

# **PUBLIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>**

## **MONTLAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DESIGN DEPARTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Project #3039304-SD**

**November 22, 2022**

This report is produced pursuant to the City of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.44.006 F and 23.79). The intent and purpose of this report is to document public comment and make recommendations to the City regarding proposed modifications to development standards to facilitate expansion and modernization of Montlake Elementary School located at 2405 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave E, Seattle, WA 98112.



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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Sections 10-12 of Ordinance 126188, which will remain in effect until December 30, 2022, the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods is authorized to submit this recommendation report to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections in lieu of an advisory committee process.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Project Description

On July 12, 2022, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) submitted a request for departures per SMC 23.79.002 for Montlake Elementary School, located at 2405 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave E, Seattle, WA 98112. The departure request pertains to lot coverage, building height, setbacks, parking quantity, bus and truck loading and unloading, curb cut to service area without parking, bicycle parking quantity, bicycle parking standards, and a changing image message board sign.

The requested departures will modernize the existing landmarked building and construct a new 65,000 square foot addition to the existing building. The proposed addition will accommodate a total capacity of 500 students in Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade to address projected enrollment growth in Seattle Public Schools. Six existing portable classroom structures, one existing cafeteria/lunchroom structure, and one existing greenhouse structure will be demolished to accommodate the new addition.

## 1.2 Site Plan

Montlake Elementary School sits on a 1.65-acre site located at the center of the Montlake neighborhood. It is bounded by E. Calhoun St. to the north, E. McGraw St. to the south, 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E. to the west, and 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave E. to the east. The surrounding area is zoned SF5000 and consists mostly of neighborhood residential with some low-density retail located on 24<sup>th</sup> Ave.

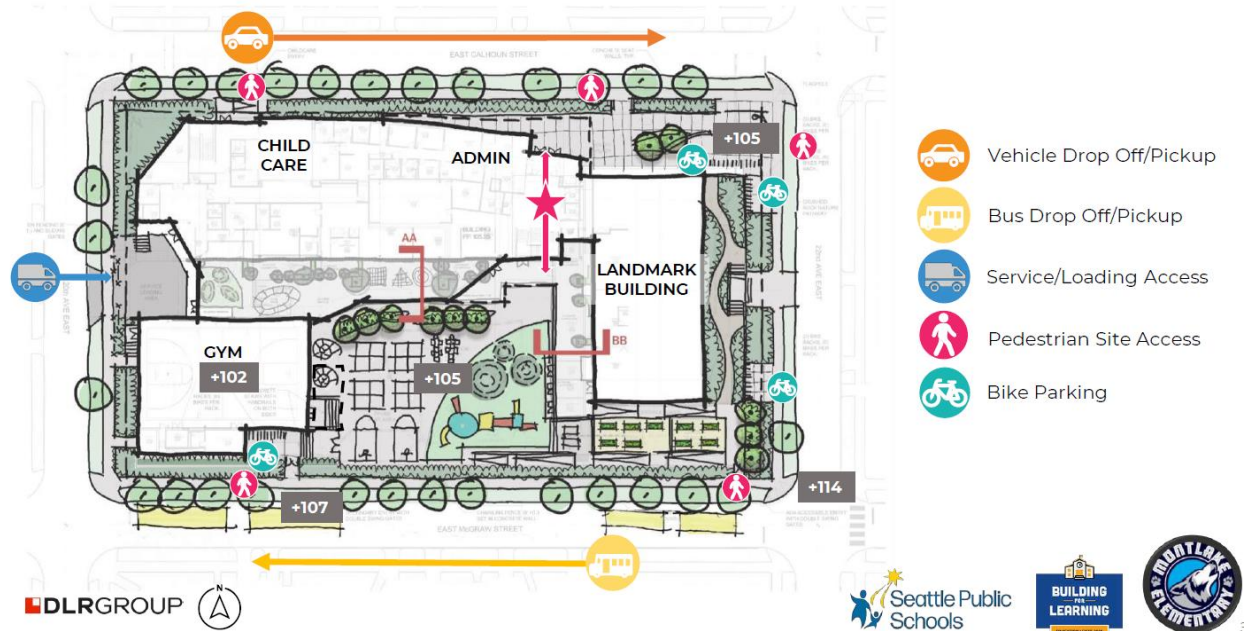
Despite the limited site area, the school grounds feature a small garden, greenhouse and outdoor classroom that are treasured features for the school community.

The new building is expected to match the height of the historic building as well as including features that match the historic building in terms of size and scale. The modernization of the campus will address seismic needs and earthquake safety.



**Exhibit 1 Proposed Site Plan**

## Proposed Site Plan | Site Access



**Exhibit 2 Proposed Site Plan | Site Access**

### 1.3 Neighborhood Characteristics

Montlake is in central Seattle along the Montlake Cut of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. It is bounded to the north by Portage Bay, to the east by the Washington Park Arboretum, and to the south and west by Interlaken Park. Capitol Hill is on the south and west sides, and the University of Washington campus lies across the Montlake Cut to the north. State Route 520 runs through the northern tip of Montlake.





## **1.4 Requests for Departures and Process**

The City administers the Development Standard Departure Process pursuant to SMC 23.44.006F and 23.79. The Code requires that the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) convene a Development Standard Advisory Committee (hereinafter as “the Committee”) when SPS proposes a departure from the development standards identified under the Code. These standards are popularly referred to as the “zoning code.”

The purpose of the Committee is 1) to gather public comment and evaluate the proposed departures for consistency with the objectives and intent of the City’s land use policies to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings; and 2) to develop a report and recommendation to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) from DON. (SMC 23.79.008).

In April 2020, the City Council passed Ordinance 126072, which temporarily allowed certain land use applications to be handled administratively. These provisions (later extended by Ordinance 126188) were part of a larger City effort to expedite permits, respond to economic challenges, and address urgent development needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the DON Director is temporarily authorized to submit this recommendation report to SDCI in lieu of a public advisory committee process. Absent further legislative action, the temporary provisions will expire on December 30, 2022. The content of this report is informed by public comments solicited and reviewed by DON staff.

Following completion of DON’s recommendation report and its transmittal to SDCI, the Director of SDCI will issue a formal report and decision. The SDCI Director will consider the DON report’s recommendations and (1) determine the extent of departure from established development standards that may be allowed, and (2) identify all mitigating measures which may be required. The SDCI Director’s decision is appealable.

## **2. Departures**

### **2.1 Specific District Requests**

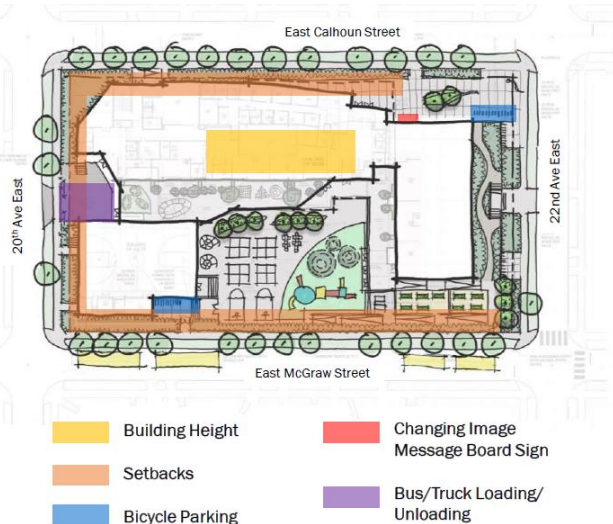
SPS, the Montlake Elementary School community, public listening sessions, student and teacher input, community surveys, and the Design Team all contributed to the development and definition of a project vision: “A Verdant Garden of Change-makers: A place to create, cultivate and connect”:

- 1) Inclusive neighborhood network through safety and accessibility and neighborhood partnerships and engagement.
- 2) Holistic health through connection to nature, comfort and well-being and inclusivity.
- 3) Spirit of place by honoring the landscape and context and culture.
- 4) Cultivating a resilient future through resource conservation and resilience.

To accommodate the project vision and goals of this project, SPS requested the following departures from the development standards found in SMC 23.51B.002.

## Requested Departures Summary

- Departure for Lot Coverage: SMC 23.51B.002.C.2 and 3.**  
Seattle Public Schools (SPS) requests a Departure to allow 45% lot coverage. (In addition, SPS requests that the director waive lot cover restrictions as allowed by SMC to permit an additional 12% for a total of 57% lot coverage.)
- Departure for Building Height: SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c.**  
SPS proposes a departure of 15' above the existing building height to accommodate mechanical and elevator equipment penthouses.
- Departure for Setbacks: SMC 23.51B.002, Table E**  
SPS proposes setbacks of 3 feet along the north property line, 6 feet along the west property line, and 5 feet along the south property line, for a departure of 12 feet along the north property line, 9 feet along the west property line, and 10 feet along the south property line.
- Departure for Vehicular Parking Quantity: SMC 23.54.015, Table C**  
SPS proposes to provide 0 on-site vehicle parking spaces for a departure of 131 spaces.
- Departure for Bus & Truck Loading/Unloading: SMC 23.51B.002.I.2**  
SPS proposes one loading dock berth that is 25 feet wide by 34 feet long measured from the property line for a departure of 6' below the standard loading berth length.



## Requested Departures Summary

- Departure for Curb Cut to Service Area without Parking: SMC 23.54.030.F.2.b.3**  
SPS proposes one new 25 foot wide curb cut with 2.5 foot flares along 20th Ave E to allow access to a service area without parking.
- Departure for Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity: SMC 23.54.015 Table D:**  
SPS proposes 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces for a departure of 25 long-term bicycle parking spaces.
- Departure for Bicycle Parking Standards: SMC 23.54.015.K.2.**  
SPS proposes a secured enclosure for 12 of the 30 long-term spaces provided. Departure requested to allow open, weather protected bike racks for 18 long-term bike parking spaces.
- Departure for Changing Image Message Board Sign: SMC 23.55.020**  
SPS requests a departure to allow one changing image message board sign.

## Departure #1 – Increased lot coverage

### Requested Departure #1 : Lot Coverage

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.C. – Lot Coverage in Single Family Zones

C.2. For new public school construction and additions to existing public school structures on existing public school sites, the maximum lot coverage permitted is the greater of the following:

- The lot coverage permitted in 23.51B.002.C.1 (35% of lot area for structure more than one story); or
- The lot coverage of the former school structures on the site...

C.3. Departures from lot coverage limits may be granted or required pursuant to the procedures and criteria set forth in Chapter 23.79. Up to 45% lot coverage may be allowed for structures of more than one story. Lot coverage restrictions may be waived by the Director as a Type I decision when waiver would contribute to reduced demolition of residential structures.

Departure Requested: Seattle Public Schools requests a Departure to allow 45% lot coverage. (In addition, SPS requests that the director waive lot cover restrictions as allowed by SMC to permit an additional 12% for a total of 57% lot coverage.)

### Requested Departure #1 : Lot Coverage

#### EXISTING LOT COVERAGE

Space	Square Feet
Existing Building	16,943
Cafeteria	1,563
Greenhouse	483
Portable P1	793
Portable P2	784
Portable P3	784
Portable P4	890
Portable P5	784
Portable P6	782

Total Building Area 23,806  
Total Site Area 72,000

Existing Lot Coverage 33%

Existing Lot Coverage is less than allowable by SMC 23.51B.002.C.1

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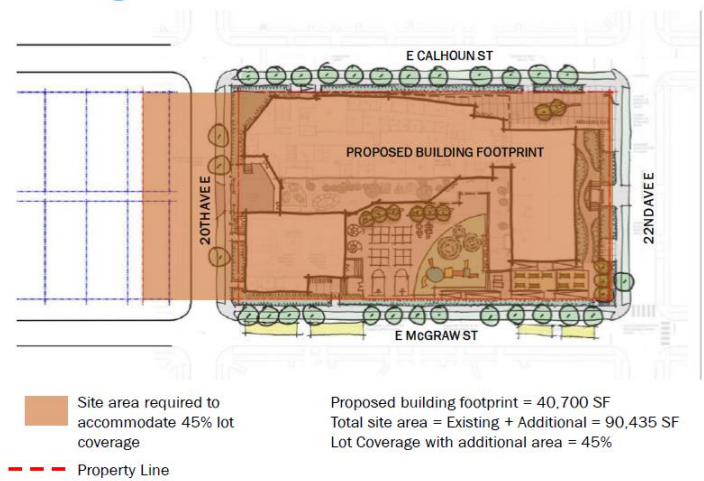


# Requested Departure #1 : Lot Coverage

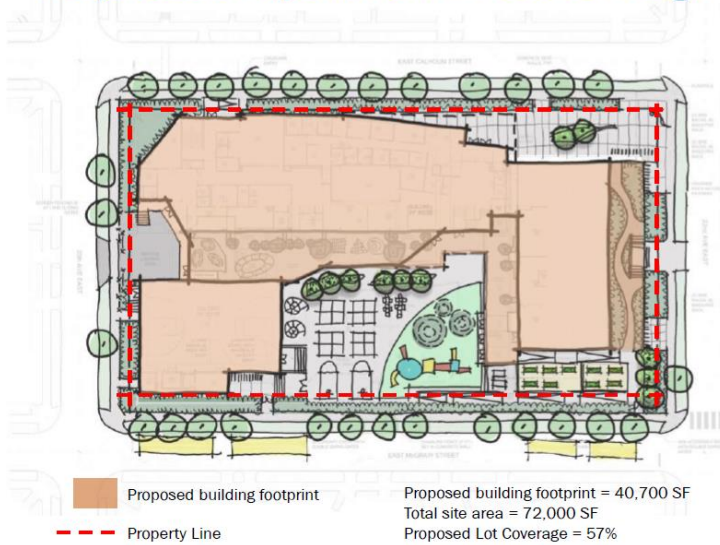
## 45% ALLOWABLE LOT COVERAGE

This graphic shows property extents that would be required to accommodate school program within a 45% lot coverage. An additional 18,500 square feet of property would need to be annexed in order to meet this lot coverage threshold and would require vacating a portion of 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E between E Calhoun and E McGraw Streets, as well as condemning and demolishing two residential properties across 20<sup>th</sup>.

SPS requests a departure to allow 45% lot coverage and that the Director waive lot coverage restrictions to avoid demolition of residential property.



# Requested Departure #1 : Lot Coverage



*Consistency:* The proposed Montlake Elementary School lot coverage has been designed to meet Seattle Public Schools educational program, while minimizing building mass to remain consistent with the intent of the code.

*Relationship:* The proposed design has been created to maximize outdoor play area as well as mitigate building height in a way that is appropriate to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood. The design also takes advantage of existing mature tree cover to reduce the perceived scale of the building.

*Need:* The Montlake Elementary School site area is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 SF or 1.65 acres. This small site area limits the available site square footage to accommodate program square footage without demolishing residential structures.

In order to satisfy the program requirements, Seattle Public Schools proposes a total of 57% lot coverage.



## Requested Departure #1 : Lot Coverage



Perspective View from 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave. E and E McGraw St.



**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS requests a departure to allow 45% lot coverage (In addition, SPS requests that the SDCI Director waive lot coverage restrictions as allowed by the SMC to permit an additional 12% lot coverage, for a total of 57% lot coverage.)

## Departure #2 – Greater than allowed building height

### Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.D. – Height

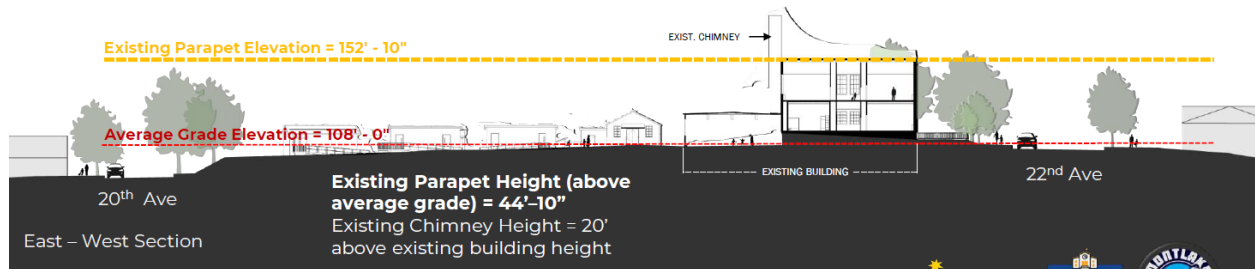
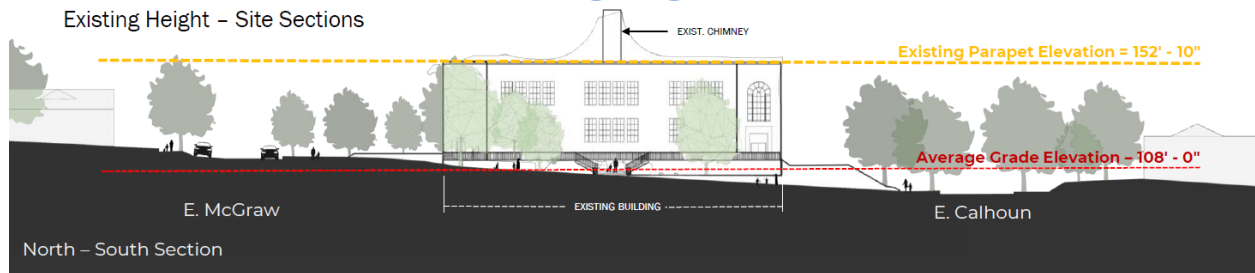
D.1.c. For additions to existing public schools on existing public school sites, the maximum height permitted is the height of the existing school or 35 feet plus 15 feet for a pitched roof, whichever is greater. When the height limit is 35 feet, the ridge of the pitched roof on a principal structure may extend up to 15 feet above the height limit, and all parts of the roof above the height limit must be pitched at a rate of not less than 4:12. No portion of a shed roof is permitted to extend beyond the 35 foot limit under this provision

Departure Requested:

Seattle Public Schools requests a Departure of 15 feet above the existing building height, measured from average grade level, to accommodate a mechanical and elevator equipment penthouses on the new addition.

### Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

Existing Height – Site Sections




## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

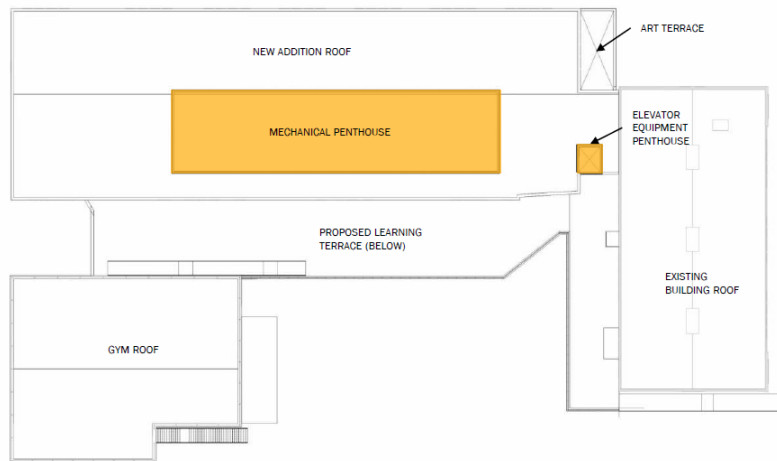
Existing Building Height = 44'-10"

Existing Building Height is greater than 35' height noted in SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c, therefore allowable height is 44'-10" above average grade.

Design proposes to exceed the existing building height in order to provide penthouses for mechanical and elevator equipment.

Areas exceeding the existing building height = 11.4% of total roof area

 Proposed roof area of requested Departure



## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

*Consistency:* The proposed Montlake Elementary School has been designed to minimize building height to remain consistent with the intent of the code.

*Relationship:* The proposed design maintains the parapet line of the existing school and is in keeping with the established scale of the site. A mechanical penthouse and elevator equipment penthouse have been sized and located to minimize visibility from pedestrians on the sidewalk.

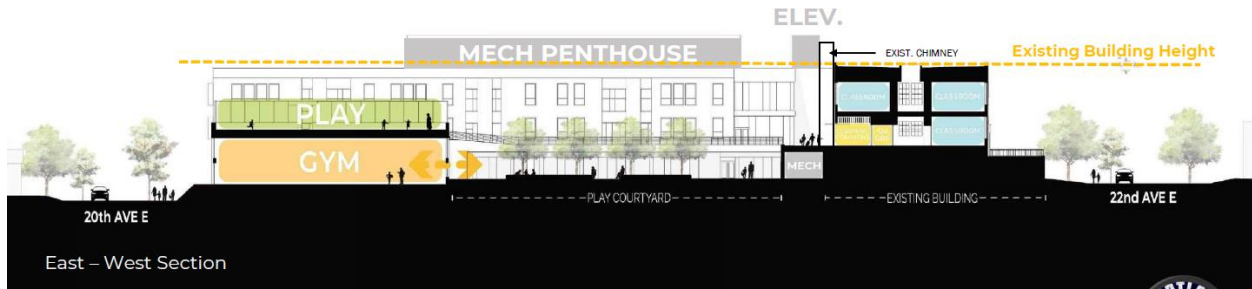
*Need:* The Montlake Elementary School needs to be able to accommodate the mechanical equipment that provides heating, cooling and fresh air to students as well as an elevator to provide accessible travel through the building. The requested penthouses allow this equipment to function properly without taking program space out of the main building volumes.

In order to satisfy functional requirements, Seattle Public Schools proposes a building height of not more than 60' at the mechanical and elevator penthouses.



