



# Aki Kurose Middle School

Seattle Public Schools

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## Departures Presentation

3928 S Graham St  
SDCI Project # 3042363-SD



# INTEGRUS

A COLLABORATION OF YGH & INTEGRUS ARCHITECTURE

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## Land Acknowledgment

*We would like to show our respect and acknowledge the Puget Sound Coast Salish peoples, past and present, on whose lands we gather today. The Suquamish Tribe and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe are the federally recognized Indian tribes of greater Seattle, under the treaties of Point Elliott and Medicine Creek.*

# Aki Kurose Middle School

## Project Scope:

The project scope includes the comprehensive modernization of the existing building and the construction of a new two-story classroom wing to replace demolished Unit A. The modernization will feature full system replacements and extensive site improvements. The new/modernized school will support 1,000 students to address projected growth.

## Milestones:

Anticipated Start of Construction: Summer 2026

Anticipated Occupancy: Fall 2028



# Aki Kurose Middle School

## Presentation Contents

- + Public School Departures Overview
- + Project Overview
- + Departures Requested:
  - #1 Lot Coverage
  - #2 Building Height
  - #3 Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity
  - #4 Changing Image Message Board Sign
- + Public Comments





# Public School Departures Overview

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# Purpose & Intent

- Most schools are in residential neighborhoods, the land use code does not include a “school zone”.
- Renovation and additions often will not meet the underlying zoning; therefore, the public schools can request exemptions, known as departures, from the land use code.
- This committee is an opportunity for neighbors and the surrounding community to give the City feedback whether to allow departures.
- The committee can recommend to grant, grant with condition, or deny the requested departures.



# Evaluation Criteria – Consistency

## (SMC 23.79.008)

Departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the City's Land Use Code, including the rezone evaluation criteria in Chapter 23.34 of the Seattle Municipal Code, to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings.



# Evaluation Criteria – Relationship

## (SMC 23.79.008)

In reaching recommendations, the advisory committee shall consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

**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.





## Evaluation Criteria – Need

(SMC 23.79.008)

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.



# Meeting Process

- Robert's Rules of Order – DON Staff serves as non-voting Chair
- Presentations from School and SDOT (if necessary).
- Public Comment.
- Committee Deliberation – reference criteria (SMC 23.79.008)
- Vote on each departure individually



# Schedule

TBD, Committee Formed (90-day clock starts to conduct meetings)

TBD – First Meeting

TBD – 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting, if needed

TBD – 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, if needed

Recommendation report due to director of SDCI (drafted by DON, with the committee's final approval):

If 1 Meeting = TBD (30 days after first meeting)

If 2-3 Meetings = TBD (90 days after first meeting)

TBD, SDCI Director issues decision





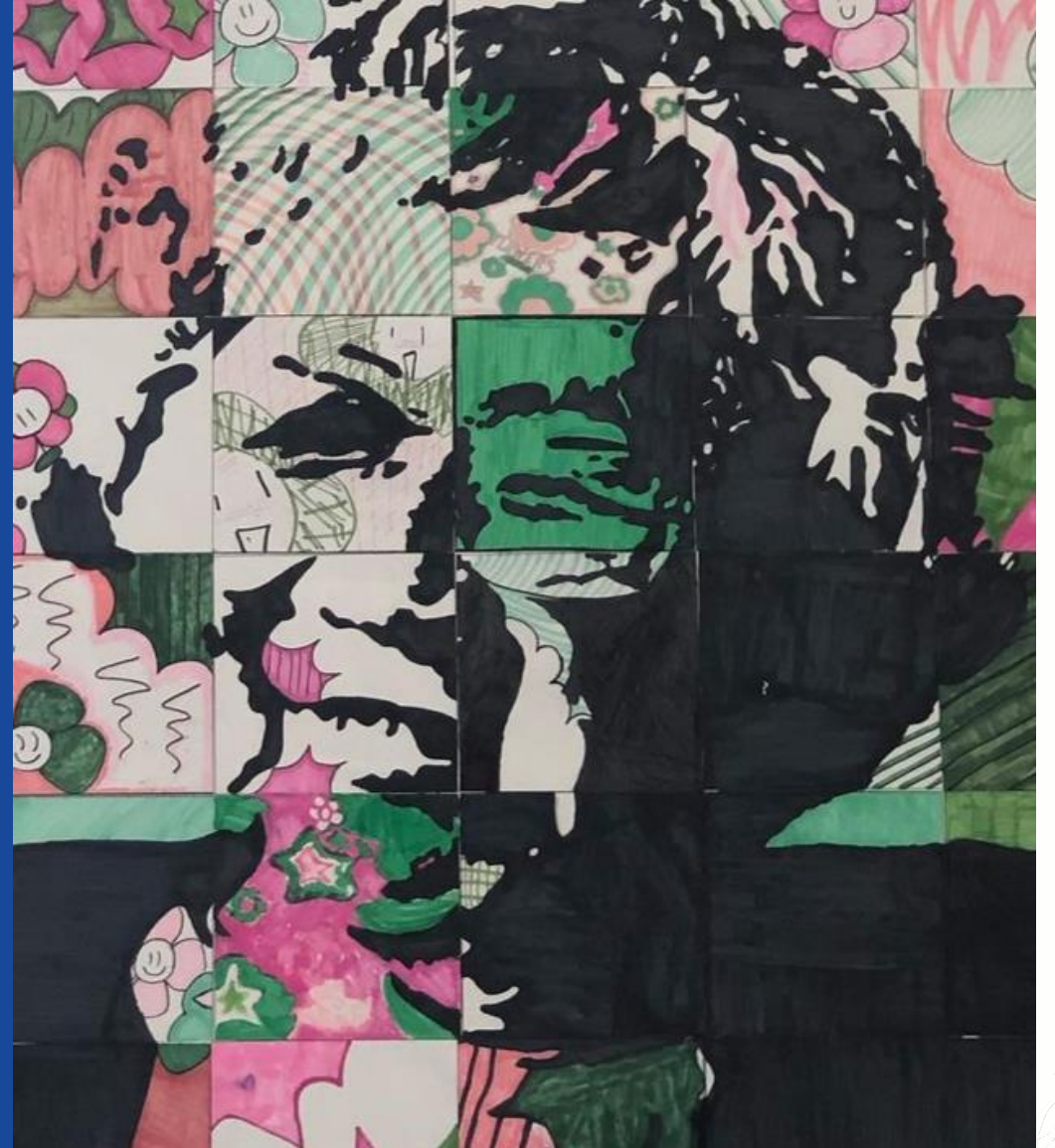
# Advisory Committee Recommendations

Recommendations must include consideration of the interrelationship among height, setback and landscaping standards when departures from height or setback are proposed.

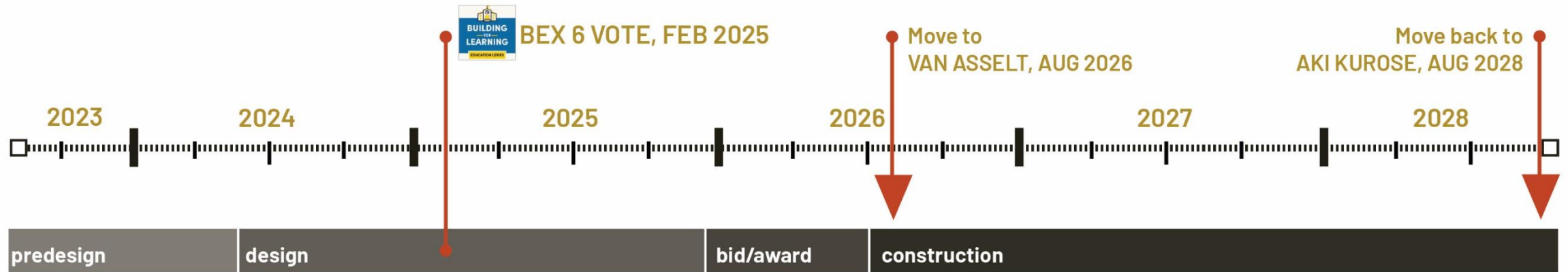


# Project Overview

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# Schedule





# Engagement

The project team met with numerous groups throughout the pre-design and early design process (October 2023 to date). Engagement with these groups is ongoing, and will continue throughout the remaining design and construction phases.

- |                               |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ● School Community            | ● Community Ambassadors             | ● Culturally Responsive Design Team      |
| ● School Design Advisory Team | ● Student Engagement                | ● SPS Teaching & Learning and Facilities |
| ● Community Cafes             | ● Community Centers / Organizations | ● Community Partners (24 partnerships)   |



# Project Vision and Goals

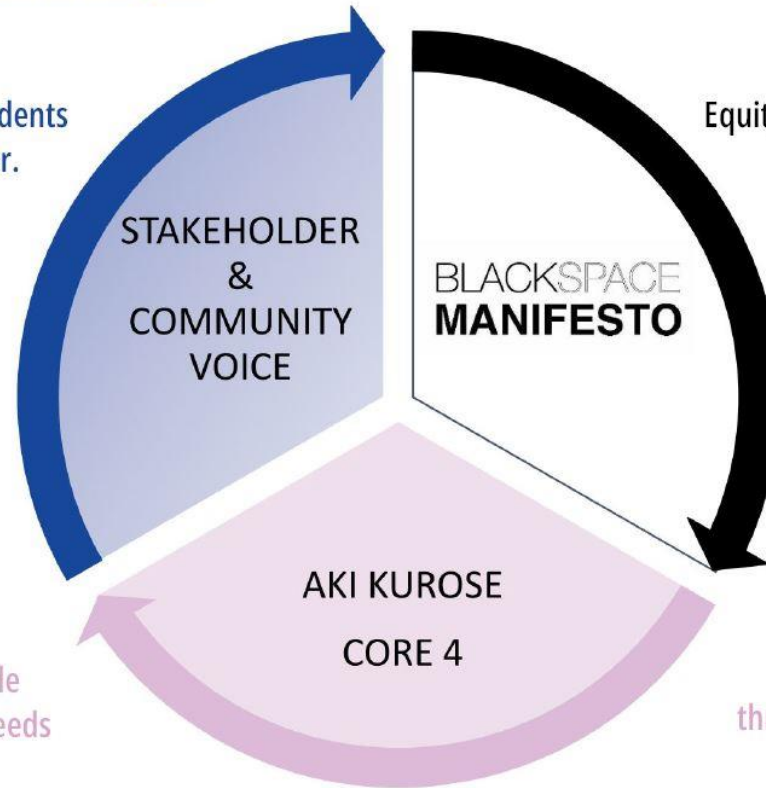
Building and site that welcome family and community members so that they can support student learning and well-being.

