

Initial Project Review

Conditional Use Permit: Franklin Pierce School District Gates High School Relocation

Application Number: 994366
Parcel Number: 0319131002

Mid-County Advisory Commission (MCAC) Public Meeting: October 11, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.,
at the Mid County Community Center, 10205 44th Avenue East, Tacoma, WA

Proposal: Relocate Gates Alternative High School and Transitional School to the site of the former Collins Elementary School. There will be some site improvements and the existing building will remain to serve the school's roughly 130 students.

Project Location: 4608 128th Street East, Tacoma, WA, in the Rural Separator (RSep) zone classification of the Mid-County Community Plan (MCCP) area, within the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 13, T19N, R 3E, W.M., in Council District #5

Review Summary: The project can be conditioned to comply with all applicable policies and objectives of the Pierce County Code, Shoreline Regulations, Comprehensive Plan, and MCCP area. Staff has reviewed this proposal for compliance with all policies, codes, and regulations and intends to recommend approval with conditions, based on the submitted application and current information.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): The Franklin Pierce School District requests and is granted lead agency SEPA status for their proposals. Staff is not certain of the current status or proposed issuance of a SEPA determination.

County Contact: Dan Buhl, Senior Planner, 253-798-3268, dan.buhl@piercecountywa.gov

Pierce County Online Permit Information:

<https://pals.piercecountywa.gov/palsonline/#/permitSearch/permit/departmentsStatus?app!PermitId=994366>



Project Data

Complete Application Date: July 27, 2022

Initial Project Review Mailed: October 6, 2021

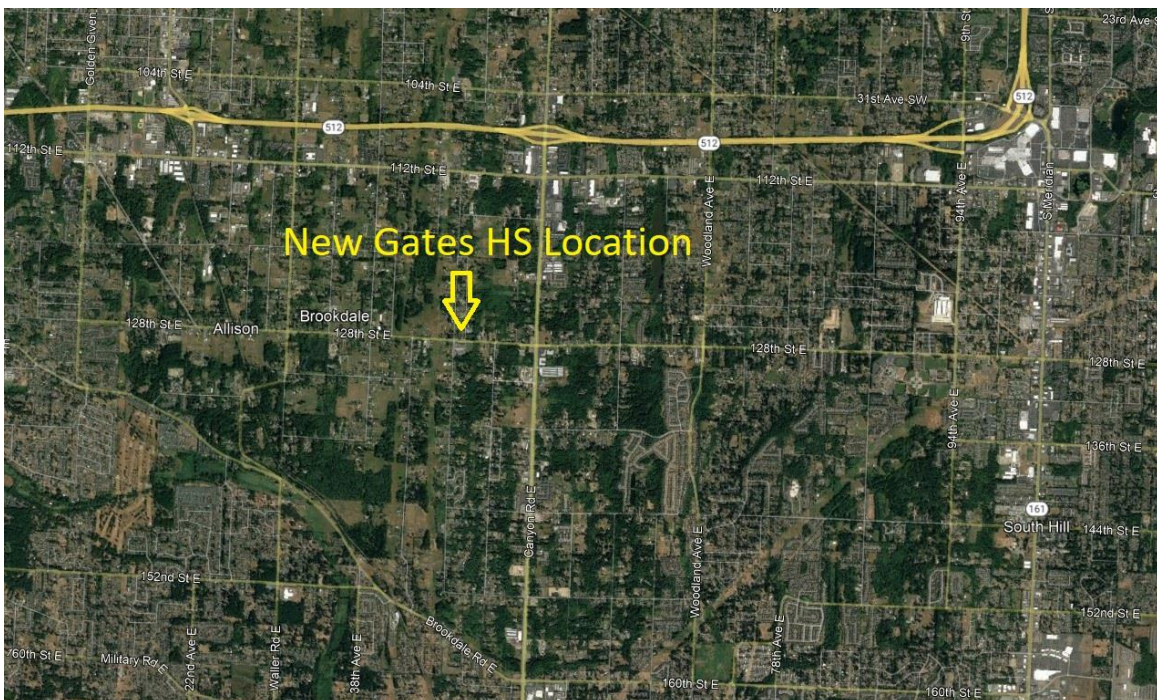
Owners/ Applicant: Franklin Pierce School District
Attn: Robin Heinrichs
315 129th Street South
Tacoma, WA 98444-5099
rheinrichs@fpschools.org

Agent: AHBL, Inc.
Attn: Lisa Klein
2215 North 30th Street, Suite 300
Tacoma, WA 98403
lklein@ahbl.com

Legal Notice

- *August 31, 2022*: Notice of Application and Public Meeting Notice, including the Mid-County Advisory Commission (MCAC) public meeting and Examiner's Hearing information, was sent to property owners within a radius of 300 feet, but not less than two parcels deep, around the exterior boundaries of the subject property.
- *September 13, 2022*: The site was posted on this date and confirmed with a Declaration of Posting.
- *September 27, 2022*: Legal notice was published in the official County newspaper (*Tacoma News Tribune*), advertising the public meeting to be held by the MCAC.

