



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: 3015917
Applicant Name: Steven Lee, Studio Meng Strazzara for Seattle Public Schools
Address of Proposal: 13224 37th Avenue NE

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to change a 10,800 square foot portion of existing institution and art center (Cedar Park Elementary School/Cedar Park Art Center) from artist studio dwelling to institution. Review Includes installation of eight new portable classrooms (6,616 square feet). Environmental documents have been prepared by Seattle Public Schools.*

The following approval is required:

SEPA – For conditioning only - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

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

*Environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools: Cedar Park Elementary School Modernization, SEPA Addendum to Building Excellence Phase IV Capital Improvement Program Programmatic EIS (2012).

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location

The existing Cedar Park Elementary School is located on a 4.4 acre site at 13224 37th Avenue NE. The western half of the property is leased to the Seattle Parks Department for use as a Park (Cedar Park). The park provides neighborhood open space with play equipment.

Zoning

The proposal is located in a Single Family 7200 zone (SF 7200).



Proposal Information

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) proposes to renovate and re-open Cedar Park Elementary School to accommodate approximately 350-400 students. The modernization will provide structural reinforcements, improve energy and water conservation, and upgrade the existing building systems to meet current fire, life safety, and ADA code requirements. Eight (8) new modular classrooms with a total square footage of 6,616 square feet are proposed to be added southwest of the existing school buildings. The western half of the property is leased to the Seattle Parks Department under a long-term agreement. No changes are proposed on the leased portion of the property.

Cedar Park Elementary has not been used as a school since 1981. Most recently, the building has been used as artist studios and residences. The existing school building will be upgraded with a new roof and mechanical, electrical and structural systems. Eight new modular classrooms will be added southwest of the existing building. The modular classrooms will house six classrooms, one office, and one library room. These improvements will re-open a neighborhood school.

The building was designed by architect Paul Thiry and constructed in 1959. The applicant has submitted a landmark nomination proposal to the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Program. The Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) voted to grant a Certificate of Approval for the proposed exterior rehabilitation, site improvements, and eight new modular classrooms per the applicant's submittal. A copy of the document is filed in the project electronic file.

Previous SEPA Related Actions

Prior to application for a Master Use Permit, Seattle Public Schools exercised its prerogative to act as lead agency. A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued by Seattle Public Schools on January 30, 2014. No appeal was registered. The District submitted their MUP application (project number #3015917) to DPD for review. For the purposes of this permit application, exercise of substantive SEPA authority by the DPD is limited to conditioning only for impacts previously identified by SPS. Conditioning pursuant to this authority will rely on the threshold DNS issued by the District and on environmental documents prepared by the District.

Public Comments

Notice of the proposed project was published on October 3, 2013, and the required public comment period ended on October 16, 2013. No comments were received during the official public comment period.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The proposal's environmental impacts have been analyzed in environmental documents prepared by the Seattle School District. Documents include a SEPA Checklist dated January 2014 and a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) issued by Seattle School District dated January 30, 2014.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.660 provides that proposals can be conditioned in order to mitigate environmental impacts. All conditions must be related to impacts identified in the environmental documents, based on adopted policies, and must be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. This proposal is reviewed under that substantive SEPA authority.

The Department is reviewing the environmental impacts of the proposal in order to impose further conditions, if necessary. Disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made

in the environmental documents listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, written descriptions of the project, geotechnical report, transportation and parking report, construction requirements, arborist reports and renderings) and the experience of this agency with review of similar proposals form the basis of this analysis and conditioning.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) establishes the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for specific elements 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 certain limitations/circumstances, (SMC 25.05.665.D.1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation for short and/or long term impacts. Applicable codes may include 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 the Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08), Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations, and city ECA regulations.

Environmental impacts were identified in the Seattle Public School environmental documents which can be found in the city’s electronic file for this project 3015917. Identified Impacts include impacts on earth, air, plants, construction noise, light and glare, cultural preservation, and transportation. The identified impacts are subject to additional mitigation as described below.

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 excavation, filling and transport of materials to and from the site; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel traveling to and from the work site; consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources; disruption of utilities serving the area; and conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment.

