



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Applicant Name: Department of Planning and Development

Address of Proposal: Amendments to the Land Use Code to allow a 35-foot height limit subject to certain conditions for a woodshop associated with an institution located in a Lowrise zone.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

This is a non-project proposal to allow wood shops that are accessory to an institution and are located in Lowrise zones, to have a maximum permitted height of 35 feet. An additional 10 feet would be permitted for a pitched roof with a minimum slope of 4 to 12 (the pitch of the roof rises 4 inches for every 12 inches of horizontal distance).

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Environmental Conditions - 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 INFORMATION

Background

Wood shops accessory to an institution provide a forum for instruction on building techniques, where students use materials and tools to make structures and other finished products. Trades that provide wood shop training include cabinet making, carpentry, boat building, and marine carpentry. Materials used are predominantly wood, but limited use of other materials such as fiberglass and metal are also included.

Marine carpentry (boat building in particular) facilities require an increased height limit to accommodate different sizes and types of boats. Training the local workforce in building and repairing these boats depends on exposure to the use of modern equipment and to work on different types and sizes of boats. Modern facilities require more space, in particular height. A new facility with an open wood shop built at the proposed height limit would also help promote good building design with clerestories allowing for more natural light in the facility.

Proposal Description

This non-project proposal would allow wood shops that are accessory to an institution and are located in Lowrise zones, to have a maximum permitted height of 35 feet. An additional 10 feet would be permitted for a pitched roof with a minimum slope of 4:12. Buildings that are 35 feet tall will be required to set back 20 feet from all property lines.

Currently, Seattle's Land Use Code allows gymnasiums and auditoriums associated with an institution to be 35 feet in height if all portions of the structure above the height limit of the zone are set back at least 20 feet from all property lines. The proposed addition of wood shops to these provisions is limited in that it would apply to only those lots zoned Lowrise. In addition, there are a limited number of existing institutions that either have wood shop facilities and support a carpentry or boat-building program, or have a curriculum that offers this type of instruction.

While the definition of institution in the Land Use Code (23.84A.018) includes a variety of institution uses, only community colleges are anticipated to offer vocational training of the sort that would need a wood shop built according to the proposed amendment. Currently only the Seattle Central and South Seattle Community Colleges have established woodworking or marine carpentry programs.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

This proposal is an adoption of legislation and is defined as a non-project action. The SEPA Ordinance requires a threshold determination for any proposal that meets the definition of action that is not categorically exempt. SMC 25.05.800 does not specifically address whether this action is categorically exempt, and therefore DPD must determine whether the proposal would have any probable significant adverse environmental impact.

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist. The information in the checklist, a copy of the proposed text changes, the Director's Report and Recommendation and the experience of DPD staff form the basis for this analysis and decision. The proposal is a non-project action that does not involve any construction. However, individual projects subject to the provisions of this amendment may be reviewed for their site-specific environmental impacts.

Aesthetics

Currently, the code allows a 35-foot height limit for gymnasiums and auditoriums associated with an institution. Allowing wood shop facilities a similar height exception fits with the intent behind the exception; to allow the occasional larger, more modern structures associated with an institution to exceed the maximum height limit in Lowrise zones. The change in roof pitch from 3:12 to 4:12 is proposed in order to be consistent with recent changes to single-family development standards and pending changes to the multifamily code. A 4:12 roof pitch is slightly steeper than a 3:12 pitch and is more compatible with development in and around residential zones.

The requirement for a 20-foot setback from all property lines will mitigate any height, bulk and scale impacts that would otherwise result from development using the proposed amendment. Adoption of this amendment is expected to result in a limited number of facilities built to the proposed height and any development above the threshold for environmental review (SEPA) would undergo review to address location and building-specific issues of height, bulk, and scale.

Land Use

Provisions, including height limits for multifamily residential uses, will not be changed by the proposed legislation. While the proposal will allow additional height for one specific accessory use, wood shops accessory to an institution, a limited number of sites are likely to be affected.

The SEPA checklist identifies Seattle Comprehensive Plan goals that relate to the proposed legislation. An increase in height for wood shops in Lowrise zones is consistent with the following policies of the Comprehensive Plan:

Economic Development Element

- EDG6 Develop a highly trained and well educated local work force that effectively competes for meaningful and productive employment, earns a living wage and meets the needs of business.
- ED19 Support employability development and entry-level career development efforts for low-income youth and adults, people of color, women, individuals with disabilities and the homeless.
- ED23 Encourage and facilitate the development of programs for dislocated workers to assist in a successful transition to new jobs.

Human Development Element

- HD19 Work with community colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning to promote life-long learning opportunities for community members and encourage the broadest possible use of libraries, community centers, schools, and other existing facilities throughout the city, focusing on development of these resources in urban village areas.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have also been considered, and no significant changes to GHG emissions are expected. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review) and existing odor and emissions requirements currently contained in the Land Use Code and promulgated by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency.

Traffic

DPD does not anticipate significant traffic impacts associated with increasing the height limit for wood shops.

Conclusion

The SEPA checklist addresses each of the environmental policies relevant to the proposed ordinance. It is anticipated that there will be only one parcel impacted by this proposed amendment, although other development opportunities could be identified in the future. Environmental impacts for individual development projects exceeding SEPA thresholds will be identified and mitigated as appropriate during project-specific environmental review. Overall, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed amendment.

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.

Signature: (signature on file)
William K. Mills, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: March 19, 2009