

3.4 SCHOOLS

This section of the DSEIS analyzes school-related impacts associated with 860 new homes proposed to be built in *The Point at Northshore* development.

3.4.1 Affected Environment

The Point at Northshore would be located within the Tacoma School District (School District). The School District currently operates 38 elementary schools, 11 middle schools, and 5 high schools. Students attend schools based on neighborhood boundaries. *The Point at Northshore* site lies within the boundaries of Brown’s Point Elementary, Crescent Heights Elementary, Northeast Tacoma Elementary, Meeker Middle School, and Stadium High School, see **Figure 3.4-1**.

A school impact analysis was submitted to the City by the School District in a letter dated November 20, 2007. The analysis assumed the addition of children from 860 single-family homes (both detached and attached units) to the vicinity school service area.

Enrollment and Capacity

As of 2007,¹ the Tacoma School District had an enrollment of 28,882 students in grades K-12. The enrollment of schools in the vicinity of the proposed development is shown in **Table 3.4-1**, along with the capacity for these schools and projected deficiencies upon completion of *The Point at Northshore*.

**Table 3.4-1
EXISTING (OCTOBER 2007) SCHOOL CAPACITY**

Capacity / Enrollment	Browns Point Elementary, Crescent Heights Elementary, and Northeast Elementary	Meeker Middle School	Stadium High School
Capacity	1,592	750	1,800
Enrollment (October 2007)	1,447	804	1,854
Available Capacity/Deficiency	145	(54)	(54)

Source: Tacoma Public Schools Comment Letter dated November 20, 2007

Based on current capacity and enrollment, there is insufficient space at the middle and high schools in the project vicinity. In addition, there is limited available space at elementary schools.

Student Generation Rates

The School District issued new Student Generation Rates in November of 2007.² The Student Generation Rates were formulated using Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer data on development activity for the years 2002 through 2006. The student generation rates for single-family homes are summarized in **Table 3.4-2**.

¹Data from Tacoma School District letter, February 14, 2008.

²Tacoma Public Schools 2007 Student Generation Rates, Mike McCormick, November 2007.

**Table 3.4-2
TACOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT GENERATION RATES**

Grade Level	Single-Family School Generation Rate (estimated # of students per home)
Elementary	0.258
Middle School	0.123
High School	0.162

Source: Public Schools 2007 Student Generation Rates, Mike McCormick, November 2007

The above student generation rate assumes all 860 units are single-family homes, including single-family attached townhouses. If instead townhouses were considered multi-family homes, a different student generation rate would apply.³ The burden of negotiating which student generation rate to use falls upon the School District and the Proponent. The School District recently entered into an agreement with the developer of the 65-lot Watchtower Heights subdivision in Northeast Tacoma in which the developer agreed to pay \$2,340 per single-family dwelling unit. The Watchtower Heights development is anticipated to impact three of the same schools (Browns Point Elementary, Meeker Middle School, and Stadium High School) as *The Point at Northshore* development. However, *The Point at Northshore* development differs from the Watchtower Heights subdivision in two ways. First, *The Point at Northshore* impacts two additional elementary schools (Crescent Heights Elementary and Northeast Elementary) that Watchtower Heights did not impact. Second, the difference in size between the proposed 860 units in *The Point at Northshore* and the 65 units in Watchtower Heights creates different school impacts and needs. Specifically, the projected students from the Watchtower Heights subdivision did not create a deficiency at the elementary school level. *The Point at Northshore*, with a projected elementary student generation rate of 222 students (versus Watchtower Heights' 17 elementary students), is projected to create a deficiency across three elementary schools. While the Watchtower Heights subdivision created a deficiency at the middle school level, *The Point at Northshore* development increases the deficiency with a projected middle school student generation rate of approximately 13 times more than that of the Watchtower Heights subdivision (i.e., 106 middle school students versus 8 middle school students). Differences in high school student generation are similar.

School Impact Mitigation Fees

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), cities, towns, and counties are authorized to impose impact fees on new development to help finance certain public facilities, including schools, within their jurisdiction. The City of Tacoma does not currently impose school mitigation fees.

School District Planning

The School District issued an updated *Facilities Master Plan* in August 2007. This plan states the School District's goal to modernize, remodel, or replace all District schools over the 30-year planning period (1986-2016).

³The student generation rate for multi-family homes is the following for each unit: 0.130 elementary students; 0.047 middle school students; and 0.069 high school students.

School Access

Because there are currently no residences at the proposed development site, there are no walking routes or Pierce County Transit bus stops serving the site.

