



**DIRECTOR DECISION**

*from the* DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**Permit Number and Project Nam:** DR-2024-0010 Sumner Public Library

**Applicant:** Pierce County Library District – 3005 112th Street E, Tacoma, WA 98446 - Christina Neville-Neil  
Contact: Ko Wibowo

**Location/Parcel(s):** 15216 Main Street E, Sumner, WA 98390. 0520193060, 0520197014, 0520197015

**Project Components:** The site is made up of three parcels totaling approximately 1.7 acres, the parcels will be consolidated into one lot for the new Sumner Public Library building. The building will be approximately 17,500 SF with additional associated site development. Site development will include the East Main Street frontage and on-site parking on the south side of the site, lighting, landscaping and stormwater management.

**Related Permits:** Conditional Use Permit, SEPA, East Main Modification, Development Agreement, Civil and Building permits.

**Date of Meeting:** November 13, 2024 at 6:00 pm

**Staff Representative:** Scott Waller – Senior Planner

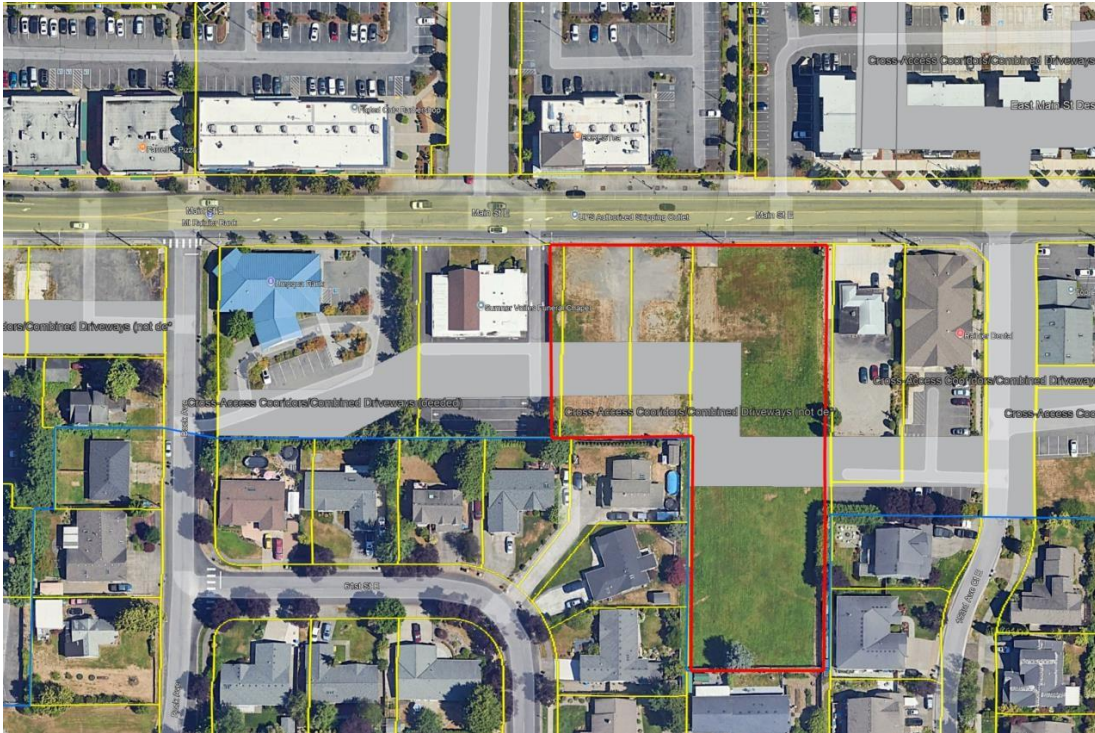
**Recommendation:** Approve modification as proposed.

