



Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS)

Puyallup School District Fruitland Elementary Site Improvements Capital Project #02-01-23

Proposal: The site improvements at Fruitland Elementary are designed to provide safety improvements for the student pick up/drop off area and to reduce the number of vehicles queuing and parking along the school's frontage road known as South Fruitland. The south parking lot will be extended further south to provide a passenger drop off/pick up area, as well as additional onsite queueing and parking stalls. The north parking lot will be repurposed into the bus drop off/pick up area. Some onsite vegetation, including trees, will be removed as part of this project while other areas will remain protected.

Location: Fruitland Elementary
1515 S. Fruitland
Puyallup, WA 98371
Pierce County Parcel No. 0420324002

Proponent: Puyallup School District #3

The Puyallup School District hereby makes the following Findings and Determination based upon review of the Expanded 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 on January 27, 2025.
2. A Notice of Expanded SEPA Environmental Checklist with a 15-day comment period was issued January 31, 2025, following public notice requirements consistent with Board Policy 6890. Publishing of said notice included the following:
 - a. Publication in the Tacoma News Tribune.
 - b. Public notice sign posted at the site.
 - c. Electronic notification to the Dept. of Ecology SEPA Register.
 - d. Email notification to State and local governmental agencies.
 - e. Posting on the Puyallup School District website.
3. The following comments were received within the 15-day comment period of the Notice of Expanded SEPA Checklist:
 - a. Letter from Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife dated February 13, 2025.
 - i. Comments related to the project's arborist report, tree preservation and the need for removal of English Ivy in the remaining forested area.
 - b. Email from Pierce Transit dated February 11, 2025.

- i. No transit stops in the immediate area of the project and no further comment.
 - c. Emails from six community residents with topics covering:
 - i. Tree preservation.
 - ii. Support for traffic mitigation within South Fruitland near the project site.
 - iii. Support for non-project traffic solutions such as carpooling and higher school bus ridership participation.
 - iv. Inquiry about an additional sidewalk along South Fruitland.
 - v. Onsite traffic circulation route planning.
- 4. The following reports were prepared and reviewed in conjunction with the environmental review of and in conjunction with comments received on this project. They are on file with the lead agency and will be made available on request.
 - a. Site Plan – JMJ Team, November 2024, and Revised Site Plan – JMJ Team, February 2025.
 - b. Traffic Assessment – Heath & Associates, December 23, 2024, and Fruitland Elementary Parking Analysis, JMJ Team.
 - c. Preliminary Arborist Report, Tree Solutions Inc., November 2024 and Final Arborist Report, Tree Solutions Inc., April 2025.
 - d. Critical Areas Assessment, Habitat Technologies, November 12, 2024 and Revised Tree Removal Program Memo dated March 2025.
 - e. Geotechnical Engineering Report, Associated Earth Sciences, Inc., October 6, 2004.
 - f. Tree Retention Plan, JMJ Team Exhibit, February 25, 2025.

Earth:

1. The project will re-grade and re-configure the existing parking lot area. The project includes approximately 55,000 square feet of new or replaced impervious surface with 11,500 cubic yards of cut and 12,500 cubic yards of fill. Fill will come from approved suppliers.
2. Temporary erosion, sedimentation and construction dust control BMPs will be applied in accordance with City of Puyallup standard section 500 – Grading, Erosion and Sedimentation Control and all engineering Best Management Practices (BMPs), in accordance with City Engineer approval.

Air:

1. Watering of exposed soil during construction to suppress dust will limit impacts to ambient air quality resulting from the project improvements.
2. No known sources of foul or offensive odors are anticipated because of the project.
3. Construction of the project will result in temporary increases in emissions related to construction equipment. The District will follow Best Management Practices consistent with the regulations of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (“PSCAA”) and Ecology, and therefore, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Water:

1. The existing stormwater pond treats the runoff from the parking lot and school. The pond will be removed and runoff from the school and new parking lot will be collected in underground stormwater vaults located under the parking lot before discharging to the City’s stormwater system. Additionally, the pollution-generating parking lot runoff will have enhanced water quality treatment before discharge to the city system.

