

August 31, 2020

TO: Council Member Dan Strauss, Chair, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee
FROM: Samuel Assefa, Director, Office of Planning and Community Development
SUBJECT: Council Docketing Resolution for Comprehensive Plan Annual Amendments for 2021:
OPCD Recommendations

This memo provides recommendations for amendments to the City’s Comprehensive Plan to include on the docket for Council consideration in 2021. OPCD has reviewed 11 proposals submitted by community members for consistency with the criteria established by City Council Resolution 31807 and recommends one of these for docketing. In addition, OPCD has reviewed six previous Council-generated proposals to study amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and recommends two of these, with modifications, for docketing for 2021.

In summary, OPCD recommends that three amendment topics be further analyzed, and pending that analysis, considered for possible adoption. They are:

Proposed amendment from the community recommended for docketing

- Extend University District Urban Center Boundary

Proposals in prior Council resolutions recommended for additional analysis, with modifications

- Future Land Use Map amendment and policy amendments to support transit-oriented development in the immediate vicinity of the planned 130th Street Link Light Rail Station
- Identification of amendments to industrial land use and related policies that advance initial implementation of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy

Finally, this memo also identifies two additional areas of ongoing work – racially equitable recovery and planning for a “15-minute city” – around which OPCD may recommend comprehensive plan amendments in 2021.

Amendments Proposed by Community

Under the state Growth Management Act, the City may amend its comprehensive plan up to once each year. Council Resolution 31807 establishes a schedule and criteria for docketing proposed amendments on an annual cycle for consideration by the City Council. On May 15, 2020 the application period closed for community members to submit proposals to amend the plan in 2021. Eleven amendments were proposed by the community. OPCD has reviewed these proposals for consistency with the established criteria and recommends one amendment for docketing. Consistent with CR 31807, OPCD will analyze the proposed amendment, conduct environmental review, and transmit recommended amendments to Council in 2021.

Recommended for Docketing

OPCD recommends that the following proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan be docketed for further analysis and consideration for adoption:

1. Extend University District Urban Center Boundary

The proposed Future Land Use Map amendment expands the boundary of the University District Urban Center east to include the half block that fronts on the west side of 15th Avenue NE and between NE 56th Avenue and NE Ravenna Avenue.

The amendment satisfies the City Council's criteria for docketing.

Not Recommended for Docketing

OPCD recommends the following Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals not be docketed for 2021:

1. Heavy Vehicles

This proposal would amend the Transportation Element to add policies intended to minimize damage to streets from heavy vehicles.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted in prior years and not docketed by the City Council.

2. Open and Participatory Government

This proposal would amend the Comprehensive Plan by establishing a new element or appendix to establish policies to outline goals, objectives, and policies for decision processes that maximize the possibility of public input before decisions are made.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted in prior years and not docketed by the City Council.

3. Potential Landslide Area Covenants

This proposal seeks to amend the Comprehensive Plan to cease the practice of requiring potential landslide area covenants in environmentally critical areas.

This amendment does not address a Comprehensive Plan policy and is more appropriate to achieve through a regulatory change or Director's Rule.

4. Yards and Trees

This proposal would amend the Land Use Element to revise policies LU 5.6, LU 5.7, and LU 5.8. Language would be amended to LU 5.6 to expand the purpose of its guidance to establish setbacks in residential areas to include the planting or maintenance of large trees. Language would be added to LU 5.7 to require yards for every multifamily lot. LU 5.8 would be amended to include the value of trees in addressing public health and urban wildlife.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted and considered in prior years and not adopted by the City Council.

5. Pedestrian Grade Separations

This proposal would add a new policy to the Transportation Element that discourages pedestrian grade separations (skybridges, aerial tram, tunnel) in all Urban Centers and Urban Villages.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted and considered in prior years and not adopted by the City Council.

6. Rezones and Conditional uses

This proposal would amend to Land Use Element to add two new policies that provide direction for rezones and conditional uses. The first would direct the City to establish zone criteria and procedures to guide decisions about what zone is appropriate in any given location to advance city goals. The second would be to ensure that rezones and conditional use decisions are made with ample public notice and public outreach.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted and considered in prior years and not adopted by the City Council.

7. Development Monitoring

This amendment would restore policies in section L61 of the 1994 City Comprehensive Plan, that were subsequently removed from the plan by amendment in the late 1990s. These policies commit the City to monitor development activity and take active steps (i.e. provide additional resources, reduce development activity, or establish annual growth targets) when growth exceeds growth targets.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted in prior years and not docketed by the City Council.

8. Demolition and Displacement

This proposal would restore policies removed from the Comprehensive Plan in the 2016 update that discouraged the demolition of existing affordable housing.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted and considered in prior years and not adopted by the City Council.

9. Trees

This proposal would amend the Land Use Element policy E 1.2, Environment Element policy T 4.5, and Parks Element policy P 3.3 to include policy language related to urban forest and tree preservation. The actions described in the amendment application are more appropriately addressed through Seattle's Municipal Code.

This amendment is substantially the same as an amendment submitted in prior years and not docketed by the City Council.

