

Seattle Public Utilities
Re-Construction of the North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS)
SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)

Summary of Proposed Project

The proposed project would replace the existing North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS) with new and additional facilities on the existing parcel and an adjacent parcel to the east, located at 1550 North 34th Street. The parking lot north of North 35th Street between Carr Place North and Woodlawn Avenue North would continue to be used for parking. This threshold determination applies to all actions that are required to accomplish the project, including but not limited to the issuance of regulatory permits, street vacation decisions, budget decisions, and contracting decisions.

Background:

Seattle's North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS) is more than 40 years old, is subject to frequent breakdowns, and is becoming less reliable with age. In addition, the outdated design is inefficient and lacks the capacity to meet Seattle's future recycling and waste-handling needs.

Description of Proposal:

The proposed action would replace the existing North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS) with new and additional facilities on the existing parcel and an adjacent parcel to the east, located at 1550 North 34th Street. The parking lot north of North 35th Street between Carr Place North and Woodlawn Avenue North would continue to be used for parking. The project is expected to be constructed in three stages: demolition, site preparation, and building construction.

Existing structures would be demolished before rebuilding new facilities. Construction would include the new transfer station building, scales, access roads, operations yard, landscaping, and other associated facilities on the existing NRDS property. During the construction period, transfer operations would shift to the South Recycling and Disposal Station (SRDS). The new transfer building would be fully enclosed except for vehicle entrances on the sides. The building height and development setbacks would be within the limits allowed for the area as zoned. The site would also contain a small fueling station for onsite equipment to replace an existing fueling station. Carr Place North between North 34th Street and North 35th Street would be vacated and incorporated into the facility site. Recycling facilities and operations, and offices would be located on the property at 1550 North 34th Street.

Primary vehicular access to the NRDS would be from North 34th Street. A secondary access for transfer trailers would be from North 35th Street.

Analysis - SEPA:

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist dated April 9, 2008. The information in the checklist and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar project actions form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Short-term Impacts

The Proposed Action may have minor, adverse impacts on the environment from construction activities, including potential impacts to noise, air quality, water quality, and environmental health.

The SEPA environmental checklist prepared for the project indicated that the construction phase would include numerous activities, each generating a variety of air pollutants, including emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), fine particulate matter (PM₁₀), very fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), sulfur (SO), fugitive dust, mobile source air toxics (MSATs), or odorous compounds. However, the checklist, and an accompanying air quality technical report, concluded that due to the probable limited level of emissions and the temporary nature of these impacts, they are expected to be minor and are not considered to be significant.

The SEPA environmental checklist also indicated that water quality in the area of the project could be impacted by pollutants from excavation, temporary dewatering, stormwater runoff, demolition of buildings and pavement, and materials leaking or spilling from construction equipment. However, an approved temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) plan and Spill Prevention Plan would be in place before construction begins. These plans, combined with collection of any water on site and discharge of the collected water into the combined sanitary sewer system would minimize impacts to receiving water quality, and therefore impacts would not be significant.

The SEPA environmental checklist also indicated that environmental health could be impacted during construction from spills of small amounts of materials that may be stored onsite for construction purposes including gasoline and diesel fuels, hydraulic fluids, oils, lubricants, solvents, paints, and other chemical products. Contaminated soils, sediments, or groundwater could also be exposed during excavation. However, a spill control and countermeasures (SPCC) plan would be developed to control spills on site during construction, and any contaminated soils encountered during construction would be excavated and disposed of in a manner consistent with the level of contamination and in accordance with state regulatory requirements by a qualified contractor(s) and/or City staff. State regulations concerning contaminated soil include the Model Toxics Control Act (Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code [WAC]) and the Dangerous Waste Regulations (Chapter 173-303 WAC). Therefore significant impacts on environmental health would be very unlikely to occur.

The SEPA checklist also concluded that the construction phases would generate a wide range of noise levels, depending upon the specific activities, with the demolition of the existing concrete transfer building being the loudest activity. However, since short-term

noise from construction equipment would be limited to the allowable maximum levels set forth in the City of Seattle's Noise Control Ordinance (SMC Chapter 25.08), impacts from noise would not be significant. During construction, noise from construction equipment would not occur between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. weekdays, and 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. weekends.

Seattle Public Utilities would implement the following measures to minimize environmental impacts during the construction period:

- Adhere to Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations contained in Sections 9.11, 9.15 and 9.20 of their Regulation 1 which require the use of best available control technology to control fugitive dust emissions.
- Spray water over the debris during demolition of buildings, if necessary to minimize dust
- Keep the soil damp during excavation and grading operations, if necessary to minimize dust
- Have paved or rip-rap exit aprons for haul trucks, if necessary to minimize dust and to minimize off-site tracking of material
- Clean vehicle undercarriages and tires before they exit onto public streets, if necessary to prevent off-site tracking of material
- Cover or wet down truck loads of earth if necessary to prevent wind-blown dust
- Maintain all construction machinery in good working order and operate equipment within load limits and engine RPM levels to minimize exhaust smoke
- Adhere to Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 25.08, which prescribes limits to noise and construction activities, while the project is under construction.
- Maintain heavy equipment and its mufflers in good condition.
- Buffer stationary generators or compressors (if they are used) with portable sound barriers if necessary to keep noise levels within regulatory limits
- Prepare and implement a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) for use during construction

- Implement best management practices (BMPs) and comply with the temporary erosion and sedimentation control (TESC) requirements of the City of Seattle's Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), Chapters 22.800–22.808) and Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual (Director's Rule 16-2000).
- Prevent the removal or placement of material in or from surface water or wetlands.
- Develop and implement an approved Spill Prevention Plan prior to the start of construction.
- Develop and implement a Health and Safety Plan before work commences as required by Washington Department of Labor and Industries (Chapter 296-843 WAC).

In summary, potential short term impacts resulting from construction of the proposed facility are likely to be minor, and similar in nature to impacts associated with any construction activity of comparable size and duration.

Long-term Impacts

Most long-term impacts of the Proposed Action are expected to be an improvement relative to impacts from existing conditions and from the No-Build condition. The SEPA checklist, and accompanying air quality technical report, indicates that operation of the project would result in emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), fine particulate matter (PM₁₀), very fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), sulfur (SO), fugitive dust, mobile source air toxics (MSATs), or odorous compounds; however, the level of emissions with the project would be equal to or less than the level of emissions without the project due to improvements in the flow of traffic in and out of the facility, reduced vehicle queuing and emissions, new equipment with fewer emissions than those being replaced, facility designs that reduce odors, and increased recycling opportunities.

For reasons that are described in the checklist, the project is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts to the atmosphere in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. However scientific uncertainty exists regarding GHG analysis and information necessary to perform such analysis cannot reasonably be developed in the context of this project application. For that reason, and having considered the severity of possible impacts related to global warming that might occur if the project is developed, the City intends to proceed with the project.

The SEPA checklist, and an accompanying noise technical report, indicates that the new facility would generate noise from a combination of sources, primarily automobile and truck traffic using the stations, unloading and consolidating recyclable materials such as glass and metals, and the machinery used to process the solid waste for transfer to the intermodal facility. However, the SEPA checklist and noise technical report conclude

that after project completion, noise levels would be less than today and less than the City of Seattle's Maximum Permissible Sound Level of 60 dBA at residential receivers due to improved facility design, use of noise buffers, and an improved site layout.

The SEPA checklist also concludes that because the new station would have an updated and improved stormwater treatment system, the proposed redevelopment (and associated stormwater facility upgrade) would improve the quality of stormwater leaving the site compared to existing conditions. Specifically, pollutant loading in runoff from roadway and parking areas would be reduced due to improved stormwater treatment facilities. Likewise, areas currently used for material handling, transfer, or storage would continue to drain to the combined sanitary sewer/stormwater collection system. Thus, the operation of the reconstructed NRDS would reduce potential adverse impacts on surface waters compared to existing conditions.

The SEPA checklist, and an accompanying transportation technical report, conclude that by the year 2030, completion of the project would increase daily trips, compared to No Action, by 14 to 40 trips, depending on the traffic scenario and analysis day. This increase is primarily due to additional employee trips. However, the traffic impacts associated with the project would be less than the impacts associated with the current facility, and the No-Action scenario, due to improvements in the flow of traffic in and out of the facility, reduced vehicle queuing, and increased recycling opportunities.

The Proposed Action may have a minor impact on views after construction is completed. The SEPA checklist prepared for the project, and an accompanying visual technical report, discusses the potential impacts on views from eight public and private locations around the project site. While full project designs are not finalized, the analysis indicates that some distant downtown skyline views from some of these locations could be changed if the building footprint is expanded east or west, or if the building height is raised within zoning limits. Some of these views may also be changed by development currently proposed south of the project site. None of the public views are "designated" views that are subject to protection under the City's substantive SEPA policies, SMC 25.05.675 (P), and the City does not prohibit or restrict development that might change private views. In short, the proposed facilities may affect some views relative to existing conditions, but the number and nature of views potentially changed is limited and not considered significant.

Seattle Public Utilities would implement the following measures to minimize environmental impacts during the project operation:

- Adhere to SMC 23.50 and 23.47A, which prescribes zone specifications regarding maximum size limitations for industrial and commercial land uses, maximum floor area ratios, setback requirements, venting, and transportation concurrency level-of-service standards.
- Replace the open-sided transfer building with a solid walled structure with an engineered ventilation system.

- Expedite the entrance process to reduce the time that vehicles spend idling in a queue before reaching the transfer building by using one or more of the following: multiple entry lanes; separate entry line for contracted collection trucks; use of radio frequency identification sensors for contracted collection trucks to speed access, and other methods.
- Ensure that the 95th-percentile queues from the NRDS site do not backup onto adjacent roadways during normal operations.
- Minimize evaporation of oils, solvents, and other volatile organic fluids by keeping such items in closed containers.
- Buffer ventilation units with a three-sided enclosure (pointed away from residential areas).
- Adhere to SMC 23.47A.016, which prescribes a 5-foot landscape setback on all sides of the existing NRDS properties that are adjacent to City streets; revegetate exposed soils with drought tolerant grasses, forbs, and shrubs; landscape the site to enhance the aesthetics of the facility, but that minimizes the attraction of wildlife.
- Ensure that all sanitary sewer discharges meet King County Metro pretreatment requirements prior to discharge.
- Include aesthetic architectural features within the NRDS site to decrease the visual prominence of the facility.
- Provide lighting, lighting supports, and fixtures that are both functional and non-intrusive to residents living north of the site and near the proposed employee parking area.

SPU would also implement the following operational procedures:

- Minimize dust by frequently washing down and/or sweeping the operations yard;
- Perform weekly litter pickup patrols on the perimeter of the station.

Conclusion:

The proposed re-construction of the North Recycling and Disposal Station is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts. Construction and operational practices, and design standards, to be implemented by SPU will minimize potential impacts to air quality, noise, water quality, transportation, public views, and neighborhood aesthetics.

Proponent:

Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle Municipal Tower, Suite 4900
PO Box 34018
Seattle, WA 98124-4018
Attn: Henry Friedman, (206) 733-9147

Location of Proposal, including street address, if any:

The proposed project is located between the Fremont and Wallingford neighborhoods in Seattle, north of Lake Union, approximately 2.5 miles north of the City's central business district. The address of the existing station is 1350 North 34th Street. Adjacent properties included in the proposal are located at 1550 North 34th Street and at the northeast corner of Carr Place North and North 35th Street (parcels 4083306055 and 4083306050). The project is located in Section 18, Township 25N, Range 4E.

Lead Agency:

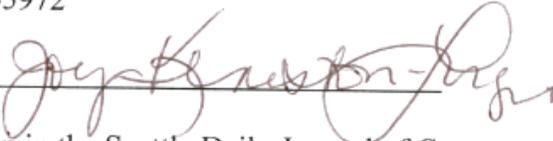
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the lead agency for this proposal, has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other related documents on file with the lead agency. This information may be examined at Seattle Public Utilities offices by contacting the Project Manager listed above.

This DNS is issued under 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the publication date below.

Comments must be submitted by May 1, 2008.

Responsible Official:

Joy Keniston-Longrie
Major Interagency Projects Director
Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle Municipal Tower, Suite 4900
PO Box 34018
Seattle, WA 98124-4018
(206) 684-5972

Signature: 

Date: 4-14-2008

Date of Publication in the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce: April 17, 2008

You may appeal this determination, in writing, no later than May 8, 2008 to:

City Hearing Examiner
PO Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729

There is a \$50 filing fee for the appeal. You should be prepared to make specific factual objections.

Contact the Hearing Examiner at (206) 684-0521 to ask about or to make arrangements to read the procedures for SEPA appeals.