Pedestrian Zones - Overview

What would a pedestrian zone add to your neighborhood commercial district?

A pedestrian zone designation adds use provisions and development standards to strengthen, protect and promote walkable shopping and service areas.

What if my neighborhood commercial district does not have a pedestrian zone?

In neighborhood commercial (NC) zones outside of a pedestrian zone, residential uses would be allowed at street-level, as well as live-work and a range of commercial uses. The key standards that apply to all NC zoned areas and those that are added with the pedestrian zone are outlined below.

Key Street-level Standards for all Neighborhood Commercial zones

→ Facades must be within 10 feet of sidewalk
→ Sixty percent of the street-facing façade for nonresidential uses must include windows within 2 and 8 feet above the sidewalk
→ Space for shops and restaurants meet minimum dimensions (height, width & depth)
→ Parking cannot be located between a building and the street (can be to the side, rear or within the building)

Additional Street-level Standards along Principal Pedestrian Street in Pedestrian Zone

→ Required to have pedestrian-oriented commercial uses (active uses), like shops, restaurants and customer service offices, on 80% of the ground floor
→ Drive-ways may not cross sidewalks, unless it is the only means of access
→ Parking areas must be located to the rear, or within the building (not in front or to the side)
→ In areas where parking is required, waivers are allowed for street-level uses (outside of urban centers, urban villages and frequent transit areas)

Pedestrian zones promote uses that generate walk-in customers and lively business districts. The following table shows how uses are regulated in a pedestrian zone.

Use Provisions along Principal Pedestrian Streets in a Pedestrian Zone		
Required / Permitted uses at street-level		**Prohibited uses at street-level**
• Community club or centers • Religious facility • Library • Elementary or secondary school • Parks and open space • Arts facilities (in Pike/Pine) • Automotive retail sales and service (in an existing structure in Pike/Pine) • Rail transit facilities	• General sales and services • Major durables retail sales • Eating and drinking establishments • Lodging • Theaters and spectator sports facilities • Indoor sports and recreation • Medical services • Museum	• Residential use and live-work (limited to 20% of frontage) on ground floor • Gas stations and other businesses with drive-in lanes • Surface parking • Administrative or professional service offices

What areas are under consideration for pedestrian zoning?

→ zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC) AND
→ identified in the Land Use Code (Maps 1 through 60, section 23.47A.005)*; *or*
→ located within an urban village that does not currently contain any existing pedestrian zones

*Six areas are excluded that lie in neighborhoods that are in the midst of a separate planning effort.

What criteria is used to determine if a pedestrian zone should be designated in a particular area?

To kick-off the community discussion, DPD has reviewed each area to develop a preliminary DPD recommendation, asking questions such as:

→ Does the existing land use pattern generate pedestrian interest and activity?
→ Is there an existing and/or planned for population to support the street-level uses?
→ Is this, or could this be, a comfortable street for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders to move through the area?
→ Are there other existing or proposed pedestrian zones within walking distance (1/4 - 1/2 mile)?
→ Are there adopted neighborhood plans and policies that apply?

DPD will take all of this into consideration, in addition to community comment and feedback, when preparing a final recommendation to submit to the Mayor, as to whether or not to designate a pedestrian retail area (pedestrian zone designation) in any of the areas under review.

What other requirements are under consideration in a pedestrian retail area?

In addition to the existing use provisions and development standards required in a pedestrian zone, we are considering some additional standards that would apply in all pedestrian zones:

→ increasing minimum sidewalk widths;
→ requiring overhead weather protection for new buildings;
→ regulating drive-in businesses on the periphery of pedestrian zones;
→ reviewing required ground floor uses (i.e. allow arts facilities in all pedestrian zones); and
→ establishing minimum floor area ratio (FAR) requirement within Urban Centers, Urban Villages, and Station Area Overlay Districts.

December 2013

Pedestrian Zones - Overview

To help start a community discussion, DPD has ranked each area under review as having high, medium or low potential to maintain or transition to a pedestrian zone using the criteria outlined in the table below. This is combined with neighboorhood policies and plans, other observed characteristics and the presence of existing or proposed pedestrian zones in the surrounding area to develop a preliminary DPD recommendation. This, combined with community comment and feedback, will inform final recommendation to submit to the Mayor, as to whether or not to designate a pedestrian zone in any of the areas under review.

Factors favoring a pedestrian zone designation*

Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Majority of uses pedestrian-oriented	No	Somewhat	Somewhat
Higher residential and housing unit density	No	No	Yes
Surrounded by residential uses	Yes	Yes	Yes
In an urban center or urban village	No	No	Somewhat
On an arterial and both sides of the street are zoned NC	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Across or adjacent to a park, more institution or other use that attracts pedestrians	No	No	Yes
Good sidewalk conditions with limited driveway crossings	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Priority area identified in Pedestrian Master Plan	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat
Low number of pedestrian / auto conflicts	Somewhat	Yes	Yes
Existing medium to high frequency transit	Somewhat	Yes	Yes
On a future high priority transit corridor (identified in the Transit Master Plan)	No	Somewhat	Somewhat
Existing bicycle facilities (lanes, trails, etc.)	No	Somewhat	Yes
Future planned bicycle facilities (identified in the DRAFT Bicycle Master Plan)	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Walk score >70	No	Somewhat	Yes
Bicycle score >70	No	No	Yes
Transit score >70	No	No	Somewhat

Yes = generally meets criteria; Somewhat= generally meets criteria but does not fully meet it; No = generally does not meet criteria
*Adding up the answers (Yes, No, Somewhat) leads to an initial determinition of low, medium or high potential.

Nonconforming Uses

Sometimes, when zoning is changed or different regulations are adopted for the same zone, existing uses and/or development in the area become nonconforming.

What is a nonconforming use or development?

A use becomes nonconforming when a new zone or new use regulations are applied to a property that does not allow the use that was legally established under the previous zone or regulations. Development is nonconforming when new regulations of development standards, such as yard requirements, are not met.

Can I still use my property if it is nonconforming?

Yes. No existing businesses would be displaced based on a pedestrian designation.

Nonconforming uses can continue to operate as usual as long as they are not abandoned or discontinued for a period of more than 12 months. If the use is discontinued for more than 12 months, the uses on the property must come into conformance with the current zoning regulations on the property. Nonconforming development can be altered or added to, generally, as long as new construction meets current standards and the nonconformity is not increased. However, development containing a nonconforming use may not, in general, be altered or added to, if the alterations or additions would expand or extend the nonconforming use.

For example, a light manufacturing use may be legally established as a nonconforming use, but a permit to build an addition would be considered an expansion and not allowed.

Can I change the use of my property if it is nonconforming?

Yes. A nonconforming use may be converted to any conforming use if all development standards are met. A nonconforming use may also be converted to another use not otherwise permitted in the zone by an administrative conditional use authorization. We may allow a conforming use to occupy a nonconforming development.

What if my property is damaged, can I rebuild my nonconforming use?

A nonconforming use or development that is disrupted by fire, act of nature, or other causes beyond the control of the owners may be resumed. Any structure occupied by the nonconforming use may be rebuilt in accordance with applicable codes and regulations to the same or smaller configuration existing immediately prior to the time the structure was damaged or destroyed.

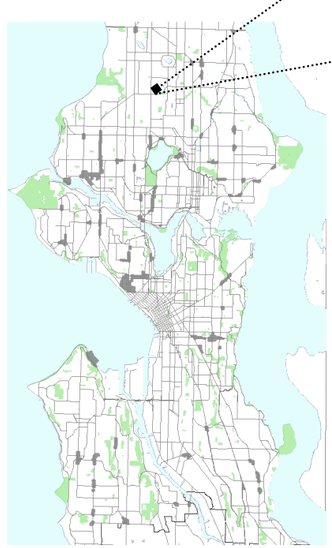
Further, nonconforming residential structures, except in certain situations in the Shoreline District, may be rebuilt as a matter of right, as long as they are rebuilt to the same or smaller configuration as the existing nonconforming structure.