A generous welcoming entry where students can be greeted by adults and each other.

Ample natural light and outdoor views without compromising comfort.

Inviting, warm, and beautiful and conveys that students are valued, celebrated and loved.

Spaces and systems should be adaptable as educational practices and student needs evolve.





# Site Context

## Neighborhood

Aki Kurose Middle School is in the Hillman City neighborhood, in a Neighborhood Residential zone (NR3). Brighton Playfield, a Seattle Parks facility, is located directly to the north. The main entry is located on South Graham Street, which connects to Martin Luther King Jr. Way S and Rainer Ave S, where there is commercial activity as well as Metro bus stops.

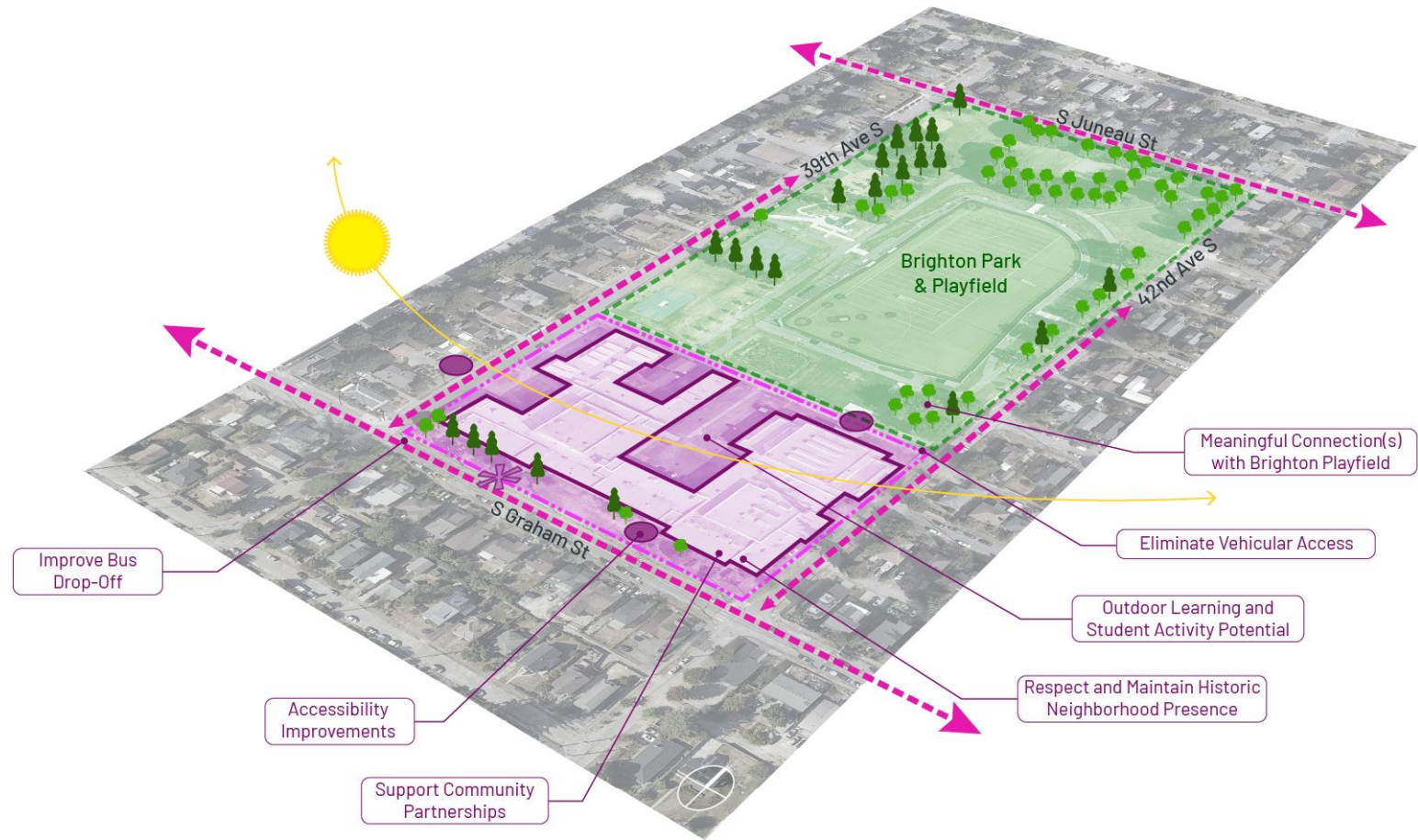




# Site Analysis

## Existing School

The existing school has a strong historic presence along South Graham Street but does not have an accessible entry. Buses pick up and drop off on the north and south sides of the site; safety would be improved by consolidation. The school utilizes Brighton Playfield for PE and lunch periods. There is potential to provide more outdoor space for students on the site in the existing main courtyard, which is currently paved.

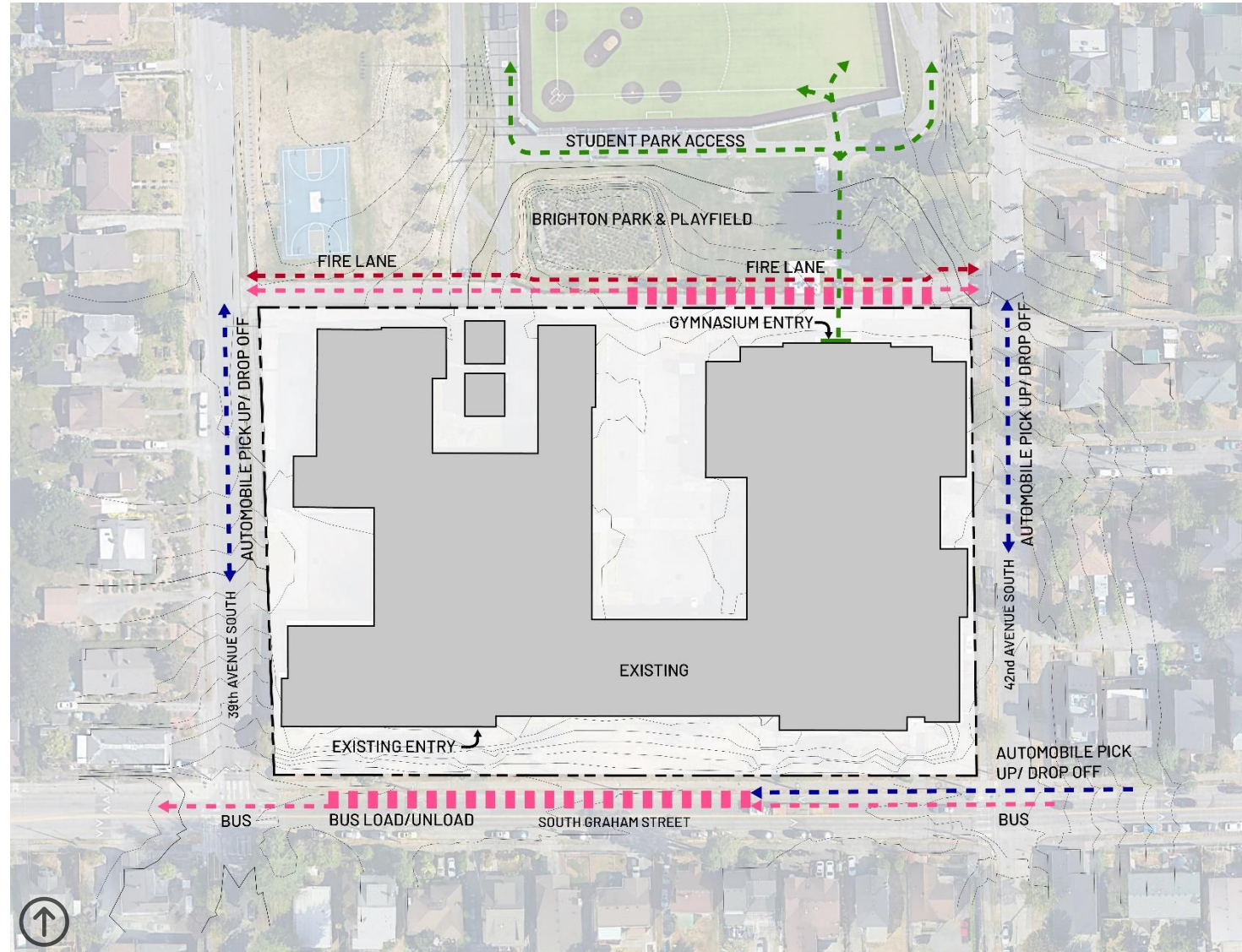


# Site Analysis

## Existing Circulation & Access

Bus loading and unloading is split between S Graham St and the paved lane on the Brighton Playfield property. Informal parking at the center of the site is also accessed via the paved lane. Automobile drop-off happens around the site. The main entry is the west entry on S Graham St; it is not accessible.