Earth

The project will require grading/excavation and construction permits. The existing Codes (The City of Seattle Stormwater Code, SMC 22.800, Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas SMC 25.09, and the City of Seattle Grading Code SMC 22.170) provide authority to require appropriate mitigation for this project. Surface water controls (i.e. temporary interceptor swales, check dams, silt fences, etc.) will be constructed simultaneously with clearing and grading for project development. Surface water and erosion control measures will be relocated or new measures will be installed so as site conditions change, erosion control measures remain in accordance with City of Seattle Best Management Practices (BMP) requirements during the construction period.

Grading/excavation

There will be excavation and removal of material for the project. Approximately 20 cubic yards of cut is expected and the material will be used on or near the site. Approximately 850 cubic yards of fill material from approved locations will be imported for the project improvements. During grading and excavation City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded, uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed in route to or from a site.

The contractor will obtain the City of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) approval that erosion control measures are in place and functioning and will maintain erosion control measures as earthwork and utility construction commences in accordance with City of Seattle standards, as part of building permit review. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Air Quality

Demolition, grading and construction activities each may create adverse air quality impacts in the surrounding area. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808) and the Grading Code (SMC 22.170) regulate on-site grading activities and require that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of the work. Construction activities will include several measures to minimize impacts to air quality: The contractor chosen for the proposed project would be required to comply with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's (PSCAA) Regulation I, Section 9.15 requiring reasonable precautions to avoid dust emissions and Regulation I, Section 9.11 requiring the best available measures to control emissions of odor-bearing contaminants. The contractor will be required to comply with recommendations in the Washington Associated General Contractor brochure "Guide to Handling Fugitive Dust from Construction Projects." No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Construction Noise

There will be excavation required to prepare the building site and foundation. Additionally, as development proceeds, noise associated with renovation of the building and placement of the modular classrooms could adversely affect the surrounding residential uses. The limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), mitigation is warranted, see SEPA conditions at the end of this document.

Construction Vehicles and Construction Traffic

There will be a variety of construction vehicles required to prepare the building site and to support construction activities. As development proceeds, vehicles associated with construction of the building could adversely affect the surrounding residential uses. The District will require the selected contractor to develop a construction management plan (CMP) that addresses traffic and pedestrian control during school construction. It will define truck routes, lane closures, walkway closures, and parking disruptions, as necessary. To the extent possible, the CMP will direct trucks along the shortest route to arterials and away from residential streets to avoid unnecessary conflicts with resident and pedestrian activity. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Construction Parking

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. Construction workers can be expected to arrive in early morning hours and to leave in the mid-afternoon. Surrounding residents generate their peak need for on-street parking in the evening and overnight hours when construction workers can be expected to have departed. The CMP will identify parking locations for the construction staff; to the extent possible, construction employee parking will be contained on-site. No additional conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and 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).

SPS has proposed mitigation to address short term impacts as described above. The measures outlined in their environmental documents adequately address impacts. Except for noise conditioning listed at the end of this document, no further conditioning of the short term impact elements of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Long Term Impacts

Long term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of this proposal, including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased demand for public services and utilities; loss of plant and animal habitat; and increased light and glare. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment.

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 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).

Earth

Approximately 43 percent of the 4.38-acre site will be covered by impervious surfaces (1.9 acres). Eight new modular classrooms will be brought onto the site, accounting for the majority of new impervious surface additions created by the project, along with a new concrete ADA ramp and walk. In the right-of-way, approximately 51% of the disturbed 0.60 acres of frontage area will be covered by impervious surfaces (0.30 acres), consisting of asphalt paving, curb and sidewalk.

Temporary erosion and sedimentation control BMPs and construction water quality treatment measures will be installed to minimize erosion and to treat stormwater runoff during construction. BMPs specific to the site and project will be specified by SPS in the construction contract documents, and the construction contractor would be required to implement them.

