

From: [Sarah Fletcher](#)
To: [Robin Proebsting](#)
Subject: Re: Draft EIS for East Seattle School (SEP17-020) now available
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2020 8:32:47 PM

Hello Robin, I went up to the site yesterday and there definitely is a grove of trees (ie, 8 or more) or possibly two groves. If you look at the Arborist's Report, if you look at nos.16 to 28, those are all Cypress trees and have a diameter of more than 24 inches, apart from one or 2. They are in very good condition, albeit, they might deem them close to the building, but they should be protected, not torn down. The Code makes it very clear about grove trees.

And I don't know if you realize, but there is a lane along the west side which is not wide enough for vehicles to pass each other. And there is a ditch on the side of the property. How did they propose to put the houses there with just a lane?

Thank you.

Sarah Fletcher

On Thu, Feb 20, 2020 at 11:03 AM Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org> wrote:

Greetings Sarah,

Recall that a percentage of trees can be removed when a subdivision is proposed--see [MICC 19.10.060\(A\)\(2\)\(a\)](#): "A minimum of 30 percent of trees with a diameter of 10 inches or greater, or that otherwise meet the definition of large tree, shall be retained over a rolling five-year period". While a minimum percentage of trees need to be retained, some can be removed under this code standard.

Best regards,

Robin

From: Sarah Fletcher <fletchsa1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 5:06 PM
To: Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org>
Subject: Re: Draft EIS for East Seattle School (SEP17-020) now available

And if they say that the trees are "viable," but then they are taking them out, what does that mean?

Viable is viable, it does not mean "not viable, remove."

Thanks.

Sarah

On Tue, Feb 18, 2020 at 4:26 PM Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org> wrote:

Greetings Sarah,

After reviewing the code and conferring with John, my understanding is that there are a few reasons why many of the existing trees are proposed for removal on this site. First, in cases where a tree is determined not to be viable for long-term survival (as reviewed and confirmed by the City Arborist), it may be removed as long as it is replaced with new trees at [the ratios required by code](#). The reason for this is to encourage as many trees as possible to survive long-term. This would not be achieved if a non-viable tree were to be required to be maintained. Allowing non-viable trees to be removed and requiring 1-6 trees to replace it supports greater tree coverage in the long-term.

Second, neither trees that have been maintained as a hedge (for example, many of the Leyland cypresses including tree 29), nor non-viable trees, nor trees with a diameter under 10 inches are counted for the purpose of calculating the 30% retention requirement. Trees 34 and 35, for example, have diameters of less than 10 inches, and are therefore not part of the calculation that determines tree retention required during subdivision (see [MICC 19.10.060\(A\)\(2\)\(a\)](#): “A minimum of 30 percent of trees with a diameter of 10 inches or greater, or that otherwise meet the definition of large tree, shall be retained over a rolling five-year period.”) Note as well that in the first review letter, staff relayed to the applicant that tree 25 needed to be retained and requested confirmation that at least 30% of regulated trees were retained and protected.

I hope this answers your questions. Please let me know if any further clarification is needed.

Kind regards,

Robin

[Robin Proebsting](#)

Senior Planner

City of Mercer Island – Community Planning and Development

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From: Sarah Fletcher <fletchsa1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2020 11:10 AM
To: Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org>
Cc: Evan Maxim <evan.maxim@mercergov.org>; John Kenney <John.Kenney@mercergov.org>; Dan Thompson <danielp.thompson@hotmail.com>; Jake Jacobson <jake.jacobson@mercergov.org>
Subject: Re: Draft EIS for East Seattle School (SEP17-020) now available

Hello, thank you for providing me with this information. I am going to go up to the library to print it so that I can see what is going on, but just off the bat, with regard to the Arborist's Report, it now seems that trees can be removed for having ivy growing on them, or for being old, or for not being a regulated tree, is that correct?

And if you look at tree nos. 25, 29, 33, as examples, it says that the trees are "viable," but then, if you look on the last page, it has "X's" marked for them to be removed. What's more, on the plan, there are two more Pine trees (7" and 9" respectively, nos. '34' and '35' were on the list of trees on the property, but it shows those two as being removed on the plan (the last page of the attachment).

And have you heard about trees not regulated by the City are excluded? Where does it say that in the Code? And wny are they "removing 3 small trees from the Report?" ie, the two Pine trees and one other?

"Portugal laurel and Leyland cypress, though shown on an earlier survey, are not trees regulated by City and are excluded from tree retention calculations." Is this what the City arborist is advising and who decides what is regulated and what isn't?

So, out of all the trees on the property, does it look like to you that just **one** will remain? So not altogether, clearcutting because they saved all of ONE TREE. It says in the Code: "Percentage of trees to be retained ((A-B)/Ax100) note: must be at least 30%." There are 35 trees if you include the two other Pine trees, so saving one tree out of 35 is **2.857%**, it is certainly nowhere near the **30% of trees which have to be retained**. So, they are going to have to save more trees. John, did you ask them to retain the 30% and what did they say when you told them they had to retain **30%**? And the hedges give privacy, what is going to provide privacy if all, but one of the trees, is removed?

