



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3003650

Applicant Name: Eric Nothdurft, LMN Architects
For the University of Washington

Address of Proposal: 1200 NE Pacific Street (West Campus Parking Garage expansion)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit for a five-story expansion to an existing parking garage (West Campus), including 12,000 sq.ft. of administrative office and a 113,212 sq.ft. parking garage addition for 324 vehicles. A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) has been prepared by the University of Washington.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - to approve, condition or deny pursuant to [25.05.660](#) – Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter [25.05](#)

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS¹

 DNS with conditions

 DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

¹ The University of Washington Capital Projects Office prepared a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS), published October 2005. The University published its final SEIS on April 20, 2006.

BACKGROUND DATA

Existing Conditions

The project site is located on the grounds of the University of Washington (UW), in an area referred to as the South/Southwest campus. This particular site is bounded by NE Pacific Street on the north, 15th Ave NE on the east, NE Boat St on the south, and Brooklyn Ave NE on the west. The University's [Campus Master Plan](#) (2003) identifies the site as #68S and depicts the project site variously as an opportunity for either enhanced open space or possible academic or mixed uses. In addition, the plan illustrates an opportunity for a pedestrian corridor immediately south of the project site along Skamania Lane. Skamania Lane extends generally in an east-west direction along the south edge of the project site from Brooklyn Ave NE across 15th Ave NE and continues through the new William H. Foege Building (former Bioengineering and Genome Research Sciences Building) to the east.

The site is currently occupied by a parking garage in the northwest corner of the site, academic buildings devoted to oceanography research, surface parking and construction staging associated with the Foege building. The site and general vicinity were subjects of the "Southwest Campus Master Plan" (1993), which contemplated [street vacations](#) of University Way NE and 15th Ave NE, and a rededication of a reoriented 15th Avenue East (enacted 2001). A physical remnant of the original University Way exists south of NE Pacific St as the east entrance to the existing parking garage.

The majority of the University's campus is to the north and east of the site. North of the site are three arterial intersections, where NE Pacific Street connects with 15th Ave NE, University Way NE, and Brooklyn Ave NE. To the north across NE Pacific St is the Burke Gilman Trail. To the east beyond the new Foege Building is the UW Medical Center. To the west of the site are academic buildings devoted to computing and marine studies. To the south across NE Boat Street is Portage Bay, fringed by marinas, waterfront access, and accessory parking.

The University of Washington Campus Master Plan and the City's Land Use Map identify this area as having a Major Institution Overlay with a height limit of 50 feet (MIO-50). Adjacent rights of way are improved with hard surface roadways, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. There are street trees along Brooklyn (Pin Oaks) and along Pacific (Zelkovas), and along 15th (Little-leaf Lindens, recently planted) which are to remain. There is a large Deodar Cedar located on site: it is not considered "exceptional" per SMC [25.11](#) and is proposed to be removed.

Proposal

The project involves a five-level, approximately 113,000 gsf addition to the existing parking garage to accommodate 324 additional vehicles. The proposed structure also includes 12,000 sq.ft. of administrative office space, slated for use by the University's Transportation and Parking Services Department.

Exterior building materials would include post-tension concrete slabs and horizontally oriented tension cables. Screening is not included in the preferred alternative discussed by the Draft Supplemental EIS, though it is shown as an "add alternative" on elevation drawings submitted as part of the Master Use Permit application.

The most prominent vehicular entry to the existing and proposed garage is from the north, from the vacated portion of University Way NE. Another access to the existing garage is on the west side, from Brooklyn Ave NE. A third access is proposed from 15th Ave NE, approximately 130 feet south of the intersection with NE Pacific St. All parking in the existing garage and the proposed expansion would be accessible from any of the three entries.

Public Comment

DPD received one comment letter from the public prior to preparation of this decision. The letter is from the University District Community Council and was apparently also endorsed by the City-University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC). It raises concerns related to public views of Portage Bay, increases in single-occupancy-vehicle trips, and uses identified for the site by the UW Campus Master Plan.

