

**Mayor's Recommended
Comprehensive Plan Amendments, 2008**

Department of Planning and Development
Diane Sugimura, Director

August 15, 2008



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

August 18, 2008

Dear Reader:

This report accompanies a proposed ordinance the Mayor is sending to the City Council as the 2008 annual amendments for Seattle's Comprehensive Plan process.

The suggestions for amendments came from a variety of sources, including interested community members, public agencies, City departments and the City Council. Starting from these suggestions, Council adopted Resolution 31049 on April 14 identifying amendments for further analysis this year. This report describes the results of that analysis and the Mayor's recommendations regarding the amendments.

The City Council's Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee will schedule a public hearing on the ordinance during September 2008, in Council Chambers, second floor of City Hall, 601 5th Avenue.

You may send comments on the ordinance to:

Councilmember Sally Clark
City Hall
601 5th Avenue, Floor 2
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

You may also email City Council staff at complan@seattle.gov or Mark Troxel of DPD at mark.troxel@seattle.gov.

Sincerely

Diane M. Sugimura,
Director

**Director's Report
On the
Mayor's Recommended
Comprehensive Plan Amendments, 2008**

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Mayor's Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendments, 2008

Introduction

This report describes the Mayor's recommendations for amending the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan (the "Comp Plan," or the "Plan") is a collection of goals and policies that guide City actions for managing future population, housing and employment growth. The Plan is a requirement of the state Growth Management Act (GMA), which calls for most counties and cities in the state to prepare plans showing how they will accommodate the state's projected population growth. The Plan includes policies for urban villages, land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, utilities, economic development, neighborhood planning, human development, cultural resources and the environment.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

The City adopted the current Comprehensive Plan in 1994 and conducted a review and update of the Plan in 2004, extending the Plan's horizon to 2024 and planning for revised growth estimates. The City provides a process each year for individuals, groups, City departments and elected officials to propose updates to address changing conditions so the plan will reflect ongoing work or new information.

The GMA generally limits the City to amending the Plan only once a year. The City has amended the Plan most years since it was first adopted – to accomplish such tasks as to add new elements (chapters), to add or modify policy direction in specific policy areas, or to update information in the Plan.

In October 2007, the City Council revised the amendment process by adopting Resolution 31016. Suggestions for amending the Plan are now sent directly to the City Council rather than to the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). DPD remains the lead for analyzing the possible amendments once Council identifies which suggestions are appropriate for further analysis..

2008 Amendments

Individuals, community groups, City departments and the City Council have proposed amendments to the Comp Plan in 2008. Council adopted Resolution 31049 identifying potential amendments for further evaluation. Two proposals have since been withdrawn – one that would require housing to be built in commercial or government buildings and one to change the Future Land Use Map designation of a site on Harbor Ave from industrial to mixed use. Proposed Future Land Use Map amendments affecting industrial lands are being deferred until completion of work associated with the Industrial Jobs Initiative, except in

the South Lake Union and South Downtown areas, where subarea planning efforts have recently formulated specific recommendations for the future of those lands.

Each amendment in this report is shown with underlining to indicate new language and ~~((strike-through))~~ to indicate existing language recommended to be deleted.

Summary of Recommended Amendments

The Mayor is recommending that the City Council adopt the following amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan:

Re-connecting First Hill and Capitol Hill to Downtown Over I-5

- A. Add a policy that the City will seek opportunities to re-establish pedestrian connections between Downtown and Capitol Hill/First Hill by constructing lids over I-5 that may also provide development opportunities and open space.

Livable South Downtown

- B. Change the designation of land within the Little Saigon neighborhood and along the northern portion of Rainier Avenue from Industrial to Commercial Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map.
- C. through E. Amend three existing policies in the Downtown neighborhood plan to allow establishment of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program for historic properties in South Downtown

South Lake Union

- F. Change the designation of land within the South Lake Union Urban Center from Industrial to Commercial/Mixed Use.

Pedestrian Access to Transit Stops

- G. Add a policy encouraging transit agencies to site transit stops and stations in locations that facilitate pedestrian access.

Reducing Trips and Vehicle Miles Traveled in the City

- H. Amend existing policy related to reducing vehicle miles traveled in the city by noting the beneficial impact of that policy on greenhouse gas reduction.

Affordable Housing Action Agenda

- I. Add a policy supporting sufficient density and incentives to provide affordable housing near transit hubs.
- J. Add a policy addressing infrastructure and amenities in areas where density is likely to increase, e.g., near light rail stations.
- K. Add a goal of implementing strategies and programs to help ensure a range of housing opportunities affordable to those who work in Seattle.

- L. Amend existing land use policies to seek opportunities to provide affordable housing when land is rezoned.

Additional Priority Uses for Surplus City Properties

- M. Amend existing open space policies to include parks, forested areas, and viewpoints among the priority uses for surplus City properties.
- N. Add a goal and policy directing the City to anticipate the effects of climate change and to plan for adapting to those effects.

Anticipating the Effects of Climate Change

- O. Add language to a discussion in the Environment Element recognizing need to plan for the effects of climate change.
- P. and Q. Add complementary goal and policy directing the City to prepare and plan for addressing the likely impacts of climate change.

Next Steps

City Council’s Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee will hold a public hearing regarding these proposed amendments in September 2008 in the Council Chamber. The Committee will take oral and written comments and make a recommendation to the full Council. Council is scheduled to vote on the proposed amendments in December 2008.

