



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

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**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:** 3016077  
**Applicant Name:** Dave Biddle of Blueprint Services  
**Address of Proposal:** 6917 California Ave SW

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**SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

Project Description

Land Use Application to allow a 3-story, 30-unit residential structure. No parking proposed. Existing structures to be demolished.

Required Approval

The following approval is required:

**SEPA Environmental Threshold Determination** (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.05)

**SEPA DETERMINATION**

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

## SITE AND VICINITY

Zoning: Lowrise 2 (LR2) / Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village

Parcel Size: 6,130.9 square feet (sq. ft.)

Existing Uses: Detached Single Family Structures

Environmental Critical Areas: None

### Project Proposal

The applicant proposes a 7,800 square foot, three-story residential structure containing 30 residential units. Each unit is accessed through a shared hallway, with building ingress/egress on the east and west side of the structure. Each unit is approximately 220 square feet, and contains a bathroom and kitchen. A shared laundry facility, storage, and bicycle storage are found in the basement.

### Current Development

The subject site contains two existing single family structures, one with a detached garage and one exceptional tree. All structures are proposed for demolition. The exceptional tree will remain.

### Surrounding Development

The subject site is located near the corner of California Avenue Southwest and Southwest Mills Street, within the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village. The site is surrounded on all sides by residential uses: north is LR2 zoned property with townhouse structures; south is LR2 zoned property with an existing single-story detached single family structure; across California Avenue Southwest to the east is Lowrise 3 (LR3) property containing existing multiple-family structures; and across the alley to the west is SF 5000 property containing existing detached single family structures. Further south, on the west side of California Avenue Southwest, south of Southwest Mills Street, is LR2 RC (Lowrise 2, Residential-Commercial) zoning containing commercial and retail uses. Institutions in the area include Gatewood Elementary School; approximately 400 feet to the southwest.

Public transit routes within one-quarter mile of the site include routes on California Avenue Southwest and Fauntleroy Way Southwest, with transit stops within approximately 60-feet and 650-feet respectively.



*For illustrative purposes only*

Public Comment

The comment period ended on November 27, 2013 after an extension request pursuant to SMC 23.76.012.D. Many letters were received expressing concerns including, but not limited to: an increase in on-street parking demand; increased traffic; safety around Gatewood Elementary School; an increase in density; and a lack of review by the design review board.

A petition was received requesting a public meeting pursuant to SMC 23.76.015. The public meeting was held on December 9, 2013 at the West Seattle Senior Center. Approximately 25 people attended the meeting and expressed concerns including, but not limited to: an increase in on-street parking demand; increased traffic; safety around Gatewood Elementary School; and an increase in density.

**ANALYSIS – SEPA (WAC 97-11 and SMC 25.05)**

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (SMC 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant, and reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file. As indicated in the environmental checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment; however, due to their temporary nature or limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant. A discussion of these impacts is warranted.

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 *SEPA 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 (SMC 25.05.665).

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 following: *Stormwater Code* (SMC 22.800-808); *Grading Code* (SMC 22.170); *Street Use Ordinance* (SMC Title 15); *Seattle Building Code*; and *Noise Control Ordinance* (SMC 25.08). The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality.

## SHORT TERM IMPACTS

Construction activities are expected to result in some adverse impacts. Short-term, temporary or construction-related impacts may include temporary soil erosion, 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, and conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site. Several construction related impacts are mitigated through existing city codes and ordinances applicable to the project; therefore, compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. The following is an analysis of the air and construction-related noise impacts.

### Air Quality/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 due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project. SEPA conditioning is not warranted to mitigate air quality impacts pursuant to *SEPA Policy* (SMC 25.05.675.A.).

### Construction Impacts: Noise

The character of the neighborhood is residential in nature, and as a result, unmitigated construction related noise will have an impact on the surrounding residents. The limitations of the *Noise Control Ordinance* (SMC 25.08) are found to be adequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. SEPA conditioning is not warranted to mitigate noise impacts pursuant to *SEPA Policy* SMC 25.05.675.L.

## 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 traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; and increased demand for public services and utilities. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment.

### Air Quality/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. SEPA conditioning is not warranted to mitigate air quality impacts pursuant to *SEPA Policy* SMC 25.05.675.A.

### Height, Bulk, and Scale

The subject site is adjacent to SF 5000 zoning containing detached single-family structures. The proposed multiple-family structure is approximately 24 feet tall, with a rear, side, and front setback of: 25-feet, approximately seven feet, and 10-feet, respectively. The proposed height is below the maximum permitted height of 30-feet, and the rear and front setbacks are larger than the minimum required. An alley to the rear (west) of the building provides additional separation to the single family zoning to the west for a total of 41-feet. This setback and alley combined provide measures to offset the appearance of height, bulk, and scale from the adjacent single family structures. Landscaping is also proposed along the westerly property line to further screen the structure from the single family structures. No mitigation is warranted pursuant to *SEPA Policy SMC 25.05.675.G*.

### Historic Preservation

The subject site contains two existing single family structures, both more than 50 years old. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) referred the proposal to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) for review per SMC 25.05.675.H.2.c. Based on the review of the referral, as well as information from the City's Historic Resources Survey database, DON has determined that it is unlikely that the subject building would meet the standards for designation as an individual landmark (LPB 825/13); therefore no mitigation is warranted pursuant to *SEPA Policy SMC 25.05.675.H*.

### Parking

The proposed 30-unit apartment building proposes zero on-site vehicular parking spaces, and eight bicycle spaces in the basement of the structure. The subject site is within a multi-family zone, the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village, and is within 1,320-feet of a street with "frequent transit service" (SMC 23.84A.038 "T"); therefore, there is no minimum requirement for on-site parking (SMC 23.54.015).

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Manual indicates that the residential use could generate peak demand for approximately 41 vehicle parking spaces (1.37 spaces per residential unit peak demand). However, these estimates are generated based on data collected from suburban sites, with typical market-sized residential units. The proposed development consists entirely of studio sized residential units that are approximately 220 square feet in size, located in a dense neighborhood with frequent transit and opportunity for walking and biking to nearby services. It is reasonable to expect that the actual peak parking demand from this project would be less than 41 spaces. As is typical with residential projects, the peak parking demand is expected to occur during late evening and overnight hours.

To better understand the impacts of this development, the applicant submitted a *Parking Demand and Parking Utilization Study* (William Popp Associates, January 22, 2014). This study estimates the parking demand for this use, and evaluates the existing availability of on-street parking in the area. What the study finds is that this apartment building will likely generate a parking demand of approximately 15 vehicles (0.5 per unit), and that these vehicles can be accommodated on the street as the study area has a late evening parking utilization rate of 55% (282 legal on-street spaces with 156 vehicles parked). The expected 15 project-related vehicles would increase the on-street utilization rate to 61%.

The additional parking demand does not contribute adverse impacts requiring mitigation. In addition to this finding, SMC 25.05.675.M. notes that there is no SEPA authority provided for mitigation of residential parking impacts in portions of urban villages within 1,320 feet of a street with frequent transit service, such as is this site.

### Traffic and Transportation

The proposed multiple-family apartment building contains 30 units of approximately 220 square feet each. The subject site is located within the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village, and within 1,320-feet of frequent transit service.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual indicates that the proposed use could generate up to 18 PM peak hour vehicle trips (0.62 trips per unit). However, these estimates are generated based on data collected from suburban sites, with typical market-sized residential units. The proposed development consists entirely of studio sized residential units that are approximately 220 square feet in size, located in a dense neighborhood with frequent transit and opportunity for walking and biking to nearby services. The proposal also includes no vehicular parking, which is likely to attract a higher number of tenants who do not own cars. It is reasonable to expect that the actual peak hour and daily vehicle trips would be less than the ITE estimates.

The subject site is located on California Avenue Southwest, a Collector Arterial, and approximately 500 feet east of Fauntleroy Way Southwest, a Minor Arterial. The nearby street system is oriented in a grid pattern, and several arterials and/or collectors are located within a few blocks of the site. This type of street system and capacity makes it possible to disperse vehicle trips and disperse the impacts of a development on nearby street capacity. Additionally, the project proposes no on-site parking, further reducing a relative concentration of traffic at any one location.

While the potential impacts from added vehicle trips in the area may be adverse, they are not expected to be significant. No mitigation is warranted per *SEPA Policy* SMC 25.05.675.R.

### **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 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21.030(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).

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

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**

None

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: March 17, 2014  
Carly Guillory, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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