



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

**Record Number:** 3038025-LU

**Council File Number:** 314494

**Applicant:** Andy Ishizaki for the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS)

**Address of Proposal:** 11302 Meridian Avenue North

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

Council Land Use Action to allow a new 3-story city facility (Fire Station #31). Parking for 15 vehicles proposed.

The following approvals are required:

- I. **Council Land Use Action (SMC Chapter 23.76.064)** - for concept approval and to waive or modify development standards for a city facility.
  
- 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.
- Determination of Significance (DS) – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Determination made under prior action.
- Exempt

**SITE AND VICINITY**

*Site Description:* The project is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Meridian Avenue North and North 113<sup>th</sup> Street. Meridian Avenue North, a major arterial, is improved with roadway, curb, gutter, and sidewalk. North 113<sup>th</sup> Street is not improved with curb, gutter and sidewalk.



Evergreen Washelli Cemetery is to the west. The site is in the Northgate Urban Center and Northgate overlay district.

The site slopes at approximately 10% from north to south. There is an existing rock wall at the northwest corner of the site, retaining approximately 4-feet of grade. There is also an existing gravel driveway on the south side of the property that has a 3.5-foot rock wall on either side.

The site contains some mature landscaping and large trees. Three Exceptional trees have been identified on site.

*Site Zone:* Lowrise 2 (M1) (LR2 (M1))

*Zoning Pattern:* (North) Neighborhood Residential 2 (NR2)  
(South) Lowrise 3 (M) (LR3 (M))  
(East) Lowrise 1 (M) (LR1 (M))  
(West) Lowrise 2 (M) (LR2 (M))

*Environmentally Critical Areas:* None.

*Site Size:* 30,516 square feet

## PROJECT PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construct a new three-story approximately 22,000 GSF Fire Station and associated site improvements. Demo of existing structures was under a separate permit. Project includes regrading, repaving, and construction of new right of way improvements on N 113th Street and a new fire apparatus driveway and associated emergency vehicle traffic signal on Meridian Ave N. Landscaping is planned onsite and within the surrounding right-of-way. The Exceptional trees are proposed to be removed due to their location on the site, one in declining health.

### Seattle Design Commission

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) reviewed the subject proposal at the predesign phase, schematic design phase and design development phase.

On July 21, 2022, the SDC voted unanimous support of the proposed deviations from development standards and approved the design development phase for the Fire Station 31 Replacement project with the following condition:

1. *Present a response to these three art integration recommendations to a subcommittee of the SDC after the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) has reviewed the art and its integration has been further developed:*
  - *Work meticulously, as you did with the building volume cut outs, to integrate the art three dimensionally.*
  - *Consider the presence and force of both the art and the shou sugi ban along the south façade and southwest corner of the building and establish clarity of the relationship.*
  - *Continue to refine the building design to support the energy, sense of movement, and images of the art.*

The Commission also offered these recommendations at that meeting:

1. *If the development to the south of 113<sup>th</sup> is not built in a timely way, address the SDC concern that fire apparatus access movements are maintained if street improvements on the south portion of 113<sup>th</sup> are delayed or not implemented.*
2. *Explore raising the canopy on the balcony on Meridian Ave N so the edge is more aligned with the parapet in order to maintain the cut out as one volume.*
3. *Consider how the glass awning canopy over the balcony will appear with leaves and debris on it, and how it will be maintained.*
4. *Refine the design of the southwest corner where pedestrians will be near arterial traffic and fire vehicles that are backing up. Consider reversing the direction people would sit on the seat wall and providing more sidewalk space. Alternately, retain the current configuration but refine the design to discourage people from sitting on the seat wall closest to Meridian Ave N. Improve how the space relates and connects to the entrance.*
5. *Consider providing lighting along the N 113<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk, because the retaining wall and trees will obstruct the building light.*
6. *Reconsider the dark color, opacity, and metal material of the fence along the east and north property lines and consult with the neighbors on the final selection.*
7. *Consider visibility of the art for pedestrians on N 113<sup>th</sup> Street when you select the trees.*
8. *Continue to explore locations for tree replacement. Examine whether the trees are providing the most value they can at the north precinct wetlands. Consult with experts on the need for them at this location. Look for opportunities on City property, where you can support community projects.*

On November 29, 2022, the SDC subcommittee met to evaluate and advise on the changes to the design that the applicant team made in response to a condition of approval from the July 21, 2022 SDC meeting. The commissioners appreciated the following aspects of the presented art design:

1. *The vibrancy and civic nature of the mosaic tile work.*
2. *How the glazing and artwork relate as a continuous plane across the south and west facades.*
3. *The diversity of experiences viewers will have, up close, and at a distance.*
4. *The ways in which the artwork's dynamic visuals and location celebrate the movement of fire vehicles into and out of the station.*
5. *The exemplary way the architects, City staff, and artist collaborated, and continue to work together, imaginatively, and effectively.*
6. *The testimony of this project to the benefits of exploring materials and how they will perform collaboratively in person.*

At that meeting, the commissioners provided direction for further development of the art as follows:

1. *Continue to develop the nuanced ways in which the art can most effectively wrap around the station's southwest corner and have a presence on the Meridian side of the station.*
2. *Continue the strong artist, design team, FAS, and OACA collaboration through fabrication and installation.*

## PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment period ended on June 21, 2022. 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 positive support for the project, maximizing the retention of existing trees, and a comment by the Duwamish Tribe. Consistent with SMC 23.76.050, a response to public comments is provided in Section I below.

**I. ANALYSIS – COUNCIL LAND USE ACTION**

Fire stations are public facilities that are permitted outright in all multifamily zones if the development standards for institutions (other than dispersion requirements) are met (SMC 23.51A.004). Development standards for public facilities in multifamily zones are found in SMC 23.45.570. Section 23.76.064 includes provisions for the City Council to grant concept approval and to waive or modify applicable development standards, accessory use requirements, special use requirements or conditional use criteria for City Facilities. SMC 23.76.004, .036C, .064 classifies this decision as a legislative action (Type V). The Finance and Administrative Services Department (FAS) seeks a Council Concept Approval under SMC 23.76.064 to modify four development standards, as follows in Table A:

| <b>Table A</b>  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Development Standard Standard</b>                        | <b>Code Requirement</b>   | <b>Proposed Wavier or Modification</b>   |
| SMC 23.45.570.F.3.a<br>SMC 23.45.570.F.3.b<br>North Setback | Minimum side setback is 10' from a side lot line that abuts any other residentially-zoned lot. Additional side setback beyond the 10' minimum is required for portions of the structure where the structure depth extends beyond 65'. | Single story building volume at north side of proposed building will extend to the property line with no setback equating to 1,453 sq. ft. A small portion of level 2 and level 3 (equating to 91 sq. ft. per floor) will also extend into the additional setback required for building depth. This staggered area is graphically represented on the applicant's drawings submitted to SDCI on 2/21/2023 and supplementary material. |
| SMC 23.45.570.F.3.b<br>South Setback                        | Additional side setback beyond the 10' minimum is required for portions of the structure where the structure depth extends beyond 65'.  | The entire south edge of the proposed structure conforms to the 10' minimum setback requirement, but a portion of the southeast corner of the building (equating to 420 sq. ft. per each three floors) is proposed to depart from the additional setback required based on building depth. This staggered area is graphically represented on the applicant's drawings submitted to SDCI on 2/21/2023 and supplementary material.     |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| SMC 23.45.518.1.8<br>Retaining Wall at South Property Line | Bulkheads and retaining walls used to raise grade may be placed in each required setback if they are limited to 6' in height, measured above existing grade. | Approximately 70' of the east-most portion of the retaining wall along the public sidewalk on 113 <sup>th</sup> Street will be taller than 6' above existing grade. Height above existing grade varies from 6' to a maximum of approximately 8'-7". |
| SMC 25.11.040<br>Tree Protection                           | Tree removal is prohibited for existing exceptional trees on lots in Lowrise zones.  | Remove 3 exceptional trees from the project site.   |

SMC 23.76.050 requires the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Director to prepare a written report on the Type V application, which includes the following analysis and information:

**1. *The written recommendations or comments of any affected City departments and other governmental agencies having an interest in the application or request;***

During the preapplication stage, agencies made comments in response to a site plan. The comments were site specific, but not project specific. Comments were made by SDCI Drainage, Seattle City Light, SDCI Land Use, Seattle Department of Transportation, and Seattle Public Utilities.

No comments were received from other city departments having an interest in the application at the project application stage.