- BUS
- BUS LOAD / UNLOAD
- AUTOMOBILE LOAD / UNLOAD
- FIRE LANE
- STUDENT PARK ACCESS

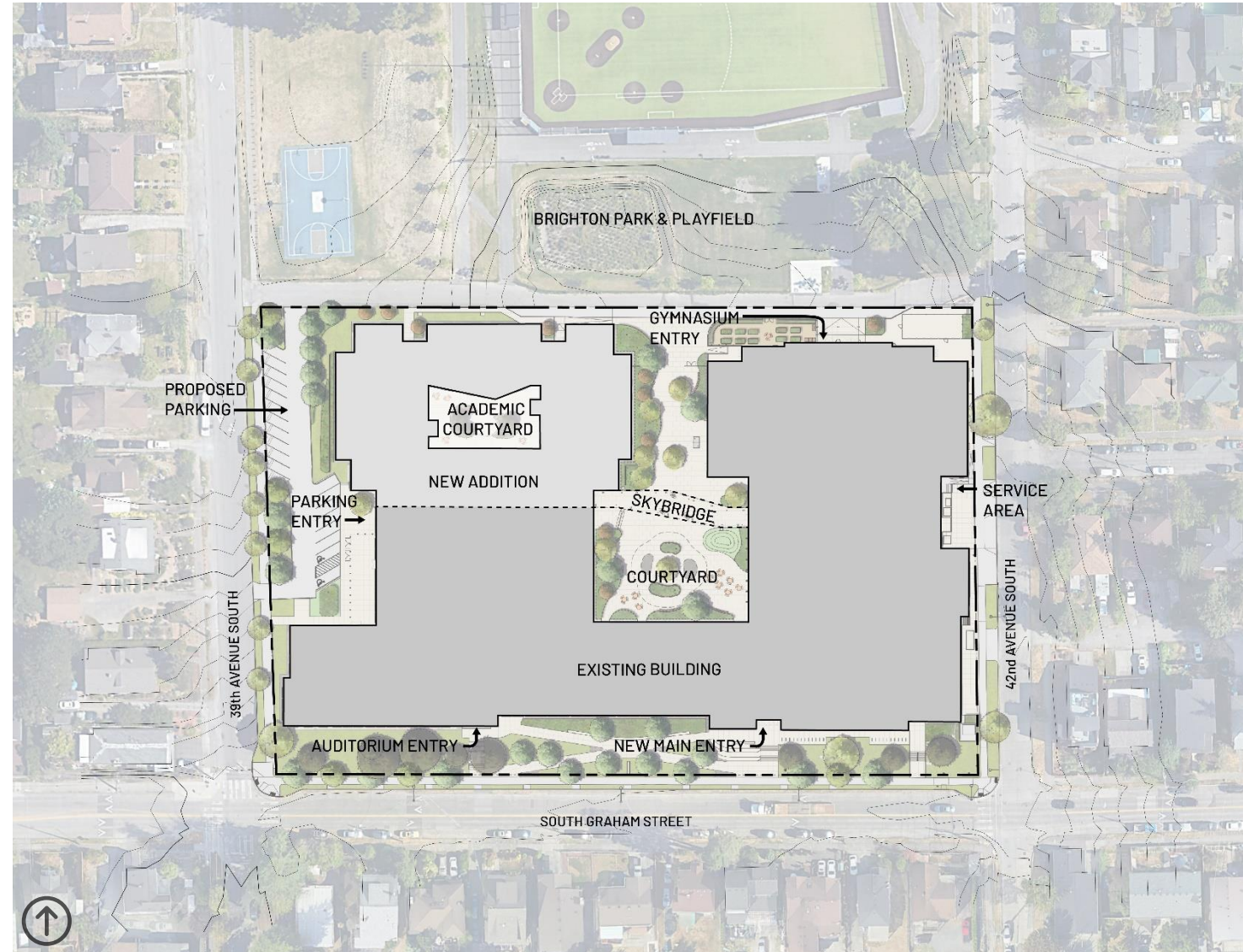




# Proposed Design

## Proposed Site Plan

The main entry is relocated to the east side of the site, with accessible pathways to both entries on S Graham St. The central courtyard is utilized for student activities, with a skybridge and covered walkway linking the commons and most of the classrooms. A new two-story addition replaces Unit A at the northwest corner of the site and contains classrooms and associated program areas; it is organized around a protected academic courtyard. The first-floor footprint (lot coverage) and square footage of the building are increased to meet the SPS MS Educational Specifications.



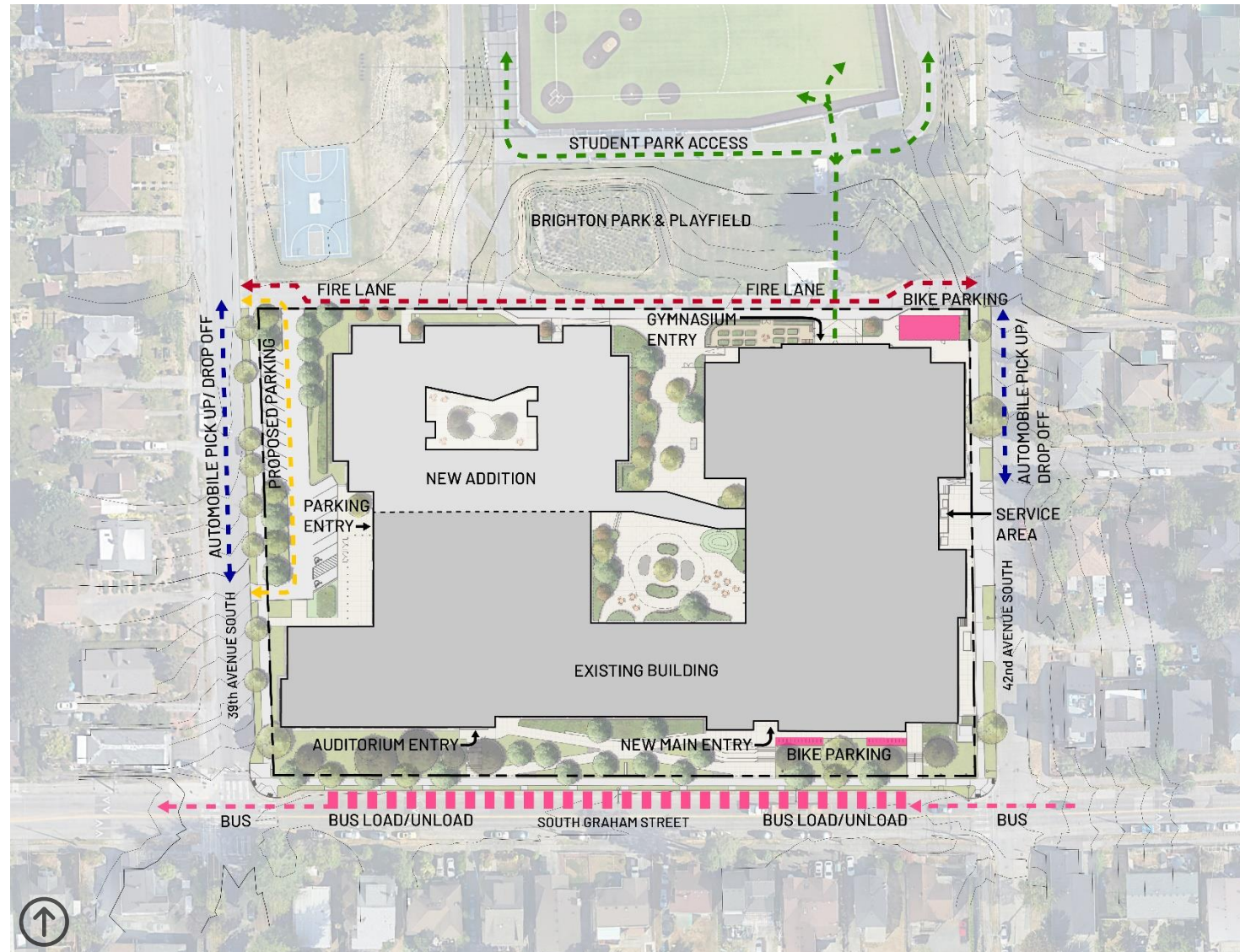


# Proposed Site Circulation

## Circulation & Access

Bus loading is consolidated along S Graham St, where both entries will be accessible. Long-term bike parking is in a covered, enclosed structure at the NE corner of the site, while short-term bike parking is located adjacent to the main entry. Parking is relocated to the NW portion of the site.

- BUS
- BUS LOAD / UNLOAD
- AUTOMOBILE LOAD / UNLOAD
- PARKING
- FIRE LANE
- STUDENT PARK ACCESS





# Trees – Project Impact, Including New Trees

## West side of site: 39<sup>th</sup> Ave S:

8 street trees to remain, 10 new trees added on site.

## East side of site: 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S:

2 street trees to be removed due to arborist evaluation of condition and conflict with street improvements, 3 street trees to remain.

## North side of site: Brighton Playfield:

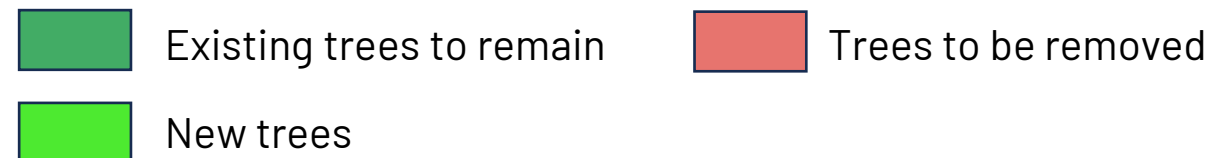
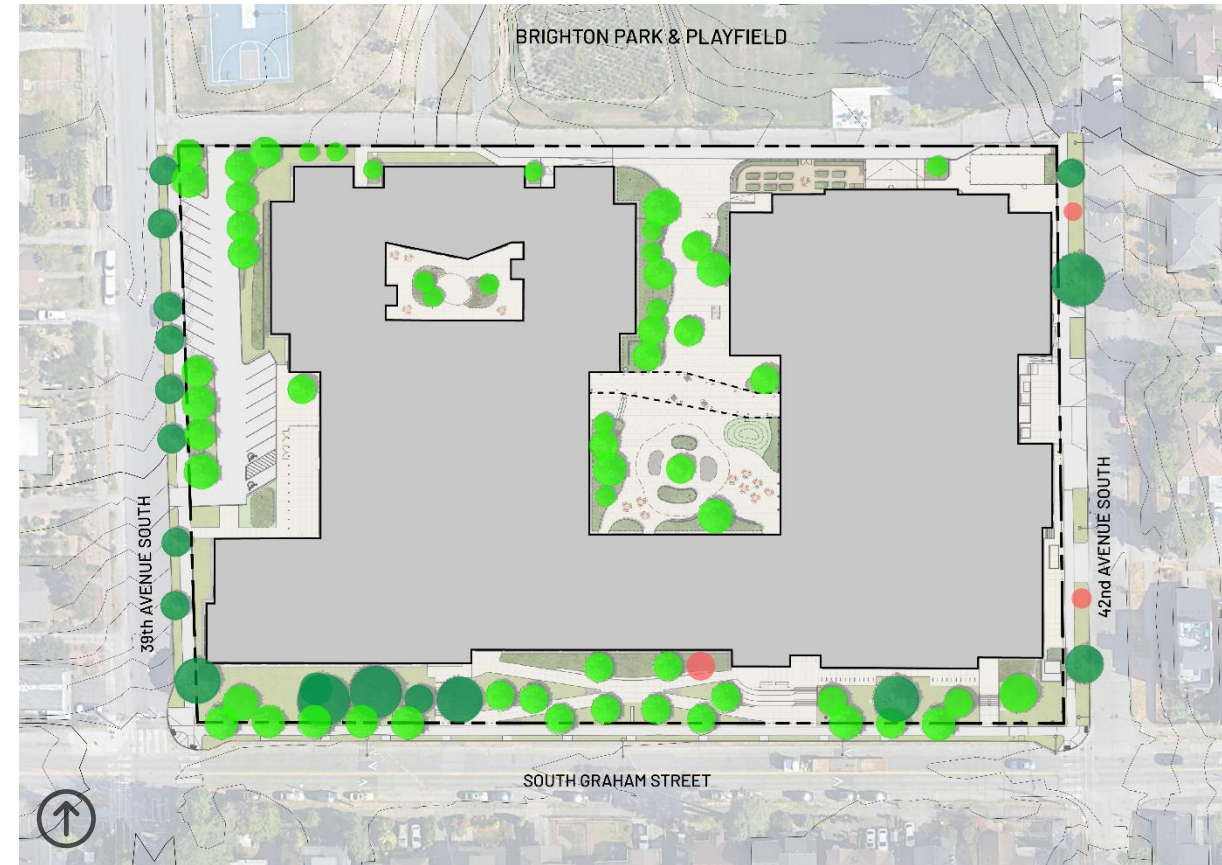
4 new trees on site.

