



## Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS)

### Puyallup School District Firgrove Elementary Replacement Capital Project #01-02-16

**Proposal:** Puyallup School District proposes to replace the existing Firgrove Elementary school with a new 85,000 square foot, two-story elementary school in the southwest corner of the District's property shared between Firgrove Elementary and Ballou Junior High, a combined 40-acre site (includes Pierce County tax parcels 0419164005 and 0419164008). The existing school will be open during construction of the new school. The site has frontage on Meridian Avenue East (SR-161) and 136th Street East. The new school will accommodate approximately 730 students and will include new commons/cafeteria, gymnasium, and library.

During the 2019-20 school year, Pope Elementary students and staff will occupy the existing Firgrove Elementary buildings during the planned remodel and expansion construction work at Pope Elementary planned for that school year. Pope Elementary students and staff will return to the Pope Elementary site in the summer of 2020 for the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. The existing Firgrove Elementary buildings may be surplused and raised as soon as the 2020-21 school year, subject to school board approval.

**Location:** Firgrove Elementary  
13918 Meridian Avenue East  
Puyallup, WA 98373

**Proponent:** Puyallup School District #3

The Puyallup School District hereby makes the following Findings and Determination based upon review of the SEPA checklist and attachments, and other information on file with the Puyallup School District.

#### **Findings:**

##### General:

1. A SEPA checklist with attachments related to this project was prepared July 10, 2017
2. The following reports were prepared and reviewed in conjunction with the environmental review for this project. They are on file with the lead agency and will be made available upon request.
  - a. FEMA Habitat Assessment Summary by The Watershed Company, dated 12/30/2016
  - b. NGPA Wetland Verification Report by The Watershed Company, dated 12/30/2016
  - c. Traffic Impact Analysis by Heath & Associates, dated 03/09/2017
  - d. Geotechnical Report by GeoEngineers, dated 11/17/2016
  - e. Geotechnical Report Addendum by GeoEngineers, dated 5/5/2017
  - f. Landscape Site Plan dated June 16, 2017
3. A Notice of Expanded SEPA Environmental Checklist with a 15-day comment period was issued July 14, 2017. Publishing of said notice included the following:
  - a. Advertisement in Tacoma News Tribune newspaper
  - b. Public notice sign posted at the site
  - c. Email notification to the Dept. of Ecology SEPA Register
  - d. Email notification to local agency partners
  - e. Posting on the Puyallup School District website.

4. The following comments were received within the 15-day comment period of the Notice of Expanded SEPA Checklist:
  - a. Letter from Pierce County Public Works Traffic Engineering dated July 19, 2017.
    - i. Comments relating to State Route 161 and jurisdictional authority.
  - b. Letter from Tacoma Pierce County Health Department dated July 28, 2017.
    - i. No objections to the proposal as presented.
5. Three public meetings have been held by the applicant for this project. Notice of each meeting was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site. School district staff and the project architect were present to address questions and comments. The dates and locations of these public meetings are listed below:
  - a. October 6, 2016 at Firgrove Elementary
  - b. November 17, 2016 at Ballou Junior High
  - c. May 10, 2017 at Firgrove Elementary

Information from these meetings can be found on the Puyallup School District website at: <https://www.puyallup.k12.wa.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=141151&pageId=3551525>

#### Earth:

1. The site is described as generally level, with some limited areas of 20-35% slopes along the southern portion of the site. No geological hazards such as steep slopes, erosion zones, landslide zone or abandoned landfills are located on the site or within the site vicinity.
2. Underlying soils within the project area generally consist of existing fill or reworked soils (fill), lacustrine ice-contact deposits (lacustrine soils), and glacial till like soils (glacial till).
3. It is estimated that the project will produce 12,400 cubic yards of export soil material and require 2,000 cubic yards of imported material.
4. Erosion control measures will be in place prior to any clearing, grading, or construction. A temporary erosion and sediment control plan will be prepared and implemented during the construction phase in accordance with Pierce County development standards. Best Management Practices will be following during clearing, grading and construction.

#### Air:

1. There are no known off-site sources of emissions or odors that will affect the project.
2. Construction activities will comply with Northwest Clean Air Agency regulations, including reasonable controls such as applying water to suppress dust during dry weather, and vehicle washing and street cleaning to prevent dirt, mud and other debris deposits on public roadways.

#### Water:

1. There is an existing wetland and buffer along the west boundary of the school property, per Wetland Verification Report prepared by The Watershed Company, dated December 30, 2016.
2. All construction activity related to this project will be outside the wetland and buffer areas.
3. There is a 100-year floodplain elevation, as mapped by Pierce County, along the west side of the school property. The project does not propose any improvements within this 100-year floodplain area.
4. No waste materials will be discharged into groundwater.
5. Flow control BMPs and stormwater facilities in accordance with Pierce County requirements will be utilized to mitigate surface runoff from the project. These include utilizing low impact development techniques, such as bioretention ponds and permeable pavement as the first tier of stormwater management and limited infiltration into the native site soils. Further mitigation and infiltration of stormwater will be provided by a combination of below grade open bottom chambers, and below grade detention pipes to provide the required mitigation prior to discharging into the existing drainage system.

#### Plants:

1. No threatened or endangered species are known to be on or near the site.

2. The project will preserve a stand of trees on the south and west edges of the site. Some trees will need to be removed in accordance with the Pierce County tree conservation requirements.

Animals:

1. No federally listed endangered species or state threatened species are known to inhabit within the project boundaries.

Energy and Natural Resources:

1. The project will be compliant with the Washington State Energy code and all applicable regulations in the latest edition of the International Building Code (IBC) at the time of building permit application or as adopted by Pierce County development regulations.
2. The proposed replacement school will be designed to meet Washington Sustainable School Protocol for high performance schools.