Comments were received from the Duwamish Tribe noting a level of interest in subsurface potential for archeological evidence. The comment stated, *“Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. Based on the information provided and our understanding of the project and its APE, we would recommend an archaeological review performed for this project. This is in an area the Duwamish Tribe considers culturally significant and has a high probability to have unknown archaeological deposits. If any archaeological work is performed, we request notification. An IDP should not be used in lieu of archaeological investigation. Cultural and archaeological resources are non-renewable and are best discovered prior to ground disturbance.”* The applicant has prepared an Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) in case artifacts or indicators are found during excavation.

**2. *Responses to written comments from the public;***

Public comments are summarized in italics, with responses following in normal typeface. All public comments are available online at the Seattle Services Portal ([Permits, Licenses and Regulatory Compliance - Seattle Services Portal | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/permits/licenses-and-regulatory-compliance)) by entering the project number or address.

*“I want to see the big trees on this lot remain. Please don't remove the large evergreens on this property.”*

The applicant is seeking a waiver to remove existing exceptional trees. The existing tree canopy is proposed to be replaced on site with new trees which can thrive in a new and dedicated location. The fire station program and size of the apparatus, or trucks and vehicles, is unusually large. Large storage

and maneuvering room is required for the trucks as well as emergency generation equipment and 24 hour staff vehicles, common rooms, training areas and bunk rooms.

*Support for the fire station project and intent to provide street improvements along North 113<sup>th</sup> Street and increased oversight to the area.*

The project will be required to make street improvements and the 24 hour nature of the station will bring increased practical activity to the area.

***3. An evaluation of the proposal based on the standards and criteria for the approval sought and consistency with applicable City policies;***

Per SMC 23.51A.004 C in making a Council Action decision, the Council may waive or grant departures from development standards or administrative conditional use criteria for public facilities, if the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1. The location of the public facility addresses public service needs, and any waiver or departure from development standards or administrative conditional use criteria is necessitated by those public service delivery needs; and*

In October 2019, the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), together with the Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) and the Mayor's Office, determined that the existing Fire Station 31 (FS 31) building at 1319 North Northgate Way no longer met SFD's operational needs. Following an extensive search process that included community input and considerations for criteria such as ability to meet service response times, size of property, safety, and access to arterial roadways, the City identified and approved a new location for the permanent station at 11302 Meridian Avenue North. Per FAS, the site is largely vacant and highly suitable for SFD's operational and service area needs.

Providing emergency services within acceptable response time to all citizens is a service requirement for the Fire Department. Citizens receiving the services represent the full range of City residents and visitors including all races, ethnicities and economic statuses. FS 31 is already one of the busiest stations in the City based upon call volumes and first-at-scene response times. The proposed project is well situated with quick access to I-5, SR 99, and east/west arterials to continue providing critical services in a timely manner.

The siting and design of the new FS 31 facility necessitates four modifications to development standards for institutions in a Lowrise zone pursuant to SMC 23.45.570-south and north side setbacks, retaining wall height and exceptional tree removal. FAS explained that the requested modifications from development standards are necessary to meet public service delivery needs because:

- Fire stations must have operational support areas directly adjacent to the apparatus bays. These rooms store mission-critical gear such as tools, hoses, ladders and personal protective equipment that must be readily accessible at all times. Given the requirement to have drive-through bays for the larger apparatuses, and given the limited width available on site, there is no other place to locate this program. Level 2 and Level 3 areas that are nonconforming are similarly required to meet core operational needs based on the minimum 75' length of the apparatus bay, as well as the need to provide egress from level 3 and the required number of firefighter bunk rooms over the apparatus bays.

- Having a drive through configuration for the fire engine and ladder truck at this station is a core need for the fire department to operate safely and effectively. Maintaining this drive-through path at the rear apron requires the building program to extend in wings to either side and there is no other place to locate this program given the limited site width. The main building entry, meeting room, and mobile integrated health office are located in this zone.
  - Fire department vehicles must exit directly to Meridian Ave N, which is the major arterial. The elevation at the midpoint of the Meridian driveway therefore establishes the elevation of the ground level of the building. The retaining wall is necessary to provide an accessible route to the building entrance while allowing the public sidewalk to continue to fall with existing grade as it continues to the east. There is no other available location at level 1 that could function as a main entry.
  - The proposed fire station needs four apparatus bays to operate all of its actively responding vehicles. The minimum required width of each apparatus bay, as well as the need to respond directly to Meridian Ave N, which is the arterial road, effectively sets the position of the apparatus bays on site. There is no space to locate the apparatus bays differently such that the (2) exceptional Douglas firs (and their associated large root systems) in the southwest corner of the site can be preserved.
2. *The impact of the public facility on surrounding properties has been addressed in the design, siting, landscaping, and screening of the facility.*

The proposed facility will be south facing with access from the south, North 113<sup>th</sup> Street and the west, Meridian Avenue North. The building is situated on the west of the site so that there is direct access onto Meridian for trucks exiting the facility. The façade closest to the Neighborhood Residential zone will have less activity, fewer building openings, be lower in height and have landscaping along part of the property line to give a sense of privacy and screening between the two zones. Landscaping will meet standards and be as full and striving as possible.

