



# City of Seattle

## Seattle Planning Commission

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### **Staff**

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Assistant  
  
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Planning Intern

October 17, 2008

Honorable Council President Richard Conlin  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

### **Re: Commission Raises Concerns over Proposed Rezone to Dravus Area**

Dear Council President Conlin,

The Planning Commission is concerned about the revisions to the proposed Dravus rezone passed by PLUNC on October 8, 2008 and urges you to reconsider elements of the original proposal. We are particularly concerned that the revised ordinance does not appear to include adequate mechanisms for ensuring the infrastructure and amenities necessary to serve the proposed development. Nor does the revised ordinance appear to provide for an incentive zoning package adequate to provide significant workforce housing. Both of these elements were important factors in the Commission's initial decision to support the original proposal.

As stewards of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, we have reviewed the revised rezone and determined that it would fundamentally diverge from longstanding City policy. The Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village Strategy encourages growth where the City has already developed infrastructure, thereby lowering the public cost of new development. While LU6 allows Council to consider increased heights in this area, Resolution 30804 stipulated that one of the conditions distinguishing it from other areas outside urban villages is that the community intended to fully fund a local improvement district. We believe that SEPA mitigation alone – when implemented in piecemeal fashion - may be inadequate to comprehensively provide the the infrastructure needed to sustain this new mixed-use community.

Without a mechanism in place, such as the LID, it is not clear to the Commission that adequate public or private funding will be available to provide the essential infrastructure. We do not wish to see scarce funds diverted from other programs or other areas of the city to provide infrastructure to an area not identified as an Urban Village.

This upzone will provide considerable economic benefit to property owners and developers. The City has established a strong policy directive that requires significant upzones to include public benefits, such as affordable housing. The Commission believes the incentive zoning package as currently proposed (base building height of 65 feet up to 85 feet through density bonus) would yield far less workforce housing than

the earlier proposal. We recommend that the City consider enacting a lower base building height of 40 feet to help provide additional workforce housing stock.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide Council with our independent expert review of this proposal as it moves forward. We have attached our letter of July 30, 2008 for your review. Please contact me or our Director, Barbara Wilson at (206) 684-0431, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Linda Amato, Chair  
Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Mayor Greg Nickels  
Seattle City Councilmembers  
Tim Ceis, Nathan Torgelson, Mayor's office  
Diane Sugimura, John Skelton, Tom Hauger, Jim Holmes, DPD  
Grace Crunican, Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT  
Adrienne Quinn, Rick Hooper, Office of Housing  
Rebecca Herzfeld, Ketil Freeman, Council Central Staff

<b>RECORD OF DISCLOSURE/ RECUSAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Commissioner Tom Eanes recused himself from all Commission discussion and action in this matter.</li><li>- Commissioner Martin H. Kaplan disclosed that he is a member of the Queen Anne Community Council and Land Use Review Committee and has reviewed the project as a Queen Anne resident many times.</li><li>- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design Company, has a contract with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). In March 2008, SPU hired SvR to review the Department of Planning and Developments SEPA Checklist and identify information needed to estimate the stormwater and wastewater capacity requirements of the proposed rezone.</li><li>- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, has several clients which own and operate industrial businesses.</li></ul>