

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DESIGN DEPARTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Project # 3034330-SD

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019



This report is produced pursuant to the City of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.79) (the “Code”). The intent and purpose of this report are to document public testimony and make recommendations to the City for modifications to development standards for less than the required setback for the addition of classroom space at the east side of the school site (along 6th Ave W) at Coe Elementary School located at 2424 7th Ave W.

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Coe Elementary School Design Departure Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations

2. Background

1.1 Project Description

On April 22, 2019, Seattle Public Schools submitted a request for departure from the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Development Standards requiring a minimum setback of 5 feet from the property line for structures or portions of structures across a street or alley from lots in residential land use zones to accommodate a new three-story addition, six classrooms and shared learning areas located on the east side of the existing building along 6th Ave W.

Coe Elementary School enrollment has been increasing and has long exceeded the building's capacity. The new three-story addition of six classrooms and shared learning space is needed to accommodate the existing enrollment.

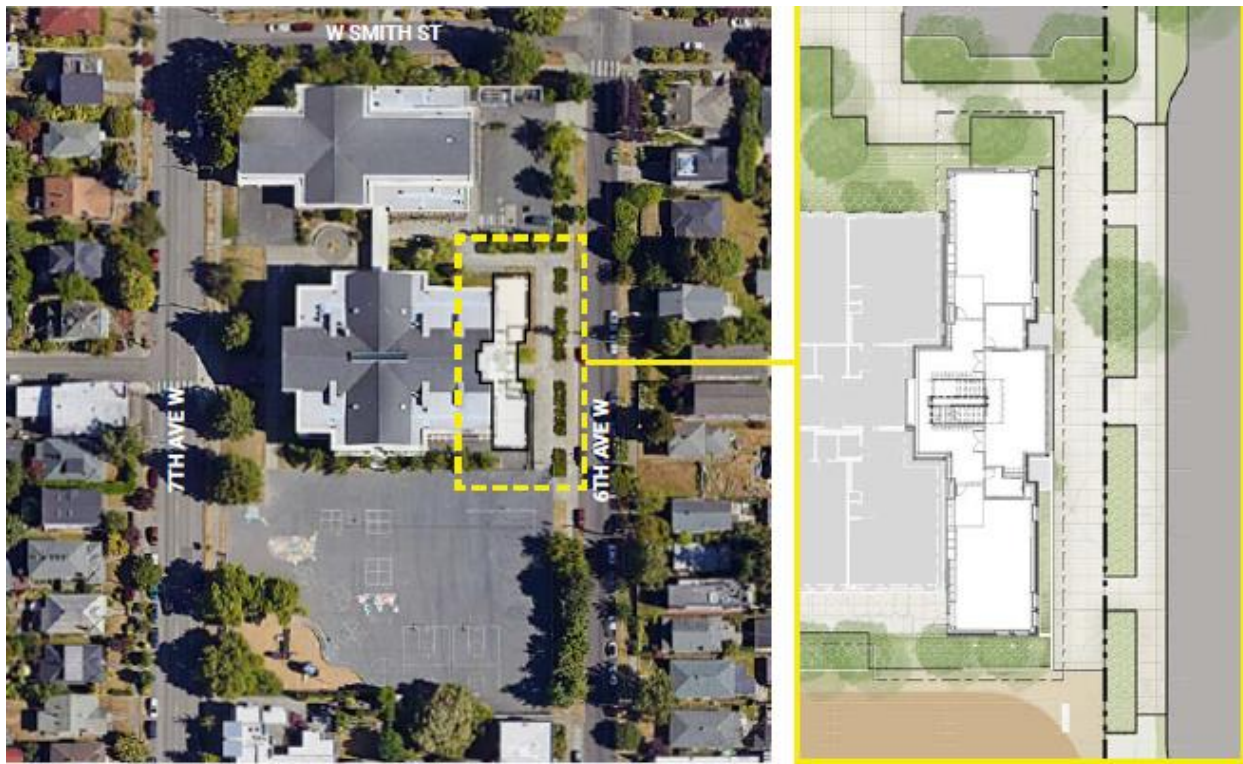


Exhibit 1 Existing & Proposed Site Plan

1.2 Neighborhood Characteristics

Coe Elementary School sits in the Queen Anne neighborhood. The neighborhood lies just south of Fremont and is bounded on the west by 15th Avenue and Elliott Avenue, beyond which is Magnolia. Queen Anne's eastern boundary is Aurora Avenue or SR 99 which marks the beginnings of Westlake Ave N and the Lake Union neighborhood. The Queen Anne neighborhood is separated into two distinct communities, Upper Queen Anne and Uptown (also known as Lower Queen Anne and the Seattle Center areas).

Coe Elementary School property is bounded on the north by West Smith Street, on the west by 7th Avenue West, on the east by 6th Avenue West, and on the south by small local businesses and multi-family housing. Coe Elementary School has been an important learning institution since it opened in two temporary wooden structures on its present site in 1905. On January 21, 2001, the three-story school burned to the ground. It was being remodeled when the fire broke out and on January 6, 2003, the new structure was completely rebuilt, and the new school was reopened to students.

