



**Wing Luke Elementary  
School Design Departure  
Advisory Committee**

**Members**

Ayane Ahmed  
Mimi Boothby  
Jeffrey Cook  
Todd Grain  
Mike Skutack  
Roxanne Tsai

**Ex-Officio Members**

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

## Wing Luke Elementary School

### Development Standards Design Departure Advisory Committee

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting #1**

**February 26, 2018**

Wing Luke Elementary School  
3701 S Kenyon St  
Seattle, WA 98118

**Members and Alternates Present**

Ayane Ahmed	Mimi Boothby	Jeffrey Cook
Todd Grain	Mike Skutack	Roxanne Tsai

**Staff and Others Present**

Holly Godard	SDCI
Rachel Huck	SDOT
Brian Love	NAC Architecture
Tod McBryan	Heffron Transportation
Matt Rumbaugh	NAC Architecture
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 departures as requested;
- 2) Recommend granting the departures with modifications or specific conditions, or
- 3) Recommend denial of the departures.

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**

#### **The Project:**

Mr. Brian Love of NAC Architecture presented that the proposed design is to replace the existing school with a 2-story 93,000 sq. ft. building that can accommodate about 660 students. The school is in South Beacon Hill and it bounded by the Rainier Valley neighborhood and the new Holly redevelopment.

There are two schools nearby. The Original Van Asselt school, which the School District will be using as a swing school while Wing Luke is being constructed, and the Van Asselt Elementary School.

The site has been owned by the School District since 1914. In 1969 it was renamed Wing Luke and a new building completed in 1971. There was a classroom and commons additions in 2005.

The site area has a 20-ft. change in the elevation from the north to the south side and an additional 15-ft. elevation from the south side to the playfield area. South Kenyon and 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. S are the only areas sizeable and appropriate to handle traffic.

The design team worked with the School Design Advisory Team (SDAT) made up of parents, teachers, administrators early in the project who identified several characteristics that were essential to the culture of Wing Luke Elementary School.

The proposed design will maintain and enlarge parking at the north end of the site. There will be a separate entry to the site and an exit from the parking lot to reduce any congestion. The parent drop-off will be separated from the parking. Bus drop-off will remain at the same location on 39<sup>th</sup> Ave S. The child care center located at the southwest corner of the site will remain. The remainder of the site is developed for student recreation and student play.

The point of access to the site that goes to the utility yard is intended for large vehicle entry only and will be gated and locked.

#### **Summary of the Requested Departures:**

##### **1. Building Height**

Mr. Love noted that the height departure is due to the mechanical penthouses. The City of Seattle does not have a zone for schools. The zoning height limit is set for single-family residential buildings. The School District is requesting for a height departure because the zone is not crafted for school buildings but for residential buildings.

The Design team considered reducing the bulk appearance of the mechanical penthouses by painting a lighter color to reduce the amount of eye attention.

The maximum building height from the average existing grade is 35 ft. and the proposed maximum building height is 48 ft. for the mechanical penthouse.

The departure request is for 13 ft. above the height limit.

## **2. Parking Quantity**

Mr. Love noted that there are currently 39 parking spaces and the proposed will be 50 parking spaces. The parking quantity is set by 1 space for every 80-sq. ft. of assembly space. The assembly space is the commons or cafeteria and the gymnasium.

The School District completed a transportation report, coordinated with a transportation engineer, and worked with SDOT on the specifics of the proposal. It was recommended that a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) be implemented to make it clear where the different forms of transportation are supposed to go.

The departure request is for 80 parking spaces.

## **3. On-street Bus Loading**

Mr. Love noted that they would like to maintain the bus loading off 37<sup>th</sup> Ave S. because it is suitable and wide enough for traffic to go in either direction when buses to pull off to the side of the street. If the current location is moved on-site, play area and recreation space will need to be reduced.

The departure request is to maintain the current on-street bus loading on 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

## **4. Electronic Message Board**

The proposed message board will be two-sided and images on both sides. It will be electronic and LED and it will allow to program and change the image. The message board will operate no later than 10:00 pm and it will only operate during the school year.

The message board will be no bigger than 30 sq. ft. and it will be relatively low to the ground.

The departure request is for a double-sided, electronic, changing image message board.

