



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

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: 3015668

Applicant Name: Laurel Rech, NBBJ Architects, for Neighborcare Health

Address of Proposal: 10521 Meridian Avenue North

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 2-story structure containing 41,500 sq. ft. of medical office and human services uses (Meridian Center for Health). There will be surface parking on site for 19 vehicles, with additional parking on lot to south for a total of 97 vehicles. Project includes 3,300 cu. yds. of grading.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA - Environmental Determination - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code

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 and Vicinity Description

The mid-block site is located on the west side of Meridian Avenue N. between N. 105th Street and N. 107th Street. It abuts property belonging to the Park Meridian condominiums on both the north and west sides. Directly to the south lies a 77,889 sq. ft. lot, created as Lot A through the instrument of a Short Subdivision (#30159690) which separated the present site (Lot B) from a predecessor health care facility, surface parking and attendant landscaped grounds. Lot B is approximately 60,273 sq. ft. in size. As a condition of the plat, the existing building on Lot A

shall be demolished within six months of the granting of an occupancy permit for the proposed new structure on Lot B. Access to the site will be a passenger drop off only from Meridian Avenue N. and access from N 105th Street to drop-off and parking by means of an easement across a portion of Lot A. The property is zoned Lowrise 3 (LR3), as are the properties to the north, south and west. Directly across Meridian Avenue N., the zoning is Midrise (MR85).

The immediate vicinity is characterized by a mixture of small residential structure, including single family residences, and large condominium and apartment structures. Meridian Avenue N. is also characterized by a number of office structures which are interspersed with the residential structures. There are no predominating massing types or architectural styles in the general area of the proposal.

Proposal Description

The applicant is proposing to construct a 2-story building with approximately 41,500 sq. ft. of medical and human services uses. Surface parking for 19 vehicles will be provided on site. Additional surface parking for approximately 78 vehicles will be provided on the lot to the south. The project includes demolition of the existing medical and human services building on the lot directly to the south within 6 months of occupancy of the proposed new structure, as conditioned by Short Plat #3015969. Construction of the new structure will require excavation of approximately 3,300 cu. yds. of soil.

Public Comments

The public comment period for this proposal ended on January 29, 2014. One letter commenting on the proposal was received by the Department of Planning and Development. It lamented the destruction of trees on the site and requested that construction activities not be allowed to disrupt bus service along Meridian Avenue N. The Department also received one letter directed to the subdividing of land (MUP #3015969); it objected to the Short Plat and also voiced general disapproval of the development proposed on the site.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist dated October 25, 2013, and annotated by the Department of Planning and Development. The information in the checklist, supplemental information and project plans provided by the applicant, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.665(D), the SEPA Overview Policy, 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). Per SMC 25.05.665. D. 1-7, mitigation can be considered for specified limitations and/or circumstances. Therefore, a more detailed discussion of some of the anticipated impacts is appropriate.

Short - Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during construction; potential soil erosion during excavation and general site work; increased runoff; tracking of mud onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles; increased demand on traffic and parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian and vehicular movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC 25.05.794).

Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: the Noise Ordinance (construction noise), the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion), the Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of pedestrian right-of-way), and the Building Code (construction measures in general). The following analyzes construction-related noise, air quality, earth, grading, construction impacts, traffic and parking impacts as well as its mitigation.

Noise

There will be noise associated with demolition activities of this project, as well as noise during construction. The immediate surrounding area includes primarily residential uses. Neighboring residents are likely to be adversely impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction activities. The SEPA checklist notes that construction will take place during regular weekday hours. Although the Noise Ordinance is found to be adequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts Monday through Friday, further mitigation is warranted pursuant to the SEPA policies. Unless specifically addressed for mitigation within a Construction / Noise Impact Plan, no work shall be allowed on Saturdays except for low noise-generating activities once the building is entirely enclosed. No construction work shall be allowed on Sundays.

Air Quality

Construction for this project is expected temporarily to add particulates to the air that 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 SEPA Air Quality Policy (SMC 25.05.675). To mitigate impacts of exhaust fumes on the directly adjacent residential uses, trucks hauling materials to and from the project site will not be allowed to queue on streets under windows of the nearby residential buildings.

Should asbestos be identified on the site, it must be removed in accordance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) and City requirements. PSCAA regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and require permits for removal of asbestos during demolition.

Earth

Approximately 3,300 cu. yds. of grading is proposed with this project. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGDCC) 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 soils report, construction plans, and shoring of excavations as needed, will be reviewed by the DPD Geo-technical Engineer and Building Plans Examiner who will require any additional soils-related information, recommendations, declarations, covenants and bonds as necessary to assure safe grading and excavation.

The SGDCC provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to the SEPA policies.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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.