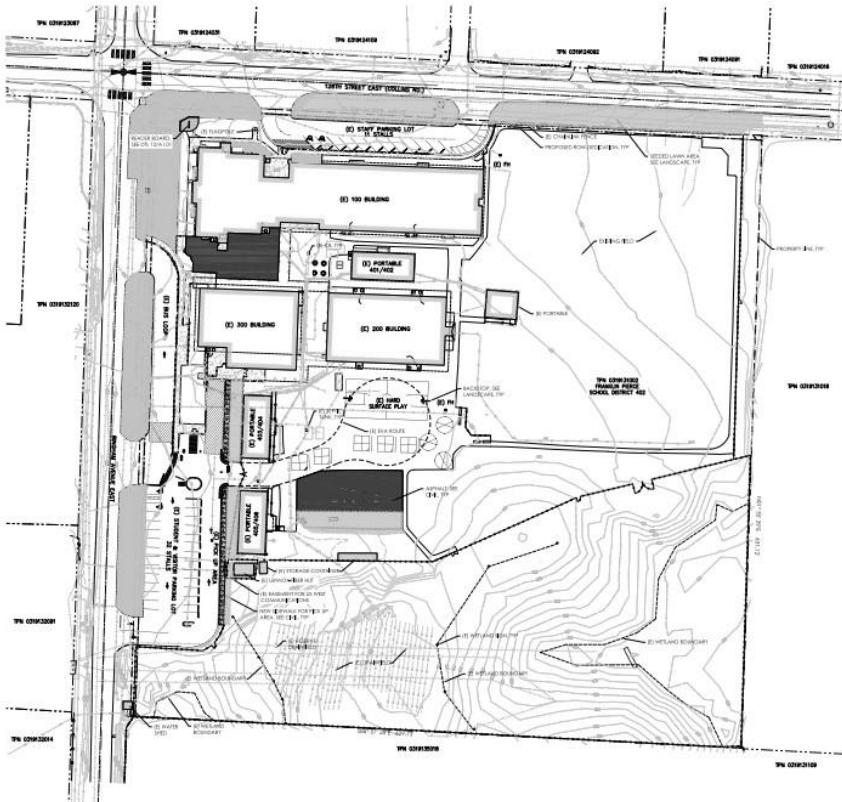
Vicinity Map



2017 Aerial Photo



Site Plan



Review Responsibility

The following list includes examples of jurisdictional areas for various County departments and divisions typically involved in the review and administration of this proposal:

A. Planning and Public Works (PPW):

- Current Planning verifies compliance with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, applicable community plans and Development Regulations such as, but not limited to, zoning, critical areas, natural resource lands, shoreline management, design review, and potential environmental impacts.
- Development Engineering reviews for drainage, erosion control, site development, flood, survey, landslide and erosion hazard, lot dimensions, and road standards.
- Resource Management reviews for consistency with the County wetland and fish & wildlife regulations.

B. Mid-County Advisory Commission (MCAC):

The MCAC's role in the review process for a land use proposal includes the following:

- Review the proposal for consistency with the goals and policies in the Community Plan.
- Provide a local perspective that includes input from the community and insights of which PPW staff or the Hearing Examiner may not be aware.
- Offer recommendations for project design to fit with the community's vision while remaining consistent with the Community Plan.

PCC Chapter 2.45 Land Use Advisory Commissions provides regulations that apply to the MCAC. Per PCC 2.45.130, Land Use Advisory Commission (LUAC) recommendations on a land use application shall be to approve, modify and approve, deny, or make no recommendation.

Review Criteria

The following regulations and policies shall be used during the review process including, but not limited to:

- A. Pierce County development regulations and construction and infrastructure regulations;
- B. Pierce County Comprehensive Plan and Mid-County Community Plan;
- C. Applicable state statutes; and
- D. All applicable notes on related previously recorded County documents.

Site Characteristics

- The 10-acre site previously was the home of Collins Elementary School.
- The parcel is located south of 128th Street East and east of Bingham Avenue East with access from both street frontages.
- The project site consists of three fixed buildings with additional onsite portable buildings for a total building area of approximately 41,000 square feet.
- The site is relatively flat with a large wetland and riparian buffer area along the eastern and southern parcel boundaries.

