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01/16/2026

City of Lynnwood

Development & Business Services

20816 44<sup>th</sup> Ave. W, Suite 230

RE: PDR-25-0007 Edmonds School District Response to City of Lynnwood PDR Comments; Letter from Tulalip Tribes

Dear Rebecca Samy,

Thank you for sharing the thoughtful comments regarding our PDR submittal. As always, the Edmonds School District is committed to improving the educational outcomes of our students including their responsibility as world citizens. At the onset of the design process for this school we created a design review committee consisting of parents, staff, students, and community members to help guide the design. One topic which was discussed at length was the goal to minimize our disruption to the existing wetlands, Golde Creek, and their buffers. As such, the necessary site program elements have been placed to try to maximize the site's wetland and stream buffer area and functions. The buffer mitigation strategy was designed to meet, and where possible, exceed local critical area regulations requirements, including restoration activities within the buffer areas. Thank you for your recommendations to support restoration of the site's critical area function. Your recommendations are copied below in italics, followed by the Edmonds School District's response.

1. *Shorten the east driveway a bit so the turn-around is outside of the standard buffer.*

The goal for site design was to position the high intensity uses farther from the wetlands and stream and locate low intensity, less active uses closer to the wetlands and stream. The school building is positioned as far away from the stream as site dimensions and needed education-related elements allow. The bus lane will have fewer trips than the parking and drop-off lot, generating less disturbance to the stream ecosystem. The driveway length is set by the number of buses required to offload students safely. The driveway has been located as far away from Golde Creek and as close to our building as possible given significant site grades. Our goal is to get all vehicular traffic onsite and out of public roads to minimize idling vehicles, impact to surrounding environment, disruption to traffic, and disruption to our neighbors.

2. *Maintain the standard buffer throughout most of this area and move the critical area fencing accordingly.*

The project has implemented a thorough mitigation sequencing process to avoid impacts to the site's critical areas to the extent possible<sup>1</sup>. However, the project will unavoidably reduce 24,270 square feet (sf) of buffer through the buffer reduction and enhancement allowed in Lynnwood Municipal Code 17.10.059. The proposed enhancement area currently consists of mowed lawn, invasive species, and daily recreation use. The proposed buffer enhancements consist of invasive species removal, native woody species planting, and native meadow seeding. In response to your recommendation, the project has further decreased the buffer reduction by approximately 6,000 sf and increased the native

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<sup>1</sup> Shannon & Wilson. (2025). *Buffer mitigation plan for the New Middle School*, (Project no. 113832-006). Shannon & Wilson.

woody planting area by an additional 5,400 sf, resulting in a 2:1 ratio (area of native woody plantings to area of reduction). Following receipt of your letter, the project has also incorporated downed, salvaged trees to the buffer enhancement area to further restore habitat complexity. These enhancements will replace and greatly improve upon buffer ecological function that will be impacted by the project's buffer reduction strategy.

3. *Move the school boundary fence to the property line and enhance the buffer area currently outside of it.* Moving the boundary fence could cause significant disruption to the area, especially in areas of identified high slopes immediately adjacent to Golde Creek. Performing this work would require disturbance to the wetland and Golde Creek in the northeast property corner. We are exploring placing a lien on the adjacent encroaching properties, which would require careful relocation of the fence and establishment of a buffer area at the time that the neighboring land is sold or improved. Further, the design includes a fenced buffer area, discouraging foot traffic in this restored habitat.

4. *Consider applying for a variance from LMC 8.40.0240 in order to move the eastern driveway farther away from the stream buffer.*

There is not sufficient space to move the driveway and place all underground utilities on our property east edge. All work for new utilities and driveways enhancement will take place on the far side of the existing driveway relative to the stream. On the stream side of the driveway, only buffer restoration and enhancement activities are taking place.

5. *Identify any opportunities to enhance or restore fish habitat within the on-site portion of Golde Creek. (maybe this could be a school project for kids?)*

We agree that Golde Creek presents an opportunity to enhance the education of our students and are providing a walking path near the buffer boundary with teaching locations along it for students to learn about Golde Creek, the surrounding wetland, and buffer. We can explore if and how future student involvement can synergize safely and legally enhance the wetland- stream system. The District has developed an Outdoor Educational Specification encouraging learning opportunities throughout the campus for students', staff, and communities' cognitive, social emotional, and physical well being.

Thank you for the letter of concern,



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Edmonds School District