

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Project Proposal:** Fire Station Amendments

**Project Sponsor:** City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

**Location of Proposal:** The proposal is a non-project action that would apply throughout the city, wherever police or fire stations are existing or permitted.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposal is a non-project action that would allow temporary relocation of fire and police stations city-wide; allow resumption of existing permitted uses that are temporarily interrupted or displaced by a permitted temporary use; and amend certain development standards..

The following approval is 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**

Proposal Description

The City of Seattle Fleets and Facilities Department and the Fire Department are proposing a number of new fire stations for various City neighborhoods to replace existing fire station facilities. While new fire station structures are being constructed on the existing fire station sites, fire fighting facilities must be temporarily relocated to other sites within the neighborhoods served. Several minor changes to the Land Use Code are proposed to address the temporary relocation of fire stations. The changes would also apply to police stations, although there are no current proposals for replacement of police stations.

The proposed amendments would accomplish the following:

- Extend the time limit allowed for temporary use of a site as a fire station from 12 to 24 months;
- Allow resumption of existing legally established uses on a site (if those uses are temporarily interrupted or displaced by all temporary uses as permitted under the regulations for intermittent and temporary uses, including temporary fire stations); and
- Change existing development standards, including curb cut width and location, for emergency vehicles.

Up to fifteen fire stations may eventually be proposed for redevelopment. In some of these cases, temporary facilities for fire stations may be established on site, but other station sites have size constraints requiring temporary relocation of facilities to another site during reconstruction. To the extent that these sites are known, they are primarily located in non-residential zones and on sites that are not within Environmentally Critical Areas. As noted above, existing legally established uses on sites that are displaced by temporary uses will be allowed to resume, except that existing uses in structures that must be demolished to accommodate the temporary use will be allowed to resume only under current Land Use Code standards. While some of the probable sites of temporary fire stations are occupied by uses that may be nonconforming to development standards, it does not appear that many existing nonconforming uses will be affected by the proposals.

The proposed amendments are consistent in policy intent regarding the current treatment of public facilities in the Code, while providing greater flexibility for providing and upgrading these important City services.

#### Public Comment

Proposed changes to the Land Use Code require City Council approval. Public comment will be taken on the proposed amendments at a future City Council Public Hearing.

#### **ANALYSIS - SEPA**

The disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made in an environmental checklist submitted by the proponent, dated June 12, 2008. The following describes the analysis conducted to determine if the proposal is likely to have a probable significant adverse environmental impact. This threshold determination is based on:

- the proposal, as described above and in memoranda;
- the information contained in the SEPA checklist;
- additional information, such as analyses prepared by City staff; and
- the experience of DPD analysts in reviewing similar documents and actions.

This is a substantive change to the Land Use Code, to allow temporary relocation of fire and police stations city-wide, as well as to allow resumption of existing permitted uses that are temporarily interrupted or displaced by a permitted temporary use. This amendment may result in potential impacts and warrants further discussion.

### Short-term Impacts

As a non-project action, the proposed amendment will not have any short-term impact on the environment. Future development affected by this legislation and subject to SEPA will be required to address short-term impacts on the environment.

### Long-term Impacts

Long-term impacts of this code amendment are expected to be minor. The discussion below evaluates the potential long-term impacts that could result from differences in future development patterns due to the proposed amendments.

*Natural Environment* (Earth, Air, Water, Plants and Animals, Energy, Natural Resources, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Noise, Releases of Toxic or Hazardous Materials)

The proposed changes would result in no direct impacts, and are unlikely to result in significant indirect or cumulative adverse impacts related to earth, air (including greenhouse gas emissions), water, plants/animals, fisheries, energy, natural resources, sensitive areas, noise, or releases of toxic/hazardous substances. The proposed amendment is a non-project action that would allow temporary relocation of fire and police stations city-wide, as well as allow resumption of existing permitted uses that are temporarily interrupted or displaced by a permitted temporary use. Since the amendments apply city-wide, it is possible that elements of the natural environment on future sites identified for temporary use could be impacted. Development of specific projects on individual sites would be subject to the City's existing regulations, such as the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Ordinance, the Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance, and Noise Ordinance, and will be subject to environmental review (if it meets or exceeds thresholds for environmental review).

*Built Environment* (Land & Shoreline Use, Height/Bulk/Scale, Transportation, Public Services and Utilities)

The intent of the proposal is to allow temporary relocation of fire and police stations city-wide, as well as to allow resumption of existing permitted uses that are temporarily interrupted or displaced by a permitted temporary use. The temporary relocation of fire and police facilities would not involve construction of permanent structures. The regulations proposed to allow resumption of existing permitted uses after termination of an approved temporary use would not allow any expansion or change of these uses. In the event of demolition of existing structures, the previous uses would not be allowed to resume without conforming to current standards of the Land Use Code. Development of specific projects on individual sites is subject to the City's existing regulations and will be subject to environmental review (if it meets or exceeds thresholds for environmental review). It is unlikely that any projects will be proposed within the Shoreline District. Thus, any direct or indirect impacts to land and shoreline use or height, bulk, and scale are expected to be minimal.

The proposed Code amendments would result in no substantial direct impacts and are unlikely to result in indirect or cumulative significant adverse impacts related to transportation or public services/utilities. Temporary fire and police stations would substitute for the permanent stations

being rebuilt on their permanent sites and thus would not be likely to add to demands for transportation, public services, or utilities. Traffic patterns may shift slightly, but the location of temporary fire and police stations in the same neighborhoods as the permanent stations would keep the transportation impacts of the stations broadly similar to existing and future conditions. Any localized impacts due to station relocations would be temporary, and are expected to be minor. Existing permitted uses temporarily displaced by a permitted temporary use would not be allowed to change or expand and therefore also would not be likely to change impacts to transportation, public services or utilities. Development of specific projects on individual sites is subject to the City's existing regulations and will be subject to environmental review (if it meets or exceeds thresholds for environmental review).

*Consistency with the Seattle Comprehensive Plan*

SEPA Land Use Policy states that the City's policy is to ensure that proposed uses in development projects are reasonably compatible with surrounding uses and are consistent with any applicable, adopted goals and policies in Section B of the land use element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan regarding Land Use Regulation for the area in which the project is located (SMC 25.05.675J). The proposal applies to property city-wide and primarily involves public facilities. Therefore it is appropriate to consider the goals and policies for public facilities.

The goals and policies for public facilities are set forth in Section A-3 of the Land Use Element and state the City's goals and policies for the development of Land Use Code provisions for public facilities and small institutions. Policy LU 14 is to allow small institutions and public facilities that are determined to be compatible with the function, character and scale of the area in which they are located. The proposed legislation facilitates continued operation of essential emergency services, such as fire and police protection, within the neighborhoods they serve, by providing reasonable temporary use of property for these services while new stations on existing sites are rebuilt or remodeled.

**DECISION - SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist, code amendment, 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 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).

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS – SEPA**

None.

Signature: \_\_[Signature on file]\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_June 26, 2008\_\_  
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Department of Planning and Development