February 22, 2021

Mrs. Lucy Sloman, AICP
City of Issaquah
1775 12th Ave NW
Issaquah, WA 98027

Project: Issaquah High School #4 and Elementary School #17, AHBL No. 2180412.10
Subject: Request for AAS from FAR - revised

Dear Mrs. Sloman:

This revised letter is to formally request an Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) as outlined in the City of Issaquah Municipal Code (IMC) for the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirement for the Issaquah High School #4 and Elementary School #17 project.

From our review of the City Code, pre-application comments, and numerous meetings discussing the FAR, we understand that the project must comply with a FAR of 0.75 for Compact Public Schools, per IMC Table 18.07.480. The IMC allows a reduction in FAR based on footnote 7 of table 18.07.480 which reads as follows:

> "FAR reduction may be requested, if needed, for operational functions at the discretion of the Designated Official, using the administrative adjustment of standards process established in IMC 18.07.250, Administrative adjustment of standards. Approval criteria for FAR reduction is established in subsection (E)(19) of this section. For schools, operational functions include outdoor space that is used for required academic curriculum; for example: track and field areas."

Based on a number of project constraints, meeting the 0.75 FAR requirement is infeasible due to non-developable site area attributed to slopes, roads, bus circulation, trees, buffers, wetlands and parking requirements. These elements conflict with the intent of a Compact School Code yet are required due to the unique conditions of this site. For this reason, a reduction to the FAR requirement is requested. The gross building areas listed below: (See FAR Areas Map attached and Calculated Area below)

Gross Building Area:

- HS Gross Building Area
- HS Future Expansion
- ES Gross Building Area
- Portables for HS and ES
- ES Covered Play Area
- ES Canopy and Shelter Areas
- ES Covered Loading Dock
- HS Grandstand

Civil Engineers
Structural Engineers
Landscape Architects
Community Planners
Land Surveyors
Neighbors

TACOMA
2215 North 30th Street
Suite 300
Tacoma, WA 98403-3350
253.383.2422 TEL
www.ahbl.com

- Ticket Booth
- HS Pedestrian Cover

The gross building area amounts to a total of 351,812 square feet.

The total site area is equal to 1,776,812 square feet. which includes undevelopable areas and community spaces that are removed from the total site area to obtain the developable area. As noted in the footnotes 8 of IMC Table 18.07.480 community spaces are not counted in the FAR calculation. Note that this area is from the boundary survey prepared for the project and does not match GIS or assessor records. Reductions to the total site area are listed below:

<u>Total Site Area Reductions</u>

- Critical Area and Buffer
- Community Spaces - From IMC 18.02 Definitions "Community space: Public lands containing resource protection, recreation or public amenity such as parks, plazas, trails, informal gathering areas, community gardens, and other similar facilities and areas. Some community spaces are required, others are encouraged."
    - Community Use space: areas that the district allows community use of under current agreements for other school facilities
        - Tennis Courts and associated Plaza
        - Track and Field
        - Plaza Spaces
        - Baseball Field
        - Softball Field
        - Elementary School Playground
    - Recourse protection areas – the tree protection areas on the site is an area that has been set aside for recourse protection onsite. From our review of the City code we understand that recourse is not defined but based on a common definition and public comments about tree save that this area is a recourse for the site and city. The school district is willing to place this tree save area in a restrictive easement if desired by the City as a condition of the FAR reduction.

After removing these areas from the overall site total the Developable Area of the Site is 951,567 square feet.

Using these values for gross building area and developable area, the FAR value of the site is calculated to be 0.426. This is approximately 43% below the required value of 0.75 and is the reduction the school district is requesting for this project, as outlined in Footnote 7 of IMC Table 18.07.480 (provided below for reference).

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Based on the district's program requirements we anticipate that reductions for operation functions on this site would include:

- Easements and ROW Dedications
- Private Access Roads
- Parent drop off areas
- Bus Pickup and Drop off areas
- Staff Parking
- ADA Walk walks
- Buffers and required landscape screening for neighbors – outside tree save area

It should also be noted that the district has gone to extensive lengths to modify their standard program and needs in order to meet the Compact Schools and subsequent FAR requirements. These program changes include:

- No practice fields outside standard program features (Skyline practice field)
- Reduction of 4 tennis courts (8 desired like Skyline)
- Reduction in Elementary School Playground area
- Reduction in plaza and outdoor learning spaces
- Additional structured parking – code requires 50% and this revised site plan is closer to 60%
- Tennis courts separated from sports complex

Section 18.07.480 E(19) Approval Criteria for FAR Reduction is being met by the proposed reduction presented in this letter. The least amount of reduction necessary to construct the proposed project is being requested. The proposed request is no greater than the maximum 50% and the reduction will fulfill the intent of the code found in 18.07.480 A. The proposed design is compatible with the site surroundings regarding aesthetics, height and other developmental standards. The proposed site will provide a safe place for the public and function as part of the community for years to come. Community improvements and additions are being met and implemented in order to satisfy the needs of the region. The school is also compact, utilizing one site for both an elementary school and high school as well as new facilities for the public.