This reminds me very much of the John Day Development, where they just marked anything they liked and had plans all along to remove just about every tree. And as for the Arborist's Report, that is a joke. He must be laughing his head off as how creative he was with his Report. When you read: "All trees possess the risk of failure. Trees can fail at any time, with or without obvious defects, and with or without applied stress." I never knew that.

And I am copying the City Arborist to ask him what he thinks of this Arborist Report and Jake as he was in the construction business. Perhaps, he can shed light on this. There is no need for O'Brien to have to build 14 houses on the property. He happens to have a house overlooking the lake, he is most definitely not going to be living in one of the houses he plans on building. It is just disappointing that after all the work I put into trying to save the 100-year old Sequoia tree, and the City brought in a new Code and it seems like a developer can just merrily have every tree, but one cut down, how do you think I feel? It is time you woke up as to what is going on and not act like you don't know what is going on. The developer has shown zero interest in working around the trees. And I would like to see the permits for all the trees the City arborist is allowing to be cut down and how many trees he is going to allow the developer to replant. Let me guess, he won't have to replace the necessary amount of trees as per the Code?

Thanks.

Sarah Fletcher

On Thu, Feb 13, 2020 at 9:42 AM Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org> wrote:

Greetings Sarah,

Thank you for your input. I do not have information on whether Mr. O'Brien plans to live in one of the houses proposed to be built. This type of information really is outside the scope of information pertinent to the SEPA review, which is focused on analyzing the potential impacts to historic resources, were the East Seattle School to be demolished.

Other uses allowed for the zone in which this site is located are listed in subsection (A) of the code here: <https://mercerisland.municipal.codes/MICC/19.02.010>. Uses that could potentially be allowed with a Conditional Use Permit can be found in subsection (C).

Lastly, the layout of the proposed subdivision is shown in the subdivision application materials here: <https://mieplan.mercergov.org/public/SUB19-002/Submittal%201/PlatMap%203.1.19.pdf>. Information on

trees can be found on the last page of the arborist report here: <https://mieplan.mercergov.org/public/SUB19-002/Submittal%201/ArboristRpt%202.21.19.pdf>

I hope this helps! Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Best regards,

Robin

[Robin Proebsting](#)

Senior Planner

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From: Sarah Fletcher <fletchsa1@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2020 9:33 AM

To: Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org>; Evan Maxim <evan.maxim@mercergov.org>

Subject: Re: Draft EIS for East Seattle School (SEP17-020) now available

Hello Robin, thank you for providing me with the information. Do you happen to know whether Mr O'Brien plans on living in any of the houses should they be built? And if not, did you ask him why he doesn't want to live in any of the houses? It just seems that there was a plan to build 14 houses right from the start. And quite frankly, 14 houses is too much anyway for that site relative to the houses next door.

I am favoring the option below, but would like to find out more about what uses under existing zoning it could be used for. I most definitely want the building documented as a historic building and be preserved under that condition. And the volleyball field does get a lot of use, I would like that maintained which is very nice of Mr. O'Brien to be maintaining that. I don't mind that should Mr O'Brien preserve the historical building and volleyball field that he and his O'Brien Auto Group get name recognition for what they have done.

"B. Adaptive Reuse of the Building. This scenario assumes that OB Mercer Properties, LLC would sell the site and that the East Seattle School building would be repurposed for alternative uses by others. Building use would be consistent with the limited range of uses under existing zoning and/or would utilize historical preservation incentives, and adaptive reuse would be carried out in a manner that retains the historical integrity of the building. This scenario does not meet the applicant's objectives." I thought like a YTN might be a good use for it, or a pre-school.

And would it be possible to see the layout of the 14 houses? I would like to see how that fits in with the

neighboring houses. It is not fair for the neighbors to have to look out at large houses when there was an expectation that they would always look out at the old Boys and Girls Club and volleyball fields.

And I take it that should they build 14 houses on that site, all the trees would "need" to be removed, is that a correct assumption? And as you would be aware by now, that is against the Tree City USA Proclamation and not allowed in the Code to remove every tree on the property.

Thanks.

Sarah Fletche

On Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 5:17 PM Robin Proebsting <robin.proebsting@mercergov.org> wrote:

Greetings,

This email is to let you know that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for project SEP17-020, reviewing impacts associated with the proposed demolition of the East Seattle School, is now available. You are receiving this email because you previously commented on this SEPA review or requested to be kept informed about this project. As a courtesy, I have attached a copy for you to review.

I have also attached the Notice of Availability, which contains information about the comment period and public meeting.

Best regards,
Robin

[Robin Proebsting](#)
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