

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE 127358

COUNCIL BILL 121092

AN ORDINANCE relating to administration of the Major Institutions and Schools program; transferring administration of Major Institutions and Schools program from the Department of Neighborhoods to the Office of Planning and Community Development; amending Sections 23.69.032, 23.78.002, 23.78.006, 23.78.010, 23.78.012, 23.78.014, 23.79.004, and 23.79.006 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, the 2026 Proposed Budget includes the transfer of administration of the City’s program for Major Institution Master Plans and Development Standard Departures for Public Schools from the Department of Neighborhoods to the Office of Planning and Community Development; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Planning and Community Development is well positioned to consider the needs of major institutions and schools to grow and change over time in the context of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and its overarching policies for growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments are limited to shifting the oversight and staffing responsibilities to a different department and do not make any changes to the substantive requirements of the existing major institution master plan and development standard departure for public schools processes; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 23.69.032 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127099, is amended as follows:

23.69.032 Master plan process

* * *

1 B. Formation of a Development or Implementation Advisory Committee

2 1. Immediately following submittal of a notice of intent to prepare a master plan,
3 the institution shall initiate the establishment of a Development Advisory Committee of at least
4 six((7)) but no more than 12 members. In addition, all institutions with adopted master plans shall
5 have an Implementation Advisory Committee.

6 2. Where there is more than one Major Institution in the same general area, as
7 determined by the Director, a single Advisory Committee serving more than one institution may
8 be permitted.

9 3. The institution, in consultation with the Director of the ((~~Department of~~
10 ~~Neighborhoods~~)) Office of Planning and Community Development, shall notify individuals and
11 organizations directly affected by the actions of the institution of opportunities to serve on its
12 Advisory Committee. To the extent possible, members of the Advisory Committee should
13 possess experience in such areas as consensus building, community organizing, land use and
14 zoning, architecture or landscape architecture, economic development, real estate development,
15 and educational or medical services. A nonmanagement representative of the institution shall be
16 included.

17 4. Members of the Advisory Committee shall have no direct economic
18 relationship with the institution except as provided in subsection 23.69.032.B.3.

19 5. The Director of the ((~~Department of Neighborhoods~~)) Office of Planning and
20 Community Development shall review the list of potential Advisory Committee members and
21 recommend to the Council those individuals appropriate to achieve a balanced, independent, and
22 representative Development Advisory Committee. The City Council may confirm the
23 Development Advisory Committee composition, make changes in the size and/or composition of

1 the Development Advisory Committee, or remand the matter to the Director of the (~~Department~~
2 ~~of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development for further action. The
3 City Council shall establish the final composition of the Development Advisory Committee
4 through a memorandum of agreement with the institution, prepared by the (~~Department of~~
5 ~~Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development and adopted by resolution.

6 6. Four nonvoting, ex-officio members of the Advisory Committee shall represent
7 the Major Institution, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, the (~~Department~~
8 ~~of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development, and the Seattle
9 Department of Transportation.

10 7. The Advisory Committee shall be staffed by the (~~Department of~~
11 ~~Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development with the cooperation and
12 assistance of the Major Institution. Technical assistance to the committee shall be provided by
13 the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, the Seattle Department of
14 Transportation, and the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community
15 Development.

16 8. During the master plan review and adoption process, the Council may, in the
17 interest of ensuring representative community participation on the Implementation Advisory
18 Committee, amend the size and/or composition of the Implementation Advisory Committee.

19 9. The City-University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC) shall serve as
20 the Development and Implementation Advisory Committee for the University of Washington.

21 10. The Director of the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and
22 Community Development shall promulgate rules applicable to Major Institution advisory

1 committees, including terms of office, selection of chairpersons, and methods of conflict
2 resolution.

3 * * *

4 K. Requirement for compiled plan. Within 30 days of adoption of a master plan by the
5 City Council, the institution shall submit a draft copy of the compiled adopted plan for the
6 Director's review and approval. This compiled plan shall incorporate all changes and conditions
7 imposed during the plan approval process. The Director shall review the compiled plan within 30
8 days of receipt of the plan and may request corrections or clarifications if necessary. Upon the
9 Director's approval, the institution shall submit six written copies of the compiled adopted plan
10 to the Director. The Director shall keep one copy and distribute the other five copies to the City
11 Clerk's Office, the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community
12 Development, and the Seattle Public Library (one copy each for the main downtown library and
13 the two branch libraries nearest the institution). The institution shall also submit one copy of the
14 compiled adopted plan in electronic format for the City to post on the City's website. No Master
15 Use Permit for development first permitted in the adopted plan shall be issued until the compiled
16 plan has been reviewed and approved by the Director except as provided in Section 23.69.033.