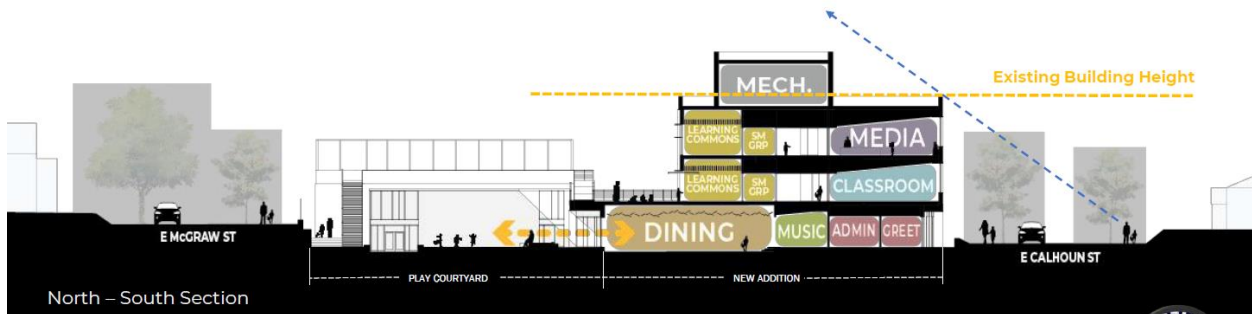
## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

The proposed addition uses the height of the existing historic building as the governing height for the new addition. The addition and courtyard play space are cut down into the site to provide required program square footages while keeping the addition height and floor levels in alignment with the existing building. Limited areas will exceed this height to accommodate mechanical and elevator penthouses.



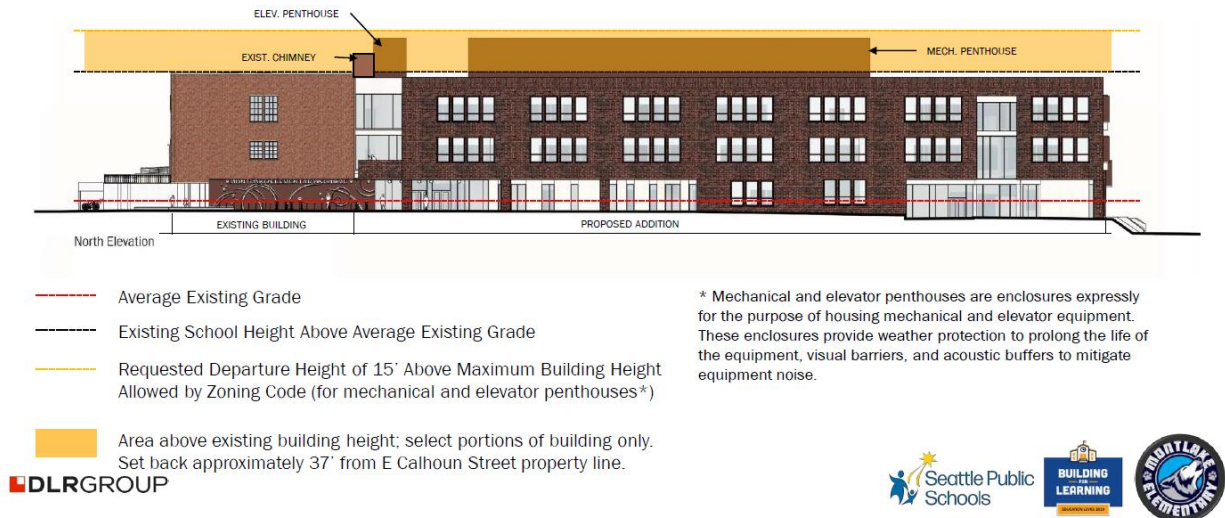
## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height

Limited areas will exceed the existing building height for mechanical and elevator penthouses but will be set back from the building edge to decrease visibility from pedestrians on the sidewalk.





## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height



## Requested Departure #2 : Building Height



View from across E Calhoun St. showing pedestrian perspective

**DLRGROUP**



**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes a departure of 15' above the existing building height to accommodate mechanical and elevator penthouses.

## Departure #3 – Reduced setbacks

### Requested Departure #3 : Setbacks

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.E. – Setbacks

E.4.a. For additions to existing public school structures on existing public school sites across a street or alley from lots in residential zones shall provide either the setback of the previous structure on the site or 15 foot setbacks for façade heights greater than 35 feet up to 50 feet measured from average grade level:

Departure Requested:

Seattle Public Schools proposes setbacks of 3 feet along the north property line, 6 feet along the west property line, and 5 feet along the south property line, for a departure of 12 feet along the north property line, 9 feet along the west property line, and 10 feet along the south property line.

### Requested Departure #3 : Setbacks



**Consistency:** The proposed Montlake Elementary School has been designed to meet Seattle Public Schools educational program, while providing setback to the greatest extent possible to remain consistent with the intent of the code.

**Relationship:** The existing property line is 6'-6" from the back of sidewalk consistently around the site. While the SMC requires the setback to be calculated from property line, the actual distance from the sidewalk to building face will be greater. This additional distance will make the perceived setback more generous and soften the transition in scale.

**Need:** The Montlake Elementary School site area is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 SF or 1.65 acres. This small site area limits the available site square footage to accommodate program square footage without further increase to building height.

Seattle Public Schools proposes the following setbacks:

- 3 feet along the North property line (9'-6" from sidewalk)
- 6 feet along the West property line (12'-6" from sidewalk)
- 5 feet along the South property line (11'-6" from sidewalk)

**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes setbacks of 3 feet along the north property line, 6 feet along the west property line, and 5 feet along the south property, for a departure of 12 feet along the north property line, 9 feet along the west property line, and 10 feet along the south property line.

## Departure #4 – Reduced vehicular parking quantity

### Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.G. – Parking Quantity  
SMC 23.54 – Quantity and Design Standards for Access, Off-Street Parking, and Solid Waste Storage.  
SMC 23.54.015 Table C – Required Parking for Public Uses and Institutions

Required Parking:

Childcare Calculation

1 Parking Space per 10 Children  $30/10 =$  3 spaces

Childcare Loading Zone Calculation

1 Loading Zone Space per 20 Children  $30/20 =$  2 spaces

Elementary School Calculation

Public Assembly Spaces at 80 spaces/SF  
Dining Commons + Gymnasium  $10,086/80 =$  126 spaces

**Total: 131 spaces**


Departure Requested:	Required Parking Spaces	131 Spaces
	Provided Parking Spaces	0 Spaces
	Departure:	131 Spaces



### Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity



#### Existing On-Site Parking Quantity

 \*Existing On-Street Parking  
(not included in parking calculation);  
RPZ 1 Permit required.

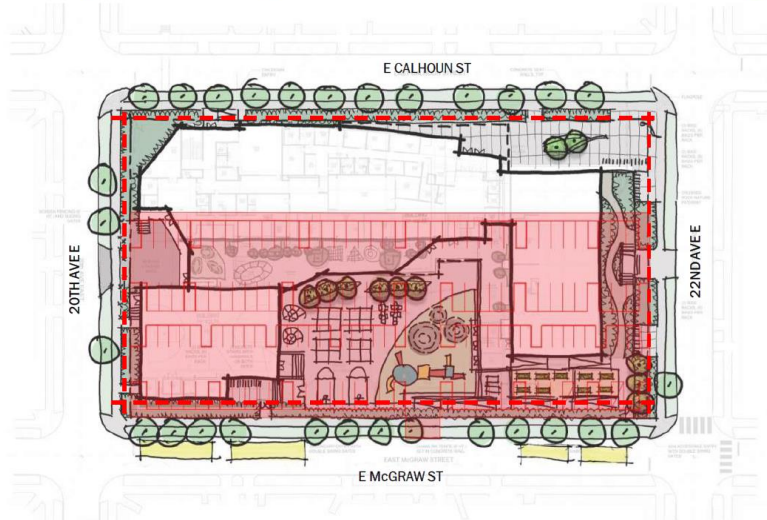
Per SMC 23.51B.002.G, the existing school building would require 25 automobile parking spaces. 0 designated parking spaces are currently provided.

There is currently a small paved service area off of E Calhoun St where one or two staff members park infrequently, however this area does not contain marked parking spaces as defined in the Land Use Code.





## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity



This diagram demonstrates the amount of site area that would be needed to meet the code-required number of 131 parking spaces. This amounts to approximately 68% of the total site area.

Area needed to accommodate required on-site parking

Property Line

## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

**Consistency:** The code required number of parking spaces is derived from the number of spaces needed during a large assembly event, rather than a more typical day-to-day need. An on-street parking availability study, performed by Heffron Transportation, Inc., demonstrates that on-street parking capacity can support the code required parking demand for large assembly events if certain transportation and parking recommendations are implemented. The transportation study determined there are 598 on-street parking spaces within the existing study area (within 800-foot walking distance from the site), and these remained under the rate at which the City of Seattle considers full capacity (85% of available spots filled) during all time periods studied. The proposal is not anticipated to place undue stress on the existing neighborhood parking.

**Relationship:** The proposed number of parking spaces is less than the code required number in order to accommodate the Seattle Public Schools educational program requirements and to maximize the amount of play and outdoor learning opportunities on the site. The square footage required to provide the desired educational program and maximize outdoor play areas further limit available parking areas on-site. Additionally, the School Design Advisory Team (SDAT) and results from Community Surveys, reinforced the desire that the project provide outdoor play and learning opportunities that supported both the school and broader neighborhood community.

**Need:** The Montlake Elementary School site area is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 SF or 1.65 acres. This small site area limits the available site square footage to accommodate the addition to the existing school to meet the current Seattle Public Schools educational program requirements, as well as the desire to maximize outdoor play. Subsequently, the available square footage for on-site parking is also limited. Parking quantities that meet the Seattle Municipal Code could not reasonably be achieved without drastically reducing available student program space and site amenities.



## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

### Previous Seattle Public Schools Departures:

Due to educational program space requirements in the SPS Standards, most recently constructed elementary schools have provided less on-site parking area than what is required by code in order to preserve educational program space.

School Name	Enrollment Capacity	Site Area (Acres)	On-Site Parking Provided/Required	Departure
Arbor Heights Elementary	650	5.65	55 / 138	80
Genesee Hill Elementary	650	6.82	71 / 135	64
Loyal Heights	650	2.85	0 / 70	70
Magnolia Elementary	500	2.50	6 / 79	73
Queen Anne Elementary	500	3.00	32 / 118	86
Thornton Creek Elementary	650	7.66	91 / 162	71
Wing Luke Elementary	500	6.85	60 / 130	70
Kimball Elementary	650	4.78	40 / 140 (proposed)	100
Northgate Elementary	650	5.77	30 / 140 (proposed)	110
Montlake Elementary	500	1.65	0 / 131 (proposed)	131

## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

### Transportation and Parking Impacts Analysis Summary:

#### Elements Evaluated:

- **Replacement school** – Up to 500 students in grades K-5 plus 30-student childcare classroom (planned for before- and after-school care, but could accommodate added pre-school students). Evaluated potential of up to 530 students in Pre-K-5 (an increase of 343 students compared to 2022 enrollment)
- **Number & time of added school trips** – Morning Arrival (7:30-8:30 a.m.) increase = 238 trips (134 in, 104 out); Afternoon Dismissal (2:15-3:15 p.m.) increase = 152 trips (71 in, 81 out).
- **Traffic operations & safety** – Eight intersections; all forecast to operate at Level of Service (LOS) D or better overall. No significant adverse impacts to study area traffic operating conditions. Collision data did not indicate any unusual collision patterns.
- **On-street parking** – Daily use & evening events. City considers occupancy of 85% or higher as effectively full. Currently, 60% to 64% occupied on school days (201 to 242 unused). With project, school-days to remain between 65% and 71%. During most events (~1 per month) expected to remain below 85%; largest event (e.g., Curriculum Night) could cause full parking or demand beyond 800 feet—measures recommended.
- **Construction traffic & Mitigation** – Reviewed and approved by SDOT for construction access and haul routes to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Source: *Montlake Elementary School Modernization and Addition Transportation Technical Report*, Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2022.

## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

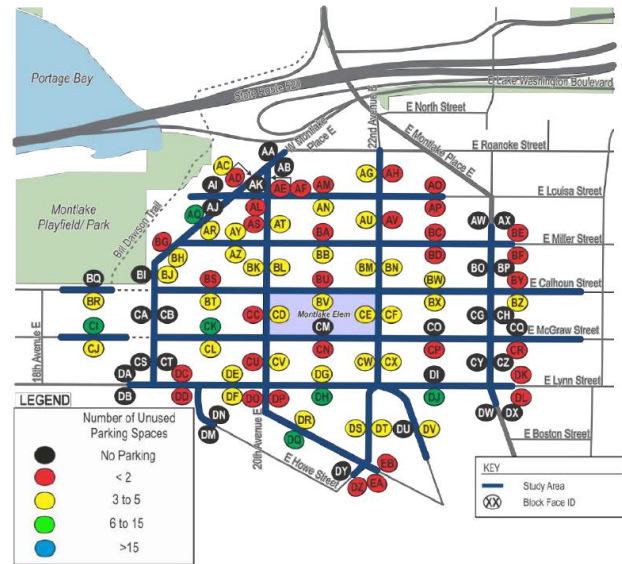
### On-Street Parking Occupancy - Weekday Early Morning

Total On-Street Parking Spaces within  
800-ft walking distance = 575 Spaces

- 360 to 374 cars (7:00 - 7:45 a.m.)  
(63% to 65% occupied)\*
- Number Unoccupied = 201 to 215

\* Note: City of Seattle considers occupancy rates of  
85% or higher to be effectively full.

Source: *Montlake Elementary School Modernization and  
Addition Transportation Technical Report*,  
Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2022.



## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

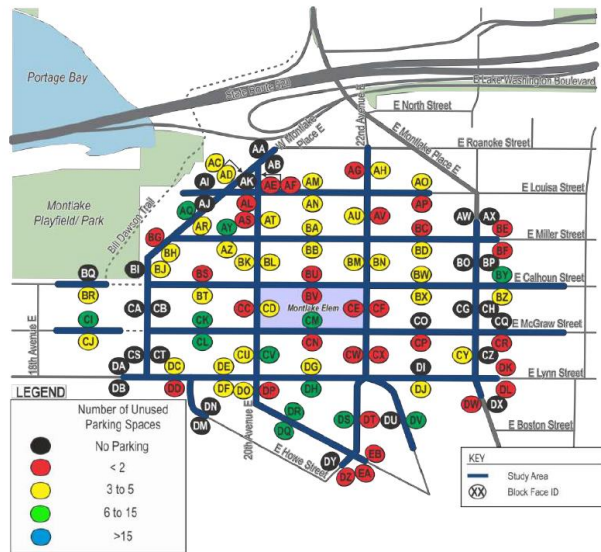
### On-Street Parking Occupancy - Weekday Mid Morning

Total On-Street Parking Spaces within  
800-ft walking distance = 598 Spaces

- 356 to 358 cars (10:30 - 11:15 a.m.)  
(60% occupied)\*
- Number Unoccupied = 240 to 242

\* Note: City of Seattle considers occupancy rates of  
85% or higher to be effectively full.

Source: *Montlake Elementary School Modernization and  
Addition Transportation Technical Report*,  
Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2022.



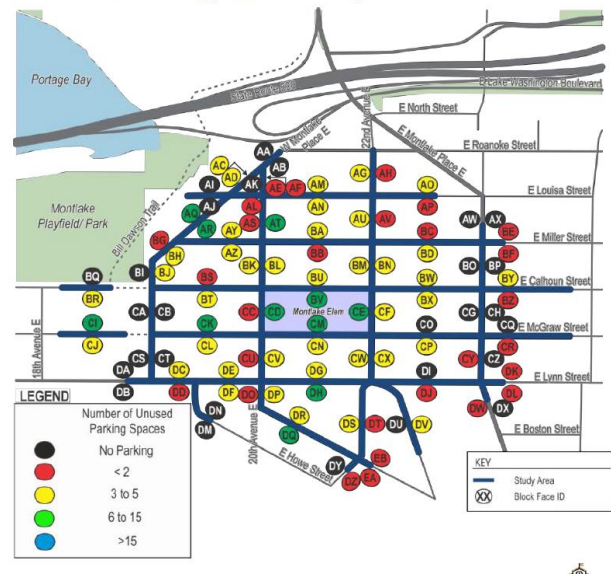
## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

### On-Street Parking Occupancy – Weekday Evening (No Event)

- Total On-Street Parking Spaces within  
800-ft walking distance = 598 Spaces
- 332 to 342 cars (7:30 - 8:15 p.m.)  
(56% to 57% occupied)\*
  - Number Unoccupied = 256 to 266

\* Note: City of Seattle considers occupancy rates of  
85% or higher to be effectively full.

Source: Montlake Elementary School Modernization and  
Addition Transportation Technical Report,  
Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2022.



## Requested Departure #4 : Vehicular Parking Quantity

### Transportation and Parking Recommendations to Provide:

- **School Construction Transportation Management Plan:** The selected Contractor will develop this plan which addresses traffic and pedestrian control during construction of the new facility. It will define truck routes, lane closures, walkway closures, and parking or load/unload area disruptions, as necessary. To the extent possible, this plan will direct trucks along the shortest route to arterials and away from residential streets to avoid unnecessary conflicts with resident and pedestrian activity. This plan may also include measures to keep adjacent streets clean on a daily basis at the truck exit points (such as street sweeping or on-site truck wheel cleaning) to reduce tracking dirt offsite.
- **Develop Plan for Large-Events:** When enrollment reaches 300 students, for the one or two largest events each year (such as Curriculum Night), develop large-event plan to either: 1) identifies additional parking supply (such as parking at the Montlake Community Center to the northwest) and/or 2) modifies the event to reduce total peak demand by separating it into two sessions or into two nights based on grade levels (as occurs at some other Seattle elementary schools).
- **Develop Neighborhood Communication Plan for School Events:** Plan to inform nearby neighbors of large events (those expected to draw 500 people or more) each year.
- **Update right-of-way & curb-side signage:** Work with SDOT to confirm the locations, extents, and signage (such as times of restrictions) of the school-bus and/or school load zones established or eliminated on adjacent streets.

Source: Montlake Elementary School Modernization and Addition Transportation Technical Report, Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2022.



**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes 0 on-site vehicle parking spaces for a departure of 131 spaces.

## Departure #5 – Reduced loading dock depth

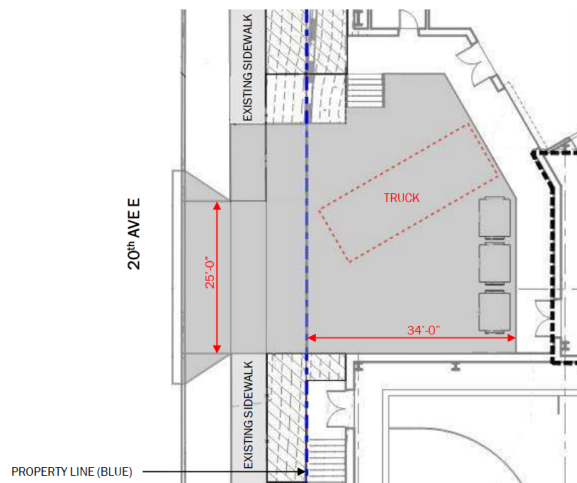
### Requested Departure #5 : Bus/Truck Loading & Unloading – Loading Berth

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.I. – Bus and Truck Loading and Unloading

I.2. One off-street truck loading berth that is 13 feet wide and 40 feet long is required for new public school construction.

Departure Requested: Seattle Public Schools proposes a 25-foot wide by 34-foot long loading dock measured from the property line for a departure of 6' below the standard loading berth length.

### Requested Departure #5 : Bus/Truck Loading & Unloading – Loading Berth



*Consistency:* Truck loading currently occurs at a small paved area accessed off of E Calhoun. This area does not provide adequate maneuvering clearance and trash pickup happens on the street. Proposal provides dedicated area for deliveries and trash pickup to occur off-street.

*Relationship:* The proposal provides a dedicated area to not only provide loading function, but also provide a sheltered area for loading activity as well as solid waste storage. This reduces odors, noise and visual impacts on the neighborhood and reduces traffic impacts.

*Need:* The limited site area available to fit educational program and the Owner's desire to maximize outdoor play space limit the available space for a service and loading dock area.

SPS proposes a 34'-0" deep loading berth accessed off 20th Ave E measured from the property line in lieu of the code-required 40'-0" depth. This configuration will accommodate the size of SPS vehicles anticipated to service the site.

**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes one loading dock berth that is 25 feet wide by 34 feet long measured from the property line for a departure of 6' below the standard loading berth length.



## Departure #6 – New curb cut to service area without parking

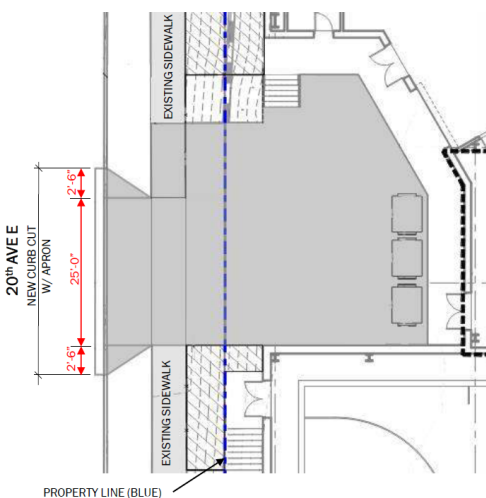
### Requested Departure #6 : Curb Cut to Service Area without Parking

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.54.030 – Parking Space and Access Standards  
SMC 23.54.030.F. – Curb Cuts

F.2.b.3. For public schools, the maximum width of a curb cut is 25 feet. Development standard departures may be granted or required pursuant to the procedures and criteria set forth in Chapter 23.79.  
F.5. Curb cut flare. A flare with a maximum width of 2.5 feet is permitted on either side of curb cuts in any zone.

