



**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION AND INSPECTIONS**

**Record Number:** 3040867-LU  
**Applicant:** Matt Wittman  
**Address of Proposal:** 1116 SW Holden Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

Land use application to allow a 2-story institution (community center). Existing building to be demolished. Parking for 20 vehicles proposed.

The following approvals are required:

- I. Administrative Conditional Use in Multifamily Zones (SMC Sections 23.42.042 and 23.45.506) –**  
to allow a community center in a Lowrise Multifamily (LR2 (M)) zone.
  
- II. SEPA Environmental Determination (SMC Chapter 25.05)**

**SEPA DETERMINATION**

- Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)
  - Pursuant to SEPA substantive authority provided in SMC 25.05.660, the proposal has been conditioned to mitigate environmental impacts.
  - No mitigating conditions of approval are imposed.

**BACKGROUND**

Per the applicant submitted material, Highland Park Improvement Club (HPIC) was started back in 1918 as a private, non-profit meeting and social center (Community Center). The existing building was built in 1925 with additions added throughout the years. In 1980, the property received an Administrative Conditional Use permit (File No. X-80-196) which granted a private club use and an accessory parking area; and variances from the front and side yard setback, and zoning separation on the split-zoned lot (“Multiple Residence Low Density (RM 800) zone and Single-Family Residence High Density (RS 5000) zone”).

In 2021, the building was damaged by fire which predicated the community desire to rebuild and expand the structure to meet the current demands.

**SITE AND VICINITY**

*Site Description:* The site is square in shape and occupied almost entirely by a single-story community center. The southern frontage is bordered by Holden Street, western frontage is bordered by 12<sup>th</sup>

Avenue SW, and the eastern façade abuts an alley. The site slopes from the northwest to the east about three feet.

*Site Zone:* Lowrise 2 (M) (LR2 (M)) & Neighborhood Residential 3 (NR3)

*Zoning Pattern:* (North) NR3  
(South) LR2 (M)  
(East) LR2 (M)  
(West) Lowrise 2 Residential-Commercial (M) (LR2 RC (M))

*Current and Surrounding Development; Neighborhood Character; Access:* The site is occupied by a single-story community center and an existing surface parking area. It is located in a highly developed area with buildings ranging from 1 to 3 stories in height. SW Holden Street is an arterial east-west connector in the West Seattle neighborhood and contains many residential structures along both sides of the street. Vehicular access to the site is both currently and proposed from 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and the alley east of the site. Pedestrian access is proposed from both SW Holden Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW.



The top of this image is north. This map is for illustrative purposes only. In the event of omissions, errors or differences, the documents in SDCI's files will control.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment period ended on September 6, 2023. Comments were received and carefully considered, to the extent that they raised issues within the scope of this review. These areas of public comment related to support of the overall project and request from the Duwamish Tribe to be part of any archaeological work or monitoring.

### **I. ANALYSIS – ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

#### SMC 23.42.042 CONDITIONAL USES

In authorizing a conditional use, the Director or City Council may impose conditions to mitigate adverse impacts on the public interest and other properties in the zone or vicinity.

The Director may deny or recommend denial of a conditional use if the Director determines that adverse impacts cannot be mitigated satisfactorily, or that the proposed use is materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

#### SMC 23.45.506 ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USES IN MULTIFAMILY ZONES

- A. *Uses permitted as administrative conditional uses in Section 23.45.504 may be permitted by the Director when the provisions of Section 23.42.042 and this Section 23.45.506 are met.*

This proposal is determined to comply with the applicable criteria subject to the conditions in this decision.

- B. *Unless otherwise specified in this Chapter 23.45, conditional uses shall meet the development standards for uses permitted outright. If an existing structure is nonconforming to development standards, then no conditional use is required for any alterations that do not increase the nonconformity.*

Community centers are classified as institutions and are permitted outright in the LR2 zone if compliant with the development standards set forth in SMC 23.45.570 (SMC 23.45.504). Institutions not meeting development standards are permitted with the issuance of an Administrative Conditional Use Permit approval pursuant to SMC 23.45.506. The proposed community center does not comply with the development standards related to setbacks and dispersion criteria. As such, the proposed use is required to meet the criteria for Administrative Conditional Use.

- C. *Institutions other than public schools not meeting the development standards of 23.45.570, Institutions, and Major Institution uses as provided in Chapter 23.69, may be permitted subject to the following:*

1. *Bulk and Siting. In order to accommodate the special needs of the proposed institution, and to better site the facility with respect to its surroundings, the Director may modify the applicable development standards. In determining whether to allow such modifications, the Director shall balance the needs of the institution against the compatibility of the proposed institution with the residential scale and character of the surrounding area.*

The existing fire damaged structure is proposed to be removed but the existing foundation is being reused. The applicant's drawings show that the new structure will expand the existing square footage but will not expand the existing foundation setback. The existing structure which is sited within the LR2 zoned portion of the project site does not meet all development standards of SMC 23.45.570; therefore, consideration of modifications to these development standards is required. These development standards that are not met include the front setback along SW Holden Street and the side setback off the alley.