As outlined in the paragraphs above, this project combines two separate school buildings on one site and uses a shared infrastructure of circulation facilities, parking, and utilities to serve both schools. We believe this meets the intent of the City's compact school requirement. During the July 15, 2020 community meeting for this project, City Commissioner Michael Brennan stated "so the higher FAR is actually driving more development on the property. It seems like a challenging requirement for schools."

The floor area ratio portion of the code begins with a section on the intent of the applicable land use code and is articulated at the beginning. We believe that this project is meeting the intent of the code as outlined below.

> "18.07.480 Community facilities standards.
>
> A. Purpose and Intent: The purpose and intent of requiring specific standards for community facility buildings and structures or land uses are:
>
> 1. Compatibility of Land Uses: Establish general standards regarding aesthetics, height, and other development standards for community facilities which will ensure compatibility of design, construction and scale, and minimize the impact of these facilities with surrounding uses.

2. Provision of Service: Establish general standards to ensure that the public is provided with safe and functional community facilities.
3. Comprehensive Plan Implementation: Provide for community facility improvements and additions necessary to meet local and regional needs and implement Issaquah's Comprehensive Plan.
4. Compact Facilities: Allow for the siting of public buildings more efficiently as the City continues to densify."

With regard to item 1, we are working hard to minimize the impact to neighboring uses including offering larger than required buffers and working to minimize noise and traffic impacts. We believe we have viable solutions that can bring those issues to a productive resolution.

Item 2 demands a "safe and functional community facility" which in this case we satisfy by providing a very compact program that includes shared infrastructure between the two schools and athletic amenities to be shared with the public after hours. We believe that we've designed the athletic program components required for the high school program in the least impactful way.

Item 3 correctly recognizes the growth in Issaquah and the inherent need for additional community facilities to accommodate that growth. This project is precisely what is needed to meet the "local and regional needs" for delivering quality public education.

Item 4 speaks to the need to chart a course toward more density within the City. We infer that the FAR requirements outlined later in the code are meant to ensure project sites are used "more efficiently" than they historically have been. The proposed site plan illustrates by far the most efficient use of land of any high school in the district. The table below compares some surrounding schools.

School	Building Area (sf)	Site Area (acres)	FAR
Liberty High School	222,000	37.9	.26
Issaquah High School	294,000	40.1 (excluding MS)	.39
Skyline High School	263,300	49	.21
Proposed High School	**234,000**	**HS: 30.7 acres** ES: 5 acres Unbuildable slope along 228th: 5 acres Total: 40.7 acres	**.61**

The proposed high school and associated parking and play fields are densely organized on a site which would normally only accommodate a high school. In this case, we made efficient use of the site *and* included an elementary school. This is a clear benefit to the public because it means the District does not need to exercise eminent domain and expend additional tax dollars to acquire even more property and disturb another area of the city. The way we were able to fit so much on the site is in part due to an incredibly efficient building layout. The footprint of the high school is significantly more compact than a typical high school in our region which would usually have multiple courtyards separating classrooms wings similar to Issaquah High School. We are proud that we've been able to do all of this while also providing generous buffers to the neighbors *and* while meeting the City of Sammamish's request for a 75' buffer along 228th.

The District has also eliminated from this site a practice field and reduced the number of tennis courts that would normally be included for high school programs.

Based on the criteria presented in this letter it is our opinion that we have met the intent of the code and an approximately 43% reduction in the FAR requirements should be allowed for the proposed project. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please call me at (253) 383-2422.

Sincerely,

Todd Sawin, PE
Principal

TCS/

c: Tom Mullins, Issaquah School District
Jean Stolzman, Bassetti Architects

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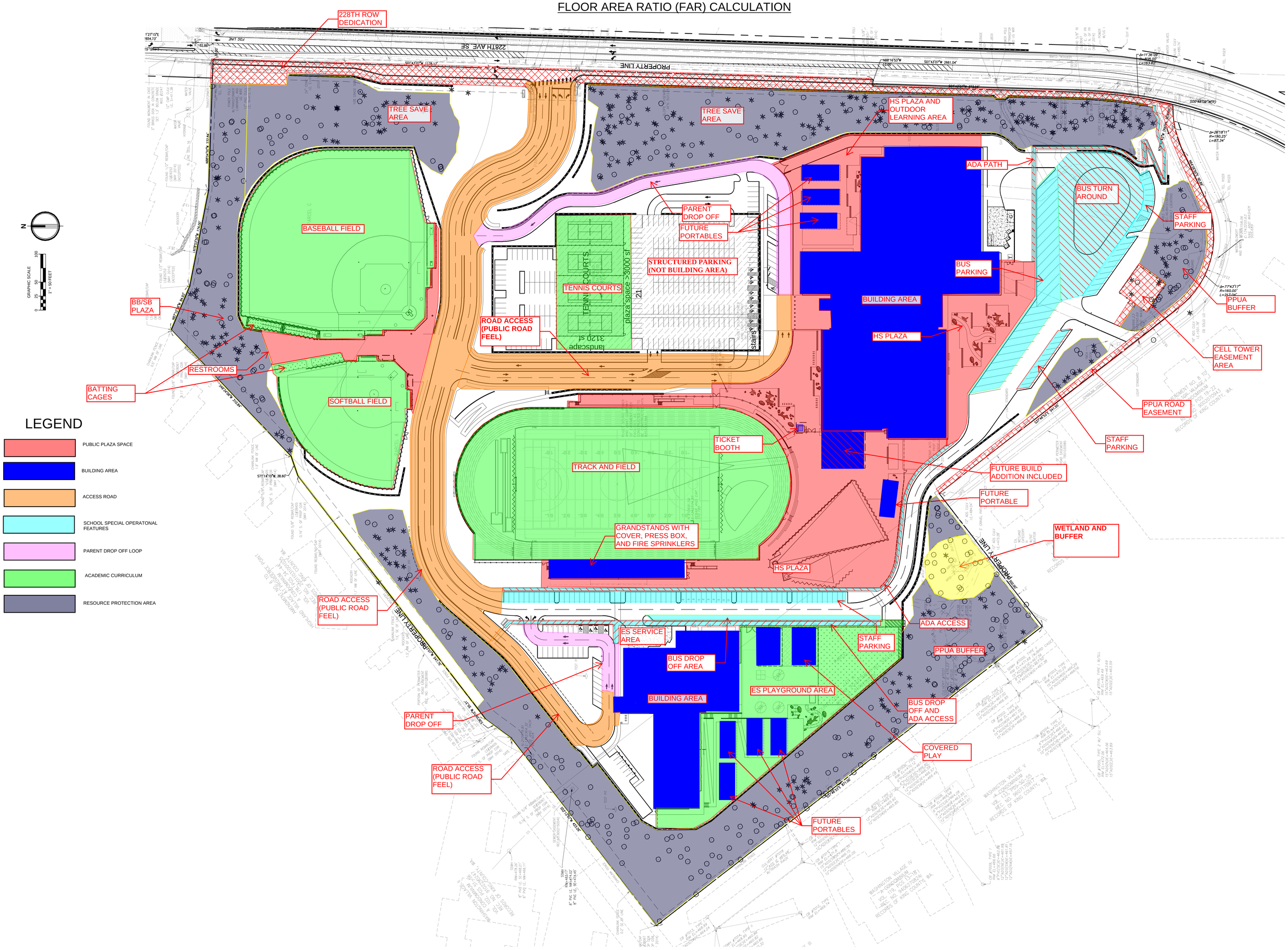
FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR) CALCULATION



FAR EXHIBIT

HIS#4 and ES#17 FAR Calculations			2/22/2021
See FAR Exhibit for area			
FAR CALCULATION			
Gross Building Areas: Max Build Out	Area (sf)		
HS Gross Building Area	226552		
HS Future Expansion	13553		
ES Gross Building Area	71283		
Ticket Booth	278		
HS Pedestrian Cover	4205		
Portables HS & ES	18179		
ES Covered Play	5884		
ES Covered Canopy/Shelter	2098		
HS & ES Covered Loading Dock	643		
HS Grandstand	9137		
Total Gross Building Area:	**351812**		
Gross Site Area	**1776812**		
Reductions:			
PPUA Setbacks	0	x	
Code Setback	0	x	
Resource Protection	389673		
Easement/Dedication: Cell Tower, ROW Dedication, Access	0	x	
Utility Easement Area	0	x	
Bus Parking	0	x	
Wetland and buffer	11084		
Bus Turnaround	0	x	
Staff Parking	0	x	
Track and Field	148761		
Baseball	102797		
Softball	43258		
Tennis	26157		
ES Playground	42923		
Plazas	180914		
Parrent drop off	0	x	
Tennis Plazas	6000		
Access Road to HS	0	x	
Access Road to ES	0	x	
Access Road	0	x	
ADA Walkways	0	x	
Total Site Reductions Area:	**951567**		
Developable Area:	**825245**		
FAR = Gross BLDG/Developable Area	**FAR**		**0.426**