Air

Upon completion, the project will result in a decrease in air quality over existing conditions, especially at morning and afternoon peak loading and unloading periods, but similar to those when the school was more fully operational. The impact of the proposed project on air quality in the area is not anticipated to be significant. The school has begun a program to encourage non-motorized trips (such as walking, biking, and bussing). Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

Plants

To accommodate the proposed improvements near the center of the site, 13 trees will be removed. None of the trees to be removed are Exceptional trees as defined by the City of Seattle. The landscape plan includes restoration and native planting west of the school building. Trees will be planted in this area as replacement trees for those that will be removed. Overgrown shrubs and berries will be trimmed or removed. SPS will follow standard best practices for preservation of all other vegetation and trees during construction that are scheduled for retention. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Environmental Health

A Phase I Abatement and Finishes Removal process will be conducted to remove any toxic materials, such as asbestos containing materials, PCB containing light ballast, mercury containing fluorescent lighting tubes and switches, in advance of school demolition activities. Project specifications require adherence to all applicable local, state and federal regulations governing hazardous materials removal and disposal, eliminating public exposure. No mitigation is necessary or warranted.

Noise

Reactivating the vacant school site will introduce and increase new sounds reminiscent of the school when it was last in operation. While reinstating the school use is a substantial increase, the school accommodated over between 300 and 400 in the late 1960s the number anticipated in this proposal. The noise level is expected to be below established noise thresholds for residential zones. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

Historic Preservation

The City of Seattle has determined that preserving historic buildings and districts is important to the citizenry for retaining a living sense and appreciation of the past, and has established the Landmarks Preservation Board to determine the historical and cultural significance of individual buildings and sites. SPS nominated the school for review by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) in September 2012. The LPB reviewed the nomination and designated the school as a Seattle Landmark on September 5, 2012 (LPB, 2012). The features identified in the designation report to be preserved include “the exterior of the building and the building site” (LPB, 2012).

At the state and national level, Cedar Park Elementary School has not been fully documented in DAHP's Historic Property Inventory Database nor has a recommendation for its NRHP eligibility been made. At the local level, the school has been designated as a Seattle Landmark (LPB, 2012). SPS worked with LPB to minimize impacts of proposed work on identified significant elements through the Certificate of Approval process. The Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) voted to grant a Certificate of Approval for the proposed exterior rehabilitation, site improvements, and eight new modular classrooms per the applicant's submittal.

According to the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), there are no recorded archaeological sites or cemeteries within or immediately adjacent to the project site. Based on DAHP's Statewide Predictive Model, the project site is classified as High Risk and Very High Risk for encountering precontact archaeological resources (DAHP, 2013). In the event that cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the project, construction will be temporarily halted in the immediate vicinity of the identified resources and the City, DAHP, and Affected Tribes will be notified. Mitigation and/or avoidance measures will be negotiated with the City, DAHP, and other stakeholders. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Light and Glare

Exterior lighting on the site will be expanded and interior lighting will be noticeable during some dark hours during the school year. Exterior lighting around the school building is anticipated to remain similar to former conditions but with improved fixtures to reduce spillover and glare. New lighting will be installed at the existing main staircase and entrance courtyard located to the north of the existing building. New lighting will also be installed at the modular classrooms. New lighting will increase light impacts but new modern fixtures reduce spillover and glare and it is anticipated that the lights at the school building and main staircase will be on timers to be activated only during school-related activities. With these controls in place no further mitigation is warranted.

Traffic and Transportation

Technical information regarding traffic impacts and projections for the school's re-opening is included in a Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. dated January 30, 2014. The Analysis is available for review on the DPD website at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/>.

The completed project will maintain 9 existing parking spaces north of the school building (accessed from NE 135th Street) and 8 existing spaces within Cedar Park (accessed from 37th Avenue NE). The project will also construct frontage improvements along the south side of NE 135th Street, the west side of 39th Avenue NE, and the east side of 37th Avenue NE. These frontage improvements include widening that will provide more formal parallel, on-street parking capacity. The improvements will replace existing informal parking capacity that exists along the shoulders of NE 135th Street and 37th Avenue NE. The improvements will provide new parking capacity.

