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: 3013618

Applicant Name: Craig Belcher

Address of Proposal: 2501 NE 45th St (project at 4000 Walla Walla Road NE).

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a one-story 7,910 sq. ft. baseball practice building (University of Washington Husky Baseball Field). Existing building will expand to a three-story 21,830-square-foot baseball stadium with bleachers, dugout and ticket booth. Project also includes 4,110 cubic yards of grading. University of Washington issued a Determination of Nonsignificance on January 6, 2009.

The following approval is required:

SEPA for conditioning only (Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code).

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

[ ] DNS with conditions

[X] DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction. [1]

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description: The site is located in the University of Washington Seattle Campus east of Montlake Blvd. N.E. and south and east of the E-1 parking lot. It is zoned MIO-37', LR-1 (Major Institution Overlay with a 37-foot height limit and an underlying zone of Lowrise One). The soccer and baseball competition fields and stands are in site 59E in the University of Washington Seattle Campus Master Plan (CMP) 2003. The East Campus area is the location of both intercollegiate and intramural athletics.

[1] The University of Washington Capital Projects Office prepared an Environmental Checklist and published a Declaration of Non-Significance on January 6, 2009. The University of Washington updated their SEPA documentation in a memorandum to the project file, dated March 3rd, 2013.

Proposal Description: The project involves continuation of upgrades to the University of Washington's baseball facilities. The University of Washington is currently seeking building permits to construct a one-story 7,910-square-foot floor player development building with a roof overhang above the home team bullpen, and to expand the existing team building to a three-story 21,830-square foot baseball stadium with bleachers, dugouts, ticket booth and entry gate. The stadium will have a capacity for approximately 2,500 spectators.

Public Comment: The public comment period was from August 2, 2012 to August 15, 2012. No comments were received.

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The University of Washington is the SEPA Lead Agency responsible for making the threshold determination with respect to this proposal. The University issued a Determination of Nonsignificance, on January 6, 2009. There was a fourteen-day comment period which ended on January 19, 2009.

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 specific circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be required.

The policies for specific elements of the environment (SMC 25.05.675) describe the relationship with the Overview Policy and indicate when the Overview Policy is applicable. Not all elements of the environment are subject to the Overview Policy (e.g., Traffic and Transportation). The following summarizes anticipated short-term and long-term impacts, and identifies regulations in place that will mitigate these impacts.

Short-term (Construction) Impacts

The project is likely to have short-term adverse, construction-related environmental impacts with respect to vegetation, earth, noise, air, water quality, traffic, and pedestrian circulation. No other elements of the environment appear likely to be adversely affected, and no other elements have been identified in the Environmental Checklist.

Air, Earth, and Water: The project is likely to cause some minor impacts from soil erosion from grading and other site work while the earth is exposed. These include decreased air quality from dust and other particulates produced by construction equipment and operations, and possible tracking of mud and dirt onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles. Erosion may occur during construction, primarily if done during wet weather. These impacts are expected to be minor in scope and would be limited to the period of site preparation. Several adopted City codes and ordinances provide adequate mitigation. The Street Use Ordinance requires prompt cleaning of any materials deposited on public streets. To protect water quality, all earthwork and site preparation on site would be conducted in compliance with the City of Seattle's Grading

Code (Section 22.170) and with implementation of construction best management practices required in the City of Seattle's Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual (DPD Director's Rule 16-2009).

Construction will result in localized, short-term increases in particulate and carbon monoxide associated with the removal of existing pavement, excavation, grading, soil compaction, and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment. On-site activity and periodic traffic delays on adjacent streets could contribute to slight increases in localized vehicle emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide. It is not expected that increased suspended particulates or carbon monoxide emissions would cause violation of any local ambient air quality standards.

Methane gas emissions from fill and bog material beneath the site is regularly monitored for unsafe gas concentrations.

Construction activities including 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 SEPA policy-based mitigation of indentified air, earth, and water impacts is warranted.

Noise: Short-term noise from construction would be generated during working hours. Noise levels during construction would be expected to comply with the City of Seattle Noise Ordinance. Noise sources in the area include traffic on Montlake Boulevard NE, and NE 45th Street, as well as traffic on other local streets. There is noise from students already intensively using the area for recreation sports programs and there is noise from existing intercollegiate athletic baseball and soccer practices and games with spectators. Given the relative isolation of the proposal site from sensitive receptors and the fairly high ambient noise levels that already exist, mitigation of construction-related noise impacts is not warranted.

Circulation and Traffic: Pedestrian and bicycle routes may be temporarily affected by construction. Temporary bicycle and pedestrian routes are expected to be in effect in the vicinity of the construction area.

The University of Washington and the contractor for the project will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers and construction vehicles. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 3:00 – 6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. It will also proscribe measures necessary for the protection of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists present in the project vicinity. Submittal of this plan to Seattle DPD is required prior to issuance of grading or construction permits.

DPD concludes that no additional mitigation is warranted.