Agency Review Comments

The proposed project has been routed to interested departments and agencies for review. Comments received from various departments and agencies may be found by accessing the Online Permit Information referenced on page 1.

Comments have been received, and corrections and/or additional information requested by the following agencies on the application:

- Pierce County Resource Management, Dara Kessler – commented the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) will be approved once the related Wetland Application is approved.
- The Nisqually and Puyallup Tribes have noted they have no specific comments or concerns, but wish to be kept informed in the case of any Inadvertent Discoveries of Archaeological Resources/Human Burials.

Public Comments

No public comments have been received concerning the proposal.

Initial Planning and Public Works Staff Review for Consistency with Development Regulations and Policies

Mid-County Community Plan (Pierce County Code, Title 19B)

Urban Residential

GOAL MC LU-11 Allow non-residential uses within residential areas.

MC LU-11.1 Limited non-residential uses such as schools and daycares should be allowed within residential areas.

MC LU-11.2 Non-residential activity should be scaled and sized appropriately to ensure compatibility within the neighborhood.

Staff Comment: The site previously housed Collins Elementary School, which has moved to a new location. The neighboring properties are also zoned RSep and have had this school site as a neighbor for decades.

Title 18A Development Regulations – Zoning

18A.27 Mid- County Use Table

This Chapter provides the Use Tables and Density and Dimension Tables for the MCCP area.

Staff Comment: Under the Civic Use Category in Table 18A.27.020 - Rural and Resource Zone Classifications, the Education Use Type is referred to the Rural School Siting regulations (See 18A.43.020). PCC 18A.43.020 A allows for schools in rural areas through the Conditional Use Permit process with specific criteria listed in the section that will be discussed later in this review.

18A.33 Use Category Descriptions

18A.33.220 Civic Use Category – Description of Use Categories

18A.33.280 D – Education Use Type. Education Use Type refers to educational services provided by public, private, or parochial institutions. Typical uses include, but are not limited to, elementary, junior, and senior high schools, community colleges, public and private colleges, universities, commercial/vocational schools, and private colleges. This type includes buildings and campuses. Educational facilities may accommodate other civic uses during the standard school day or when facilities are not in use such as, but not limited to: religious services, recreation, social services, daycare facilities, Head Start and preschool, and recreational or educational programs for students and the greater community.

Staff Comment: A high school is considered Level 2 in the Education Use type, confirming the need for the Conditional Use Permit for the new use.

18A.35 Parking. The purpose of this Section is to regulate off-street and on-street parking areas to ensure adequate parking, lessen traffic congestion, and create uniform standards which provide sufficient on-site areas for parking and maneuvering of motor, transit, and nonmotorized vehicles.

Staff Comment: The new school will be located at the site of a former elementary school and currently has a parking lot. The parking provided is sufficient. Section 18A.35 Parking Minimum is 1 parking stall per employee plus 1 per 10 students, and a maximum of 2 per employee plus 1 per 5 students. Estimates provided for the alternative and transitional schools is 34 staff and approximately 150 students. Parking must be provided from 49-64 stalls.

18A.43 Siting Rural Schools

18A.43.020 Location Standards New educational facilities may be allowed through Chapter [18A.17](#) PCC, Use Category and Use Type Tables, in the rural area through a Conditional Use Permit subject to the following conditions:

1. The location of the proposed facility meets Comprehensive Plan policies addressing schools outside of the urban growth area;

Applicant Comment: The Conditional Use Permit is consistent and compatible with the intent of the goals, objectives and policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Mid-County Community Plan, and PCC 18A.43 Siting Rural Schools. Specifically, the proposal is consistent with the following:

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Goal LU-78: Site schools, institutions, and other community facilities within the rural area when they serve primarily rural student populations.

Land Use Policy LU-78.1.2: Expansion of an existing site is preferred over the creation of a new site.

Land Use Policy LU-78.1.3: Ensure the location and design of proposed facilities in the rural area is harmonious, including size and scale, with the existing character of the area. Land Use Goal LU-119: Public and community facilities will be located in consideration of the following criteria.

Land Use Policy -119.1: Public facilities should be designed around the service delivery standards with service levels appropriate to the people using each facility.

Land Use Policy -119.2: Recreation facilities, schools, libraries, medical area facilities, sheriff and other community facilities, should be convenient to people using them.

Land Use Policy -119.3: Community facilities should be located in centers or in areas with direct access to major thoroughfares.

