

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SEPA Threshold Determination
for the
2012 Comprehensive Plan Annual Amendments

Project Sponsor: City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD)

Location of Proposal: The amendments relate to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which pertains to the entire City.

BACKGROUND

Proposal Description

The proposal consists of several possible amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, as summarized below. DPD recommends approval of most of the items listed below, except for Items E, I, and K. The City Council will review the proposed amendments at a later date.

- A. Broadview-Bitter Lake-Haller Lake Neighborhood Plan policies adoption and recommended possible Future Land Use Map and zoning changes:** This neighborhood plan update expands upon prior neighborhood plan concepts to stimulate the evolution of a denser urban village land use pattern including a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use spine along Linden Avenue N., and further consider land use/zoning changes in the future along with related street and open space/park improvements. The plan includes (but is not limited to) several instances of new and amended policies address neighborhood priorities on topics such as: improving drainage system infrastructure and performance; improving the aesthetics, completeness and functionality of the street system including Aurora Avenue N; improving the functionality of circulation systems for pedestrians and bicyclists; the goal of a vibrant mixed-use center focused along Linden Avenue N; strengthening Aurora Avenue N as a regional commercial center and source of jobs, while enhancing its fit with surrounding communities; enhancing economic and social vibrancy; improving Stone Avenue N as a green corridor connecting the Aurora Avenue vicinity with Haller Lake; seeking to improve compatibility between lower-density and higher-density areas; and other proposed amendments. Also, the plan update proposes adjustments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) regarding Urban Village boundaries and land use designations, and future consideration of rezones:
- i. Consider changing the FLUM designation of parcels fronting the east side of Linden Avenue N., between N. 135th St and N 145th St., from Commercial to Multifamily. Consider rezoning these properties to Midrise designation or similar designation that facilitates dense and affordable multifamily development.

- ii. Consider rezoning the parcels fronting the east side of Linden Avenue N., between N. 135th St and N 130th St., from Commercial to a mixed-use designation such as Neighborhood Commercial (NC3) or Seattle Mixed (SM).
- iii. Add current Commercial C zoned properties east of Stone Avenue N to the urban village, between N 122nd and 135th Streets; add a small strip of LR3 zoned land just south of N 130th Street by the Bitter Lake Park; and remove a large cemetery tract west of Aurora Avenue N and north of N 115th Street from the urban village.

B. Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan policies adoption and recommended possible Future Land Use Map and zoning changes: This neighborhood plan update expands upon prior neighborhood plan concepts to further stimulate the evolution of a denser urban village land use pattern in the heart of the neighborhood as well as near the light rail station at MLK Way/S. Henderson Street, and other locations. The neighborhood plan also expands upon efforts to create a safe, healthy, culturally responsive and educationally-supportive community that will best serve its residents. The plan includes (but is not limited to) several instances of new and amended policies addressing neighborhood priorities such as: better coordinated and more aesthetic transportation system improvements; increased opportunities for live-work units and home occupations; an urban farm and wetlands restoration project; better pedestrian/non-motorized connections among public spaces; improved public safety; using public art to express cultural diversity; and more capability to achieve affordable family-size residential units; and proposed adjustments to the FLUM regarding Urban Village boundaries and land use designations:

- i. Expand the Urban Village boundary between Martin Luther King Way S and 42nd Avenue S, between Yukon Avenue S and Renton Avenue S (just south of S Henderson Street), and south of the Rainier beach light rail station along Martin Luther King Way S.
- ii. Allowing for the update of the FLUM by:
 - 1. Considering re-designating parcels to the east and west of Martin Luther King Way S, south of S Henderson Street, to Commercial /Mixed Use (parcels adjacent to existing Commercial / Mixed Use designation).
 - 2. Considering re-designating properties east of Renton Avenue S and south of S Henderson Street to Multifamily Residential.
 - 3. Considering re-designating properties at the northwest corner of the intersection of S Henderson Street and Martin Luther King Way S to either Multifamily Residential or Commercial Mixed Use.
- iii. In the area within the residential urban village west of Martin Luther King Way S., permit consideration of rezones of Single-Family zoned land to Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Seattle Mixed (SM), Lowrise Duplex Triplex (LDT) [or similar zone type], Lowrise 1 (L1), or Lowrise 2 (L2) or Lowrise 3 (L3) designations.
- iv. Within ¼ mile of the rail station, and contiguous with Commercial / Mixed Use Future Land Use Map designations, and where there are changes in elevation,

park land, rights-of-way, or similar buffers, permit consideration of rezones of Single-Family or multifamily designations to Neighborhood Commercial (NC) or Seattle Mixed (SM) designation.

- v. Support and expand the existing character and diverse mix of small-scale, minority and immigrant-owned businesses nodes around Rainier Ave S and S Rose Street; Rainier Ave S and 56th/57th Ave. S; and the rail station vicinity.
- C. **Transit Communities:** Proposal Item C’s content is defined per DPD’s recommended amendments, which narrow and revise the proposals made by the original applicant – the Seattle Planning Commission. DPD’s proposal for Item C includes a variety of new goal/policy statements in a new section of the Land Use Element with guidance about “transit communities” as a planning concept or tool that can be considered and possibly implemented in future actions such as neighborhood plans, subarea plans or rezones. The proposal posits the benefits of urban planning that emphasizes “transit communities” in general, meaning areas near major transit stops or service intersections. The intent is that future planning choices and related future growth, to the extent it can be directed by the City, will occur in ways that increase the overall efficiency, accessibility, and vitality of districts near these areas. The proposal is also seen as contributing toward more efficient per-capita carbon emission levels and maintaining or improving social equity. The proposal also indicates desired values of “complete, compact and connected” for transit communities, and describes a range of aspirational “place types” that fall within the general category of transit communities.
- D. **Add Container Port Element narrative:** Add five paragraphs of narrative introductory text to this existing element in order to expand and clarify the description of the element’s purposes and aims. The text describes the Port of Seattle’s economic value, functional value, its vulnerability to adverse pressures of economy and accessibility, and a range of possible protective approaches the City may consider in its future work programs. It also mentions State legislation and past City land use code amendments.
- E. **Spectator sports facilities in Industrial Zones:** Amend the Land Use Element to prohibit the development of spectator sports facilities in Industrial zones if they would significantly restrict or disrupt existing industrial uses.
- F. **Climate Action amendments to the Land Use, Transportation, and Environment Elements:** Add and amend policies addressing future growth and transport in ways aimed at reducing the production of greenhouse gases, seeking “net zero emissions” of greenhouse gases by 2050.
- G. **Add an Urban Design Element with policies about public spaces and connections:** Add policies seeking improved design of public spaces and connections between them.
- H. **Recreational boating industry support in Economic Development Element:** This amendment would recognize the importance of the recreational boating industry that includes

but is not limited to marinas, boat yards, boat sales and similar water-dependent and water-related business uses.

- I. **Discourage pedestrian grade separations in Urban Centers:** Amend the Transportation Element to discourage such separations that can have negative implications on urban design and function.
- J. **Healthy food:** Add or amend policies in several elements supporting the production and distribution of healthy food.
- K. **Funding neighborhood organizations for neighborhood planning:** Amend the Neighborhood Planning Element to state the City's receptivity to funding such organizations for such processes.

ANALYSIS - OVERVIEW

The following describes the analysis conducted to determine if the proposal is likely to have a probable significant adverse environmental impact. This threshold determination is based on:

- the proposal, as described above and in memoranda;
- the information contained in the SEPA checklist;
- additional information, such as analyses prepared by City staff; and
- the experience of DPD analysts in reviewing similar documents and actions.

ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Adoption of the possible amendments would result in no immediate adverse short-term impacts because the adoption would be a non-project action. The discussion below generally evaluates the potential long-term and cumulative impacts that might conceivably result from net differences in future development patterns or other physical environmental implications due to the proposed amendments. The analysis is organized to address the full discussion of impacts for each of the first three proposed items A-C; and it then analyzes the remaining items D-K in a grouped fashion because they have fewer potential adverse impact concerns.

