



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

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February 16, 2010

Honorable Councilmember Sally J. Clark, Chair
Committee on the Built Environment
Seattle City Council
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

RE: Recommendations on Proposed 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Dear Councilmember Clark,

The Seattle Planning Commission is an independent and objective volunteer body that advises City officials on broad goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the city. The Commission is the steward of both Seattle's neighborhood plans and the Comprehensive Plan, "Toward a Sustainable Seattle." Offering recommendations on the annual Comprehensive Plan proposals is a mandated responsibility of the Commission, and we are pleased to provide you with our comments and recommendations on the proposed 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

Purpose of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision for how Seattle will accommodate residential and employment growth over the next 20 years, while promoting the values of its citizens, a vibrant economy, and livable neighborhoods.

The Plan was adopted in 1994 to comply with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The Plan does this by accommodating most new growth in places designated as either urban centers or urban villages. It contains growth targets for each urban center and urban village related to Seattle's share of regional growth that is anticipated in the coming 20 years. The Plan also includes policies that describe how the City intends to serve this growth through transportation services and other infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan is part of a suite of related plans that include:

- Vision 2040 prepared by the Puget Sound Regional Council (addresses growth in the four-counties of the central Puget Sound region),
- Countywide Planning Policies (provides guidance to the comprehensive plans of all jurisdictions in King County)
- Seattle's neighborhood plans (tailor the City's Comprehensive Plan policies for individual neighborhoods). The adopted goals and policies of the neighborhood plans are contained within the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

A. *Amend the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan: Adjust the boundary of the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village to include an area south of S Henderson Street between MLK Way S and the Chief Sealth Trail.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

- The Commission supports the proposed amendment. Higher-density development would be appropriate around the light rail station based on the changing character of the neighborhood and the wishes of community groups supporting the proposal.
- While the Commission also supports the intent of DPD's proposed amendment to Rainier Beach Policy 4, we suggest that the following language more clearly expresses that intent:

Except where listed below, encourage residential small lot opportunities inside the designated residential urban village boundary and seek ((Seek)) to preserve ((at)) character of areas that are zoned single family. ((zoned areas' character. Encourage residential small lot opportunities for redevelopment within single-family areas inside within the designated residential urban village and in)) In the areas within the residential urban village west of Martin Luther King Blvd S and south of S Henderson St west of the Chief Sealth Trail, permit consideration of rezones of single-family land to the Lowrise Duplex Triplex (LDT), Lowrise 1 (L1), or Lowrise 2 (L2) designations.

B. *North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan Update*

C. *North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Update*

D. *MLK at Holly (Othello) Neighborhood Plan Update*

Commission Comments: **APPROVE**

We understand that the SEPA determination of non-significance (DNS) has been appealed and the proposed amendments B, C, and D will not be considered in this year's amendment cycle. The Commission continues to be strongly supportive of the tremendous outreach effort that occurred during the past year to update these neighborhood plans. We are concerned that momentum will be lost during the SEPA appeal process and urge the City to maintain active communication with residents and business owners so that they can remain involved as the plan updates move forward.

E. *Roosevelt **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)** and Neighborhood Plan Amendment: Amend the FLUM in the Roosevelt Urban Village in anticipation of a zoning proposal developed by the Department of Planning and Development and the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association consistent with the Roosevelt Neighborhood Plan.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

- The Commission generally supports the proposed amendments. We strongly support a full range of multifamily densities to be considered as the expected rezone moves forward in order to maximize the future light rail station.
- The Commission has reservations about amending the FLUM to rezone approximately one parcel from Multifamily Residential to Single Family Residential at NE 69th Street west of Roosevelt Way NE.
- We also note that the design along 12th Avenue NE will be very important for access to the light rail station and more broadly to the character of the neighborhood. The function of the station area as a center for services accessible on foot and by transit would be enhanced by extending the Commercial designation on 12th Avenue NE north to NE 68th Street, and we would urge you to consider this minor change to the proposed map amendment.
- The Commission will continue to work with DPD as the specific rezones are reviewed by City Council.

F. *Shoreline Master Program: Amend goals and policies as part of overall update to Shoreline Master Program.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **DEFER**

The Commission awaits DPD's recommended amendments that will be submitted later this year.

G. *South Downtown FLUM Amendment: Amend the FLUM to redesignate some areas east and west of Interstate 5 from Commercial/Mixed Use to Downtown Area.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

This proposed amendment is consistent with the proposed Livable South Downtown plan, which seeks to balance important elements including creating more housing options affordable to a mix of incomes, enhancing economic development opportunities, and preserving cultural character. We would also like to note that the designation of Downtown zoning east of the freeway is significant. We will continue working with DPD and City Council as this legislation moves forward later this year.