Recommended Amendments

A. Re-connecting First Hill and Capitol Hill to Downtown Over I-5

Element: Neighborhood Planning

Submitted by: Department of Planning and Development

Background: With the construction of I-5, begun in 1957, Capitol Hill and First Hill neighborhoods were effectively cut off from Downtown. Because the stretch of I-5 between Denny and Madison Streets is situated below grade, crossings are via bridges. In the 1970s, Freeway Park was constructed on a four-acre lid between Seneca and University Streets, and in the 1980s the Washington State Convention and Trade Center was built over I-5 at 7th Avenue and Pike Street.

Recommended Amendment to an existing Downtown Transportation Policy:

Policy DT-TP5. Promote pedestrian circulation as the principal method of movement for trips within downtown. Improve the street level environment as the primary component of the pedestrian network. Strive to make the pedestrian network accessible to the elderly and disabled.

Continue to support a comprehensive program of public improvements to streets and sidewalks in coordination with the transportation, open space, land use and urban design policies. Consider the following pedestrian circulation improvement projects:

1. **Downtown Transit Corridor** (Streets above the Transit Tunnel). Surface pedestrian improvements to improve access to transit stations as part of planning for transit station area development.
2. **Spot Improvements**. A program of location-specific pedestrian improvements at major bus stops and high volume pedestrian locations.
3. **Green Streets**. Design and development of designated green streets in downtown neighborhoods for added passive and active pedestrian space in accordance with the adopted policies of neighborhood plans, the Green Street policies, and these policies.
4. **Belltown Boulevard**. Development of a landscaped transit/pedestrian boulevard with widened sidewalks along Third Avenue through Belltown as an extension of the Downtown Transit Corridor.
5. **Westlake Boulevard**. Development of a landscaped boulevard with widened sidewalks along Westlake Avenue between Olive Way and Denny Way, consistent with the Belltown, Denny Triangle and Commercial Core neighborhood plans. Coordinate potential extension to South Lake Union with neighborhood planning for that area.
6. **Waterfront Linkages**. Improvements to east-west pedestrian connections and access through downtown and between downtown and the waterfront, including additional hill-climb opportunities as part of both public and private projects.
7. **Downtown and First Hill/Capitol Hill Linkages**. Look for opportunities to re-establish connections between Downtown and First Hill/Capitol Hill by enlarging existing crossings or constructing lids over I-5 that can also provide opportunities for development or open space.

Analysis: While the Comp Plan contains numerous policies promoting an enhanced pedestrian environment, including the specific policies currently within Downtown Transportation Policy DT-TP5, connections over I-5 in the Center City are not directly addressed.

Recurring themes in the Plan's citywide policies are the enhancement of the pedestrian environment and encouragement of non-motorized forms of travel.

Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center (M/IC), with the overall goal of promoting housing and related development.

Recommended amendment: Amend the Future Land Use Map as shown on Figure 1.

The proposed change would affect both sides of Rainier Ave. S. north of S. Dearborn Street, and the King Street Corridor between 12th Ave. S. and Rainier Ave. S., changing the designation from “Industrial” to “Commercial/Mixed Use.”

Analysis: The affected land lies within the Little Saigon and Jackson Place/Central Area Neighborhoods. The area to the west of Rainier is within the Downtown Urban Center, and the area to the east is within the 23rd Avenue S. and S. Jackson-Union Residential Urban Village. None of the affected land is within the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center.

The area consists of 63 parcels for a total of 13 acres of land. Thirty percent of the land contains warehouse and storage uses, and .75 acres is devoted to food processing. Thirteen percent of the land is vacant or used for surface parking. Retail, office and general commercial uses comprise 45 percent of the land area, and a small portion (6%) is in residential use.

The Livable South Downtown Planning Study identifies the area as more suitable for future commercial/mixed uses consistent with surrounding neighborhood zoning designations. A Comp Plan policy adopted in 2007 states that industrial uses are generally not appropriate within urban centers. This applies directly to the land west of Rainier Ave. that is now designated industrial.

C. – E. Allow transfer of development rights (TDR) from historic properties in South Downtown

Element: Neighborhood Planning

Submitted by: Department of Planning and Development

Background: Several policies in the Comprehensive Plan address historic resources. In general the Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the need to protect and encourage rehabilitation of historic resources, particularly those that “are most threatened by development pressure.” (DT-UDP3)

Since 1973, Seattle has designated hundreds of individual sites, buildings, and historic features as “landmarks” subject to protection by City ordinance. Modifications of designated landmark buildings are subject to review and approval by the Seattle Landmarks Board. In 1985, Seattle established a Landmark Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program. That program allows

owners to “transfer” or sell unused development rights from landmark buildings to developers of other downtown commercial properties who wish to achieve additional density through the downtown bonus incentive program.

The Livable South Downtown Planning Study includes proposes establishing a program to allow the transfer of up to 3 FAR of commercial development rights from properties that are “historic, contributing” in the National Register Historic Districts in South Downtown in order to create an economic incentive for preservation over demolition as land values increase. The proposed TDR program has been drafted to avoid undue competition with the existing Downtown Landmark TDR program. While existing policies already establish the value of preserving the historical and architectural identity of buildings that represent Seattle’s history, to be fully consistent with the Comp Plan, amendments and clarifications are required.

C. Recommended amendments:

DT-LUP11: Provide incentives to maintain variations in building scale, create public open space, and preserve buildings and uses that are scarce public benefit resources through allowing ~~((a))~~ transfer of development rights ~~((TDR program))~~. Consistent with priorities for use of development incentives, limit the sites that may transfer development rights. Among sites eligible to transfer development rights, consider including:

1. housing with a minimum amount of residential floor area occupied by units affordable to households with incomes at or below 50 percent of median income;

2. Seattle landmarks in downtown areas not subject to special review district or historical district provisions;

3. historic properties within the Pioneer Square Preservation District and the Chinatown Special Review District;

~~((3))~~4. publicly available open space meeting minimum size and other standards; and

~~((4))~~5. sites on the same block as the receiving site in high density areas where it is desirable to retain varied building scale.