## **IV. Committee Clarifying Questions**

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for Committee clarifying questions.

**Ms. Roxanne Tsai** asked if the proposed building “addition” identified in the height departure will be constructed at one time or later. Mr. Love responded the proposed building is proposed to be constructed in two phases but as part of the proposed design, he asked the Committee to consider the impacts of the entire project. Mr. Mike Skutack added that because of budgetary reason, the School District could not afford the entire new addition.

Ms. Tsai asked if the electronic sign will be operated during weekends and during the school year. A response was made that it may operate during the weekends in the school year.

**Mr. Todd Grain** asked how the departures would impact the budget. Mr. Matt Rumbaugh commented that the current budget is based on the proposed design, and the only questionable item in the budget is the construction of the additional building. The School District does not have an exact timeline on the construction of the additional wing, and it will all depend on the student growth. As part of the permitting process, the School District is requesting that the entire build out be considered now to understand the full constraints and have the plan approved and be ready in the future phase of the project.

Mr. Grain asked what the projected attendance will be. Mr. Rumbaugh commented that the school design is for 660 students after the additional building. Initially, the school would be designed for 500 students. Mr. Skutack mentioned that the enrollment projection is showing that it will be 350 to 380 students in five to ten years.

**Mr. Jeffrey Cook** asked how the enrollment projections were determined. Mr. Rumbaugh commented that the school district has a standard size for elementary schools. These two standard options are either 500 or 660 capacities for all schools. Mr. Skutack added that the school building will be here in 50 to 80 years, and the building design will provide flexibility to expand in a high-density area.

Mr. Cook asked if the proposed building addition is not going forward, will the available space be used for additional parking as an option. Mr. Love mentioned that all uses of the site are dedicated to student activities, recreation, etc. If the area is used for parking, it will only be a temporary fix. Mr. Rumbaugh added that the current plan for space is to use as a playground until the proposed building is constructed.

Mr. Cook asked if there will be additional fencing around the school property and what type of materials will be used. Mr. Love mentioned that there will not be. The fencing will occur to separate the student activity and recreation area as well as the utility within the school property. The School District prefers a vinyl covered black chain link.

**Ms. Mimi Boothby** asked about the total school staff. Mr. Skutack mentioned that there is about 96 total staff. Ms. Boothby commented that these staff will be competing for parking in already crowded streets. She asked where the parents will park. She asked about where to find the code that determines what the school should build. Ms. Holly Godard mentioned that it can be found in the Land Use code development standards.

Ms. Boothby commented that she does not like having bright lights in a quiet neighborhood. She added that traffic is bad, and parents are already parking in their driveways, and it may become worse with the new school.

Mr. Grain asked about the fencing on the southeast corner and the walkway path where everyone could walk at the bottom of the hill. Mr. Love noted that the fence will be at the top of the hill to provide clear access and line of sight. He added that there will be a planting strip between the road and asphalt walkway that is not at street level.

Mr. Cook asked about the number of significant and exceptional trees that will be removed. Mr. Love responded that he does NOT know the number, but the significant trees are not outlined in the Land Use code. He mentioned that they would like to preserve the trees on S. Kenyon and along 37<sup>th</sup> because it provides visual separation from the school.

Mr. Cook asked if the size of the current bus drop off footprint will be changing. Mr. Love mentioned that currently there are two full-size buses and four special education buses that use the bus drop off in the street. If the school go to the full 660-capacity, there will be an increase of three additional short buses, and the length of the bus drop off would increase.

## **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 Dale Bamford:** Mr. Bamford asked if the height equipment could be lower. He mentioned that traffic in 37<sup>th</sup> is already congested and he is concern about safety because people are driving too fast. He added that having a sign in place may open the door of other signs around the neighborhood. He asked if SPD (Seattle Police Department) has been consulted or involved in the process since there have been various activities in the school yard in the past.

**Comments from Chris Jackins:** Mr. Jackins, is a coordinator for the Seattle Committee to Save Schools provided a copy of a list that summarizes why should this Committee reject the departures being requested for this school.

**Comments from David Price:** Mr. Price is a homeowner and lives 600 ft. away from the school. He shared his concerns about the pathway going up the hill since no one can see what is coming that may result in an accident. He noted that the electronic signage will create light pollution and suggested to have no lights and

be respectful of the neighborhood. He also added if the building can be taken down further to limit the height. He mentioned that the smartest way to manage to park is to limit and keep the buses, parents, to move in and out as effectively as possible to minimize the congestion along the streets.