17 Section 2. Section 23.78.002 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
18 123913, is amended as follows:

19 **23.78.002 Application for establishment of criteria**

20 A. The Seattle School District or other holder(s) of record of fee title of a public school
21 structure, or an authorized agent thereof, may apply for the establishment of criteria for
22 nonschool use of an existing or former public school structure. Applications shall be made to the
23 Director of the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community

1 Development. The Seattle School District or other holder(s) of record of fee title of a public
2 school structure, or an authorized agent thereof, may apply for a rezone of an existing or former
3 public school structure or site pursuant to the provisions in Chapter 23.76 rather than apply for
4 establishment of criteria through a School Use Advisory Committee.

5 B. On receipt of an application, the Director of the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~)
6 Office of Planning and Community Development shall convene a School Use Advisory
7 Committee (SUAC) to secure the comments of the public and make recommendations for school
8 use criteria for the school. The committee shall operate pursuant to rules promulgated by the
9 Director of the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community
10 Development. The committee shall consist of the following:

11 1. A representative of the City selected by the Director of the (~~Department of~~
12 ~~Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development, to act as chairperson;

13 2. A representative of the Seattle School District, or if the structure is no longer
14 owned by the Seattle School District, a representative of the structure owner.

15 3. Two (~~(2)~~) persons residing or owning property within (~~(six hundred (600))~~)
16 600 feet of the site of the school and any adjoining publicly owned property, selected by the
17 Director of the (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community
18 Development in cooperation with the community organization(s) representing the area;

19 4. A representative of the PTSA or parents' group, selected by the appropriate
20 organization, if "joint use" (both public school classrooms and nonschool uses) is contemplated
21 by the application; or a representative of the neighborhood, selected by the Director of the
22 (~~Department of Neighborhoods~~) Office of Planning and Community Development, in

1 cooperation with the community organization(s) representing the area, if joint use is not
2 contemplated in the application;

3 5. A representative of the neighborhood, selected by the Director of the
4 ~~((Department of Neighborhoods))~~ Office of Planning and Community Development;

5 6. A representative at large selected by the Director of the ~~((Department of~~
6 ~~Neighborhoods))~~ Office of Planning and Community Development to represent city-wide
7 education issues; and

8 7. A representative of the Department shall be invited to sit as a nonvoting
9 member.

10 Section 3. Section 23.78.006 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
11 123913, is amended as follows:

12 **23.78.006 Notice provided**

13 A. If notice is required pursuant to this Chapter 23.78, except mailed notice as defined in
14 Section 23.84A.025, it may be provided by electronic means if the recipient provides an e-mail
15 address to the ~~((Department of Neighborhoods))~~ Office of Planning and Community
16 Development. Notice to City agencies may be provided through the City's interoffice mail or by
17 electronic means.

18 B. Notification of the application and formation of a SUAC and the first meeting of the
19 SUAC shall be provided by the Director in the following manner:

20 1. Mailed notice;

21 2. Inclusion in the Land Use Information Bulletin;

22 3. Posting one land use sign visible to the public at each street frontage abutting
23 the site except, when there is no street frontage or the site abuts an unimproved street, the

1 Director shall either post more than one sign or select an alternative posting location so that
2 notice is clearly visible to the public;

3 4. Through the regular processes of a parents' organization, if one exists; and

4 5. Provision of notice to community organizations known to the ((~~Department of~~
5 ~~Neighborhoods~~)) Office of Planning and Community Development as representing the local area,
6 and to similar organizations that have requested notice in writing and provided an address for
7 notice.

8 Section 4. Section 23.78.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
9 121429, is amended as follows:

10 **23.78.010 SUAC responsibilities((-))**

11 The SUAC shall:

12 * * *

13 D. Recommend criteria to the Director of the ((~~Department of Neighborhoods~~)) Office of
14 Planning and Community Development no later than ((~~ninety (90)~~)) 90 days after its first
15 meeting unless a ten ((~~10~~)) day extension is requested, in writing, by a majority of the SUAC
16 and granted by the Director of the ((~~Department of Neighborhoods~~)) Office of Planning and
17 Community Development.

18 Section 5. Section 23.78.012 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
19 123913, is amended as follows:

20 **23.78.012 Duties of Director of the ((~~Department of Neighborhoods~~)) Office of Planning**
21 **and Community Development**

22 A. The Director of the ((~~Department of Neighborhoods (DON)~~)) Office of Planning and
23 Community Development (OPCD) shall establish final use criteria and permitted uses for the

1 school structures and grounds based on the School Use Advisory Committee's (SUAC's)
2 recommendations within ten days of the receipt of the recommendations. If the Director of
3 ~~((DON))~~ OPCD modifies the recommendations of the SUAC, the reasons for the modification
4 shall be put forth in writing.

5 B. The ~~((DON))~~ OPCD Director's decision shall provide notice of the decision within
6 seven days of the date the decision is made in the following manner:

- 7 1. Publication in the City official newspaper;
- 8 2. Inclusion in the Land Use Information Bulletin; and
- 9 3. Notice provided to the applicant, all members of the advisory committee, and
10 persons who have requested specific notice in writing and provided an address for notice.

11 C. The notice of the decision shall state the address of the school and briefly state the
12 decision made by the ~~((DON))~~ OPCD Director. The notice shall also state that the school use
13 criteria are subject to appeal and shall describe the appropriate appeal procedure.

14 Section 6. Section 23.78.014 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
15 123913, is amended as follows:

16 **23.78.014 Appeal of use criteria**

17 * * *

18 D. Appeals shall be considered de novo. The decision on the evidence before the Hearing
19 Examiner shall be made upon the same basis as was required of the Director of the ~~((Department
20 of Neighborhoods (DON)))~~ Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD). The
21 interpretation of the ~~((DON))~~ OPCD Director shall be given substantial weight, and the burden
22 of establishing the contrary shall be upon the appellant. The Hearing Examiner shall summarily

1 dismiss an appeal without hearing which is determined to be without merit on its face, frivolous,
2 or brought merely to secure a delay.

3 * * *

4 F. The decision of the Hearing Examiner may affirm, reverse, or modify the ((DON))
5 OPCD Director's decision either in whole or in part. The Hearing Examiner may also remand the
6 decision to the ((DON)) OPCD Director for further consideration. The decision of the Hearing
7 Examiner shall be final and the applicant, appellant, and ((DON)) OPCD Director shall be bound
8 by it.

9 Section 7. Section 23.79.004 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
10 121429, is amended as follows:

11 **23.79.004 Application for development standard departure((-))**

12 On receipt of an application for development standard departure or upon initiation of the process
13 by the Director, the Director shall forward an application to the Director of the ((Department of
14 ~~Neighborhoods (DON))~~ Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) who shall
15 convene a Development Standard Advisory Committee, hereinafter called the advisory
16 committee, to secure the comments of the public and make recommendations for modifications
17 of development standards. The advisory committee shall operate pursuant to rules promulgated
18 by the Director of ((DON)) OPCD. To the extent that members of the following groups are
19 available, the advisory committee shall consist of:

20 A. A representative of the City selected by the Director of ((DON)) OPCD, to act as
21 nonvoting chairperson;

22 B. A representative of the Seattle School District;

1 C. A person residing within (~~six hundred (600)~~) 600 feet of the site of the school and
2 any adjoining publicly owned property, selected by the Director of (~~DON~~) OPCD in
3 cooperation with the community organizations(s) representing the area;

4 D. A person owning property or a business within (~~six hundred (600)~~) 600 feet of the
5 site of the school and any adjoining publicly owned property, selected by the Director of
6 (~~DON~~) OPCD in cooperation with the community organization(s) representing the area;

7 E. Two (~~(2)~~) representatives of the neighborhood, selected by the Director of (~~DON~~)
8 OPCD in cooperation with the community organization(s) representing the area;

9 F. A representative at large selected by the Director of (~~DON~~) OPCD to represent city-
10 wide education issues;

11 G. A nonvoting representative of the Department;

12 H. Two (~~(2)~~) representatives of the parents of the school to be replaced, expanded, or
13 remodeled, selected by the Director of (~~DON~~) OPCD in cooperation with the school's PTSA or
14 other school parent organization; and

15 I. A person, to be selected by the Director, who resides in a housing unit which will be
16 demolished and who will be adversely affected by the demolition, when demolition of housing is
17 necessitated by the District's proposal.

18 Section 8. Section 23.79.006 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance
19 126188, is amended as follows:

20 **23.79.006 Notice provided for development standard departure**

21 A. If notice is required pursuant to this Chapter 23.79, except mailed notice as defined in
22 Section 23.84A.025, it may be provided by electronic means if the recipient provides an e-mail
23 address to the (~~Department of Neighborhoods (DON)~~) Office of Planning and Community

1 Development (OPCD). Notice to City agencies may be provided through the City’s interoffice
2 mail or by electronic means.

3 B. Notification of the application and formation of a Development Standard Advisory
4 Committee and the first meeting of the advisory committee, shall be provided by the ((~~DON~~))
5 OPCD Director in the following manner:

6 1. Mailed notice;
7 2. Inclusion in the Land Use Information Bulletin;
8 3. Posting one land use sign visible to the public at each street frontage abutting
9 the site except, when there is no street frontage or the site abuts an unimproved street, the
10 ((~~DON~~)) OPCD Director shall either post more than one sign or select an alternative posting
11 location so that notice is clearly visible to the public;

12 4. Through the regular processes of a parents’ organization, if one exists; and

13 5. Provision of notice to community organizations known to the ((~~DON~~)) OPCD
14 Director as representing the local area, and to other organizations that have made a written
15 request for notice and provided an address for notice.

1 Section 9. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code
2 Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

3 Passed by the City Council the 21st day of November, 2025,
4 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 21st day of
5 November, 2025.

6 

7 President _____ of the City Council

8 Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this 24th day of November, 2025.

9 

10 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

11 Filed by me this 24th day of November, 2025.

12 

13 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

14 (Seal)