Strengthening Neighborhood

Business Districts

CITY PLANNING
Department of Planning and Development
City of Seattle, Greg Nickels, Mayor

Purpose of this Meeting

- **Purpose 1**
  Share information and findings with neighborhoods (open house, presentation)
- **Purpose 2**
  Present more detailed findings and begin dialogue about alternative solutions (presentation)
- **Purpose 3**
  Discuss the implications and possible solutions at the neighborhood business district level. Specifically, discuss pedestrian-friendly retail areas (small groups)

Project Scope

A. Evaluate how well today's code is working

B. Look at the development review process

C. Revise the commercial chapter of the Land Use Code

Project Timeline

2003

1st Quarter 2004

2nd Quarter 2004

- Public kick-off meeting

3rd Quarter 2004

- Subarea workshops/ neighborhood meetings

4th Quarter 2004

- Follow-up public meetings

concept

strategy

new commercial code

Strengthening Neighborhood Business Districts

What are we trying to achieve?

A More active, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood business districts

B Code that strengthens urban village concept

C Easier-to-use code

ZONES :: Seattle's Commercial Zones

NC1

NC2

NC3

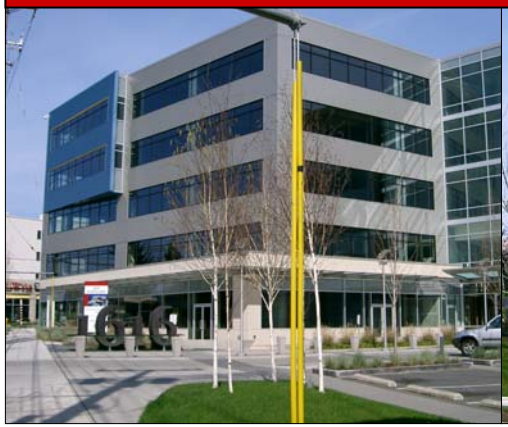
- Allows range of pedestrian-oriented retail, entertainment, and commercial service establishments
- Encourages mixed-use buildings
- Allows residential uses

ZONES :: Seattle's Commercial Zones

C1

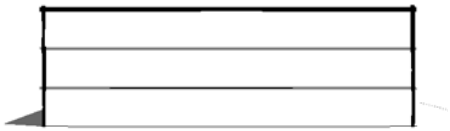
C2

- Accommodates auto-oriented and more intensive commercial uses, such as auto retail, wholesale and warehouse uses, and light manufacturing
- Residential uses are allowed in C1 and are discouraged in C2 zones

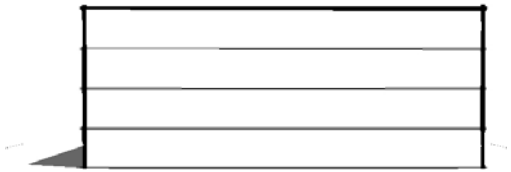


ZONES :: Heights

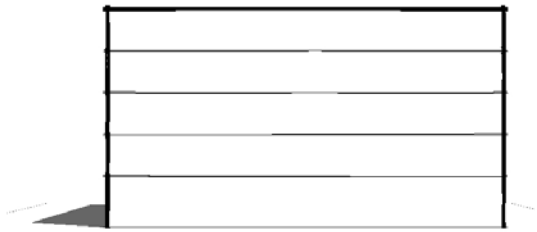
Different height limits to help ensure that buildings are compatible with the existing neighborhood character.