Based on daily trip generation rates published for Elementary Schools by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, Cedar Park Elementary is expected to generate about 520 trips per day (260 in, 260 out). The peak traffic volumes are expected to occur in the morning just before school (expected between 7:45 and 8:45 A.M.), when the school is expected to generate 276 trips (139 in, 137 out).

SPS has proposed measures to reduce and control traffic and transportation impacts. They include the following:

- (1) Prior to the building reopening as a neighborhood school, the District and school will develop an access management plan to address congestion, pedestrian crossings, access patterns, and vehicle load/unload zones. The District and school principal will establish a communication plan to educate parents and students about the access and parking challenges that will exist at the school. The effort will encourage school bus ridership, carpooling, and supervised walking (such as walking school buses) and will discourage parent-vehicle drop-off and pick-up activity. The plan will define clear procedures and travel routes for parent vehicles, school buses, pedestrian, and loading zones.
- (2) The District will work with SDOT to confirm the locations and signage of parent-vehicle load/unload zones (assumed to be along the west side of 39th Avenue NE) and school-bus load/unload zones (assumed to be the south side of NE 135th Street west of 39th Avenue NE). The District will also work with SDOT to determine if any spaces along the east side of 37th Avenue NE will remain restricted to short-term (two-hour) parking. If not, the signs will be removed.
- (3) The District will engage the Seattle School Safety Committee (of which SDOT is a member) to review walk routes and determine crosswalk locations, signage, pavement markings, school zone speed limits, crossing guard locations, and traffic control for the adjacent roadways as well as uncontrolled intersections on 39th Avenue NE, and the yield-sign controlled intersection at NE 135th Street/37th Avenue.
- (4) The District will coordinate with SDOT to implement and enforce school-zone speed limits near the site.
- (5) The District will work to identify potential future walk routes and coordinate with the City to identify potential improvements and funding for additional pedestrian facilities to serve the school area. Future walk routes will be needed once the school becomes a neighborhood school after interim use by Olympic Hills Elementary.
- (6) The District and school administration will develop a neighborhood communication plan to inform nearby neighbors of events each year. The plan will be updated annually (or as events are scheduled) and will provide information about the dates, times, and rough magnitude of attendance. The communication is intended to allow neighbors to plan for the occasional increase in on-street parking demand that would occur with large events.
- (7) If substantial adverse parking impacts occur with large events, the school will consider altering the events to reduce attendance (such as by splitting the events) or relocating the events to an alternative location that has parking capacity to accommodate the demand.
- (8) The frontage improvement designs around the site will provide adequate turning radii at the intersections to accommodate school buses.
- (9) The roadway frontage improvements along NE 135th Street will ensure that adequate sight lines are available for drivers exiting the site driveway.

King County Metro Transit provides bus transit service in both directions along Lake City Way NE to the west of the proposed Cedar Park School site. The nearest transit stop is located at NE 137th Street, about 1/3-mile from the project site and is served by Routes 306, 309, 312, 330, 372,

65, and Sound Transit's Route 522. These routes provide service between the Downtown Seattle, Woodinville, the UW Bothell /Cascadia Campus, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, First Hill, Shoreline Community College, Fircrest, and the University District. Another transit stop (with a shelter) is located about ½-mile from the project site, along NE 130th Street just west of 35th Avenue NE. This stop is served by Metro Transit Routes 41 and 72, which provide connections to and from Downtown Seattle, Northgate Transit Center, Ravenna, Cowen Park, and the University District.

Based on the outlined mitigation by SPS, and in order to provide for such mitigation, the proposal has been conditioned, as noted at the end of this document.

DECISION - SEPA

The application is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

During Demolition and Construction

1. All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 7pm. Interior work that involves noisy construction equipment, including electrical compressors, may be allowed on Saturdays between 9am and 7pm once the shell of the structure is completely enclosed, provided windows and doors remain closed. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized by the Land Use Planner when necessitated by unforeseen construction, safety, or street-use related situations. Requests for extended construction hours or weekend days must be submitted to the undersigned Land Use Planner at least three (3) days in advance of the requested dates in order to allow DPD to evaluate the request.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: June 12, 2014
Holly J. Godard
Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development