

(Date)

Honorable Councilmember Rob Johnson, Chair
Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee
via e-mail

RE: Planning Commission Recommendations on the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Dear Councilmember Johnson,

The Seattle Planning Commission is pleased to provide our comments and recommendations on the proposed 2016-2017 Comprehensive Plan amendments. Providing recommendations on annual Comprehensive Plan proposals is a mandate of the Commission and a responsibility we are pleased to fulfill as stewards of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed FLUM Amendments

Proposal: 1625 S. Columbian Way
Planning Commission recommendation: Adopt

The applicant is requesting to amend the FLUM from a Single Family (SF) designation to either a Multi-Family or Commercial / Mixed Use designation.

The Commission recommends this amendment be adopted. We support residential development of this property recognizing that this site is adjacent to existing public facilities that would support future residential use. Although the proposed amendment addresses a single parcel, the parcel is 2.6 acres. Only four percent of parcels zoned single-family within the city are equal to or greater than 2.6 acres. The average single-family zoned parcel is .15 acres. Approximately seventeen average-sized single-family zoned parcels would fit on this site. The applicant is proposing 60-90 townhomes on the site and has indicated a plan intent to opt into the Mandatory Housing Affordability program, performing on site. The Commission believes a difference between 17 housing units and 60-90 is significant, especially during the current housing crisis. Our support of this amendment should not be considered a precedent for amendments addressing a single parcel.

Proposal: 1807 20th Avenue South
Planning Commission recommendation: Do Not Adopt

The applicant is requesting amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan to allow rezones of single-family areas to multifamily areas.

The Commission does not recommend that this amendment be adopted. The parcels addressed by this amendment are within the North Rainier Hub Urban Village. Per the adopted Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan (the Plan), all parcels located either within urban centers or residential urban villages now have the same FLUM designation. Therefore, the request to change the FLUM is unnecessary.

The applicant proposes to amend language in the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan. The Planning Commission concurs with OPCD that the applicant has not provided any evidence of the neighborhood's support for this change in language.

Proposals: 844 NW 48th Street, 1616 W. Bertona Street
Planning Commission recommendation: Postpone

The applicant for 844 NW 48th Street is requesting to change the FLUM designations of six parcels within the Ballard-Interbay North Manufacturing-Industrial Center (BINMIC) from Industrial to Commercial/Mixed Use. The applicant for 1616 W. Bertona Street is requesting to change the FLUM designation of two parcels from Industrial to Commercial / Mixed Use and remove the parcels from the BINMIC.

Resolution 31682 directed the Executive to consider these two proposals to amend the FLUM in the context of the Mayor's Industrial Lands Advisory Panel:

“Section 2. Manufacturing/industrial amendments. The Executive is requested to provide recommendations for 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. The review should examine the locational needs, potential for use conflicts, and adjacency issues associated with emerging and innovative industrial uses, such as custom and craft producers with a retail component and other mixed-use development that includes light industrial activity. As part of that review, the Executive should consider the proposed amendments for NW 48th Street and W Bertona Street contained in Clerk File 319807 and provide a recommendation to the Council on whether those proposals would be consistent with any changes in policy direction for the Ballard/Interbay Manufacturing/Industrial District.”

The Commission concurs with the recommendation by OPCD to postpone a decision on these proposed amendments until the Mayor's Industrial Lands Task Force's recommendations are finalized. At that time, it can be determined whether these proposals would be consistent with any policy changes relative to the BINMIC. As the Task Force's recommendations are translated into policy, we look forward to reviewing policies that address all industrial-zoned areas.

Proposed Amendments to Goals and Policies

Proposal: Amend Goals and Policies of the Chinatown/I.D. Neighborhood Plan
Planning Commission recommendation: Adopt

OPCD has proposed the following amendments that implement the Cultural and Economic Vitality Goal within the Chinatown/International District Urban Center Village neighborhood plan. The substantive changes are revised or new language for Policies P1, P6, P8 and P9. Other changes reflect re-numbering.

Chinatown/International District

CULTURAL & ECONOMIC VITALITY GOAL

ID-G1 Thriving businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions.

CULTURAL & ECONOMIC VITALITY POLICIES

ID-P1 Work with the Chinatown/International District community to strategically coordinate plans, programs and projects to better support thriving businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions in Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon areas.

ID-((P1)) P2 Support marketing activities that promote neighborhood businesses, events, and cultural opportunities.

ID-((P2)) P3 Work with the Chinatown/International District community to develop business improvement strategies to encourage greater customer patronage of individual businesses.

ID-((P3)) P4 Encourage new business development and location within the neighborhood.

ID-((P4)) P5 Emphasize nighttime activity to tap into a new market for businesses.

ID-((P5)) P6 ~~((Support development of a))~~ Enable greater access for the neighborhood's residents and employees to the neighborhood's multipurpose community recreation center, library ~~((with space for community programs and associations))~~ and other public amenities.

ID-((P6)) P7 Improve utility infrastructure, when appropriate, to support community needs.

ID-P8 Work with the Chinatown/International District to develop anti-displacement strategies to ensure availability of affordable commercial space in Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon areas.

ID-P9 Work with the Little Saigon community on strategies to strengthen its culturally-based neighborhood identity.

The Commission recommends that these amendments be adopted, but are concerned that the following language in ID-P6 "Enable greater access for the neighborhood's residents and employees..." could be misconstrued as exclusive of individuals outside of this neighborhood. OPCD has been actively engaged with the Chinatown/I.D. community, and these amendments are supported by the community.

Proposal: Air Quality Effects on Sensitive Land Uses
Planning Commission recommendation: Adopt

Section 3 of the docketing resolution directed OPCD to work with the Seattle King County Public Health Department and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to evaluate and provide recommendations for potential amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to consider the health impacts of allowing or increasing residential development adjacent to high volumes of air pollution.

The Commission concurs with the recommendation by OPCD that the following policy be added to the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

LU 1.6 Consider and seek to reduce the potential health impacts of air pollution on residential populations and other sensitive uses near corridors with high volumes of vehicle traffic, the King County Airport, major rail yards, freight routes, and point sources of pollution.

According to OPCD's analysis, "This policy would direct the City to consider air quality impacts on people who would be living in new housing or using new facilities located in areas where there are high levels of air pollution. This could apply, for instance, when the City is considering actions that would increase the number of housing units near an air pollution source, or when it is considering the siting of a new school or daycare facility in such a location. One way the City could implement this would be to prepare a map that shows the pollution sources of concern and a buffer area around them to indicate locations where further study might be warranted prior to making decisions that would allow certain uses. Further study could recognize that variations in local conditions, such as topography, wind direction, wind speed and site design could produce different levels of impact on the sensitive uses. Some locations or projects may lend themselves to measures that could reduce exposure to air pollutants. Given the variety of conditions in areas that may be exposed to high volumes of air pollution contemplated under this policy, it would be appropriate to review projects in the identified areas on a case-by-case basis."

Proposals previously docketed

Resolution 31682, which docketed the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Plan amendments, referred to amendments previously docketed through City Council work programs, including amendments related to the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA). Although those HALA-related Comprehensive Plan amendments were anticipated to be forwarded to the Council in 2017, the Commission understands that transmittal schedule is currently under revision, and therefore we have no recommendations on those amendments at this time.

We appreciate the opportunity to review these Comprehensive Plan amendments and provide our recommendations. If you have any further questions please call either myself or Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director at (206) 733-9271.

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