1.3 Requests for Departure and Committee Formation

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

The purpose of the Committee is 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 Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) from DON. (SMC 23.79.008)

Following the completion of the Committee Report and its transmittal to SDCI, the Director of SDCI will issue a formal report and the Director's decision. The Director of SDCI will consider the recommendations of the Committee and 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 of Seattle Hearing Examiner.

On May 21, 2019, DON sent notices to residents within 600 feet of the Coe Elementary School for membership on the Committee. Twelve (12) community members applied, and nine (9) were chosen to be part of the Committee including two (2) alternates, and on June 24, 2019, the Committee was formed. The Committee was composed of eight (8) voting members, a representative from SDCI and a City non-voting Chair.

The Committee was appointed as follows:

Marjorie Dowd	A person residing within 600'
Liz McQuiston	A person owning property or a business within 600'
Justin Allegro	A representative of the general neighborhood
E. Tyler Crone	Parents of two graduates from Coe Elementary School
Camilla Yamada	Parent of a child at Coe Elementary School
Sheena Eaton	A representative of the PTSA
Miki Takihana	A representative of the PTSA
Jeanette Imanishi	A representative of the Seattle Public School
Drew Johnston	Alternate (non-voting member)
Claire McGowan	Alternate (non-voting member)
Holly Godard (Ex-officio)	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)
Nelson Pesigan (Ex-officio)	Department of Neighborhoods (DON)

3. Departure

2.1 Specific District Request

In order to accommodate the new three-story addition located on the east side of the existing building for six classrooms and shared learning areas and to address the current over-crowded conditions in the existing facility, the District requested the following departure from provisions of the SMC 23.51B.002.E.4.

Departure #1 – Setbacks

Existing Standard: SMC 23.51B.002 Public Schools in Residential Zones

SMC 23.41B.002.E.4 – Setbacks for additions to existing public-school structures on existing public-school sites - SETBACKS

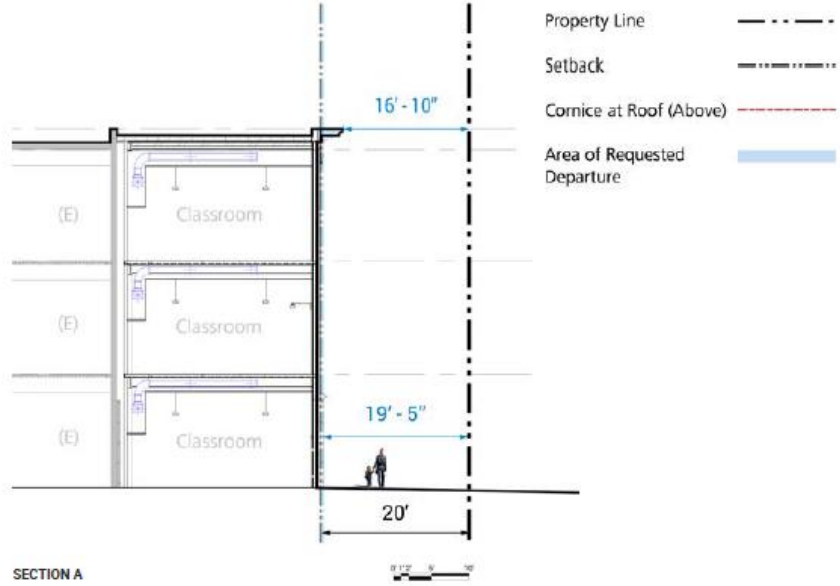
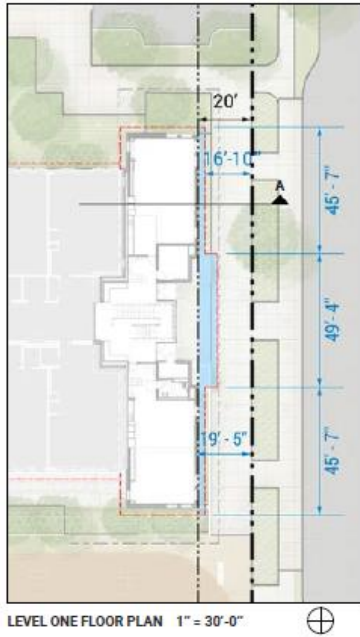


Exhibit 2a Level One Floor Plan and Section at Classrooms

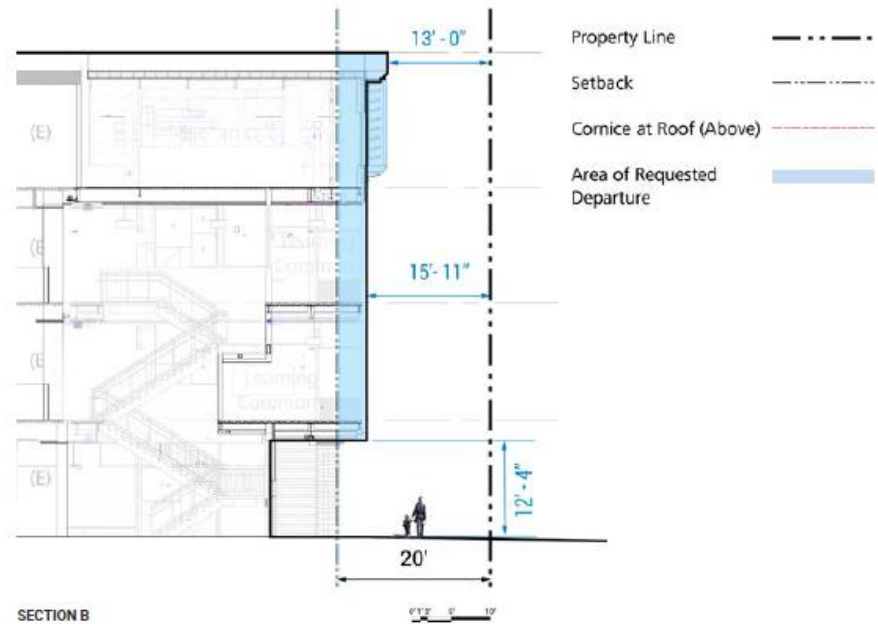
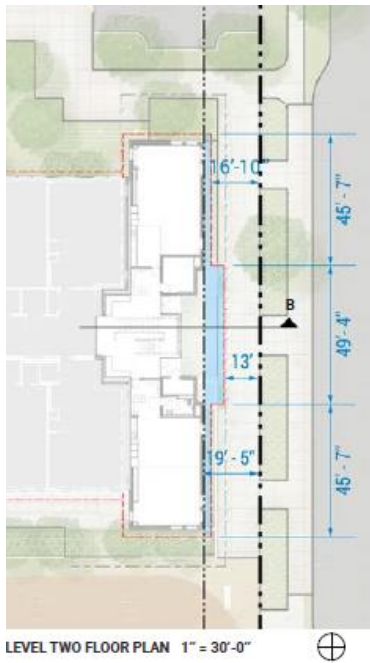