## South side of site: S Graham Street:

1 tree to be removed on site due to arborist evaluation of their condition, 7 trees to remain, 21 new trees on site.

## Site Interior, Courtyards:

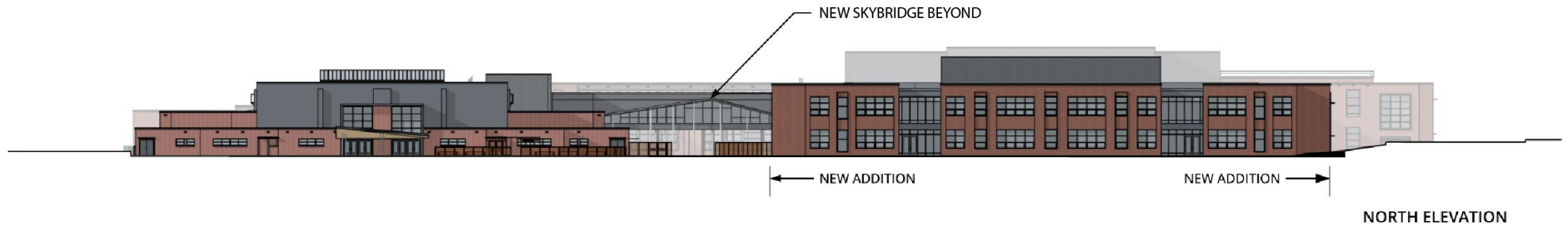
19 new trees.



# Proposed Elevations



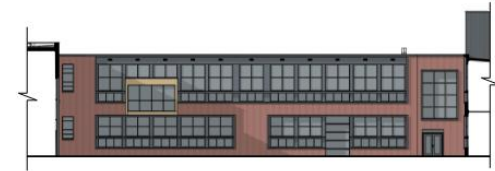
# Proposed Elevations



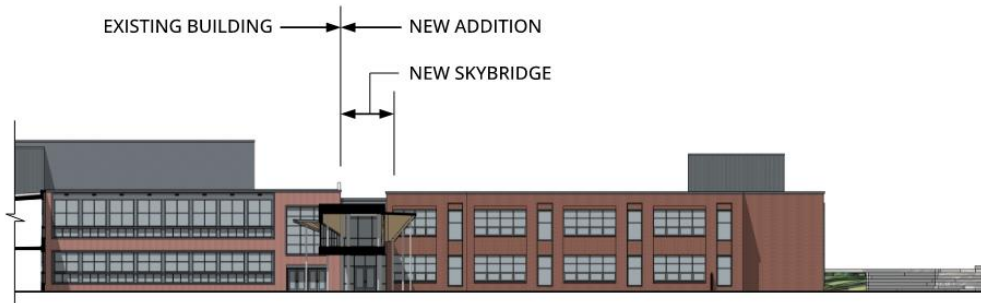
# Proposed Elevations



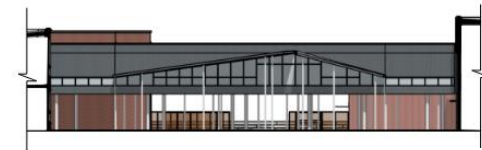
COURTYARD - WEST ELEVATION



COURTYARD - NORTH ELEVATION



COURTYARD - EAST ELEVATION



COURTYARD SKY BRIDGE - SOUTH ELEVATION







Preliminary View from Graham Street

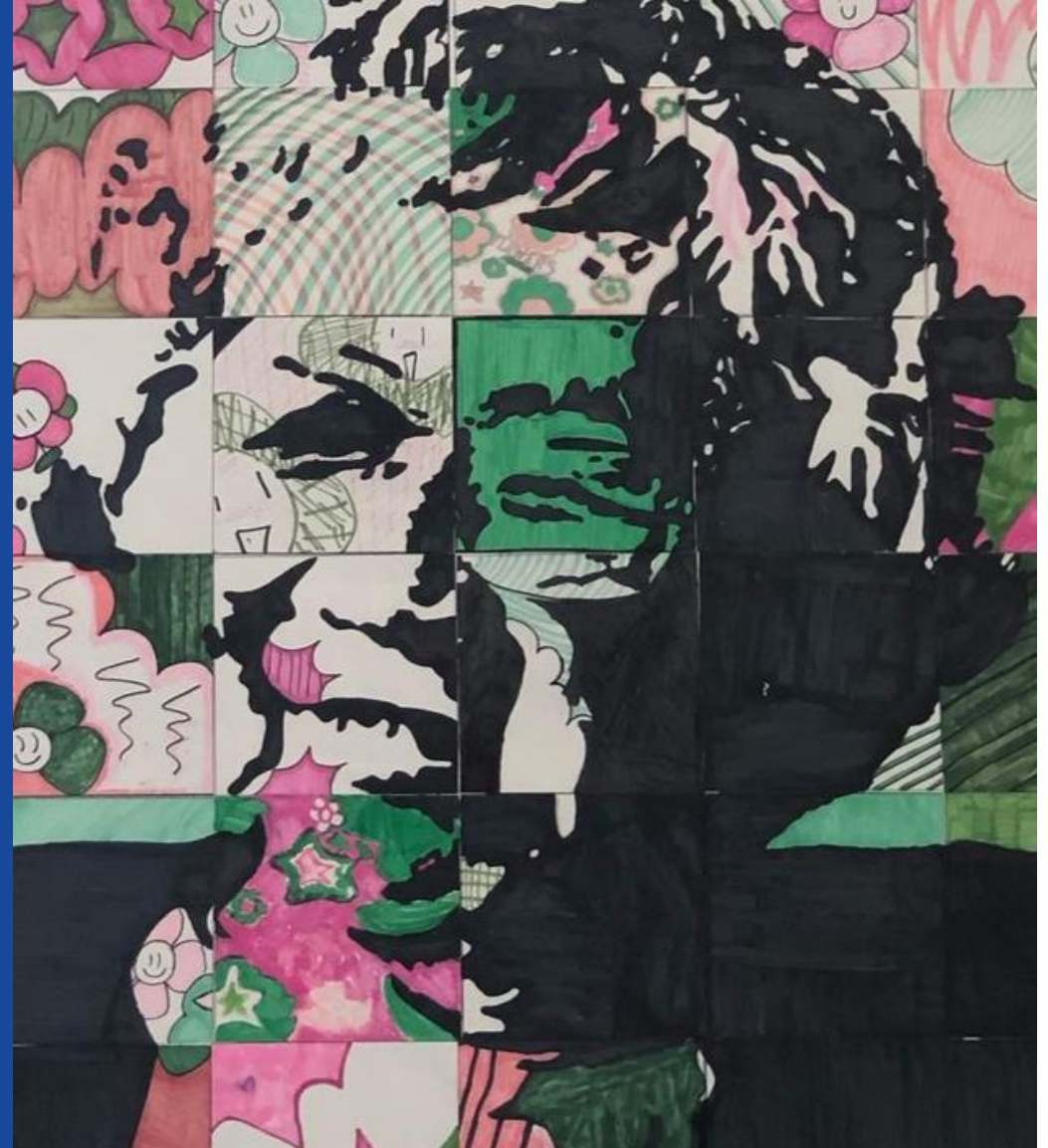


# Departures

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Departures Requested Summary:

- #1 Lot Coverage
- #2 Building Height
- #3 Bicycle Parking (Long Term) Quantity
- #4 Changing Image Message Board Sign



# Requested Departure #1: Lot Coverage

SMC 23.51B.002.C.2.: For new public school construction and additions to existing public school structures on existing public school sites, the maximum lot coverage permitted is the greater of the following:

- a. The lot coverage permitted in subsection 23.51.B.002.C.1; or
- b. The lot coverage of the former school structures on the site, provided that the height of the new structure or portion of structure is no greater than that of the former structures when measured according to Section 23.86.006.F, and at least 50 percent of the footprint of the new principal structure is constructed on a portion of the lot formerly occupied by the footprint of the former principal structure.

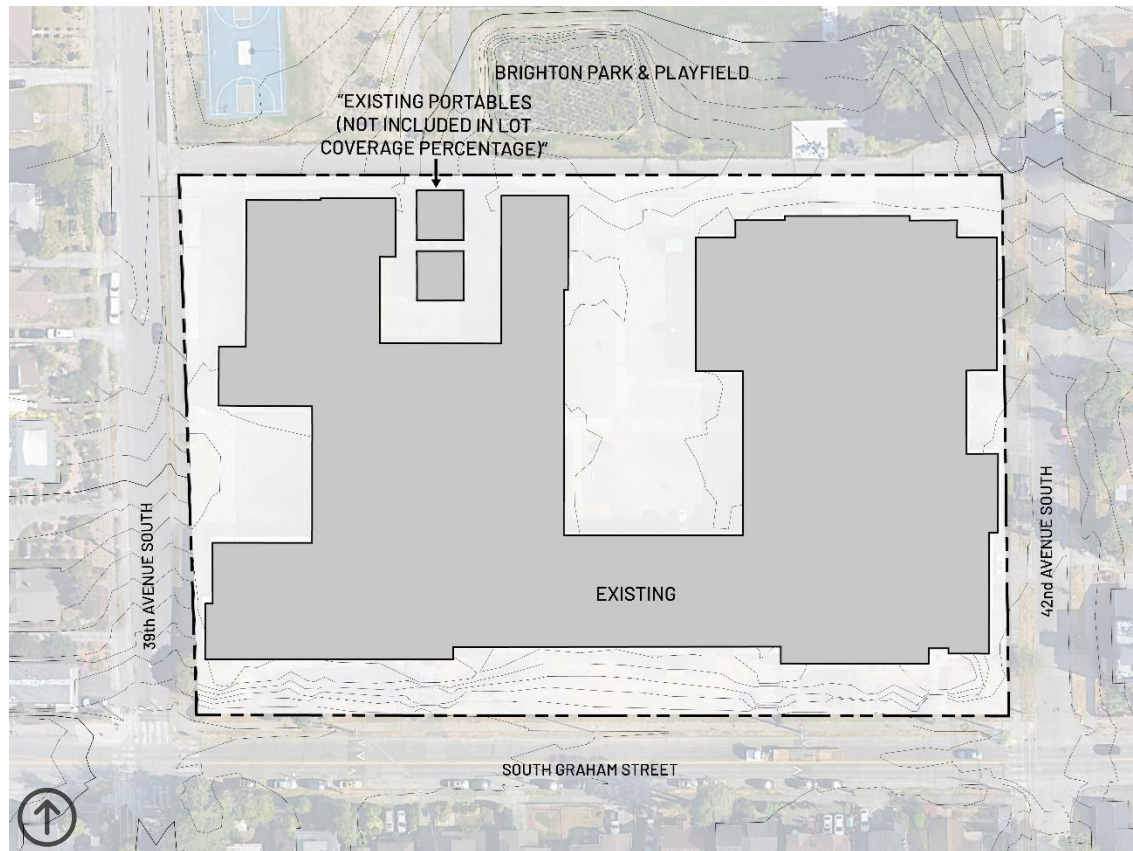
The lot coverage permitted in subsection a. is 35% and the lot coverage of the existing school structures on the site per subsection b. is **58.6%** The proposed lot coverage is **64.6%** for a **departure of 6%**.