H. *Northgate Neighborhood Plan Amendments: Amend policies in the Northgate Neighborhood Plan to identify locations along and to the north of NE Northgate Way where future increases in development density would be appropriate, and identify the types of built-environment issues more dense development would need to address, such as pedestrian connections and transit-supportive design.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

The Commission supports the intent of this proposed amendment but recommends that the language of the new neighborhood plan policy be more direct and concise. We suggest the following: "Support rezones to higher intensity designations within the North Core Subarea that would create a pedestrian friendly environment through implementation of the urban design framework."

I. *Interbay BINMIC Amendment: Amend the FLUM to remove land located north of Dravus in the Interbay area from the Ballard Interbay Manufacturing/Industrial Center (BINMIC).*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **DO NOT APPROVE**

The Commission does not support a change to the BINMIC boundary. All of the objectives stated in the proposal are already compatible with current Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for Manufacturing and Industrial Centers. The applicant states the intention and desire to seek a rezone of the area from IG2 to IC. Neither a boundary change to the MIC nor a FLUM change is required for the applicant to pursue such a request. We make no recommendation about a future rezone and will consider any such proposal if one should be submitted.

J. *Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): Add a numeric goal for reducing VMT in and through the city, consistent with adopted statewide goals; and a policy favoring highway projects that produce little or no such increase.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **DO NOT APPROVE**

While the Commission supports the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with per capita VMT, we do not feel this specific proposal is appropriate for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan at this time. The City is currently working with the State to establish a methodology for estimating per capita VMT at the local level; at a minimum, the methodology should be established before City Council amends the Comprehensive Plan with specific numerical targets. Additionally, the Commission suggests if and when specific per capita VMT targets are established for Seattle, their inclusion may be more appropriate in the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP), or similar implementation plan, than in the Comprehensive Plan.

K. *Amend Use of Building 9 at Sandpoint: Amend Sand Point policies to allow housing and limited commercial uses in Building 9 at former Sand Point Naval Station.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

While the Commission supports DPD's recommendation, we recommend that the Sand Point Master Plan Policies be removed from the Comprehensive Plan as part of the 2011 update. We believe that this level of detail is not appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan.

L. *Yesler Terrace FLUM Amendment: Amend the FLUM to redesignate the Yesler Terrace site from Multifamily Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **DEFER**

- The Commission enthusiastically supports the Seattle Housing Authority's (SHA) effort to redevelop Yesler Terrace into a vibrant, sustainable mixed-use and mixed-income community. We believe that looking beyond residential zoning to make this a 'complete community' will be of great benefit and could serve as a model for neighborhoods throughout the nation. Nevertheless, we concur with DPD that it would be more appropriate to change the FLUM after further analysis. While the Commission recognizes that changes in the FLUM will be necessary to allow for commercial uses, without further analysis it is unclear where residential, commercial, or other uses will be most appropriately mapped and zoned throughout the 28-acre site. Under the proposed FLUM change, Multifamily zoning designations or Downtown zoning designations would not be allowed. The Commercial designation does not seem appropriate for the entire 28 acres; redesignating the entire area as Commercial is therefore premature and might require subsequent FLUM changes.
- The Commission understands that SHA intends to pursue a SEPA Planned Action, which would allow for a FLUM change based on more thoroughly developed plans and would also allow SHA to pursue a Comprehensive Plan amendment and FLUM change at any time. The Commission looks forward to supporting Comprehensive Plan changes at that time.

M. *Affordable Housing Action Agenda: Add policies that promote housing affordability.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

The Planning Commission released its affordable Housing Action Agenda in 2008. Our year-long effort included independent research, extensive outreach and consensus from stakeholders, and a very thorough assessment and gap analysis of housing policies stated in the Comprehensive Plan. Based on that work, the Commission developed a number of additions and improvements to be included in the City's framework policies. Proposed amendment M represents the second in a series of suggested improvements. The Commission has worked extensively with departmental and council staff as well as with stakeholders to craft appropriate language that will begin to address the gaps in current city policy. Housing affordability is perhaps the biggest challenge facing City government and the workers of Seattle. These amendments represent another step in proactively addressing housing affordability in Seattle.

N. *Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee: Add new policies to encourage establishment of cultural districts, and to define regulations and incentives that would implement goals of those districts.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

The Commission supports the proposed goals and policies related to Cultural Overlay Districts. The Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee has worked closely with City staff over the past years

to develop goals, policies and strategies to encourage the preservation of Seattle's arts and cultural districts. The Commission recognizes that affordable space is essential to support a thriving arts community in Seattle's neighborhoods.

- O. *Greenwood FLUM and Neighborhood Plan Amendment: Amend the Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Planning Element and the FLUM in the Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Residential Urban Village area to permit zoning proposals for an area near the existing Fred Meyer block.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE**

The Commission supports the work done by the Greater Greenwood Design and Development Advisory Group (GGDDAG's) to develop the *Proposal for Legislative Rezone with Site Planning, Design Study and Development Guidelines*. In addition to the FLUM amendment that would allow for the rezone approximately 25 parcels from Single Family to Multifamily, the proposal would allow for a number of rezones from C1 to NC2 and NC3 zoning. Overall, the proposal would encourage more pedestrian-oriented development within the neighborhood than would be likely under current zoning. The Commission strongly supports the GGDDAG's proposal.

- P. *Industrial Land in Ballard Hub Urban Village: Consider FLUM amendments related to industrial land in the Ballard Hub Urban Village, in anticipation of the findings of the Department of Planning and Development's Industrial Jobs Initiative, as called for in Resolution 31026.*

Commission Recommendation & Comments: **APPROVE***

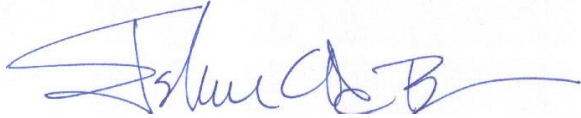
The Planning Commission concurs with DPD's recommendation to change the FLUM in this area from Industrial to Commercial. We support Comprehensive Plan Crown Hill/Ballard goal P10: "Strive to improve the pedestrian environment along NW Market Street while retaining its function as a principal arterial." The development standards of the Neighborhood Commercial zone are much more conducive to improving the pedestrian environment than those of the Industrial Buffer zone. However, we would like to point out a few issues for Council to consider;

- The Commission supports the proposed 40-foot height limit and hopes that any future height increases in this area do not negatively impact or put undue restrictions on the industrial uses and businesses to the south.
- Overwater, water-dependent industrial uses within the BINMIC to the south of the proposed rezone could be negatively impacted by residential uses that would be allowed in Commercial zones. The allowable height limit is 65 feet when residential views are not impacted. With the height restriction, residential uses within the proposed rezone area will not likely have negative impacts; however, higher heights could effectively lower the height limit for businesses within the BINMIC. The Commission would be strongly opposed to this.
- While the number of households within the Ballard Hub Urban Village has grown tremendously during the past decade, the number of jobs has not increased at a similar rate. The Commission supports DPD's Ballard Urban Village Rezone efforts that address this imbalance and would encourage the growth of businesses within the village. At the same time, the Commission is sympathetic to calls for the development of more office space within the proposed rezone area and is concerned that Neighborhood Commercial zoning would more likely result in residential development instead.

*This recommendation was not unanimous. Of 9 Commissioners present for the vote, 5 voted to "Approve." 2 voted to "Not Approve," 1 voted to recommend "No Recommendation" and 1 abstained from the vote. In addition, 1 Commissioner recused himself from discussion and vote on this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our recommendations on the 2009 – 2010 Comprehensive Plan amendment process moves forward. Please contact me or our Director, Barbara Wilson at (206) 684-0431 if you have further questions.

Joshua Brower, Chair



Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Mayor Mike McGinn
Seattle City Councilmembers
Phil Fuji, Darryl Smith, Mayor's office
Rebecca Herzfeld, Ketil Freeman, Council Central Staff
Diane Sugimura, Marshall Foster, Tom Hauger, Mark Troxel, Lyle Bicknell, DPD
Peter Hahn, Tracy Krawczyk, Barbara Gray, SDOT
Bill Rumpf, Rick Hooper, Office of Housing
Stella Chao, Kimberlee Archie, Department of Neighborhoods

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL:

Amendment C which pertains to the Neighborhood Plan Update for North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Update

- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO LLC, worked on the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan.

Amendment D pertaining to the Neighborhood Plan Update for MLK at Holly (Othello)

- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is a member of the Southeast District Council and OSCAT (Othello Station Community Advisory Team).

Amendment H pertaining to the Northgate Neighborhood Plan Amendment

- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA Adolfson, prepared the EIS for the Northgate rezone.

Amendment I pertaining to the Interbay BINMIC FLUM

- Commissioner Josh Brower also disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, represents clients who own and operate industrial businesses.

Amendment L which pertains to the Yesler Terrace FLUM to redesignate the Yesler Terrace site from Multifamily Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use

- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR, is working on the Yesler Terrace project.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that he is on the board of directors for Eldercare NW.
- Commissioner Fiori recused himself from the discussion and vote on this matter.
- Commissioner Persons recused himself from the discussion and vote on this matter.

Amendment E pertaining to the Roosevelt Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Neighborhood Plan Amendment

- Commissioner Chris Fiori disclosed that his firm, Heartland LLC, is working on projects within the Roosevelt Urban Village.

Amendment M pertaining to the Affordable Housing Action Agenda: Add policies that promote housing affordability

- Commissioner Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, manages and develops affordable housing projects.

Amendment O pertaining to the Greenwood FLUM and Neighborhood Plan

- Commissioner Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is working on a project adjacent to the proposed FLUM in the Greenwood/Phinney Ridge Urban Village.

Amendment P which pertains to the FLUM change to Industrial Land in Ballard Hub Urban Village

- Commissioner Brower recused himself from the discussion and vote on this matter

General disclosures

- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, represents clients who own and/or develop commercial property in Seattle.
- Commissioner Martin Kaplan disclosed that his firm, Martin Henry Kaplan Architects, works on projects in commercial and multifamily zones.