Limitations on Sending and Receiving Site Locations. Limit sending and receiving sites so as to promote development that is consistent with the development objectives of different land use districts and to promote other goals and policies of this Plan. The proportion of floor area that may be gained through TDRs from particular sources may be limited. Limit sites eligible ~~((#ity))~~ to transfer TDRs to ~~((sites))~~those that provide limited

downtown resources of public benefit, such as low-income housing, designated landmark structures or historic structures in historic districts, and open space, except where TDRs are allowed to be sent to nearby lots in areas where a variable scale of development is desired.

D. Recommended amendments:

DT-UDP 3: Provide the following development incentives to increase the attractiveness of preserving landmark structures and encourage adaptive reuse of historic resources:

Seattle Landmarks Transfer of Development Rights. Allow the transfer of ~~((unused))~~ development rights from designated Seattle Landmarks located in downtown areas ~~((not subject to special review district or historical district provisions,))~~ where these resources are most threatened by development pressure. Subject transfers from designated Seattle Landmarks to limits, including limits on sending and receiving sites implementing Policy LU 11: Transfer of Development Rights, and to other appropriate conditions to promote the rehabilitation and public enjoyment of designated landmark features.

Incentives. Provisions for allowing floor area above the base should not create incentives for the demolition of designated landmark structures.

Floor Area Allowance. Within downtown mixed-use residential zones where the floor area of existing structures may exceed the density limits for non-residential use, provide an economic incentive for the use and rehabilitation of designated Seattle Landmarks by allowing the total existing floor area of a landmark structure committed to long term preservation to be occupied by permitted non-residential uses, regardless of FAR limits and without use of bonuses or TDR. Allow this incentive under the conditions that there is no reduction in the amount of floor area occupied by residential use prior to rehabilitation nor any increase in the floor area in nonresidential use beyond the total floor area of the structure prior to rehabilitation. Consider limiting this incentive to lots not benefiting from other incentives, such as TDR transfers.

E . Recommended amendments:

DT- LUP 9: Allow additional floor area above the base densities, and consider allowing greater height where appropriate, up to maximum limits, in specified downtown areas where it is desirable to accommodate growth, through bonuses and transfer of development rights. In determining conditions for bonus floor area, consider measures to mitigate impacts of higher density development on the downtown environment, including such

resources as affordable housing, public open space, child care, human services, and pedestrian circulation.

Allow transfer of (~~unused commercial~~) development potential from one site to another in certain circumstances, consistent with policy LU 11. When transferable, development potential is referred to for convenience as “transferable development rights,” or “TDRs,” but such terms do not mean that there is any legal right vested in the owner of TDRs to use or transfer them. The conditions and limitations on the transfer or use of TDRs may be modified from time to time as the City may find appropriate to implement the policies of the Comprehensive Plan in light of experience and changing conditions.

Analysis: The Landmark TDR program helps protect historic resources that might be subject to development pressure in downtown neighborhoods. Designated landmarks are often located on land that far exceeds the economic value of the landmark. The Landmark TDR program provides an economic incentive for preservation over demolition.

Since the inception of the Landmark TDR program, the 2001 Nisqually earthquake damaged many historic buildings in the South Downtown area. Many of these buildings are not individually listed as landmark structures, but are nonetheless cherished historic resources that significantly contribute to the overall historic integrity of Seattle’s historic neighborhoods, and are recognized through National Register Historic District designations in Pioneer Square and Chinatown/International District.

Presently, eleven buildings in the Seattle Chinatown Historic District (a small geographic area within the International Special Review District) are partially vacant and in need of significant renovation. Numerous properties within Pioneer Square are in need of repair, renovation and upgrades.

Properties within the Seattle Chinatown National Register Historic District and the Pioneer Square/Skid Road National Register District are protected through local guidelines and federal standards for rehabilitation in a manner similar to the protections enjoyed by individually listed landmark buildings. However, there is concern within the community that owners of historic buildings would be allowed to demolish those structures.

To help reduce the possibility that historic buildings in Pioneer Square and Chinatown/International District will be demolished, DPD will be proposing a South Downtown Historic TDR program for City Council consideration in late 2008. DPD staff has worked closely with the Office of Housing, the Department of Neighborhoods and the Law Department to develop a proposal for South Downtown Historic TDR that would be compatible with the Downtown Landmark TDR program, and that would provide a way for owners of historic properties to

derive additional financial value from those properties while retaining the structures that help define the historic character of those areas.

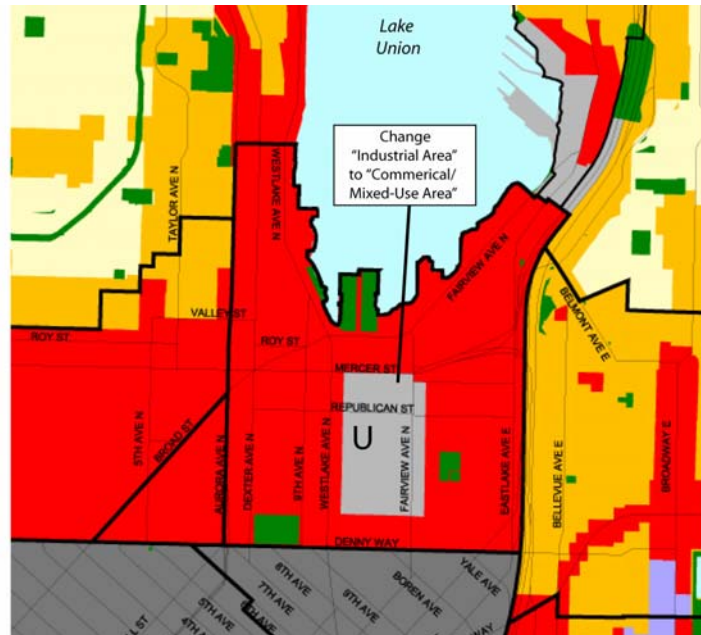
F. South Lake Union

Change the Future Land Use Map designation within the South Lake Union Urban Center from Industrial to Commercial/Mixed Use.