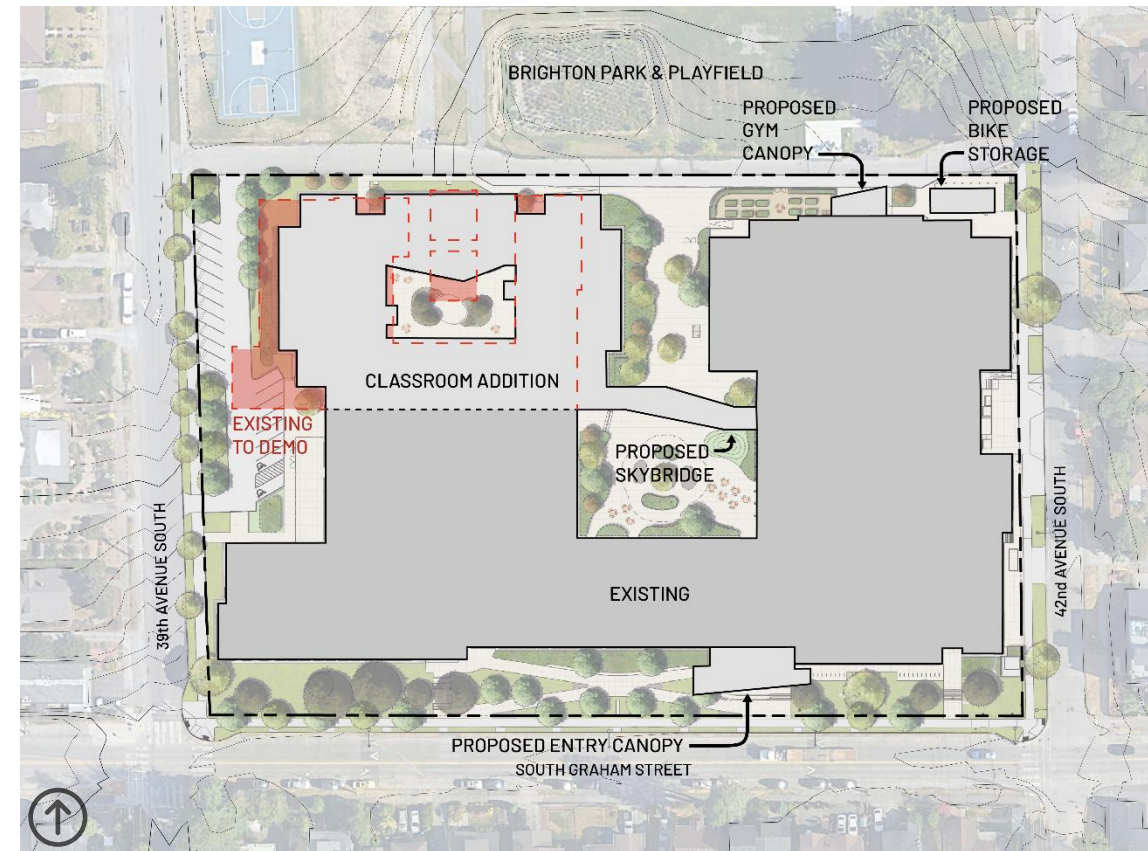


# Requested Departure #1: Lot Coverage

Existing Lot Coverage: 58.6%



Proposed Lot Coverage: 64.6%



# Requested Departure #1: Lot Coverage

## Rationale

The addition replaces an existing one-story wing of classrooms and portables (which occupy an existing outdoor courtyard making it unusable for students). The new addition adds classrooms to the school, eliminates the need for portables and creates an internal academic courtyard for student enrichment. Although the addition increases lot coverage, the east building setback is significantly increased reducing the appearance of bulk and adds landscaped visual space for the neighborhood along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

The project proposes the addition of canopy areas at the new main entry and the gym entry. These canopies provide a welcoming “front porch” for arriving students and community members to gather and engage the outdoor open spaces. The canopies are minimized structurally and unenclosed to reduce visual impacts of bulk for the neighborhood.

A secured bicycle parking pavilion provides an opportunity for long-term bicycle storage which does not currently exist on the site.



## Requested Departure #2: Building Height

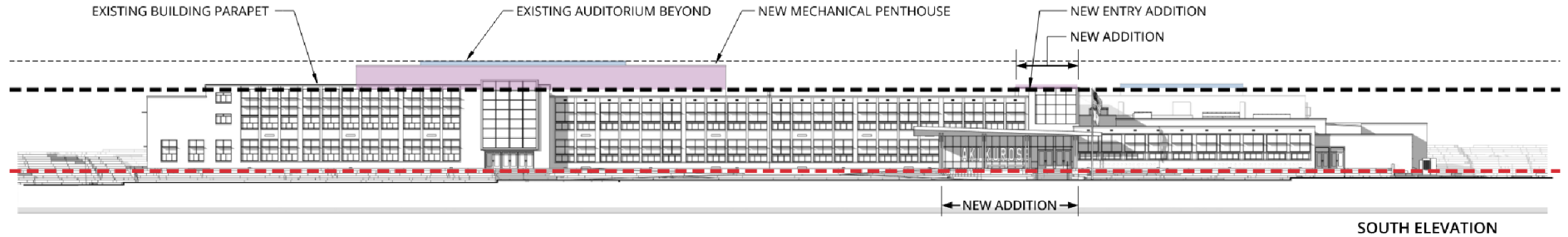
SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c.: For additions to existing public schools on existing public school sites, the maximum height permitted is the height of the existing school or 35 feet plus 15 feet for a pitched roof, whichever is greater.

**The proposed maximum building height of the addition is 47' above average grade, for a departure of 12'.** The over-height areas are mechanical penthouses stepped in front of the faces of the 2-story building addition and existing building. In addition, there is a small over-height area at the new 2-story volume at the new main entry.





# Requested Departure #2: Building Height



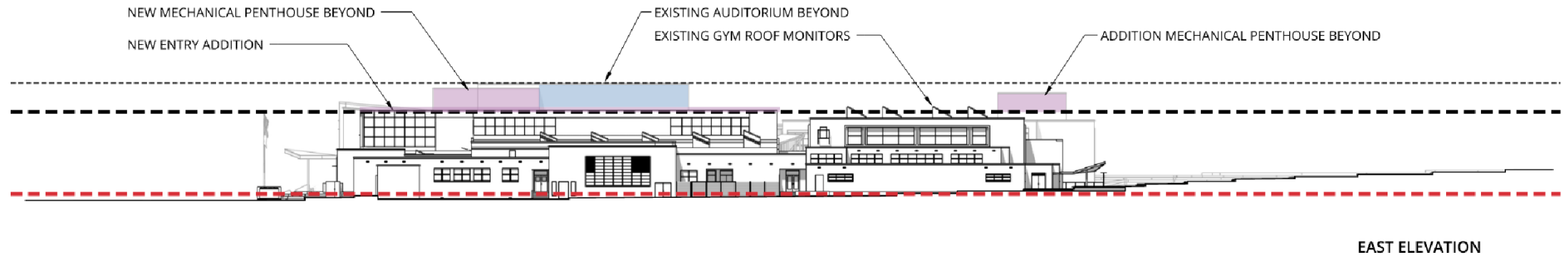
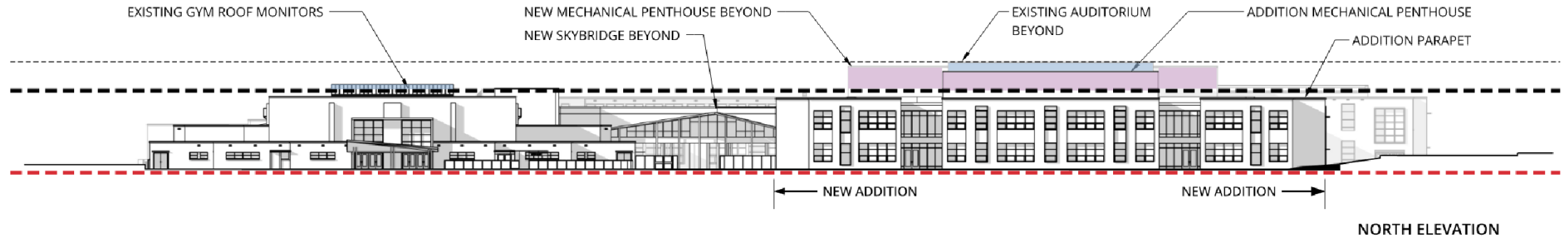
## KEY

- AVG. EXISTING GRADE
- 35' MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT ABOVE AVG. EXISTING GRADE

- REQUESTED DEPARTURE HEIGHT : 12' 47' ABOVE AVG. EXISTING GRADE
- AREA ABOVE 35' BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

- EXISTING BUILDING NOT SUBJECT TO 35' BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

# Requested Departure #2: Building Height



## KEY





- AVG. EXISTING GRADE
- 35' MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT ABOVE AVG. EXISTING GRADE

- REQUESTED DEPARTURE HEIGHT : 12' 47' ABOVE AVG. EXISTING GRADE
- AREA ABOVE 35' BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

- EXISTING BUILDING NOT SUBJECT TO 35' BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

