

**John Muir Elementary
School Design Departure
Advisory Committee**

Members

Patrick Donnelly

Jennifer Lehmann

Laura Sinn

Matisia Hollingsworth (Seattle
Public Schools)

Ex-Officio Members

Nelson Pesigan, Department of
Neighborhoods (DON)

Carly Guillory, Seattle Department
of Construction & Inspections (SDCI)

John Muir Elementary School

(SDCI Project # 3040569)

Development Standards Design Departure Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #1

December 11, 2023

John Muir Elementary School
3301 S. Horton St. - Library
Seattle, WA 98144

Members Present

Patrick Donnelly
Jennifer Lehman

Laura Sinn
Matisia Hollingsworth (SPS)

Staff and Others Present

Nelson Pesigan	DON
Carly Guillory	SDCI
Anjali Grant	Anjali Grant Desing LLC
Vince Gonzales	Seattle Public Schools
Isaac Patterson	Member of the public
Catherine LaDuke	Member of the public

I. Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened by Nelson Pesigan from the City of Seattle, Major Institutions and Schools Program. Nelson Pesigan welcomed all in attendance and briefly summarized the agenda. Brief introductions followed.

II. Overview of the Process

Nelson Pesigan stated that this process is governed by the Land Use Code Sections of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC Title 23), which specifies how the process works. Mr. Pesigan noted that the City of Seattle does not have a school zone, subject to the development standards of the underlying zone. Since most schools are in residential neighborhoods zoned "single-family," schools do not normally meet the underlying zoning requirements.

Thus, the Land Use Code contains provisions that allow the Seattle School District to request departures from various development standards.

The Committee is meeting tonight to develop recommendations concerning the School District's requested departures from provisions of the SMC related to land use.

The Committee receives information on the departures being requested from the Seattle Public Schools and its consultants, public testimony, and then the Committee discusses the requested departures.

The Committee may do one of the following:

- 1) Recommend granting the departure as requested.
- 2) Recommend granting the departure with modifications or specific conditions, or
- 3) Recommend denial of the departure.

Conditions or modifications identified should be related to the requested departure and enforceable in the District.

The Committee may develop recommendations at this meeting, or if time does not allow, additional public testimony is desired, or additional information is needed, the Committee may hold up to two additional meetings. If the Committee concludes they have enough information and there is no further benefit from additional public testimony, the Committee can determine to move forward at the end of this meeting in establishing their recommendations; in that case, this would be the only public meeting.

Nelson Pesigan emphasized that the Committee would make recommendations that will be put into a report that will be reviewed by the Committee and forwarded to Carly Guillory of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), who will consider it when drafting the Director's decision.

III. Presentation

The Project:

Nelson Pesigan introduced Matisia Hollingsworth of Seattle Public Schools and Anjali Grant of Anjali Grant Design to present the project.

The school district is proposing four departures: 1) lot coverage; 2) setbacks along South Horton Street; 3) setbacks along 34th Avenue South; and 4) bicycle parking quantity. This project intends to help more students be ready for kindergarten and to address the urgent need for affordable care.

Most of the existing buildings were constructed in 1991 except for one portion of the building that was built in 1971. The proposed changes to the 1971 structure are not consistent with a scope of work requiring SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) referral to the Historic Preservation program under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.05.800. The 1991 building is not more than 50 years old and therefore does not qualify for referral to the Historic Preservation Program within the Department of Neighborhoods (DON).

Summary of the Requested Departure:

1. Lot Coverage

Anjali Grant presented the proposed departure of lot coverage. The existing lot coverage is 41,113 sq. ft. or 34.4%. The School District is proposing 45,251 sq. ft. or 38% lot coverage: an additional 4,138 sq. ft. The Land Use code allows 35% lot coverage. The proposal is 38% lot coverage for a departure of 3% (SMC 23.51B.002.C2, Lot Coverage in Neighborhood Residential Zones).

Anjali Grant summarized the evaluation criteria for the proposed departure and noted that there will be minimal impacts on the relationship to the surrounding areas. There will be only a minor impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking per the traffic analysis that was conducted due to the additional classrooms in the same location.

Anjali Grant noted that the need for this departure is to address the location of the early learning addition that supports a needed separate entrance and play area and the need to meet the minimum classroom and outdoor play area sizes per the Seattle Public Schools and the Department of Youth Children and Families.

2. Setback at South Horton Street and 34th Avenue South

Anjali Grant presented the proposed departure of the setback at South Horton Street. The Land Use code requires a 20-foot setback on South Horton Street. The proposal is for a 5-foot setback for an 82-foot-long portion of the building, for a departure of 15 feet or 20% of the north lot boundary.

The proposal for 34th Avenue South is for a 5-foot setback for a 63-foot-long portion of the building for a departure of 4 feet, 7 inches. The Land Use code requires a 9-foot, 7-inch setback of the previous structure.