30 ft limit



40 ft limit



65 ft limit

ZONES :: Pedestrian Designations

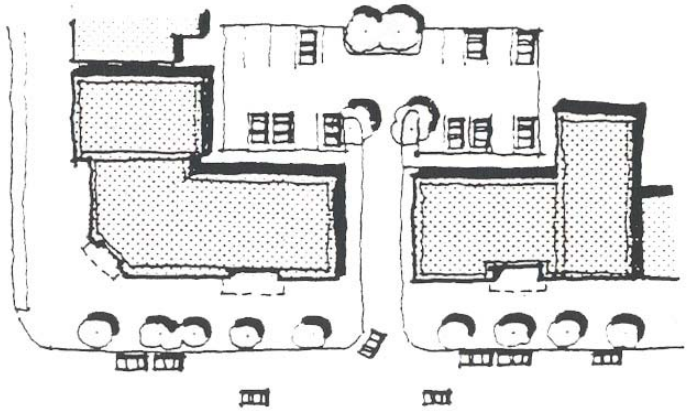
Encourages pedestrian-oriented shopping areas by requiring retail and service uses, and limits parking and vehicular access

1. Pedestrian-oriented retail and service use

2. Transparency & Blank Facades

3. Parking Quantity

4. Parking Location



Strengthening Neighborhood Business Districts

Pedestrian Designations :: Street-level Commercial Uses

Allowed at street level in P1/P2	• supermarket, clothing shop, cleaners • restaurants and cafes • theaters, nightclubs • bank, travel agent (customer-based)
Not permitted at street level in P1/P2	• attorney, architect offices (administrative) • car repair, outdoor storage, boat sales • physician, dentist offices

What we have learned - summary

- Overall, parking requirements in the code have been found to be higher than demand
- Parking requirements and limits on the max size of use can inhibit new business start up and expansion
- Incentives for mixed-use buildings, while successful, also can result in vacant and underutilized commercial spaces at ground level
- The prohibitive nature of the code has contributed to the need for many amendments over 20 years

Active Pedestrian-Oriented Streets

Vibrant business districts

Pedestrian-oriented retail

Reduce vacancies

Ground-level residential

Make new pedestrian-oriented places

Flexible bulk regulations

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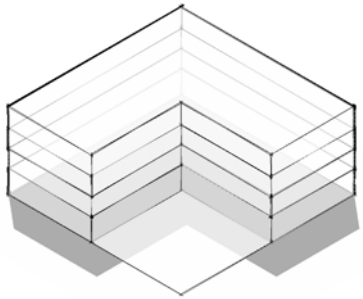
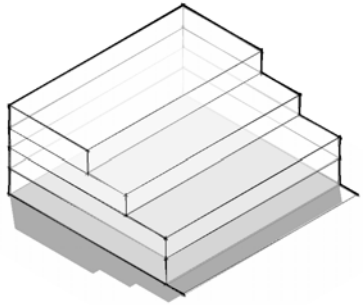
Active Pedestrian-Oriented Streets

Use flexible regulations that still control building sizes, and encourage things like **wider sidewalks**, **plaza space**, and **sidewalk cafes**





