City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

June 26, 2012

To: Councilmember Richard Conlin, Chair
Planning, Land Use and Sustainability Committee

From: Diane M. Sugimura

Subject: DPD Recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan Docketing Resolution

DPD staff have reviewed the suggestions submitted to the City Council as possible amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan in this year's annual amendment cycle. We have comments for your consideration as the City Council reviews the submittals to determine which ones should receive further study.

Using the criteria the Council has adopted for identifying topics appropriate for inclusion in docketing for the annual amendment process, some of the submittals do not appear appropriate for inclusion. These include:

 # 5. Change the Name to Maritime/Industrial Centers: The term "Manufacturing/Industrial Center" is used in other plans throughout the region, including the multicounty plan Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Under the Growth Management Act, the City's Plan needs to be consistent with these plans;

using a different term to identify Seattle's industrial areas could lead to confusion. We do, however, recognize the important role the maritime sector plays in Seattle's economy.

 # 6. Prohibit New Stadiums in Industrial Zones: The Mayor and City Council are currently engaged in a separate process to review a specific proposal for an arena in the industrial area, within the Stadium Transition Area Overlay District. A decision from that process is likely to be made prior to final action on this annual Comp Plan amendment cycle. It would be more appropriate to consider this proposed amendment once the decision on the specific proposal has been reached, consistent with threshold criterion 1.e.: "The amendment is not better addressed through another process ..."

#s 7, 8 and 9. Amend the FLUM for Three 15th W. Corridor Properties: These proposals are similar to one another, and two of them appeared in last year's docketing discussion, although the land area covered by one of those has been expanded in this year's request. During last year's docket review, DPD noted that "While the submittals appear to meet the threshold criteria for continued consideration, the combined effect of removing this much land from industrial designation should be considered with caution, given the value that industrial uses provide the City and the importance that current policies place on maintaining industrial land for industrial uses." Since that time, DPD has commenced a study of the Elliott Ave/15th NW corridor in which

all of these proposals are located. That more inclusive study is a more appropriate vehicle for addressing land use designations than are these individual proposed map amendments.

 # 10. Proposed Pinehurst Urban Village: While this proposal deals directly with the distribution of growth in the city and is therefore an appropriate topic for the Comprehensive Plan, analyzing the implications of this proposal would require resources well beyond those currently available and certainly could not be accomplished in time to deliver recommendations to the Council according to the annual amendment schedule. Furthermore, this proposal is premised on Sound Transit making a particular decision about siting a light rail station near NE 130th St. If Sound Transit does choose that location, there will be ample time between that decision and actual opening of the station to consider land use changes in this vicinity. We understand that to date there has not been any significant outreach to residents or business owners in the area, and a land use change of the scale suggested by the application would require an extensive public process to identify and consider the variety of issues it would raise.

 # 11. Amend the Urban Trail System Map: As part of the major review of the Comp Plan that we are now conducting, DPD will be reviewing the purpose and role of Plan maps such as the Urban Trails Map. We are concerned that making incremental changes to this map at this time would prejudice that review.

 # 12. Open and Participatory Government Element: City Council has repeatedly rejected this proposal. Therefore, consistent with Criterion 3.d., we recommend against further consideration.

 # 15. Changes to Housing and Jobs Targets: From the description in the application for this suggestion, we believe that it is based on a misunderstanding of the growth targets in the Comp Plan. The application says "... the Department of Planning and Development has been changing these jobs and housing targets administratively, without an ordinance and without the accompanying opportunities for public notice and involvement..." That is not the case. The City Council first adopted growth targets with passage of the ordinance that put the initial Comprehensive Plan into place in 1994. With the major update of the Plan in 2004, the Council adopted new targets for the planning period that extends to 2024. Those are still the City's growth targets, and DPD has not changed them in any way.

Confusion may come from the fact that in 2009 the Growth Management Planning Council adopted new 2031 targets for all jurisdictions in King County as part of updating the Countywide Planning Policies. In analyzing the longer-term effects of actions, such as potential rezoning of South Lake Union, DPD has sometimes used those 2031 numbers as estimates of the scale of growth that could occur. In such cases, we are using these numbers as analytic tools, and not as adopted targets.

If you have questions about our recommendations on this phase of the annual amendments, please call Tom Hauger at 684-8380.