ANALYSIS – STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)

In October 2005, the University of Washington issued its Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the West Campus Parking Garage expansion, incorporating by reference the University of Washington Master Plan Seattle Campus 2002-2012 [Final EIS](#). Project specific environmental impacts of the garage expansion have been disclosed and analyzed in the FSEIS prepared by the University of Washington, acting as Lead Agency. The University issued the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) on April 20, 2006.

The Seattle SEPA Ordinance provides substantive authority to require mitigation of adverse environmental impacts resulting from a proposed project (SMC [25.05.655](#) and [25.05.660](#)). Mitigation, when required, must be related to specific environmental impacts identified in an environmental document and may only be imposed to the extent that a given impact is attributable to a proposal, and to the extent that the mitigation is reasonable and capable of being accomplished. Additionally, mitigation may be imposed only when based on policies, plans and regulations as enunciated in SMC 25.05.665 to SMC 25.05.675 inclusive (SEPA Overview Policy, SEPA Cumulative Impacts Policy, SEPA Specific Environmental Policies). In some instances, local, state or federal regulatory requirements will provide sufficient mitigation of an impact and additional mitigation imposed through SEPA may not be necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Elements of the environment considered in the Draft SEIS include: earth, air quality, water, plants and animals, energy, environmental health, noise/vibration, land and shoreline use, land use-relationship to plans and policies, aesthetics, light/glare and shadows, historic and cultural resources, transportation, circulation, parking, and public services and utilities. Please refer to the Draft and FSEIS for a complete description of effects of the proposed alternative.

The information provided by the University and its consultants, public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar proposals form the basis for review of this proposal. The potential environmental impacts disclosed in the Draft and FSEIS are discussed below.

Short-Term Impacts

Construction activities described in the preferred alternative could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and stormwater runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and public utilities; and a small temporary increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction workers' vehicles. Many of these impacts are limited in scope and are addressed by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project, such as the Noise Ordinance, SMC [25.08](#), the Stormwater, Drainage, and Erosion Control Code, SMC [22.802](#), the Street Use Ordinance, SMC [Title 15](#), and the Building and Construction Codes, SMC [Title 22](#). In addition to these existing codes and policies, the University has incorporated several measures into its proposal to further mitigate construction-related impacts noted in each section. Among these, DPD identifies various mitigations that are appropriately applied as conditions of the Master Use Permit.

Earth

The University indicates that the excavation and export of soil material off-site and import of structural fill material would result in approximately 5,500 cubic yards of material being trucked to and from the site. The geotechnical discussion included in the FSEIS (pg 23) indicates that extensive site excavations and stockpiling of materials have the potential to create localized erosion. Geotechnical investigations did show some evidence of unstable soils on portions of the site, though it states that the potential for earthquake-induced slope instability or ground surface fault rupture at the site are low. The FSEIS also notes the presence on the site of subsurface soils contaminated by hydrocarbons, likely from underground storage tanks of a gas station that once occupied the site. Available documentation indicates that most contamination exists well below the area of proposed site disturbance, and that any underground storage tanks do not likely contain recoverable liquid fuels. Nevertheless, the FSEIS proposes a voluntary cleanup program relative to affected, onsite contaminated soils, consistent with the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, [173-340 WAC](#)). DPD considers adherence to the provisions of the MTCA to be adequate mitigation in this regard.

Erosion could occur during construction, primarily if construction were to occur during wet weather. Temporary Erosion and Sedimentation Control Measures (TESC) would be implemented to reduce the risk of construction-related erosion. Without mitigation, short-term construction impacts in terms of soil erosion and slope stability could be adverse. Therefore the University's FSEIS identifies mitigation measures that the University will institute to mitigate those impacts. The FSEIS notes the mitigating elements and proposed mitigating practices on pg 44.

Pursuant to the Overview Policy, SMC [25.05.665](#), and the Construction Impacts Policy, SMC [25.05.675B](#), compliance with the Stormwater, Drainage, and Erosion Control Code as it relates to best management practices during construction above will be sufficient to mitigate construction related earth impacts and no additional conditions are warranted.

Air Quality

Construction of the West Campus Garage Expansion will result in localized short-term increases in particulates, in which carbon monoxide could temporarily affect the quality in the vicinity.