ITEM A -- Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake Neighborhood Plan, Policy Update

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The neighborhood plan update predominantly addresses strategies to further build and enhance a more livable mixed-use neighborhood core in the Bitter Lake vicinity oriented to Linden Avenue N. This expands upon the themes already expressed in the prior version of the neighborhood plan. As well, key themes are: providing more recreational and circulation amenities and varied "complete street" improvements, with green elements, and otherwise supporting healthy living. Funding the design and construction of Aurora Avenue corridor improvements and related planning efforts is also an identified strategy. Nearly all of the neighborhood plan's proposed

activities and efforts would be neutral or positive upon the natural environment, in that they either do not substantially address modifications to the environment, or do so with intent of enhancing the natural and built setting. Therefore, there is minimal potential for adverse natural environmental impacts with implementation of most of the neighborhood plan policies.

Regarding the areas where recommended future possible designation changes could occur, there are no steep slopes, wetlands or similar critical areas and the area is mostly in impervious paved or roof surfaces. Therefore, there is no substantive potential for significant adverse impacts upon the natural environment.

If future development occurred in greater intensity following a recommended rezone action, the likely kinds of adverse natural environmental consequences would be an increased disturbance of soils during construction, possible changes in local stormwater drainage patterns, creation of dust during construction, and generation of noise. All of these construction-related impacts could temporarily disturb nearby residents. After construction, the net increase in potential for natural environmental impacts due to future use and development would be minimal. Similarly, although a couple of areas would be added to the urban village area, this would not have substantial adverse impact implications, because the areas are fully occupied and used for general commercial purposes (and one small tract in multifamily residential use). Future infill development at comparable levels could occur whether these areas are inside of the urban village or not, meaning there is no net increase in potential for adverse natural environmental impacts.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The neighborhood plan update predominantly addresses strategies to further achieve a more livable mixed-use neighborhood core in the Bitter Lake vicinity oriented to Linden Avenue N. It also seeks an improved Aurora Avenue N corridor, reinforcement of other retail district “hamlets” along Greenwood Avenue N, more complete streets, improved park/recreational and non-motorized transportation facility amenities, and other actions supporting community quality, identity and quality housing. This expands upon the themes already expressed in the prior neighborhood plan.

Land Use

While the neighborhood plan seeks to essentially maintain the existing land use/zoning intent for portions of properties abutting the Aurora Avenue N corridor, the western portion of the blocks west of Aurora Avenue N between N 130th and N 145th Streets are recommended for future land use designation/zoning changes that would newly or further encourage multifamily and/or mixed-use development rather than general single-purpose commercial uses. The northern portion of the affected areas is recommended for Midrise zoning, while the southern portion is recommended for NC3 or SM zoning. Some of the affected properties span all the way between Aurora Avenue N and Linden Avenue N.

These neighborhood plan recommendations, if land use redesignation and rezoning occurs, would underscore the neighborhood plan’s intent to foster a denser residential population

oriented to Linden Avenue N as the neighborhood's core. Such uses are partially present today, along with other uses that remain general-commercial in nature. The recommendations, if implemented, would create the potential for a more direct interface between predominantly residential uses to the west and general commercial uses to the east, e.g. more residents might live close to the rear of Aurora-oriented commercial use properties. Also, more mixing of residential and non-residential uses could occur. This adjacency and mixing-of-use potential is already possible (although less likely) under today's zoning and so would not be a new form of potential land use relationship. Design review processes, if applicable, would help to achieve site development with features at the edges that would likely provide for an adequately compatible interface between commercial and residential uses. Therefore, no significant adverse land use impacts are identified as likely from the proposed future possible land use designation/zoning changes.