The Director has balanced the needs of the institution against the compatibility of the proposal with the residential scale and character of the surrounding area and has determined that the modification of these development standards accommodates the special needs of the proposed institution and better sites the facility with respect to its surroundings.

2. *Dispersion Criteria. An institution that does not meet the dispersion criteria of Section 23.45.570 may be permitted by the Director upon determination that it would not substantially worsen parking shortages, traffic safety hazards, and noise in the surrounding residential area.*

The proposal is within 600 linear feet of a religious facility (Paradise of Praise); the code required dispersion measurement. The religious facility is about 475 feet west of the western lot line of the current proposal. The current proposal meets the current parking standards and both institutions have existed near each other for some time. No traffic

safety hazards, due to deliveries or due to a high volume of traffic, are expected with this proposal, nor is any associated traffic noise expected to worsen conditions in the surrounding residential area. The Director has balanced the needs of the institution against the compatibility of the proposal and has determined that the existing institutional boundaries are not expanding, are separated by arterial and grade change accommodates the special needs of the proposed institution and better sites the facility with respect to its surroundings.

3. *Noise. The Director may condition the permit in order to mitigate potential noise problems. Measures the Director may require for this purpose include, but are not limited to the following: landscaping, sound barriers, fences, berms, adjustments to yards or the location of refuse storage areas, location of parking areas and access, structural design modifications, and regulating hours of use.*

Most activities associated with the ongoing community center are proposed to be contained entirely within the existing structure. Access to the community center is via the proposed pedestrian entry on the east and north side of the structure facing the parking lot. The proposal does include ground-mounted mechanical units on the north side of the building which are planned to be surrounded by landscaping, parking and existing fencing to help mitigate noise. The project including external mechanical units will abide by the City of Seattle noise ordinance governing noise threshold and hours. Therefore, no noise mitigation is considered necessary for the project.

4. *Transportation Plan. A transportation plan is required for proposed new institutions and for those institutions proposing to expand larger than 4,000 square feet of floor area and/or required to provide 20 or more new parking spaces. The Director may condition a permit to mitigate potential traffic and parking impacts pursuant to a Transportation Management Plan or Program as described in director's rules governing such plans or programs. The Director will determine the level of detail to be disclosed in the transportation plan based on the probable impacts and/or scale of the proposed institution.*

The proposal is to replace a 3,780 square foot with a 5,667 square foot structure. The current parking stall locations on the northern NR-zoned part of the site are non-conforming. Proposed improved pedestrian experience on abutting sidewalks through vegetated screening and new street trees will voluntarily improve the non-conformity. Since the parking stalls are being maintained, an additional ACU is not required or necessary.

A traffic analysis has been submitted (Existing Site Access Evaluation, TENW, December 21, 2023). The traffic analysis contains examination of roadway network, vehicular and pedestrian volumes, crash history, sight distance evaluation, and existing alleyway truck circulation. The analysis considers future projected conditions of the proposed community center. In summary, there will be minimal impact on traffic from what was currently there. The driveway access on 12<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, specific to intersection and stopping sight distance requirements, are in compliance. Staff reviewed the traffic analysis report and determined that the existing driveway access would not be required to be removed. Additionally, traffic volumes on SW Holden Street are significantly

greater than traffic volumes on 12th Ave SW. Therefore, the existing site access driveway on 12th Ave SW is expected to experience less pedestrian and vehicular (truck and non-truck) conflicts than the alleyway onto SW Holden Street.

Potential traffic impacts associated with the rebuilt community center have been considered and addressed. Therefore, no traffic mitigation is considered necessary for the project.

## **DECISION – ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

This administrative conditional use application is APPROVED.

## **II. ANALYSIS – SEPA**

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) has annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the project file submitted by the applicant or agents; and considered any pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action. The information in the environmental checklist, the supplemental information, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar projects, form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states in part, "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation," subject to some limitations.

Under such limitations/circumstances, mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

### **SHORT TERM IMPACTS**

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, a small increase in traffic impacts due to construction related vehicles, exposure of hazardous materials, and increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: the Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808), the Grading Code (SMC 22.170), the Street Use Ordinance (SMC Title 15), the Seattle Building Code, and the Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08). Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of

fugitive dust to protect air quality. Short term impacts, as well as mitigation, are identified in the environmental checklist annotated by SDCI with additional analysis provided below.

#### Air Quality – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, no further mitigation is warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.A (Air Quality Policy).

#### Construction Impacts – Traffic

Increased trip generation is expected during the proposed demolition, grading, and construction activity. The area is subject to significant traffic congestion during peak travel times on nearby arterials. Large trucks turning onto arterial streets would be expected to further exacerbate the flow of traffic. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities.

However, the amount of excavation and size of construction will result in a small and temporary increase in truck trips. Any closures of the public right of way will require review and permitting by Seattle Department of Transportation. Additional mitigation is not warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.B (Construction Impacts Policy).

