



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
AND SCOPING NOTICE**

Application Number: 3014195
Applicant Name: John C. McCullough, on behalf of WSA Properties III, LLC
Address of Proposal: 1700 1st Avenue South

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Future construction of an approximately 725,000 sq. ft., 18,000 – 20,000-seat spectator sports facility (Seattle Arena). Project includes demolition of eight existing structures of approximately 128,087 sf, and grading will occur for construction. Proposal includes venue-related commercial development at the site (such as team merchandise stores, ticket offices, team offices, and potentially restaurants and club spaces). Proposal includes a street vacation of the portion of Occidental Avenue South between South Holgate and South Massachusetts Streets, and the potential conversion of Occidental Avenue South between South Massachusetts Street and Edgar Martinez Drive South and a portion of South Massachusetts Street between 1st Avenue South and Occidental Avenue South to a pedestrian mall. Parking for the facility is proposed to be provided by commercial parking lots off the site.

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

The Director of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has determined that the proposal may result in significant adverse impacts; this requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared. Prior to preparation of an EIS, the public is invited to identify probable environmental impacts that should be addressed in the EIS. Comments on the Scope of the EIS should be directed to the following address by November 30, 2012.

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development
Attn: John Shaw, Senior Transportation Planner
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, Washington 98124-4019

Two public and one agency meetings are planned:

On November 8, a public meeting will be held in the Bertha Landes room at Seattle City Hall at 6:00PM to provide opportunity for the public to discuss and identify probable significant environmental impacts that should be addressed in the EIS. “Significant” impacts, as used in SEPA, “means a reasonable likelihood of more than a moderate adverse impact on environmental quality.” Access to the Bertha Landes room is from the 5th Avenue entrance to City Hall, on the west side of 5th Avenue between Cherry and James Streets.

On November 13, a meeting will be held with public agencies and Tribes at Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2240, at 10:00 AM to provide opportunity for the public agencies and Tribes to discuss and identify probable significant environmental impacts that should be addressed in the EIS.

On November 14, a public meeting will be held in the Fidalgo Room at Seattle Center at 6:00PM to provide opportunity for the public to discuss and identify probable significant environmental impacts that should be addressed in the EIS. The Fidalgo Room is located in the Northwest Rooms, on the northwest corner of Seattle Center.

The Early Design Guidance application for the Seattle Arena can be reviewed at the Public Resource Center (PRC), 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000 Seattle Municipal Tower. The PRC is open 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and 10:30 am to 4:00 pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

ALTERNATIVES

The EIS shall discuss alternatives including the proposed action and one or more potential alternatives, and a No Action alternative. In addition to the proposed SoDo site, the initial list of alternatives includes one or more sites at Seattle Center. Additional reasonable alternatives shall include actions that could feasibly attain or approximate the proposal’s objective, but at a lower environmental cost. The No Action alternative shall be evaluated and compared to other alternatives.

BACKGROUND DATA

SoDo Site and Vicinity

The Seattle Arena is proposed to be located at 1700 1st Avenue South, south of the Safeco (Mariners’) parking garage.



Uses in the area are a mix of spectator sports facilities (Century Link Field and Safeco Field), industrial and commercial uses. Specific land uses in the immediate vicinity include the Safeco Field parking garage to the north, and a new approximately five-story office building to the northwest. The site contains a mix of one- and two-story buildings on the western portion, containing a mix of commercial and industrial uses, including the Show Box Theater. There is a warehouse on the eastern half of the site. Railroad tracks abut the site on the east.

Zoning

The site is zoned Industrial Commercial with an 85-foot height limit (IC-85). A spectator sports facility is classified in the Seattle Land Use Code as “indoor sports and recreation” within the “entertainment use” category and the use is permitted outright in the IC zone (Table A, SMC 23.50.012).

Zoning in Vicinity

Properties to the north and west of the site are zoned IC-85. Property to the south across Holgate Street is zoned for General Industrial (IG) and includes land zoned IG1 U/85 and IG2 U/85. “U/85” denotes that there is no maximum height limit for most uses; however, the maximum structure height for any portion of a structure that contains commercial uses other than spectator sports facilities and food processing and craft work uses, whether they are principal or accessory, is 85 feet. Property to the east of the site is zoned IG2 U/85.

Alternative Seattle Center Site and Vicinity

One or more alternative location(s) at Seattle Center will be evaluated in the EIS and compared with the proposed SoDo site and the No Action Alternative.

As shown on the figure below, the Seattle Center is approximately 74-acres located at the north end of downtown Seattle, south of Seattle's Queen Anne Hill.

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The Department has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (*EIS*) *is required* under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared. The Department has identified preliminarily the following elements of the environment for potential discussion in the EIS.

Construction Impacts

It is anticipated that the construction process associated with development may create temporary adverse air quality, noise and traffic impacts on the proposed and alternative sites and surrounding area.

Height, Bulk and Scale

Due to development of a spectator sports facility which can be substantially larger than the prevailing platting pattern in the SoDo area, adverse impacts may result from incongruous height, bulk and scale.

Visual

It is the City's policy to protect public views of the Space Needle from specific public places. A proposed project may be conditioned or denied to protect such views. The design for alternative sites at Seattle Center must be evaluated for their potential to impact public views of the Space Needle.

Cultural or Historic Preservation

Adverse impacts may result to historic structures or cultural resources which may be directly or indirectly impacted by development. Depending on the alternative location and the age of the existing structures, a building proposed for demolition may need to be evaluated against the criteria used to establish a building as a Seattle Historic Landmark.

Land Use

Potential adverse land use impacts may result from entertainment uses incompatible with the SoDo industrial element of the comprehensive plan.

Parking

An increase in the parking demand with development may result in an adverse impact to the available parking supply in the surrounding area at either the proposed SoDo site or at Seattle Center.

Traffic

Proposed development may generate additional vehicle trips. Increased traffic may have adverse impacts to local streets and intersections. The traffic and transportation review must analyze traffic impacts to surrounding uses. For the proposed SoDo site, this would include potential impacts to freight movement and Port-terminal operations. The analysis will include identification of possible mitigation, such as improved freight mobility.

Other Elements of the Environment

Other elements of the environment may be affected. Additional elements of the environment may be addressed as a result of comments received during this expanded 30-day Scoping period or as a result of comments received on the Draft EIS.

DECISION – SEPA

The responsible official on behalf of the lead agency made this decision after review of environmental information available to the 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).

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: October 25, 2012
John Shaw, Senior Transportation Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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