This fire station is home to firefighters responsible for fire response and fire education for the Seattle population. The rapid, efficient dispatch of fire fighters is essential for protecting lives and property within the City of Seattle. The proposal allows the fire department to meet the needs of current and future staff to serve the neighboring area. In light of these facts, there is clear public necessity for this fire station within a Lowrise zone.

As noted above, the fire station structure requires four modifications to development standards for institutions in a Lowrise zone pursuant to SMC 23.45.570. They are south and north setback modifications to help provide a proper fire institutional program building with large trucks, equipment and full time 24/7 staffing; height for a retaining wall; exceptional tree removal. The unique building typology of a fire station in a Lowrise zone site shape led to the requests. Location on a major arterial, Meridian Ave N, is appropriate. Parking on site for staff is appropriate and the emergency generator use is appropriate for this public facility. Efforts to site the building to limit impacts to the residents near the subject site are appropriate. The project includes landscaping and an art wall along the south property line to mitigate visual impacts to the greatest extent possible at that location. The impact of the public facility on surrounding properties has been addressed in the design, siting, landscaping, and screening of the facility.

**4. All environmental documentation, including any checklist, EIS or DNS;**

SEPA analysis is provided in Section II.

**5. *The Director's recommendation to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a proposal.***

Based on the analysis provided, SDCI recommends approval of the proposed fire station in a Lowrise zone with the requested modifications to development standards as described in Table A above with no conditions.

**RECOMMENDATION – COUNCIL APPROVALS**

SDCI recommends approval of the proposed fire station use in a Lowrise zone. SDCI also recommends approval of the requested modifications to development standards as described in Table A.

**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.

The applicant has submitted a Construction Management Plan (CMP). This Construction Management Plan has been reviewed and approved by Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The requirements for a Construction Management Plan include a Haul Route Plan. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website. 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.

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 SDOT-approved Construction Management Plan includes contact information in the event of complaints about construction noise, and measures to reduce or prevent noise impacts. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website at: Construction Use in the Right of Way. The limitations stipulated in the Noise Ordinance and the CMP are sufficient to mitigate noise impacts; therefore, no additional SEPA conditioning is necessary to mitigate noise impacts pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.B (Construction Impacts Policy).

### Environmental Health – Contamination

The applicant submitted the following studies regarding existing contamination on site: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Environmental Associates, Inc. February 19, 2015; Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, EHSI, March 2020; Phase II supplement, EHSI, July 12, 2021; Geotechnical Report, HWA GeoSciences Inc. August 11, 2022; and Contaminated Media Management Plan for Construction Excavation, SoundEarth Strategies, Inc. August 16, 2022. If not properly handled, existing contamination could have an adverse impact on environmental health.

As indicated in the environmental documents on file, the applicant will comply with all provisions of MTCA in addressing these issues in the development of the project.

If the recommendations described in the Contaminated Media Management Plan for Construction Excavation are followed, then it is not anticipated that the characterization, removal, treatment, transportation, or disposal of any such materials will result in a significant adverse impact to the environment. This conclusion is supported by the expert environmental consultants for the project, whose conclusions are also set forth in the materials in the MUP file for this project.

Adherence to MTCA provisions and federal and state laws are anticipated to adequately mitigate significant adverse impacts from existing contamination on site. The Contaminated Media Management Plan for Construction Excavation describes strategies to ensure adherence with MTCA provisions and indicates compliance with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) regulatory authority.

Mitigation of contamination and remediation is the jurisdiction of Ecology, consistent with the City's SEPA relationship to Federal, State and Regional regulations described in SMC 25.05.665.F (Environmental Health Policy). This State agency program functions to mitigate risks associated with removal and transport of hazardous and toxic materials, and the agency's regulations provide sufficient impact mitigation for these materials. The City acknowledges that Ecology's jurisdiction and requirements for remediation will mitigate impacts associated with any contamination.

The proposed strategies and compliance with Ecology's requirements are expected to adequately mitigate the adverse environmental impacts from the proposed development and no further mitigation is warranted for impacts to environmental health pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.F (Environmental Health 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).