**Comments from Michael Gordon:** Mr. Gordon expressed his concerns about more student traffic in the NE corner of the pathway, where a crosswalk leads down the trail because of the growth in the New Holly area. He added that 39<sup>th</sup> and the corner of Kenyon St. need to be addressed because it is dangerous and unsafe.

**Comments from Alejandro Tafon:** Mr. Tafon lives by Monroe and Beacon Ave. S. and he commented about bus loading. He would like to see a detailed explanation of the impacts on level of service this may have on the intersection. He suggested expanding the presentation to provide examples of the actual vs. the projected level of traffic in the area.

**Comments from Josephine Rainwater:** Ms. Rainwater commented that she was impressed by others who made a comment because it addressed her concerns. She mentioned that there were no environmental impact studies done. A higher building will cut off airflow and sunlight to the neighborhood. An increased population will increase traffic in the area. She asked if other school locations were considered. She noted that this is a residential neighborhood with many senior citizens.

**Comments from Cassandra Rainwater:** Ms. Rainwater commented that she grew up in the neighborhood and Wing Luke is built for this neighborhood and not for the influx of new students that will be coming from various locations. The population growth will impact the neighborhood, streets will be congested, and construction trucks will be coming in and out of the neighborhood. The neighborhood concerns are not being addressed.

**Comments from Gilbert Pettit:** Mr. Pettit lives on 36<sup>th</sup> Ave S. and he commented he was seeing that people associated with the school are currently parking on the block. He added that the area does not have the capacity to handle the students and staff that will be coming in the community. He noted that he does not like the project because of the design flaws and asked the Committee not to grant the departures.

## **VI. Committee Deliberation**

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

Ms. Tsai commented that based on the current design, the departures would be necessary, and in some way, will need some conditions attached. She mentioned that parking is a big issue. The PTA has had meetings with Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and discussed safety along the corner of Kenyon St. and Chief Sealth Trail. Even though there was a proposal for a flashing crosswalk, it is still a major safety issue because people drive way too fast around the entire school area.

Mr. Skutack commented that they are working with SRTS and SDOT on that intersection. Mr. Love pointed out that SDOT recommended moving the location to a point further down west of the block area. Ms. Tsai commented that the road is still very narrow, and people come up the hill way too fast and there is a blind spot that exists. Mr. Skutack noted that the project they are implementing is required by the Code to improve the school's side of the street. They reached out to SDOT to improve the location and walking pathways beyond the area of the project. The improvements are limited to the right of way and adjacent to the school's property.

Ms. Emily Ehlers of SDOT commented that she is coordinating with SRTS to ensure that the path is safe for kids. The standard is to have rectangular rapid beacons and a push button that will only activate as people cross the street. She has not done analysis about this project, but there will be warning signs as people drive up the hill and westbound to Kenyon St. She added that they are looking for a curved ramp as the school gets built.

Ms. Tsai commented that she understood the concerns about the building height for the people that live in 37<sup>th</sup> and Kenyon. Bus loading currently operates where it is being proposed but mentioned that there will be an increase in traffic and congestion when the school begins to accommodate 660 students. She is in favor of the electronic message board due to a diverse school community and it will be nice to have school events

translated into different languages. She is in favor of adding conditions to the timing of the messages to be considerate of the people that are living adjacent to the school.

Mr. Grain shared that he is in favor of granting the departure for the height. The parking quantity is a very hot issue and it is a difficult departure to support because of the overall impact on the neighborhood along with the on-street bus loading. He would like to see more detail on how the school will manage the increased capacity of students. He added that it will take some negotiating, flexibility and creativity to find a solution to address this issue. His only concern about the messaging board is how it would proliferate around the neighborhood, and he is hoping that the City would not allow this to happen in the neighborhood.

Mr. Cook commented that he likes what the school looks like now. He added that this was the first time he saw the modern design, and he likes it from the street view but was not sure how it will impact his hillside view. He inquired if the school construction is going to happen. Mr. Skutack commented that there will be a new school and the BEX (Building Excellence) levy was approved and passed by the voters in 2013 that include renovations and construction of a new school. He added that Wing Luke facilities are not very old, but the existing school does not meet the educational adequacy required by the School District, and this is the reason it must be replaced.