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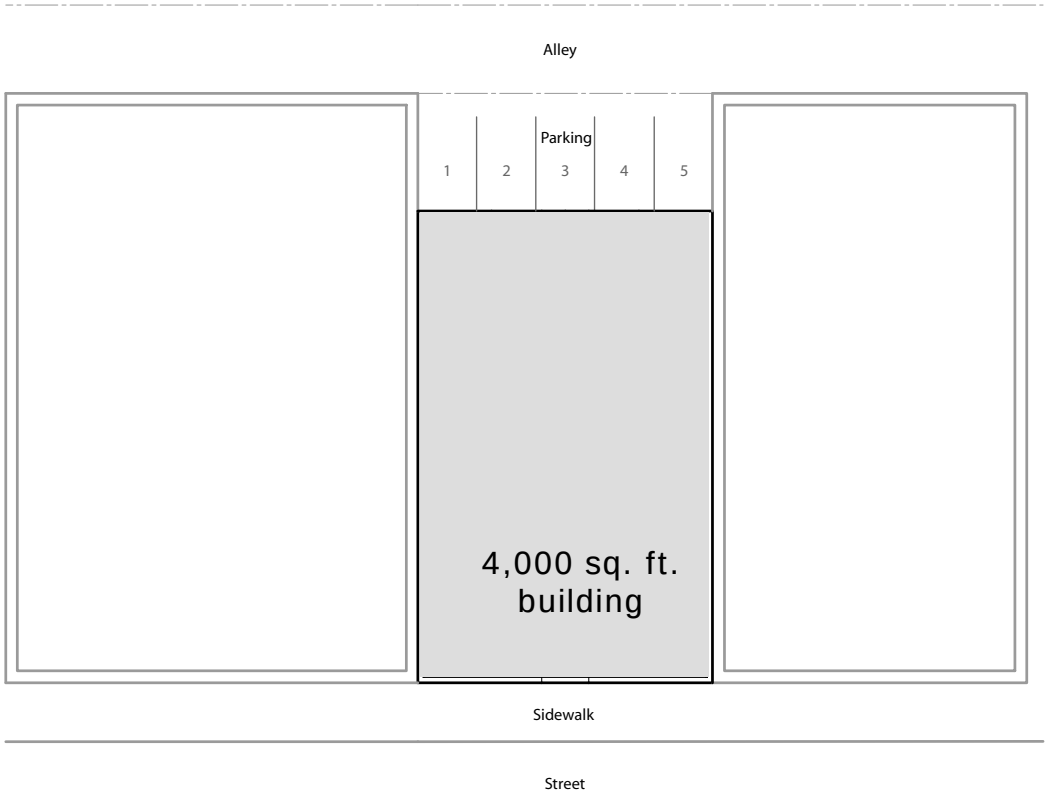
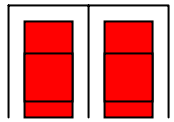
Business Start-up and Expansion :: Findings



