



Seattle Neighborhoods



Madison Middle School Design Departure Advisory Committee

Members

Mike Barrett
Charlie Calvano
Elizabeth Hughes
Robert Kelly
Fiona Preedy
Barb Vadakin
Sarah Wightman
Tristan Thomte (Alternate)

Ex-Officio Members

Maureen Sheehan,
Department of Neighborhoods
Holly Godard,
Seattle Department of Construction &
Inspections

Madison Middle School Development Standards Design Departure Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #1

May 30, 2018

Madison Middle School
3429 45th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98116

Members and Alternates Present

Mike Barrett	Robert Kelly	Barb Vadakin
Charlie Calvano	Fiona Preedy	Sara Wightman
Elizabeth Hughes	Sue Terrible	Tristan Thomte (Alternate)

Staff and Others Present

Jennifer Barnes	Heffron Transportation
Holly Godard	SDCI
Rachel Huck	SDOT
Alex Rolluda	Architects
Maureen Sheehan	DON

I. Opening and Introductions

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

II. Overview of the Process

Ms. Sheehan 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. Ms. Sheehan 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 for 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 clearly related to the requested departure and enforceable on 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.

Ms. Sheehan emphasized that the Committee's will make recommendations that will be put into a report that will be reviewed by the Committee and forwarded to Ms. Holly Godard of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), who will take it into consideration when drafting the Director's decision.

III. Presentation (00:08:50)

The Project:

Mr. Paul Dorn of Rolluda Architects presented a brief overview of the departure requested by the School District.

The project scope includes installing four portable classrooms to meet the increased enrollment. Two portables proposed to be in the north parking lot will reduce the on-site parking quantity. They will be partially in the landscape area to allow more space for the vehicles to come in and out of the site.

The School District looked at capacity management alternatives prior to recommending placing portables classrooms at the school. The south parking lot was not ideal because it is visible from the historic front and it also disrupts the drop-off circulation.

The parking required by code on site is 160 spaces. There was a departure decision of 62 spaces in 2003. The current proposed parking space departure is for 6 spaces for a total of 56 on-site parking spaces.

Parking Analysis:

Ms. Jennifer Barnes of Heffron Transportation summarized the methodology used for the parking analysis around the site including: performing on-street and on-site parking demand counts during the weekday periods and Sunday mid-mornings, calculating the parking demand that could result from the installation of the portables, doing an inventory of on-street parking supply within 800 ft. of the area, and adjusting the baseline parking to account for future projects, of which there are none.

Ms. Barnes concluded that the parking impact around the site would be negligible and there were no recommended mitigation measures.

Summary of the Requested Departure:

1. Reduced on-site parking

Seattle Public Schools is requesting a departure for reduced on-site parking of 6 spaces for a total of 56 on-site parking spaces.

The request is due to an increase student enrollment that requires capacity expansion, limited expansion options and location for the portables, and there will be negligible impact to on-street parking due to portables.

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for Committee clarifying questions.

A question was asked about the decision to locate the portables on the north side of the parking lot versus the southside and were there any ADA and accessibility considerations given. Mr. Dorn responded that having ADA access played a significant role in the decision. The north side has ADA access. There are two ADA parking stalls in the parking lot that come up to a sidewalk with a curb cut that leads to the north building entrance that has an automatic door button. The portables will have accessible ramps. Portables 1 and 2 access a flat grade into the door and elevator. The gravel will be replaced by a concrete pathway.

A question was asked about the design and profile of the portables and if they fit into the existing landscape of the neighborhood. Ms. Sheehan reminded the Committee that they are evaluating the School District's request of the removal of parking spots and not the portables. Mr. Dorn noted that the portables meet the School District's standards and are to be painted tan with white trim and includes several windows. Mr. Mike Barrett added that portables meet the height and property setbacks as defined in the Land Use Code.

A question was asked about data regarding evening activities in the school. Ms. Barnes noted that she does not have the data frequency, but based on the parking analysis, there is not much change.

Mr. Charlie Calvano commented that the report taken by Heffron describing Sunday parking was not accurate since it was done on a holiday weekend. He noted that the parking lot is always full on Sunday morning, but added that the north end parking lot is not impacted since it was closed during that time. He asked about the number of faculty and staff currently at the school site. There are approximately 85-90 staff. Mr. Barrett noted that the departure request affecting the 6 parking stalls at the north end does not affect the existing staff mode of transportation. The departure request focuses on the effect on the parking lot.

