



# City of Seattle

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## Seattle Planning Commission

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Planning Analyst

September 27, 2007

Honorable Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

### **Re: Size Limits on Certain Non-Industrial Uses in Industrial Zones**

Dear Councilmember Steinbrueck,

The Seattle Planning Commission is pleased to provide you with its recommendations regarding the proposal to reduce size limits of non-industrial uses in industrial zones. As you know, the Commission recently released a report entitled, 'The Future of Seattle's Industrial Lands.' This report represents the culmination of a multi-year effort by the Commission that includes technical research, a public outreach event series, and an extensive review of the City's current policies regarding industrial lands. The report includes the Commission's recommendations for how to best protect and foster a thriving industrial sector.

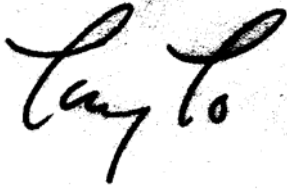
One of the Commission's recommendations is that; 'The City should align its zoning and land use policy to ensure the integrity of Seattle's vibrant industrial businesses' and that 'The allowance of excessive amounts of retail and commercial uses in industrial zones has compromised the integrity of Seattle's industrial base. We recommend that the City significantly restrict the amount of retail and commercial uses that are allowed in industrial zoned areas.'

The Commission believes the current proposal to reduce size limits of non-industrial uses in industrial zones is consistent with the recommendations included in the report. We therefore recommend that the City approve this proposal. Recognizing that there may be misunderstandings regarding the specifics of the proposal, it is worth clarifying that in cases where the industrial use is the 'principle' use, the proposed restrictions on office and retail do not apply. There are no size of use limits on office and retail that is 'accessory' to an industrial use. This fact should be clarified in the ordinance to ensure it reflects the legislative intent, which could be achieved by adding the phrase 'listed in Chart A' to the end of the first sentence on page 2 of the ordinance.

We recommend that the Executive and Council work together to engage in an outreach effort to ensure stakeholders become intimately familiar with the proposal and the effect it will have on industrial areas and uses. Some specific subjects to address may include the fact that the proposal will not limit uses accessory to industrial uses, recommends no changes to the size limits on land zoned Industrial Commercial (IC), would not affect existing uses, and would not put any new regulations on Research and Development uses.

Family wage jobs, essential tax revenue, and financial diversity are all vital assets that come with a strong and healthy industrial sector. Those assets provided the most compelling rationale for the recommendations made in our report. It is in the City's best interest to use tools such as land use policy, zoning, and infrastructure investment to protect this vital civic asset. We recognize that while this legislation represents a very important first step in ensuring a vibrant industrial sector in Seattle, there are a variety of additional steps the City can pursue to help achieve this goal. Our report discusses these steps in greater detail, and we encourage you to review it as you continue to address the issue of industrial lands. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need additional review or information.

Sincerely,



Tony To, Chair  
Seattle Planning Commission

CC:  
Mayor Nickels

cc: Mayor Greg Nickels  
Seattle City Councilmembers  
Tim Ceis, Nathan Torgelson, Rich Feldman, Mayor's office  
Rebecca Herzfeld, Ketil Freeman, Bob Morgan, Michael Jenkins, Council Central Staff  
Diane Sugimura, John Rahaim, Tom Hauger, John Skelton, Scott Dvorak, DPD

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<sup>i</sup> *The Future of Seattle's Industrial Lands, Seattle Planning Commission report, July 2007.* The full bullet point in the recommendations reads as follows; the allowance of excessive amounts of retail and commercial uses in industrial zones has compromised the integrity of Seattle's industrial base. We recommend that the City significantly restrict the amount of retail and commercial uses that are allowed in industrial zoned areas. Small retail uses are important to the functioning of the industrial areas; by limiting the size of these uses, we expect that new retail uses will be those that primarily support the industrial area. These size limitations may vary between IG and IC zones, such as creating stricter size limitations in IG zones than in IC zones, to best foster the intended uses for each zone. For example, Portland's "industrial sanctuary" zones limit retail and office primary uses to up to 3,000 square feet outright and 25,000 square feet or 1:1 Floor Area Ratio with a conditional use. In order to obtain a conditional use, the use "needs to be located in the industrial area or building because industrial firms or their employees constitute the primary market of the proposed use." In Chicago, general retail sales uses are limited to 3,000 square feet, and must be accessory sales of goods produced on-site. Generally, office uses are limited to 9,000 square feet, a reuse of an existing building, or as an accessory to the allowed industrial use.