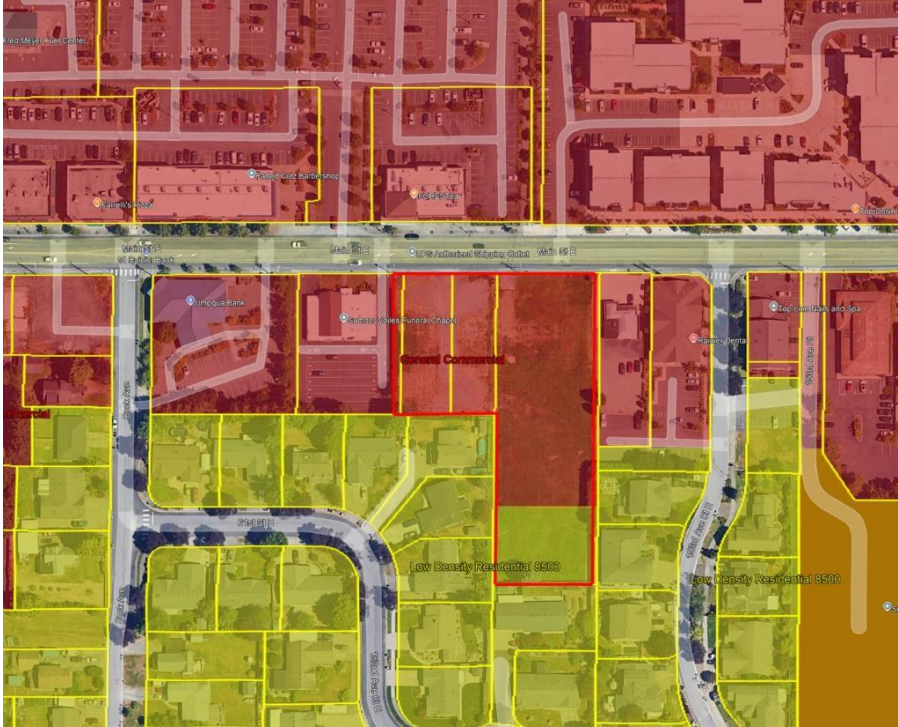
**Attachments:** Site Plans, Traffic Study, Modification Request Narrative and Elevations.

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### a. Site Location and Vicinity

The project occurs over three parcels all fronting on East Main Street. The site has previously included residential and commercial uses. The site is relatively flat and does include some contaminated soils and is currently working with Department of Ecology to receive a No Further Action. All parcels are located in Sumner's East Main Street Design Strategy area. The East Main Street area includes requirements for wider sidewalks and using cross access connections instead of individual driveways for vehicular access.





**b. Proposal Description and overview**

This scope of review and recommendation for the Design Commission is through the Modified Approvals under SMC 18.43.140 and not on the actual proposed developments design and only relates to this projects ability to terminate the cross access corridor at the Library site. Libraries are public facilities and wouldn't typically go through a formal Design Review process; however, part of the CUP criteria looks at a projects design and layout and its consistency to the zone. The Library has asked for an informal discussion with the Design Commissions and input on the design and layout of the site and building.

**II. CODE AND ANALYSIS**

The project site is primarily zoned General Commercial with a small section of LDR and is evaluated by SMC 18.43 for East Main Street vehicular access. Below are some relevant sections of code:

**GC, General Commercial District.** The GC district is intended to provide for retailing and other commercial services that serve the large market area surrounding the Sumner community. In this respect, GC district regulations are intended to accommodate conventional commercial development that is typical to urban areas such as shopping centers, commercial malls and office complexes. Such commercial developments usually rely upon the automobile as their principal source of access.

**18.43.010 Purpose of requirements for access management within the East Main Street area.**

The design requirements of this section are intended to implement the East Main Street design strategy and recognize that East Main Street serves three divergent functions: moving traffic through the city, providing both safe vehicular and pedestrian access to individual properties located along the street, and as an extension of the downtown business core. The traffic movement function of East Main Street can compromise the provision of safe vehicular and pedestrian access to individual properties. In addition, the use of multiple driveways along East Main Street detracts from the aesthetic appeal of the area for pedestrians and auto traffic to the detriment of businesses. Therefore, it is the purpose of this chapter to maintain an appropriate balance between these functions, recognizing both the rights of property owners to reasonable access and the public purpose of safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians in an aesthetically appealing environment.

Whenever any property will take vehicular access from East Main Street and within the East Main Street area, the access to the property shall be in accordance with the requirements of this chapter. (Ord. 2167 § 7, 2006; Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)

**18.43.020 Definitions.**

“East Main Street” means that portion of the right-of-way of Main Street beginning at a point 182 feet east of the eastern right-of-way line intersection of Valley Lewis Avenue and proceeding east to a point 658.75 feet west of the western right-of-way line of a 160th Avenue.

“East Main Street area” means the area within the boundaries shown in the East Main Street design strategy and designated as such on the city’s official zoning map.

