



City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**SEPA Threshold Determination
for revisions to Design Review development standard departures, Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.41.012; Commercial Code, SMC 23.47A; and Quantity and Design Standards for Access, Off-Street Parking, and Solid Waste Storage, SMC 23.54.**

- Project Sponsor:** City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
- Location of Proposal:** The proposed amendments would affect certain properties in Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones.
- Scope of Proposal:** This is a non-project legislative zoning proposal to consider adding Pedestrian zone designations in neighborhood business districts that meet the Pedestrian zone criteria (SMC 23.34.086) throughout the city of Seattle. In addition to the legislative zoning proposal, some modifications and additions to the standards that apply in Pedestrian zones are proposed.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Environmental Conditions - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

- SEPA DETERMINATION:** Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
- DNS with conditions
- DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction

BACKGROUND

Proposal Description

This is a non-project legislative zoning proposal to consider adding Pedestrian zone designations in neighborhood business districts that meet the Pedestrian zone criteria (SMC 23.34.086) throughout the city of Seattle.

Fifty-seven neighborhood business districts that encompass approximately 1900 parcels around the city are being considered for a Pedestrian zone designation. The table below outlines the total land area in the city that would be within a Pedestrian zone if the designation is applied to all 57 neighborhood-commercial areas under review:

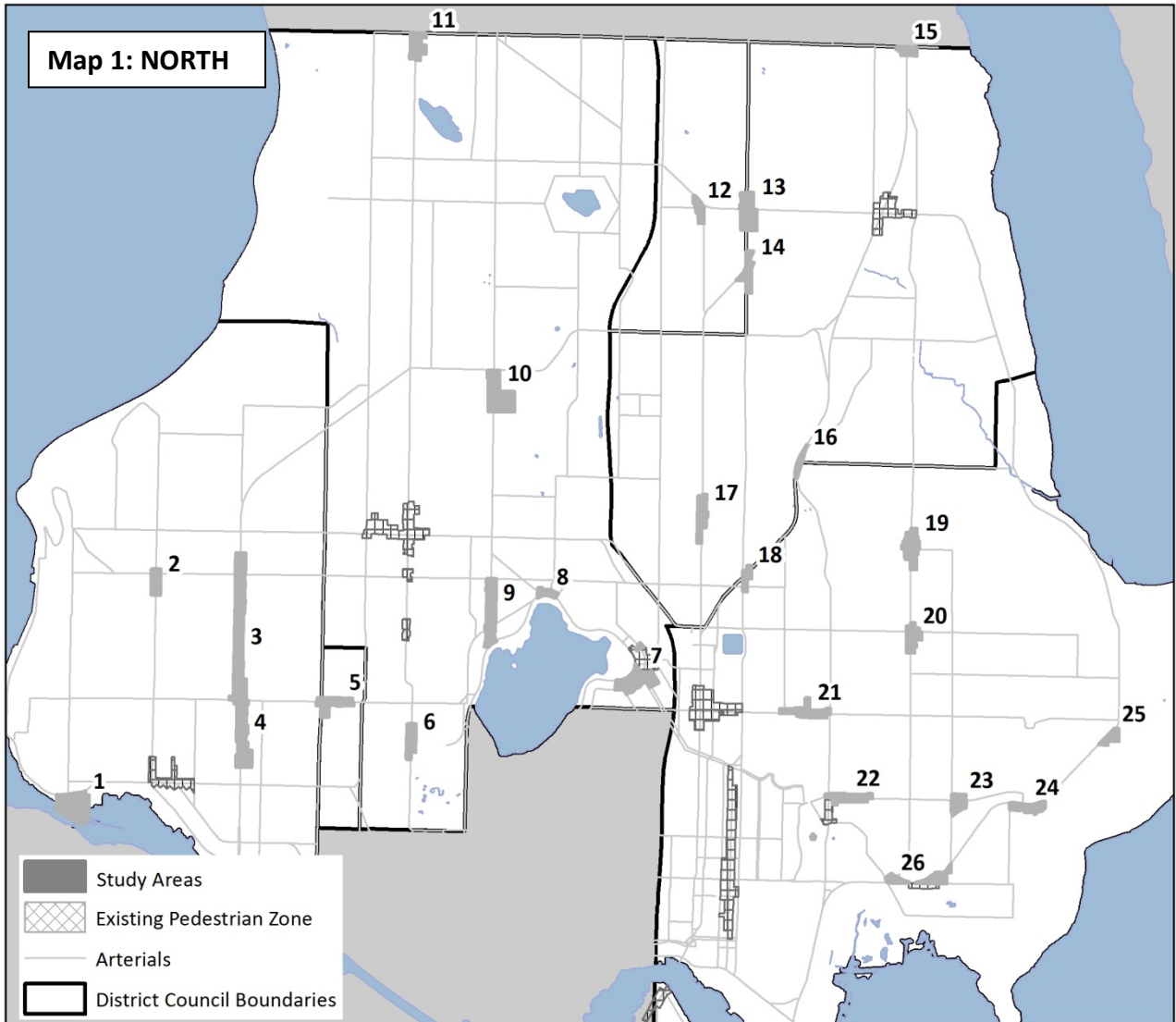
Table 1: Land Area & Pedestrian Zones

