



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

**Application Number:** 3030872-SD  
**Applicant Name:** Alex Rolluda, Rolluda Architects for Seattle Public Schools  
**Address of Proposal:** 3429 45th Ave SW

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

School Departure Process to provide less than the required off-street parking. (Madison Middle School)

The following approvals are required:

**Establishment of Development Standard Departure for Public Schools** (Chapter 23.79) Seattle Municipal Code to approve or condition the following departures:

1. To allow less than required off-street parking (6 fewer parking stalls) (SMC 23.51B.002 G)

**BACKGROUND**

**Site and Location**

Madison Middle School sits in the northern portion of West Seattle in the Admiral neighborhood. Madison Middle School is located between 45<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenues SW, and between SW Hinds and SW Spokane Streets. Madison Middle School's site is divided by a steep slope running north-south at roughly the site's midpoint. The original building and addition sit at the top of the slope to the east and the athletic/track field sit down the slope to the west. It had a major remodel and addition in 2005.

**Zoning**

The school is located in a Single Family zone (SF 5000). Surrounding zoning is Single Family SF 5000.



### Proposal Information

Seattle Public Schools submitted a request for a departure from one (1) Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Development Standards to provide 56 on-site parking stalls in lieu of 62 on-site parking stalls to accommodate the placement of portables at Madison Middle School located at 3429 45th Ave SW. Madison Middle School enrollment has been increasing yearly and has exceeded the building's capacity. Enrollment projections for the school year 2018-19 estimate another increase in enrollment of an additional 110 students.

It is anticipated an additional 4 portable classrooms will be needed to accommodate the increased enrollment. Due to the constraints of the site, two portables will need to be installed in the existing north parking lot which will reduce the school's required minimum of on-site parking stalls. Seattle Public Schools is proposing to add 4 portable classroom buildings in the NE area of the school site. The north parking lot of Madison Middle School will have 2 portables while the other 2 portables will be in the grassy terrace area between the playfield and the loading dock service drive. The added classrooms are being installed to meet the projected increase in enrollment for the 2018-19 school year. The portable buildings are 28' x 32' (896 square feet) each and will be painted tan with white trim.

Enrollment projections beyond 2018-2019 show continued increase and continued need for the portables. Although the timeframe for removal of the portables is unknown, the Seattle Public Schools Capital Planning is evaluating long-term solutions to capacity at Madison Middle School. Information on the project proposal is available in the electronic file at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/>.

### Previous SEPA Related Actions

The District has exercised its prerogative to act as lead agency for the SEPA review. SEPA documents are available on the Seattle Public Schools websites.

### Environmentally Critical Areas

Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) review is required for building permit applications. SMC 25.09. ECA review is required. Based on a review of the submitted information and the City GIS system, SDCI concludes that the ECA Steep Slope Critical Areas on and adjacent to the project site have been created by previous legal grading associated with site development and right-of-way improvements. Consequently, the project qualifies for Relief From Prohibition On Steep Slope Development, as described in SMC 25.09.090 B2b. An ECA Steep Slope Area Variance, or an Exception, is not required for this application. Except as described herein, the remaining Environmentally Critical Areas requirements apply.

### Public Comment

Comment letters were received during the official public comment period. Letters can be viewed in the public electronic file at the following link <http://www.seattle.gov/SDCI/> under the project number, MUP project 3030872. The public comments addressed concerns for decreased amount of parking, traffic flow in the area, and school attendance planning.

### Development Standard Departure

The Seattle School District submitted a request for departure from Seattle Municipal Code Development Standards for the portable classroom placements which would reduce the required parking on site. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is charged with administering the School Departure process per SMC 23.79.004. DON formed the required Advisory Committee of eight voting members with a City staff non-voting Chair. The final Development Standard Departure Report is available in the public electronic file at the following link <http://www.seattle.gov/SDCI/> under the project number.

### **ANALYSIS – Development Standard Departure for Public Schools**

The Development Standard Departure process is conducted pursuant to the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code sections 23.79.002-012. An Advisory Committee was convened, public comment received, and a written recommendation to the Director of SDCI prepared. The Director prepares an analysis and decision per SMC section 23.79.010. The Director will determine the amount of departure to be allowed as well as mitigation measures to be imposed. The Director’s Decision shall be based on an evaluation of the factors set forth in Section 23.79.008 C, the majority recommendations and minority reports of the Advisory Committee, comments at the public meeting(s) and other comments from the public. If the Director modifies the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the reasons for the modification shall be put forth in writing.