Construction activities that would contribute to these impacts include excavation, grading, soil compaction, and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment (i.e., generators and compressors). Construction activities will result in an increase in suspended particulates, which could affect the quality of air in the vicinity. Several of the erosion control measures noted above will also serve to decrease potential impacts to air quality resulting from dust.

During construction, on-site activity and periodic traffic delays on adjacent streets could contribute to slight increases in localized vehicle emissions but it is not expected that these emissions would result in a violation of any local ambient air quality standards.

The DSEIS notes various mitigating measures on page 29, which DPD considers to be feasible standard practices commensurate with this scale of development. Pursuant to the Overview Policy, SMC [25.05.665](#), and the Construction Impacts Policy, SMC [25.05.675B](#), in order to limit the amount of dust associated with grading, excavation and stockpiling of soil, further mitigation in the form of frequent watering of exposed soils and/or covering of stockpiled soil piles with construction film or similar material will be required. Construction equipment and haul trucks should be washed, as needed, before exiting the site to minimize dust impacts.

Noise

The site is located near arterial streets. Automobile traffic results in high ambient noise levels in the area. Residential neighborhoods are located at least 1500' to the north of the site. Nearby residential receptors include those single and multifamily properties located to the north across NE 40th Street. These residential uses experience similar high ambient noise levels.

Short-term noise and vibration from construction equipment and construction activity (e.g., backhoes, trucks, concrete mixers, generators, and pneumatic hand tools) would occur as a result of construction and construction-related traffic.

In accordance with City of Seattle regulations (SMC [25.08.425](#)) construction activities would be limited to applicable noise levels during nighttime (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM and 10 PM to 9 AM on weekends).

DPD determines that few, if any, residents are near enough to the site that they would be adversely impacted by construction noise. The existing limitations on evening and weekend construction noise should be adequate to mitigate noise impacts resulting from construction.

The FSEIS indicates no significant adverse noise impacts would result from the proposed project. Pursuant to the Overview Policy, SMC [25.05.665](#), and the Construction Impacts Policy, SMC [25.05.675B](#), no additional conditioning is warranted.

Construction Traffic

The FSEIS indicates that excavation, export and import of soil would result in approximately 28,800 cubic yards of material being trucked to or from the site. Exported and imported material would be hauled by a combination of 10 yard and 20 yard trucks. Approximately 1600 truck trips would be spread over a six-month timeframe. Construction vehicles and haul trucks would enter the project site from NE Northlake Place. Occasional closures of adjacent roadways and sidewalks may be required.

Temporary closure of sidewalks and/or traffic lane(s) is typically addressed through Seattle Department of Transportation permits. The Burke Gilman Trail would not be closed for construction. A pedestrian circulation plan showing how existing routes will be altered during construction and notification/signage regarding alternative routes shall be submitted to DPD for review and approval.

It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities. Pursuant to the Overview Policy (SMC [25.05.665](#)) and the Construction Impacts Policy (SMC [25.05.675B](#)), project approval will be conditioned upon the University and/or responsible party(s) securing timely approval of a Truck Trip Plan. To ensure that construction related truck traffic does not adversely affect traffic operations, one element of this plan shall be a requirement that truck trips be scheduled to avoid peak periods of 7:00-9:00 AM and 3:00-6:00 PM, Monday through Friday and shall avoid coinciding with Husky football games (before and after the games).

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are anticipated from the proposal such as increased bulk and scale on the site, increased demand on public services and utilities; increased light, glare and shadow; and increased energy consumption. Many of these impacts are limited in scope and not considered significant. Some of these impacts are also addressed by other codes and policies such as the Stormwater, Drainage, and Erosion Control Code, SMC [22.802](#) (stormwater runoff from new impervious surfaces); the [Campus Master Plan](#) (height; setbacks; parking); and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption). Some additional discussion is warranted.