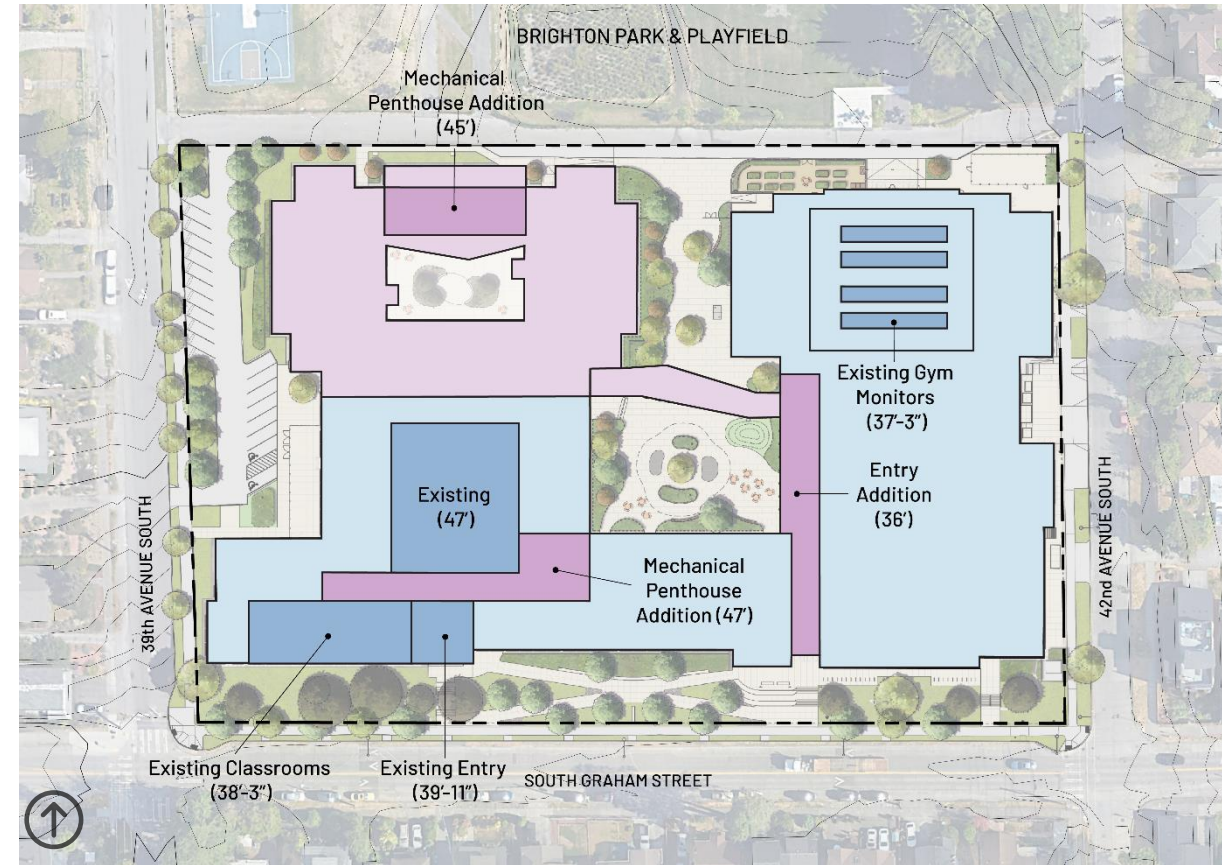
# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

## Roof Plan:

-  Existing Building to remain (below 35' height limit)
-  Existing Building to remain (above 35' height, not subject to height limit)
-  Proposed Additions below 35' height limit
-  Proposed Additions above 35' height limit

This graphic shows the existing building to remain, the proposed building additions and the penthouses and roof areas that are proposed to exceed the height limit.

(A "mechanical penthouse" is a room that is enclosed and protects equipment on the building roof. Enclosing the equipment increases longevity, reduces maintenance needs, and allows for more energy efficient equipment, and helps to reduce mechanical noise from affecting nearby properties.)







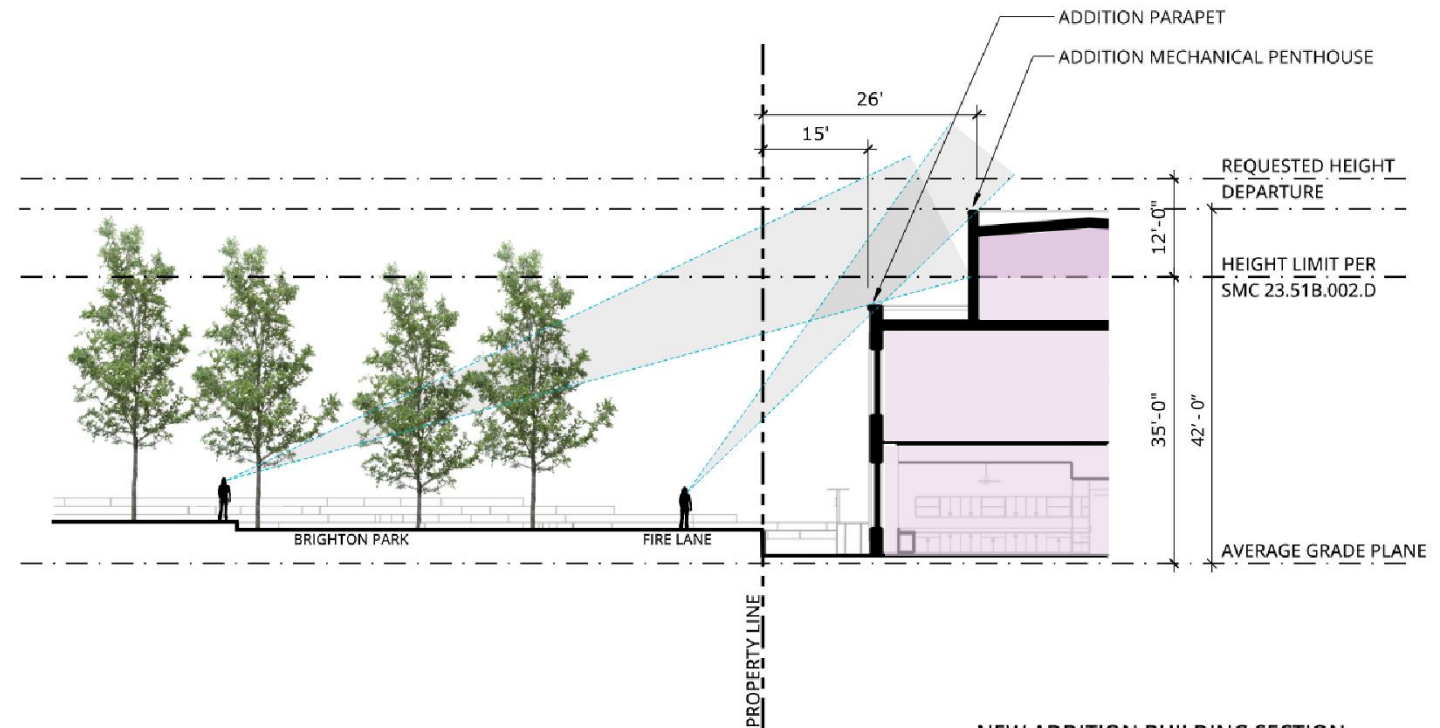
Note: The requested height departure is 10-12' for the mechanical penthouses and 1' for the east building addition. If the roof was pitched instead of low-slope (flat), a departure would not be required.





# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|  | Existing Building to remain below 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions below 35' height limit |
|  | Existing Building to remain above 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions above 35' height limit |

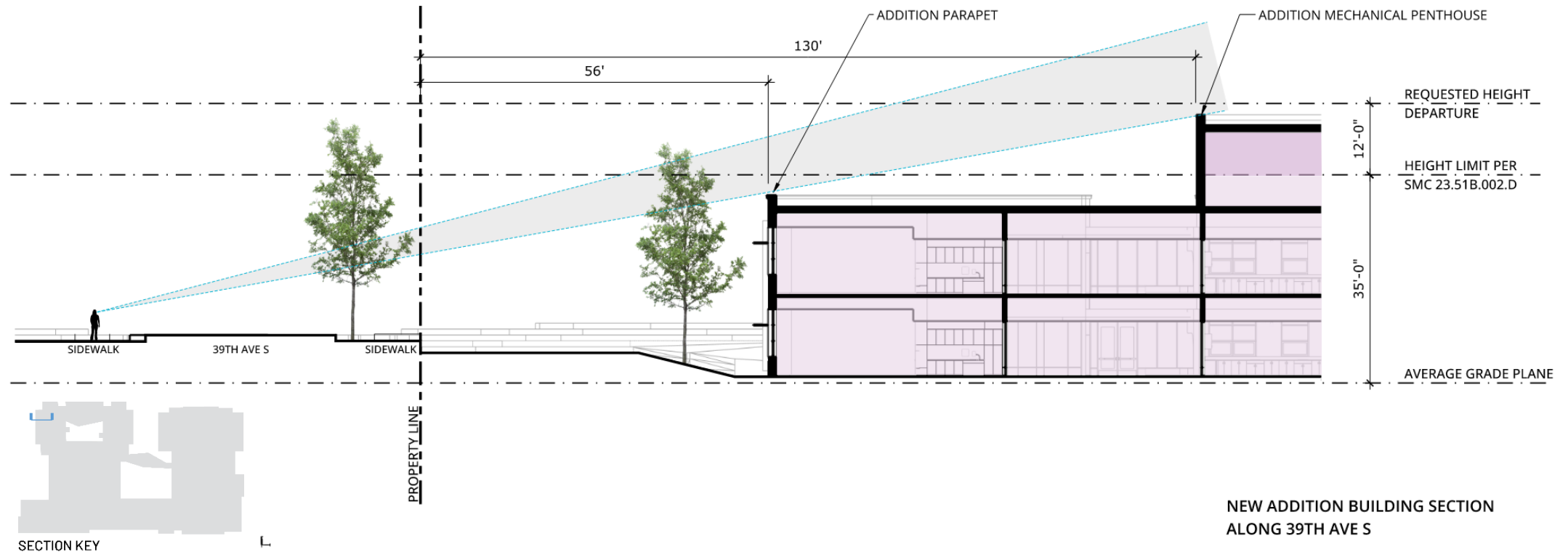


NEW ADDITION BUILDING SECTION  
AT NORTH PROPERTY LINE

# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

Existing Building to remain below 35' height limit  
Existing Building to remain above 35' height limit





