

SEATTLE'S INDUSTRIAL LANDS REGULATORY TOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores the issues outlined in City Resolution 31026 related to collecting further information about the current uses on industrially zoned land in Seattle and about the potential usefulness of certain regulatory tools for advancing the City's overall goals for its industrial areas.

Land Use Inventory

- DPD staff conducted a field survey to document the existing uses on all parcels in the city that are zoned industrial and made adjustments based on comments from interested stakeholder groups who were asked to review the initial findings.
- The results found many parcels that have multiple uses and identified many different uses of industrial land.
- The study found that parcels where an industrial activity is the primary use on the site account for about three-fourths of the industrially zoned land, in all of the industrial subareas across the city.

Zone Boundaries

- Resolution 31026 called on DPD to review boundaries of the City's Manufacturing/Industrial Centers to determine whether those boundaries should be adjusted to reflect existing land uses, proximity to urban centers, urban villages and transit.
- Recommend change from IG2 to IC zoning along south boundary of the Duwamish M/IC.
- Will be recommending changes along the north boundary of the Duwamish M/IC, as part of the South Downtown Plan that will be sent to Council in summer 2009.
- Anticipate recommendations related to analysis of Ballard Interbay Northend Manu-

facturing/Industrial Center (BINMIC), especially where that M/IC abuts the Ballard and Fremont urban villages.

- Will also review industrial zoning within the Eastlake urban village and in Duwamish M/IC surrounding the Georgetown community.

Land Use Code Definitions

- The Resolution asked whether the City's current definitions of "manufacturing" and "research and development laboratory" are consistent with current and emerging industry practices and best practices in other cities.
- Seattle's definitions of these terms are consistent with industry practice and with definitions used in other cities. They are also consistent with the City's adopted policy guidance regarding these uses.
- Recommend no changes to the current definitions of these terms.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- FAR is a measurement of building density that is used to regulate structure size. For most of Seattle's industrial zones the current FAR limit is 2.5, although there are higher limits in some Industrial/Commercial zones.
- Considered whether the City's current FAR limits in industrial zones are appropriate for current and projected industrial users and whether increasing those limits would give Seattle an advantage in attracting industrial businesses.
- Research into the actual FAR used by existing industrial businesses indicated that these firms on average use less than 1/3 of the current FAR limit.
- Seattle's FAR limits are in line with limits imposed by other comparable cities.
- Recommend no changes to the current FAR limits.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

- TDR programs allow a property owner to convey unused development potential from his property to be used on a different property.
- There is a very large amount of unused development potential on Seattle's industrial land.
- Before considering whether to adopt a TDR program, the City would need to identify a clear goal for that program, such as restricting development in certain locations or enhancing development elsewhere.
- Recommend no TDR in industrial zones at this time.

Adaptive Reuse

- Adaptive Reuse is the process of making an existing structure available for an activity different from the one for which it was originally designed, or currently used; conversion of buildings in industrial zones to non-industrial uses would be governed by the Land Use Code's size-of-use limits for certain commercial uses.
- Given the relatively small number of vacant buildings in the industrial zones, there is no perceived need to allow widespread conversion to non-industrial uses.
- However, certain multi-story buildings are much less suitable for industrial activities than they were when they were first constructed.
- Recommend allowing an exception to the size-of-use limitations for existing structures four or more stories in height and include standards that limit the impacts on the surrounding industrial uses.

New Tools

- Resolution called on Executive to look at promising actions that may lead to new industrial business opportunities and stronger job creation.
- Executive is working with Port of Seattle on a SEPA planned action (using Port's previous EIS) to facilitate development at Terminal 91.
- Port has decided to pursue development under current industrial zoning.
- City staff is identifying mitigating measures and thresholds for when those measures will need to be implemented.
- Ordinance will be sent to Council this year.