61. Aurora Ave N - N 100th to N 105th Street

Factors favoring a pedestrian zone designation:	
Majority of uses pedestrian-oriented	Yes
Higher residential and housing unit density	Somewhat
Surrounded by residential uses	Yes
In an urban center or urban village	Yes
On an arterial and both sides of the street are zoned NC	Yes
Across or adjacent to a park, more institution or other use that attracts pedestrians	No
Good sidewalk conditions with limited driveway crossings	Somewhat
Priority area identified in Pedestrian Master Plan	Yes
Low number of pedestrian / auto conflicts	No
Existing medium to high frequency transit	Yes
On a future high priority transit corridor (identified in the Transit Master Plan)	Yes
Existing bicycle facilities (lanes, trails, etc.)	No
Future planned bicycle facilities (identified in the DRAFT Bicycle Master Plan)	Somewhat
Walk score >70	Yes
Bicycle score >70	No
Transit score >70	No

Potential = MEDIUM-HIGH

For more information visit the project website at: http://bit.ly/19Tb4Rc



Study Area
Pedestrian zone use
Non-conforming use*
Non-conforming residential*
Existing Pedestrian Zone
Single Family
Multi-Family
Commercial/Mixed-Use
Industrial
Institution/Public//Utilities
Parks/Open Space/Cemeteries
Reservoirs/Water Bodies
Vacant
Easement
Unknown
Crosswalk
Bus Stop
Bus route
Existing Bike Facilities
Draft Bicycle Network
Paid Parking
Restricted Parking Zone
Time Limited Parking
No Parking Allowed

*When zoning changes, existing development that does not meet the new use or development standards is nonconforming. These developments may remain and redevelop, within limits, as long as the non-conformity is not increased.

Analysis:

- Aurora Avenue N is a busy thoroughfare. Between N 100th Street and N 105th, Aurora Ave N is a strip business district; long and narrow, surrounded by residential, and is auto-orientated.
- There are 25 parcels within the study area; 4 (16%) contain uses that would be non-conforming in a pedestrian zone. In most cases, buildings are built up to the sidewalk. There is a large shopping center on the southeast side of the study area that includes a large surface parking lot, creating a strong pedestrian edge.
- The area is surrounded by medium-density residential areas to the east and west with multi-family zones and other commercial areas located to the north and south. Most of the on-street parking is restricted or time limited along Aurora Ave N; time limits encourage turnover and shorter-term users (i.e. shoppers).
- Narrow sidewalks, coupled with parking lots and the general high speed of traffic as well as limited pedestrian crossings contribute to a higher level of auto-pedestrian conflicts. To accommodate pedestrian traffic, there is a pedestrian bridge that crosses over Aurora Avenue between N 101st and N 102nd Street. This area is identified as a priority area in the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Because of the importance of Aurora Avenue as a thoroughfare, the area is well served by bus transit. Aurora is identified as a priority bus corridor in the Transit Master Plan. The area lacks bicycle amenities along Aurora but has some facilities on the periphery. The *DRAFT* Bicycle Master Plan indicates that there may be some future investment on the edges of this area.
- Neighborhood serving shops and services would be desirable at this location, given the surrounding residential uses and limited opportunities for walkable destinations in the area. However, Aurora Ave N presents a challenge in terms of moving around the area without a car.
- The traffic volume and speed at this location make it difficult for pedestrians. In addition, the existing large shopping center is oriented towards those arriving by car. Redevelopment in this area is desirable, however this auto-oriented section of Aurora Avenue N maybe make it difficult to transition to a pedestrian oriented retail area.
- Traffic along Aurora Avenue North will remain high, but the surrounding residential density, transit access and location in an urban village suggests that, with encouragement, this area could transition to more pedestrian-oriented uses.

Preliminary DPD Recommendation

- While open for discussion, based on initial analysis, the **preliminary recommendation is to designate the area as a pedestrian zone**.

Preliminary DPD Recommendation
Ped Zone Recommended
No Ped Zone Recommended
Existing Pedestrian Zone
Principal Pedestrian Street
Existing
Proposed

December 2013