Anjali Grant summarized the evaluation criteria for the proposed departures and noted that there will be minimal impacts on the relationship to the surrounding areas. There will be only a minor impact on traffic, noise, circulation, and parking per the traffic analysis that was conducted due to the two additional classrooms in the same location.

3. Bicycle Parking quantity

Anjali Grant presented the proposed departure of bicycle parking quantity. The proposal is for 7 short-term parking spaces, for a departure of 6. The Land Use code requires 13 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The 6 bike parking spaces are shifted from short-term to long-term.

Anjali Grant noted that the need for this departure is to address family-friendly racks and a longer-term secure bicycle parking due to theft. Anjali noted that the area by the entry is very constrained, and this proposed departure will address safety and oversight issues with bike parking close to the roadway.

Anjali Grant summarized the evaluation criteria for the proposed departure and noted that there will be no impact on the relationship to the surrounding areas.

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions

Nelson Pesigan opened the floor for the Committee's clarifying questions.

One committee member asked about the short-term bicycle parking and if the space gets full during the biking months, and Anjali Grant noted that the parking spaces do not get full and commented that most families do not ride their bikes to school because the surrounding streets are not safe.

One committee member asked about the distinction between short-term and long-term bicycle parking in the Land Use code, and Anjali Grant noted that there is a distinction. Long-term bicycle parking has more requirements such as it needs to be covered and lit. The School District will be providing the type of high-quality bicycle parking that will be sheltered and more secure. It will be up to the School District and the school principal about how they would want to manage the bicycle parking.

One committee member commented about traffic concerns in the neighborhood and if there was any correlation between the proposed departures that would encourage drivers to go slower around the school site.

Anjali Grant mentioned that it is outside of the project's purview, but they are looking at ways to address the traffic concerns and prevent any vehicles going over the curb by rebuilding some of the curbs around the school site. Anjali Grant also noted that the School District will be doing ADA (American Disabilities Act) improvements to the sidewalks and adding the current ADA parking spot that is not accessible.

One committee member asked about the landscape and impacts on the existing trees, and Anjali Grant noted that the project team had a meeting with the entire second-grade class as part of this project, the plan is to replant two of every one of the same species of trees and bringing the existing boulders to protect these trees. The new trees will be protected for the first few years and have a chance to have these trees grow.

One committee member asked about astroturf as part of this project. Anjali Grant noted that there is an artificial turf that has an enviro fill which is a non-toxic fill. The project team is looking to make sure that the chemical contents of the artificial turf are non-toxic.

Vince Gonzalez of the Seattle School District noted that since it is a play area for young children, it will be different than an athletic field with synthetic turf.

Vince Gonzalez noted that there is a traffic consultant assigned to this project to address any traffic concerns around the school site and the neighborhood. Once the construction is completed, the consultant will make recommendations regarding traffic safety that the School District will support and will work with the school safety volunteers, the PTSA, and this committee. If there is funding available, the School District will request crossing guards to monitor drop-off and pick-up.

V. Public Comments

Nelson Pesigan opened the floor to public comments and questions.

(Editor's Note: The comments shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in voice recording (.mp3) form)

Comments from Catherine LaDuke: Catherine LaDuke commented if there are any PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) being used regarding artificial turf, and the status of the existing trees during and after construction, and what the arborist has to say.

Response from Anjali Grant: Anjali Grant noted that no PFAS is being used. About the existing trees, the project team will protect the redwood trees during construction. These trees are important to the history of the school and will be using a technique to make sure these trees are protected and preserved.

VI. Committee Deliberation

Nelson Pesigan opened the discussions for committee deliberation. He asked the Committee to deliberate on the comments they heard from the public and the need for the departure and then discuss whether to recommend or deny with or without conditions.

Nelson Pesigan commented that it would be helpful for the Committee to review the evaluation criteria regarding the relationship to the surrounding areas and the need for the departure.

The Committee deliberated and discussed all four proposed departures and the concerns that were raised revolved around traffic and safety concerns during and after construction. The Committee noted that it would be helpful for a communication plan to be in place to inform the neighborhood about traffic and pedestrian circulation and safety during and after construction.

The Committee agreed that their questions about the proposed bicycle parking quantity were answered and were addressed.

Committee Recommendations

Nelson Pesigan opened the discussion for Committee recommendations.

He briefly summarized the requested departure and advised the Committee members on how to proceed with their recommendations.

The Committee recommended granting all the requested departures of lot coverage, setbacks at South Horton Street and 34th Ave S., and bicycle parking quantity with a condition that the School District and John Muir Elementary School would collaborate and address any traffic and pedestrian safety through a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) and a Neighborhood Communication Plan.

VII. Adjournment

Nelson Pesigan mentioned that he will send out the draft recommendation report and meeting minutes for feedback and comments as soon as possible and he will have the final report submitted to Carly Guillory and SDCI by mid-January.

With no further business being before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT