted by the applicant regarding the subject building, including historic photographs that we requested. Based on the review of this information, we have determined that it is unlikely that the subject building would meet the standards for designation as individual landmarks."* Therefore, no mitigation is warranted by SEPA.

Summary

In conclusion, several effects on the environment would result from the project proposed. The conditions imposed at the end of this report are intended to mitigate specific impacts identified in the foregoing analysis, to control impacts not adequately regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

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.

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).

SEPA CONDITIONS

None Required.

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

Date: October 11, 2012