Exhibit 2b Level 2 Floor Plan and Section at Stair and Learning Commons

Departure Requested: a departure for the minimum setback ranging from 13' – 0" to 19' – 0" for the addition of classroom space on the east side of the school (along 6th Ave W).

2.2 Committee Review and Recommendations

2.2.1 Process & Public Meeting

The Committee was convened in one public meeting on August 28 at Coe Elementary School, approximately four members of the public attended, three of whom provided public comment. The themes raised in public comment revolved around the HVAC system and noise level that the new addition will bring to the neighborhood. A community member expressed his support of the departure because of how the design team proposes to integrate the addition in a way that preserves the integrity of the existing school’s character while minimizing encroachment on the surrounding landscape and sidewalk.

2.2.2 Review Criteria

Section 23.79 of the Code directs the Committee to evaluate the requested departures for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the Code, and to balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

- a. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:
 - (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.
- 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.

Section 23.51B.002 contains further development standards related to public schools located in single-family and low-rise residential zones.

2.2.3 Application of Review Criteria to Requested Departure and Committee Recommendation

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 in single-family zoned neighborhoods. The Seattle School District has demonstrated that it cannot accommodate and address the current conditions of the existing facility without granting the departure for a setback for the new three-story addition on the east side of the existing building.

Need for Departures

The committee understood the school district's rationale to add additional classrooms and shared learning areas to accommodate the over-crowded conditions in the existing facility. One committee member expressed his concern about the lack of traffic and parking analysis presentation this additional classroom will bring to the neighborhood. Several committee members acknowledged that they are not concerned about the traffic around the surrounding area since there will be no significant change of enrollment to the school and any traffic circulation is currently maintained and managed by the school. The committee did requested that the school investigate noise from the HVAC system at 6th Ave and West Smith St..

Departure – Setback

- 1) **Impacts on traffic, noise, and circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the proposed setback having an impact on traffic, circulation, and parking in the neighborhood as long as the school sends out communication plan updates about the status of traffic before and after the construction.

The committee's deliberation revolved around the noise level and traffic circulation. The committee agreed that it will be the school's responsibility to address the noise level concerns and traffic circulation through an updated communication plan and weekly bulletins. The committee agreed that they support the school and their mission to have additional classroom space and learning areas for the students, faculty, and staff to meet the district's educational specifications for elementary schools.

Coe Elementary School Principal provided a summary of the efforts they have made to accommodate the current number of students, faculty, and staff at the school.

After consideration of the above, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation – That the departure to allow minimum setback ranging from 13' – 0' to 19' – 0'' for the addition of classroom space on the east side of the school (along 6th Ave W) to be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools without modifications.

For the Committee,

Nelson Pesigan
Non-Voting Chair

**Coe Elementary School
Design Departure Advisory
Committee**

Members

Jeanette Imanishi

Marjorie Dowd

Liz McQuiston

Justin Allegro

E. Tyler Crone

Camilla Yamada

Sheena Eaton

Miki Takihana

Drew Johnston (alternate)

Claire McGowan (alternate)

Ex-Officio Members

Nelson Pesigan, Department of
Neighborhoods

Holly Godard, Seattle Department
of Construction & Inspections

Coe Elementary School

(SDCI Project # 3034330)

Development Standards Design Departure Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #1

August 28, 2019

Coe Elementary School
2424 7th Ave W - Lunchroom
Seattle, WA 98119

Members and Alternates Present

Jeanette Imanishi	Camilla Yamada	Drew Johnston (alternate)
Marjorie Dowd	Sheena Eaton	Miki Takihana

Staff and Others Present

Nelson Pesigan	DON
Holly Godard	SDCI
Corrie Rosen	Mahlum Architects

I. Opening and Introductions

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

II. Overview of the Process

Mr. 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 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.