Element: Land Use

Submitted by:
Department of Planning
and Development

Background: The South Lake Union neighborhood was designated an Urban Center in 2004, and the neighborhood plan was updated in 2006. Zoning in the neighborhood is under review and a determination will be made regarding zoning changes that were proposed in the neighborhood plan.



Recommended amendment: Amend the Future Land Use Map as shown on Figure 2.

Analysis: The South Lake Union neighborhood is currently undergoing significant change and growth, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the South Lake Union neighborhood plan.

The 2006 neighborhood plan anticipates significant growth in the urban center, including 16,000 additional jobs and 8,000 additional households over 20 years, and recommends allowing housing throughout the neighborhood. The current IC (industrial/commercial) zone that occupies several blocks in the center of the neighborhood does not permit housing. The map change will enable rezone to the Seattle Mixed zone that will achieve the neighborhood's goal to allow housing throughout the neighborhood. Analysis of potential rezones in South Lake Union is underway, and specific proposals are anticipated in 2009. Amending the Future Land Use Map now will facilitate the forthcoming proposal to apply the Seattle Mixed zone to this area.

G. Pedestrian Access at Transit Stops

Element: Transportation

Submitted by: Kate Martin

Background: The initial proposal was to expand the definition of accessible transit stops and to require signaled crosswalks at all transit stops with more than one lane in either direction. Council acknowledged that the initial proposal had costly budgetary implications, was more prescriptive about the design of intersections and transit stops than is appropriate for the Comp Plan, and therefore asked for a more general statement in support of safe street crossing at transit stops.

Recommended New Policy:

T24.5: Work with transit providers to locate transit stops and stations to facilitate pedestrian access, particularly on roadways with more than one travel lane in any direction.

Analysis: The Transportation Element currently includes several policies related to pedestrian safety and access to transit facilities. (See, e.g., Transportation Policies 20, 24, 25, 27, 30 and 33.) The City's Complete Streets Ordinance, the Transportation Strategic Plan, the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual, and the forthcoming Pedestrian Master Plan (which is anticipated to come before Council in 2009) articulate design principles that balance many aspects of the pedestrian environment. Current Comp Plan policies do not address the location of transit stops specifically as part of the system of safe pedestrian mobility in the city. The proposed new policy will elevate consideration of pedestrian access on more heavily traveled streets, when the City works with transit agencies such as Metro and Sound Transit on selecting the locations of transit stops.

H. Reduce Trips and Vehicle Miles Traveled in the City

Element: Transportation

Submitted by: Chris Leman

Background: In June 2008, the State of Washington passed House Bill 2815 adding a new section to Chapter 47.01 setting goals for the reduction, by 2050, in per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT), with interim goals set at 2020 and 2035. The initial proposal for a Comp Plan amendment would have adopted the state VMT goals, along with a new policy that the City would support only those highway projects that will produce little or no increase in VMT. Resolution 31049

calls for adding a goal of reducing VMT. In 2005, it is estimated that there were an estimated four billion vehicle miles traveled in the city.

Recommended amendment:

T17: Provide, support, and promote programs and strategies aimed at reducing the number of car trips and miles driven (for work and non-work purposes) to increase the efficiency of the transportation system, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Analysis: In 2007, the City adopted Environmental Goal 7 to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other climate-changing greenhouse gases in Seattle by 30 percent from 1990 levels by 2024, and by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050. Seattle’s greenhouse gas reduction goals are more ambitious than state goals, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: City and State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals.

Seattle	Washington
2012: 7% below 1990	2020: 1990 levels
2024: 30% below 1990	2035: 25% below 1990
2050: 80% below 1990	2050: 50% below 1990

Because emissions from road transportation are a significant source of greenhouse gas, achieving the goals adopted in 2007 will require reducing emissions from vehicles. Reducing VMT is one way to do that. At this time, however, there has not been enough analysis to determine whether the reductions called for in the recent state legislation represent the appropriate level of reduction for Seattle. Seattle’s urban density and its status as a major employment center, international port, and regional destination for sports, tourism and entertainment make its VMT characteristics unique within the region and the state. These factors would affect how a realistic and effective goal for reducing VMT in Seattle should compare to the statewide goal.

An increase in transit service (such as through the 2009 opening of a light rail line in Seattle), improved management of transportation demand, reduction of minimum parking requirements, station area planning, mixed-use development at near transit stations and general recognition of the relationship between land use and transportation are tools the City is also pursuing in order to slow or reverse the growth in VMT.

The state legislation calls for convening major groups who may be affected by the VMT reduction goals to determine the tools and best practices that will help to achieve the goals. A report from this group is due to the legislature in

December 2008. The Department of Ecology will also report on the anticipated impacts of these changes on small businesses, low-income households, agriculture, migrant workers, tribes, and distressed rural communities. The state's ongoing work will help inform further City decisions about how and how much Seattle should try to reduce its VMT.

The principal concern of the proposed VMT target is to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas that vehicles emit. Therefore, while the City conducts additional analysis to refine its VMT reduction targets and participates in state and regional processes to identify Seattle's role in meeting the state's VMT reduction targets, the executive recommends amending Transportation Policy 17 only to add reducing greenhouse gas emissions as one objective of its directive to "reduce the number of car trips and miles driven."

