CITY OF SHORELINE

Planning & Development Services Dept.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER# 301636

SITE – SPECIFIC DETERMINATION

CODE SECTIONS: 20.20.026, 20.50.390

ISSUES: There are two issues for each of the high school renovation projects. One has to do with whether the artificial turf used for the sports fields should count as "hardscape" under the Development Code. The other is a request to allow parking to exceed the minimum required, and a questions as to how the parking for high schools with theatres is calculated.

1. Hardscape

FINDINGS

Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) Section 20.20.024 defines Hardscape as follows:

> *Any structure or other covering on or above the ground that includes materials commonly used in building construction such as wood, asphalt and concrete, and also includes, but is not limited to, all structures, decks and patios, paving including gravel, pervious or impervious concrete and asphalt. (Ord. 531 § 1 (Exh. 1), 2009).*

Ordinance 531 was enacted to adopt the Department of Ecology Stormwater Manual for Western Washington. The ordinance also differentiated between the terms "impervious surface" and "hardscape." Impervious surface is regulated by the stormwater code. Hardscape, on the other hand, is regulated by the Development code and is more of an aesthetic value, as opposed to the value of imperviousness under the stormwater code. A synthetic turf may be completely pervious, however, that value does not matter when calculating hardscape. For instance, ompletely permeable pavement is counted as hardscape.

According to the Planning Commission staff report for the Ordinance 531, the intent of differentiating the two terms was to define hardscape as the area of a lot that has improvements, as opposed to open space or landscaped area. It is more a term that reflects the mass of built structures, the footprint of development, surfaces for thermal absorption/radiation (i.e. the "heat island" effect), etc.

A sports field is either turf or grass. They are both open spaces and their appearance is similar. A grass lawn is natural plant material, but requires maintenance in the form of watering and mowing. Turf is not natural but requires very little maintenance and no watering. Turf possesses limited evapotranspiration or root zone retention qualities and is more of a thermal sink than grass. At this point not much is known about turf fields as a source of contamination.

CONCLUSIONS

An athletic field does not appear to fall under the definition of hardscape in that it is not hard, nor is it made out of commonly used building materials. It is open space, however, it is not landscaped or natural area. The purpose of regulating hardscape is to keep a portion of properties in a landscaped or natural state, both for appearance and for the health of the environment.

The synthetic turf as proposed by the District is permeable but does not provide evapotranspiration or root zone retention like grass, and it is a heat sink, unlike grass. However since a lawn requires watering and maintenance with gas-powered equipment, the argument could be made that the artificial turf may not have any greater impact on the environment than a grass field. Still it is not in keeping with the spirit of the code to universally allow turf as "natural" area, as it is a man-made material.

The schools will have sports fields, regardless of whether they are turf or grass. The environmental impact is likely more or less equal between grass or turf, therefore, for these high school properties, it makes sense to take the surface out of the equation altogether – to not count it as either hardscape or natural area.

DECISION

For the high schools, the synthetic sports fields areas may be taken out of the hardscape calculations. This means that the area does not count as part of the area of the site, nor does it count toward total hardscape.

2. Parking: The District is requesting approval of more than 10% over the minimum parking requirement, and also clarification of the parking requirement for a high school with a theater. The District would like to provide between 400 – 500 parking spaces for adequate accommodation of evening community events.

FINDINGS:

SMC Section 20.50.390(C) limits excess parking as follows:

> *For all nonresidential uses, the maximum amount of allowed parking shall not exceed 50 percent over the minimum required number of stalls. Any proposal for parking that exceeds 10 percent over the minimum required number of stalls must be approved by the Director. (Ord. 238 Ch. V § 6(B-1), 2000).*

The Development Code parking requirements are as follows, per SMC Table 20.50.390(D)

High schools with stadium:	Greater of 1 per classroom plus 1 per 10 students, or 1 per 3 fixed seats in stadium
High schools without stadium:	1 per classroom, plus 1 per 10 students

Theater parking is listed separately as follows:

Theater:	1 per 3 fixed seats

If the parking for the theater were to be considered shared (as though it were a high school with stadium), the proposed number of spaces would exceed the maximum allowable. However, if the high school and the theater parking were cumulative, the number would fall into that allowable with the Director's approval.

Each of the high schools will have a student population of approximately 1600 students, and each will have 73 classrooms, which amounts to 233 parking spaces.

Each theater will have 450 seats. One parking space per three fixed seats amounts to 150.

If the greater of the student/classroom verses theater parking were calculated, only 233 spaces would be required. Taking that figure to the maximum of that allowed by code, 350 parking spaces would be allowed.

If the student/classroom figure of 233 were added to the theater figure of 150, the minimum required parking would be 383. The maximum would be 575.

There is no stadium at either school. The ball fields contain only limited bleachers. The stadium activities take place at the Shoreline Center, another School District location.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the parking requirements for a theater are listed separately in the code, the parking requirements can be considered cumulatively. This would adequately accommodate parking without spillover on to neighborhood streets. However, one can assume that there would not be much overlap between day time and night time uses of the property, therefore the number of spaces in excess of the maximum should be limited. The assumption behind limiting parking is to discourage an excess of pavement and to encourage other uses of transportation.

To further protect the public interest in light of environmental consequences of additional pavement, Best Management Practices (BMP's) for stormwater management should be employed on the excess spaces.

DECISION:

The District may calculate the required parking for each high school and its theater cumulatively. The District is granted an excess over the minimum required parking of 20%, which would allow for approximately 460 parking spaces. The excess number of parking spaces shall employ BMP's for stormwater management.

The amount of hardscape on the property (regardless of the level of permeability) is limited to 50%.

Director's Signature

5/12/10
Date