

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
Development Commission**

7:00 PM  
January 15, 2020

**MINUTES**

Council Chambers  
135 E. Sunset Way

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Commissioners Present:*

Richard Sowa, Chair  
Mel Morgan, Vice Chair  
Michael Brennan  
Kevin Price  
Ben Rush  
Richard Sanford  
Arthur Schulte, Alt.  
Brooke Shore

*Administration/Staff:*

Lucy Sloman, Land Development Mgr.  
Katie Cole, Planning Consultant

*Others Present:*

Rebecca Baibak, Integrus Architecture  
Brian Gormley, Cornerstone Gen. Contractors  
Jennifer Barnes, Heffron Transportation  
Jason Morse, Issaquah School District  
Tom Mullins, Issaquah School District

*Commissioners Not Present/Not Excused:*

Mark Rigos, Alt.  
Nischitha Venkatesh, Alt.

**CALL TO ORDER**

SOWA called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He encouraged any member of the public who was unable to attend tonight's hearing due to inclement weather to e-mail comments to staff. All comments are welcome and valuable, he said, and noted that tonight's public hearing will be continued to the Development Commission's meeting on February 5, 2020.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

SOWA asked for any comments or corrections to minutes of Development Commission meetings on December 4 and December 18, 2019. SANFORD noted he is incorrectly listed as present at the December 18, 2019 meeting.

- a) It was the consensus of all Commissioners present that minutes of the Development Commission meeting on December 4, 2019 be approved as presented.
- b) It was the consensus of all Commissioners present that minutes of the Development Commission meeting on December 18, 2019 be approved with the correction noted.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**a) Site Development Permit for Middle School No. 6 in Talus—Quasi-Judicial, (D)  
(Application No. SDP19-00002, Continued from 12/18/19)**

*Presented by:*

*Katie Cote, Planning Consultant  
Rebecca Baibak, Integrus Architecture*

**Staff Presentation**

Sloman began with an explanation of the process used to determine whether or not Commissioners can be both fair and appear fair in making a quasi-judicial decision on the Site Development Permit (SDP) under consideration tonight. She explained both procedural due process and substantive due process. She presented a series of six questions intended to determine fairness and asked whether any Commissioners can answer "yes"; there were no "yes" responses. She also asked

Commissioners whether any they have had any ex parte communications on this issue. All Commissioners answered “no.” Sloman asked whether there were any challenges or objections by the applicant or audience members to any of the Commissioners’ participation in the review process, and there were none.

Cote made staff’s presentation. She described the Level 3 quasi-judicial process for the SDP under consideration tonight; the notification process followed; displayed photos and drawings of the site, including zoning and adjacent land uses; showed photos of existing conditions; and gave background on the site and proposed project, including the Talus Development Agreement replacement regulations that apply. She explained the SEPA review; public comments collected in response to the project; the proposed site plan; proposed pedestrian, vehicle, and bus circulation to and from the site; characteristics of the proposed school facility; how the project complies with City development standards; site design, grading, and walls, including the role of the Talus Architectural Review Committee (ARC); vehicular circulation, location of driveways, and motorized improvements; the traffic impact analysis for the site, including a proposed traffic signal at Talus Drive and the main site entrance; proposed cyclist and pedestrian circulation; the proposed trail system; parking, including Permit Conditions 7, 20, and 21; the proposed buildings, including walls, roof screening, and fences; views of the site from Timber Ridge; landscaping; tree retention; and lighting.

### **Applicant Presentation**

Baibak, Integrus Architecture, began the applicant team’s presentation. She gave some information about Integrus Architecture and introduced other members of the applicant team. She began with an overview of the site. She gave specific details about the proposed middle school and its features, including circulation within the site. She described in detail how parents will drop off and pick up students at the site (the “queue area”) and how users will access the sports field and adjacent trail. She also walked through the floor plans for levels one through five of the multi-story building, including the gymnasium, service components, locker area, general and specialized classrooms, the administrative and other support areas, and so on.