Mr. Pesigan emphasized that the Committee 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

The Project:

Mr. Pesigan introduced Ms. Corrie Rosen of Mahlum Architects to present the project.

The school district is proposing a new three-story addition located on the east side of the existing building for six classrooms and shared learning areas. The intent of this project is to address the current overcrowded conditions of the existing facility. Ms. Rosen briefly showed the project schedule. She noted that the project is currently in the design phase through Fall with the intended construction to begin in January 2020 and a target opening in 2021. The current facility will be occupied during construction.

Ms. Rosen mentioned shared that there are a broad range of stakeholders that have an impact on the development of the project. She noted that there were different agencies and multiple stakeholders that are involved in designing and providing input to the project development. The design must also adhere to the district's elementary educational specification that define the types of spaces, size of spaces and quantities of spaces.

She added that as the design team, they begin by studying the existing site and building. The design team worked with members of the school community to gather feedback about the design of the new Coe Elementary School. The existing building alludes to the original building on the site with features that recall the noble character of its historic precursor. She explained that they start with the existing because they understand, for the community, the addition should feel like an extension of the existing.

Ms. Rosen provided a diagram that shows the existing west and east elevation as well as the proposed elevations after the classroom addition. She showed a diagram of the proposed site as well as the existing floor plans and the street views at different angles of the site. She noted that there are no proposed modifications to parking and the play area to the south of the building and vehicular and bus access will remain the same after the addition is completed.

She added that the design team respects the existing design, details, materiality, and modulation of the building and have worked to design the addition so that it feels like an extension of the existing school character.

Summary of the Requested Departure:

1. Setback

Ms. Rosen presented the requested departure as stated in the Seattle Municipal Code. She showed a diagram that indicates the setback departure in relation to the school's property line. She noted that current landscape and the existing tree in the right-of-way will be maintained and new trees will be planted at the east entry and to the north and south of the addition.

Seattle Public School is requesting a departure for the minimum setback ranging from 13' – 0' to 19' – 0" for the addition of classroom space and shared learning on the east side of the school (along 6th Ave W).

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions (20:02)

Mr. Pesigan opened the floor for Committee clarifying questions.

The Committee asked about traffic circulation and how it is mitigated. Ms. Rosen mentioned that the School District hired Heffron Transportation to conduct a traffic impact analysis and they also looked at the number of trips that will be generated and parking estimates from the classroom addition.

She noted that she did not have the exact numbers with her but Heffron's report indicated the addition would generate an increase of about 80 trips per day. She added that since there are no proposed changes to the auditorium spaces which include the commons and the gymnasium, the code does not require any revisions to the surface parking lot on site.

Ms. Miki Takihana commented that these additional classrooms will not change the enrollment at the school. The enrollment at the school depends on the school boundaries set upon by the Seattle Public Schools.

Ms. Virginia Turner, the principal at Coe Elementary commented that this project is not meant to significantly increase the current school's enrollment. This classroom addition is meant to accommodate the existing students, faculty, and staff.

The Committee asked questions about the classroom and shared learning design and how it would best accommodate the students.

Ms. Rosen commented that having these additional classrooms and a shared learning space provides significant educational value for the students, faculty, and staff.

V. Public Comments and Questions (38:04)

Mr. Pesigan 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 Chris Jackins: Mr. Jackins, coordinator for the Seattle Committee to Save Schools submitted a copy of his comments via fax and letter.

Comments from Justin Allegro: Mr. Allegro submitted a copy of his comments via email.

Comments from Carolyn Moore: Ms. Moore lives across the street from the school and she commented about the noise that is coming from the HVAC unit at 6th Ave W and West Smith St. She would like to have her concerns be addressed by the school or the City. She is concerned that any additional classroom space will include additional HVAC systems being installed.