The School District provides school bus service to students living beyond a one-mile radius of a school or when a walking route for students closer than one mile would include hazardous road crossings, according to Tacoma School District Regulation 6600.2R and WAC 392-141-115. Meeker Middle School, Crescent Heights Elementary School, and Northeast Tacoma Elementary school are within one mile of the proposed development. The safe walking routes for these schools are shown in **Figure 3.4-2**. Stadium High School and Brown's Point Elementary are not within walking distance, but are connected via school bus service.

3.4.2 Impacts of the Proposed Action

Impacts to Level of Service

Table 3.4-3 summarizes the student generation figures for the proposed development. An estimated 467 new students will be added to the School District service area.

**Table 3.4-3
STUDENT GENERATION FROM *THE POINT AT NORTSHORE***

	Single-Family School Generation Rate	Expected Students (860 sf units)
Elementary	0.258	222
Middle School	0.123	106
High School	0.162	139
TOTAL		467

Public Schools 2007 Student Generation Rates, Mike McCormick, November 2007

As shown in **Table 3.4-4**, the student population and growth projections from the School District indicate that schools in the vicinity of the proposed development will not have the capacity to serve the expected additional elementary school, middle school, and high school students living in *The Point at Northshore*.

**Table 3.4-4
PROJECTED DEFICIENCIES RESULTING FROM PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

Capacity / Deficiency	Browns Point Elementary, Crescent Heights Elementary, and Northeast Elementary	Meeker Middle School	Stadium High School
Available Capacity (from Table 3.4-1)	145	(54)	(54)
Projected Students from proposed development (from Table 3.4-3)	222	106	139
Available Capacity/Deficiency	(77)	(160)	(193)

If left unmitigated, a deficiency in school capacity will constitute an adverse impact.

Impacts to Walking Routes

The Proponent is required under *TMC* 13.04.100.E.1 to provide safe walking routes for children who walk to school. The primary pedestrian access from *The Point at Northshore* to Crescent Heights Elementary and Meeker Middle School is at North Shore Boulevard via Oakmont Place. Because this will be a location with high pedestrian activity, the Proponent will be required to provide a flashing school pedestrian sign at the intersection of North Shore Boulevard and the new 60-foot right-of-way to alert drivers to the presence of children. Additionally, a pedestrian gate or passage will be required through vehicle barricades on North Shore Boulevard between the project site and Oakmont Place.

3.4.3 Impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative

The impacts to schools of the *Proposed Action Alternative* will likely be similar to the impacts caused by the *Proposed Action*; however, the reduced scope of development will lead to a reduction in the number of households, and therefore, required mitigation will be proportionately reduced.

3.4.4 Impacts of the No Action Alternative

The current use of the project site includes no residential units; therefore, the *No Action Alternative* will have no adverse impact on the area schools.

3.4.3 Proposed Mitigation

Proposed Action

The following mitigation is required to address impacts on schools caused by *The Point at Northshore*:

1. As provided for under SEPA and the *Tacoma Municipal Code*, it has been determined that this development will have an adverse impact on the Tacoma Public Schools and, therefore, mitigation is required. Prior to any final plat approval, the Proponent shall provide mitigation to the School District in the form of an agreement to pay the Proponent's pro rata share of the cost for portables and/or permanent facilities, whichever option or options are identified by the School District as consistent with its plan to serve the students projected to be generated from the Proponent's project. The Proponent shall also be required to provide safe walking paths, if applicable, as required to comply with RCW 58.17.110. In addition to the internal walkways, all of the foot traffic from the new development shall be provided with safe walkway paths to North Shore Boulevard, and to Nassau via Oakmont.
2. At the northerly portion of the extension of North Shore Boulevard where it intersects the new 60-foot right-of-way, the Proponent shall construct school pedestrian signage consisting of a "Crosswalk" sign, an advanced sign preceding the crosswalk in either direction that will flash during school travel hours, and lighted school speed zone signs. In addition, due to concerns relative to traffic speed, the City would like the Proponent to evaluate traffic-calming opportunities along the 60-foot right-of-way to be constructed in Phase II. Because this road is to be designed to arterial standard, it cannot include speed

humps or traffic circles but may include devices such as diverters, chicanes, etc. to help ensure motorists drive in a reasonable and prudent manner.

Proposed Action Alternative

Similar mitigation would be required as with the *Proposed Action*, but would be reduced proportionately based on development scope.

3.4.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts to *Schools* are anticipated as a result of *The Point at Northshore* development, the *Proposed Action Alternative*, or the *No Action Alternative*, provided the requested mitigation is implemented.