Parking: Parking for the subject site is located in Lot E-1. Any demand for additional parking related to construction activities would be provided in the existing E-1 parking lot which has adequate capacity. The project does not eliminate any parking spaces. Lot E-1 contains 2,551 spaces. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Long-term (Use-related) Impacts

The environmental checklist identified long-term or use-related impacts to: plants and animals, transportation, environmental health, aesthetics, and land use. Elements of the environment not discussed below are not adversely affected and/or are adequately mitigated by existing codes and ordinances and/or mitigating components of the proposal itself. These identified long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope.

Plants and Animals: The current landscape plan will install 30 deciduous trees and shrub and groundcover landscaping of approximately 8,000 square feet. Vegetation lost is primarily lawn and invasive weeds that are of low habitat value to animals.

A Fish and Wildlife Report was prepared for the project. There are no threatened or endangered species known to exist in the proposal site area or nearby.

DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted to protect plants and animals.

Environmental Health: The site is a former landfill that contains contaminated soil and groundwater. Planned excavations to 10 feet or less for buildings and utilities are not expected to encounter landfill refuse. Methane gas is produced at the site from decomposition of landfill debris. Methane is a non-toxic flammable gas that can explode when present in the air in concentrations of 5%-15% by volume. Methane can present an explosion hazard on or within 1,000 feet of a landfill. Underground, methane gas can migrate laterally and accumulate in pockets inside and outside the landfill boundaries.

The University has undertaken quarterly landfill methane gas monitoring since April 2005. Data is collected from 17 monitoring wells, one of which (MP-2B) is in close proximity to the site. Continual methane monitoring by the University will help ensure safety. In addition, structures will be constructed to ensure proper and adequate ventilation, fire protection for all interior spaces, and emergency vehicle access. Mitigating measures will comply with applicable City of Seattle regulations, the *University of Washington Montlake Landfill Methane Mitigation Plan*, *Operational Guidance for Maintenance and Development Practices over the Montlake Landfill*, and the *Montlake Landfill Project Guide*. As described in the SEPA Checklist, proposed buildings and enclosed structures will include a gas management system consisting of a passive venting system in conjunction with a vapor barrier. In addition, all buildings will have methane sensors and alarms attached to the mechanical systems to provide additional exhaust should methane infiltrate the building envelope. The designs will also utilize water relief measures under the building to prevent liquefaction in the event of an earthquake. During foundation construction, the area will be monitored periodically for the presence of combustible gas. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Environmentally Critical Areas: The proposal site is within mapped Environmentally Critical Areas for potential liquefaction and peat settlement areas. Environmentally Critical Area regulations in place will adequately insure construction measures used will withstand any

expected liquefaction event and that the constructed environment will not adversely affect the peat soils beneath the site. The proposal site is also within a mapped Environmentally Critical Areas for a wetland. However, upon review of materials provided by the applicant, the City of Seattle has determined that this feature is a constructed stormwater management facility that does not meet the definition for a wetland regulated by the City of Seattle's Environmentally Critical Area regulations (SMC 25.09). Wetlands that are determined by the City of Seattle to be non-regulatory under the City of Seattle's Environmentally Critical Area regulations may be regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act. Coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Washington State Department of Ecology will be necessary to determine if they have wetland jurisdiction and permit requirements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

No SEPA policy-based mitigation measures to protect these environmentally critical areas are warranted.

Land Use Patterns: The SEPA Checklist outlines direct impacts and the project's relationship to surrounding uses. The intensity of the proposed new use and its interaction with existing surrounding uses appears to be within the accepted framework of the Seattle CMP 2003 and the 1998 City-University Agreement, as well as the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Noise: The SEPA Checklist notes that the City of Seattle's noise ordinance applies to receiving property lines and does not apply within the University Campus. No sensitive noise receptors are in proximity to the proposal site. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Light and Glare: The fields are already lighted and negative effects from existing lighting are not within the purview of this SEPA analysis. The lighting used on the exterior of the buildings will be directional and screened to prevent glare. The lighting will be limited to what is required for safety and security. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Transportation: The SEPA Checklist analyzes transportation impacts to vehicle circulation, traffic safety, transit services, pedestrian and bicycle circulation and parking. For nearby intersections, traffic impacts resulting from the project's long term (operational) use appear to be negligible at peak hours. The University of Washington also provided an additional memo, dated January 29th, 2013, which further evaluates potential parking and traffic impacts. This report concluded that the current proposal would have a negligible impact on traffic volumes or parking demand. DPD's transportation expert reviewed this memo and concurred with these conclusions. Considering these analyses, DPD concludes that no further mitigation for long-term traffic and parking impacts is warranted.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide 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.

CONCLUSION – SEPA

In conclusion, DPD finds several effects on the environment resulting from the proposed project. However, proposed mitigating features together with the conditions imposed below are sufficient to mitigate specific impacts identified in the SEPA Checklist, its studies, and the foregoing analysis to lessen or prevent impacts not regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

The other impacts noted here as mitigated by code or by condition are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

DPD approved the project, subject to conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Grading or Construction Permit(s)

1. The University of Washington will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers, for review and approval by DPD. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall indentify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 3:00 -6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. It will also proscribe measures necessary for the protection of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists present in the project vicinity.

Before and During Construction

2. The University of Washington and/or other responsible parties shall implement the approved construction traffic plan.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: June 6, 2013
Seth Amrhein, Senior Environmental Analyst
Department of Planning and Development

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