No significant adverse impact potential is identified for areas that would be added to the urban village area. The areas are already largely occupied and used for general commercial purposes (and one tract in multifamily residential use). Future infill development at comparable levels could occur whether these areas are inside of the urban village or not, meaning there is no substantial net increase in potential for adverse land use or compatibility impacts due to the areas' inclusion within the urban village boundary. Rather, the closest edge properties are already subject to the spillover effects (if any) of the existing business operations on the adjacent properties. Plus, there is no recommendation for a particular rezone for these areas, which means no increased potential for future development is identified regarding this proposal.

Transportation

Over the long-term, the implementation of the neighborhood plan and the associated land use/zoning recommendations would contribute to an encouraged intensification of the neighborhood core near Bitter Lake, along Linden Avenue N and Aurora Avenue N, as well as general improvement of existing character in other areas. Street improvements that are already funded and underway or planned, including of certain street segments with more complete sets of facilities for vehicles and other modes, would help provide for continued adequate circulation capabilities in the neighborhood. This would help avoid or moderate the potential for increased traffic congestion with denser future residential or mixed-use redevelopment. The probable future conversion of some existing commercially used properties to residential properties would also suggest at least a partial offset of potential traffic generation by the subtraction of traffic due to business cessation, over the long term. It is also possible that improved Aurora Avenue street conditions in the area, with improved transit service, would assist in overall walkability and improve the ease of using transit modes, thereby altering vehicle trip generation rates.

Despite the moderating factors identified above, given the recommended future land use/zoning changes, there likely would be an increase in total vehicle trip volumes over the long term on the street network in the core vicinity. This would be expected to add proportionately to overall traffic congestion, probable reduced level-of-service performance, and a possible need to adjust signalization. Given current and projected street capacity levels for the main arterials in this part of North Seattle, the recommended land use changes in themselves would not be expected to

cause an over-capacity condition if related future development levels occur (see screenline results for 2020 in the Comprehensive Plan transportation appendix, which support the prediction of available capacity remaining in the street network in 2020).

Public Services and Utilities

Indirectly, land use recommendations in the proposal could generate increased levels of future development that would generate increased overall demands for public services and utilities.

Over the long-term, the implementation of the neighborhood plan and the associated land use/zoning recommendations would contribute to an encouraged intensification of the neighborhood core near Bitter Lake, along Linden Avenue N and Aurora Avenue N, as well as general improvement of existing character in other areas. Other neighborhood plan recommendations include requested improvements to drainage infrastructure and related green features. While there is presently an apparent deficit in overall capabilities related to surface drainage, planned and/or underway improvements are expected to effectively improve drainage utility capabilities along Linden Avenue N. This would help accommodate surface drainage needs generated by future development, although other on-site drainage needs would likely need to be addressed through compliance with drainage and sewer improvement requirements. Analyses for future development projects' permitting would be expected to identify on-site and potential off-site improvements for which a future developer would be at least partly responsible for providing connection and service improvements, to ensure sufficient quality of utility systems. This includes sanitary sewer service, and potential electrical service needs as well.

Therefore, while it is possible there are localized shortcomings in area drainage systems or other utility infrastructure, there is a capability to improve that over the long term with an expected combination of public funded projects and private-funded required improvements as well, that would serve future development. This sort of conclusion would also pertain in relation to potential major street improvements such as along Aurora Avenue N, if any such improvement projects emerge in the next decade. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to analyze project-specific impacts of such future development or infrastructure improvements in greater detail because specifics are either not available or it is premature to conduct such analysis.

With the added extent of possible future development in this neighborhood, there would be an incremental additional need for fire, police, parks, schools and similar public services. While past analyses for comprehensive planning have already identified most such needs and concluded sufficient service is possible, the degree of possible added development capacity with future possible land use designation/zoning changes could add incrementally to those future service demands. If such future levels of increased development came to pass, the planned or possible future public service improvements would likely be affected in a manner ranging from minor-to-moderately adverse, depending on the concentration of added residents. For example, such added concentrations would be expected to generate more fire/emergency and police service calls, more students, and more use of park facilities over the long term.

ITEM B – Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan, Policy Update

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The neighborhood plan update predominantly addresses community enhancement and social development strategies, as well as reinforcing and improving infrastructure amenities including trail systems, and street system improvements. One special project already in planning with the community is an Atlantic Street nursery renovation that will extend farming activity as well as wetland protection and restoration actions in a location near Lake Washington. Nearly all of the neighborhood plan's proposed activities and efforts would be neutral or positive in their impact potential upon the natural environment, in that they either do not address modifications to the environment, or do so with intent of enhancing the natural and built setting. Therefore, there is minimal potential for adverse natural environmental impacts with implementation of the neighborhood plan policies.

Regarding the areas where recommended future possible designation changes could occur, the presence of steep slope critical areas is noted in some locations. While this would be a factor that could be reviewed for possible effects in later rezone analyses, it would be expected that future development could not develop on those critical areas except as consistent with City rules and policies. So, despite their potential to be rezoned, these critical areas would not be expected to see significant adverse disturbances if future denser development occurred.

If future development occurred in greater intensity following a recommended rezone action, the kinds of adverse natural environmental consequences could be greater disturbance of soils during construction, possible changes in local stormwater drainage patterns, creation of dust during construction, and generation of noise. All of these construction-related impacts could temporarily disturb nearby residents. After construction, there would be only a minor potential for altered earth, drainage, air and noise conditions that might represent adverse environmental impacts upon those environmental elements, or upon animals that might use nearby habitat.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The neighborhood plan update predominantly addresses community enhancement and social development strategies, as well as reinforcing and improving infrastructure amenities including trail systems, and street system improvements such as lighting, improved pedestrian facilities and other similar infrastructure. As such, there is minimal potential for significant adverse changes to the built environment due to the proposed neighborhood plan policies adoption.

Land Use

The updated neighborhood plan policies largely support existing land use, growth and development strategies embodied in the prior neighborhood plan and current Comprehensive Plan, also wishing to expand and further encourage redevelopment and densification in eligible properties near the light rail station. This leads to the plan's recommendations for land use designation and zoning changes.

These sorts of proposed land use/zoning changes in the Rainier Beach neighborhood plan seek to augment the zoned density and intensity of land in the general vicinity of the light rail station at MLK Jr. Way S/S Henderson Street, for residential and non-residential purposes. This includes some areas currently designated for Single Family uses. The purpose is to increasingly focus land use development potential in the light rail station vicinity to encourage future realization of transit-oriented development and improved activation of areas near Henderson Street and MLK Jr. Way that would help accomplish land use objectives and area character improvements desired by this neighborhood plan. This includes economic development objectives for the improved economic health of the neighborhood and its residents' livelihoods. The combination of topography, street patterns, zoning patterns and the presence of power lines passing diagonally through this vicinity has likely discouraged growth in this area to date. In contrast, the City's preferred land use and transportation planning principles seek to achieve greater residency, activity, and efficient land use patterns around the transit station areas to achieve neighborhood and citywide planning objectives.

To the extent that the existing use pattern includes single-family properties and other low-density uses or vacant tracts, the recommended changes could lead to future development that would increase the intensity of the land use pattern. This could generate increased proximity of denser and potentially taller uses near other adjoining lower-density properties (many of which will continue to be Single Family zoned), which would generate a degree of potentially adverse land use compatibility impact upon those adjoining properties. This would occur in the form of increased activity levels and/or proximity of taller and bulkier buildings to existing low-density properties. However, those potential adverse impacts are concluded to be relatively minor in extent and magnitude. Reasons for this conclusion include: the area is confined by its physical characteristics such that surrounding actual residential presence and actual potential for edge-located incompatibilities is relatively limited in quantity and geographic extent, and there is little or no potential for substantial conflict of future infill development with non-residential uses. The neighborhood plan's policy recommendations also fulfill a policy requirement that neighborhood plans identify where prospective changes away from Single Family designations may occur; therefore, the land use-related recommendations of the neighborhood plan should be given weight as the advice of citizens and the City department(s) that assisted in the plan's preparation.