#### *Height, Bulk, and Scale*

Section 25.05.675.G (Height, Bulk and Scale Policy) describes the specific environmental policy for height, bulk, and scale. The proposal was not subject to design review. The site is on the edge of other zones (NR2 and LR1) nor is its size incompatible with the neighboring properties. The LR1 zone to the east has a similar height limit and allows townhouses which per code may be similar in bulk. There is a Neighborhood Residential zone to the north of the site. The fire station will be sunk on its site and thus its overall height will be similar to a single family home allowed height of 30 feet plus a 5 foot pitched roof. Landscaping along the north property line will aid in giving a sense of scale to the proposal.

Per the Overview policies in SMC 25.05.665.D, the existing City Codes and regulations to mitigate impacts to height bulk and scale are presumed to be sufficient, and additional mitigation is not warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.G (Height, Bulk and Scale 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, in response to information from the Duwamish Tribe, the applicant submitted an Archaeological Assessment report by ICF dated September 8, 2022, which noted that the DAHP Predictive Model indicated that the study area had the potential for archeological sensitivity. Further analysis of the study area's surface geology and buried site sensitivity indicated a low and moderately low probability for encountering surface or subsurface resources. However, considering the project's proximity to an historic cemetery, ICF recommended that the project develop an Unanticipated Discovery Plan (IDP) during project-related ground disturbance. This plan should be used in instances where human remains,

or archaeological deposits are encountered during construction. The applicant has provided an Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

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 and in accordance with IFC's recommendations, the conditions listed at the end of this decision are warranted to mitigate impacts to potential archaeological resources.

### Noise

The project is expected to generate operational noise from fire alarms and sirens from emergency response vehicles (fire engines, ladder trucks and aid vehicles) when leaving the site. The site is close to residential uses, and alarms and sirens could be especially adverse in the early morning and evening. Noise associated with sirens and alarms are an essential function of a fire station and are unavoidable.

The SDCI Noise Specialist reviewed the project plans and confirmed that the Noise Ordinance exempts sounds created by fire alarms, emergency vehicles and the proposed emergency generator. Since this operational noise associated with the fire station will be intermittent and unavoidable, it is determined that SEPA mitigation or conditions are not warranted per SMC 25.05.675.L.

### Plants and Animals

Mature vegetation is located on the site, including three exceptional trees. The applicant submitted an arborist report (Arborist Report, Seattle Tree Consulting, February 7, 2020) and identified the exceptional trees (Pacific madrone 25" DBH, Douglas firs 36" and 42" DBH) on the MUP plan set. SDCI's arborist has reviewed this information.

21 existing trees are proposed to be removed. Overall 42 new trees will be provided, with 28 new trees planted on the project site and within the right-of-way. The remaining 14 new trees are proposed to be planted on another city owned property which will be coordinated by FAS.

The proposal includes removal of all exceptional trees via the Type V council action. If approved by City Council and in order to mitigate impacts under SMC 25.05.675.N (Plants and Animals Policy), the applicant proposes to replace the tree canopy. The tree planting plan will be provided as part of the landscape planting plans. No further mitigation is warranted pursuant to SMC 25.05.675.N.

### Traffic and Transportation

Per FAS staff, in addition to emergency calls, the new Fire Station 31 would have staff on site 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Staff are generally on site for a maximum 24-hour shift, with some units operating 12-hour shifts during daytime hours only. It is anticipated that between 10-15 employees would be on site simultaneously depending on time of day and staff availability. Unlike a typical office environment, staff arrivals and departures are staggered to prevent voids in staffing. The maximum number of trips is expected to occur between 7am and 8am during the morning shift change. At this time, a maximum of 30 trips (15 enter and 15 exit) could be generated spread out over the course of that hour. However, the average number of trips during this hour will usually be less than the maximum

depending on day-to-day changes in number of units in service. Very few employee trips are generated at any other times of the day. There is not a PM Peak Hour trips.

The additional trips are expected to distribute on various roadways near the project site and would have minimal impact on levels of service at nearby intersections and on the overall transportation system. SDCI's Transportation Planner reviewed the information and determined that no mitigation is warranted per SMC 25.05.675.R.

### **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.

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS – COUNCIL LAND USE ACTION**

None.

### **RECOMMENDED 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), the Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) 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 and the Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) 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.

Holly Godard, Land Use Planner  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: May 22, 2023

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