Proposed Additions below 35' height limit  
Proposed Additions above 35' height limit

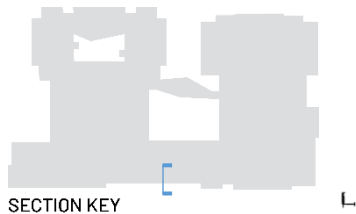
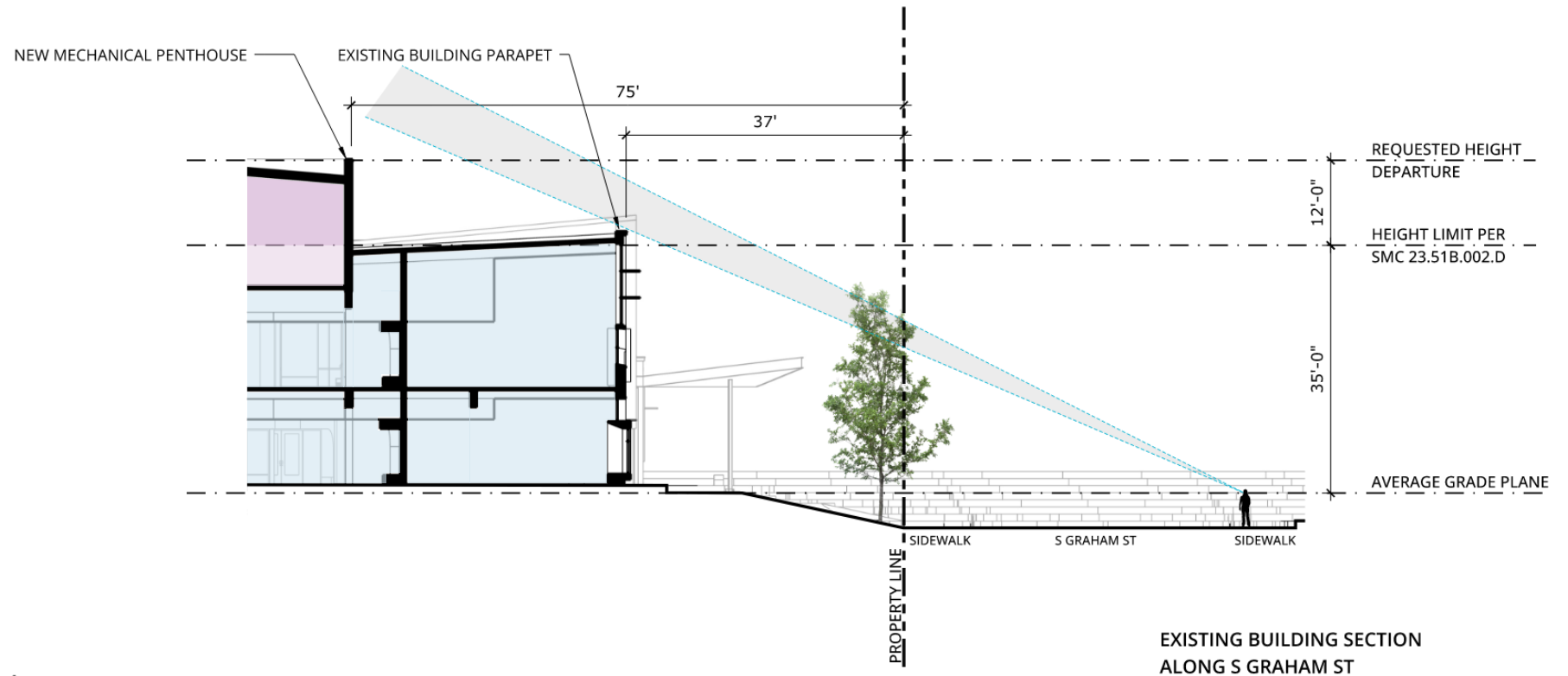


- 
- EXISTING BUILDING PARAPET
- NEW MECHANICAL PENTHOUSE
- 13'
- 97'
- REQUESTED HEIGHT DEPARTURE
- HEIGHT LIMIT PER SMC 23.51B.002.D
- 12'-0"
- 35'-0"
- AVERAGE GRADE PLANE
- SIDEWALK
- 39TH AVE S
- SIDEWALK
- PROPERTY LINE
- SECTION KEY
- EXISTING BUILDING SECTION  
ALONG 39TH AVE S







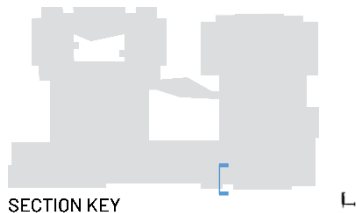
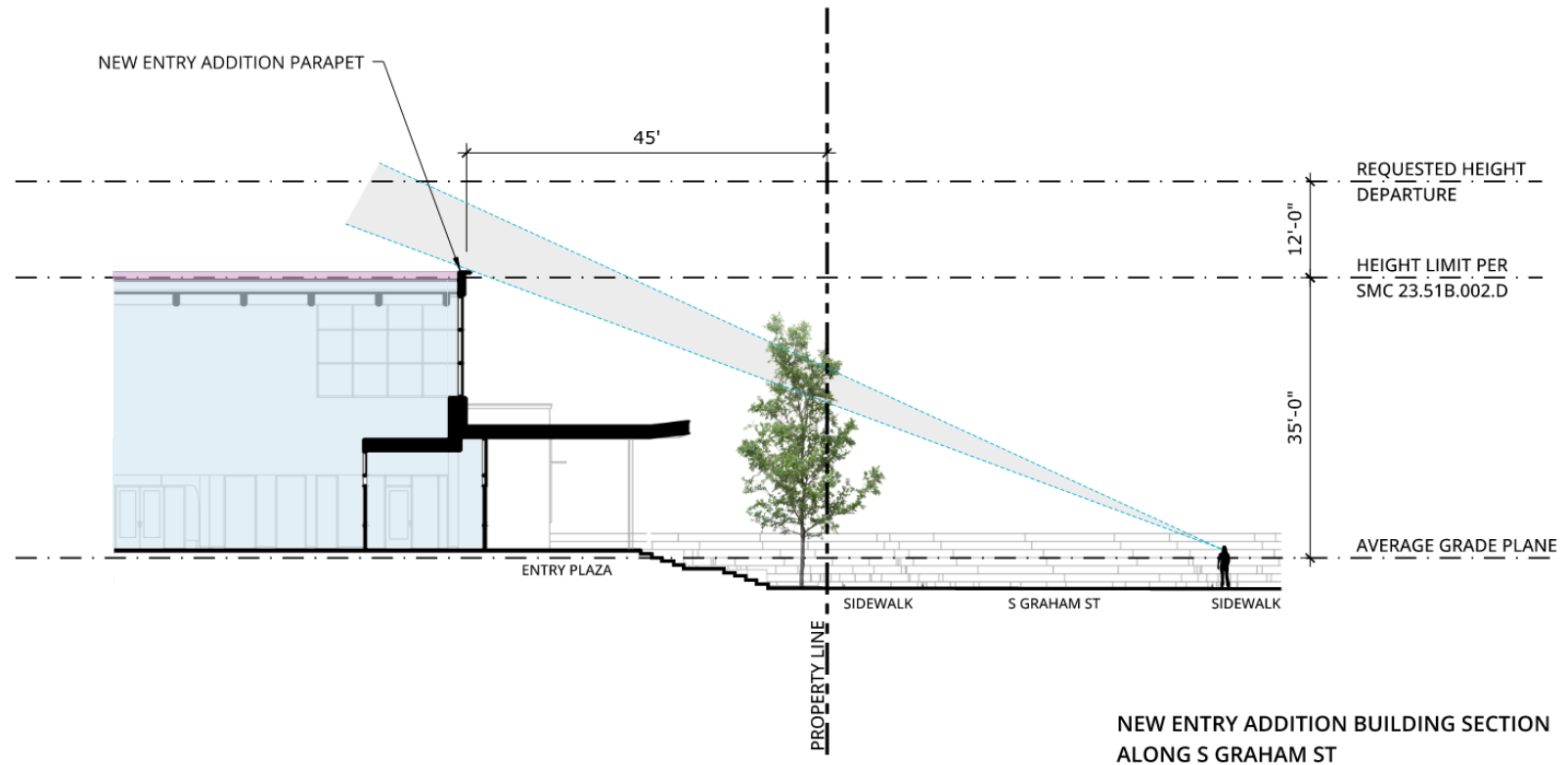
# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|  | Existing Building to remain below 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions below 35' height limit |
|  | Existing Building to remain above 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions above 35' height limit |



# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|  | Existing Building to remain below 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions below 35' height limit |
|  | Existing Building to remain above 35' height limit |  | Proposed Additions above 35' height limit |



# Requested Departure #2: Building Height

## Rationale

New Building Entry: The project proposes a new building entry location which brings together critical student-centered program areas and creates exterior gathering spaces for students and the community while also maintaining the historic school entry, retaining the character of the overall existing structure. The new entry volume exceeds the 35' building height by 1'. The added height provides an appropriate hierarchy of entry but limits its façade frontage and is in the center of the site limiting bulk impacts for the neighborhood.

Mechanical Penthouses: The penthouses are set back from the building facades reducing the appearance of bulk from the sidewalks and minimizing their visibility. Building setbacks exceed code minimum setbacks further reducing bulk to the site.





# Requested Departure #3: Bike Parking (Long Term) Quantity

SMC 23.51B.002.G.: Parking quantity. Parking shall be required as provided in Chapter 23.54.

SMC 23.54.015.K Bicycle Parking. Long-term parking for bicycles shall be for bicycles parked four or more hours. Short-term parking for bicycles shall be for bicycles parked less than four hours.

SMC 23.54.015 Table D – Minimum Number of Parking Spaces.

B.9 Schools, Primary and Secondary. 3 per classroom (Long-term), 1 per classroom (Short-term)

The code requires **78** long-term bicycle parking spaces. SPS proposes **40** long-term bicycle parking spaces for a **departure of 38 long-term spaces**.



# Requested Departure #3: Bike Parking (Long Term) Quantity

Bicycle Parking Quantity:

(Required per SMC 23.54.015 Table D)

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	78	40
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	26	40
TOTAL:	104	80



# Requested Departure #3: Bike Parking (Long Term) Quantity Rationale

Current bicycle rack usage at Aki Kurose during school hours is near zero, and there is no secured long-term bicycle storage on the site. The proposed long-term bicycle parking would be far greater than current demand, but fewer than code requirements.