10. West Seattle Bridge

The proposed amendment identifies actions the City can take in response to the West Seattle Bridge closure. Currently SDOT is developing a multi-faceted response regarding repair / replacement of the West Seattle Bridge. This effort includes a robust public participation process, including formation of the West Seattle Bridge Community Task Force and a Technical Advisory Panel, and engagement with the broader community through Reconnect West Seattle efforts. SDOT has implemented quick, critical transportation improvements since the closure and as part of Reconnect West Seattle, and is working with the communities to identify and prioritize improvement projects, neighborhood mitigation proposals, and other ideas to help people choose a different mode, as able. This process may not result in the exact measures proposed by the applicant, but will address the goals of these actions in terms of identifying transportation mitigation, shifting people out of their cars, and development of a finance plan for the bridge.

This package of amendments is not recommended for docketing because the actions can either be accomplished through regulation alone or are better addressed as a budgetary or programmatic decision. None of the proposed actions would necessitate an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

Amendments Proposed for Analysis by Prior City Council Resolution

With transmittal to OPCD of community applications proposing amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in 2021, Council central staff also called attention to potential amendments identified in several prior Council resolutions or that were previously docketed. Each is described below, along with a brief description of OPCD's current approach to addressing the proposal, including a recommendation on docketing for 2021.

Recommended for Docketing, With Modifications

1. Resolution 31870, Section 11A:

Specific to N 130th Street and Interstate 5, OPCD and other City departments are requested to support community-based planning work to develop a proposal to establish an urban village with transit supportive development capacity and urban village-level amenities, such as transit-oriented development, childcare, and housing.

Currently, OPCD is engaging in a community planning process around the planned Link Light Rail 130th St. Station. This work includes studying a range of potential land use changes and policy options that support transit-oriented development and may result in a recommendation to establish an urban village at this location. Completion of a plan for the full station area with recommended changes to the Comprehensive Plan requires more community input and environmental review than can be feasibly completed in time for adoption in 2021.

However, as an interim action to further the City's commitment to TOD around the 130th St. Station, the Executive is proposing to docket a future land use map amendment and rezoning of affected properties along with supportive policy language for one block adjacent and to the east of the 130th St. Station. Sound Transit is currently constructing Lynnwood Link and is considering accelerating construction of the 130th St. Station with a potential opening as early as 2025. Adopting an initial plan amendment and rezone in 2021 will enable early development of transit supportive land uses to support the new transit investment in anticipation of an early opening.

This station area planning process includes substantial public engagement. Outreach to date includes:

- Interviews with 50+ representatives of local schools, churches, community organizations and social service providers
- Community Open House at Ingraham HS attended by 100+ people
- Online Community Survey completed by 750+ people
- Community Workshop at North Seattle Church of Nazarene attended by 90+ people
- Project information at 20+ community events
- Monthly emails to 400+ subscribers
- Key Documents published: Background Report, Open House Summary and Survey Results
- Online engagement during the pandemic: a series of four online community conversations June through September

2. Resolution 31762, Section 3:

Includes direction to strengthen industrial land use policies and identifies several specific proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map to redesignate industrial lands.

Consistent with Resolution 31682, the Council requests that the Executive provide recommendations of potential amendments to Comprehensive Plan policies related to industrial lands including policies to strengthen the long-term viability of Manufacturing/Industrial Centers and a re-evaluation of the Stadium District for Council consideration in 2018. In developing these recommendations, the Executive should consider, analyze, and suggest improvements to the following amendments proposed by individuals and organizations, in addition to the amendments docketed in Resolution 31682:

1. *Application to amend the Future Land Use Map to remove the Interbay Armory property from the Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center (BINMIC) and designate it a “Commercial/Mixed-Use” area.*
2. *Application to amend the Future Land Use Map to remove property located at 1819-1893 15th Avenue West and 1855-2033 15th Avenue West from the BINMIC and designate it “Mixed Use/Commercial.”*
3. *Application to amend the Future Land Use Map to remove Pier One, located at 2130 Harbor Avenue SW, from the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center and designate it Mixed Use/Commercial.*

The Mayor’s Office convened a citywide stakeholder group and four subarea stakeholder groups to work with City departments (OED, OPCD, SDOT, OSE) in developing an Industrial and Maritime Strategy. The strategy is to be broad in scope encompassing workforce training, transportation investments, public safety, environmental, and land use policies with the goal of creating accessible living wage jobs. Among the outcomes of this process will be a land use policy framework that can guide key land use decisions on the 3 previously docketed land use changes above, planning for station areas within industrial areas, and other land use decisions relating to industrial land.

Regarding policies for industrial land uses, pending finalization of stakeholder outreach processes, we anticipate possible consolidation of some industrial land use policies. In addition, we anticipate:

- Potential strengthening of policy protections for core industrial areas near major infrastructure and in areas necessary for supporting water dependent uses
- Introduction of new policy content to improve equitable access to well-paying jobs
- A proactive land use approach for encouraging maritime, manufacturing, and logistics-connected employment in transit-oriented development near existing or high capacity transit nodes within manufacturing / industrial centers
- Introduction of new policy language to encourage a healthy, walkable, and visitor-oriented land use vision for industrial areas near urban villages or residential populations

This work was scheduled for completion in the summer of 2020, however, delays resulting from the COVID-19 response and new considerations for this work that align with the City’s COVID recovery efforts mean that this work will not be completed until the 4th quarter of 2020. To complete this work, a revised workplan that centers racial equity and youth engagement will inform final recommendations.