2. Storm water runoff will be managed and treated in accordance with the currently city-adopted version of the Department of Ecology Stormwater Design Manual (See PMC 21.10.040), all applicable city stormwater standards, all applicable NPDES permit requirements, and BMPs/standard engineering practices in accordance with City Engineer approval.
3. Per FEMA Firm Panel 53053C0337E (2017), the proposal area lies outside of the 100-year floodplain.
4. No discharge of waste material to surface waters is proposed for this project.

Plants:

1. The Final Arborist Report (*Tree Solutions, Inc., April 2025*) inventoried and assessed 96 trees on-site within the project scope area. Trees were inventoried if they appeared to be 15 inches or more in diameter at standard height (DSH).
2. 53 of the 96 trees inventoried meet the definition of a significant tree as defined by the City of Puyallup Vegetation Management Standards ("VMS") Administrative Policies and Procedures manual, Section 10.1.B. The VMS states that significant trees shall be retained, when possible, except as provided for certain situations which includes an assessment of the risks of maintaining any such tree or no reasonable alternative to removal exists for the siting of the project. The VMS provides flexibility and recognizes and authorizes the removal of significant trees on a project.
3. Following the issuance of the Notice of Expanded SEPA Checklist and review of the comments received during its comment period, the District Team evaluated which trees could potentially be preserved to balance preservation of as many significant trees as reasonably possible while mitigating traffic safety concerns from existing conditions on South Fruitland and maintaining necessary onsite elements, including the playground and a portion of the existing playfield areas which support student learning and physical exercise and provide year around community use.
4. The project scope has been revised to maintain 24 significant trees as defined by the City of Puyallup VMS, not including offsite trees and an existing memorial tree.
5. The planting schedule provides for a total of 82 trees to replace 29 significant trees planned to be removed. The 29 significant trees are in the footprint of the proposed project improvements or are unlikely to survive the adjacent construction due to required grading or other construction activities. This results in a ratio of 2.8 to 1 (planted trees to removed significant trees).
6. The District will follow tree protection recommendations described in the Final Arborist Report, including the installation of tree protection fencing around the Critical Root Protection Zone ("CRPZ").
7. The Arborist Report notes several invasive plant species onsite including Himalayan blackberry, English Ivy, and English Holly. English ivy was noted as pervasive, which can smother native vegetation, negatively impacting tree health, and increase the likelihood of tree failure when allowed to climb into tree canopies.

Critical Areas/Habitat:

1. The assessment of critical areas within and immediately adjacent to the project site followed the methods and procedures defined in the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1987) with the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region (United States Army Corps of Engineers, 2010); the 2014 Washington State Department of Ecology Wetland Rating Form for Western Washington