To the extent that future development could occur more broadly in the station area and be denser if land use designation/zoning changes occur, some existing residential properties around the perimeter of and within the affected area could experience localized alterations of private views and shadows, and possible changes in on-street parking availability. These would be adverse outcomes but are not interpreted to have significant impact potential, based on the specifics of the City's SEPA policies and rules on these topics.

Transportation

Land use recommendations in the proposal could lead to increased levels of future development that would generate increased overall demands for street networks, transit and other non-motorized transportation facilities. The analysis of potential transportation impacts is relatively

similar to that expressed for the Broadview/Bitter Lake neighborhood above, except the existing condition in the Rainier Beach light rail station area is less developed today, and the street network is more limited and less congested today than in Broadview/Bitter Lake. The neighborhood plan encourages the intensification of the station area through future transit-oriented development.

The immediate proximity of the light rail service would provide a high degree of mitigation value for potential development-related traffic volume increases. Even so, with implementation of the recommended future land use/zoning changes, there likely would be a future development-related increase in total vehicle trip volumes over the long term on the street network. This would add proportionately to overall traffic congestion (to the degree that infill development actually occurs). This could add to reduced level-of-service performance and a possible need to adjust signalization in the future at intersections such as S. Henderson Street/MLK Way or S. Henderson Street/Renton Avenue S. Given current and projected street capacity levels, light rail service, and existing development levels, it is likely that the recommended land use changes' trip generation and traffic adverse effects can be absorbed adequately without causing an over-capacity condition, even if all the future development encouraged by the neighborhood plan occurs (see screenline results for 2020 in the Comprehensive Plan transportation appendix, which support the prediction of a substantial level of available capacity remaining in the street network in 2020).

Public Services and Utilities

Land use recommendations in the proposal could generate increased levels of future development that would generate increased overall demands for public services and utilities.

The nature of the analysis and the programmatic potential for public service/utility impacts is nearly the same as expressed above for Broadview/Bitter Lake, except the potential magnitude and intensity of the adverse impact potential is less in Rainier Beach. This is due to the comparatively less intensive nature of the existing land use pattern and the requested future land use designation/zoning changes. As such, the incremental added potential for adverse impacts is likely only to represent a potentially minor-to-moderate degree of adverse impact upon public services and utilities. Relationships to specific utilities' impact potential would depend upon the specific characteristics of the storm and sanitary sewer systems there today, but there is a possible degree of need for system improvement over time as the area would grow, which would be addressable through a combination of public- and private-funded/required improvements over time.

ITEM C – Transit Communities Recommendations

NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land Use, Relationship to Plans and Policies, Noise, Toxic/Hazardous Substance Exposure

The City’s recommended Item C, regarding new goal/policy statements in the Land Use Element on “transit communities,” would not generate probable direct significant adverse land use impacts. Item C would establish transit communities concepts in the Comprehensive Plan for future possible use in planning efforts. The current proposal does not affect zoning designations, nor does it generate probable inconsistencies with existing plans or significant potential for land use incompatibilities. Rather, Item C’s proposals maintain a general affinity with the planning themes and direction of the comprehensive plan and neighborhood plan policies contained in it.

The planning principles in Item C could indirectly influence the formulation of future land use actions that might increase future concentration of uses in certain locations. However, there is no assurance that any particular actions would occur, and specific potentially affected locations are not known. Rather, this would depend on future planning work and analyses, the contents of which are not known. It is also unknown the degree to which “transit communities” principles would be influential in having any net effect upon any future land use action’s extent or magnitude of proposed change. Therefore, SEPA analysis of future possible development-related or zoning-related impacts in more detail would be overly speculative at this time.

A related finding is that the proposed contents of the goals and policies are generally expressed, such that future actions potentially could occur in ways that would maintain consistency with the urban village strategy and other comprehensive plan and land use policies. For example, future related land use actions could occur within urban villages, urban centers, or within particular zoned areas that are already authorized for mixed-use or multifamily development. The proposed Item C does not commit the City to take any specific future action that would definitely lead to adverse land use environmental impacts.

