



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

**Date:** June 29, 2015

**To:** Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Chair  
Planning Land Use and Sustainability (PLUS) Committee  
Councilmember Tim Burgess  
Councilmember Nick Licata  
Councilmember John Okamoto

**From:** Diane M. Sugimura, Director  
Mike Podowski, DPD, Land Use Policy Manager

**Subject:** City Owned Transitional Encampment Sites

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This memo identifies three City-owned properties eligible for use as transitional encampment sites to carry out Ordinance 124747, approved March 30 by the City Council and signed by the Mayor April 10, 2015. At the time the Ordinance was adopted DPD was directed to report back to Council on the selected sites within 90 days of the effective date of the ordinance. In addition to the three selected sites, this memo identifies four potential future sites, and describes the site selection process.

### Three Sites Selected for First Round Availability

1. City Light Market Substation, 2826 NW Market
  - Seattle City Light
  - Industrial (IB U/45') zone; adjacent to LR3 to the north, but separated by steep slope. Adjacent uses include a tavern to the west, VFW to the east, and mini-warehouse across Market to the south.
  - 9,468 sf, about 6400 sf of usable space
  - Up to 12 bus stops on NW Market and other streets within a few hundred feet, including one stop in front of site
  - City Light has tested the site for contamination. Clean-up will be conducted by City Light.
2. City Light Interbay site, 3234 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W/1631 W. Bertona
  - Seattle City Light
  - Industrial zone, IG1; one corner touches SM zoning to the southeast. Sports club to the east, QFC across an alley, also to the east, office to the south and industrial across the street to the west.
  - 33,500 sf, but majority currently in use by City Light for pole storage. 11,122 sf available for encampment, 8,798 usable due to topography
  - Has a security fence



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3. City Light S. Industrial Way site, between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

- Seattle City Light
- Industrial zone, IG2 U/85'; no residential use nearby. Abuts parking/truck storage area on private property to the south.
- Approximately 20,000 sf, but portion to the west includes a City Light tower and power lines; east ~7,400 available for encampment
- About 10 bus stops within few hundred feet, including one adjacent to the site

**Potential Future Sites**

4. Olympic Substation, 8030 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW

- Seattle City Light
- NC2/40' zone. Bank to the north, single family across alley to the east, apartment to the south, and restaurant/lounge across the street to the west
- 7,300 sf; rectifier on site so full site not usable. Also, setback from residential zone required, so about 4,500 sf available for encampment
- At least 8 bus stops on 15<sup>th</sup> NW within a few hundred feet, including two bus stops on the same block as site

5. City Light University Site, 3814 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE

- Seattle City Light
- Industrial zone, IC-45'; separated from residential zoning to the north by two parcels and the Burke Gilman Trail. Office to the north, warehouse to the east, overflow restaurant parking to the south, and SDOT storage and light industrial use across the street to the west.
- About 8,000 sf, all usable
- 4 bus stops on N. 40<sup>th</sup> within a few hundred feet
- Available in about a year, following relocation of tenant and demolition of single family house.

6. Glassyard, 7115 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S.W.

- SDOT
- IG 1 U/85'; surrounded by two properties owned by State of Washington, and a privately owned warehouse
- Large site, 165,000+ sf; includes some steep slopes
- Has been the location of an encampment in the past

7. Brighton Substation, 7110 Rainier Ave. S.

- Seattle City Light
- NC3/40'; single family zoning abutting to the east. Auto body repair use to the north.
- 9,698 sf; perhaps about 4,000 sf available due to small rectifier or maintenance structure to the east, which would provide the necessary 25' separation from single-family zone, and landscaping and fencing around the site
- Bus service along Rainier
- City Light is testing site for contamination

## **Site Selection Process**

### Identification of the Universe of Potential Sites

Using the City's GeoCortex mapping system, approximately 135 City-owned tax parcels were identified in the appropriate zones. Additional review of aerial photos and critical areas maps indicated that many of the sites were critical areas or heavily vegetated or treed, and therefore not suitable for an encampment. A heavy concentration of the tax parcels were located around the City's Joint Training Facility, which is surrounded by wetlands, topographic conditions and vegetation. In addition, "underutilized" sites were often found to be in use such as for parking or storage. We generally focused on the vacant sites, then worked with departments to cross-check availability. Further analysis was conducted to determine transit access, and whether or not the sites met the minimum encampment size. In a built-up city such as Seattle, it is not surprising that the City owns few vacant sites that would be suitable for this use.

### Interdepartmental Review

Based on the above analysis by DPD, we held an interdepartmental meeting in early February, including Seattle City Light, Seattle DOT, Parks, FAS and SPU. For the meeting, DPD had identified 17 possible sites based on mapping and preliminary assessment; 10 additional sites were suggested by the various departments. As a result of that discussion and further analysis, we developed a list of 27 sites, which were sorted into the following five categories:

- a. 9 "potential sites"
  - b. 2 "potential, but ..." sites, sites with some concerns
  - c. 2 "probably not" due to topography and location
  - d. 9 "not appropriate" due to lack of access, security issues, greenbelt, currently revenue-generating site, etc.
  - e. 5 "possible but not meet all criteria" such as slightly less than 5,000 sf, zone, ownership, etc.
- This initial meeting was held before final adoption of legislation, so some sites did not exactly meet adopted standards.

### Arriving at the Final List

A total of 13 sites were evaluated further, sites in categories a., b. and c. above. Based on additional research, such as possible contamination, closer analysis of topography, ability to accommodate an encampment of reasonable size due to presence of some structures, etc., seven sites were eliminated:

- One because a temporary homeless shelter will be in the structure
- One due to limited access
- Three due to topography
- One is leased for parking
- One site was composed of multiple right-of-way parcels, generally surrounded by roadways. These were initially rejected due to potential danger to inhabitants when site is surrounded by vehicular traffic. However, we re-evaluated and determined that two parcels adjacent to a private property could be suitable. This resulted in the 7<sup>th</sup> site described above as S. Industrial Way.

The final list also considered general geographic distribution (north, central and south).