

City of Seattle

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

Date: January 18, 2008

Amendment Title: Linking Downtown and Capitol Hill

Applicant: Department of Planning and Development

Contact: Tom Hauger

Email: tom.hauger@seattle.gov

General Area that would be affected by proposed amendment: eastern edge of Downtown Urban Center and western edge of Capitol Hill/First Hill Urban Center

- 1) Add a new policy to the Downtown portion of the Neighborhood Planning Element, with language such as: "Look for opportunities to re-establish connections between Downtown and Capitol Hill and First Hill by constructing lids over I-5 that can also provide opportunities for development or open space."
- 2) This issue is not directly addressed in the Comp Plan, although the Plan does contain numerous policies that promote an enhanced pedestrian environment. A new policy encouraging possible additional pedestrian routes and development and green space that will make those routes attractive brings more detail and clarity to the existing policy framework.
- 3) With the proposed change, the City would articulate a long-term direction that could guide incremental City actions in more specific ways than some of the broader language now found in the plan. Instead of amending the Comp Plan, the City could choose to fund a project for a specific new connection across I-5. However, without an identified funding source, such a project is unlikely in the near term. Adding a policy to the Comp Plan will help ensure that the idea of providing the pedestrian connection can be given attention and priority during future project planning and budgeting.
- 4) The text change is not expected to have an immediate tangible effect. However, it would lay the foundation for new ways that pedestrians could travel between Capitol Hill and Downtown, while providing new places to accommodate development and open space and reducing the effects of traffic noise on residents in the area.
- 5) As mentioned above, a recurring theme in the Plan's citywide policies are the enhancement of the pedestrian environment and increasing non-motorized forms of travel. In addition, the Downtown neighborhood plan

calls for “establishing a high quality pedestrian-oriented street environment,” and the Pike/Pine neighborhood plan calls for the City to “promote the improvement of primary sidewalk systems and pedestrian connections.” The proposed amendment describes a way to link the pedestrian environments in these two neighborhoods.

- 6) To date, there have been no public meetings on this proposal.