A comment was made about having clarity and consistency about the transportation study. The study does not reflect the reality of what is happening around the site. Ms. Barnes noted that throughout the traffic analysis, the result would still be below the City of Seattle parking threshold, and the impact of losing the parking spaces will be minimal.

Ms. Fiona Preedy asked how permanent the departure is, and Ms. Holly Godard noted that the departure runs with the project, and it is permanent. However, the Committee can put conditions on the departure such as removal of the departure when the portables are removed.

A suggestion was made of a condition of the removal of the portables based on the lower enrollment of the school. A response was made that it is beyond the Committee's prevue regrading enrollment projections.

A question was asked if the design team had looked at adding the portables to the southwest field and having adaption to the ADA access. Mr. Dorn responded that they looked at the pros and cons of the area and it did not make sense due to security issues. Also, the difference in grade and steep slope. Mr. Barrett noted that developing a series of ramps to overcome the steep slope drop, the result will be a considerable walking distance between the classrooms and the school building.

Mr. Barrett added that the other consideration involves the BEX (Building Excellence) levy. The continued growth in West Seattle and the projected growth enrollment, the School District is considering an addition as a potential next project. If the addition is built, the southwest field needs to be free of portables.

A question was asked about what happens if the enrollment continues to grow, will there be additional portables placed on site. Mr. Barrett commented that if the School District decides it needs more classrooms and further reduce on-site parking, it will go back through a departure process and propose additional classrooms and look at all possible real estate that is available on the site. It was noted that the building and four portables will sustain projected growth for two years.

Mr. Robert Kelly asked if additional parking spaces can be added to offset the portables. Mr. Barrett commented that would require developing a storm retention area in addition to parking.

A comment was made if community members have spoken and communicated to staff and inform them about where to park. A response was made that is a good discussion to bring during committee deliberation.

V. Public Comments and Questions

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for 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 an anonymous person: She asked if the area above the playfield is feasible for the portables. She noted that she lives across the street from the school at the flat area and noticed people choose to park in the area that is close to the school. She added that enrollment growth will be a long-term problem and would like to see a permanent expansion rather than more portables. She concluded that her main concern was daytime parking.

Comments from Doug Brandeberry: Lives on 45th and his main concern is safety during drop-off and pick-up.

VI. Committee Deliberation

Ms. Sheehan opened the discussions for committee deliberation. She asked the Committee to deliberate on the need for the departure and then discuss on whether to recommend or deny with or without any conditions.

Mr. Tristan Thomte shared that he is in favor of granting the departure. He noted that there was sufficient due diligence done in the street parking analysis and added with the current number of staff and faculty at the school, the parking lot is not at all full and the impact to the neighborhood is minimal. He added that teachers can find different modes of transportation other than driving and parking on-site or in the streets.

Ms. Wightman is in favor of granting the departure with the condition of removing the departure when the portables are removed. She also added that her main concern was the drop off and pick up traffic rather than parking and suggested if the Committee can address this issue as a condition.

Ms. Vadakin is in favor of granting the departure and she agrees with what Ms. Wightman stated.

Ms. Terrible commented that she appreciates Ms. Hughes' comments since she experiences the same situation regarding the impact of parking. Her main concern is the long-term effect of the enrollment growth at the school and if this departure is the best available solution.

Ms. Vadakin asked about the new BEX levy and with the proposed new addition to the school, will the portables be removed. Mr. Barrett noted that one of the goals of the BEX projects is to add capacity and the portables are not an ideal long-term solution. The design will be to add more classrooms and the portables will remain until the addition is completed. Ms. Vadakin asked about the timeline if the voters approve the next levy. Mr. Barrett noted that the levy is for a six-year period and that the list of school projects for the upcoming levy are being reviewed by the school district and are not yet final. Information about the list of potential projects and the upcoming levy can be found at the Seattle School District's website.

A question was asked about the continued increase in enrollment at Madison and if there are any alternatives being considered to accommodate the growth such as more portables on-site or boundary changes. Mr. Barrett commented that he recognized a boundary changes but does not have the information about how this change will affect Madison. He added that the portables are not trying to solve the growth issue.