Departure Requested: Seattle Public Schools proposes a 25-foot wide curb cut with 2.5 foot flares for a departure to allow access to a service area without parking.

### Requested Departure #6 : Curb Cut to Service Area without Parking



*Consistency:* SPS anticipates approximately two street parking spaces will be lost to accommodate the new curb cut; however, two existing curb cuts along E Calhoun and E McGraw Streets will be re-established as part of the project, which may accommodate two additional street parking spaces, resulting in no loss of street parking spaces at the project site perimeter.

*Relationship:* A completed traffic study found that on-street parking within the site vicinity averages between 56% and 64% occupied on school days with between 201 and 266 unused spaces across the three observation periods. These levels are below the 85% threshold at which the City considers effectively full.

As noted in parking departure, the streets surrounding the project site require RPZ 1 parking permits and City-code allows employees of Montlake Elementary School to obtain RPZ 1 permits to park on-street in the vicinity. The increase in short-term parking associated with school visitors as well as increased staff parking could be accommodated by unused supply, and typical utilization is estimated to remain between 65% and 71%.

*Need:* The limited site area available to fit educational program and the Owner's desire to maximize outdoor play space limit the available space for a service and loading dock area.

SPS proposes a new 25'-0" curb cut with 2.5' flares along 20th Ave E to access a new service area without parking spaces. This configuration will accommodate all SPS service vehicles.



**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes one 25-foot-wide curb cut with 2.5-foot flares to each side for a departure to allow access to a service area without parking.

## Departure #7 – Reduced bicycle parking (long term) quantity

### Requested Departure #7 : Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.54.015 Table D

Long-term bicycle parking spaces  
18 classrooms\* @ 3 spaces per classroom = 54  
1 per 4,000 SF @ Childcare = 1  
Total long-term spaces required = 55

\* The number of spaces required for classrooms is based on classrooms in the proposed new addition only.

**Departure Requested:** The Seattle Land Use Code requires 55 total long-term bicycle parking spaces. Seattle Public Schools proposes 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces for a departure of 25 long-term parking spaces.

### Requested Departure #7 : Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity

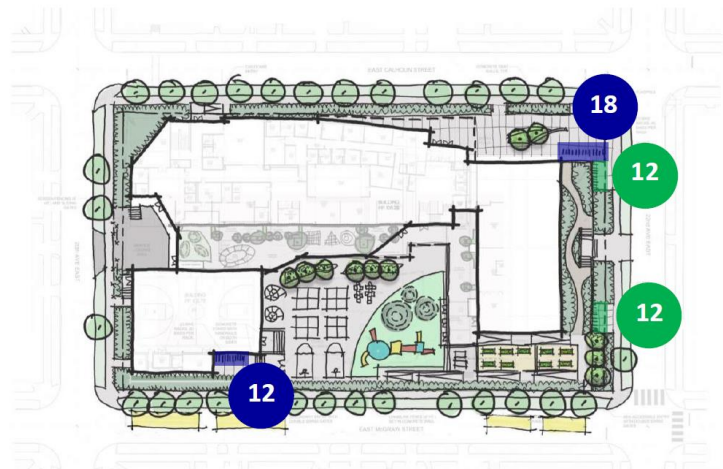
Required Bicycle Parking Quantity per 23.54.015 Table D:

Long-Term Bicycle Spaces, based on 18 new addition classrooms: 55 total Long-Term spaces required:

■ 30 spaces provided, for a departure of 25 spaces

Short-Term Bicycle Spaces: based on 18 new addition classrooms: 20 total Short-Term spaces required:

■ 24 spaces provided (no departure required)



### Requested Departure #7 : Bicycle Parking (Long-Term) Quantity

#### Long-Term Bicycle Parking

**Consistency:** The proposed design provides 30 long-term bicycle spaces. The current site does not provide any bike parking that meets the standards for long-term bike parking. A study conducted by school staff found between 3-5 students regularly bike to school each day and at most, 8 students bike to school each day representing approximately 4% of the existing student population. The proposed school design is intended to accommodate a student enrollment of 500, the 30 long-term bike parking spaces provided will accommodate 6% of the maximum enrollment. The proposed quantity brings the site closer to compliance with the code.

**Relationship:** The reduction in long-term bike parking is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on the surrounding community.

**Need:** The Montlake Elementary School site area is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 SF or 1.65 acres. This small site area limits the available site square footage to accommodate long-term bicycle parking.

**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces for a departure of 25 long-term parking spaces.

## Departure #8 – Simplified bicycle parking standards

### Requested Departure #8 : Bicycle Parking Standards

Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.51B.002 – Public Schools in Residential Zones  
SMC 23.51B.002.G. – Parking Quantity  
SMC 23.54 – Quantity and Design Standards for Access, Off-Street Parking, and Solid Waste Storage.  
SMC 23.54.015.K. Bicycle Parking

K.2. Performance standards. Provide bicycle parking in a highly visible, safe, and convenient location, emphasizing user convenience and theft deterrence, based on rules promulgated by the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation that address the considerations in this subsection 23.54.015.K.2.

a. Provide secure locations and arrangements of long-term bicycle parking, with features such as locked rooms or cages and bicycle lockers. The bicycle parking should be installed in a manner that avoids creating conflicts with automobile accesses and driveways.

i. Provide full weather protection for all required long-term bicycle parking.

#### Departure Requested:

The Seattle Land Use Code requires secure locations for all long-term bicycle parking with features such as locked rooms or cages and bicycle lockers. Seattle Public Schools proposes a secured enclosure for 12 of the 30 long-term spaces provided. Departure requested to allow open, weather protected bike racks for 18 long-term bike parking spaces.

### Requested Departure #8 : Bicycle Parking Standards

#### Long-Term Bicycle Parking Performance Standards:

Long-Term Bicycle Spaces, based on 18 new addition classrooms:  
55 total Long-Term spaces required, 30 spaces provided.

	Weather Protected / Secured	12 spaces
	Weather Protected / Not Secured	18 spaces



### Requested Departure #8 : Bicycle Parking Standards

#### Long-Term Bicycle Parking Performance Standards

**Consistency:** The performance standard within the code is intended to provide bike parking that is in a visible and safe location to encourage use and deter risk of theft. The 12 provided long-term spaces are visible from the admin area which is staffed during school hours. All long-term parking provided does provide weather protection for bicycles.

**Relationship:** The requirement for locked bicycle rooms, cages or lockers is intended to apply to adult users who are issued keys or access cards to allow entry. This type of system is not practical for children in an elementary school environment.

**Need:** The Montlake Elementary School site area is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 SF or 1.65 acres. This small site area limits the available site square footage to accommodate enclosed long-term bicycle parking for all of the spaces provided and does not have the capacity to administer access controls for younger children.

**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes a secure enclosure for 12 of the 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces provided. Departure requested to allow non-secured, weather protected bike racks for 18 long-term bicycle parking spaces.

## Departure #9 – Electric changing-image sign

### Requested Departure #9 : Electric Changing-Image Sign

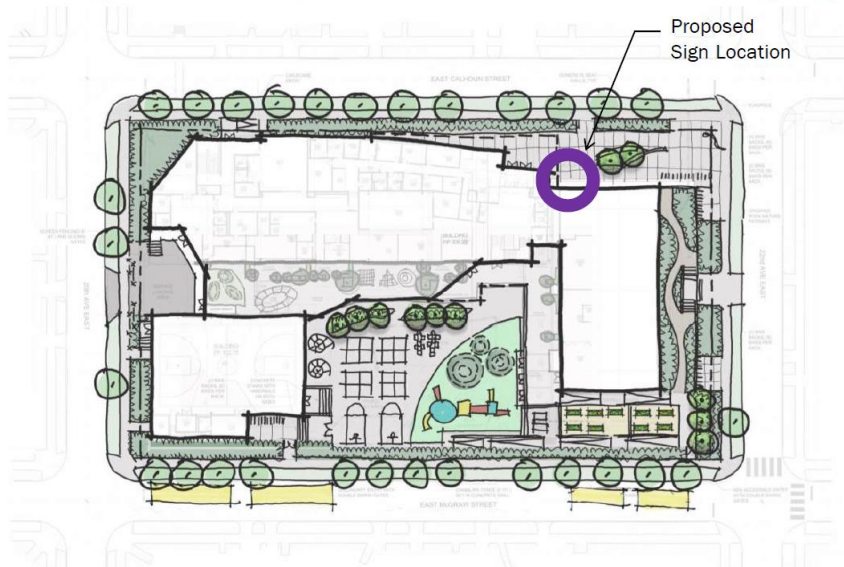
Seattle Municipal Code Sections: SMC 23.55 – Signs  
SMC 23.55.020 - Signs in Single-Family Zones

- B. No flashing, changing-image or message board signs permitted.
- D. The following signs are permitted in all single-family zones:
  - 7. For elementary or secondary schools, one electric or nonilluminated double-faced identifying sign, not to exceed 30 square feet of area per sign face on each street frontage, provided that the signs shall be located and landscaped so that light and glare impacts on surrounding properties are reduced, and so that any illumination is controlled by a timer set to turn off by 10 p.m.

**Departure Requested:** The Seattle Land Use Code does not allow flashing, changing-image or message board signs. Seattle Public Schools requests a Departure to allow for (1) Changing Image Message Board Sign

- a. The proposal is limited to one sign which may change images.
- b. The sign shall be set to turn on no earlier than 7am and turn off no later than 9pm; the sign may be used on weekends during these times.
- c. The sign is limited to be lit using one color with a dark background.
- d. No video, flashing, scrolling, tumbling or moving images allowed.

### Requested Departure #9 : Electric Changing-Image Sign



The proposed new main entrance location along East Calhoun Street will provide a secure entry for parents and visitors and work well with the parent pick up and drop off practices along Calhoun.

SPS would use the message board sign adjacent to the new main entrance to alert families and the community to events taking place at the school. Messages could be displayed in multiple languages, which a fixed message sign would not allow.



Sign Example

**Proposed Departure Requested:** SPS proposes a departure to allow one changing image message board sign.



## **2.2 DON Review**

### **2.2.1 Public Comment**

The public comment period began via a press release issued by DON on August 8, 2022. The press release was sent to media outlets, and postcards soliciting for public comments were mailed to nearby neighbors and addresses within approximately 600 feet of the school property.

DON also created a webpage where the public could submit their comments and instructed SPS to post signs about the public comment period at the perimeter of the school property. The departure information and public comment notice was also published in the City's Land Use Information Bulletin Board (LUIB). The public comment period ran through September 9, 2022.

DON received 30 public comments via email, 16 postcards, 1 letter via fax, and 1 individual called and left a voice message. In total, DON received 48 public comments about the requested departures.

### **2.2.2 Review Criteria**

In lieu of an Advisory Committee process, Section 23.79 of the Code currently allows the DON Director to evaluate requested school departures for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the Code, and to balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

#### **a. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:**

- (1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- (2) Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale.
- (3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk.
- (4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area; and
- (5) Impacts on housing and open space.

b. Need for Departure: The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departure may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or an integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.

### **2.2.3 Application of Review Criteria to Requested Departures**

Code departures may be granted to accommodate the educational needs of public-school programs located in neighborhood residential zoned neighborhoods. For Montlake Elementary School, SPS has demonstrated it cannot accommodate the necessary educational programs and vision without development departures for: 1) increased lot coverage, 2) greater than allowed building height, 3) reduced setbacks, 4) reduced vehicular parking quantity, 5) reduced loading dock depth, 6) new curb cut to service area without parking, 7) reduced bicycle parking, 8) simplified bicycle parking standards, and 9) an electric changing image message board sign.

## 2.2.4 Need for Departures

The public comments submitted to DON expressed a range of support and concerns regarding the departure requests. This includes comments received by DON that expressed opposition to all departures without further explanation. DON also received several comments that were outside the scope of the departure process and unrelated to the requested deviations from the Land Use Code.

In response to the concerns raised in the received comments, SPS and the Design Team provided a letter to DON to clarify the potential impacts of the proposed departures on the surrounding neighborhood.

Per SMC 23.79.008, the DON Director evaluates the departure requests balancing the interrelationships as enumerated in SMC 23.79.008C1 (a) 1-5. Per SMC 23.79.008C1 (b) and upon further review of all public comments and response letter received, the DON Director recommends and considers the need for the departures as described in the following results below.

## 3. DON Recommendations

### Departure #1 – Increased lot coverage

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the school's increased lot coverage having an impact on its relationship to the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the school's increased lot coverage having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the school's increased lot coverage having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered, and DON did not have concerns about the school's increased lot coverage having an impact on traffic, circulation, and parking in the neighborhood.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the school's increased lot coverage having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received several comments opposing the requested departure. One individual commented that the lot coverage would reduce the amount of outdoor space and play area, and another commented that the departure is inappropriate to the history and size of the school.

SPS and the Design Team noted in their presentation and in their response to public comments that the limited size of the site necessitates a departure from lot coverage requirements to meet

educational requirements and avoid an expansion of the school site into adjacent residential properties.

After consideration of the public comments received and SPS' response, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 1 – That the departure to allow increased lot coverage to be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools.**

**Departure #2 – Greater than allowed building height**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did have concerns about the school's greater than allowed building height having an impact on its relationship to the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the greater than allowed building height affecting the presence of edges which provides a transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the greater than allowed building height affecting the location and design to reduce the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the greater than allowed building height impacting on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the greater than allowed building height impacting housing and open space.

DON received several comments opposing the requested departure. Several individuals commented that it is out of scale and would block sunlight and create shadows in the residential neighborhood. Others commented that it would ruin the views and livability of existing Montlake neighborhood residences. One individual requested SPS provide any shadow studies related to the departure.

SPS and the Design Team noted in their presentation and in their response to public comments that the three-story addition allows for expanded educational programming while also respecting the height and materiality of the existing landmarked building.

The building height departure is only required to accommodate a mechanical penthouse which covers approximately 11% of the overall roof area and is set back from the edge of the building. The building has been designed to respect the height of the existing, landmarked school building and align with that height.

After consideration of the public comments received and SPS' response, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 2 – That the departure to allow greater than allowed building height to be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools**

### **Departure #3 – Reduced setbacks**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced setbacks having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced setbacks having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced setbacks having an impact on the location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced setbacks having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced setbacks having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received several comments opposing and expressing concerns about the requested departure. These included a comment from an individual that the setbacks are not sufficient, and residents will be confronted with a towering and overpowering wall. One comment expressed that this departure is an attempt to squeeze in a school that is too large for the lot.

SPS and the Design Team noted in their presentation and in their response to public comments that concerns over the building's scale may be lessened by the property line not being at the sidewalk and the existing trees surrounding the site, which will remain or be replaced at select locations.

The existing property line around the site is consistently 6'-6" from the back of the sidewalk. As the Code requires the setback to be calculated from the property line, the actual distance from sidewalk to building face will be greater. The additional distance will make the perceived setback more generous and soften the transition in scale.

After consideration of the public comments received and SPS' response, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 3 – That the departure to allow reduced setbacks to be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools.**



#### **Departure #4 – Reduced vehicular parking quantity**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced vehicular parking quantity having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced parking quantity having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced vehicular parking quantity having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did have concerns about the reduced vehicular parking quantity having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the reduced vehicular parking quantity having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received several comments opposing and expressing concerns about the requested departure. These include an individual comment about the lack of disabled parking spaces, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and lack of a bus loading area. One comment expressed that parking for additional staff and students are non-existent and will not be adequate. One individual commented that this departure is an attempt to squeeze in a school that is too large for the lot.

SPS and the Design Team noted in their presentation and their response to public comments that the current school bus loading and unloading occur on-street in the existing bus loading zone area and there is no striped vehicular parking on-site. The proposed design maintains the existing conditions related to bus loading and striped vehicular parking.

Due to the limited area of the site, providing on-site vehicular parking would result in sacrificing educational opportunities and outdoor play space. Parking requirements in the SMC are measured by the square footage of assembly space, not the number of students or teachers.

The results of a traffic study conducted by Heffron Transportation, Inc. indicated that on-street parking space utilization is below levels considered full capacity and there is sufficient available on-street parking to accommodate daily parking and school events. Transportation and parking recommendations for large events are provided in the above-mentioned study. These recommendations are summarized on the slide presentation.

After consideration of the public comments received and SPS' response, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 4 – That the departure to allow reduced vehicular parking quantity to be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools with the following conditions:**

- 1) **Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the school reopening, SPS and the principal of Montlake Elementary should establish a TMP to educate families about access load/unload procedures for the site. They should require the school to distribute information to families about onsite vehicular access as well as travel routes for approaching and leaving the school. Staff and parents should also be instructed to not block or partially block any residential driveways with parked or stopped vehicles.
- 2) **Engage Seattle Safety School Committee:** SPS should continue ongoing engagement with the Seattle School Safety Committee (led by SDOT), Risk Management Office to review access if any changes should be made to crossing paths with school buses or traffic control to help encourage pedestrian and non-motorized flows at designated crosswalk locations.
- 3) **Neighborhood Communication Plan for School Events:** SPS and Montlake Elementary's administration should develop a neighborhood communication plan to inform nearby neighbors of large events each year. The plan should be updated annually (or as events are scheduled) and provide information about the dates, times, and magnitude of large-attendance events. The communication would be intended to allow neighbors to plan for occasional increases in on-street parking demand that would occur with large events.
- 4) **Update right-of-way and curb-side signage:** SPS should work with SDOT to confirm locations, extents, and signage (such as times of restrictions) of the school bus and/or school load zones established or eliminated on adjacent streets.

**Departure #5 – Reduced loading dock depth**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced loading dock depth having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced loading dock depth having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced loading dock depth having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced loading dock depth having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced loading dock depth having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received very few comments on this departure. Some of the comments received expressed neutrality about the departure while others supported denying the departure without offering any further explanation.

After consideration of the public comments received, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 5 – That the departure to allow reduced loading dock depth to be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools.**

**Departure #6 – New curb cut to service area without parking**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the new curb cut to service area without parking having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the new curb cut to service area without parking having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the new curb cut to service area without parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the new curb cut to service area without parking having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the new curb cut to service area without parking having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received very few comments on this departure. Some of the comments received expressed neutrality about the departure while others supported denying the departure without offering any further explanation.

After consideration of the public comments received, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 6 – That the departure to allow a new curb cut to the service area without parking be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools.**

**Departure #7 – Reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not

have concerns about reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking having an impact on the presence of edges.

- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about reduced bicycle (long-term) quantity parking having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received several comments that expressed concerns regarding the requested departure for long term bicycle parking quantity. These include an individual comment about providing bicycle parking that meets the minimum requirements of the SMC, especially for covered parking. Other comments also expressed support for access to safe, secure, innovative, and long-term bicycle parking solutions.

SPS and the Design Team noted in their presentation and their response to public comments that the proposal provides 30 long term bicycle spaces. The current site does not provide any facilities that meet the SMC standards for long-term bike parking. The proposed quantity brings the site closer to compliance with the SMC.

**Recommendation 7 – That the departure to allow reduced bicycle parking (long-term) quantity to be GRANTED as requested Seattle Public Schools.**

**Departure #8 – Simplified bicycle parking standards**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the simplified bicycle parking standards having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the simplified bicycle parking standards having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the simplified bicycle parking standards having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the simplified bicycle parking standards having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the simplified bicycle parking standards having an impact on housing and open space.



DON received very few comments about this departure. The comments received either expressed neutrality about the departure or offered support for a simplified bicycle parking structure.

After consideration of the public comments received, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 8 – That the departure to simplified bicycle parking standards to be GRANTED as requested Seattle Public Schools.**

#### **Departure #9 – Electric changing-image sign**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** was considered and DON did have concerns about the electric changing-image sign having an impact on the character and scale of the surrounding area. SPS and the Design Team responded with a variety of mitigation measures for the sign design and use and recommended conditions listed below.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the electric changing-image sign having an impact on the presence of edges.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the electric changing-image sign having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the electric changing-image sign having an impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking in the area.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** was considered and DON did not have concerns about the electric changing-image sign having an impact on housing and open space.

DON received several comments that expressed concerns about or opposition to the departure to allow an electric changing-image sign. These comments stated the sign would be unnecessary and/or intrusive, and out of character to the residential neighborhood. Others commented that the current message board should remain and continue to serve its purpose.

SPS and the Design Team noted in the departure request and their response letter that the sign would not include video, flashing, scrolling, or moving images and would only operate during specific times (7am to 9 pm).

The sign would also enable SPS to alert families and the community to events taking place at the school and allows for the display of messages in multiple languages.

The proposed sign would be set back from E. Calhoun St and across the street from residences with significant foliage and/or similarly set back from the right of way, thus the sign will not be of significant impact to the adjacent neighbors.

After consideration of the public comments received and the SPS response, DON recommends:

**Recommendation 9 – That the departure to allow an electric changing-image sign to be GRANTED as requested Seattle Public Schools with the following conditions:**

- 1) The electric reader board may only be turned on between 7am to 9pm.**
- 2) No video, flashing, scrolling, or moving images; however, messages can change to show content.**
- 3) Sign illumination should be limited to one color with a dark background.**

**Recommendation Summary:**

Departure #1	Lot Coverage	Granted
Departure #2	Building Height	Granted
Departure #3	Setbacks	Granted
Departure #4	Vehicular Parking Quantity	Granted with conditions
Departure #5	Loading dock depth	Granted
Departure #6	Curb cut to service area without parking	Granted
Departure #7	Bicycle parking	Granted
Departure #8	Bicycle Parking standards	Granted
Departure #9	Signage/Changing Image Sign	Granted with conditions

Per SMC 23.790081C1 (b), the DON Director has considered the need for the above departure requests. DON has determined that for the Seattle Public Schools to meet the educational specifications, the above departures are required at this site. The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to the educational needs are balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area.