Section 23.79.008 directs the Advisory Committee to “gather and evaluate public comment”, and to “recommend maximum departures which may be allowed for each development standard from which a departure has been requested”. It states, “Departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the objectives and intent of the City’s Land Use Code....., to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings”. The Advisory Committee is directed to consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors in SMC 23.79.008 C 1:

- a. *Relationship to Surrounding Areas: The Advisory Committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:*

1. *Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;*
2. *Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;*
3. *Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*
4. *Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*
5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

*More flexibility in the development standards may be allowed if the impacts on the surrounding community are anticipated to be negligible or are reduced by mitigation; whereas, a minimal amount or no departure from development standards may be allowed if the anticipated impacts are significant and cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.*

- b. *Need for Departure: The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departures may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas, a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.*

#### Departure Request and Advisory Committee Recommendation

Seattle School District submitted a request for a departure from Seattle Municipal Code Development Standards to reduce the amount of onsite parking due to installation of new portable classrooms.

The City initiated the Development Standard Departure Process, pursuant to SMC 23.44.006E, 23.51B and 23.79. The code requires that the Department of Neighborhoods convene an Advisory Committee (Development Standard Advisory Committee) when the School District proposes a departure from the development standards identified under the code. These standards are referred to as the "zoning code".

The purposes of the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee are: 1) to gather public comment and evaluate the proposed departures for consistency with the objectives and intent of the City's land use policies to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings; and 2) to develop a report and recommendation to the City Department of Construction and Inspections from the Department of Neighborhoods.

Following completion of the Advisory Committee Report and its transmittal to the City's Department of Construction and Inspections, SDCI, will publish the Director's Decision. The Director of the Department of Construction and Inspections will determine the extent of departure from established development standards which may be allowed, as well as identify all mitigating measures which may be required. The Director's Decision is appealable to the City hearing examiner.

The Department of Neighborhoods sent notices to residents within 600 feet of the proposed new school and to a list of individuals and organizations that had shown interest in other community issues requesting self-nominations for membership on the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee. The Committee was formed and composed of eight voting members with a City staff non-voting Chairperson.

In order to accommodate the educational program for this project, the District requested the following departure from the Seattle Municipal Code:

**Departure #1 – To allow a reduction of on-site parking.**(SMC 23.51B.002 G) –The code requires the District to provide 62 parking spaces. The District requested a departure to allow 6 fewer spaces for a total of 56 parking spaces on site.

Madison Middle School enrollment has been increasing yearly. Enrollment projections for the school year 2018-19 is for another increase in enrollment of additional students. The added classrooms are being installed to meet the projected increase in enrollment for the 2018-19 school year.

It is anticipated an additional four (4) portable classrooms will be needed to accommodate the increased student enrollment. Seattle Public Schools is proposing to add an additional four (4) portable classroom buildings in the north area of the site, two in landscaped area (which do not cause need for a parking departure), and two in the north parking lot which cause a reduction in parking amount.

The Seattle Municipal Code intent is to grant departures from the requirements of the Municipal Code to accommodate the educational needs of the programs to be located in single family zoned neighborhoods. The Seattle School District has demonstrated that it cannot accommodate the educational program necessary without granting departures for reduced on-site parking. Therefore, the Advisory Committee considered the criteria for departure approval.

**Departure #1 – Less than Required Off-street Parking SMC 23.79.008 C 1a**

- 1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area were considered by the committee, and they did have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking in the neighborhood, which were addressed in the recommended conditions.
- 5) Impacts on housing and open space were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on housing and open space.

A significant portion of committee deliberation was spent discussing whether the installation of portables will address the problem of over enrollment. Some committee members questioned the school districts decision to use portables rather than addressing the issue. The district did share

that an addition to Madison Middle School is proposed for the upcoming schools levy. This concern is reflected in the first condition below, limiting the placement of the portables. Near neighbors were concerned that teachers and parents coming to the school would park primarily only on the streets adjacent to the school, causing them to bear most of the burden of traffic impacts.

The Committee understood that the removal of six on-site parking stalls will not create significant new traffic impacts that will negatively impact the neighborhood. The committee focused on how they can have a positive impact on the challenges the neighborhood is currently experiencing.

While parking is not an immediate concern, vehicles passing through the neighborhood and parking illegally in intersections and crosswalks is of concern, especially as children are walking to and from the school. The committee would like to ensure, regardless of the number of parking stalls on-site, that parents, students, and neighbors can safely travel through the neighborhood and drivers obey the posted laws.

#### Need for Departure SMC 23.79.008 C 1b

The Committee members spent most of their time discussing whether installing these portables is addressing the issue at hand, which is over enrollment at Seattle Public Schools as well as the parking and safety impacts on the immediate neighbors from those additional cars coming and leaving the school. Overall the committee agreed that students need classrooms on-site and the long-term issue of enrollment would be addressed in the upcoming schools levy.

After consideration of the above, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1 – That the departure to allow less than required off-street parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools without modifications and with the following conditions:

- a. Removal of the departures when the portables are removed;
- b. SDOT review the enhanced parking and safety measures around the perimeter of the school site and cross streets, specifically on 45th and Hinds and 45th and Charlestown.

#### Director's Analysis

The Director's decision shall be based on an evaluation of the factors set forth in Section 23.79.008 C 1 a and b, the majority recommendations and minority reports of the Advisory Committee, comments at the public meeting, and other comments from the public.

Section 23.79.008 C states:

*a. Relationship to Surrounding Areas: The Advisory Committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:*

- 1. Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area*

2. *Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale.*
3. *Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*
4. *Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*
5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

**Departure #1– To allow a reduction in on-site parking. (SMC 23.51B.002 G).**

The land use code requires the District to provide 62 on-site parking spaces for this project. The District requested a departure to allow 56 parking spaces on site, for a 6-parking space departure.

The departure request to reduce the parking on-site by was considered by the Departure Advisory Committee. The Committee members focused on the anticipated increased impacts to traffic and parking in the area and on general traffic and pedestrian circulation with special thought to minimizing accidents and conflicts. The Director agrees that the additional students will increase traffic and parking impacts at the site. However, the applicant, Seattle Public Schools, has stated that the portable classrooms are needed to best serve students.

The Director agrees with the Committee that there is a need for the Departure per SMC 23.79.008C1b and agrees with the Committee that there will be impacts to traffic and parking due to the portable placement and consequent reduced parking spaces, criteria 4 of SMC 23.79.008C1a4.

The Director accepts the Committee recommendation to approve the departure with conditions. The conditions are slightly modified to include the SDOT Safe Routes to Schools committee who is practiced at planning for increased safety for the school community.

After consideration of the Departure Advisory Committee majority recommendations and minority reports, public and agency comments, the Director recommends that the departure to reduce the parking requirement be granted with conditions listed at the end of this document.

- b. Need for Departure: The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departure may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or an integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas, a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.*

The Committee discussed the overall need for a departure (SMC 23.79.008C1b) as part of its deliberations. The Seattle Municipal Code provides for granting departures from the requirements of the Municipal Code to accommodate educational needs of programs to be located in proposed buildings. In this case, the Seattle School District stated that placing portables in parking spaces helps further serve the district's students' educational needs.

The Director balances departure requests through criteria based on the relationship to surrounding areas with need for development standards departures to meet program requirements and finds that the departure request should be allowed.

**DECISION-DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The school development standard departure, to allow a reduction of on-site parking, is **GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS**.

**CONDITIONS –SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

*Prior to building permit final certificate of occupancy*

1. SDOT and the Safe Routes to Schools Committee should evaluate the perimeter streets and how students and staff safely arrive and leave the school, and should consider raised crosswalks, signage throughout the neighborhood alerting drivers to speed limits, one-way streets, etc. and should increase parking enforcement.
2. The reduction in parking, approved in this Decision, will expire when the two portables located in the parking lot are removed.

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

Date: July 2, 2018

HG:drm

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT**

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance”. (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance” on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner’s decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered “approved for issuance” following the Council’s decision.

The “approved for issuance” date marks the beginning of the three-year life of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by SDCI within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a two-year life. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at [prc@seattle.gov](mailto:prc@seattle.gov) or to our message line at 206-684-8467.