As this work proceeds, the Executive will work with industrial and maritime stakeholders to identify potential recommendations for high-level Comprehensive Plan policy amendments in 2021, with the

bulk of implementation actions, including further Comprehensive Plan amendments, considered for adoption in 2022 or with the major Comprehensive Plan update in 2024.

Not Recommended for Docketing

1. Resolution 31870, Section 2:

Impact fee amendments. Consistent with [Resolution 31762](#), the Council requests that the Executive provide recommendations of potential amendments to Comprehensive Plan policies necessary to support implementation of an impact fee program for: public streets, roads, and other transportation improvements; publicly owned parks, open space, and recreation facilities; and school facilities. This may include amendments to update or replace level-of-service standards or to add impact fee project lists in the Capital Facilities Element and amendments to other elements or maps in the Comprehensive Plan, as appropriate.

The City Council conducted SEPA on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments related to transportation impact fees and issued a DNS in November 2018, which was appealed to the Hearing Examiner. The Examiner issued its decision in October 2019, requiring some additional work to be done. The Council has yet to complete that work. OPCD does not anticipate working on this issue for the 2021 amendment cycle.

2. Resolution 31870, Section 5:

Amendments related to fossil fuels and public health. The Council requests that OPCD, in consultation with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, the Office of Sustainability, and the Environmental Justice Committee, draft, evaluate, undertake environmental review and provide recommendations for potential amendments to the Environment, Land Use or Utilities Elements that would clarify the City's intent to protect the public health and meet its climate goals by limiting fossil fuel production and storage.

This amendment is more appropriate for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update because it will require more public outreach and staff analysis than can be feasibly accomplished, given limited resources and competing priorities, in this annual amendment cycle.

3. Resolution 31870, Section 8:

E. Specific to the South Park Residential Urban Village, the Council requests the following actions:

1. *OPCD is requested to assess how the neighborhood meets the criteria for urban village designation and provide a report to Council as part of the 2019-2020 Comprehensive Plan docketing process.*

The City will be adopting a major update to the Comprehensive Plan by June 2024. As part of the update, OPCD expects to review the Urban Centers and Villages Growth Strategy. South Park is more appropriately addressed as part of this work.

4. Resolution 31870, Section 7: Recommend a new name for single-family zoning.

The Council requests that OPCD make a recommendation for an alternative name for single family zones, such as Neighborhood Residential, and propose Comprehensive Plan amendments as part of the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Plan Docket to implement this change, as appropriate.

Given the potential relationship to other policies, level of analysis, and level of public engagement necessary, this proposal may be more appropriately addressed through the major update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2024.

Ongoing Work: Racially Equitable Recovery

The COVID-19 emergency has revealed Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities to be disproportionately impacted and at a greater risk of harm from the pandemic and its impacts. Voices of community, amplified through recent and ongoing protests, have heightened the urgency of a City response to COVID-19 that recognizes and addresses systemic racism, toward recovery that supports a more racially equitable future for Seattle.

The Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which currently contains a number of policies that promote racial equity, is an evolving tool for the City to set policy direction on land use, housing, capital facilities, transportation, and other areas of policy in a way that supports and enables the City to take actions around equitable recovery and anti-racism.

For the remainder of 2020 and into 2021, the Executive will continue to lead efforts to work with BIPOC communities to identify community needs and recommended actions. In doing so, OPCD will work to identify any additional potential amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that may be considered for adoption in 2021. We will explore the potential for amendments that support community ownership and wealth building, affordable housing, and recommendations that may emerge from an ongoing racial equity analysis of the growth strategy in Seattle 2035 (response to SLI-29-4-B-1). This work may include Comprehensive Plan amendments as a potential tool to support community ownership and provide flexibility for a range of uses at independent/BIPOC-led community centers.

Ongoing Work: Toward Connected Complete “15-minute” Neighborhoods

The response to COVID-19 has also highlighted the importance of the city’s neighborhoods as places where people live and increasingly work and seek to meet a wide range of daily needs. A “15-minute city,” which was recently highlighted as a key recommended strategy in the C40 Cities Green and Just Recovery Plan, has attracted interest as a framework for city planning where a variety of affordable housing choices, everyday stores and services, health care, parks, and educational and cultural institutions are all located within an easy walk or bike ride from each other.

Through the balance of 2020 and into 2021, OPCD will be exploring planning for a “15-minute” City of Seattle as a potential framework for the next major Comprehensive Plan update due in 2024. Such work would incorporate the heightened role of station areas around future transit investments and identify additional areas where 15-minute city concepts are applicable. This work could, for example, guide investments in multimodal transportation, local community amenities and facilities, neighborhood businesses, a variety of housing types and choices, and other strategic land use changes. As the City works towards the major update, the Executive may recommend incremental amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, as early as 2021, through the annual amendment process.