I.- L. Affordable Housing Action Agenda

Elements: Urban Village, Housing, and Land Use

Submitted by: Seattle Planning Commission

Background: In its February 2008 Affordable Housing Action Agenda Report, the Seattle Planning Commission described the current situation in the Seattle region with regard to the alarming lack of affordable housing, and developed a series of strategies for alleviating the shortage. The report (available online at <http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/>) prescribes nine broad strategies and includes proposed Comp Plan language and a set of implementation strategies for each, to be implemented over the next few years. The initial set of proposed Comp Plan amendments for 2008 is drawn from Strategies 1 and 9:

- **Affordable Housing Action Agenda Strategy 1:** Encourage the development of affordable housing in mixed-use, transit-supportive, walkable neighborhoods.
- **Affordable Housing Action Agenda Strategy 9:** Coordinate increases in density with development of transportation strategies or infrastructure, open space, and other public amenities.

Taken together the proposed Affordable Housing Action Agenda amendments build on themes that are already in the Comp Plan, with a greater emphasis on providing an adequate supply of affordable housing.

I. Recommended new policy:

UV 2.5: In areas surrounding major transit hubs, except in industrial zones, allow densities sufficient to take advantage of significant investment in public transportation infrastructure. Use incentive zoning

programs and other strategies to help ensure the provision of affordable housing.

J. Recommended new policy:

UV 7.5: Coordinate public and private activities to address transportation, utilities, open space and other public services to accommodate the new growth associated with subarea rezones (e.g., in transit station areas) that result in significant increases in density.

K. Recommended New Goal:

H 11.5: Implement strategies and programs to help ensure a range of housing opportunities affordable to those who work in Seattle.

L. Recommended Amendments:

LU 5.2: Seek opportunities in rezones or changes in development regulations to incorporate incentive programs for development of housing that is affordable for the longest term (~~(practicable))~~practical.

Analysis: The proposed language for the Urban Village policies strengthens the existing connections among land use, transportation, and affordable housing. It draws from existing goals and policies related to focusing development within urban villages to make attractive and compact communities, and takes the further step of identifying urban villages as an opportunity to increase the supply of affordable housing. Proposed UV7.5 directs the City to anticipate the greater demand on public services that increased density may cause.

The proposed new Housing Goal adds a directive for the City to implement strategies and programs that can help ensure a range of housing opportunities, based on a finding in the Commission's report that new housing units currently being added to the market are not affordable to many households.

M. and N. Additional Priority Uses for Surplus City Properties

Element: Urban Village

Submitted by: Councilmember Rasmussen

Background: When a City department determines that real property in its possession is no longer needed for City purposes, the property is subject to Procedures for the Evaluation of the Reuse and Disposal of the City's Real Property set forth in Resolution 29799, and amended by Resolution 30862 (the Procedures). The Council may determine how to reuse or dispose of a specific

property or type of property without recourse to the Procedures. The Comp Plan's Urban Village Element currently identifies P-Patch community gardens as a desirable use for surplus City property.

M. Recommended amendments:

UV 57: Promote inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation to expand community gardening opportunities(~~(, and include P-Patch community gardening among priorities for use of City surplus property))~~).

N. Recommended new policy:

UV 57.5: Create opportunities for people to experience the natural environment by including parks, forested areas, community gardens (P-Patches), and viewpoints among the priority uses to be considered for the City's surplus properties.

Analysis: Decisions about the reuse or disposal of City real property are made on a case-by-case basis, subject to established procedures to ensure consistency with the City's departmental needs, coordination with neighborhood planning efforts, and an appropriate level of citizen participation. Adding parks, forested areas, and viewpoints to the list of priority uses for surplus properties in the Comp Plan acknowledges the potential opportunities for preserving natural spaces and providing passive recreation opportunities in Seattle.

O. – Q. Anticipating the Effects of Climate Change

Element: Environment

Submitted by: Councilmember Conlin

Background: While Seattle has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent (from 1990 levels) by 2050 (Environmental Policy 7), recent data indicate that the adverse effects of greenhouse gas concentrations discernible today were driven by atmospheric conditions present decades ago. Thus, if we are successful at arresting greenhouse gas emissions over the next 40 years, the effects of today's atmospheric conditions will be warming the climate well into the latter half of the 21st century.

O. Recommended amendments to Environment Element discussion:

Part E. Climate Change

Climate change and the human factors that contribute to it are not confined to jurisdictional boundaries. Nevertheless, Seattle City

government can contribute to reductions of those factors through public education, regulation, and by reducing emissions from City government operations.

Seattle is a regional employment center and, as such, is a locus for the generation of greenhouse gas emissions from industry and traffic that are the shared responsibility of the region, state, and nation. By monitoring and seeking to respond to emissions within Seattle's geographic boundaries, Seattle can contribute to regional reduction in greenhouse gases.

This Comprehensive Plan addresses the period between 2004 and 2024. The greenhouse gas emission goals below are set to correspond to a 50-year goal consistent with studies prepared by national and international organizations. These studies indicate that developed countries must reduce greenhouse gases as much as 80 percent in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e) below 1990 levels by 2050 in order to achieve climate stabilization.

Meeting targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will require political consensus and technology innovation. Without such consensus and innovation, there is a risk that the City may not continue to make necessary progress in meeting these goals. Seattle can, and should, be in the forefront of developing new economic opportunities in industrial sectors that can positively affect greenhouse gas reduction.

In addition to doing its part to reduce the effects of climate change, the City must also prepare for, and adapt to, the effects of climate change.

P. Recommended new goal:

EG 7.5: Be prepared for the likely effects of climate change.