Traffic and Parking

Duration of construction, including demolition of the existing building on Lot A of Short Plat #3015969, could last approximately 18 months. During construction, parking demand will increase due to additional demand created by construction personnel and equipment. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities and parking (SMC 25.05.675.B and M). Parking by construction workers during construction would likely reduce the supply of parking in the vicinity. Due to the extensive duration for completion of the project, this temporary demand on the on-street parking in the vicinity due to construction workers' vehicles may be adverse. In order to minimize adverse impacts, the applicant will need to provide a construction worker parking plan to reduce on-street parking. The authority to impose this condition is found in SMC 25.05.675.B.2.g of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance.

The construction of the project also will have adverse impacts on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site. During construction a temporary increase in traffic volumes to the site will occur, due to travel to the site by construction workers and the transport of construction materials. Approximately 3,300 cu. yds. of soil represent the amount of excavation at the project site. The soil removed for the below grade parking will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site. Excavation and grading activity will require approximately 330 round trips with 10-yard hauling trucks or 165 round trips with 20-yard hauling trucks. The area around the construction site is marked by primary arterials, non-arterial streets within a short distance from Interstate 5. The ingress and egress of trucks, personnel and equipment may adversely impact circulation on the surrounding streets at the project locations. These construction activities may generate adverse impacts; therefore, pursuant to the SEPA Construction Impact (SMC 25.05.675.B) and Traffic/Transportation Policy (SMC 25.05.675.R), additional mitigation is warranted.

Accordingly, the applicant shall be required to submit a construction phase transportation plan to DPD for review and approval prior to the beginning of construction. The plan shall identify approximate phases and duration of construction activity, haul routes to and from the site, address ingress/egress of trucks and personnel/equipment as well as construction worker parking. As conditioned, compliance with Seattle's Street Use Ordinance is expected to mitigate any additional adverse impacts to traffic which would be generated during construction of this proposal.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area; increased demand for parking; and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. A Certificate of Approval from the Pioneer Square Preservation Board is required, which includes code provision to address materials, bulk and scale and other features of the built environment. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. However, due to the size and location of this proposal, greenhouse gas emissions, historic preservation, height, bulk and scale, traffic, and parking impacts warrant further analysis.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the project's 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.

Transportation and Parking

Trips to and from the project site will be made by staff and patients. Approximately 100 staff currently work on-site. This number is expected to remain roughly the same; information from the applicant indicates the projected number of staff in the new facility to be 80 to 100.

The number of patient trips is expected to increase. Currently, services in the existing facility result in approximately 47,000 patient visits annually; this number is expected to increase to approximately 55,500 patient visits a year with the new facility. The net increase in annual patient visits would be about 8,500. Given a 240-day working year, the average daily increase would be about 35 patient visits. As each visit results in two trips, the proposed project would generate about 70 new patient trips on a typical work day. The new trips would be spread throughout the day; any given hour is likely to experience 10 or fewer new trips.

In addition to the low volume of net new trips expected from the facility, the following factors are likely to reduce the expected number of new trips:

- The project is required to prepare a Transportation Management Program and submit reports to the City, documenting efforts to reduce employee trips;
- The patient population that will access the site regularly utilizes public transportation.
- Integration of patient services may result in more efficient scheduling and reducing individual trips to the facility.

On balance, the increase in project-related trips is expected to be small, and result in no appreciable transportation impacts. No mitigation for transportation impacts is required pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 R.

The existing facility provides approximately 85 parking stalls. The new project will provide about 97 stalls. Usage of the stalls will shift, as on-site parking will no longer be provided for staff. This is expected to result in more on-site parking by patients and increased off-site parking by staff. On balance, however, it is likely that parking impacts from the project will be similar to existing conditions in the vicinity of the site. No substantial parking impacts are expected, and no mitigation for parking impacts is required pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 M.

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 requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public 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 2C.
- [] 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 2C.

This DNS is issued after using the Optional DNS Process in WAC 197-11-355 and Early Review DNS Process in SMC 25.05.355. There is no further comment period on the DNS.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of a Demolition, Grading, or Building Permit

- 1) A Construction Traffic/Noise Management Plan shall be required, subject to review and approval by DPD, prior to the issuance of any permit to demolish, grade or construct. The plan shall identify approximate phases and duration of construction activity, haul routes to and from the site, address ingress/egress/idling of trucks and personnel/equipment as well as construction worker parking. The transportation plan shall also include approximate phases and duration of demolition and earth and landscaping restoration activities associated with the existing structure on Lot A of Short Plat #3015969. The Construction Traffic/Noise Management Plan shall include a requirement that trucks hauling materials to and from the project site shall not queue along any of the adjacent residential buildings. Construction activities (including, but not limited to demolition, grading deliveries, framing, roofing and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 6pm. Unless specifically addressed for noise mitigation measures within the plan, work on Saturday shall be limited to low noise activities within the building once it has been entirely enclosed, between the hours of 9am and 6pm. No work shall be permitted on Sundays.

Prior to Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy

- 2) A *Temporary* Certificate of Occupancy may be issued for the completed building and occupancy allowed, but a *Permanent* Certificate of Occupancy shall not be issued until after the existing building on Lot A has been demolished and measures have been completed to restore the land upon which the building stood to an agreeably landscaped condition.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: September 4, 2014

Michael Dorcy,
Senior Land Use Planner