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November 18, 2019

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for reaching out. I hope this letter helps address some of your concerns, but feel free to reach out if you have any other questions.

WSDOT has applied for a permit to remodel their existing regional headquarters (RHQ) facility in its entirety to allow for the State Department of Ecology (DOE) to relocate offices to the site. They will also be constructing a new building on the east end of the site which will store DOE's fleet vehicles.

For many development projects in the City, applicants are required to install certain on-site and right-of-way improvements depending on the scope of the project. For right-of-way/frontage improvements (such as street widening, curbs, sidewalks etc.), these improvements are triggered when the construction value of a project exceeds 50% of the value of buildings on the property. In this case, the RHQ building was assessed in 2019 to be worth about \$18.2 million, and the applicant has indicated the project to be worth more than \$20 million. Therefore, the applicant is required to install the following improvements along Dayton Ave N (note that this only applies to the WSDOT side of the street):

- a) Street pavement widening for on-street parking and bus stops;
- b) New curbs
- c) 5-foot-wide amenity zone (typically a landscaping strip)
- d) 8-foot-wide sidewalk

These requirements are set by the Public Works Department in the Engineering Development Manual (EDM) and are based on the needs of the City's transportation infrastructure.

**Due to the installation of these improvements, as well as the grading work needed to even out the slopes of the sidewalks, some of the trees are going to be too impacted by construction to save. Based on the plans they submitted in September, I am counting a rough total of 378 existing trees along Dayton Ave N, 130 of which are proposed for removal, primarily those along the top of the slope. (I will ask the applicant for a more accurate count, as the trees are so dense in places it is hard to precisely count them.) This leaves about 248 trees**

remaining along the frontage of Dayton. I will note, however, that this is not the final count of trees to be removed/retained. I know of two things that could probably contribute to additional tree retention:

1. For past projects, the City has allowed deviations to required frontage improvements for the purpose of saving trees. These deviations can include reducing the width of sidewalks or parking lanes, or “jogging” the sidewalk around trees in order to reduce their impacts. Any deviations would need to be approved by the City Engineer.
2. The steep slopes along Dayton qualify as Very High-Risk Landslide Hazard Areas, and therefore require additional protection. Tree removal from steep slopes can reduce slope stability. We are requiring the applicant supply a report from a qualified professional (e.g., engineering geologist or geotechnical engineer) that examines the impact of tree removal on these slopes. If they determine that removal will result in an increased risk of landslides, then they will either need to retain additional trees or mitigate (replant) for those removed.

Additionally, there are requirements for replacement trees both on-site and in the City right-of-way. Depending on the size of the trees to be removed, they will need to be replaced with 1 to 3 smaller trees (1.5-inch caliper if planting deciduous trees, and at least 6 feet tall if planting conifers).

WSDOT submitted their permit applications formally in late September, but during the initial review, staff found several key items were missing, and the application was deemed incomplete. Just last week, the applicant submitted the remaining materials needed for review, so we will check again to see if they’ve provided everything we need. Once staff determines the application is complete, we will mail a Notice of Application to all owners of property within 500 feet of the site. There will also be notice signs along the street frontages of the site and an advertisement published in the Seattle Times. At that time, you will be invited to submit written comments to the City, as well as come to City Hall to view the plans and project file if you so choose, though you are also welcome to come to City Hall to look at plans before the notice goes out.

Finally, I will also note the permit file numbers for this project, as different work is happening under different permits (this will be helpful when asking for plans/documents at City Hall):

- a) COM19-2211/COM19-2367: RHQ remodel (building-only permits)
- b) COM19-2368: New storage facility for DOE vehicles
- c) DEV19-2366: Site development permit (on-site tree removal, landscaping, drainage, etc.)
- d) ROW19-2371: Frontage improvements and right-of-way tree removal

We understand the concerns of Shoreline residents to protect as many trees as possible, and City policy aims to balance these concerns with the need for new development and infrastructure. Once we begin reviewing the permit materials for this project, City staff will carefully examine all plans and reports to ensure they are in compliance with this policy, and to find ways to protect as many trees as possible.

Thanks again for your input, and please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caleb Miller', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Caleb Miller, Associate Planner  
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