Views

The Campus Master Plan (2003) identifies significant views and vistas. In the vicinity of the Southwest Campus, such views are predominantly to the south, toward Portage Bay. On page 59, the Master Plan identifies the Portage Bay Vista, an allotted area that aligns with the raised plaza of the Physics Block, along the east side of the new Foege Biosciences building, toward the water. As currently provided, the Portage Bay Vista appears to be consistent with Condition 3 of the University's Property Use and Development Agreement (PUDA), adopted as part of a [street vacation](#) process. It appears that the preferred alternative would have no impact on the identified Portage Bay Vista. The PUDA condition also references a view corridor along the realigned 15th Ave NE, but it does not prescribe any specific setback or other characteristics of this corridor. University staff submits that the rededicated 15th Ave NE right of way is itself the required view corridor. As such, the identified view corridor will be unaffected.

SEPA provides authority to mitigate obstructions of public views from several specified public places around the city in certain City parks, scenic routes and viewpoints per SMC [25.05.675 P2a](#). In this case, none of the protected viewpoints would be affected by the project, and no views from scenic routes would be adversely affected, including NE 40th St and segments of 15th Ave NE. Therefore no further mitigation is warranted.

Height Bulk and Scale

Seattle's SEPA Policy on Height, Bulk and Scale provides that development should be reasonably compatible with applicable goals, policies, plans and regulations. Further, development should provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less and more intensive zoning.

The area slopes generally north to south, and allowed zoning envelopes generally step up further to the north, indicating that there are this project presents no concerns with regard to zoning edge conditions.

As a Major Institution, University development is not subject to Design Review, though this project has been subject to comment by the University's architecture review committee. Seen from the north, the project presents a four-story profile, comparable to the existing west campus garage. To the northeast, adjacent to the intersection of 15th Ave NE and NE Pacific St, the proposed garage defers to the corner. The south elevation clearly involves five stories above grade, but its overall bulk is visually mitigated by clear massing distinctions between the two-story administrative offices and the three stories of parking above.

The Campus Master Plan identifies a potential transit station on this site, on what was originally the preferred corridor for Sound Transit's subgrade light rail line. Plans for such a corridor are now focused further east, and Husky Stadium is a more likely location for the transit stop. In this context, project scope and development potential for the site have clearly shifted. The Master Plan identifies an estimated maximum building envelope of 28,000 gsf. The proposed garage expansion involves a new structure of about 100,000 gsf, not including the 25,800 sq.ft. top deck, effectively the structure's roof. The DSEIS appears to justify this discrepancy on page 48 by identifying the structure as "mixed use" and stating that parking may be included in a mixed use structure. The FSEIS appears to imply that the University's total allowed parking quantity is subject to its own limitation (12,300 parking spaces campus-wide – the existing campus parking supply plus the preferred alternative do not exceed this limit), and that structure area devoted to parking is therefore not to be counted toward the estimated maximum building envelope. The proposed garage expansion is within its height limit and provides deeper than required setbacks from street property lines.

While a prominent addition to the urban landscape, the FSEIS indicates that the West Campus Parking Garage Expansion will not result in significant adverse bulk and scale impacts. DPD determines that no further mitigation is warranted, pursuant to SMC [25.05.675 G](#).

Light and Glare

Prior to issuance of the FSEIS, an internal University architectural review committee has reportedly reviewed and commented on the project. While DPD has no minutes or other written material related to this review, university staff and consultants state that screening has been a point of considerable discussion.

On page 60 (Aesthetics), the DSEIS states "...[A]t this point in the project planning process, unlike the adjacent West Campus Parking Garage, there is no budget for the comprehensive screening of automobiles that would be parked on levels of the proposed West Campus Parking Garage expansion. While not necessarily an adverse impact, no screening would alter the

character of views into the project. ... [A] limited amount of screening would be provided by the proposed 11-strand cable-rail car barriers In addition, as the trees and shrubs that are proposed as part of this project mature, limited screening of vehicles would occur during part of the year for vehicles parked on the lower levels of the structure. Nonetheless, views of automobiles parked on the parking levels would be visible from the key viewpoints.”

DPD staff notes that submitted Master Use Permit drawings show screening panels covering the majority of the structure, though such panels are qualified as “add alts”, presumably desired but otherwise non-required project elements. The project architect states that such screening would consist primarily of panels of vertically oriented aluminum bars, or “fins”, each approximately 1.25" deep and spaced 1" apart. The effect of the screening would be to allow light to pass roughly perpendicular to the screens, but to block or diffuse light shining at other angles. Nighttime lighting from vehicles and ceiling fixtures would likely be perceptible more as a glow instead of shining directly from its sources.

DPD staff further notes that submitted Master Use Permit drawings omit a landscape plan. A plan supplied by the architect shows low shrubs and deciduous trees along the project’s north and east edges. Such plantings are likely to be appropriately chosen, given the constraints of a relatively narrow strip of available soil between the proposed foundations and the sidewalk. However, the proposed plantings do not appear to reflect the stated mitigation of the DSEIS. Existing street trees are relatively low, they are outboard of the sidewalks, and they do not reach beyond the first levels of the proposed garage. Further, they are deciduous and would only serve as screening for a portion of the year.

Regarding potential light and glare impacts, the DSEIS addresses light impacts briefly, focusing primarily on solar glare. On page 64 it states, “It is anticipated that the amount of light that would emanate from within the proposed building would be similar to that of the existing West Campus Parking Garage. All parking levels would be lighted for security. Lighting associated with the rooftop parking level would contain hoods or cut-outs to direct light downward and away from adjacent land uses.” Subsequent discussion with the project architect determined that proposed fixtures would likely be high-pressure sodium lights, in order to match the color and intensity emitted by the existing garage.

Notwithstanding the above analysis, DPD determines that an unscreened structured parking garage of the proposed project’s scale is not likely to be a substantial source of nighttime light impacts to the adjacent environment. Required mitigations identified in the FSEIS and/or on Master Use Permit plans and design drawings do provide some limited mitigation, adequate to address some portion of spillover light. DPD therefore determines that no further mitigation is warranted, per SMC [25.05.675 K](#).

DPD concurs with the analysis in the DSEIS that the potential reflective glare impacts of the preferred alternative are appropriately mitigated as indicated on page 72.

Traffic and transportation

The DSEIS traffic analysis compares impacts associated with the preferred and no action alternatives, concluding that the proposed garage expansion would result in relatively minor adverse impacts on these intersections’ levels of service (LOS, see table 16 on page 106). The

largest increase in projected wait-times would be on 6th Ave NE and NE Northlake Way, where average morning peak hour wait times would likely increase about 7 seconds. This intersection is a four-way stop and already operates at LOS F. The FSEIS concludes that the intersection is insufficiently signaled, but indicates that traffic volumes associated with the project would not be a significant factor in further diminished LOS. Another affected intersection is NE Pacific St and 15th Ave NE, where the average evening peak hour wait time would likely increase about 5 seconds, from 67.1 to 72.0 seconds. The study determines that all other intersections would be marginally affected. DPD concurs with the traffic analysis and determines that no mitigation is warranted.

DECISION – SEPA

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Master Use Permit plans submitted for the project, public comment, and responses to requests for information all comprise DPD's record. Pursuant to SMC [25.05.600 D](#), DPD relies on the environmental documents and technical reports prepared by the University of Washington in their role as lead agency. DPD has determined that the FSEIS issued and utilized for the environmental analysis of the Research and Technology Building and permitted herein, is adequate. The SEPA conditions listed below are imposed based on Master Use Permit (MUP) plans as well as on all environmental documentation submitted to date.

SEPA CONDITIONS

Prior to Issuance of a Construction Permit

1. Submit to DPD for review and approval a Truck Trip Plan which delineates the routes and the travel hours that trucks carrying project-related materials will employ to minimize negative traffic and noise impacts. Scheduled truck traffic shall avoid peak periods of 7:00 - 9:00 am and 3:00 - 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday and shall avoid coinciding with Husky football games (before and after the games).
2. Submit to DPD for review and approval a pedestrian circulation plan showing how existing routes will be altered during construction and how users will be notified of changes to existing routes and alternative routes in the immediate area.

During Construction

None.

Signature: (signature on file)
Scott Ringgold, Land Use Planner,
Department of Planning and Development

Date: May 18, 2006