By providing a covered and secure long-term bicycle parking at less than code minimum, the project is balancing bicycle parking opportunities with site impacts, such as lot coverage. The project proposes providing short-term bicycle parking stalls at more than code minimum to mitigate the loss of long-term stalls.



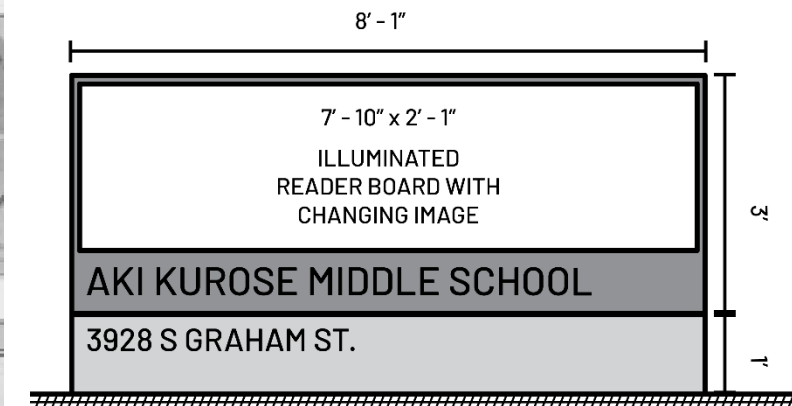
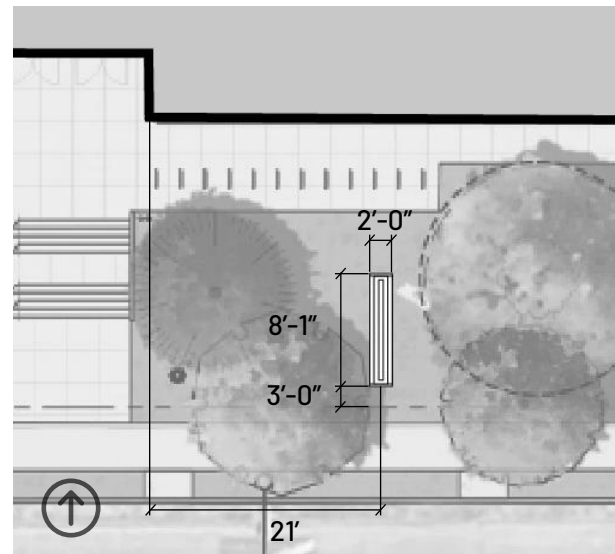
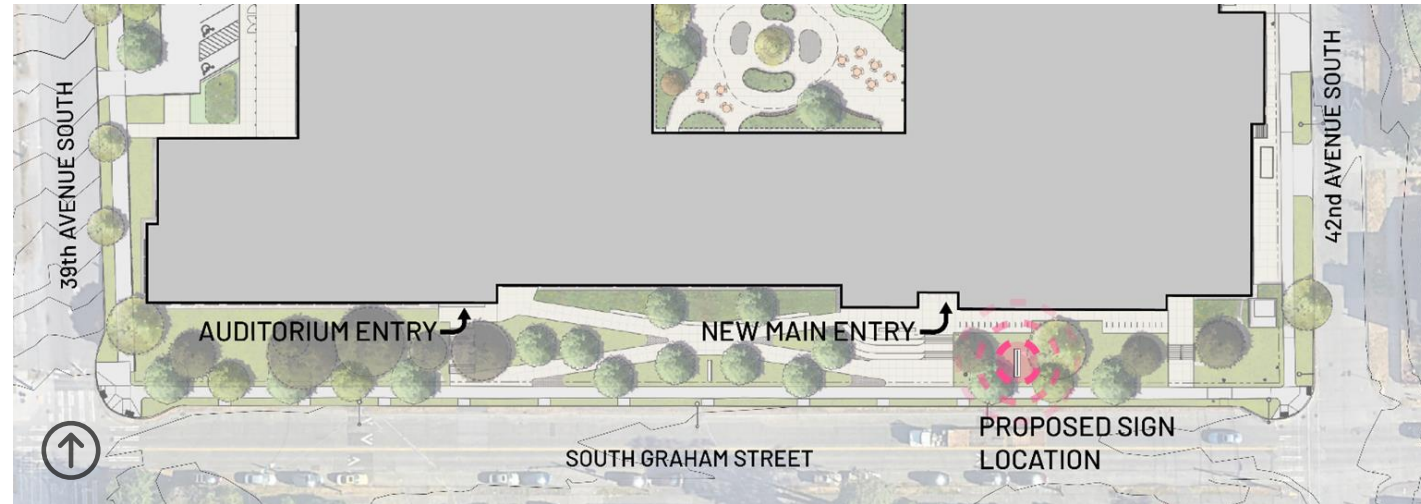


# Requested Departure #4: Changing-Image Message Board

SMC 23.55.020.B: Reader board standards: No flashing, changing image or message board signs.

For elementary or secondary schools, one electric or nonilluminated double-faced identifying sign, not to exceed 30 square feet of area per sign face on each street frontage.

The project is requesting a departure to allow **one double-sided illuminated reader board with changing image**. The reader will be on from 8am-9pm, every day and will automatically shut down accordingly. Proposed size: 8'-1" L x 3' H x 1' W (24 square feet) with a 7'-10" x 2'-1" illuminated changing image portion.



# Requested Departure #4: Changing-Image Message Board Rationale

SPS would use the proposed illuminated reader board to alert families and the community to events and information relevant to the school. Information could be displayed in multiple languages and reach the community in an equitable way as access to technology is not universal.

Proposed mitigation measures to limit impacts of the sign include:

1. Limited to only one double-sided sign location.
2. Limited hours (8am to 9pm daily) with automatic shut down.
3. Sign is limited to be lit using one color with a dark background.
4. No video, flashing, scrolling, tumbling or moving images allowed.

# Requested Departures Summary

## Departure #1: Lot Coverage

The code allows the lot coverage of the previous structures on the site. The project proposes a departure of a 6% increase in lot coverage.

## Departure #2: Building Height:

The code allows a maximum height of 35' for secondary schools. The project proposes a 47' height limit for a 12' departure.

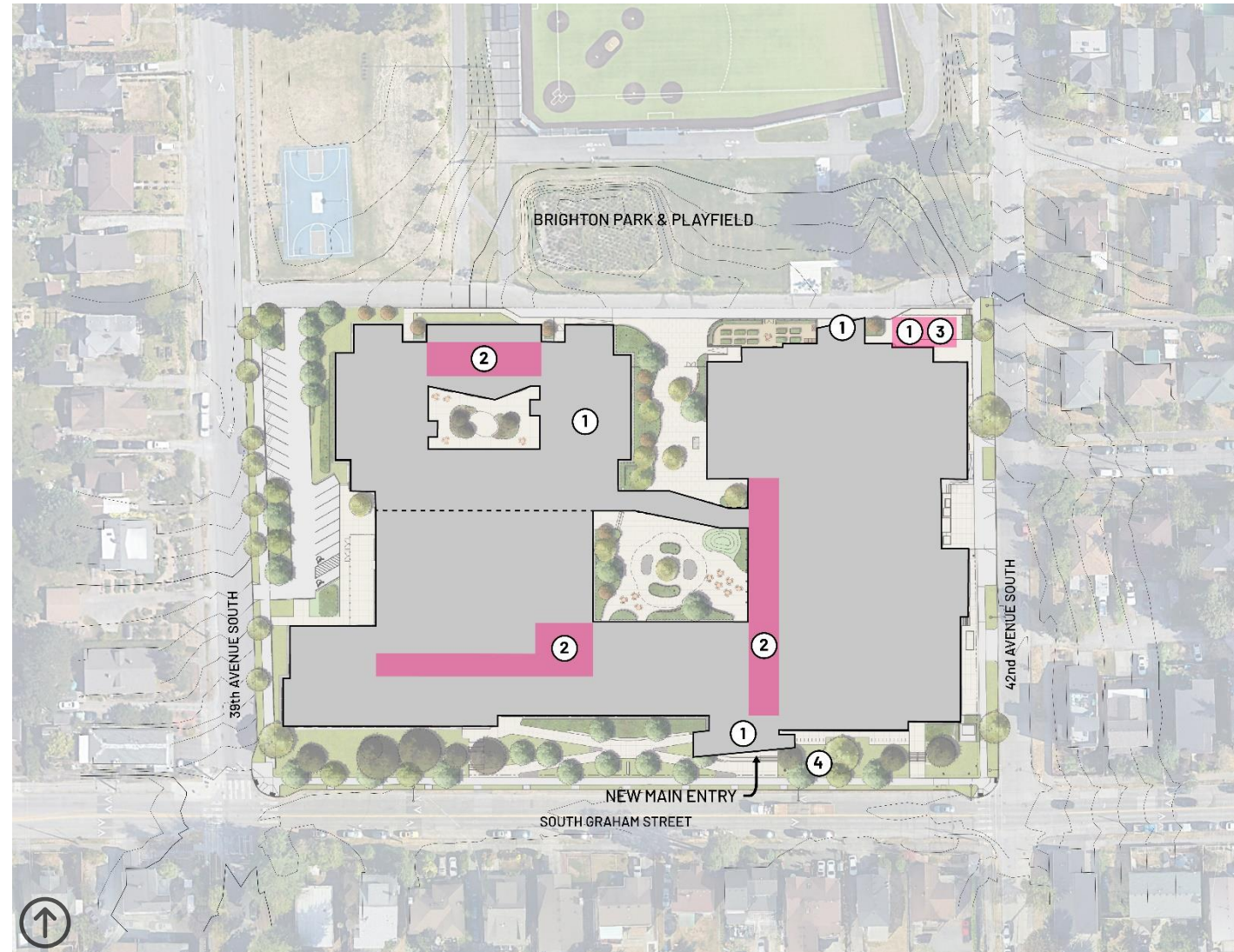
## Departure #3: Bike Parking (Long Term)

### Quantity:

The code requires 78 long-term bike parking spaces. The project proposes 40 for a departure of 38.

## Departure #4: Reader Board:

The code allows a reader board with no flashing, changing image, or message board sign; not to exceed 30 SF. The project proposes a double-sided 60 SF illuminated reader board with changing image.





# Aki Kurose Middle School

## Public Comment

Thank you for taking the time to review this presentation!

We welcome your input. Please submit your comments on the requested departures, including any mitigation measures or conditions of approval by July 14, 2025 to:

Dipti Garg

[dipti.garg@seattle.gov](mailto:dipti.garg@seattle.gov)

City of Seattle, Department of Neighborhoods

Attn: Dipti Garg

PO Box 94649

Seattle, WA 98124-4649

