

How will a Neighborhood Commercial 3 zoning designation affect existing businesses?

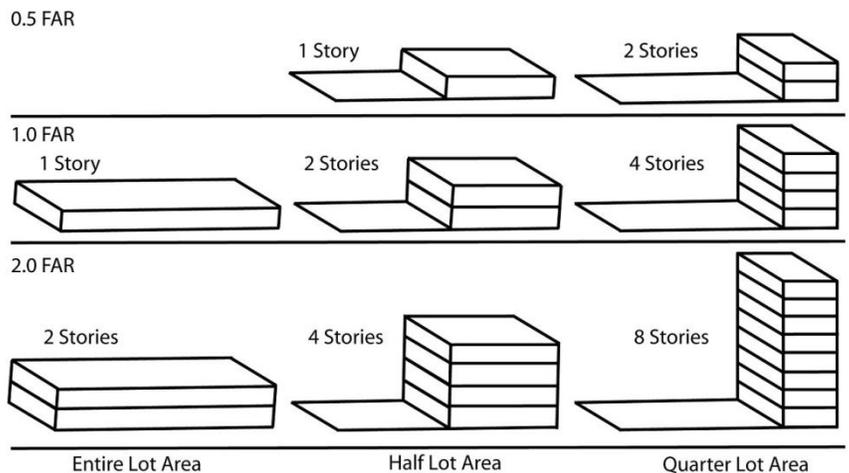
<i>Current Uses in the Triangle</i>	<i>Percentage of the Planning Area (Excluding Rights-of-Way)</i>
Un-leased Land (surface lots, empty buildings)	22%
Outdoor sales, storage (Alki Lumber)	10%
General retail sales and services	13%
Community organizations	10%
Residential, including residential within mixed use	12%
Automotive sales and services	8%
Parks	8%
Restaurant & entertainment	7%
Customer service, office, medical service	5%
Surface parking	2%
Gas station	2%
Government (not parks)	2%

Generally, all uses currently in the Triangle planning area are allowed outright under Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) and Commercial 1 (C1) zoning, and are allowed to expand. Two exceptions to this include: Food processing uses and drive-in lanes whether associated with an allowed use or not, would be limited under NC zoning.

Comparing the C1 and NC 3 Zones

Land Use Code Provisions Governing Development 	Commercial 1 (C1) Zone	Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) Zone
Density/ FAR¹ FAR: Residential-only or nonresidential only FAR: Mix of residential land nonresidential uses	4.25	4.25
	4.75	4.75
Uses	All existing uses would be allowed outright in either the C1 zone or the NC3 zone and could expand as the market allows; However, future “food processing” and the incorporation of “drive-in lanes” would be limited under an NC3 zone designation.	
Parking Quantity	Parking quantity is treated the same in NC and C1 zones.	
Parking Location and Access (see separate discussion on “street frontage considerations.”)	Parking may be located in front of the building— between the building and the sidewalk.	Parking is generally located below, behind or beside a structure, except where not feasible.
Design Considerations	Generally design of buildings is oriented to vehicles rather than pedestrians	Building design is generally oriented toward the sidewalk, allowing vehicle access and parking in less-prominent locations on the lot.

¹**What is FAR?** FAR or Floor Area Ratio is a measure of density in buildings on a lot. For example, 1 FAR represents the equivalent square feet in structures as is contained on the lot. 2 FAR is the equivalent of 2 lots worth of square feet within built structures.



Q&A Business Issues and the NC Zone

Can businesses expand under the NC3 zone?

With the exception of food processing, all businesses in the Triangle could expand under either C1 or NC3 zoning. Food processing uses could expand up to 25,000 square feet.

Does the NC3 Zone encourage residential development?

Both zones –C and NC—have exactly the same limits and incentives for commercial, residential or mixed use development. In this area, the market is more likely to dictate whether or not future development includes residential and/or commercial uses.

Would parking quantity standards change with the NC3 zone designation?

No. Parking quantity applies the same under all commercial and neighborhood commercial zones.

What about Industrial Uses?

Currently there are no uses in the Triangle that are considered “industrial”. Auto service uses and outdoor sales (Alki Lumber) are considered to be “commercial” in nature and consistent with a commercial zone designation of either C 1 or NC 3.

The City has policies intended to preserve industrial land for industrial uses, and these policies apply to industrially-zoned land.

Can zoning avoid incompatibility between uses?

One of the principle concepts that led to current zoning practices is to avoid incompatibility among uses. Commercial zoning allows a full range of uses that has resulted in the existing mix of commercial and residential uses. The Triangle area has included a broad mix of residential and commercial uses for over 100 years. This pattern of development is expected to continue under any commercial zoning scenario.

Can parking be located in front of a structure under the proposed NC3 zone designation?

Parking is required to be placed in, under, behind or to the side of a building. Parking may be located between a structure and the sidewalk if it is infeasible to locate parking behind, beside, in or below a structure, or if a non-conforming structure is rebuilt.

Interestingly, very few lots in the Triangle business area feature on-site parking that is inconsistent with NC3 standards. Additionally, the current informal use of streets and building frontages for business use will not change as a result of a rezone.

Which Factors are Most Likely to Affect Small Business

Because the proposed NC3 zone and the existing C1 zone are similar, except with regard to parking location, it is unlikely that a rezone will directly and negatively impact businesses in the Triangle business district. However, there are other factors that can affect the climate for business. These include:

- The market for development: whether there is market demand for residential or commercial floor area in the future.
- Property ownership patterns: including whether or not the business owner also owns the land on which the business is located. Additionally, larger assembled parcels are considered “more likely” to develop.
- Decisions by property owners to sell/ acquire/ assemble/ develop. Currently, several property owners in the Triangle have indicated a strong interest in retaining current business operations on their land rather than redevelop. However, that is an individual decision that can change at any time.
- Future regulatory changes that affect allowable height or density. Increased height or density can increase land values and encourage property owners to sell or develop their land. Increases in land values can also result in increased valuation relative to property taxes. Height and density is not proposed to change within the Triangle business district.
- Potential to accommodate floor plate sizes that are desired by office employers. Several people in West Seattle have indicated a desire to attract mid-size or large scale employers to the area. For example, a trend in office space is the availability of buildings with floors of 40,000 contiguous square feet in size or greater. The availability of land that can accommodate such large floor plates is one factor that could affect the market for new office space.