Q. Recommended new policy:

E 15.5: The City should anticipate the effects of climate change and make plans for adapting to those effects.

Analysis: Comprehensive Plan policies address greenhouse gas emissions, but no specific policies address preparation for the effects of climate change that are likely to occur. The proposed new goal and policy will fill this void. Washington State agencies have convened Preparation/Adaptation Working Groups in five areas; fresh water, public health, agriculture, coasts and infrastructure, and forests. The Working Groups will review projected impacts and develop recommendations for immediate actions and identify areas for further research.

The Seattle Climate Action Plan acknowledges the need to prepare for climate change, and Seattle's participation in intergovernmental efforts to forecast the effects will help focus resources on preparation and, where possible, the prevention of harm. Consider, for example, how changes affecting our international trading partners can affect our economy, our trade and shipping practices. As likely impacts become known, jurisdictions like Seattle will assess their vulnerability and make plans to develop resilience to the effects of climate change.

Amendments Not Recommended

A. Consolidate Goals and Policies, and Add New Policies, Related to Trees

Background: A proposal was made to add new goals and policies and possibly a new element to the Comprehensive Plan related to preservation of existing trees and increasing Seattle's tree canopy. Resolution 31049 directs DPD to study consolidation of existing tree-related policies in one location, except where the location is important to the meaning of the policy, and to consider additional amendments where necessary to close gaps related to several aspects of a healthy urban forest.

Discussion: DPD staff reviewed existing policies related to trees, including urban forest, open space, wildlife habitat, and natural drainage. See Attachment 1 to this report. Policies that apply primarily to trees are appropriately located in the Environment Element. The majority of tree-related policies are functionally integral to their current location. Examples include Neighborhood Planning policies that promote open space and greenbelts, Land Use policies associated with habitat in shoreline areas, and Transportation policies regarding street trees.

DPD's analysis determined that existing goals and policies are sufficient for the policy-level guidance appropriate to the Comp Plan. Technical questions regarding a balanced economic model of tree value or evaluating canopy in conjunction with an understanding of tree life span are more appropriate to work programs, such as implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan. Substantial budget and staff resources, scientific expertise, and community engagement would be required to answer key questions and make effective programmatic and regulatory recommendations.

Recommended Action: Prepare an index, to be published in the Environment Element, of tree-related goals and policies located throughout the Comp Plan. Rely on the Urban Forest Management Plan for more specific guidance on detailed programmatic and regulatory efforts associated with fostering a healthy urban forest.

B. Prohibit Surface Parking in the Downtown Mixed Residential Zone

Background: Resolution 31049 directed further study of a Comp Plan amendment prohibiting surface parking in the Downtown Mixed Residential (DMR) zone.

Discussion: The Comprehensive Plan poses no obstacle to legislation amending the development standards of the DMR zone to prohibit surface parking. Land Use Goal 5 says: “Regulate the location of off-street parking . . . to reduce parking and vehicle traffic impacts on pedestrians and residential and commercial streetscapes” Whether surface parking is allowed as a permanent or temporary use can be regulated.

Recommended Action: Legislation amending Section 23.49.146 of the Land Use Code can accomplish the stated objective of the proposed amendment. No Comprehensive Plan amendment is needed.

C. Neighborhood Planning for Areas Not Anticipating Growth

Background: The proposal would amend Neighborhood Planning Goal NG3 to encourage, rather than permit, neighborhood planning efforts in areas of the city not anticipated to take significant amounts of growth, and would delete a portion of the goal that encourages limited scopes of work and focused planning objectives in areas not anticipated to take significant amounts of growth.

Discussion: The proposed amendment is not consistent with the role of the Comp Plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA). The Comp Plan and GMA are fundamentally oriented toward managing growth in order to conserve and make most efficient use of limited resources. While neighborhoods outside of urban villages also deserve strong communities and quality services, for the fundamental purposes of managing growth and focusing limited resources, it is appropriate that the emphasis in neighborhood planning be on areas expected to grow.

Recommended Action: Do not amend Neighborhood Planning Goal NG3.

D. Discouraging Extra-heavy Vehicles

Background: The proposal would add a policy discouraging extra-heavy transit buses and solid waste trucks because they have more potential to damage roads and bridges, and would encourage transit agencies to purchase lighter-weight

vehicles and offer incentives to solid waste contractors to use trucks that do not require the state's solid-waste-hauler weight exemption.

Discussion: Comp Plan Transportation Policy T70 directs the City to “[p]ursue strategies to finance repair of road damage from heavy vehicles in a way that is equitable for Seattle’s taxpayers.” Policies T7 – T9 already address the capacity of the street system to handle vehicle loads, and largely direct the specifics of financing and maintaining the street system to the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP). While preventive measures are generally prudent, the factors involved in fleet selection for transit, utilities, and construction are complex. The proposed policy’s objectives regarding the type and weight of transit buses and solid-waste haulers can best be achieved through budgetary or programmatic decisions by transit agencies, the Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities, or by amendments to the TSP.

Recommended Action: Do not adopt proposed Transportation Policy 69.5.

E. Establish Level-of-Service Standards for Non-motorized Modes

Background: A proposed policy would have directed the City to establish level-of-service standards for non-motorized modes of travel, “or alternative means of ensuring that non-motorized travel facilities keep pace as development occurs.”

Discussion: Performance-based level-of-service (LOS) standards for motorized vehicles are based on a limited set of objectives, and are based on principles similar to those used to predict and monitor the flow of fluid through a pipe. An analyst can model the effect of speed limits, merging lanes, driveways, etc. on a narrow concept of capacity: How many cars get through and how long do they wait? Bicyclists are most similar to motorized vehicles, but the number of variables important to cyclists grows to include safety (proximity to motor traffic, obstacles, parked-car doors), gradient, surface quality, bike parking at the destination, among others. A pedestrian’s expectations have many variables as well, and a high proportion of these are subjective, such as perception of safety, character of the street, quality of amenities such as lighting or furniture.