#### Construction Impacts – Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition, grading, and construction. The Seattle Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08.425) permits increases in permissible sound levels associated with private development construction and equipment between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM on weekends and legal holidays in Lowrise, Midrise, Highrise, Residential-Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial zones: and 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends and legal holidays in Neighborhood Residential zones.

If extended construction hours are necessary due to emergency reasons or construction in the right of way, the applicant may seek approval from SDCI through a Noise Variance request. The applicant's environmental checklist does not indicate that extended hours are anticipated.

The limitations stipulated in the Noise Ordinance are sufficient to mitigate noise impacts and no additional SEPA conditioning is necessary to mitigate noise impacts pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.B (Construction Impacts Policy).

#### Environmental Health – Asbestos and Lead

Construction activity has the potential to result in exposure to asbestos. Should asbestos be identified on the site, it must be removed in accordance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) and City requirements. PSCAA regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and require permits for removal of asbestos during demolition. The City acknowledges PSCAA's jurisdiction and requirements for remediation will mitigate impacts associated with any contamination. No further mitigation is warranted for asbestos impacts pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.F (Environmental Health Policy).

Construction activity has the potential to result in exposure to lead. Should lead be identified on the site, there is a potential for impacts to environmental health. Lead is a pollutant regulated by laws administered by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (Title X), Clean Air Act (CAA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) among others. The EPA further authorized the Washington State Department of Commerce to administer two regulatory programs in Washington State: The Renovation, Repair and Painting Program (RRP), and the Lead-Based Paint Activities Program (Abatement). These regulations protect the public from hazards of improperly conducted lead-based paint activities and renovations. No further mitigation is warranted for lead impacts pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.F (Environmental Health Policy).

### LONG TERM IMPACTS

Long term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. Long term impacts, as well as mitigation, are identified in the environmental checklist annotated by SDCI with additional analysis provided below.

#### *Air Quality – Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project's energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, no further mitigation is warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.A (Air Quality Policy).

#### *Historic Preservation – Architectural Resources*

The existing structure on site is more than 50 years old. The Department of Neighborhoods reviewed the proposal for compliance with the Landmarks Preservation requirements of SMC 25.12 and indicated the structure on site is unlikely to qualify for historic landmark status (Landmarks Preservation Board letter, reference number LPB 445/23). Per the Overview policies in SMC 25.05.665.D, the existing City Codes and regulations to mitigate impacts to historic resources are presumed to be sufficient, and no further conditioning is warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.H (Historic Preservation Policy).

#### *Historic Preservation – Archaeological Resources*

The project is not within the U. S. Government Meander Line buffer that marks the historic shoreline – an area with the potential for discovery of pre-contact and early historic period resources. However, the project is within an area the Duwamish Tribes considers culturally significant with low potential for discovery of pre-contact and early historic resources.

Since the information showed there was low probable presence of archaeologically significant resources on site, Section A of Director's Rule 2-98 applies. Pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.H (Historic Preservation Policy) and consistent with Section A of Director's Rule 2-98, the conditions listed at the end of this decision are warranted to mitigate impacts to potential archaeological resources.

### Traffic and Transportation

The transportation analysis (Existing Site Access Evaluation, TENW, December 21, 2023) indicated that the project is expected to generate a total of 39 net daily vehicle trips, two net new AM peak hour trips and three net new PM peak hour trips.

The additional trips are expected to distribute on various roadways near the project site, including 12<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, SW Holden Street, Highland Park Way SW and would have minimal impact on levels of service at nearby intersections and on the overall transportation system. The SDCI Transportation Planner reviewed the information and determined that no mitigation is warranted per SMC 25.05.675.R (Traffic and Transportation Policy).

### **DECISION – SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS).** This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued after using the optional DNS process in WAC 197-11-355 and early review DNS process in SMC 25.05.355. There is no further comment period on the DNS.

### **CONDITIONS – ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

None

### **CONDITIONS – SEPA**

#### Prior to Issuance of a Master Use Permit

1. The owner and/or responsible parties shall provide SDCI with a statement that the contract documents for their general, excavation, and other subcontractors will include reference to regulations regarding archaeological resources (Chapters 27.34, 27.53, 27.44, 79.01, and 79.90 RCW, and Chapter 25.48 WAC as applicable) and that construction crews will be required to comply with those regulations.



During Construction

2. If resources of potential archaeological significance are encountered during construction or excavation, the owner and/or responsible parties shall:
  - a. Stop work immediately and notify SDCI (Land Use Planner) and the Washington State Archaeologist at the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). The procedures outlined in Appendix A of Director's Rule 2-98 for assessment and/or protection of potentially significant archeological resources shall be followed.
  - b. Abide by all regulations pertaining to discovery and excavation of archaeological resources, including but not limited to Chapters 27.34, 27.53, 27.44, 79.01 and 79.90 RCW and Chapter 25.48 WAC, as applicable, or their successors.

Scott Reynolds, Land Use Planner  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: February 20, 2024

SR:bg

Reynolds/3040867-LU Decision