Nelson Pesigan,  
Department of Neighborhoods

**Attachments:**

Montlake Elementary School Public Comments

SPS Response Letter to the Public Comments

Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature

Alan Weiner

Printed name

ALAN WEINER

Address

2303 22ND AVE E

Email

AMWEINER@UW.

Phone

206 851 4426

Further comment:

EDU  
Going from less than 200 students to  
over 500 with bussing will KILL  
our neighborhood!

**From:** [Annie Vithayathil](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary Feedback on Variances  
**Date:** Thursday, September 8, 2022 7:21:16 AM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hi Nelson,

I send this note as a parent and homeowner in the Montlake Elementary catchment area. My children attended Montlake the last two years.

I have not yet seen the full plans for Montlake's renovations. But a neighbor alerted many of us to the requested variances.

Here is my feedback organized by my sentiment about them.

**Strongly negative feedback**

**Reduced vehicular parking quantity.**

This proposal will put the project squarely in conflict with the ADA and similar state laws guaranteeing disabled access to public facilities like schools.

As a parent with two neurodegenerative conditions and mobility problems, I sometimes use a rollator walker or drive my kids to school even though it is only a short walk away. Currently there are no marked spots for disabled parking which meant this past year I either had to double park the dumpsters, rely on neighbors for drop off or pickup, or hope that I could make the walking distance from the street parking I found near the school. At least once I was chastised by a bus driver for where I parked (I was not in the bus zone).

Obviously this current lack of disabled parking doesn't just affect parents, but also limits mobility impaired students and teachers as well, even more so than a parent.

I raised my strong concerns with Mrs. Pearson earlier in the year and was told ADA issues would definitely be addressed in the renovation.

While it MIGHT have been reasonable for such a historic building to fail in disabled parking earlier, after the renovation, such an excuse would be patently ridiculous. As a disability advocate and attorney, if needed, I would organize disability activists if this existing plan moves forward.

On-street parking with designated disabled spots on the flatter roads surrounding Montlake could address situations like mine where I retain some mobility with the use of an aid. However, there needs to be at least one van accessible parking spot. Given that the roads are so narrow, that spot should be placed on-site, not on-street. The streets are so tight it's almost impossible to drop your kids off on-street even if they don't use a wheelchair.

I applaud the districts willingness to push its attendees to use public transport, bike or walk. So I don't oppose the majority of this variance. However, until this plan addresses the needs of those who cannot use traditional public transport or cannot walk/bike due to disability, I would

stand strongly against this proposal and engage the disability community to strongly oppose it, including with legal ADA intervention.

The same goes for any lack of elevator or stair lift. I was told this ADA issue too would be included in the final plan, but have not yet seen this addressed.

Negative feedback:

**Reduced bicycle parking.**

**Simplified bicycle parking structures.**

I understand the need to discourage car parking, but in the absence of adding car parking you should do more for bike parking. Given that ground space is a premium, have you considered spending a bit more to allow denser bike parking, like allowing bikes to hang vertically? Unless I understand that other options have been considered it's hard to support this.

**Signage/Changing Image Sign**

I don't oppose the notion of a black and white text only electronic signboard. I understand the need to communicate with the community about events and celebrations. I also understand the convenience of having an electronic sign to reduce staff labor. But flashing, colored, or image based signage seems entirely unnecessary and better suited to marketing campaigns. Those features are strictly unnecessary, tacky and not in keeping with the neighborhood aesthetic of historic homes.

Positive to neutral feedback:

1. Increased lot coverage.
2. Greater than allowed building height.
3. Reduced setbacks.

The New York Times has written so many pieces about liberal NIMBYISM that it usually makes me tired to read another cause they are so painfully true. As someone who grew up on public assistance but I can now afford a Montlake home, these articles ring so so so very true.

Example: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/22/opinion/california-housing-nimby.html>.

When I hear some of the arguments against these Montlake variances, these articles come to mind. The bulk of the objections seem to be NIMBYISM of having an oversized not-particularly



charming building in their backyard. Like it or not, Seattle is quickly becoming the next SFO and we can either address that trend with greater density or try and deny it's happening and then suffer the foreseeable consequences like SFO has. I choose the former even though I grew up and am raising my kids in the Seattle area, as did my parents and grandparents.

I also choose to support these because the objections to increased density play a huge role in the economic inequity I see in this city. Sometimes as a neighbor we have to accept substandard outcomes for ourselves so that others can thrive and we can live our liberal principles. To me, this is one of those situations.

The arguments made by opponents made are about the dearth of childrens playgrounds or similar, but that doesn't resonate with me. The reality is that the playground already sucks— it's a big concrete slab and indeed we've needed to do something about it for a long time and the proposal looks like a huge improvement.

That said, when I look at the proposal I see three things you could do to improve it. These changes would make the objections much weaker.

First, Improve the visual cohesion of the exterior and bring it more in line with the historic nature of the neighborhood. Holy Names and Saint Joes schools are also massive buildings jammed into a residential neighborhood with large frontages directly adjacent to a lot line. But they are attractive and neighborhood appropriate. They are head turners but for good reasons not bad.

The current proposal looks like a low security prison was bolted onto the otherwise beautiful Montlake school. Why not bring the frontage into greater alignment with the landmark building and neighborhood? At least the school would be attractive even if it is huge and built to the edges. I like modern design a lot, but that's not Montlake.

Second, I see you've added a rooftop play area on part of the building. One objection by the community is the lack of play area. Why not capitalize on the roof area on the new addition

around the penthouse? Also, why make the gym two story when the rest is two story? An additional covered play area between the rooftop “soccer field” and the ground level would add space and probably free up some space to add the parking spots I mentioned on the ground floor.

Third, there is very little Montlake-specific justification for the 500 student size, which is nearly 3x increase. I applaud planning for the future and so wouldn't object to the plans on these grounds alone. However, your documentation doesn't do a good job supporting the 500 number other than being an arbitrary figure. Please provide projections or other information to justify this particular number. If we must squeeze in more density to future proof, this neighbor is happy to have it in her backyard. But it would be good to see the math.

### Neutral feedback

1. Reduced loading dock depth.
2. New curb cut to service area without parking.

These both seem ok. Given that parking and land is such a premium. I am glad to see you thinking about what is truly necessary.

Thanks,

Annie Vithayathil

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**From:** [A.D.](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School remodel-addition size  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 6:26:55 AM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

To Nelson Pesigan and the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods,

As a long time (over decades) certified K-12 teacher who has worked in numerous Seattle Public Schools and during that time also been an active PTSA parent, now living a block from Montlake Elementary I have very strong concerns about the proposed remodel-addition of the school (SDCI Project #3039304):

- 1) Shoehorning the buildings--proposed for 500 students-- to cover most of what vies for the smallest school lot in the city, would be about a tripling of current school, staff, and student body size. This though even Seattle School District's website indicates little to no growth in number of households in the Montlake community in the next five years. There has been diminishing enrollment rather than expanding, and future growth in student population in Montlake or Seattle public schools overall are far from certain. Addition is way too big for the site. Please reduce the size of the addition.
- 2) **With the massive new buildings--65,000 square feet needed to accommodate 500 students-- even with the innovative and creative designs proposed, major departures from land use/building standards are indicated and violate development standards in extreme ways:**
  - **Height.** Out of scale to neighborhood--60 foot high average at grade-- new addition classroom building dwarfing and shadowing the residential neighbors.
  - **Setbacks.** Not sufficient. Only 3 feet on the north side of addition. People using and living on E Calhoun will be confronted with a towering and overpowering wall.
  - **Lot coverage.** Extreme departure. The proposed new addition area will cover almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the usable area of new construction, reducing the playground area to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what it is now (if completed--for three times the number of students to use it), a postage-stamp small plaza with some play equipment. No open field for activity that so often benefits young children.
  - The Project Vision is headlined as aimed to create "A Verdant Garden of Change-makers." Yet the outdoor spaces for exploration and growth will be tremendously reduced. Those remaining will be fragmented into difficult spaces for adults to monitor, and not possible to use for large group activities with 500 students.
  - It was also noted that current large 75-year-old beautiful trees that line and shade E. Calhoun and the healthy row lining E. McGraw Street might be removed. It is

understandable that the trees on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E would have to be removed for the excavation of the lot and creation of delivery driveway. Removing the rows of well-established trees on those 2 other streets does not help create a “Verdant Garden.”

2) Transportation. To expand the student numbers so far beyond the current 180-plus to the proposed 500, will mean transporting young children to the school either by bus/transit or as so often happens now, parents driving their children to school. Both of those prospects appear not viable long term as related to the environment, especially for a district cutting school bus routes, and unrealistic for traffic to this small site with narrow congested streets.

- **Parking** problems. The proposal for 500 student school entails another massive departure from development standards—for the proposed buildings, onsite parking required would be 131 (onsite) spaces. Proposed--Zero.
- With almost 3 times as many students, staff will also need to be increased greatly. Though there has been mass transit very close by for years (Metro busses a block away and light rail only blocks--within 10 min. walk) staff understandably continue to drive from homes most often distant from the school.
- During normal school days all the streets adjoining the school are currently parked up, full, with staff filling any available spaces. Further, volunteers, visitor vehicles, families, with no place to park overflow into congestion now on narrow streets. There will be about 32 parking spaces on the streets abutting the school where the current staff now parks. Where would multiple, 2 to 3 times as many, additional school staff, volunteers, school visitors and families park?

A major departure--even with the street spots abutting the school, further 100 parking spaces short from what standards would require onsite. The SEPA indicates staff would get Zone 1 permits and park on neighborhood streets. This would fill all available spots for blocks and blocks throughout the heart of Montlake that the school lives in.

Before Zone 1 residential parking was established, residents remember streets filled daily such that often one could not leave the house during the day and return to find a parking spot nearby even to unload anything or anyone-- groceries, babies.

THERE IS A SOLUTION that would help tremendously in resolving the above issues: Rather than trying to cram 500 students in large buildings on one of the very smallest school lots in the city that even with the creative proposed design necessitates extreme land use development departures:

**Please reduce the proposed school new classrooms construction footprint so that along with the welcome historic Montlake Elementary building remodel, the school could accommodate 300-350 students. This would leave plenty of space for new students, double**

### **the current student population.**

Reducing the new classrooms addition could significantly aid in resolving issues noted above. I.e. could provide more usable outdoor school spaces, provide funds to complete the proposed open roof spaces, alleviate neighborhood building impacts, cut down on parking issues and dangerous congestion—and more, and

a) Would be much more realistic in terms of projected school population, meet students' needs in the best ways possible while opening more space for beneficial outdoor activity rather than covering most of the smallest school property in the district with buildings.

b) Some of the space gained could be left ready for building (even with infrastructure connections stubbed in/available) in the event that the school population was to grow substantially in the distant future.

People in the neighborhood are aware of the age of the main building and portables and welcome remodel. If approaching this neighborhood and building beneficial community in Seattle Neighborhoods are indeed goals, please note:

After decades of construction impact projects in Montlake (including SR520) and Seattle “public comment” responses that have been ultimately ignored, people in the neighborhood often voice the feeling that responding can be like throwing ideas and energies into a dark hole. You have strong opportunity or opportunities to show otherwise.

Planning and aggressive overbuilding in the development of Montlake Elementary, that do not take into account the impacts to the neighborhood and support of the school, are likely to lose families and young children that could help fill any new school buildings.

Again, your attentions are appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you soon. As I know all such records are public, what date do you have scheduled for the Public Comments on this project to be posted and available?

Thank you for your attentions.

All best wishes,

Arthur Dorros  
Montlake resident



**From:** [bill kuhn](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Montlake School renovation.  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 4:38:24 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

I'm writing with respect to the proposed zoning variances for the Montlake School renovation. Some variances make plenty of sense, e.g. the small area with excess height. Others are not at all good for the neighborhood. For example, the lot coverage and setback variances combine to land a behemoth in our neighborhood. Why? Who is asking for this? What is magic about 500 students?

It's a pipe dream to imagine a zero parking situation. Far better would be a lot that enabled teachers and staff to charge their electric vehicles. I would say this plan is anti-car, but usually that implies a pro-bike plan (which I strongly support). But no, it is terrible for bikes as well. In what transportation universe do these planners reside? Will there be a magic carpet lot?

If you'd like to have us non-child households continue to support the school (as we all do, as evidenced by our votes on various levies), you need to think about how an elementary school fits into the neighborhood. This is an arrogant plan that ignores the very people that want to have a vital school in their neighborhood.

The ludicrous loop chart on page 20 of the proposal provides zero useful information, and is clearly just intended to placate the casual observer. There's a lovely section in the plan that talks about 'connection to nature'. Do the miniscule setbacks and over-code lot coverage reflect that? And how, precisely, is 'comfort and well-being' reflected in this plan?

Please reconsider the following 'Departures'

- Lot coverage. Let's make a greener plan, not more brick
- Setbacks. There is no justification presented for this, other than the fact you want to stick a big building on a small lot.
- Parking. The notion that parking is plentiful is ludicrous. There's a reason we're one of the first neighborhoods with an RPZ - UW students and employees flood the neighborhood. What about charging stations?
- Bicycle Parking. There's a subtle little side note in this proposal where the desired number of parking spaces only includes the new space. Yet, the site consists of both the old and new spaces. The under-sizing by 30 does not account for this. This is an extremely un-green, and backward looking proposal.
- Bicycle Parking Standards. This is unrealistic, given the continued crime levels we're experiencing. Who will determine the golden 12 who get secure spaces?

Thank you

--

Bill Kuhn  
2048 23rd Ave E  
Seattle 98112

**From:** [Carla Leonardi](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [THOMAS PAYNE](#); [vickyc@cascade.org](mailto:vickyc@cascade.org)  
**Subject:** Bike Parking at Montlake Elementary  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:38:04 AM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Nelson,

I have been the owner of Cafe Lago on 24th Ave E in Montlake for 32 years and have lived in Montlake just as long. I am a new board member of the Montlake Community Club.

Thomas Payne (fellow Montlake bike rider) sent me the [DLR document](#) describing proposed departures for the Montlake Elementary School renovation. **Improvements our city is making in alternatives to car transportation are targeted toward the future, and so should this Montlake design.** There is a light rail station less than a mile away, an easy bike ride, and as you note, a greenway passes immediately next to the school connecting Capitol Hill, the University District, the Burke Gilman Trail, and Eastlake.

We need the number of students and staff riding bikes to Montlake to increase dramatically, and should plan for it. I know that space for additional bike parking can be configured in an innovative way. Vertical storage, stacked racks, subsidized folding bikes (Brompton, Dahon)—figure out a way to get lots of bikes in a small place. That is the expertise we want in our designers. If DLR Group doesn't have that expertise, team up with a firm that does!

I'm copying Vicky at Cascade Bike Club which has bike education programs directed at young students.

Thanks for sharing this proposal and for making Montlake ready for the next century.

Best regards,  
Carla Leonardi  
2208 16th Avenue E

--



**Carla Leonardi**

[Cafe Lago](#)

M 206.841.9015

O 206.329.8005

**From:** [Catherine Leblond and Lorne Balaski](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School Project - Comment on the Departures Presentation.  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 8:46:26 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hi,

This email is in response to the request for comments on the Departures Presentation for the Montlake School Project. We own/live at 2002 East Miller Street and both of our children have attended Montlake.

1. We are generally in favor of the project and are fans of public education. We were actively involved in the 'Save Montlake School' effort in the 2000's so are excited about this project.
2. We are ok with most of the departures requested in the presentation with the BIG exception of the 'vehicular parking quantity' departure. Having lived in our location for approximately 15 years we are very intimate with the parking issues in the area and have two different concerns:
  - a. During weekdays in the school year our area has pressure on available parking from 4 primary sources; residents, local businesses, UW Medicine, and Montlake School. Regardless of what various studies say, our experience is that there are times when week day parking is challenging in our area for residents, some of whom are elderly and struggle to park a distance from their homes. The large increase in parking quantity required by the school expansion (131 spots total) will have a pretty negative impact on the local residents.
  - b. Secondly, our understanding is that currently staff and teachers from the school are not provided assigned parking or street parking passes, requiring them to move their vehicles every 2 hours in order to avoid parking tickets. Regardless of the parking quantity ultimately approved in the departure request this burden on staff and teachers is bit ridiculous. If you are going to allow them street parking then provide them a silly parking pass.
2. Two obvious questions come to mind when discussing parking:
  - a. Why does the school design include no on site parking whatsoever? In the departures presentation there is some discussion about how there is no reasonable way to provide surface parking on the school site, but no discussion about the obvious solution of underground parking. If the school will truly require 131 parking spots is it not reasonable to expect that at least some portion of these are included on the school property rather than on the surrounding streets. To expect 131 street parking spots for the school, in addition street parking from local businesses, UW Medicine employees and local residents is too much. The logical solution is to provide a reasonable amount of parking on the school property.

Sincerely,

Lorne Balaski

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows





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Date 6/29/22

This FAX transmission contains 1 pages (not including this cover sheet)

To: Name DEPARTURES  
 Department SEATTLE DEPT. OF NEIGHBORHOODS (DON  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 FAX ( 206 ) 233-5142

From: Name CHRIS JACKINS  
 Telephone ( 206 ) 521-3288

Notes: ATTACHED: COMMENTS ON PROPOSED  
ZONING DEPARTURES FOR MONT LAKE ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL PROJECT

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June 28, 2022

File montlake letter on departures

TO: Departures  
Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods (DON)  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
FAX 206-233-5142

FROM: Chris Jackins, Coordinator  
Seattle Committee to Save Schools  
P.O. Box 84063, Seattle WA 98124  
206-521-3288

REGARDING: Comments on proposed zoning departures for Montlake Elementary School project

Dear Departures at DON,

1. I have concerns about the Seattle School District's request to allow the Montlake Elementary School project to not meet City zoning code.
2. I oppose granting any of the requested departures.
3. The District is asking for at least eight departures from the zoning code according to the Draft Environmental Checklist for the project. [page 2, A.10; page 24, B.8.I]:
  - a. Lot coverage greater than allowed.
  - b. Higher than allowed buildings.
  - c. Less than required setbacks.
  - d. Less than required on-site parking.
  - e. Less than required bicycle parking.
  - f. Allowing buses to load on the street. (Off-street, on-site bus loading is the default for safety.)
  - g. Truck loading / unloading.
  - h. An electronic changing-image reader board sign.  
Bright electronic night-time signs are not consistent with residential neighborhoods, and many school neighborhoods have successfully rejected allowing such signs.
4. There are so many problems that the project does not make sense and is plain "wrong" for this neighborhood. The playground will shrink by half, going from 25,600 sq. ft. to 12,500 sq. ft. This is an example of a standardized, cookie-cutter, too-large-sized school with capacity increasing from current enrollment of 187 students to 530 students, when the highest recorded enrollment was in 1935 at 487 students [page 3, Appendix F]. The building square footage will increase enormously, adding on a new 65,000 sq. ft. 3-story building that will dwarf the current landmarked 1-story and 2-story neighborhood school of about 23,250 sq. ft. plus portables. Student capacity would more than double, but there would be no off-street parking. The majority of the trees on the site would be removed.
5. The proposed departures from Code are too large, they would harm the neighborhood, and the impacts on the neighborhood are out of balance with the need for the departures.
6. These impacts cannot be satisfactorily mitigated within the current design. By SMC 23.79.C1.a and b, no departures should be allowed.
7. Public meetings should be held regarding the requested departures.
8. Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Sincerely,





August 22, 2022

File montlake letter on departures 2

TO: Nelson Pesigan, Departures  
Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods (DON)  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
FAX 206-233-5142; [Nelson.pesigan@seattlegov](mailto:Nelson.pesigan@seattlegov)

FROM: Chris Jackins, Coordinator  
Seattle Committee to Save Schools  
P.O. Box 84063, Seattle WA 98124  
206-521-3288

REGARDING: Comments on proposed zoning departures for Montlake Elementary School project

Dear Nelson Pesigan,

1. I have concerns about the Seattle School District's request to allow the Montlake Elementary School project to not meet City zoning code. I sent a previous comment letter on Montlake to you on June 28, 2022, based on the descriptions in the School District's Draft Environmental Checklist for the project. [page 2, A.10; page 24, B.8.]
2. Since that time, a presentation on the nine departures requested by the Seattle School District was posted on the Department of Neighborhoods website, with comments requested by September 9, 2022.
  - A. I continue to oppose granting the requested departures. The project does not fit into the neighborhood.
3. This letter discusses some overall issues related to the departure process and the presentation posted by the DON.
  - A. Harmful and unnecessary exclusion of the public from the City's departure process.
  - B. The District and City seem to be cooperating in a Montlake departure process which is unfair and biased against the public and against the Duwamish Tribe.
  - C. The District is planning to continue to load/unload school buses on the street instead of onsite as required by code, but the District has not requested a departure from code to load/unload school buses on the street.
  - D. Possible typos in the presentation.
  - E. A summary from pages 11-14 of the presentation of evaluation criteria for the proposed departures.
4. This letter also gives detailed responses to the nine proposed departures from the presentation posted by DON,
5. Here is a summary of the nine proposed departures from the presentation posted by DON.
  1. Lot coverage:
    - proposed 57%
    - maximum allowed 35%
    - (Existing 33%)
    - (Departure to 45% plus further "waiver" up to 57%)
  2. Height:
    - proposed 60 feet above average grade
    - maximum allowed 45 feet
    - (Existing 45 feet)
  3. Setbacks from property line:
    - proposed 3 feet at N, 6 feet at W, 5 feet at S
    - minimum required at least 15 feet at each of N, W, S
  4. Onsite vehicle parking spaces:
    - proposed zero
    - required 131
    - (Existing 2)
    - (Existing should require 25)
  5. Truck Loading/Unloading Berth off of 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E:
    - proposed 25 feet wide by 34 feet long
    - required at least 40 feet long
  6. Curb Cut on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E for Loading Berth / Service Area without replacing lost Parking:
    - proposed don't replace 2 street parking spaces lost to curb cut
    - required replace 2 lost parking spaces
    - (District wants to count as a 2-space replacement the proposed elimination of existing curb cuts on E. Calhoun and E. McGraw)
  7. Long-term bicycle parking spaces:
    - proposed 30
    - required 55
  8. Secure & enclosed bicycle parking spaces:
    - proposed 12 secure & enclosed spaces and 18 other spaces in weather protected bike racks
    - required 30 secure & enclosed spaces
  9. Electric Changing-Image Message Board Sign:
    - proposed one electric changing-image sign at new main entrance on East Calhoun Street
    - Forbidden "Seattle Land Use Code does not allow flashing, changing-image or message board signs in single-family residential zones"

Sincerely, **Chris Jackins**



Some overall issues related to the departure process and the presentation posted by the DON.