Land Use Policy -119.4: Public facilities should be located on sites which are economical to develop and reasonably level.

Land Use Policy -119.6: Schools, because of health and safety issues, should be protected from traffic.

Land Use Policy -119.7: Cultural facilities, educational institutions, and spectator sports facilities, because of service areas, should be located central to their function or where complementary functions could be located.

Land Use Policy -119.9: Community facilities should be located on level or gradable land and avoid geologically hazardous areas.

Mid-County Community Plan:

Land Use Goal LU-2.3: Provisions should be made to allow for limited civic and public safety uses when appropriately designed so as to be compatible with their surroundings.

Land Use Goal LU-11.1: Limited non-residential uses such as schools and daycares should be allowed within residential areas.

Design and Character Goal D-4: Natural vegetation should be required as a component of all new rural developments.

Transportation Policies Goal MC T-7.2: Limit sidewalks to the major arterials and to areas where schools and businesses are located.

PCC Chapter 18A.43 Siting Rural Schools:

PCC 18A.43.020 – Expansion, modernization, or placement of portable classrooms at existing schools are permitted outright with applicable permits.

PCC 18A.43.020.3 – Expansion of an existing site is preferred over the creation of a new site.

2. The proposed facility is harmonious with the existing rural character of the area; and

Applicant Comment: The proposal is to use the existing developed school site for educational purposes and will not change or adversely affect the established character. The proposed project will apply for development and building permits that will be required to meet Pierce County development standards to ensure it is within the established and planned character of the surrounding vicinity. Therefore, changing the educational types for an existing school building/campus will not adversely affect the established or planned character for the surrounding community.

3. The school district has made a finding that the new school is necessary to accommodate the district's need, which cannot otherwise be reasonably accommodated on an existing site.

Applicant Comment: Public education is a use that improves the health, safety and general welfare of the community. The purpose of the proposal is to replace the existing vacated elementary school use with a new use that is designed to meet today's educational needs for both alternative high school curriculum and transitional program needs and better serve the community. The proposal will maintain the existing driveways/access locations and provide adequate onsite parking. The proposal will result in a reduction in trip generation from the previous elementary school use. The proposal will install grass where there is presently gravel along the frontages to discourage illegal parking in these areas. Therefore, the proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

Staff Comment: Staff finds the applicant's review criteria responses more than adequate to meet the rural school siting review criteria.

Title 18J Development Regulations – Design Standards and Guidelines

The required design standards and guidelines to promote compatibility between land uses by reducing visual, noise, and lighting impacts of development on users of the site and abutting uses are outlined in this section. The following are a list of the relevant standards and guidelines:

18J.15.040 Landscape Buffers. The purpose of this Section is to use landscaping and buffering concepts to promote compatibility between land uses by reducing the visual, noise, and lighting impacts of development on users of the site and abutting uses.

Staff Comment: A Level 1 landscape buffer is required along the roadway frontages. The other two property boundaries have existing vegetation that adequately screens the neighboring properties.

18J.15.090 Surface Parking Lot Landscaping. The intent of surface parking lot landscaping is to provide visual and noise relief to adjacent uses from parking lots by enhancing public and private open spaces, and to facilitate aquifer recharge.

Staff Comment: Any new parking areas shall meet the requirements of this section.

18J.15.100-130 Landscaping Plant and Soil Requirements. The intent of these code sections is to foster the use of plants native to Western Washington and drought tolerant plants common to this area, ensure compliance of applicable plant related design standards through installation concurrent with development of a project site, and ensure that vegetation required by this Chapter is healthy and continues to meet the objectives for the life of the project.

Staff Comment: All proposed landscaping must meet the requirements of these sections.

18J.15.155 Mechanical Equipment and Outdoor Storage Screening. Protect the aesthetic quality of developments and surrounding properties by screening service areas for mechanical equipment and outdoor storage.

Staff Comment: Any proposed addition to any rooftop mechanical equipment must be screened per this section.

18J.70 Mid-County Community Plan Area Design Standards and Guidelines. A review of the MCCP Table 18J.70.020-1 Type of Review Required for Regulated Activities found the following section will require compliance:

Staff Comment: A review of the individual code sections found no standards or guidelines were applicable due the school's location and lack of proximity to any local neighborhood.

Questions for MCAC Discussion and Consideration

Conditional Use Permit:

- Is the request consistent with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan or Mid-County Community Plan? If not, how can it be made consistent?

Other Questions or Concerns?

Gates Alternative High School CP IPR MCAC-DB.docx