Environmental Health:

1. No environmental health hazard is anticipated from the development of this project.

Noise:

1. There are no significant adverse noise impacts arising from the project. Project construction activity will be limited to the hours identified by Pierce County Code 8.76.060 Maximum Permissible Environmental Noise Levels.
2. Proposals to reduce or control noise include: siting the building far away from the property line, constructing noise barriers, and installing silencers on mechanical intake and exhaust.

Land Use:

1. The proposal will not change the existing use of the site, since the shared 40-acre site includes Firgrove Elementary and Ballou Junior High School.
2. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation and zoning classification are:  
Zoning: Community Center  
Comprehensive Plan: Community Center

Housing:

1. No residential housing will be eliminated as a result of this project.

Aesthetics:

1. The proposed two-story replacement school building(s) will stand approximately 30 feet and will be located in the southwest corner of the district property adjacent to existing stands of trees. No views in the immediate vicinity will be significantly altered or obstructed.

Light & Glare:

1. New parking areas and exterior mounted lighting will utilize LED lighting fixtures with shields and full-cut off lights which direct optics toward the ground. These lighting measures will provide no measureable light spillage off site and will minimize glare. No significant impacts from light and glare from the project have been identified.

Recreation:

1. The project will not disrupt or displace any offsite existing recreational opportunities in the area.
2. Onsite playfield and hardscape play area will be restricted temporarily during certain phases of construction of the project.

3. The proposed replacement school will include site amenities such as pedestrian walkways, covered play area, play equipment area, and grass playfield with a walking track.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

1. Existing Firgrove Elementary includes two school buildings, not including the portable classroom buildings or covered play shed. The smaller of the two buildings is approx. 6,000 square feet and dates back to the 1930's. The main building is approximately 43,000 square feet and was constructed in 1961. Neither building is listed on a national, state, or location preservation register, nor proposed by the applicant/owner.
2. In the event that suspected historic or cultural artifacts, or objects of suspected archaeological value are discovered during site excavation, grading or other form of site development/construction, all work on site shall immediately stop and the property owner/developer shall notify the County, the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and all applicable local Tribe of Indians.

Traffic:

1. A traffic study was completed by Heath & Associates on behalf of the applicant, as listed under General Finding #2.
2. The site will have direct access from Meridian Avenue East (State Route 161) and from 136<sup>th</sup> Street East. Washington State Department of Transportation (SR 161) and Pierce County Traffic Engineering (136<sup>th</sup> St E). Both agencies have been included in all SEPA-related notices for this project.
3. Subsequent to the new school opening, the district will monitor as needed to provide the safest and most efficient operational flow in terms of student drop-off/pick-up queuing with the new layout and design.

Public Services/Utilities:

1. Public utilities, such as water, sewer and electricity, are available and have the capacity to support the construction and operation of the replacement school project.

**Threshold Determination:** The Responsible Official has concluded that a Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance applies to this proposal, that the proposal does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2) (c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information and comments on file with the Puyallup School District and the above noted findings. This information is available to the public on request. This MDNS is issued under WAC 197-11-350.

**Mitigation Conditions:**

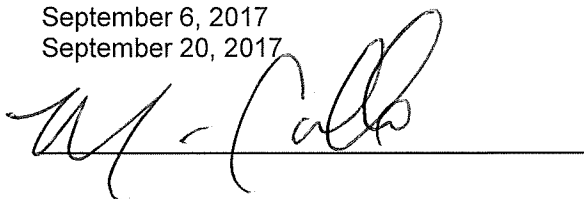
1. During peak school hours, exiting traffic onto Meridian Avenue East will be limited to right turns only.
2. Implement an offset bell schedule during the 2019-20 school year while Pope Elementary occupies the existing Firgrove facility and Firgrove Elementary occupies the proposed Firgrove replacement building.
3. Design and construct a southbound right-turn pocket or right-turn taper in accordance with WSDOT standards at the northerly inbound entrance on Meridian Avenue East to allow efficient ingress while quickly removing decelerating right-turn vehicles from the through lane of travel. The applicant shall coordinate with WSDOT staff on the design and phasing of said improvement.
4. Repair or replace damaged fencing along the perimeter of the existing Native Growth Protection Area established under Pierce County Wetland Application Number 401415, for said fence within 300 feet of the construction area for this project. New critical area signs shall be posted at 50 foot intervals attached to the fence.

**Comments:** Comments relating to this MDNS must be submitted within 15 days, by 4:00 p.m. on September 20, 2017. Contact Brian Devereux, Director of Facilities Planning, at (253) 841-8772 or at [deverebj@puyallup.k12.wa.us](mailto:deverebj@puyallup.k12.wa.us) with questions about the project.

Responsible Official: Mario Casello, Chief Operations Officer  
Lead Agency: Puyallup School District #3  
Operations Department  
302 2<sup>nd</sup> St SE  
Puyallup, WA. 98372  
Office: (253) 841-8772

Date of Issue: September 6, 2017  
Comment Deadline: September 20, 2017

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Casello', is written over a horizontal line.

NOTE: Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.075, the final determination of the Responsible Official may be appealed. In accordance with Puyallup School District SEPA Policy #6890, the Responsible Official will issue a Notice of Action. Any action to set aside, enjoin, review or otherwise challenge such action on the grounds of noncompliance with the provisions of chapter 43.21C RCW (State Environmental Policy Act) shall be commenced in Pierce County Superior Court.

NOTE: The issuance of this MDNS does not constitute project approval. The proposal must comply with applicable requirements of Pierce County prior to receiving construction permits.