There is potential with or without the adoption of Item C for adverse land use-related consequences from future development – effects related to added bulk, density, increased activity levels, and potentially added exposure to noise and toxic/hazardous substances. The added increment of impact due to Item C would occur if future use of tools in Item C leads to net increases in certain locations’ development intensity or coverage, such that those kinds of impacts might occur within transit communities or areas bordering transit communities. This is concluded to be a potential indirect adverse land use impact.

Transportation, Air Quality

Item C could indirectly lead to increased development intensity near frequent transit-served stops and corridors. In such a scenario, the differential in land use patterns (compared to current zoning) would be likely to increase the long-term capability of more residents to rely upon transit systems rather than personal vehicle use for more trips including commuting and non-commuting

trips. This type of effect would represent a potentially net positive sort of transportation impact (also with corresponding positive implications for air quality), although such development patterns could also exacerbate congestion and delay at localized intersections. Given a lack of knowledge about the future extent of actual use of the “transit communities” tools, it is not possible to provide additional interpretive analysis of potential adverse transportation impacts for locations around the city. Rather, future possible land use actions would be subject to SEPA review if or when such proposals are made.

Public Services and Utilities

Future potential intensification of land use patterns in certain unknown locations could generate differences in demand for public services and utilities that could generate localized adverse impacts upon those systems. In other words, the potential future enabling of higher demands from future development could lead to identification of shortfalls or local weaknesses in utility systems (or in provision of police, fire, schools and parks) in various locations across the city. This would depend upon the nature of future land use actions that are not known at this time; SEPA analysis of such impacts could occur in the future if such proposals are made. It is noted that in such cases, City utilities may require that the future developer participate in necessary upgrades or extensions of service, as necessary, either fully financing such improvements or providing funds in a manner proportionate to the impact they generate.

As one example of a potential utility-related impact, the differential in land use patterns that could occur if Item C influences future development could lead to greater stormwater volumes generated through addition of more impervious surfaces such as roofs and driveways. At the same time, the greatest fraction of these volumes would be directed toward City utility systems and/or to on-site detention systems, required by code, which would lead to better overall control of surface runoff patterns. This would be due to the beneficial effects of the systems that would be required of new development per today’s drainage requirements. Such systems would slow down runoff and provide more treatment of runoff than occurs today in many locations. However, it is also noted that the total volumes of treated runoff and sewage ultimately released from on-site systems and City or County sewer systems to downstream natural waters such as Puget Sound and Lake Washington could increase, which would be an adverse impact upon the natural environment.

ITEMS D THROUGH K

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

All Natural Environmental Elements

D. Add Container Port Element narrative: Due to the proposed paragraphs’ intended location in the introductory discussion of this element, they have no actual substantive policy weight, even though they would provide for a better discussion of context and importance of the Port to the economy. Therefore, this item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the natural environment.

- E. **Prohibit spectator sports facilities in Industrial Zones:** This item has no identified potential for significant adverse natural environmental impacts, due to its prohibitory, use-restricting nature. Precluding one land use among numerous permitted land uses would not forestall the possibility of future development of the affected area with any other permissible land use. This means the potential for adverse effects upon the natural environment of this proposal is essentially neutral, in that future effects upon the natural characteristics of these urban properties could still occur with future development, such as clearing of existing vegetation to the extent present, and excavation for denser development.
- F. **Climate Action amendments to Land Use and Transportation Elements:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the natural environment. Rather, this policy guidance encourages a variety of actions that would have overall community and regional benefits interpreted as positive impacts, due to its encouragement of a variety of actions that would reduce the future “footprint” of impacts of the city of Seattle upon the natural environment.
- G. **Urban Design amendments on public spaces and connections:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the natural environment. Rather, this policy guidance encourages a variety of actions that would have overall community benefits interpreted as positive impacts, arising from the inclusion of natural environment-oriented policies that support designs respecting the environment and residents’ activities within it.
- H. **Recreational boating industry support in Economic Development Element:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the natural environment. As a reinforcement of the importance of an industry that is already well-established, the proposal is relatively neutral due to a low potential to create net added levels of natural environmental impact.
- I. **Discourage pedestrian grade separations in Urban Centers:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the natural environment.
- J. **Healthy food policies:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential of this item upon the elements of the natural environment. Rather, this policy guidance encourages a variety of actions that would have overall community and regional benefits interpreted as positive impacts with respect to environmental protection and sustainable practices.
- K. **Funding neighborhood organizations for neighborhood planning:** This item has no identified potential for meaningful adverse natural environmental impacts, due to a minimal relationship to future actions that could negatively affect the environment.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

