

**The Livable South Downtown EIS:
*an Integral Element of the Planning Process***

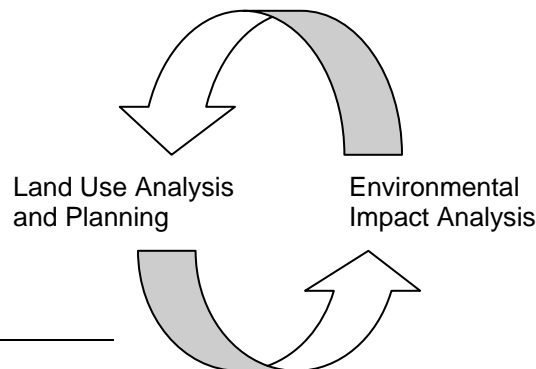
An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document prepared to describe the effects for proposed activities on the environment. In this case "environment" is defined as the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment and includes land, water, air, structures, living organisms, environmental values at the site, and the social, cultural, and economic aspects.

The primary purpose of the Livable South Downtown Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to ensure that analysis of possible environmental impacts is provided to the public and decisionmakers, and environmental considerations are incorporated into Livable South Downtown planning, as suggested by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)¹. Elements of the EIS process will take place throughout 2006 in conjunction with general land use planning for South Downtown.

The EIS process will be an opportunity for City government and interested members of the public to review and comment on proposed land use actions and decisions. The process is intended to help the City to improve its plans and decisions, and to encourage the resolution of potential concerns or problems. For that reason the Livable South Downtown EIS will be conducted prior to developing a final proposal.

The environmental impact statement is more than a disclosure document. Analysis of environmental impacts for the EIS will inform the land use planning processes, and, at the same time, land use planning will inform the evaluation of impacts. For example, identification of potentially major impacts on utilities or road capacities could influence what types of future land uses are analyzed in greater detail and forwarded for further decisionmaking. In this way the Livable South Downtown EIS process is an integral aspect of land use planning for South Downtown.

**Livable South Downtown Planning
2006 & Early 2007**



¹ WAC 197-11-400

The EIS and land use planning work will influence the development of final land use recommendations in ways that are distinct yet complementary.

Possible Land Use Study Topics	Possible EIS Topics
Identify and analyze zoning scenarios and possible land use code amendments for consistency with community and City goals	Identify future land use impacts on compatibility with surrounding uses, and other aspects of the physical environment.
Conduct economic/real estate analysis to understand how the City can support community and City goals, and stimulate investment where desired.	Conduct economic/real estate analysis to understand impact of land use proposals on area businesses, local economy, land values, housing costs.
Identify housing goals and methods for reaching those goals.	Identify impact of decisions on housing affordability.
Identify possible development standards by analyzing height and bulk of proposed zoning changes	Identify future developments' impacts on view corridors, access to light and air, etc.
Identify specific land use strategies for supporting the community's open space goals.	Analyze land use scenarios for their impact on open space resources.

Environmental Impact Statement Milestones

The South Downtown EIS process includes several notable phases:

- 1) Formal scoping. The first step in the environmental review process, "scoping" is an opportunity for project staff and community to discuss the range of topics that will be addressed in the EIS. This process is discussed below.
- 2) Draft EIS (DEIS). A draft environmental impact statement will be released in autumn 2006. The community will offer feedback on the DEIS document, and staff will formally respond to public comments. The EIS alternatives will be amended and environmental analysis will continue.
- 3) Final EIS (FEIS). The final EIS will be released in the spring of 2007.

The draft project timeline reflects the integration of EIS analysis and land use planning that will be undertaken as part of the Livable South Downtown project. Each element will include several opportunities for public involvement that are identified on the DPD web site.

	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07
Draft EIS TIME FRAME:																			
EIS Scoping			—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EIS Analysis*				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Draft EIS Published									X										
Draft EIS Comment										—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Final EIS Analysis											—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EIS Published													X						
Draft LAND USE PLANNING TIME FRAME:																			
Preliminary Recs	X																		
Land Use Analysis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Final Recommendation to Council																	X		
Council Deliberation																		—	—
Community Involvement	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Extent and timing of EIS analysis dependent upon available resources.

Public Scoping Process Livable South Downtown Project

An important element of the Livable South Downtown process is "scoping" to identify the range of actions and impact topics that will be addressed in the EIS. Scoping is the first step in the environmental review process. The South Downtown project will conduct formal scoping early in the EIS process. Scoping will also occur informally throughout the EIS process: as new information is learned, the scope of the analysis can be revised accordingly. Fundamental objectives of the EIS scoping process include:

- Identify public concerns and areas where additional expert analysis may be warranted.
- Develop land use alternatives that will be examined.
- Identify significant issues that need to be analyzed.
- Ensure that problems and positive aspects of the land use proposals are identified early and are properly studied.
- Identify potential mitigation strategies.

Milestones in the EIS Scoping Process

The EIS formal scoping process will feature several identifiable milestones and phases:

May 15, 2006

- *Determination of Significance* is published by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Scoping materials will be made available on the web site and by contacting project staff.

May 15-June 15, 2006

- *Comment Period*: Formal scoping is required to continue for at least 21 days. DPD will conduct extended scoping for a period of 31 days. During this time, written comments are accepted by DPD regarding the scope of EIS analysis. DPD will also hold a public scoping meeting to discuss issues that should be addressed through EIS analysis.

June & July 2006

- *Finalizing the Scope*. At the end of the comment period, DPD staff will publish the formal scope of EIS. Again, DPD staff will take comments throughout the EIS process.

Opportunities for Public Involvement—May, June, July 2006

- The South Downtown scoping comment period will be 31 days in length during which time formal EIS scoping comments can be submitted to DPD staff. Formal scoping will end on June 15, 2006.
- Advisory Group meeting to discussion EIS process and economic issues (May 24).
- Public scoping meeting (June 1).
- Project staff will meet with groups and individuals throughout the South Downtown planning area; DPD staff welcomes requests for meetings.

EIS Scoping Materials

- Description of EIS process, including draft schedule
- Draft description of the range of analysis & description of alternatives
- Scoping questionnaire