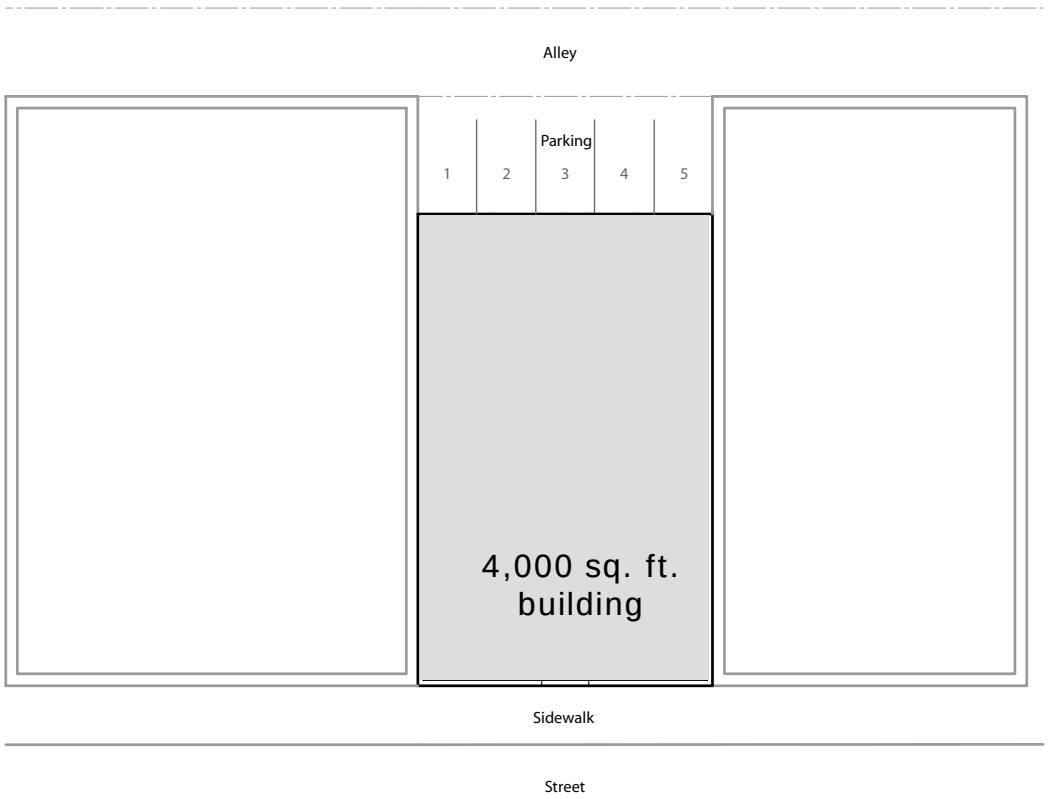
Office to retail = **+2 spaces**



Office to restaurant = **+7spaces**

Retail to restaurant = + **7 spaces**

Business Start-up and Expansion :: Findings



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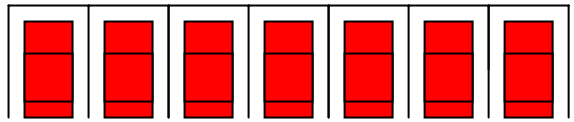

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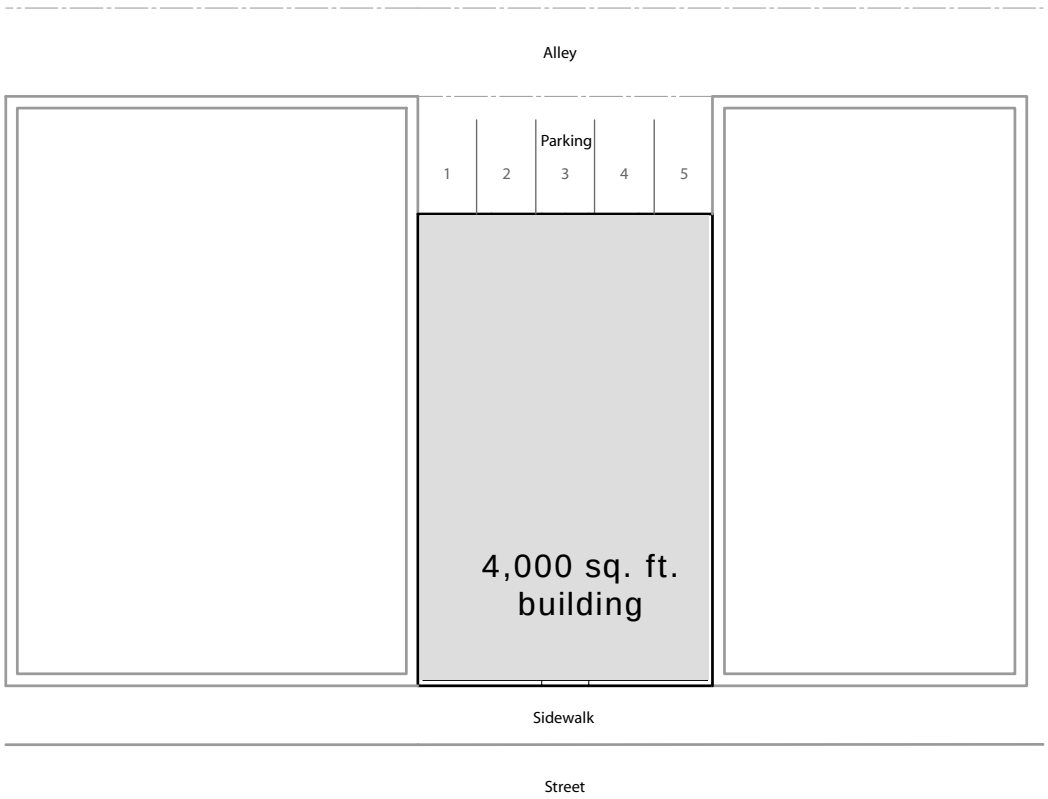
Business Start-up and Expansion :: Findings



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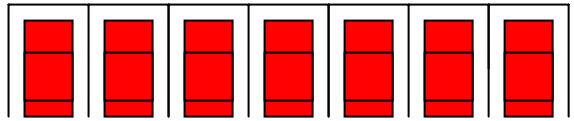

Business Start-up and Expansion :: Alternative Solutions

- Include parking waivers similar to P1 and P2 in NC code
- Grant parking waivers when new use needs only a few additional parking spaces
- Lower parking requirements to be consistent with demand for different uses

PARKING :: Findings

Some lots are vacant at certain times of the day

Vacant parking lots

Perceptions v. survey

Congested streets

Residential demand in Urban Village

Retail

Restaurants

PARKING :: Findings

DPD is often pressured to require more parking – our experience has been in places like the U-District was that people's perceptions was a lack of parking – but we found an ample supply, however much of it was not FREE.

Vacant parking lots

Perceptions v. survey

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PARKING :: Findings

An oversupply of free parking encourages people to drive alone, which contributes to traffic congestion.

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PARKING :: Findings

2000 Census = 1 car /household

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PARKING :: Findings

Demand for retail parking is frequently lower than code requirements

- Vacant parking lots
- Perceptions v. survey
- Congested streets
- Residential demand in Urban Village
- Retail
- Restaurants

PARKING :: Findings

Very successful restaurants may have higher demand while most others generate a lower demand for parking

Vacant parking lots

Perceptions v. survey

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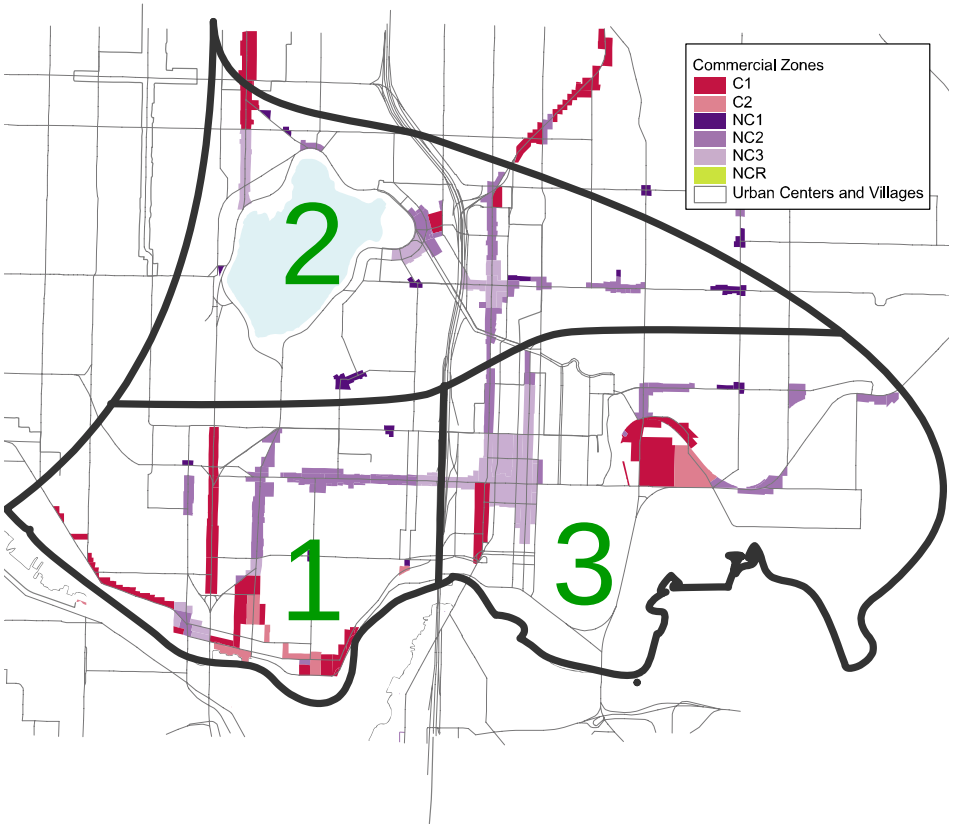
PARKING :: Possible Solutions