“New construction, major” means when:

1. The value of new construction, as determined by the building official, exceeds 10 percent of the assessed improvement value of the structure in any 12-month period prior to the new construction; or the new construction increases the total building area by 2,000 square feet, whichever is less; or
2. The new construction results in the conversion of a single-family dwelling to any other use; except, an existing single-family dwelling may add an accessory dwelling unit per SMC 18.16.080(L) without being required to construct the combined driveway; or
3. Construction of a new parking lot that exceeds the threshold in SMC 18.46.080(C).

“New construction, minor” means development that requires any of the following:

1. A certificate of occupancy for a change of use per the city’s adopted building code, chapter 15.08 SMC;

2. A building permit, except when for the maintenance, repair, or aesthetic improvement of the facade that does not increase the building footprint of the structure; or replacement of mechanical equipment or changes to landscaping;
3. A land use permit; or
4. An increase in the number of spaces of an existing parking lot by an increment greater than 100 percent. (Ord. 2167 § 8, 2006: Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)

**18.43.090 Cross-access corridors designated.**

A. The general location of cross-access corridors shall be indicated on the official zoning map by means of dashed or dotted lines or other suitable symbols. This designation shall be used to show what properties are required to provide a cross-access corridor and not its exact location. This indication shall distinguish those portions of the designated corridor for which easements have been granted from those that have not been granted.

B. At the time of major or minor new construction, the development services director, in coordination with the public works director, shall be authorized to designate the exact location of cross-access corridors on properties within the East Main Street area. (Ord. 2788 § 45, 2021; Ord. 2167 § 10, 2006: Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)

**18.43.100 Dedication and construction of cross-access corridors.**

A. Wherever a cross-access corridor is designated, no major or minor new construction shall be approved unless the property owner shall grant an easement, running with the land, allowing public ingress and egress from the other properties in the affected area and, where applicable, to East Main Street. Prior to issuance of a building permit for new construction, such easement shall be recorded in the public records of Pierce County and constitute a covenant running with the land.

B. When major new construction occurs on properties that contain designated cross-access corridors per SMC 18.43.090, the cross-access corridors shall be constructed as a part of parking lot construction.

C. Cross-access corridors shall be designed to provide unified access and circulation within the East Main Street area, in order to assist in local traffic movement. Each designated corridor should be designed to include the following elements:

1. Serve more than one parcel and should be a minimum length of 200 feet and have a design speed of 10 miles per hour;
2. Minimum 24 feet wide to accommodate two-way travel aisles designed for automobiles, service and delivery vehicles including tractor-trailers;
3. Stub-outs and other design features to make it visually obvious that the abutting properties may be tied in to provide cross-access; and

4. Where feasible, link to other cross-access corridors in the area. (Ord. 2167 § 11, 2006: Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)

***18.43.110 Design to accommodate service vehicles.***

Cross-access corridors shall allow adequate access for service and loading vehicles, including tractor-trailers, to each business site, and all easements, agreements and stipulations shall so provide. (Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)

**III. CRITERIA FOR APPROVING MODIFICATIONS:**

***18.43.140 Modified approvals.***

***The requirements of this chapter may be modified by the development services director in consultation with the public works director and following a recommendation from the design commission if the modification:***

***18.43.120 Where unified access and circulation is not practical:***

***A. The development services director shall be authorized to modify the requirements for cross-access corridors in of this chapter where he/she finds:***

***1. That abutting properties have been so developed that it is clearly impractical to create a unified access and circulation system within part or all of the affected area;***

The Library site gains access through an existing cross access corridor per the East Main street plan; however, the termination of the cross access corridor is a deviation from the mapped plan for cross access corridors. The request to deviate on this site does have merit seeing that the abutting site to the west is already developed and does not include a stub or connection to a cross access connection to the Library and therefore meets this criteria.

***2. It is reasonable and necessary for the development of the property;***

Termination of the cross access corridor on the site does come with advantages specific to a Library use. The Library proposes some outdoor areas on the south side of the building to provide outdoor space for its patrons. If a cross access corridor did continue through the site, it would generate more concerns for pedestrian vehicular conflicts. Libraries more so than other uses anticipate children and others using outdoor spaces for extended periods of time and maintaining safety is of the utmost importance. Sumner has allowed for the termination of other cross access corridors when the proposed use wasn't compatible with a connection through the site.