As a condition of the levy, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is required and there have been specific environmental studies conducted on the site. He mentioned that the scope of this Committee is to look at the departures being requested.

Mr. Cook commented that he is content with the height departure. His concern about the look of the mechanical penthouse is that it not look industrial and would prefer options regarding the design and materials that will be used. He commented that he will not support the parking departure and would like to see other options explored. He noted that he would like the design team to explore a way for the bus loading be pushed to the school property. He does not see a problem with the electronic signs. He heard about the concerns and would like to see conditions be attached so it will not have a tremendous impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. Skutack commented that the electronic message board's purpose is to get the message out to the community about school events and any commercial advertising will not be permitted.

Ms. Boothby commented that she is okay with the building height departure. She noted that parking must be fixed. She has no problem with the bus loading and the buses have been efficient. Her only concern is the parents who are jockeying for parking that affects the bus loading.

Ms. Sheehan mentioned that the way traffic moves around the school can be managed efficiently and effectively by working with the school administration and the Principal. Some schools have volunteers that coordinate parent drop off and pick up to ensure that people are moving effectively.

Ms. Boothby commented that she does not mind the electronic message board. She added that there should be a condition to turn off the messaging board earlier.

Mr. Skutack added that the school design is great. The School district is reaching out the neighborhood, and SRTS for traffic safety. The new building offers a proportionate amount of open space. He mentioned that a traffic management planning expert is available to help explain and understand how much parking is needed.

He added that in a transportation study, it is recommended that the school put together a TMP that consists of a committee of neighbors, parents and school officials that will ensure that traffic around the school site is addressed.

The Committee began their deliberation by discussing the requested departures.

### **1. Building Height:**

Mr. Love commented that the materials they are going to use for the mechanical penthouse will be durable, fiberboard and paintable. It will be a lighter color that projects a less bulky and massive structure. He added that the rooftop location of the mechanical penthouse is fixed. Any other location will be expensive, and this configuration reduces the footprint of the building.

Ms. Sheehan asked the Committee if they have enough information to recommend the building height departure.

Mr. Cook suggested making the mechanical penthouse as nice as possible for the people that will be viewed across the street. Ms. Godard commented that they could request to take pictures of the several angle views and incorporate them into the design.

Mr. Grain commented if the School District could consider an artistic or creative design on them. Mr. Skutack mentioned about having a simple, gray color that will blend with the sky, and not highlight the entire mechanical area.

Mr. Cook suggested having trees along Kenyon St. that are tall enough that will distract the view of the penthouse. Ms. Godard commented that is a condition that the Committee can add that reduces the scale of the building and provides a transition from the large structure.

Ms. Sheehan noted that what she heard from the Committee as conditions for the building height departure are: having trees that will blend to the security and obscure the additional height of the building and adding color and texture to the building materials to make the penthouse less industrial-looking.

Mr. Cook suggested allowing the building height departure for Phase 1 with a condition to postpone the proposed additional building until later and take into consideration the visual impact of the penthouse with a lighter color and tone.

Ms. Boothby made a motion to grant the building height departure for Phase 1 with conditions and it was seconded; the Committee voted, and the motion passed unanimously. It was decided that the additional new building on the South side of the property currently shown on the plans as phase II will come back to the community for additional discussion regarding its height if and when that structure gets built.

## **2. Electronic Message Board:**

Ms. Godard commented that from her experience from previous school departures, the neighborhood chose not to have signs. This Committee chose to add conditions by limiting the hour of usage, change in text color, or reducing the size of the message board.

Mr. Skutack heard of a suggestion earlier to move the reader board closer to the building itself to avoid vandalism.

Ms. Sheehan commented that what she heard from the public comments are setting a precedent for having electronic signs in the neighborhood, limiting the height, hours and days of operation due to light pollution. Mr. Skutack added about the choice of color of the signs to limit visibility.

Ms. Tsai also added to limit the electronic board to just one and there will be no additional signs around the school.

Mr. Cook mentioned about a comment that it will only allow text display and no graphics.