1. Harmful and unnecessary exclusion of the public from the City's departure process.
  - A. The Presentation describes "Process Changes Due to COVID-19", which notes that instead of the usual City process of holding in-person public meetings including with members of the public on an advisory committee, the DON is only taking written comments from the public. [page 9]
    - a. "The school departure recommendation process typically requires in-person public meetings, which are prohibited due to public health mandates on social distancing and limited gatherings." [page 9]
    - b. City Ordinance 126188 "allows certain City land use processes to be handled administratively" and "the DON Director is temporarily authorized to submit this recommendation report to SDCI in lieu of a public advisory committee process." [page 9]
  - B. This exclusion of the public has caused a negative impact for the public in the zoning departure process.
  - C. I ask that the DON instead hold remote meetings, by phone and Zoom, and remotely include members of the public on the advisory committee, and allow these members to act remotely in the capacity prescribed by City code.
    - a. The language used on page 9 would seem to allow this.
    - b. It sounds like the temporary City Ordinance only prohibits in-person meetings, that it does not explicitly prohibit remote meetings and that by referencing "electronic" access it actually seems to anticipate remote meetings, and that the Ordinance "allows" DON ("allows" is the word used by DON) to choose to NOT eliminate all public meetings and to NOT eliminate all direct public participation in making recommendations.
    - c. Please respond in writing as to whether or not DON believes that DON has the option to choose to NOT eliminate all public meetings and to NOT eliminate all direct public participation in making recommendations according to DON's interpretation of City rules and please explain why.
    - d. A posting on the Department of Neighborhoods' "Front Porch" on May 5, 2020, titled "Recent Council legislation makes temporary process changes to Major Institutions and Schools" notes that "The legislation passed by Seattle City Council makes temporary school departure process changes ... and it enlists community participation by replacing in-person meetings with electronic outreach ..."
  - D. The current temporary process greatly excludes the public and places the City and the School District, and those acting in their name, in a category of institutions and people who are NOT strong advocates of public involvement and democracy.
2. The District and City seem to be cooperating in a Montlake departure process which is unfair and biased against the public and against the Duwamish Tribe.
  - A. An attempt to show respect to Indian Tribes appears on page 2 of the District / DON Montlake presentation. But the attempt leaves out any mention of the Duwamish Tribe.
    - a. The second page of the Montlake presentation posted by DON states:
      - "Land Acknowledgment"
      - "We would like to show our respect and acknowledge the Puget Sound Coast Salish peoples, past and present, on whose lands we gather today. The Suquamish Tribe and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe are the federally recognized Indian tribes of greater Seattle, under the treaties of Point Elliott and Medicine Creek."
    - b. Leaving out any mention of the Duwamish Tribe is at odds with the District's own policy as expressed in the October 12, 2016 School Board Resolution 2016/17-1 supporting Treaty rights and benefits for the Duwamish Tribe.
    - c. And the "City of Seattle" is named for a Duwamish Chief, Chief Seattle.
  - B. The Montlake Presentation discusses the proposed project and its compatibility with the character of the surrounding area, including its Native American history.
    - a. The Montlake Presentation references "Project Vision and Goals", "Spirit of Place", and "Honor the landscape". [page 21] With regard to the Montlake "Site Context" and "Spirit of Place", the Presentation states:
      - "The project team engaged with members of the Muckleshoot Tribe to provide context and perspective on the specific importance of the Montlake area to the indigenous peoples of the Puget Sound. Near the current path of State Route 520 was a primary native canoe portage route between Lake Washington and Lake Union. In 1916, the Montlake Cut was constructed as a shipping channel to connect the two lakes. The cut had far



reaching implications disrupting areas of cultural importance, native fishing habitats and the ecology of the entire region.” [page 23]

- b. The discussion cites the Muckleshoot Tribe but makes no mention of the Duwamish Tribe.
  - c. The Duwamish Tribe is a part of the history of the Montlake area.
  - C. In the Rainier Beach High School project departure process, the public, including the Duwamish Tribe, was forbidden from discussing the proposed project and its compatibility with the character of the surrounding area, including its Native American history.
    - a. As the representative of the DON, you provided the departure recommendations for the Rainier Beach High School project.
    - b. However, you were not a participant at the appeal hearing before the City Hearing Examiner for those departures, so perhaps you are not familiar with how that process went. [Hearing Examiner File MUP 22-004, MUP # 3037700-SD]
    - c. Appellants representing members of the public had lined up testimony from an historian for the Duwamish Tribe and from the Chair of the Duwamish Tribe, relating to the compatibility of the proposed project with the surrounding area. The Rainier Beach High School project area for many centuries was inhabited by members of the Duwamish Tribe.
    - d. The School District attorneys made a motion to exclude such testimony.
      - Appellants objected to the District’s motion.
      - The representative from the City DCI (Department of Construction and Inspections), who embraced DON’s recommendations, did not object to the District’s motion.
      - The City Hearing Examiner ruled in favor of the District’s motion, and such testimony and evidence was excluded from the hearing.
    - e. The result for the public, including the Duwamish Tribe, was unfair and prejudiced.
  - D. We ask that the DON’s recommendation in the Montlake departure process include proper consideration of the Duwamish Tribe.
3. The District is planning to continue to load/unload school buses on the street instead of onsite as required by code, but the District has not requested a departure from code to load/unload school buses on the street
- A. In the Montlake Draft Environmental Checklist, the District stated that it expected to ask for a bus loading departure. [page 2, A.10; page 24, B.8.I]:
  - B. There are situations where a departure is not needed, if enrollment capacity is not being greatly increased.
  - C. However, for Montlake, the capacity is being increased by about 50%, so the Montlake project would not seem to qualify for being allowed to continue bus loading on the street without being granted a departure.
    - a. According to the Montlake Draft Environmental Checklist, the Transportation Report on page 3 states that the school now has a “reported capacity of 251 students”, which cites to the Seattle Public Schools, School Capacity Summary, Updated October 16, 2019..
    - b. The planned new capacity is 530. [page 4, A.11, Montlake Draft Checklist]
    - c. This is a greater than 50% increase in capacity.
    - d. SMC 51B.002.I.4.b requires “The student capacity of the school is not being expanded by more than 25 percent”.
  - D. Has the DON been asked to use past higher enrollment numbers at Montlake (for example the peak enrollment of 487 in 1935-1936) which would yield a smaller percentage increase compared to the new capacity of 530, rather than the District and SEPA actual current capacity of 251 compared to the new capacity of 530?
  - E. Please respond in writing as to whether or not DON believes a bus loading departure is necessary according to DON’s interpretation of City rules and please explain why.
4. Possible typos in the presentation.
- A. The Montlake Presentation states with regard to the Montlake Design Review Process: “The Project Team is working with many stakeholders throughout the design of John Rogers Elementary School Replacement”. [lines 3-4, page 18]
    - a. The citation to “John Rogers” was likely meant to be “Montlake”?
    - b. Apparently the Montlake Presentation text used portions of the John Rogers Presentation text.
  - B. The Montlake Presentation references “An on-street parking availability study, preformed by Heffron Transportation”. [lines 3-4, page 62]
    - a. The citation to “preformed” was likely meant to be “performed”?



5. The presentation provides evaluation criteria for the proposed departures on pages 11-14 related to the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) as follows:

A. Evaluation Criteria – Consistency (SMC 23.79.008)

Departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the City's Land Use Code, including the rezone evaluation criteria in Chapter 23.34 of the Seattle Municipal Code, to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings.

B. Evaluation Criteria – Relationship (SMC 23.79.008)

In reaching recommendations, the Director of Department of Neighborhoods (DON) shall consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

Relationship to Surrounding Areas. The Director of Department of Neighborhoods (DON) shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:

- 1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;
- 2) Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;
- 3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;
- 4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and
- 5) Impacts on housing and open space. More flexibility in the development standards may be allowed if the impacts on the surrounding community are anticipated to be negligible or are reduced by mitigation; whereas, a minimal amount or no departure from development standards may be allowed if the anticipated impacts are significant and cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

C. Evaluation Criteria – Need (SMC 23.79.008)

Need for Departure. The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departure may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or an integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.

D. Recommendations

Recommendations must include consideration of the interrelationship among height, setback and landscaping standards when departures from height or setback are proposed.

Chris Jackins' responses to nine proposed departures from the presentation posted by DON,

Overall response.

Overall, the project does not fit into the neighborhood. This is the wrong site for this project. The District design proposals seem similar to trying to put together a big model ship in a tiny glass bottle.

The proposed departures from Code are too large, they would harm the neighborhood, and the impacts on the neighborhood are out of balance with the need for the departures. These impacts cannot be satisfactorily mitigated within the current design. By SMC 23.79.C1.a and b, no departures should be allowed.

Summary of background information.

Some of this information comes from the Montlake Presentation posted on the DON website, and also from the Draft SEPA Environmental Checklist for the Montlake Elementary Project (2409 22nd Ave E), which is posted on the School District website at <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/sepa/>

- A. Small site. The presentation notes that the Montlake site is the second smallest school site in the Seattle School District, at 1.65 acres. [page 41, Presentation]
- B. Two zoning exemptions. To fit onto the Montlake site whose current lot coverage is 33%, the project would need not one but two separate zoning exemptions for 57% lot coverage that would exceed the maximum 35% allowed by code. [pages 38-39, Presentation]
  - a. There is a request for a departure to allow 45% lot coverage.
  - b. And there is a second separate further request for a waiver to go up to 57% lot coverage.
- C. The playground area will shrink to half its current size.
  - a. The playground would shrink from the current 25,600 sq. ft. down to 12,500 sq. ft. [page 5, A.11; page 28, B.12.b, Montlake Draft Checklist]
  - b. On a per-student basis, playground space would shrink to one-fourth the current size, going from about 100 sq. ft. per student to 25 sq. ft. per student. (25,600 divided by current capacity of 251 students, versus 12,500 divided by the planned capacity of 530. [Capacities from page 4, A.11, Montlake Draft Checklist])
  - c. The actual per-student playground space loss impact is even greater, because playground space is currently about 136 sq. ft. per student. (25,600 divided by current enrollment of 187) [page 4, A.11, Montlake Draft Checklist]
- D. The target enrollment capacity is inconsistent with and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable recent need.
  - a. The target capacity of 530 does not correspond to any modern-day enrollment in the current neighborhood.
  - b. According to page 3 of the Transportation Report, Appendix F of the Montlake Draft Checklist:
    - The current capacity is 251 students; the current enrollment is 187.
    - Peak enrollment was 487 in 1935. Another peak enrollment was 439 in 1956. These peaks were over 60 years ago.
    - The recent peak enrollment was 269 in 2017.
- E. The "majority of the trees on site will require removal". [pages 1, 5, Appendix D, Arborist Report, Montlake Draft Checklist]
- F. Cookie-cutter school enrollment capacity. A chart on page 63 of the presentation shows a proposed Montlake project capacity of 500. This capacity inflexibly conforms to one of two minimum enrollment capacities prescribed by current District Educational Specifications (Ed Specs), either 500 or 650. The District Ed Specs are not imposed by another government body, they may be changed by the District, and they do not constitute an automatic waiver from City zoning code.
  - a. Of the nine other example schools listed, six have capacities of 650 and three have capacities of 500.
  - b. These other example schools are all relatively recent projects (two are in process).



- c. I have tracked each of these other nine school projects.
  - d. Part of the impetus for enforcing these standard sizes was essentially a District assumption that public schools could be run like a string of 7-11 stores.
  - e. Larger enrollment capacity was thought to allow savings through “efficiencies” like eliminating the cost of “extra” principals caused by “smaller” schools: every principal would supposedly serve at least 500 or 650 students rather than the current Montlake enrollment of 187 students.
  - f. This assumption turned out to be erroneous: schools with larger enrollments have had to hire assistant principals to successfully handle the extra work.
  - g. Nevertheless, the District is continuing to follow this model in its school construction projects. The District also followed this model when it closed and sold off schools.
  - h. Public schools are not factories or 7-11’s. The District can and should find a way to offer successful education at a variety of sites and enrollment sizes.
- G. Threats to demolish neighborhood homes. The District claims that if it is allowed “only” a 45% lot coverage departure and not a further waiver to 57%, that this “would require vacating a portion of 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E between E Calhoun and E McGraw Streets, as well as condemning and demolishing two residential properties across 20<sup>th</sup>.” [page 40, Presentation]
- a. I have seen the District use this “threat” on other school projects, aiming to silence public criticism of its plans: basically, “if you don’t let us build our proposed project, we will take your homes.”
  - b. Such threats are not very nice things to do to neighborhoods and taxpayers.
  - c. Such threats are actually another indication that the proposed project does not belong in this neighborhood, that the proposed project needs to be down-sized, and that the District request for departures and waivers from the zoning code should be denied,
- H. The presentation inaccurately understates the incompatibility of the size of the project with the surrounding neighborhood.
- a. A chart on page 63 of the presentation lists that the proposed Montlake project capacity as 500.
  - b. The Montlake Draft Environmental Checklist shows a larger possible capacity of 530, stating: *“Although not anticipated at this time, the childcare classroom could be utilized to accommodate preschool students in the future which would result in a potential future capacity of approximately 530 students in grades Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.”* [page 4, A.11, Montlake Draft Checklist]
- I. The building square footage will increase enormously, adding on a new 65,000 sq. ft. 3-story building that will dwarf the current landmarked 1-story and 2-story neighborhood school of about 23,250 sq. ft. plus portables. [pages 3-4, A.11, Montlake Draft Checklist]

## Responses to each individual departure request

### 1. Lot coverage:

- proposed 57%
- maximum allowed 35%
- (Existing 33%)
- (Departure to 45% plus further "waiver" up to 57%)

The presentation on page 41 references:

#### A. Consistency.

- a. The presentation asserts: The lot coverage has been designed to meet the educational program while minimizing building mass to remain consistent with the intent of the code.
- b. Our response:
  - The educational program capacity is too large and is inconsistent with the fact that the very small site size is the second smallest in the District.
  - The building mass is enormous for this site – "minimizing" does not help.
  - The project needs to be downsized – it is out of proportion to the site and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable and recent need for the proposed enrollment capacity.

#### B. Relationship.

- a. The presentation asserts: The design maximizes outdoor play space and mitigates building height in a way that is appropriate to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood, and uses mature tree cover to reduce the perceived scale of the building.
- b. Our response:
  - The playground area will shrink to half its current size, a pathetic result for something that supposedly "maximizes outdoor play space". This flows from a project which is inconsistently large compared to the small site.
  - The building height is accentuated by cramming the site with tall buildings which is NOT "appropriate to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood".
  - Rather than using tree cover to reduce the perceived scale of the building, the "majority of the trees on site will require removal". [pages 1, 5, Appendix D, Arborist Report, Montlake Draft Checklist]

#### C. Need.

- a. The presentation asserts: The lot coverage is needed because the site is so small and otherwise nearby residences would need to be acquired by the District and demolished to expand the site.
- b. Our response:
  - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.

### 2. Height:

- proposed 60 feet above average grade
- maximum allowed 45 feet
- (Existing 45 feet)

The presentation on page 48 references:

#### A. Consistency.

- a. The presentation asserts: The design minimizes building height to remain consistent with the intent of the code.
- b. Our response:
  - The design massively adds tall buildings and accentuates the height with penthouses.
  - An actual "minimization" would reduce height and bulk by downsizing the enrollment capacity to be more compatible with the scale of the neighborhood.

#### B. Relationship.



- a. The presentation asserts: The design maintains the parapet line of the existing school and is in keeping with the scale of the site. A mechanical penthouse and elevator equipment penthouse are sized and located to minimize visibility from pedestrians on the sidewalk.
  - b. Our response:
    - With the proposed additions, the extension of the parapet line with the penthouse top-off, the scale of the site changes to a large crowded tall-building site.
    - The penthouses' visibility needs to be "minimized" for more than pedestrians on the adjacent sidewalk. And the accompanying sample illustrative "view" hiding the penthouses is not convincing: for example, is this a spot where any further away the penthouses would be visible?
  - C. Need.
    - a. The presentation asserts: The penthouse height is needed for ventilation and elevator equipment and to avoid otherwise taking program space out of the main building volume.
    - b. Our response:
      - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.
3. Setbacks from property line:
- proposed 3 feet at N, 6 feet at W, 5 feet at S
  - minimum required at least 15 feet at each of N, W, S

The presentation on page 56 references:

- A. Consistency.
  - a. The presentation asserts: The setbacks have been designed to meet the educational program while providing setbacks to the greatest extent possible to remain consistent with the intent of the code.
  - b. Our response:
    - It would be better to actually meet the setback requirements of code rather than striving to create an optical illusion that the project has provided more space than there is.
    - Per code, the design setbacks are:
      - 80% too small at N (3 feet is only 20% of required 15 feet)
      - 60% too small at W (6 feet is only 40% of required 15 feet)
      - 66% too small at S (5 feet is only 33% of required 15 feet)
    - The project needs to be downsized – it is out of proportion to the site and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable and recent need for the proposed enrollment capacity.
- B. Relationship.
  - a. The presentation asserts: The code requires the setback to be calculated from the property line, but there is also a 6.5- foot distance from the property line to the back of the sidewalk which will make the perceived setback more generous and soften the transition in scale.
  - b. Our response:
    - The District wants to count as part of its required 15-foot setback 6.5 feet of property that it does not own to achieve a "perceived setback".
    - One might as well propose moving the sidewalk further from the school.
    - This still would not change the fact that the design creates a very big, crowded site looming over the neighborhood.
- C. Need.
  - a. The presentation asserts: The smaller setbacks are needed because the site is so small and otherwise the building height would have to be increased even further over code.
  - b. Our response:
    - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.

4. Onsite vehicle parking spaces:

- proposed zero
- required 131
- (Existing 2)
- (Existing should require 25)

The presentation on page 62 references:

A. Consistency.

- a. The presentation asserts: The code sets the number of required onsite vehicle parking spaces based on school assembly spaces rather than day-to-day need. The on-street capacity can handle the larger school and with four mitigating steps (page 68) the larger school will not "place undue stress on the existing neighborhood parking":
  1. A construction management plan for truck routes.
  2. For large events once or twice a year either use parking at the Montlake Community Center or split up the events into two nights.
  3. Warn neighbors beforehand about specific large events.
  4. Update right-of-way & curb-side signage.
- b. Our response:
  - The District is incorrect to act like using assembly space to set parking requirements is wrong and silly.
  - Assembly space is what is used to evaluate parking needs per City code. The number of possible attendees that can attend an event is related to how many people can fit into assembly spaces, which correlates to the likely number of parking spaces needed for vehicles used to transport the attendees.
  - Parking problems affect the livability of a neighborhood.
  - And day-to-day use of street parking is a big impact that tends to fall especially on nearby neighbors.
  - The proposed mitigating measures leave the burdens on the neighborhood. People who live near schools in other neighborhoods with tight parking report that they start planning their lives around when they can go shopping for food and still return to a parking spot near their home, and that they leave for important appointments an hour early to account for delays when cars block their driveways, and that it is left up to neighbors to try to enforce any updated street signage.
  - The project needs to be downsized – it is out of proportion to the site and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable and recent need for the proposed enrollment capacity.

B. Relationship.

- a. The presentation asserts: The proposed number of parking spaces is less than required by code in order to maximize the amount of play and outdoor learning opportunities on the site which along with the small size of the site limit the available area for onsite parking areas.
- b. Our response:
  - The District has a certain amount of gall to try to claim that it is a champion of outdoor play area, when it is proposing to shrink playground area to half its current size while greatly increasing enrollment.
  - While there is a tradeoff between the size of the various departures the District is requesting, the departures also add up one on top of another to make clear that the proposed project is too big for the site. Too little onsite parking, too big buildings, too little playground space, etc.

C. Need.

- a. The presentation asserts: The departure to provide zero onsite parking is needed because the site is so small and otherwise outdoor play space would have to be further reduced and it is difficult to fit in the building additions to meet educational program requirements. "Parking quantities that meet the Seattle Municipal Code could not reasonably be achieved without drastically reducing available student program space and site amenities."
- b. Our response:
  - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.
  - Reducing the proposed out-sized enrollment capacity would reduce the requirements for onsite parking and free up play area space and free up space for onsite parking.



- How can the District get away with providing zero onsite ADA parking? (ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act) I have heard from longtime District staff who work with special education students: these District staff have been adamant about requiring ADA parking.
- The District generally does not consider it “reasonable” to look at underground parking. Perhaps the 6.5-foot strip of City property surrounding the school that the District wants to count as its own “setback” could be donated by the City as a contribution to establishing some surface parking or underground parking?