***3. It will result in a more efficient access to and circulation within the property; and***  
Discontinuing the cross access corridor at the Library site will allow for a better layout of the site and provide for a safe outdoor space that wouldn't be subject to cut through

traffic. The Library provides a public service and having safe outdoor areas provides a better public benefit than having a cross access stub at the west end of the site. Additionally, its unknown if and when the site to the west will ever redevelop, in the event that it does redevelop the abutting site does have a stub for a cross access connection to the west side. This ensures that a termination of the Library site's cross access corridor wouldn't create connection issues if and when the neighboring site to the west redevelops.

**4. It will not create a hazardous condition for motorists or pedestrians.**

Since the Library is not proposing any Main Street driveways or additional vehicular points, the proposed plan would reduce the number of vehicle pedestrian interaction points.

**18.43.140 Modified approvals.**

***The requirements of this chapter may be modified by the development services director in consultation with the public works director and following a recommendation from the design commission if the modification:***

**A. Is reasonable and necessary for the development of the property; and**

*A driveway onto Main Street is only approved in this case if an access easement from 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Ct E is not granted to the Library. If no access easement is granted to the Library then the only access option for the site at the current time is through a driveway onto Main Street.*

**B. Will result in a more efficient access to and circulation within the property; and**

*The Library and the City are working to get an access easement from 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Ct E; however, in the event that an easement does not come to fruition, then a driveway from Main Street is needed for site access.*

**C. Will not create a hazardous condition for motorists or pedestrians.**

*In the event that a driveway on Main Street is necessary for vehicular access on the Library site, it would be the smallest driveway width needed fore ingress and egress, additionally the below condition of approval would require a contrasting paved material to be used at the driveway entrance to provide caution to drivers that pedestrians may be present.*

**D. The decision of the development services director may be appealed by the applicant to the hearing examiner, pursuant to SMC 18.56.170. (Ord. 2788 § 47, 2021; Ord. 2015 § 7 (part), 2002)**

**IV. DIRECTOR DECISION**

1. The proposed cross access termination modification to SMC 18.43 is hereby approved to allow the Library project to terminate the cross access corridor on their site.
2. The project site may include a driveway on Main Street as part of their proposal in the event that an access easement from 153<sup>rd</sup> is not acquired, subject to the following conditions of approval:
  1. The driveway crossing at East Main must include a contrasting paving material across the width of the driveway adjacent to the sidewalk and

stamped design in order to provide a safe and distinguished pedestrian crossing over the driveway approach and include signage and safety measures determined by City Engineering.

2. All Main Street curb cuts other than those approved here shall be closed off and frontage improvements made per City Engineering approval per SMC 18.43.

## DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR

The Director of the Development Services Department hereby approves permit DR-2024-0010 subject to the above Conditions of Approval.

Signed by:



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Doug Beagle – Development Services Director

## V. Appeals

### 18.56.170 Hearing examiner appeals.

A decision of the director involving a Type III.a, III.b, III.c, III.d, and Type VI.b decision may be appealed to the hearing examiner subject to the following provisions:

A. Appeals shall be submitted in writing to the city clerk by 5:00 p.m. of the fifteenth calendar day following the date of the decision. When the last day of the appeal period so computed is a Saturday, Sunday, or federal or city holiday, the period shall run until 5:00 p.m. on the next business day. The appeal shall be in writing and shall state specific objections to the decision and the relief sought. The appeal shall be accompanied with any applicable filing fees.

B. At the hearing examiner's initiative, or at the request of any party of record, the hearing examiner may have a conference prior to the hearing in order to entertain and act on motions, clarify issues, or consider other relevant matters.

C. Notice of filing of the appeal and the date of an open record appeal hearing shall be mailed to the applicant and any persons submitting substantive comments on the proposal.

D. Appeals shall be considered de novo. The hearing examiner shall entertain only those issues cited in the written appeal which relate to compliance with the applicable appealable provisions of the municipal code.

E. The director's decision on appeal shall be given substantial weight.

F. The decision of the hearing examiner shall be rendered within 15 days of the close of the record.

G. When a proposal before the examiner involves multiple decision components or



appeals, the examiner shall strive to consolidate the hearings to the extent possible.

H. The appointment of hearing examiners, conduct of hearings, and other rules related to the hearing examiner shall be governed by chapter 2.58 SMC. (Ord. 2851 § 15, 2023; Ord. 2691 § 1 (part), 2019; Ord. 1762 § 2 (part), 1996)