Ms. Ahmed commented that it is a diverse school and she would like to have announcements in different languages.

Mr. Cook asked if it is possible to move the message board closer to the school, have a darker background and have it on the half-hour before and after school hours for the parents arriving at the school.

Mr. Grain commented that he likes the proposed location of the sign, and any conditions should be focused on the actual visual sign itself. There should be a protection in place of the sign to deter any type of vandalism. Mr. Skutack mentioned having the School District worry about any vandalism issue around the school property.

Ms. Ahmed assed the importance having the sign on during special school evening events for families to see as they come and go.

Ms. Sheehan commented if the School is out of compliance regarding the schedule and time of the electronic message board, the neighborhood will report them to the City and contact the School officials.

Ms. Sheehan noted that what she heard from the Committee is to limit to one sign, and no flashing, scrolling or moving images, one color on a dark background, there will be no weekends, and the hours of operation during the week will be from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm except for special school events that can go to 9:00 pm. These events include family nights, potlucks, and school programs. The sign will only operate when the school is in session.

Ms. Boothby made a motion to grant the electronic message board departure with the above listed conditions, and it was seconded; the Committee voted, and the motion passed.

### **3. Parking Quantity:**

Mr. Cook proposed to have a second meeting to continue this discussion and identify any feasible options.

Mr. Skutack suggested the Committee come up with items would want to see to prepare for the next meeting.

Mr. Tod McBryan commented that he put together parking and traffic analysis report that is part of the SEPA analysis. He noted that the code requirement for parking spaces is based on assembly space.

Ms. Tsai commented about the western edge of the project site along 37<sup>th</sup>. She mentioned that the street is not wide enough for a two-lane traffic with the bus loading. She noticed people park on the west side of the street where there is no sidewalk and even observed people parking over the resident's yard.

Mr. Skutack suggested setting a condition to widen the street where the buses are. Mr. McBryan commented that a typical neighborhood street around the school, in general, is 25 ft. from curb to curb that allows parking on both sides of the street. The type of traffic congestion that is being described here is common around schools. He noted that the school has not effectively implemented a TMP. Once the school is reopened they will develop a TMP. One recommendation could include having a circulation pattern for parents and families that are driving into the school site.

He added that the site is challenging because of the little frontage that is suitable for drop-offs. He mentioned conducting an alternative where the school can implement a program with the neighborhood such as a walking school buses and other programs. These programs, however, need participation and commitment from parents, neighbors, and school officials to follow.

Mr. McBryan commented about parking and whatever the Committee decided, it will not change the pickup and drop off. He noted that the Committee can suggest widening 37<sup>th</sup> and create a bus pull out if it is possible. He mentioned that SDOT is resistant to change the roadway width, but the Committee could ask SDOT to explore this. He also suggested the Committee explore short-term parking restrictions.

Mr. Cook commented that this departure request needs some time to review and look at the issue. He suggested that a potential solution could be having staff parking and drop-off temporarily by the proposed building.

Mr. Skutack asked if what the Committee is looking for is to be able to provide parking for the entire school staff. He added that the homework for the design team is to look at additional parking spaces to develop for the Phase 2 addition and target a 100% building occupancy.

Mr. Cook commented that it will be nice to see some options to decide what this Committee or the neighborhood will be giving up.

Ms. Sheehan asked the Committee if there are any other items they want the design team to look at besides adding more parking onsite. She mentioned that bus loading and unloading will continue to happen at 37<sup>th</sup>.

She added that it is equally important as Mr. McBryan mentioned that a TMP is in place that the school's principal and the community can enforce.

Mr. Skutack mentioned that they will work with the school to create a TMP that addresses all the issues.



4. **On-street bus loading**

Ms. Sheehan noted that the Committee decided that there will be no additional work for the design team to address bus loading and unloading until the parking issue is resolved.

**VI. Committee Recommendations**

Ms. Sheehan opened the discussion for Committee recommendations and noted that the Committee had deliberated on three of the four departures, and they will need to hold a second meeting to continue the discussion. She noted that a second meeting will have public comments, clarifying questions and deliberations and that the School District and the Design Team may provide additional information.

**VII. Adjournment and scheduling of next meeting**

Ms. Sheehan mentioned that she will send out a poll survey to determine the date and time for the next meeting.

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