- Base parking requirements on new demand information
- Use different parking requirements in different areas
- Lower parking requirements where transit is more frequent and accessible
- Let market determine appropriate supply of parking
- Support short-term versus long-term use of parking

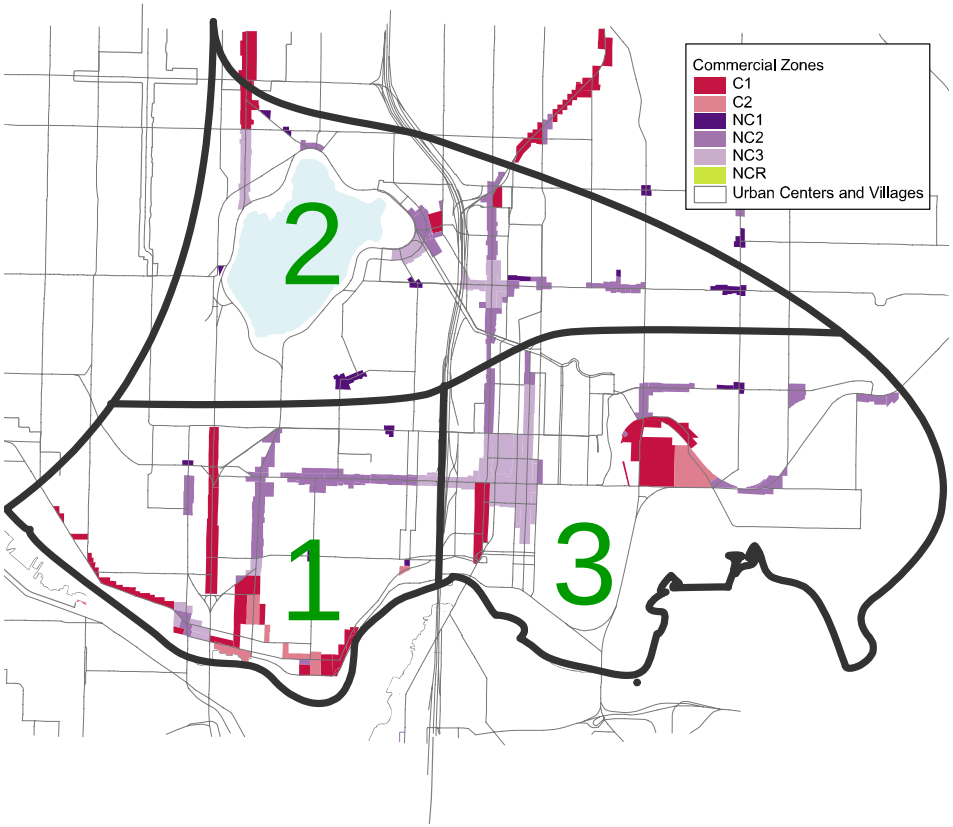
Small Groups



Warm-up questions to think about, as you prepare to answer the main questions:

1. Where do you do your everyday shopping?
2. Where do you do weekend shopping?
3. How do you get there, how does it differ for certain places or types of shopping?
4. When you drive, where do you park? In one location or multiple locations?
5. Do you walk or bike? What would make it easier for you to do so?

Small Groups



Main Questions:

1. What elements/features help make a pedestrian-friendly streetfront?
2. What parts of your neighborhood are the “retail cores” or pedestrian-friendly “main street” retail or commercial areas? If not present now, where should they be?
3. What elements/features might be different inside or outside the “retail core”? What elements/features are critical, and which are helpful?
4. How can auto-oriented zones be made safer and more pleasant?