Mr. Calvano commented that he is in favor of granting the departure with the condition that the departure be removed when the portables are removed.

A comment was made that she agrees with granting the departure with the condition already stated. She also suggested investigation of safety issues around the site as a condition of the departure. Ms. Sheehan commented that every school should have a transportation management plan where the principal and staff identify the pick-up and drop off areas and coordinate with volunteers about safety around the school. This can be a condition that the Committee can recommend.

A comment was made that it is beneficial to recommend SDOT be involved in the process, so they can identify the curb cuts, crosswalks, etc.

Ms. Vadakin commented that she was on the Safety Committee for the school and the challenge was educating the parents on where to do the drop-off and pick-up around the site to ensure the safety of the kids.

A comment was made that at a minimum to have a clear designated crosswalks, curbs and safety zones identified around the school site.

Mr. Kelly commented that it is unfortunate that parents do not want to listen or follow the pick-up or drop-off plan. He noted that he is in favor of granting the departure with conditions.

Ms. Preedy commented that she is in favor of granting the departure with conditions. She noted that the educational adequacy of the portables is much greater and installing portables in the north parking lot is the only possible solution to address the safety of the children.

Mr. Barrett is in favor of granting the departure with conditions. He agrees with the Committee about removing the departure when the portables are removed. He also heard about safety conditions and he noted that there is already a Safety Committee at school and he does not know if adding a condition about safety would encourage parents to cooperate with the plan. He noted that he will communicate the information back to the principal.

Ms. Rachel Huck of SDOT commented that she heard the concerns about safety and parking around the school site and she will bring this information back and see if the site is eligible for traffic measure upgrades. She added that technically no one is allowed to park within 40 ft. of the intersection and she recommended having signs installed.

A comment was made that she prefers no signs because of vandalism but having painted curbs instead. Ms. Huck will check what is SDOT's standards about painted curbs.

Ms. Sheehan suggested for the Committee to recommend SDOT to look at ways of how to minimize and prevent parking conflicts and illegal parking around the school site.

A comment was made suggesting SDOT to look at the intersection around 45th and Hines and 45th and Charlestown for parking and safety measures.

Ms. Sheehan summarized the conditions for granting the departure as follows:

- a. Removal of the departures when the portables are removed;
- b. Requesting SDOT to review the enhanced parking and safety measures around the school site specifically on 45th and Hines and 45th and Charlestown.

Ms. Huck suggested if the School District do the count of the pedestrian crossings and cars during pick-up and drop-off and make recommendations to SDOT based on these counts.

Mr. Barrett suggested to adding the four corners around the school site during pick-up and drop-off for SDOT to review pedestrian safety measures.

Mr. Barrett commented for SDOT to receive the recommendation, will it be possible if SDOT accept the counts done by an independent third party. Ms. Huck answered that SDOT would need the counts on hours of pick-up and drop-off and pedestrian walking on the four corners of the streets.

Ms. Godard asked about the scope of Safe Routes to School, and Ms. Huck noted that SDOT would implement the recommendations of Safe Routes to School.

Mr. Barrett commented if it is SDOT's standards to paint the curbs so far back at the corner of the intersection, and Ms. Huck responded that she will go back and check the standard procedure.

Ms. Sheehan summarized that one of the condition is to request SDOT to review enhanced parking and pedestrian safety at a minimum at all four corners of the school perimeter including 45th and Charlestown.

VI. Committee Recommendations

Ms. Sheehan opened the discussion for Committee recommendations and noted that the Committee had deliberated on the conditions and the departure being requested.

Departure: Reduced on-site parking

There was a motion to recommend granting the reduced on-site parking departure with the following conditions; and it was seconded.

1. Removal of the parking departure when the classroom portables are removed;
2. Requesting SDOT to review parking and pedestrian safety at a minimum at all four corners of the school perimeter including 45th and Charleston.

By show of hands, a quorum being present, and the majority of those present voted unanimously in favor of granting the requested departure, the motion passed.

VII. Adjournment and scheduling of next meeting

Ms. Sheehan mentioned that she will send out the draft recommendation report for feedback and comments as soon as possible.

No further business being before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.