5. Truck Loading/Unloading Berth off of 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E:

- proposed 25 feet wide by 34 feet long
- required at least 40 feet long

The presentation on page 72 references:

A. Consistency.

- a. The presentation asserts: The current truck loading area off E Calhoun is too small so trash pickup happens on the street, and the new truck loading area off 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E will allow for off-street trash pickup.
- b. Our response:
  - The fact that the loading area length will be too short again shows that the project needs to be downsized – it is out of proportion to the site and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable and recent need for the proposed enrollment capacity.

B. Relationship.

- a. The presentation asserts: The new truck loading area off 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E will also provide a sheltered area for loading and for storage of solid waste, which will reduce odors, noise, and visual impacts on the neighborhood and reduce traffic impacts.
- b. Our response:
  - While there is a tradeoff between the size of the various departures the District is requesting, the departures also add up one on top of another to make clear that the proposed project is too big for the site. Too little onsite parking, too big buildings, too little playground space, a stubby truck loading and waste storage area, etc.

D. Need.

- a. The presentation asserts: The departure to allow a short 34 foot long loading area rather than the required 40 foot long loading area is needed because the site is so small and it is difficult to fit in new buildings to meet educational program requirements and otherwise outdoor play space would have to be further reduced.
- b. Our response:
  - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.

6. Curb Cut on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E for Loading Berth / Service Area without replacing lost Parking:

- proposed don't replace 2 street parking spaces lost to curb cut
- required replace 2 lost parking spaces
- (District wants to count as a 2-space replacement the proposed elimination of existing curb cuts on E. Calhoun and E. McGraw)

The presentation on page 76 references:

A. Consistency.

- a. The presentation asserts: The curb cut for the truck loading area off 20<sup>th</sup> Ave E will take away two street parking spaces, but taking away the existing curb cuts on E. Calhoun and E. McGraw will restore two street parking spaces, so there will be no loss of street parking spaces at the project perimeter.
- b. Our response:
  - The District is proposing a new loss of two street parking spaces. Giving back two previous spaces just continues the impacts in a new location.

- The District's request for the project to be allowed to create these impacts shows again that the project needs to be downsized – it is out of proportion to the site and out of proportion to any demonstrated reasonable and recent need for the proposed enrollment capacity.

**B. Relationship.**

- The presentation asserts:** A traffic study found that on school days the average street parking within 800 feet of the school is only occupied up to 64% and new usage might go to 71% with the expanded school, which is below the 85% usage the City considers "full". Parking permits will continue to be required in the surrounding RPZ 1 Residential Parking Zone, and school employees are allowed to obtain such permits, and the increase in short-term parking "could be accommodated by unused supply".
- Our response:**
  - These are the same arguments made for not supplying any onsite parking. The departures add up one on top of another to make clear that the proposed project is too big for the site.

**C. Need.**

- The presentation asserts:** It is too difficult to otherwise make up for the two street parking spaces lost from the new curb cut because the site is so small and it is difficult to fit in new buildings to meet educational program requirements and to fit in outdoor play space and a loading dock area.
- Our response:**
  - Taking away street parking spaces changes the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.

**7. Long-term bicycle parking spaces:**

- proposed 30
- required 55

The presentation on page 81 references:

**A. Consistency.**

- The presentation asserts:** The current site has no bike parking that meets standards for long-term bike parking. A study by the school staff says that 30 bicycle parking spaces will accommodate those likely to use the spaces, which is 6% of the new maximum enrollment.
- Our response:**
  - A smaller maximum enrollment would reduce the size of the District's variance from code.

**B. Relationship.**

- The presentation asserts:** "The reduction in long-term bike parking is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on the surrounding community."
- Our response:**
  - This departure along with other departures add up one on top of another to make clear that the proposed project is too big for the site.

**C. Need.**

- The presentation asserts:** The site is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 square feet or 1.65 acres, which limits the area for bike parking.
- Our response:**
  - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.

**8. Secure & enclosed bicycle parking spaces:**

- proposed 12 secure & enclosed spaces and 18 other spaces in weather protected bike racks
- required 30 secure & enclosed spaces

The presentation on page 86 references:

**A. Consistency.**



- a. The presentation asserts: The code intent is to have visible and safe bike parking locations to encourage use and deter risk of theft. The 12 proposed secure & enclosed spaces are visible from the admin area during school hours, and the other 18 spaces are weather protected.
- b. Our response:
  - A smaller maximum enrollment would reduce the size of the District's variance from code.
- B. Relationship.
  - a. The presentation asserts: The code intent for bike lockers is for adult users with keys, which are not practical for elementary school children.
  - b. Our response:
    - School staff should be able to help make lockers work for elementary school children.
- C. Need.
  - a. The presentation asserts: The site is the second smallest in the District, at 72,000 square feet or 1.65 acres, which limits the area for bike parking, and the school "does not have the capacity to administer access controls for younger children."
  - b. Our response:
    - The District assertion is another confirmation that the educational program capacity is too large and Montlake is the wrong site for this size of project.
    - Denying public school children access based on lack of staffing is not a valid argument. It is another indication that plans for school construction are not in synch with proper education. The District at Northgate Elementary School recently plopped large buildings onto the site and eliminated a wonderful large natural grass playfield, saying that the school had not been allowing children to use the field anyway because of a lack of supervisory staff to watch the playfield.

9. Electric Changing-Image Message Board Sign:

- proposed one electric changing-image sign at new main entrance on East Calhoun Street
- Forbidden "Seattle Land Use Code does not allow flashing, changing-image or message board signs in single-family residential zones"

The presentation on page 90 does not specifically reference Consistency, Relationship, or Need:

- a. The presentation asserts: "SPS would use the message board sign adjacent to the new main entrance to alert families and the community to events taking place at the school. Messages could be displayed in multiple languages, which a fixed message sign would not allow."
- b. Our response:
  - On page 91, the presentation states: "Seattle Land Use Code does not allow flashing, changing-image or message board signs in single-family residential zones"
  - An "electric changing-image sign" is a form of "flashing" sign. It is not appropriate for a residential neighborhood, and is forbidden by code. Other school neighborhoods have rejected such signs.
  - The District has robo-call, multi-language capability to specifically target messages to families by language.
  - A simpler, non-electronic sign would adequately serve the needs of the school and the neighborhood.
  - One or two "lucky" residents would get to have a lighted sign right across the street from their homes.
  - If the proposal was to have multiple lighted signs, one each right across the street from every home around the school site, that would not be good, though it would alert every nearby neighbor to school news.
  - Shoving these impacts especially onto one or two neighbors does not make it OK.
  - And everyone else who walks, bikes, or drives by a single sign will still be impacted.
  - And the electronic nature of the sign display process makes it hard to prevent commercial acknowledgments, like "Thanks to Pete's 7-11 for the free soda pop!"
  - The School Board dropped its past anti-commercial advertising policy a few years ago, and has put ads into School District calendars, etc.

**From:** [Connie Bain](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake School Expansion  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 5:44:01 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Mr. Pesigan:

My husband and I are in our late eighties and have lived in the Montlake neighborhood for nearly 60 years. Our three children attended Montlake, Meany and Garfield. While we are avid school supporters, contributing to Montlake School fundraising events and always voting for school levies, we are concerned with the huge expansion of Montlake School which has been proposed.

Montlake is a neighborhood school with some students bused in and yet had under 200 students enrolled recently. I know in the past, when there were rumors of closing the school and the goal was to get 300 students enrolled, it was difficult to do so. We agree it would be an advantage to get rid of the portables and move the students into an additional building but why such a large one? Where will all those additional students come from? Surely they must come on buses which will cause undesired congestion on neighborhood streets.

It seems counter intuitive to demolish family homes to make way for a larger school which isn't really needed.

Is it possible the plan can be scaled back to a smaller second building, thus providing more room for a larger playground and less need for more buses?

Thanks for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,  
Connie and Jim Bain  
2056 -23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue E., Seattle, WA 98112  
[conbain@comcast.net](mailto:conbain@comcast.net)  
306-323-6869

**From:** [davidmenz@earthlink.net](mailto:davidmenz@earthlink.net)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Recommendations re: Montlake Elementary School massive project  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 16, 2022 4:14:07 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Nelson,

Thank you for considering comments on the Montlake Elementary project.

Every year, the U.S. Navy at the Whidbey base applies for great increases in its access to state public parks and beaches for expanded war games, applies to use Olympic National Park and its airspace for electronic warfare training and “growler” airplane flights – and they hope no one notices, or loses the energy to keep fighting back in the courts at the needless over-reaching. The Montlake Elementary project reminds me somewhat of this manner of development: ask for way too much, see how many push back – and take as much as you can get. A powerful governmental entity like a school district can keep steamrolling the public with its bureaucracy – but could individual citizens ever receive the same results of achieving 8 different zoning violation waivers and variances for a construction proposal? Rarely.

I have heard there is research that when poorer children are bused to a wealthier neighborhood for school, they achieve better. Good. But, I have nowhere seen this is the reason for the Montlake expansion.

Many days this summer the Seattle Times headlines revealed the severely declining Seattle Public Schools enrollments, the hardship this is causing the district, and the fact that the district does not have a plan for how to respond to it.

Yet! – Montlake neighborhood will be torn apart for 120% increase in student population, with likely re-configuration of several streets to “One Way” to account for hugely increased traffic flows, needless cutting down of 40 trees, many of which are a hundred feet tall (to make it a little easier for trucks and diggers), destruction of a famous school community garden, reduction of the playground space by more than half (for a doubling student population!?! = opposite logic).

I have now heard from a district insider that the third floor of the new structure will be built as a shell – and purposefully left uncompleted – due to shortage of funds. This is one of the parts of the project exceeding height limitations. This is a demonstration of the excess of the project.

Why do the developers of these schools always toss in a large flashing neon billboard?! Is it so Seattle Construction and Inspections can try to make the neighbors feel we won something when the neon sign is the not allowed, but all else is given a green light? We are not on Rainier Ave. or any thoroughfare. It is dark and quiet at night for many blocks around the school in all directions. A glowing, flashing message board is not how schools communicate with families anymore. Smart phone is all. An electrical lighted sign serves no educational purpose. This shows how out of touch with both the neighborhood - and with education - the SPS developers are.

Increasing project size and greatly increasing school population size of staff and families – while limiting and decreasing transportation, parking, and bicycling access – is bad policy. Once again, opposite to logic. There seems little sense to granting multiple waivers for these code violations.

The size of the project is beyond all public necessity. It is not a reasonably-sized or reasonably designed re-build given the setting. There is no legitimate demonstration otherwise.

No zoning variances should be permitted. No “departures.” None. SPS can demonstrate citizenship by obeying the code and designing with more care, thought, and respect.

Sincerely,  
Dave Menz  
1932 E Calhoun St, Seattle



**From:** [Dick Knutson/Patti Gorman](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** re: SDCI Project #3039304/Montlake School  
**Date:** Monday, September 5, 2022 11:10:53 AM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Nelson:

I am writing as a member of the Montlake community and as a parent who sent two children to Montlake Elementary School.

The current plan seems flawed in many respects:

- The number of children who will be housed is far too many for good learning at the elementary level.
- The space the building will take up will not allow for enough play space for the projected number of children.
- Is the projected number of students in keeping with the Seattle enrollment trends?
- There will not be adequate parking space in the neighborhood for the increased staff.

I implore you to reconsider this project that will have a bad, if not terrible, effect on the children and the neighborhood. And I am not speak from the point of view of a "nimby" because I don't even live close enough to the school for it to have a negative impact on my residence.

Be well,

Patti

Dick Knutson and Patti Gorman  
1824 East McGraw St.  
Seattle, WA 98112

206-324-9045  
[rampgk@comcast.net](mailto:rampgk@comcast.net)

"Whatever you do will not be enough, but it matters enormously that you do it."  
Gandhi

**From:** [Elizabeth Sandvig-Spafford](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Mountlake school community  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 9:09:52 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

,Dear Sir. I am opposed to making Montlake Elementary school a destination school because it is a small school ,even smaller than in the distant past . To increase it to 500 students and take down houses and keep the playground small makes no sense to me. Many of montlakes children are attending private school so there are even fewer students now. There are no great apartment developments for the neighborhood school to draw from. Unless you are going to bus 300 students to a small neighborhood school and change the character of the neighborhood ,it is not needed. In taking down two houses that have children in them or the potential for children, the neighborhood will be diminished ,and the tax base lowered by \$ 20,000, a year or more. The people that buy houses here want to send their children to a neighborhood school. Thats why they buy houses here. If you want to bus children from University Village just think of the impossible traffic you can add to this location. We are not a neighborhood that is going to increase its density for many years to come because there is no room for major developments, much less minor developments. In making the playground smaller you will be encouraging people to move to other neighborhoods like Madison Park. Taking away housing is also a bad idea. Thank you for your attention. Elizabeth

Elizabeth Sandvig-Spafford  
[esandvig@comcast.net](mailto:esandvig@comcast.net)  
[www.elizabethsandvig.com](http://www.elizabethsandvig.com)

**From:** [Eric Schreiber](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [Eric Schreiber](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School Departures  
**Date:** Sunday, August 14, 2022 12:15:02 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hi Nelson, here are my comments on the requested departures:

The departures overall make sense given the circumstances. To call out a few specifically, that may be more controversial: (1) given the sloping terrain, increasing the building height seems quite reasonable, with the second floor of the new building matching the first floor of the original, and (2) there is no way you can fit on-site parking (without a huge underground parking garage), no different from how it is today.

That said, I do have a few disagreements. The biggest: I am **against** having an electric message board sign. I think a standard, non-electric sign should be sufficient, and I think having a flashing sign would detract from the neighborhood. I also question whether there can't be more done for bike parking – I can't speak to the quantity given the space constraints, but given the prevalence of bike theft in the city, I'm a proponent of having a secured enclosure for all the spots you will have, rather than 12 out of 30.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Schreiber  
2015 E Lynn St, 1.5 blocks away from Montlake Elementary

**From:** [Forrest Baum](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** SDCI Departures for Montlake ES  
**Date:** Friday, August 12, 2022 10:41:54 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Nelson,

I'm writing regarding the requested departures for Montlake Elementary.

Specifically, our family rides the school route daily with our kindergartener, and I've personally witnessed a growth of interest in walking, biking, and other ways of getting to school (some of which are quite creative!)

In the current atmosphere of climate upheaval, I'd understand a departure in order to bolster more bike parking - especially if it would have the added bonus of helping the bussing challenges.

It's also my understanding that SPS publicly committed to meeting 100% of bike parking spaces required by code through a board vote.

I ask that you keep bicycle parking at least to a minimum of code, especially for covered parking.

Thank you for listening!

[Forrest Baum](#)  
[SPS 1st Grade Parent](#)

**From:** [Janice Sears](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School  
**Date:** Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:45:50 AM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

All,

I am a Montlake resident. Coincidentally, my Dad grew up in Montlake and attended Montlake Elementary in the 1930's.

While I whole heartedly support an upgrade to the school, increased capacity and getting rid of the portables, I have a huge concern for what seems like an arbitrary number of 500 students - too many.

As u know the lovely school is on a smaller than usual plot for an Elementary school. I don't see any parking and worse yet I only see one bus pull out. In addition, I don't see a suitable drop off area - already problematic with 181 students!

Please don't do this to our community!

Again, I support the project but please re-think the capacity based on the realities of the site not an arbitrary number!

Thank you,

**Janice Sears**

[206-369-3726](tel:206-369-3726) | [linkedin](#)

**NEW POST - Tom's Top Ten Wildflower Hikes in Mt Rainer National Park**

[www.travelwithjanice.com](http://www.travelwithjanice.com)

**From:** [Lundgren, Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [Josh McLane](#); [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Feedback on Montlake School Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 3:34:22 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello all,

I am cc'ing our principal Julia Pearson on this conversation. We are both part of the SDAT building committee and this digital reader board was never mentioned or discussed. I agree with Josh, (and along with, I imagine everyone else on the team!), that a digital reader board is the exact opposite type of design we are striving for in our historical school and neighboring community. Digital signage is completely inappropriate and complete visual pollution. Alongside a highway is bad enough!

Thank you,

Jennifer Lundgren  
Visual Arts Teacher  
Montlake Elementary  
Seattle, Washington

---

**From:** Josh McLane <josh.c.mclane@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 1:46 PM  
**To:** Nelson.pesigan@seattle.gov <Nelson.pesigan@seattle.gov>  
**Cc:** Lundgren, Jennifer <jllundgren@seattleschools.org>  
**Subject:** Feedback on Montlake School Project

Hi Nelson,

Thank you for sharing the comprehensive presentation on the Montlake school project. While I'm not excited for the construction zone, I'm very supportive of what you are doing for the school and the neighborhood.

I'd like to request that you re-consider two of your proposed departures that in my opinion violate the project's objectives of maintaining the neighborhood feel that makes Montlake such a great place to live and go to school.

1. **Departure for Changing Image Message Board Sign: SMC 23.55.020:** I am strongly opposed to any digital signage on the school. This will cause light pollution and will distract from the historic building that we love so much. In my opinion, this departure violates the 'Relationship' Evaluation Criteria. I have already spoken with Jennifer Lundgren (SDAT team member cc'd) who has re-assured me that Julia Pearson (Principal & SDAT team member) is strongly opposed to the digital sign. I also have spoken with other concerned neighbors who are not supportive of digital signage. I would ask that you remove this from the plans and communicate the change.
2. **Departure for Building Height: SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c.:** I am not supportive of any departure from building height standards. During early neighborhood meetings on this



project, we were reassured that the building height would remain no higher than the existing structure. I will look directly at the new structure from our kitchen and dining room, and I'm concerned about the larger structure blocking light to the homes on Calhoun street. In my opinion, this departure violates the 'Consistency' and 'Relationship' evaluation criteria.

After reading the proposed changes, I am left questioning the proposed capacity of the school. The lot coverage, setbacks, and building height proposals point to an attempt to squeeze in a school that is too large for the lot. Rather than departing from building codes so substantially, has the team re-considered the capacity of the school? A school built for 400 students for example (which is more than 2x current enrollment) would mitigate these departures substantially. It appears that the team is challenging 3 really big building codes instead of challenging an arbitrary 500 student school size criteria. ***Has this been considered sufficiently?***

Thank you for considering my feedback.

Regards,

Josh

Montlake Homeowner (2453 22nd Ave E) & Dad to Logan & Parker

--

Josh C. McLane

[LinkedIn](#)

[484.614.7429](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Please don't click links, open attachments, or reply with confidential details unless you are certain you know the sender and are expecting the content.

Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature Jessica Whitsitt Sean Whitsitt  
Printed name Jessica Whitsitt Sean Whitsitt  
Address 2026 E Calhan St Seattle WA 98112  
Email jesswhitsitt@gmail.com Phone 206-988-4258

Further comment:

strong concerns about lack of setbacks - especially considering proposed height. SMC 23.51B.002 suggests min. setback of 15'.

Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature Astrida Onat  
Printed name ASTRIDA ONAT  
Address 2001 E LYNN ST  
Email astrida@comcast.net Phone 206-324-4365

Further comment:

The project is oversized in every



**Regarding:** Proposed zoning departures for the John Rogers Elementary School Project

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I do not favor the Seattle School District's request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Higher than allowed buildings (55 feet planned, maximum allowed by City zoning code is 35 feet); (b) Less than required on-site parking (39 spaces planned, City code requires 145 onsite spaces) (Note: District says it actually plans only 28 daytime spaces, not 39 - See page 36, section B.14.c, Environmental Checklist); (c) Less than required secure long-term bicycle parking (19 spaces planned, City code requires 73); (d) An electronic changing-image reader board sign (not allowed by City code).

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature

Printed name

Address

Email

Phone

**Further comment:**

*Shari Crossland, MSW*  
*SHARI CROSSLAND*  
*10534 41ST PLACE NE*  
*CROSSLANDShari@gmail.com* *206-890-8792*  
*I do not want less parking or an electronic reader board!!*  
*These are bad for our neighborhood.*

**Regarding:** Proposed zoning departures for the John Rogers Elementary School Project

Dear Nelson Pesigan, City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I do not favor the Seattle School District's request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Higher than allowed buildings (55 feet planned, maximum allowed by City zoning code is 35 feet); (b) Less than required on-site parking (39 spaces planned, City code requires 145 onsite spaces) (Note: District says it actually plans only 28 daytime spaces, not 39 - See page 36, section B.14.c, Environmental Checklist); (c) Less than required secure long-term bicycle parking (19 spaces planned, City code requires 73); (d) An electronic changing-image reader board sign (not allowed by City code).

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature

Printed name

Address

Email

Phone

**Further comment:**

*Jonathan C. Pasley*  
*JONATHAN C. PASLEY*  
*3916 NE 109th ST, 98125*  
*mrconnecto@yahoo.com* *206 306 9175*

**From:** [Josh McLane](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [jillundgren@seattleschools.org](mailto:jillundgren@seattleschools.org)  
**Subject:** Feedback on Montlake School Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 1:46:24 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hi Nelson,

Thank you for sharing the comprehensive presentation on the Montlake school project. While I'm not excited for the construction zone, I'm very supportive of what you are doing for the school and the neighborhood.

I'd like to request that you re-consider two of your proposed departures that in my opinion violate the project's objectives of maintaining the neighborhood feel that makes Montlake such a great place to live and go to school.