ITEMS D THROUGH K

All Built Environmental Elements

- D. **Add Container Port Element narrative:** Due to the proposed paragraphs' intended location in the introductory discussion of this element, they have no actual substantive policy weight, even though they would add clarity and provide for a better discussion of context and importance of the Port to the economy. Therefore, this item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the built environment.
- E. **Prohibit spectator sports facilities in Industrial Zones:** This item has no identified potential for significant adverse built environmental impacts, due to its prohibitory, use-restricting nature. Precluding one land use of numerous possible land uses would not forestall the possibility of future development of the affected area with any other permissible land use, with related potential for adverse impacts such as added traffic. This means the potential for adverse effects upon the built environment, due to a proposal that removes just one of many possible land uses in a zone, is essentially neutral.
- F. **Climate Action amendments to Land Use and Transportation Elements:** This item has no identified potential for significant adverse built environmental impacts. The proposed climate action policies would have predominantly positive land use impact potential, in their potential to encourage more functional transport systems and built environments, and in their encouraging of land use patterns that would be more efficient in their location of all uses including places of residence and employment. This would encourage the accomplishment of the City's and the region's growth management and environmental protection objectives.
- G. **Urban Design amendments on public spaces and connections:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the built environment. Rather, this policy guidance encourages a variety of actions that would have overall community benefits interpreted as positive impacts, arising from the inclusion of several policies that support high-quality urban design that would enhance urban form, building form, quality of the public realm, and residents' uses of the built environment.
- H. **Recreational boating industry support in Economic Development Element:** Recognition of the economic importance of the recreational boating industry is a goal/policy that would help maintain the status quo and/or add weight in local land use policy to that industry's importance to the economy. It is not likely to generate significant implications for adverse change in most portions of the shoreline, and it could discourage certain changes that would be seen as harmful to the economy, e.g., trends or individual regulatory decisions that would passively or actively push out existing boating-related industries from in-city shoreline areas. This proposal would not have identified adverse built environmental impact implications but would be relatively neutral in nature.

- I. **Discourage pedestrian grade separations in Urban Centers:** This item has no identified significant adverse impact potential upon the elements of the built environment. Rather, the probable outcomes of such policy guidance would be to influence higher-quality built environments by avoiding potentially detrimental grade separations, which is interpreted as a positive impact upon the built environment.

- J. **Healthy food policies:** This item has no identified potential for significant adverse built environmental impacts. Rather, such policy changes could create a number of beneficial or positive impacts for the community as a whole. For the built environment, one summary of such benefits would be the integration of food systems into Seattle’s neighborhoods in ways that would foster improved nutritional and community health outcomes.

- K. **Funding neighborhood organizations for neighborhood planning:** This item has no identified potential for meaningful adverse built environmental impacts, due to a minimal relationship to future actions that could negatively affect the environment.

SUMMARY INTERPRETATION OF POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

In relation to the overall potential for cumulative impacts arising from all the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, it can be noted that several items are intended to reinforce and enhance the quality, efficiency and utility of Seattle’s urban environment citywide and in particular neighborhoods including Rainier Beach and Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake. The net probable effect of the proposed amendments would be positive in nature, with only a limited potential degree for localized environmental impacts. There is little or no potential for the combination of the proposed amendments to create significant adverse impact consequences upon any given subarea of the city. Future environmental reviews for project or non-project proposals not categorically exempt would afford future opportunities to review environmental impacts at a finer level.

DECISION

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030.(2)(c).

- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Gordon Clowers, Senior Urban Planner
Department of Planning and Development