- (Hruby, T. & Yahnke, A. 2023); the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Forest Practice Rules (WAC 222-16-030); and City of Puyallup – Chapter 21.06.
2. The Critical Area Assessment Report (Habitat Technologies November 12, 2024) reviewed available public mapping resources and determined there are no regulated critical areas on or immediately adjacent to the property, including wetlands, streams, or critical fish and wildlife habitat area.
 3. The State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) SalmonScape Mapping was reviewed as a part of the assessment. This mapping resource did not identify any surface drainage corridors within or immediately adjacent to the project site. This mapping resource identified the Clarks Creek Corridor well offsite to the east of the project site.
 4. The City of Puyallup Mapping Inventory was reviewed as a part of the assessment. This mapping resource did not identify any environmentally critical areas within the project site or immediately adjacent to the site. The movement of any seasonal surface water along the eastern side of the South Fruitland Corridor is to the north which eventually enters a City stormwater conveyance system associated with South Fruitland that continues northerly. The offsite forested areas identified as a “general habitat area” are also part of the Clarks Creek Park and provide a system of accessible, well-used public recreational trails.
 5. No federally listed endangered species, state threatened species or habitat, or state sensitive species are known to inhabit within the project boundaries.
 6. The Critical Areas Assessment by Habitat Technologies concludes that no wetlands, streams, or Critical Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas exist on the project site. A single, federally listed “species of concern” – bald eagle – has been documented to utilize the habitats associated with the Puyallup River Corridor, the Clarks Creek Corridor, and a variety of the larger ponds within this portion of the City of Puyallup. As such, this species may occasionally overfly the project site although none have been documented.
 7. Habitat Technologies concluded, as documented in the Revised Tree Removal Program Memorandum that:
 - 7.1 the additional tree replacements will provide greater tree species diversity than presently exists onsite, would provide a better balance of coniferous and deciduous species, and would remove identified undesirable black cottonwood trees; and
 - 7.2 the proposed project will not result in significant adverse impacts to the physical or biological functions either onsite or offsite within the adjacent forested areas to the south and to the east of Fruitland Elementary.

Energy and Natural Resources:

1. The proposal includes the use of electrical energy for parking lot lights. LED lighting will be used for energy conservation and efficiency.
2. The project is not anticipated to impact solar access for the subject property or adjacent properties.

Environmental Health:

1. The project is not anticipated to contain increased or unusual risks related to fire hazards, explosive materials, toxic chemical storage or manufacture, hazard waste spill risk, nor is the project anticipated or known to increase the risk of health hazards to the environment.
2. If soil contamination is suspected, discovered, or occurs during the proposed construction, testing of the potentially contaminated media must be conducted. If contamination of soil or groundwater is readily apparent, or is revealed by testing, the Washington State Department of Ecology must be notified. Contact the Environmental Report Tracking System Coordinator at the Southwest Regional Office (SWRO) at (360) 407-6300.

Noise:

1. Motorized construction equipment will be properly fitted with mufflers to reduce engine noise and construction will be limited to daytime hours. The temporary nature of the construction as recognized by the Puyallup Municipal Code which exempts noise emanating from construction activities except between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM, and best management practices will reduce any potential noise impacts to be less than significant.
2. There is no long-term noise impact associated with this proposal.

Land and Shoreline Use:

1. This site is within the City of Puyallup. The site is zoned and designated as Public Facilities (PF).
2. The current use of the site as a public elementary school dates to the school opening in 1965. The proposal will not affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties.

Housing:

1. The project will improve transportation flow on South Fruitland to better serve students and families from existing and proposed housing within the Fruitland Elementary attendance area as well as the general community using South Fruitland, a major arterial in the City of Puyallup.
2. The site does not contain residential housing.

Aesthetics:

1. The project will comply with all site plan design requirements of the City of Puyallup, including landscape buffer requirements along South Fruitland.

Light and Glare:

1. The exterior lighting fixtures shall be shielded (full cut-off) from above in such a manner that the bottom edge of the shield shall be below the light source. Shielding will also confine the direct illumination of the light source to the school site property boundaries.
2. The exterior lighting is necessary to provide safety and security for students, staff and visitors.

Recreation:

1. The project will reduce the size of the play field by approximately 29,000 square feet. The remaining play field will be approximately 84,500 square feet of accessible grass surface.
2. No impacts to offsite recreational amenities will be impacted by this project.

Historic and Cultural Resources:

1. The project area has been previously disturbed with existing improvements. No cultural/historical resources have been identified on the project site.
2. The District will provide direction to the contractor that in the event an unanticipated archaeological or historic resources are encountered during construction, all ground-disturbing activity near the find will be halted, and Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation ("DHAP") will be promptly notified. If evidence of human remains is encountered, all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity will be halted immediately and protected from further disturbance. DAHP, the Pierce County Medical

Examiner's Office, and the City Police Department will be contacted. If the medical examiner determines the remains are non-forensic, then DAHP will take jurisdiction and notification to the appropriate Tribes will occur.