1. ***Departure for Changing Image Message Board Sign: SMC 23.55.020:*** I am strongly opposed to any digital signage on the school. This will cause light pollution and will distract from the historic building that we love so much. In my opinion, this departure violates the 'Relationship' Evaluation Criteria. I have already spoken with Jennifer Lundgren (SDAT team member cc'd) who has re-assured me that Julia Pearson (Principal & SDAT team member) is strongly opposed to the digital sign. I also have spoken with other concerned neighbors who are not supportive of digital signage. I would ask that you remove this from the plans and communicate the change.
2. ***Departure for Building Height: SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c.:*** I am not supportive of any departure from building height standards. During early neighborhood meetings on this project, we were reassured that the building height would remain no higher than the existing structure. I will look directly at the new structure from our kitchen and dining room, and I'm concerned about the larger structure blocking light to the homes on Calhoun street. In my opinion, this departure violates the 'Consistency' and 'Relationship' evaluation criteria.

After reading the proposed changes, I am left questioning the proposed capacity of the school. The lot coverage, setbacks, and building height proposals point to an attempt to squeeze in a school that is too large for the lot. Rather than departing from building codes so substantially, has the team re-considered the capacity of the school? A school built for 400 students for example (which is more than 2x current enrollment) would mitigate these departures substantially. It appears that the team is challenging 3 really big building codes instead of challenging an arbitrary 500 student school size criteria. ***Has this been considered sufficiently?***

Thank you for considering my feedback.

Regards,  
Josh  
Montlake Homeowner (2453 22nd Ave E) & Dad to Logan & Parker

--

**Josh C. McLane**

[LinkedIn](#)

[484.614.7429](#)

**From:** [Josh McLane](#)  
**To:** [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org)  
**Cc:** [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](#); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [Pesigan, Nelson](#); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com)  
**Subject:** Please Reconsider the Montlake School Project Size  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 7, 2022 9:03:49 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

(cc select stakeholders)

Dear Directors Rankin, Rivera Smith, Hampson, Song Maritz, Sarju, Harris, and Hersey,

We are writing to you in regards to the Montlake Elementary School project. As Montlake neighbors and parents to two young children (Logan, 3.5yo & Parker, 7mo), we care deeply that the Montlake school continues to be the centerpiece of the neighborhood and provides a supportive and diverse learning environment for Seattle's children. We are strongly in favor of a project to renovate the school, particularly if it provides an opportunity for children from around the city to participate in Montlake's unique educational experience. However, we are concerned that the [proposed municipal code departures](#) will hinder the educational environment and experience that Montlake school provides to Seattle children.

***Simply put, the lot coverage, setback, building height, and parking departure proposals point to an attempt to squeeze in a school that is far too large on a lot that is far too small. This is a neighborhood school that exists in wonderful partnership with a family-friendly community. We ask that you consider revising down the new school's capacity to 300-350 students, which would nearly double, rather than triple the capacity (relative to current enrollment). We are concerned that the building team is challenging four substantial building codes that will have real impact on both the neighborhood and the learning environment for students (e.g., small school playground, congested neighborhood sidewalks and streets, natural light blocked by large buildings).***

In our opinion, the following departures violate the 'Consistency' and 'Relationship' evaluation criteria for building code departures (outlined in SMC 23.79.008):

1. ***Departure for Lot Coverage:*** SMC 23.51B.002.C.2 and 3.
2. ***Departure for Building Height:*** SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c.
3. ***Departure for Setbacks:*** SMC 23.51B.002, Table E
4. ***Departure for Vehicular Parking Quantity:*** SMC 23.54.015, Table C

These departures will reduce the amount of outdoor space for public school children and create a learning environment that is overcrowded with buildings and traffic (both foot and automobile). Furthermore, these plans do not appear to be justified by a demand for increased enrollment and classroom space (Montlake school is currently ~25% under-enrolled). This project also does not appear to include a clear plan to grow the student body and faculty in a sustainable way. It appears that we are building an oversized school simply because we can, and not because we need to. There is no doubt that Seattle public school students would benefit from a Montlake School renovation and a proportional and appropriate expansion, but we hope that the School Board will consider doing so in a more sustainable, realistic, and harmonious way.



Additionally, we are strongly opposed to any digital signage on the school property (***Departure for Changing Image Message Board Sign: SMC 23.55.020***). This will cause light pollution and will distract from the historic building and intimate neighborhood feel that makes Montlake Elementary special.

***Thank you for the hard work that you all do and for advocating for all of Seattle's families. I hope you will take this note in the positive and productive light that it is intended. We look forward to productive communication as this conversation and project continues.***

Josh & Caitlin McLane

Parents to Logan (3.5 years) & Parker (7 months)

Homeowners of 2453 22nd Ave E. and 5 year Montlake residents

**From:** [Kim Teagarden](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [My love Matt](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School Remodel  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 10:01:51 AM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Mr. Pesigan-

We live in the Montlake neighborhood and are excited for the Montlake Elementary remodel, especially since we have an incoming kindergarten this year, and another child who will be starting in two years at Montlake.

However, there are some aspects of the remodel design that are concerning and we would like to voice our concern.

1. We live on Calhoun St. one block west of Montlake Elementary. Currently, school mornings are VERY busy on our street. We are very concerned with the safety of residents and parking capacity with the plan to grow Montlake capacity to over 500+ students. Part of the charm of Montlake Elementary is it is a neighborhood school with a small, close community. The neighborhood is not set up for this many students to safely be dropped off and picked up each day, not to mention parking necessary for the added staff and teachers.
2. We very much disagree with the request for digital signage. That is not necessary and does not add to the neighborhood or school.
3. We would ask that the plans for the playground area be revisited. The playground is a critical element for these young children and the neighborhood. Shrinking it in half does not make sense.

Please consider this feedback when finalizing the design and plan for Montlake Elementary.

Matt & Kim Teagarden  
1908 E Calhoun St

**From:** [Lynn Heller](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake School Project concerns  
**Date:** Sunday, September 4, 2022 7:23:10 PM

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CAUTION: External Email

Dear Mr. Pesigan,

I'm very concerned about the Montlake School project and the departures from the zoning code. I became aware of this by accident only recently even though I live around the corner from the school. I'm surprised and disappointed that there apparently were no public meetings or outreach in the community regarding a project of this scope and impact.

The departures from code are too large. This is a very small site. The second smallest in the district. A huge tall building (proposed 60' above average grade where maximum allowed 45') is completely out of character for the neighborhood. The playground area proposed is far too small for the proposed number of students. Outdoor play is vital for child development, and as a retired Seattle public schoolteacher I know that elementary students are in need of this kind of activity.

A target capacity of 530 students is excessive. Recent peak enrollment was 269 in 2017. Why such a huge school on a small site where there is not the demonstrable need or demand? These departures and more from code requested by the school district-lot coverage, setbacks, no on site parking..... should be denied and the project downsized.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Heller  
2012 E Lynn Street  
Seattle 98112  
206-359-0481  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** [maureen/ron](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake school plan  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 3:25:33 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

I am totally opposed to approving the variances for a new Montlake school. Having lived within steps of the school grounds for 40 years I am appalled that this design seems so inappropriate to the history and size of the school. I'm sure you can do better - for the environment, for the neighborhood, for the children.

Please do better!  
Maureen DiGiacomo

**From:** [Noah Tratt](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake School Build Plan Comment  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 2:55:36 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Mr. Pesigan,

I wanted to share my feedback on the proposed plan for the Montlake school. After having reviewed the plan I was impressed with the thoughtfulness of the design and the desire to balance the needs of the neighborhood and the growth requirements and upgrade needs of the school. I am very much in favor of the overall plan including providing a variance for setbacks and coverage.

My only objection is to the "flashing sign" part of the plan. While I understand that flashing signs are part of many public schools I don't think they are particularly useful when the school is not on an arterial and the nature of the Montlake school amid residential housing makes me particularly concerned. Could a traditional reader board be used instead? Could the school continue to survive without such a sign? I would think either of these options would be workable.

Thank you for your consideration. Noah Tratt 2205 22nd Ave E



**From:** [Paul Viola](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake School : Departures  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 17, 2022 8:45:16 AM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello,

I am extremely concerned about the departures currently under consideration for the new Montlake School design.

As a nearby resident of 17 years:

- I have seen that congestion around the current school is intense during school dropoff and pickup times.
- The playspace is already quite crowded for the students.
- Teachers, staff, and visitors have no place to park nearby.

Each of the proposed departures are intended to squeeze 3 times more students into a block and neighborhood that can just barely accommodate the school population of today (181 vs 500).

As you know the school currently strains the limits of local infrastructure. The access roads are very small and school buses just barely can enter and exit the neighborhood. Against the recommendations of the schools many parents insist on driving in to dropoff, and this presents a huge traffic problem and quite a bit of danger to pedestrians (ironically given that these are all parents of small children).

The lack of a bus loading area, will further exacerbate a serious safety issue with kids getting on and off the buses on McGraw while parents are driving on the same road (also against recommendations).

Based on the 57% lot coverage, and the plan drawings, the playspace will be less than 15K square feet. This would yield a tiny area where it would be hard for 500 students to stand and wait for the beginning of school. There would be no possibility of play. Perhaps this is acceptable for a high school but not for young children.

There are urban schools throughout the world. These are the result of historical accidents, where urban high density grew up around existing schools. That is what Montlake is today. And it is acceptable. To triple the current student population, and increase the stress and strain on the students and the neighborhood is not acceptable. There is no reason to create a situation that will be painful for all involved from the very beginning.

I would appreciate it if you could acknowledge receiving this email and placing it among other feedback.

Thanks,  
Paul Viola  
2317 22nd Ave E

425.241.8406 (cell)

8/16/22

To Nelson Pesigan -

Regarding the cap restrictions in Montlake and the upgrades of the Montlake School, allowing that school to be much higher is the one part that I object to!

Plunging surrounding homes into a shadow, blocking their views and taking more open space is a Bad idea for Montlake. Capitol hill was ruined by relaxing the Height restrictions.

Don't do it! Renate Puch

206 - 3231199

**From:** [Rachel McLellan](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Departures presentation for Montlake Elementary  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 17, 2022 4:03:14 PM

---

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Nelson,

I looked over the departures and they all seem thoughtful and reasonable.

I would definitely hate to see our neighbors' houses demolished (#1). I don't know them but I live in the neighborhood and my daughter goes to Montlake Elementary.

Good call on the bike racks. I only ever see a few kids ride to school. Many people walk as many of us live close by. It's nice to have some bike racks as you proposed and the addition of bike parking will be an improvement.

The higher height of the school doesn't bother me as I don't see any way around it on the small land footprint.

I can see the proposed sign helping get the message out about important community info and helping to build a sense of community. Communication at schools is always a challenge. It's important to keep students and families up to date and challenging as a parent to stay on top of all the school happenings, especially when parents have kids at multiple schools. The signs should help.

I can see why you wouldn't want to take up any more of the playground space for the loading area. Better to have more room to play if possible on such a limited space.

I'm excited for Montlake to have these improvements while also keeping the beautiful historic facade.

Thank you,  
Rachel McLellan

**From:** [Norman Pinch](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake school development  
**Date:** Thursday, August 11, 2022 1:50:15 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

I object to the height of the structures being higher, this means that low rise Montlake neighborhood will have it's first tall monolith sized building. That will start other buildings to want to build higher and ruin the views and livability that still exists in Montlake. Wsdot has already ruined the traffic flow and this development should be done at the existing height of the school structure and not higher.

I own a house very near the school and I don't want to be plunged into the shadow of an extremely tall structure. The school can be improved with out going higher which seems bad considering the possibility of upcoming earth quakes occurring.

Thank you,  
Renate and Norman Pinch



**From:** [Sara Billey](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary School Proposal -- Not acceptable  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 7, 2022 3:59:46 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Nelson Pesigan,

I am \*very\* concerned that the proposal to renovate the Montlake Elementary school has not been designed with children and education as the top priority. Please say "NO! to the lot coverage variance," "NO! to the variance on setbacks! and "No! to the variance on required parking", and "No to the height departure!"

The key issue for is the proposal of taking a school with 181 students to 500 students. This is causing many violations of the current construction regulations. The regulations are in place for a reason: to help balance all of the different needs in the community! The increased size is not in proportion to an increase in demographics in our neighborhood but to a single "ideal size" that somehow Seattle Public Schools has decided is optimal for all situations. Where will these 500 kids have recess? Where will these 500 kids come from? How much will it cost to bus them here? How long will they need to ride each day? Where will they have recess? This is not a cookie-cutter optimization problem. It's a school proposal, and it needs to first and foremost function for the kids.

Thanks for your consideration,  
Sara Billey  
2317 22nd Ave. East

**Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project**

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature

Printed name

Address

Email

Phone

**Further comment:**

I'm particularly concerned about the intended size of the school, given the size of one block it sits on. 200 kids max please!

all is better for younger kids!

**Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project**

Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature

Printed name

Address

Email

Phone

**Further comment:**

Phillip A. Cohen, MD  
Susan Raab-Cohen, PhD  
2203 E Miller St  
Seattle, WA 98112

**From:** [Sean Whitsitt](#)  
**To:** [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](mailto:Podesta, Fred (Seattle Public Schools)@seattleschools.org); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Pesigan, Nelson](mailto:Pesigan, Nelson)  
**Subject:** Neighborhood feedback on Montlake School Project  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 5:11:09 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Directors and Stakeholder Team,

We write to you as Montlake residents and parents of 3 prospective students (Liam 4, Clancy 2.5, and Wyatt 3 mos) with concerns about the proposed project.

We are strong advocates of public education and we're excited about the promise of a Montlake renovation; however, we feel the proposed project doesn't fit within the scope of what's needed, required, or makes sense based on the lot.

We kindly ask you to reconsider the size, square footage, building height and setbacks you're proposing. The departures (specifically building height, lot coverage, and setbacks) will significantly impact the neighborhood in adverse ways.

The building height in the current design will create a fortress wall blocking sunlight to an entire block, and alter both the natural landscape (vegetation, trees, etc.) and residents in close proximity - particularly those with Seasonal Affective Disorder who are already sensitive to changes in weather. If the space was needed, we'd understand but the proposed building height is unnecessary and unwarranted. Given the current enrollment is ~190 and there are no plans for growing the student and faculty body in a sustainable way we don't think this makes sense.

Lot coverage departures seem to be based on a plan to optimize for school capacity - while the designs look great, as prospective parents of students we think this will create overcrowding and give way to a less than desirable outdoor learning/experience environment.

A smaller, but still much larger than what currently exists, school size of ~300-350 students would reduce the need to request such significant setback departures and drastically improve the neighborhood compared to what's been proposed.

We appreciate all that you do, it's hard work and you do a fantastic job. We hope you will take this feedback into consideration as things progress.

Kindly,

Sean & Jessica Whitsitt

Parents of Liam (4), Clancy (2.5) & Wyatt (3mos)

Residents of 2026 E Calhoun St (Montlake residents for 6+ years)

**From:** [stephanie.cooper](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montalke school renovation  
**Date:** Friday, September 9, 2022 11:12:33 AM

---

CAUTION: External Email

I live in Montlake and raised three children here. I support SPS. But this plan is overwhelmingly negative in multiple respects. The building codes exist for a reason, being flexible on some of them when there's a need may make some sense. But in this case there is not a demonstrable need to among others things eliminate a reasonable sized playground, and to ignore ADA and parking need codes, and to build a massive building in a neighborhood that will not generate the census if children to fill!

I'm sure we can come up with a plan that is more sensical.

I heartily request you to not approve it as it stands.

Stephanie Cooper

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [THOMAS PAYNE](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [vickyc@cascade.org](mailto:vickyc@cascade.org)  
**Subject:** Montlake School: Departure for Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity: SMC 23.54.015 Table D  
**Date:** Thursday, August 11, 2022 4:53:54 PM

---

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Nelson!

I've received and reviewed the [DLR document](#) describing proposed departures for the Montlake Elementary School renovation. While it is generally a good plan, the number of bike parking slots should be increased, not decreased. On page 80, the report states *"A study conducted by school staff found between 3-5 students regularly bike to school each day and at most, 8 students bike to school each day representing approximately 4% of the existing student population."* **Improvements our city is making in alternatives to car transportation are targeted toward the future, and so should this Montlake design.** There is a light rail station less than a mile away, an easy bike ride, and as you note, a greenway passes immediately next to the school connecting Capitol Hill, the University District, the Burke Gilman Trail, and Eastlake.

We need the number of students and staff riding bikes to Montlake to increase dramatically, and should plan for it.

I've lived in Montlake for 33 years, and for a decade lived immediately across the street from Montlake School on McGraw. (We now live about a block away.) Our 2 children attended Montlake, and my wife and I were active in the PTSA. We are very invested in the education of our young people and in this school as an exemplar of what is possible. I serve as the volunteer bike commuter coordinator for the Harborview Medical Center campus where our secure bike parking has increased enormously over the last 5 years, anticipating a large rise in bike commuting which is now coming to pass.

Showing young people alternatives to driving is an important part of their education. Be innovative! Vertical storage, stacked racks, subsidized folding bikes (Brompton, Dahon)—figure out a way to get lots of bikes in a small place. That is the expertise we want in our designers. If DLR Group doesn't have that expertise, team up with a firm that does!

I'm copying Vicky at Cascade Bike Club which has bike education programs directed at young students.

Thanks for sharing this proposal and for making Montlake ready for the next century.

Best regards, and again thanks,

Tom Payne, MD  
2070 23rd Ave E



**Regarding: Proposed zoning departures for the Montlake Elementary School Project**

**Dear City of Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods;**

I have concerns about the Seattle School District's apparent request to allow the project to not meet City zoning code with regard to: (a) Lot coverage greater than allowed; (b) Higher than allowed buildings; (c) Less than required setbacks; (d) Less than required on-site parking; (e) Less than required bicycle parking; (f) Allowing buses to load on the street; (g) Truck loading / unloading; (h) An electronic changing-image reader board sign.

Please include me on the list of people to be notified and consulted about the zoning departures, including required public meetings.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Further comment:**



**From:** [Victoria Habas](#)  
**To:** [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Cc:** [Bryan Habas](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Montlake Elementary School Proposal  
**Date:** Thursday, August 18, 2022 12:44:57 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image001.png](#)

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Thanks, Mr. Pesigan!

And here are my formal comments for your collection:

1. Approve Departure #1 or reduce the overall space requirement to avoid demolition of the two historic homes across 20th Ave E. Our home is over 100 years old and was recently included in a proposal to add a historical walking tour to the Montlake neighborhood. Tearing down historic architecture for the sake of new architecture is a net loss for Montlake. As I understand it, preserving historic architecture was a key design requirement for the school project- that same respect should be extended to the surrounding homes.
2. Parking for the teachers, childcare providers, and staff is already non-existent / inadequate. The surrounding streets are over-crowded between the cars and buses, requiring residents to compete for parking at their own home, and creating a safety issue at crosswalks. The area is also prone to commuter parking (those that work at the UW, catch the Microsoft connector or take the Lightrail from UW station), exacerbating the issue. If the site will be dug out- why miss the opportunity to build underground parking for the staff?
3. How was the square footage requirement determined? The new school seems oversized for the neighborhood and enrollment statistics. Enrollment at this school is down year over year- what is the compelling reason for increasing student capacity and, subsequently, the building size. Reduced setbacks, increased lot coverage AND increased building height is a triple whammy...I recommend the design team picks one of those, at the most, or provide a reference, law or other mandate that is driving the large size against the residents' wishes.
4. Three more trees have died on the school side of 20th Ave E. Before anyone does construction there, or over-promises on tree cover that will provide privacy, the team ought to investigate what is happening there.
5. This project ought not to begin before completion of the SR520, Montlake Bridge, Vision Zero, and Portage Bay Viaduct projects are complete. The neighborhood is under undue strain from traffic disruption, noise pollution, construction dust/debris, and general chaos with all that has been simultaneously heaped upon it.

Please send confirmation and proof that my comments have been received and registered with the project team.

Thank you,  
Victoria Habas  
1934 E McGraw St  
503-890-2213

On Aug 18, 2022, at 11:56, Victoria Habas <victoriahabas@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good afternoon Ms. Godard,

The message that Mr. Nelson relayed below is certainly welcome news, but can you walk us through the rules and/or references that make it so? It would go a long way to putting us at ease.

Best,  
Victoria

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Pesigan, Nelson" <Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov>  
**Date:** August 18, 2022 at 10:19:49 PDT  
**To:** Victoria Habas <victoriahabas@yahoo.com>  
**Cc:** Priyanka.byay@live.com, Bryan / Habas <bryanhabas@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Montlake Elementary School Proposal

Hello Victoria,

Just as a follow up, Holly Godard (SDCI) informed me that you and your neighbors are at no risk.

Thank you,

**Nelson Pesigan**  
**Strategic Advisor**  
**Community Assets Division**  
Office: 206.684.0209  
Cell: 206.276.3613  
Fax: 206.233.5142  
[seattle.gov/neighborhoods](https://seattle.gov/neighborhoods)

image001.png



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**From:** Pesigan, Nelson  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 18, 2022 10:11 AM  
**To:** Victoria Habas <victoriahabas@yahoo.com>  
**Cc:** Priyanka.byay@live.com; Bryan / Habas <bryanhabas@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Montlake Elementary School Proposal

Hello Victoria,

That is correct.

Here is the Department of Neighborhoods School Departure website in case you are interested on the process and what other area schools did on their departures.

<https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/programs-and-services/major-institutions-and-schools/school-departures-advisory-committees>

Thank you,

**Nelson Pesigan**  
**Strategic Advisor**  
**Community Assets Division**  
Office: 206.684.0209  
Cell: 206.276.3613  
Fax: 206.233.5142  
[seattle.gov/neighborhoods](https://seattle.gov/neighborhoods)

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**From:** Victoria Habas <[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 18, 2022 10:00 AM  
**To:** Pesigan, Nelson <[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)>  
**Cc:** [Priyanka.byay@live.com](mailto:Priyanka.byay@live.com); Bryan / Habas <[bryanhabas@yahoo.com](mailto:bryanhabas@yahoo.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Montlake Elementary School Proposal

**CAUTION: External Email**

Thank you for the conversation this morning. I appreciate you explaining

the “Departure” language to me.