	Acres	% of City	% of NC Zones
Areas under review	601	1.13%	23.81%
Existing P Zone	612	1.15%	24.24%
NC Zones	2,524	4.75%	
City	53,113		

In addition to the legislative zoning proposal, some modifications and additions to the standards that apply in Pedestrian zones are analyzed. The Land Use Code amendments analyzed include the following potential actions to SMC 23.41.012, 23.47A.005, 23.47A.008, 23.47A.028, 23.54.015, 23.54.016, 23.54.020:

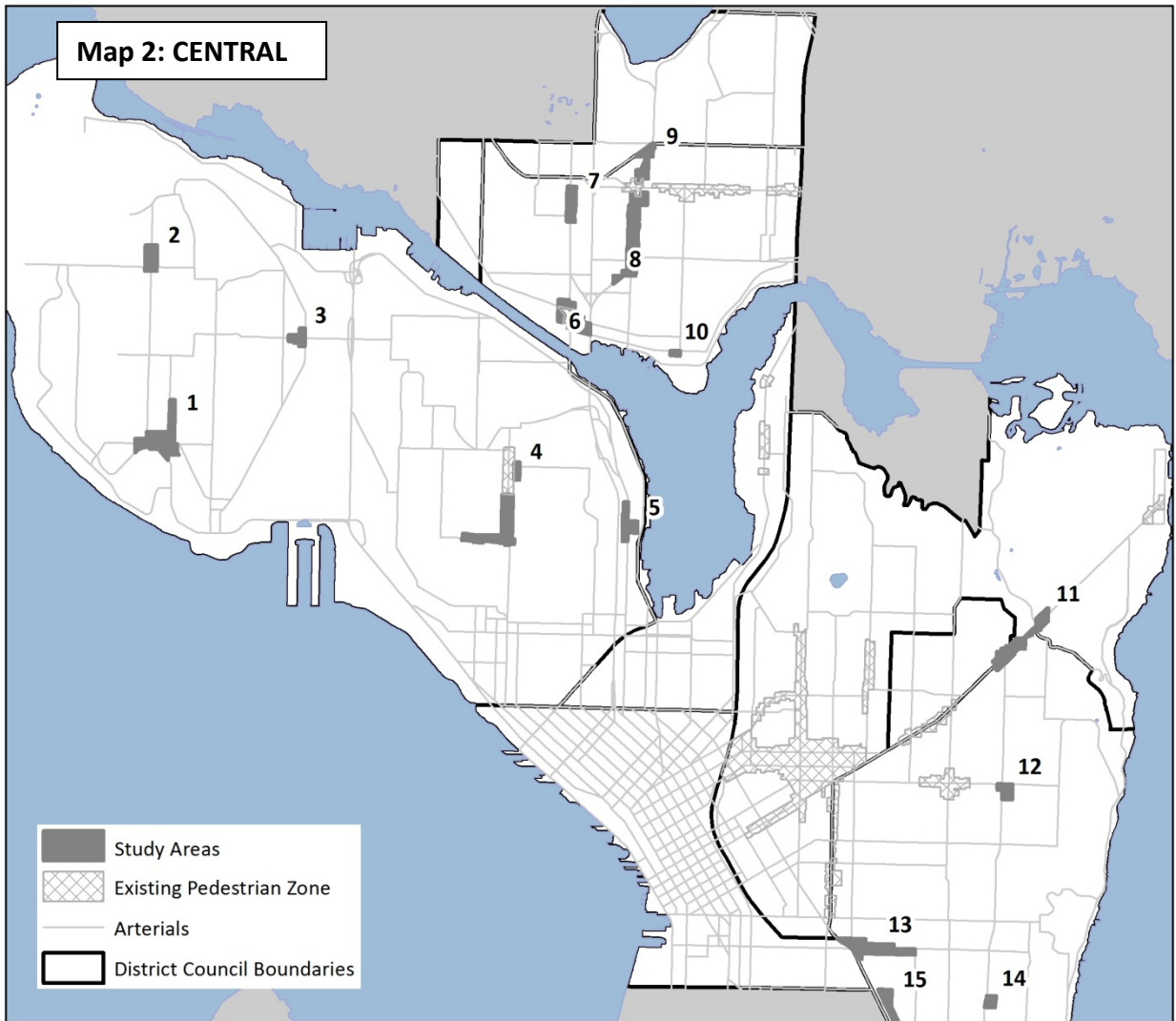
- limit the Design Review departures available in Pedestrian zones for ceiling height, transparency requirements and the availability of departures that would allow residential uses to exceed 20 percent of the street-level (SMC 23.41.012);
- allow a departure to Minimum Floor Area Ratio requirements(SMC 23.41.012);
- expand the list of allowed active street-level uses (SMC 23.47A.005);
- clarify the transparency requirements to specify that transparent areas must allow views into and out of the structure at eye level and that the width of a driveway at street level is not included when calculating the transparency requirement (SMC 23.47A.005);
- add a standard to require overhead weather protection along 60-100% of the building façade for new development along a Principal Pedestrian Street (SMC 23.47A.005);
- eliminate waivers to minimum parking standards specific to Pedestrian Zones and remove or modify any references to Pedestrian Zone parking waivers (SMC , 23.41.012, 23.54.015, 23.54.016 and 23.54.020);
- add standards for live-work units to clearly delineate work space and live space and to help ensure that the work portion of the unit contributes to a vibrant commercial street-front (SMC 23.47A.008);
- limiting businesses with drive-in lanes on the periphery of Pedestrian Zones (23.47A.028);
- add sidewalk width and design standards specific to areas in a Pedestrian Zone (23.53.006);

Maps 1-3 below identify the study areas considered for a pedestrian zone under this project and the location of existing areas with a Pedestrian Zone designation that will be subject to the proposed changes to development standards.

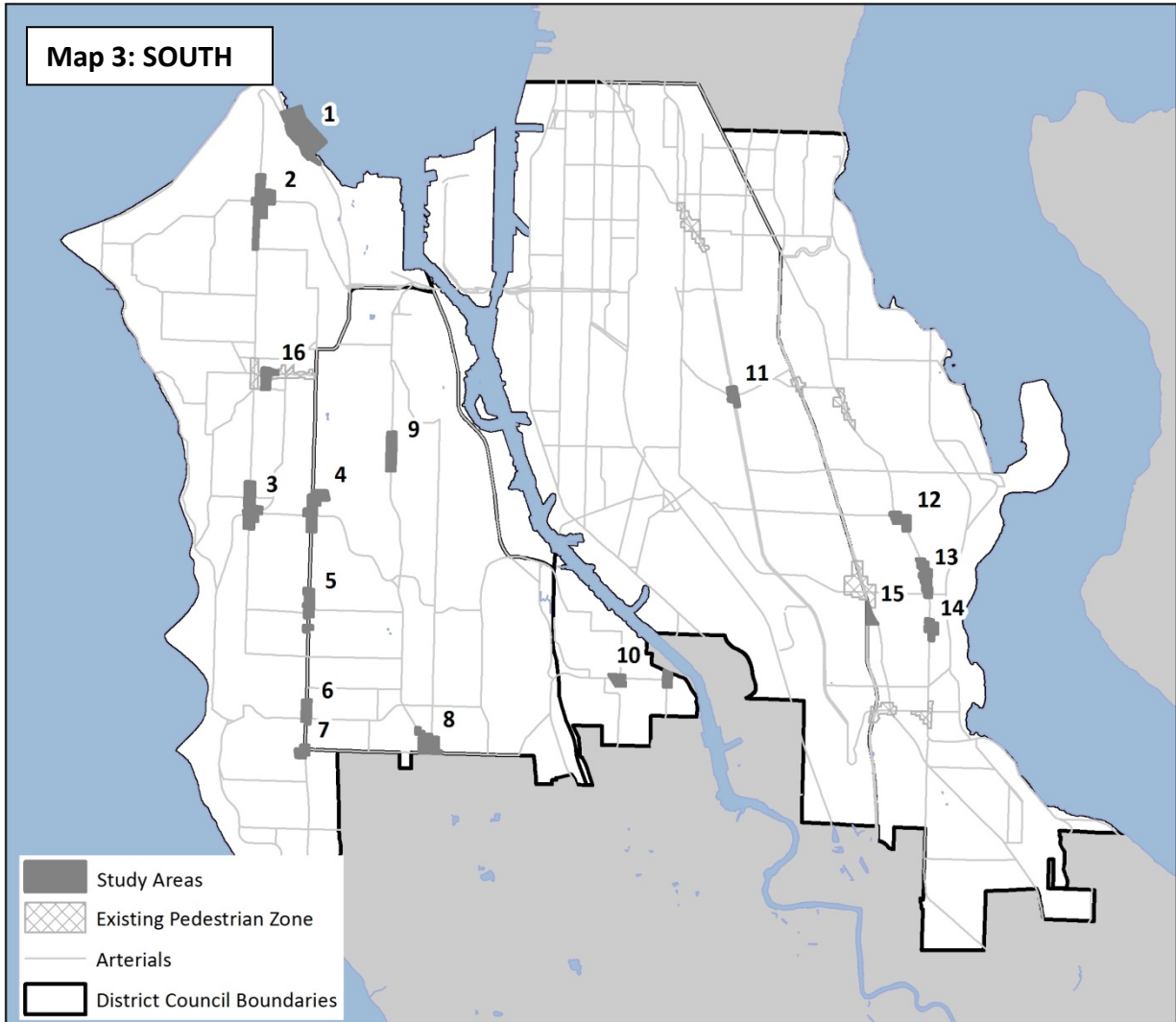


	Study Area
1	Ballard Locks
2	Loyal Heights
3	15th Ave NW - S of NW 83rd St
4	15th Ave NW - N of NW 57th St
5	NW 65th St - W of 4th Ave NW
6	Phinney Ridge - north of N 58th St
7	Green Lake
8	North Green Lake
9	Aurora Ave N south of N 80th St
10	Aurora-Licton Springs
11	Broadview
12	Roosevelt Way NE at NE 125th St
13	15th Ave NE at NE 125th St

	Study Area
14	Pinehurst Way
15	Lake City Way at NE 145th St
16	Lake City Way at NE 96th St
17	Maple Leaf (Roosevelt Way)
18	Lake City Way at NE 80th St
19	Wedgwood - North
20	Wedgwood - South
21	Ravenna (NE 65th St)
22	25th Ave NE at NE 55th St
23	40th Ave NE at NE 55th St
24	Sand Point Way NE at 50th Ave NE
25	Sand Point Way NE at NE 63rd St
26	Sand Point Way NE at 36th Ave NE



	Study Area		Study Area
1	Magnolia	9	Stone Way N - S of N 45th Street
2	34th Ave W at W Emerson St	10	South Wallingford at N 34th St
3	21st Ave W and W Dravus St	11	E Madison St
4	Upper Queen Anne	12	Martin Luther King Jr Way at E Union St
5	Dexter Ave N at Garfield St	13	S Jackson St - east of Rainier Ave s
6	Fremont	14	M L K Jr Way S at S Dearborn St