Moreover, non-motorized users interact with each other, and include people with limited mobility, skaters, small children, and pets. While motor vehicle behavior can be simplified so that a LOS model is useful, models of non-motorized travelers developed by other cities are typically a scorekeeping matrix, and the results are generally not intended to measure performance.

There is value in developing the matrix, however, as a process for engaging the community in describing its vision of a high quality streetscape. Seattle’s Bicycle Master Plan and the forthcoming Pedestrian Master Plan arrive at goals for improving non-motorized mobility that can be implemented under the authority of

the Complete Streets Ordinance. Support for these tools already exists in the Comp Plan.

The other suggested approach in the proposed amendment (ensuring that non-motorized travel facilities keep pace) is a programmatic or budgetary matter. The Comp Plan is clear in supporting the movement of people and goods rather than vehicles, in fostering a transit-supportive urban form, and in designing streets according to the Complete Streets principles. Ensuring that non-motorized travel facilities keep pace is part of implementing current Comp Plan policies and will require ongoing commitments to development standards and to public investments that encourage attractive alternatives to the private automobile.

Recommended Action: Do not adopt the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment; rely instead on narrative-based documents such as the Bicycle Master Plan and the forthcoming Pedestrian Master Plan to provide guidance about the types of improvements that are necessary to encourage increased use of non-motorized modes of travel.

Conclusion

The actions recommended for the possible Comprehensive Plan amendments identified in the City Council resolution are based on the adopted criteria for reviewing amendments. In general, the amendments reviewed this year would not make major, substantive changes to the directions currently embodied in the Plan. Those that have been recommended for adoption tend to provide additional clarification or emphasis to existing directions.

Attachment 1: Digest of Current Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies Related to Trees

Urban Village Element:

UVG40 Enhance the urban village strategy through the provision of:
... enhanced tree canopy and understory throughout the city

UV54 Promote sustainable management of public and private open spaces and landscaping including preserving or planting native and naturalized vegetation as appropriate to the landscape, removing invasive plants, protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, and using an integrated pest management approach which favors natural over chemical pest management.

Land Use Element:

LUG36 Protect the ecological functions and values of wetlands, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; prevent erosion from development on steep slopes; and protect the public health, safety and welfare in landslide-prone, liquefaction-prone and flood-prone areas.

LUG37 Permit landowners to develop land in a manner that is reasonable in light of the environmental constraints present.

LUG38 Avoid development that causes injury to persons, property, public resources or the environment.

LU39 Preserve and enhance the City's physical and aesthetic character and environment by:

- Preventing untimely and indiscriminate removal or destruction of trees
- Providing incentives to property owners for tree retention
- Providing protection to large trees
- Providing special protection to exceptional trees that, because of their unique historical, ecological, or aesthetic value, constitute an important community resource.

LU40 Use the following tools to protect trees, appropriate to the size, importance and location of a tree:

- Providing flexibility in development standards

- Promoting tree retention through the design review process
- Promoting site planning and horticultural practices that are consistent with the reasonable use of property
- Educating the public and development community concerning the value of retaining trees
- Restricting the removal of trees on undeveloped land prior to review of a specific development proposal

LU41 Because of the many benefits that street trees provide to both property owners and the general public, encourage the preservation or planting of street trees as development occurs, except in locations where it is not possible to meet City standards intended to preserve public safety and utility networks.

LU53.1 When designing parking facilities in City parks, strive to preserve parks open space, green space, trees and other mature vegetation; limit parking to discourage auto use and discourage the conversion of surface area to parking for private automobiles.

LU151 On sites that are highly visible to the public because of their location on selected major arterials, require new development to provide street trees and landscape screening in order to promote a positive impression of the city's industrial areas. Streets appropriate for this special treatment are:

1. Streets that provide major routes through the city and/or serve as principal entrances to downtown;
2. Streets that provide the principal circulation route within an industrial area; and
3. Streets where right-of-way conditions will permit required landscaping without conflicting with industrial activity.

LU165 Apply standards for screening, landscaped areas, curbs and sidewalks, setbacks, and street trees to improve the appearance of, or obscure, outdoor activity, to maintain continuity along a street front, to enhance the environment and safety of the buffer area and to maintain compatibility with adjacent areas.

LU223 Seek no net loss of wetland acreage, and require no net loss of wetland values or functions across the city, including, but not limited to flood control, water quantity and quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and quality of life and educational benefits. In limited circumstances, allow a wetland's functions to be replaced either on or off-site.

LU224 Near wetlands, protect vegetation in its existing condition unless augmenting or replanting can be shown to better protect the wetland's functions.

LU225 Regulate development in and near designated fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas in order to protect the remaining native wildlife species and significant fish populations, especially salmonids.

LU226 Whenever possible, maintain in their natural or native state those areas that contain the natural vegetative cover and physical space necessary to serve as valuable habitat, in order to:

- protect large contiguous wildlife habitat areas;
- maintain wildlife corridors that connect functions;
- conserve soil and ground conditions that support native vegetation;
- prevent siltation and high water temperatures in downstream habitat;
- dampen fluctuations in surface water flow which are typically problematic in urbanized areas; and
- maintain groundwater recharge flow to support stream flows during drier seasons.

LU227 Regulate development within riparian corridors to protect the natural functions and values of streams, creeks and lakes from the potential negative effects of urban development.

LU228 Establish development standards to:

- prevent the degradation of water quality,
- prevent erosion and siltation, and
- protect fish and wildlife habitat.