I will work with SPS to understand the “why” behind the school’s proposed size, in light of reduced enrollment.

I will work with the developer to understand options for the project space.

And I can work with Ms. Godard to understand the Departures.

I would appreciate continuing to work with you (?) regarding the City’s procedures, offers or options should the worst come to pass and Seattle needs to reclaim our properties.

Let me know if I have that all correct!

Best,  
Victoria

On Aug 18, 2022, at 09:46, Pesigan, Nelson  
<[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)> wrote:

Hi Victoria,

Per our conversation, the other person to contact is Holly Godard ([holly.godard@seattle.gov](mailto:holly.godard@seattle.gov))

She is the Land Use Planner at SDCI (Seattle Department of Constructions & Inspections). She reviews the applicant’s departure request base on the Seattle Municipal Code.

Thank you,

**Nelson Pesigan**  
**Strategic Advisor**  
**Community Assets Division**  
Office: 206.684.0209  
Cell: 206.276.3613  
Fax: 206.233.5142  
[seattle.gov/neighborhoods](http://seattle.gov/neighborhoods)

image001.png





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**From:** Victoria T Habas <[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 17, 2022 11:31 AM

**To:** [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com);  
Pesigan, Nelson <[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)>

**Cc:** Bryan Habas <[bryanhabas@yahoo.com](mailto:bryanhabas@yahoo.com)>; Priyanka  
Bandyopadhyay <[priyanka.byay@gmail.com](mailto:priyanka.byay@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Montlake Elementary School Proposal

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello again Mr. Pesigan,

Regrettably, I've still not heard back from anyone. I did also try your two phone numbers today with no luck.

Since you are listed as the point of contact on the flyers that were distributed throughout the neighborhood, I'd like to schedule a meeting with you for this Friday, 19 August at 0900L. At the very least, you can collect my comments at that time.

Please let me know the building and office where our meeting will take place.

Thank you!  
Victoria Habas

On Monday, August 15, 2022 at 08:25:49 PM PDT, Victoria Habas <[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Hello Montlake Project Team,

We are trying to schedule a discussion regarding this project before the end of the week. When can you fit us into your a schedule for an in-person meeting or zoom call before the end of this week?

Thank you!  
Victoria Habas

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Pesigan, Nelson"  
<[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)>  
**Date:** August 15, 2022 at 14:52:51 PDT  
**To:** Victoria T Habas  
<[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)>  
**Cc:** [bryanhabas@live.com](mailto:bryanhabas@live.com)  
**Subject: RE: Montlake Elementary School Proposal**

Hello Victoria,

I apologize and thank you for your patience.

Here is the contact information for the Montlake Elementary School Project.

Paul Wight (Seattle Public Schools):  
[pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); (206) 252-0648

Ryan Luthman (DLR Group):  
[rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); (206) 461-6000

Thank you,

**Nelson Pesigan**

**Strategic Advisor**

**Community Assets Division**

Office: 206.684.0209

Cell: 206.276.3613

Fax: 206.233.5142

[seattle.gov/neighborhoods](https://seattle.gov/neighborhoods)

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**From:** Victoria T Habas  
<[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2022 2:44 PM  
**To:** Pesigan, Nelson  
<[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)>  
**Cc:** [bryanhabas@live.com](mailto:bryanhabas@live.com)  
**Subject:** Re: Montlake Elementary School  
Proposal

**CAUTION: External Email**

Hello Mr. Pesigan,

We've not heard back from anyone...can you put us in touch with a phone number or perhaps we can sit down with you as the project point of contact?

Thank you!

Victoria

On Friday, August 12, 2022 at 08:34:10 AM PDT,  
Pesigan, Nelson <[nelson.pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:nelson.pesigan@seattle.gov)> wrote:

Hello Victoria,

I am forwarding your email to the Seattle Public School and the Design Firm that oversees the project.

Thank you,

Nelson Pesigan  
Strategic Advisor

Community Assets Division  
Office: 206.684.0209  
Cell: 206.276.3613  
Fax: 206.233.5142  
[seattle.gov/neighborhoods](http://seattle.gov/neighborhoods)

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-----Original Message-----

From: Victoria Habas <[victoriahabas@yahoo.com](mailto:victoriahabas@yahoo.com)>  
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2022 8:27 AM  
To: Pesigan, Nelson <[Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov](mailto:Nelson.Pesigan@seattle.gov)>  
Cc: [bryanhabas@live.com](mailto:bryanhabas@live.com)  
Subject: Montlake Elementary School Proposal

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Mr. Pesigan,

We received the flyer regarding the Departure Recommendations for the Montlake Elementary School remodel yesterday. It came as quite a surprise to find that our home at 1934 E McGraw St could be at risk for condemnation and demolition as part of this project.

We would like to schedule a 1-on-1 discussion with you to understand exactly what is at stake for our family and livelihood as part of this project.

When are you available next week?

Thank you!  
Victoria Habas  
503-890-2213

**From:** [Jaime Novais](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](#); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio, Rebecca S](#); [Skutack, Mike](#); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](mailto:sepaappeals@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson, Nathan](#); [Godard, Holly](#); [Morningstar, Sarah](#); [Pesigan, Nelson](#); [MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](mailto:MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** In support of Montlake Elementary Modernization and Addition Project  
**Date:** Friday, November 11, 2022 3:40:50 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

I am writing to let you know that I am in favor of the proposed design for Montlake Elementary. I have been living 2 blocks from Montlake Elementary since 1991 and I believe that having a modern, vibrant school in our neighborhood is a benefit to our community.

--

Jaime Novais



**From:** [Lisa Piacitelli](#)  
**To:** [MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](#); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](#); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](#); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](#); [Godard, Holly](#); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](#); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](#); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](#); [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](#); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](#); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](#); [Skutack, Mike](#); [Torgelson, Nathan](#); [Pesigan, Nelson](#); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](#); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](#); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](#); [Asencio, Rebecca S](#); [Morningstar, Sarah](#); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](#); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](#); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary Project  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 8:38:02 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

**SPS School Board and Montlake Project Team:**

As a Montlake resident and homeowner, I am supportive of the Montlake Elementary Modernization and Addition Project. However, I am deeply concerned with several elements of the design that were first shared with the public in June 2022. Thus far, I do not feel Seattle Public Schools has provided sufficient opportunities for public engagement or seriously considered neighborhood feedback, especially on these elements, which is why I am writing. Here are the elements of greatest concern to me:

**Maximize the outdoor play area**

**Problem:** Montlake Elementary has the functionally smallest site of any elementary school in the district. If the rooftop play area that is currently a budget alternate was to be cut later in the project, the school would end up with approximately half the current amount of outdoor play area. It is not acceptable to drastically decrease the amount of outdoor play area while greatly increasing the capacity of the school.

**Proposed Solution:** Please add the outdoor play area on the roof of the proposed gym into the core budget so it is no longer a budget alternate. In addition, please design the buildings so that additional roof areas could be developed in the future for uses such as outdoor learning, play, gardens, or solar panels.

**Relocate the rooftop equipment**

**Problem:** Including a 15' tall mechanical penthouse on the roof would result in a new building that is up to 76' tall, two to three times the height of surrounding homes. The extra 15' of building height decreases open sky and natural light for students in outdoor learning and play areas, reduces available rooftop space for solar panels, harms the historic character of the school and neighborhood, and reduces quality of life and health for neighbors by casting around-the-clock winter shadows on people, trees, plants, and homes.

**Proposed Solution:** Please locate mechanical, HVAC, elevator, and similar equipment in locations other than the rooftop that do not increase the overall height of the buildings beyond the 44'-10" parapet height of the historic building.

**Remove the digital message board (!!!)**

**Problem:** The district is proposing to add an electronic Changing Image Message Board Sign, even though school leadership has indicated that their needs are met by a non-electronic message board. An electronic message board would harm the historic character of the school and neighborhood, and cause unnecessary light pollution.

**Proposed Solution:** Please replace the electronic Changing Image Message Board Sign with a non-electronic message board similar to those used at other historic schools in the district.

**Right size the capacity**

**Problem:** The 500 student standard model does not work at the Montlake site without compromises to the outdoor educational experience for students and extreme and excessive impacts on the neighborhood. Compared to other elementary schools in the district, Montlake has the functionally smallest site, excluding Alki Elementary which has outdoor and play areas within an adjoining multi-acre public park. Current capacity at Montlake, including the six portables, is 251 students. Enrollment stands at 184 students as of October 2022 and has averaged 244 students over the past 10 years. It does not make sense to me to spend nearly \$80 million in taxpayer funds to build a school with unjustified excess capacity, which would create extreme impacts on the neighborhood because of the exceptionally small site.

**Proposed Solution:** Please evaluate alternatives, such as a 350 student capacity school in a two story new building rather than three story, with the new building prepared for a future third story. This would allow for decades of growth, while alleviating the negative impacts that a third story of empty classrooms would have on outdoor play areas and the Montlake Historic District, and because of the shadowing of people, trees, plants, and homes. In addition, please share: 1) enrollment projections specific to Montlake Elementary, 2) a site-specific analysis that shows how many students the site can support without compromising the outdoor play experience for students, and 3) a site-specific analysis that models traffic and pedestrian safety issues at various school capacities.

I would appreciate your reply to let me know that you received my feedback, and what other opportunities there are for me to provide further input.

Thank you,  
Lisa Piacitelli- Homeowner, 22nd Ave E

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

**From:** [Mark Orr](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](#); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio, Rebecca S](#); [Skutack, Mike](#); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson, Nathan](#); [Godard, Holly](#); [Morningstar, Sarah](#); [Pesigan, Nelson](#)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary Project feedback  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 9:19:15 AM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear School Board and Montlake Project team

As a long-time resident of the Montlake neighborhood I would like to provide feedback on one aspect of the proposed Montlake Elementary Modernization and Addition Project. I am overall supportive of this project and appreciate the difficult work this group has done.

However, regarding the electronic Changing Image Message Board sign, it does not seem to be necessary, is not aligned with our shared environmental values, and will not fit with the nature of the residential location of the school.

1. School leadership has indicated that the school's communication needs can be adequately addressed with a non-electric message board.
2. Employing a non-electronic option would reduce the project budget and reduce ongoing operating costs.
3. A non-electronic option would reduce the environmental footprint by saving on both up-front manufacturing of electronic equipment that require non-renewable resources and eliminating ongoing energy usage.
4. A non-electronic option would reduce light pollution which is consistent with Seattle's leadership on environmental issues.
5. A non-electronic option will be less intrusive and more consistent with the residential location of the school.

Thank you for reconsidering this issue and for your ongoing work on this program.

Best Regards  
Mark Orr, Ph.D.

**From:** [Mary](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta.Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](mailto:Podesta.Fred@seattleschools.org); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio.Rebecca.S](mailto:Asencio.Rebecca.S@seattleschools.org); [Skutack.Mike](mailto:Skutack.Mike@seattleschools.org); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](mailto:sepaappeals@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson.Nathan](mailto:Torgelson.Nathan@seattleschools.org); [Godard.Holly](mailto:Godard.Holly@seattleschools.org); [Morningstar.Sarah](mailto:Morningstar.Sarah@seattleschools.org); [Pesigan.Nelson](mailto:Pesigan.Nelson@seattleschools.org); [MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](mailto:MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Montlake Elementary Project  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 4:49:59 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

**SPS School Board and Montlake Project Team:**

I am supportive of the Montlake Elementary Modernization and Addition Project. However, I am deeply concerned with several elements of the design that were first shared with the public in June 2022. Thus far, I do not feel Seattle Public Schools has provided sufficient opportunities for public engagement or seriously considered neighborhood feedback, especially on these elements, which is why I am writing. Here are the elements of greatest concern to me:

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**Problem:** Montlake Elementary has the functionally smallest site of any elementary school in the district. If the rooftop play area that is currently a budget alternate was to be cut later in the project, the school would end up with approximately half the current amount of outdoor play area. It is not acceptable to drastically decrease the amount of outdoor play area while greatly increasing the capacity of the school.

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I would appreciate your reply to let me know that you received my feedback, and what other opportunities there are for me to provide further input.

Thank you,  
Mary Karges  
2216 E Miller



**From:** [Lobel, Sharon](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](mailto:Podesta, Fred (Seattle Public Schools)@seattleschools.org); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio, Rebecca S; Skutack, Mike; pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:Asencio, Rebecca S; Skutack, Mike; pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](mailto:sepaappeals@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson, Nathan; Godard, Holly; Morningstar, Sarah; Pesigan, Nelson; MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](mailto:Torgelson, Nathan; Godard, Holly; Morningstar, Sarah; Pesigan, Nelson; MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Yes to proposed Montlake Elementary Project  
**Date:** Friday, November 11, 2022 3:33:04 PM

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This sender might be impersonating a domain that's associated with your organization. [Learn why this could be a risk](#)

**CAUTION: External Email**

A small subset of neighbors has been blanketing the neighborhood with information expressing concerns about the new school design for Montlake Elementary. I am writing as a long-time resident (30 years) of this neighborhood and parent of a former Montlake student to let you know that I welcome the proposed building improvements. I would appreciate your reply to let me know that you received my feedback.

Sharon Lobel

**From:** [Sumaira](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta.Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](mailto:Podesta.Fred@seattleschools.org); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio.Rebecca S](mailto:Asencio.Rebecca.S@seattleschools.org); [Skutack.Mike](mailto:Skutack.Mike@seattleschools.org); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](mailto:sepaappeals@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson.Nathan](mailto:Torgelson.Nathan@seattleschools.org); [Godard.Holly](mailto:Godard.Holly@seattleschools.org); [Morningstar.Sarah](mailto:Morningstar.Sarah@seattleschools.org); [Pesigan.Nelson](mailto:Pesigan.Nelson@seattleschools.org); [MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](mailto:MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com)  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 8:30:21 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

SPS School Board and Montlake Project Team:

I support of the Montlake Elementary Modernization. However, I am deeply concerned with the massive expansion that is planned, as well as several design elements I have been made aware of by other equally concerned neighbors.

I have only recently been made aware of this planned expansion. I understand that we, as neighbors, were not given sufficient opportunities for comment and to make our concerns known. Here are my concerns:

**There are several laws/codes that the plans depart from and those have been approved. Why do we have laws and codes if those can just be bypassed?**

I strongly feel that laws concerning lot coverage, building height, setbacks, bicycle parking, and not allowing electronic message boards are vital for community health and well-being overall.

I oppose the electronic signage proposed. I am told the school leadership has shown no interest in this, so then why would this be a budget item and a departure from established code?

I do not feel comfortable at all with the expansion plans of trying to accommodate 500 students, especially considering there is not a need for the expansion given the current and projected enrollment level. There are several schools in the neighboring communities that accommodate the students in those communities. Montlake student population is unlikely to be at the 500 level even in the next 20 years. So again, why use taxpayer money on empty classrooms, all at the expense of setbacks, sunlight, playground for kids, not to mention the constant construction for the next 3 or 4 years? I would like to see any actual numbers that demonstrate the need.

Online plans show that from the street level, the rooftop equipment is not even going to be visible.

This, however, is only from the perspective of Calhoun Street. On McGraw and beyond (the other side of the school), this is going to be an eyesore for all neighbors and way too tall, blocking natural light and beauty in the historic neighborhood.

I believe replacing the existing mobile structures with ground level permanent buildings, improving the playground, and enhancing current building to be accessible are the only updates that are actually needed.

**I hope SPS can find a better use for our tax dollars than the plans for this school that has no neighborhood support or a need.**

I would appreciate your reply to let me know that you received my feedback, and what other opportunities there are for me to provide further input.

Thank you,

Sumaira Inayat

A neighbor on E McGraw St.

**From:** [Tom Burritt](#)  
**To:** [liza.rankin@seattleschools.org](mailto:liza.rankin@seattleschools.org); [lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org](mailto:lisa.rivera.smith@seattleschools.org); [chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org](mailto:chandra.hampson@seattleschools.org); [ysmaritz@seattleschools.org](mailto:ysmaritz@seattleschools.org); [michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org](mailto:michelle.sarju@seattleschools.org); [leslie.harris@seattleschools.org](mailto:leslie.harris@seattleschools.org); [brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org](mailto:brandon.hersey@seattleschools.org); [Podesta, Fred \(Seattle Public Schools\)](#); [rlbest@seattleschools.org](mailto:rlbest@seattleschools.org); [Asencio, Rebecca S](#); [Skutack, Mike](#); [pdwight@seattleschools.org](mailto:pdwight@seattleschools.org); [jepearson@seattleschools.org](mailto:jepearson@seattleschools.org); [sepaappeals@seattleschools.org](mailto:sepaappeals@seattleschools.org); [ljohnson@dlrgroup.com](mailto:ljohnson@dlrgroup.com); [spayton@dlrgroup.com](mailto:spayton@dlrgroup.com); [rluthman@dlrgroup.com](mailto:rluthman@dlrgroup.com); [Torgelson, Nathan](#); [Godard, Holly](#); [Morningstar, Sarah](#); [Pesigan, Nelson](#); [MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com](mailto:MontlakeElementaryNeighbors@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** THUMBS UP - Montlake Elementary Project  
**Date:** Sunday, November 13, 2022 2:42:54 PM

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**CAUTION: External Email**

**SPS School Board and Montlake Project Team:**

I'm fine with the proposed Montlake Elementary project AS-IS, and am excited to move forward without further delay.

Sincerely,  
Tom Burritt  
2023 E McGraw St  
Seattle, WA 98112



**DLR Group inc.**  
a Washington corporation  
  
51 University Street, Suite 600  
Seattle, WA 98101

September 30, 2022

Nelson Pesigan  
City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods  
PO Box 94649

Re: Montlake Elementary School – Departure Comment Responses  
3039304-SD

Dear Mr. Pesigan,

We received several emails and postcard comments related to our requested Departures from the City of Seattle Land Use Code. Some comments supported and/or expressed a level of low concern for the Departure requests while others raised concerns. There were also several comments outside of the scope of the Departures process that are unrelated to the requested deviations from the Land Use Code; DLR Group and Seattle Public Schools will work to address these comments. In fact, SPS and members of our design team participated in a meeting held at the school 9/28/22 with a few community members that submitted comments during this departures process. This letter is intended to clarify the Seattle Public School's thinking related specifically to the proposed Departures from the Land Use Code.

Several neighbors expressed concern over traffic from buses, vehicle parking around the school site, and the lack of vehicular parking on site. Currently, school bus loading and unloading occur on-street in the existing bus loading zone area and there is no striped vehicular parking on site. The proposed design maintains the existing conditions related to bus loading and striped vehicular parking. Due to the limited area of this site, providing on-site vehicular parking would result in sacrificing educational program and outdoor play space. Parking requirements of the Seattle Municipal Code are measured by the square footage of assembly space, and not the number of students or teachers. As such, it vastly overestimates the parking needed for a school. Results of a traffic study conducted by Heffron Transportation, Inc. indicated on street parking space utilization is below levels considered full capacity and there is sufficient available on-street parking to accommodate daily parking. and to accommodate events. Transportation and parking recommendations for large events are provided within the above-mentioned traffic study. Those recommendations are also included on slide 68 of the Departures presentation slides dated July 2022

Several comments expressed concern over the requested Departures for lot coverage, setbacks, and building height, stating the proposed design results in a building out-of-scale with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The proposed design calls for these Departures to meet the Seattle Public Schools educational program specifications. On lot coverage, the limited size of the site necessitates that the addition would require a departure from lot coverage requirements to meet educational program requirements without requiring an expansion of the site into adjacent residences. Concerns over the building's scale may be lessened by the property line not being at the sidewalk and the existing trees surrounding the site which will remain or be replaced at select locations. The existing property line is 6'-6" from the back of sidewalk consistently around the site. While the SMC requires the setback to be calculated from property line, the actual distance from the

ELEVATE *the*  
HUMAN EXPERIENCE  
THROUGH DESIGN



sidewalk to building face will be greater. This additional distance will make the perceived setback more generous and soften the transition in scale. The three-story addition allows for educational program, some of which the current school does not have, while also respecting the height and materiality of the existing Landmarked building. The building height Departure is only required to accommodate a mechanical penthouse, which covers approximately 11% of the overall roof area and is set back from the edge of the building. The building has been designed to respect the height of the existing Landmark school and align with that height.

Comments were received regarding the requested Departure for long term bike parking quantity. The proposed design provides 30 long-term bicycle spaces. The current site does not provide any bike parking that meets the standards for long-term bike parking. A study conducted by school staff found between 3-5 students regularly bike to school each day and at most, 8 students bike to school each day representing approximately 4% of the existing student population. The proposed school design is intended to accommodate a student enrollment of 500, the 30 long-term bike parking spaces provided will accommodate 6% of the maximum enrollment. The proposed quantity brings the site closer to compliance with the code.

Several comments expressed concern over the Departure to allow a changing image message board sign, stating that it would be unnecessary and/or intrusive to the residential neighborhood. As indicated in the Departures request, the sign will not include video, flashing, scrolling, tumbling, or moving images and will operate during specific times (7am to 9pm). The sign allows SPS to alert families and the community to events taking place at the school and allows for the display of messages in multiple languages. The proposed location of the sign is set back from E Calhoun St and is located across the street from residences with significant foliage and homes similarly set back from the right of way. As such, the sign will not be of significant impact to the adjacent neighbors.

Lastly, there a few comments requesting to be included on the notification list for public meetings related to the Departures process. We assume you will notify individuals regarding further opportunities for public comment, whether that be virtual or in-person.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to comments on the proposed design.

Sincerely,  
DLR Group



Ryan Luthman, AIA, CDT  
Associate