Comments from Robert Stearns: Mr. Stearns reiterated the concerns about the HVAC noise. He also questioned the school's diversity regarding enrollment and current population.

Comments from Kris Snyder: Mr. Snyder commented that he fully supports the departure request. He noted that he loves the new design and he like the idea of embracing the integrity of the school building, sidewalk, and landscape.

Comments from Virginia Turner: Ms. Turner is the principal of Coe Elementary and she commented about the current student population and enrollment projections. She noted school enrollment will not get any smaller but will maintain the current enrollment projections.

VI. Committee Deliberation (48:19)

Mr. 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 on whether to recommend or deny with or without conditions.

Ms. Holly Godard 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.

Mr. Johnston commented that he is leaning towards granting the requested departure. He added that Ms. Rosen's presentation was informative. He noted that he would like to see more information about traffic and parking but mentioned that there is a need for the departure.

Ms. Dowd commented that she is in favor of granting the requested departure without any conditions. She added that she is not concern about the current traffic circulation in the area since there will be no change in the student enrollment and population after the classroom addition is completed.

Ms. Eaton commented that she would also recommend granting the requested departure. She noted that she was impressed by how much classroom space will be added and have minimal impact on the sidewalks and landscape. She agreed with Ms. Dowd's comments about no changes in traffic circulation. She commented that the only challenge will be during construction.

Ms. Takihana commented that she is inclined to granting the requested departure without any conditions. She noted that the architects did an excellent job in keeping the existing integrity of the school and identified any potential impacts on the neighboring spaces.

Ms. Yamada commented that she is leaning towards granting the departure with no conditions. She suggested having the school look at the parking situation along the 6th and 7th Ave W and the drop-offs. Ms. Takihana commented that school safety has specific guidelines on morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups.

Ms. Imanishi commented that she is in favor of granting the departure. She added that the design of the classroom addition is a vast improvement in providing quality classroom spaces and teaching for the students.

Ms. Godard commented on the HVAC system noise that was brought during public comments and asked Ms. Rosen if there are any operational plans to mitigate this. Ms. Rosen noted that she will talk with the district to understand a possible buffer to mitigate noise coming from the HVAC system.

Ms. Godard suggested to the Committee to address this issue as a non-binding condition in the recommendation report. She also asked the School District about any plans on how to address the noise level during and after the construction.

Ms. Godard mentioned about the current TMP that was established at the 1999 departure, and she asked Ms. Rosen if the plan is carried forward to this current departure request. Ms. Rosen noted that since there were no changes in traffic circulation, parking, bus loading, and unloading and student drop-offs and pick-ups, it is her understanding that the current TMP plan is in effect.

Ms. Godard commented that the Committee should not change any conditions regarding the current TMP, but she suggested that the school administration and the School District work with the parents and neighbors about the drop-off and pick-up location through a communication plan.

Mr. Johnston agreed with Ms. Godard's comments that any traffic circulation impact and noise level that was not addressed in the presentation should be highlighted and investigated to respond to the concerns that were brought during the public comments.

The Committee agreed that it is the school administration's responsibility to address these concerns through updated communications and weekly bulletins.

Committee Recommendations

Mr. 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 the requested departure of setback without any conditions. The Committee suggested having the school administration at Coe Elementary address and monitor the noise level concerns during construction and adhere to the existing Transportation Management Plan (TMP) established by the school regarding traffic circulation, drop-off, and safety.

Departure: Setback

Ms. Takihana made a motion to grant the requested departure of modifications for less than the required setback for the addition of classroom space at the east side of the school site (along 6th Ave W) with no conditions, and it was seconded by Ms. Yamada.

By a show of hands, a quorum being present, and the majority of those present voted 6 in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment and scheduling of next meeting

Mr. 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 Ms. Godard and SDCI by September 29th.

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