LU229 Establish buffer areas adjacent to the water body on each development site that is located within a riparian corridor. Strictly limit development within buffer areas, and leave vegetation in its natural condition unless new plantings will enhance the functions of the buffer.

Transportation Element:

T13 Designate, in the Transportation Strategic Plan, a Street Type overlay to define street use and design features that support adjacent land uses, generally, as follows:

...

- **Green Street:** This Street Type on certain downtown streets provides exceptional pedestrian environments and may include wider sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, and appropriate street furniture emphasizing pedestrian movement.

- Neighborhood Green Street: May be on any non-arterial street adjacent to residential and commercial land uses. This Street Type supports all modes with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities, street trees and landscaping.

Utilities Element:

U10 In meeting the demand for electric power, strive for no net increase in City contributions to greenhouse gas emissions by relying first on energy efficiency, second on renewable resources, and, when fossil fuel use is necessary, taking actions that offset the release of greenhouse gases such as planting trees or using alternative fuel vehicles.

Neighborhood Planning Element:

Admiral:

A-P31 Seek to provide open space within the Admiral neighborhood to serve the community's needs and to protect critical areas and natural habitat.

A-P33 Seek to preserve and extend the neighborhood's tree canopy.

Bitter Lake:

BL-P13 Encourage the preservation of existing and creation of new open space throughout the planning area. Seek additional opportunities to plant trees throughout the community.

BL-P18 Explore mechanisms to prevent lot clearing and provide for creative site designs that encourage the retention of mature trees.

BL-P27 Seek to create a greener and healthier environment by protecting existing trees, as appropriate, and planting new trees.

Crown Hill/Ballard:

CH/B-P15 Create opportunities for people to experience the natural environment through the preservation of publicly-owned forested areas, encouraging community gardening (P-patches), and tree planting on private property and in the public right-of-way, and creating access to views and waterways.

Delridge:

D-P2 Seek to protect from development: natural open space areas, wetlands, drainage corridors, and woodlands that contain prime wildlife habitat along the Longfellow Creek, Puget Creek, and Duwamish River drainage corridors and valley hillsides.

Downtown (International District):

ID-P13 Build on partnerships which can work together to provide additional pedestrian amenities such as pedestrian street lighting, street trees, street furniture and informational kiosks that enhance the pedestrian environment.

Green Lake:

GL-P31 Enhance the health and quality of vehicle and pedestrian corridors by adding trees and other vegetation.

Greenwood/Phinney Ridge:

G/PR-G3 A neighborhood with streets that are green, tree-lined, pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and contribute to an integrated open space system.

G/PR-P21 Encourage new development, both public and private, to provide trees and greenery, pedestrian amenities, and improved streetscapes as part of facility design.

G/PR-P33 Strive to implement a street tree program with priority on the most visible locations such as along arterials and in commercial areas.

MLK @ Holly:

MLK-P20 Work with community to identify measures for residential streets, such as traffic circles, on-street parking, and street trees to mitigate impacts from nearby arterials.

Morgan Junction:

MJ-P9 Seek opportunities to re-vegetate parks and open spaces with native plants and reintroduce native plant species to appropriate habitats.

Queen Anne:

QA-P1 Seek to create and maintain attractive pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and enhance Queen Anne's community character with open space, street trees, and other vegetation.

Roosevelt:

R-EP1 Protect and enhance the urban forest on public and private property to reduce storm runoff, absorb air pollutants, reduce noise, stabilize soil and provide habitat.

R-EP4 Strive to protect and retain exceptional trees and groups of trees that enhance Roosevelt's historical, cultural, environmental and aesthetic character.

South Lake Union:

SLU-P46 Seek to increase tree coverage, reintroduce native plant species into the neighborhood and provide for additional wildlife habitat appropriate to the urban environment.

West Seattle Junction:

WSJ-G7 A neighborhood with a cohesive identity and aesthetics, which respects the urban forest and native habitat.

WSJ-P20 Enhance the urban forest within existing parks and open space areas.

WSJ-P21 Support the maintenance and restoration of native habitat and species in existing parks, open spaces, and street right-of-ways.

Cultural Resources Element:

CR6 Capitalize on opportunities for promoting community identity through the design of street space, preserving or encouraging, for example:

...

- details that can reinforce community identity and authenticity such as light standards, street name markers, original granite curbing and cobblestone paving or types of street trees; or

...

Environment Element:

E4 Strive to protect and retain certain trees and groups of trees that enhance Seattle's historical, cultural, environmental and aesthetic character.

E5 Maintain the health of natural habitats on private property through a combination of education, incentives and development standards that recognize and promote sound practices by private land owners.

E6 Create partnerships with organizations in the private sector and engage the community to protect and enhance Seattle's urban ecosystems and habitat.

E8.1 Where there would be measurable benefits to people or wildlife, place priority on solving drainage problems, such as flooding and frequent reliance on the combined sewer overflow system, with natural drainage system approaches and by restoring watershed elements such as forest, wetlands, and natural channels.

E9 Work to achieve a sustainable urban forest that contains a diverse mix of tree species and ages in order to use the forest's abilities to reduce storm water runoff and pollution, absorb air pollutants, provide wildlife habitat, absorb carbon dioxide, provide shade, stabilize soil, and increase property values.

E9.5 Strive to achieve no net loss of tree canopy coverage starting in 2008, and strive to increase tree canopy coverage by 1 percent per year up to a total of 40

percent, to reduce storm runoff, absorb air pollutants, reduce noise, stabilize soil, provide habitat, and mitigate the heat island effect of developed areas.

E10.1 Update the 2000 tree canopy inventory in the Urban Forest Management Plan every 10 years to measure progress toward the goal of increased canopy coverage.