Baibak continued by presenting proposed exterior materials and explained the thinking that went into the proposed choices, including working with the Talus ARC. She showed renderings of views from a variety of perspectives, including from the entry on NW Talus Drive, Talus Drive itself, the intersection of Talus and Falcon Drive, the Timber Ridge Plaza, Falcon Way, the track and field area, and SR-900.

She addressed some of the comments and questions raised by the public to the proposed treatment of the east retaining wall, specifically the use of sculpted shotcrete facing on the wall. She spoke about parking at length, including the parking provided for drop-off and pick-up activity at the school, at the sports field, on the site itself, and for special events. She explained how the quantity of parking is determined, including comparisons with other comparable middle schools (Pacific Cascade and Pine Lake). She noted that the project provides a total of 161 parking spaces, 122 for regular use and 39 additional spaces for special events. She also addressed the impact of adding a middle school to Talus Drive traffic, setting a school zone speed limit of 20 mph with flashing beacons, and installing a traffic signal where NW Talus Drive intersects with the main driveway to the school.

Gormley, Cornerstone General Contractors, addressed concerns raised at a recent community meeting about how short-term construction impacts will be managed. He specifically discussed construction work hours, which will be in compliance with Issaquah regulations; parking and access needed during construction; and communicating with the Talus community during the construction phase.

Baibak continued the applicant team's presentation on how bus ridership and snow conditions will be addressed. She continued with a list of "what's next" in the process, including SEPA, which is in process now; how the team will integrate discussion and feedback from tonight's meeting; integration of comments and conditions in the Staff Report into the site design; the reboundary process to begin this spring; and consideration of any other comments.

### **Public Hearing**

SOWA opened the meeting for public comment at 8:00 PM.

Bruce Semple, 100 Timber Ridge Way NW, Issaquah, spoke as a member of the Timber Ridge continuing care community. He described the traffic conditions Timber Ridge residents regularly face, including from delivery and emergency services. He expressed appreciation for the City's favorable consideration of residents' request to restore a short portion of the street width on Talus to 11 feet as was originally proposed, and said he hopes that the Commission agrees with this request. He continued describing the difficulties the large population of senior drivers in the Timber Ridge community face and spoke in favor of an 11-foot-wide lane on a portion of Talus Drive.

Jason Morse, Executive Director of Middle School Education for Issaquah School District (ISD), spoke in support of approving the SDP for Issaquah Middle School No. 6 in Talus. He described his background with the ISD and gave some history on the current middle school situation in the City. He explained how adding a sixth middle school would help alleviate current crowded school conditions and provide a valuable facility for the community. He noted that ISD intends for the new school to be a good neighbor, including being built to "green" standards.

Christie Anderson, chair of the landscape committee for the Talus community, said she would like to see a comprehensive maintenance plan for the landscaping that is being proposed for the school site. She said establishing a long-term landscaping maintenance plan is very important to the Talus community.

Ken Esemann, Talus resident, said the Talus Residential Association is generally supportive of the middle school project and said there is a good working relationship between the parties. He spoke about safety on Talus Drive. He specifically referred to a City report that indicated there are more than 1,000 vehicles a day that exceed the speed limit on Talus Drive by 10 mph or more. He showed data from the study, done in the fall of 2018, including information and photos of property damage sustained from accidents and collisions on Talus Drive due to speeding. He described some of the accidents that have occurred and noted the WSDOT reports do not always reflect all of the accidents. He continued his presentation, and concluded that excessive speed on Talus Drive is a well documented and long-standing issue. The City and ISD are responsible for ensuring the safety of the students and staff attending the Talus Middle School as well as residents of Talus and the surrounding area. He asked the Development Commission to ask the City to commit to a plan to address this issue prior to giving approval for the project to proceed.

Mary Lynch, 2690 NW Oak Crest Drive, Issaquah, commented she was glad to see that lighting was added to the preliminary SEPA report. She spoke in favor of studying the effects of lighting and especially glare on nearby neighbors. She also said she would like to see a plan for ensuring that amplified music is not allowed and how to control it. She asked for more information on how the building is being designed to reduce energy usage and its carbon footprint. She said she also supports the use of speed cameras on all four directions of travel on Talus, and asked how semi-truck deliveries will be controlled, particularly during parent drop-off and pick-up times. She also said parents will inevitably seek alternate routes to drop off their kids, and that needs to be addressed so

it doesn't happen. Parking in bus zone areas is also a problem, she added, and asked what will prevent that from happening. She also asked what will prevent a kid from throwing something off the high crosswalk into the parent pick-up area below, and how will the crosswalk be designed so that it isn't slippery in cold weather. She also spoke about potential problems with snow routes, specifically getting kids to SR 900 and other safety concerns in snowy and icy weather.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, SOWA continued the public hearing to the Development Commission meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

### **Commission Questions and Discussion**

SCHULTE asked the applicant for details about the proposed pedestrian bridge. Baibak said she doesn't have that information with her tonight and will follow up with those details. SHORE asked whether the plans address a throw fence to prevent people from throwing things from the bridge to the area below. Baibak replied yes, we have been working on that and will include details in her follow-up. SANFORD asked is the bridge covered. Baibak said no; the intent is for students to walk relatively quickly over the bridge, as they would on a sidewalk, to covered areas. She showed the covered areas on a diagram. MORGAN asked how wide is it. Baibak replied 10 feet wide, and explained how a gate will be used to manage access to the pedestrian bridge.

SHORE asked about space for portables. Sloman replied there is the possibility of extending the north wing, but that is not part of this proposal, and there is no provision for portables.

RUSH asked about managing traffic, as described by the applicant. He asked for more details about how many students would use the drop-off versus arrive to school by bus. Baibak replied ISD has the highest bus ridership in the state, and is constantly working on strategies to encourage even greater bus ridership. She gave examples of those strategies. RUSH referred to his experience living near a school in the Highlands, and said the use of a speed camera is a good idea as a way to control driving speeds. He asked whether anything is planned beyond using a flashing beacon. Baibak replied what has been discussed is implementing a 20-mph speed limit, a traffic signal, and pavement striping. SHORE asked whether any sketches are available of the movement allowed at the main intersection. Cote showed a diagram that was included in the traffic analysis. Barnes, Heffron Transportation, explained the movements proposed for the intersections of the main driveway at Falcon Way, at Talus Way, and at the main busway and Falcon Way, and how the circulation system will function.

SANFORD asked whether an administrative adjustment of standards (AAS) is required to address the 200-foot spacing between the main driveway and the Falcon Way arterial (page 148), and noted the City standard is 600 feet. Sloman replied staff has reviewed the spacing with Public Works Operations and City Engineering. It was approved as a staff decision, she said, and briefly explained when seeking a deviation is appropriate versus an AAS.

RUSH asked whether the lighting will be similar to the lighting recently installed at a park in the Highlands. Sloman replied it will be similar to the lighting used at Issaquah Middle School, which is being tested now. The glare will likely not impact the Talus community so much as it will impact Newport Way. She said staff and ISD can address lighting in more detail in the Briefing Response Memo. RUSH said new schools often seem to use a multi-story design, and asked about provisions for emergency evacuations. Baibak explained that the third level of the facility is actually the main level, and explained how kids would get out of the building and onto the field. She said more work on the actual routes that would be used is still in progress.

SCHULTE asked about queuing of buses onto Falcon Way, and asked will buses be stored on site or elsewhere. Baibak said the intent is to not store buses on site, so the parking areas would be available for other uses after hours. Barnes explained that the queuing analysis in the Traffic Report addresses how buses and vehicles would enter and exit the site, and gave more details from the report. SCHULTE asked what time would the buses be leaving in the afternoon. Baibak said the school schedule has not yet been established. Morse said currently, dismissal times for ISD middle schools is about 2:45 PM (around 3:30 PM on Wednesdays), and arrival times generally start around 7:30 AM. He gave details about how arrival and departure times are established and adjusted when necessary for Issaquah schools.

BRENNAN asked for clarification of the role of the Development Commission versus the Talus ARC. Sloman explained the purview of the Talus ARC and the role of the Development Commission in reviewing this permit. She continued it can be more difficult to make the distinction in the area of landscaping, and gave examples. BRENNAN asked whether the top of the garage will receive any landscaping treatment. Sloman replied the applicant has to meet a ten-percent landscape requirement, which can be met in several ways. Baibak explained the plan includes an architectural trellis, which isn't clearly visible in the diagrams. MORGAN referred to two planting areas shown on page A-104, at the bottom left and upper right, as landscaping elements. Baibak confirmed that is correct, plus the architectural trellis to which she just referred. The applicant team gave more details about what will be included and the views. Sloman said staff and the applicant will attempt to make that more clear in the Briefing Response Memo.

BRENNAN said he would like to hear more about what will be visible from the perspective of the project being a "gateway" into the Talus neighborhood, particularly for residents. Baibak said we have been working through that with the ARC, and showed a sculpted finish to the walls that has been proposed. She continued we can bring more details to the next meeting. She showed a depiction of the view from SR-900. PRICE asked will the proposed landscaping reach the height of the trees in the depiction. Baibak replied the view from SR-900 will include a lot of existing landscaping. We used computer-generated imagery in creating this depiction, she added, and it does use existing conditions as well. SCHULTE asked about signage to identify the school. Baibak replied signage is being considered for the entry view only, and showed the location on a diagram. There would not be monument signs on SR-900, only at the entry to the school site off Talus Way, she clarified.

SCHULTE asked how the applicant will address the blank walls shown on the north and south elevations (page 59). Baibak replied that has been identified as an issue and the applicant team is discussing how best to respond. SANFORD asked would ARC have authority over the blank wall treatment. Sloman replied the City would be looking for some kind of appropriate treatment, such as "modulate the wall," and it would be in the ARC's purview to determine and approve an appropriate solution. SCHULTE asked would that be true for roof line modulation as well (east elevation, level 5). Sloman replied yes, ARC would be the authority to determine whether there was sufficient modulation.

PRICE said the journey from the parking garage to the entrance to the school will be heavily congested at certain points of the day. How is safety there being addressed, he asked. Baibak explained the plaza area is being developed to be clear that this is the primary entrance to the building. She explained other ways and routes that students can access the building. SANFORD asked are any traffic calming measures planned there. Baibak explained that the change in roadway texture is intended to alert drivers to the speed restrictions there. Mullins, Director of ISD Capital Projects, explained how crossing guards will ensure safe crossings during school hours.

SANFORD asked about the width of the street before it transitions to the driveway. Baibak replied it is 28 feet. SANFORD asked is the incoming street divided. He explained his concern that some parents might seek to make a U-turn there, particularly during times of the day that are not busy. Baibak replied there isn't anything to prohibit that from happening, although ISD will manage those kinds of issues during school hours.

SCHULTE asked where will students wait; will it be covered, with benches, and so on. Baibak showed the covered waiting areas, as well as the bicycle parking area, on a diagram, and added the biking parking area is not covered. Sloman noted there is additional covered bike parking in the garage. SANFORD asked was the possibility discussed of clearly designating separate areas for pedestrians and cyclists where bike traffic enters the site. Baibak replied we have not yet discussed that topic.

BRENNAN noted there is no additional parking available in close proximity to help manage overflow parking, and mitigation measures will be needed for special events. He continued the application speaks to the applicant team seeking solutions to finding those mitigation measures, such as the use of a shuttle, and asked the applicant for any comments. He also said he thinks that having those measures agreed to before the certificate of occupancy is issued is too late, and that the decisions should be made before the building permit is issued. Morse referred to his experience as a middle school administrator, specifically to the use of shuttled parking, using a neighboring ISD campus. He gave examples of how shuttling could work. MORGAN asked would parking on the athletic field be a possibility. Baibak replied no; that would cause too much damage to the field. SANFORD asked whether eighth-grade commencement activities would ever be changed from mid-day to evening. Morse replied in his experience, a range of times can work, and explained how that kind of decision would be made.

MORGAN asked for clarification of the statement, "The Applicant has proposed establishing a tract of land surrounding the trail, which would also be deducted" on page 14 of the Staff Report. Sloman replied the City is not proposing that the tract of land be owned by ISD, although it could be, and continued it would be counted as part of the school tract.

MORGAN said a requirement for an elevated crosswalk at Falcon Way is referenced on page 29. Would that create a problem for buses to travel over an elevated crosswalk, he asked. Sloman replied we have spent considerable time talking about that, and the ISD engineer's solution appears to be acceptable and workable for both ISD and the City. She continued one of the conditions speaks to the requirement for a constant grade.

MORGAN said on page 32, there is a reference to a trail connection, "[The trail] connects into the rest of the site only at the southernmost point of the passenger loop. This is an appropriate point of connection through the bus loop...". Staff made a note to clarify the language. MORGAN continued on the map on page 33, why would a pathway be designed in the middle of the loop rather than just having the pathway go next to the loop so people would not need to cross. Sloman said our original thought was to have it go around the outside as you suggest, but the feeling was that the path could not be accommodated relative to the steep wall there. We can take another look and respond in the Briefing Response Memo, she added.

MORGAN said on page 33, the discussion of the loading dock and service yard and the nearby walkway is particularly concerning. He asked whether there would be roll-up doors for the loading dock area. Cote displayed an aerial view. Baibak explained where a covered-roof area for dumpsters and the loading area would be located, and how deliveries would be scheduled and coordinated. MORGAN said the sidewalk area appears to narrow where the bicycle wall is located.

Baibak replied the sidewalk does not narrow, and we can provide some actual measurements for the next meeting so it will be clearer how it will function. MORGAN said he understands the constraints required of the site design, but has a concern about the potential appearance of having an enclosure for trash cans and a loading area right at the main entrance to the facility. Sloman said the specific mechanism to be used is up to the ARC, but there is also an urban design aspect that falls into the purview of the Development Commission. She referred to Condition 18, and said it would be good for the City and applicant team to focus on the concern and include a response in the Briefing Response Memo. Baibak explained what the applicant team has proposed to address that concern.

MORGAN noted a correction is needed in the count of replacement trees on page 54. Staff made a note of it.

MORGAN asked whether any of the City's skybridge requirements would apply to the proposed skybridge walkway for this project. Sloman said staff will look into it.

MORGAN asked about the community's request to widen a short portion of the roadway width to 11 feet. Sloman replied the original proposal was for 11 feet, and the City's standard is 10 feet. After several discussions between the City and the Timber Ridge community, staff decided to ask ISD to seek an adjustment of standards to 11 feet as was originally proposed. That will also be addressed in the Briefing Response Memo, she noted.

SCHULTE said he would like to see more detail about the service area. He asked whether parallel parking along the drop-off loop roadway would be all-day parking. Barnes replied no, during school hours there is more than adequate parking provided in the garage for parents coming to the school. Sloman noted ISD perceived an opportunity for multi-function uses for both of those loops during non-school hours, and explained when and how that parallel parking would be available.

SCHULTE said on the rendering depicting the view from the entry on NW Talus Drive, there appears to be a landscaped island, and asked for comment. Baibak replied in this instance, the rendering is not accurate.

SHORE noted there was a lot of public comment given about the intersection of Talus and SR 900. What is the impact of the school on that intersection, she asked. Barnes replied the additional traffic would add delay at the intersection, although there is also a condition to re-optimize the traffic signal at that location to address that. The level of service standard at that level is level E, as mandated for a state facility, and the level of service calculated as part of the traffic study is level C, both with and without the project. PRICE asked would that mean a delay for northbound traffic. Barnes replied the calculation is for the average delay, and the biggest increase would be in that northbound lane.

SHORE asked does incorporating any other traffic-calming measures at the school entrance intersection make sense. Barnes replied the traffic signal itself should have some effect. The presence of more traffic, and the speed restrictions, will also slow down traffic. Overall, the measures to be incorporated as a result of the project should be beneficial to traffic on Talus Drive, she stated. Our data does indicate there is regular speeding on Talus, she continued, and the City does have a process for taking traffic calming actions.

SANFORD said a concern was expressed in public comment that parents will idle on Talus Drive while picking up students. Are any mitigation measures being considered, he asked. Barnes replied having a good site design with good flow is the most useful mitigation measure. She spoke of the difficulty parents would have pulling over and idling on Talus Drive, which would actually be illegal. SANFORD suggested that signage indicating no waiting or idling could be considered. The applicant team made a note of it.

SANFORD asked are any other options being considered for exiting downhill in case of an emergency. RUSH asked whether a gated road would be used for emergency access, such as is used at Black Nugget Road in the Highlands. Sloman replied the second entrance and exit for emergency purposes is James Bush Road, which doesn't meet City standards to be used as an everyday road but which could be used in an emergency. She continued all lanes could be used as exit lanes with appropriate flagging.

SANFORD asked about the use of solar panels and other green measures. Baibak referred to the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP) and explained how the design meets WSSP requirements.

SCHULTE asked how Timber Ridge residents would access the field for walks, both during school hours and on weekends. Baibak said residents can request a key card to access the school facilities after hours, with the restriction that access be during daylight hours or when the facility is lit, and when no special events are taking place. Morse gave more details about when and how residents would be able to access and use the field.

SANFORD asked about the materials proposed for the vertical screening at the parking garage. He asked whether the City has a regulation for opaque screening to ensure headlights from the parking garage cannot be seen. Sloman replied yes. Baibak displayed a diagram of how headlights would impact the site and how they would be screened. Sloman noted Condition 27 addresses headlights.

SANFORD asked is there a way to ensure lights are not powered on until they are approved, as occurred at the Issaquah Middle School. Sloman said the circumstances are quite different with this project than with Issaquah Middle School, and that work will inform this project.

SCHULTE asked are sound systems available that offer reduced decibel levels. Baibak referred to onsite signage as the primary means to enforce sound restrictions.

SOWA asked for comments from Commissioners. MORGAN complimented staff, the public, and the applicant team on a thorough and well-written Staff Report. He said it appears that there would be more demand for parking than supply only about nine to 24 times a year, and he said he would prefer not to create a lot of extra parking stalls on the site just to accommodate those times. He said he also agrees with the 11-foot-wide roadway for Falcon Way referenced by Mr. Semple during public comment. He said as BRENNAN suggested, he would like to see views of the wall while driving down Talus Drive; close-ups of the service area elevations, particularly what people there will see; and more information on the pedestrian bridge.

SHORE said she would like to see any other possible speed control measures be implemented as part of the project. Condition 20 addresses parking but does not mention an annual assessment of parking, she added.

BRENNAN expressed appreciation for the great work that went into the design and Staff Report. He said the facility will be a community asset, and the overall design is a good solution to a challenging location. He said he would like to hear more details about addressing the parking situation, particularly for special events. He agrees with the 11-foot-wide provision for Falcon Way. He also encouraged any additional actions ISD can take to enhance sustainability of the facility, and noted that sustainability is a strong ethic for both the City and ISD.

SCHULTE agreed the presentation, Staff Report, and application materials were well done. He also agreed with the proposed 11-foot-wide provision for Falcon Way, particularly given how much service and delivery activity the Timber Ridge community receives. He said he looks forward to receiving more information about the pedestrian skybridge.

Sloman clarified that Condition 20 is intended to address concerns raised by Commissioners tonight about the Parking Management Plan (pages 79 and 82 of 278). She asked whether the monitoring referenced in Condition 1 adequately addresses those comments. SHORE said she would like to see the timing or the frequency of the reporting be specified in the condition if possible. Staff made a note of it.

SCHULTE said he would also like to see how blank façade treatments will be addressed (page 58).

#### **OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next Development Commission meeting, which will be a continuation of tonight's public hearing, is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers. SOWA expressed appreciation for the work and engagement of the community in this process, and encouraged any interested parties to express their concerns at the February 5 meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, SOWA adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary