



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

DRAFT

February 14, 2015

Honorable Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Chair
Planning Land Use and Sustainability Committee
Seattle City Council
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

RE: Recommendations on Proposed 2015 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Dear Councilmember O'Brien,

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. Providing recommendations on annual Comprehensive Plan proposals is a mandate of the Commission and a responsibility we are pleased to fulfill as stewards of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. This letter offers the Commission's recommendations and comments on the proposed 2015 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

Purpose of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, was adopted in 1994 to comply with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The Comprehensive Plan articulates Seattle's 20-year vision for how the city will grow consistent with its core values of community, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and social equity. The Comprehensive Plan does this through an urban village strategy that directs most housing and employment growth to urban centers and villages.

Planning Commission Recommendations on the 2014-2015 Annual Amendments

In review of the annual amendments the Commission would like to express support for the overall changes within Urban Villages that allow for flexibility into the future. The Commission supports the Urban Village strategy and supports a Future Land Use Map that recognizes Urban Villages as areas that provide

opportunity for increased density and flexibility in land use. While the Commission understands the desire for Urban Village boundary changes to appear as part of the annual amendment cycle and as an outcome of the DPD neighborhood planning processes, the Commission looks forward to a more complete and robust conversation about Urban Village boundaries as laid out in the Transit Communities policies as part of the Major Update.

1. Central Area Neighborhood Plan

Planning Commission recommendation: Adopt with modification

The Commission supports updating the Central Area Neighborhood Plan goals and policies to facilitate implementation of the 23rd Ave Action Plan. We understand that this amendment is a continuation of the extensive public engagement work in this area. The Commission is concerned by the prescriptive nature of the language in the amendment. The amendment could move forward without specific mention of the parcel or its ownership. This level of detail is inconsistent with the majority of the plan and with best practices for Comprehensive Planning.

The Commission concurs with the proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) change intended to encourage a vibrant business district within the 23rd and Jackson planning area. The changes give businesses added flexibility and are supported by the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village Strategy.

2. Lake City Neighborhood Plan

Planning Commission recommendation: Adopt

The Commission supports updating the Lake City Area Neighborhood Plan goals and policies. The Commission appreciates the renewed focus on pedestrian safety and access. The pedestrian focus will help to build a more walkable and vibrant business district as well as connect community amenities.

The Commission concurs with the proposed FLUM changes to give the business district added flexibility and support the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village Strategy.

3. Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan

Planning Commission recommendations: Adopt with modification

The Commission supports updating the Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan policies to allow added flexibility. The Commission is concerned and cannot support the language as written. While we understand the community has participated in the planning and drafting of the language we are concerned with the very prescriptive nature of the language as well as the inclusion of zoning terminology in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission feels strongly that this will be precedent setting for future Comprehensive Plan amendments and would caution against the City Council including zoning, design and the like within the

Comprehensive Plan. Instead the Commission would request that broader language that provides flexibility within Urban Villages be inserted and that the changes move forward.

The Commission concurs with the proposed FLUM change. The change has tremendous community support and supports the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Village Strategy.

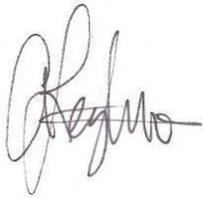
4. Downtown Neighborhood Plan Updates

Planning Commission recommendations: Adopt

The Commission supports updating the Downtown Neighborhood Plan policies to allow for added flexibility in future affordable housing programs. The Commission is supportive of the Mayor's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda and the desire to find new funding sources for affordable housing. The Commission supports these changes and will continue to participate in this important conversation.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me or our Executive Director, Vanessa Murdock, at 733-9271 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amalia Leighton', is positioned above the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amalia Leighton, Chair
Seattle Planning Commission