Transportation:

1. The proposed project will improve traffic circulation and reduce existing transportation impacts on South Fruitland from student drop off/pick up activities. To alleviate these impacts, the student pick up/drop off area onsite will be redesigned to limit the number of vehicles queuing along South Fruitland. The south parking area will be extended further south to provide a passenger drop off/pick up area that will provide 1,580 LF of off-street queueing.
2. The project will increase the number of parking stalls from 77 to 127 during drop-off and pick-up times. Onsite parking for after-school activities will accommodate up to 185 vehicles in total when combined with curbside parking. The increase of onsite vehicle parking and queuing capacity will substantially alleviate school-related queueing on South Fruitland during drop-off and pick-up times, documented in the Traffic Assessment Report by Heath and Associates.
3. During various stages of construction, offsite pick-up and drop-off, with school bus shuttle service, could temporarily occur on South Fruitland. Currently, students who waive into Fruitland Elementary utilize a school bus shuttle from the Puyallup School District's Kessler Center site (3901 39th Ave SW) for parent drop-off and pick-up of their student(s).
4. The district provides school bus transportation for students attending Fruitland Elementary that reside within the Fruitland Elementary attendance area and outside of the school walk zone. Transportation ridership counts show that school bus routes are underutilized by students/families. The district has historically encouraged bus ridership for eligible students, with ongoing efforts during the 2024-25 school year.
5. No improvements within South Fruitland are proposed nor required by the City of Puyallup as part of this project.

Public Services:

1. The proposed project is expected to benefit emergency responders and the community that travel South Fruitland near Fruitland Elementary by reducing the school-related traffic that may impede through traffic on South Fruitland during peak drop-off and pick-up periods of Fruitland Elementary.
2. The District will coordinate with local fire and police departments to ensure emergency response access to the school property prior to the installation of the proposed access gates.

Utilities:

1. Some existing utilities, such as power and water (fire hydrants) will be modified to serve the proposed project. Stormwater from additional impervious areas will be managed with an underground detention system, in accordance with City of Puyallup development standards, prior to release to the City conveyance system.

Threshold Determination: The Responsible Official has concluded that the Proposal, as modified, and with the mitigation measures which are incorporated into the Proposal and as set forth hereinbelow, 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 a review of a completed environmental checklist, the environmental and engineering studies, reports, plans, 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. Plant a minimum of 82 trees onsite, including native tree species, which will replace the removal of 29 significant trees, as defined by the City of Puyallup Vegetation Management Standards ("VMS") Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual. Replace proposed paper birch plantings with another tree species free from known pest issues, as determined by the District's Arborist, and as approved by the City of Puyallup.
2. Tree protection fencing, in accordance with the recommendations of the Arborist Report, shall be installed prior to the start of construction around all retained trees to protect their Critical Root Protection Zones (CRPZs) from soil compaction and other construction impacts.
3. Remove English Ivy from trees to be retained onsite, where applicable, within 3 feet of the tree base.

The MDNS, including attachments, are available on the Puyallup School District website at: <https://puyallupsd.org/sepa> or by visiting the Puyallup School District Capital Department office located at 319 12th St NW, Portable 2, Puyallup, WA, 98371 during business hours.

Comments: Comments relating to this MDNS must be submitted within 15 days, by 4:00 p.m. on May 13, 2025. Comments may be sent to the address below or sent by email at: sepa@puyallupsd.org.

Responsible Official: Brian Devereux, Director of Facilities Planning
Lead Agency: Puyallup School District #3
323 12th Street N.W.
Puyallup, WA. 98371
Office: (253) 841-8772

Date of Issue: April 29, 2025
Comment Deadline: May 13, 2025

Signature: _____

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 the applicable requirements of Pierce County prior to receiving construction permits.