7	Fremont Ave N - south of N 45th St	15	Hiawatha Place S at S Dearborn St
8	Stone Way N - S of N 50th Street		



Study Area		Study Area	
1	Harbor Ave SW - N of Fairmount Ave SW	9	Delridge Way SW (SW Brandon & SW Juneau St)
2	Admiral	10	South Park
3	Morgan Junction	11	Beacon Ave S at S Columbian Way
4	35th Ave SW at SW Morgan St	12	Rainier Ave S)S Holden St & S Kenyon St)
5	35th Ave SW at SW Holden St	13	Rainier Ave S at S Graham St
6	35th Ave SW at SW Barton St	14	Rainier Ave S at S Othello St
7	35th Ave SW and SW Roxbury St	15	M L K Jr Way S at S Holden St
8	Westwood Park (Delridge Way SW at SW Roxbury St)	16	West Seattle Triangle

Public Comment

Proposed changes to the Land Use Code require City Council approval; opportunity for public comment will occur during future Council hearings. DPD has considered public comment in several forums and discussions on the topic to date, including: attending 12 district council meetings, over 20 standing community council and business district meetings; met one-on-one with community members; conducted an online survey (over 900 responses); shared information through the project website, social media and project list serve; and briefed the City Neighborhood Council, Seattle Planning Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Board and Urban Forestry Commission.

ANALYSIS - OVERVIEW

The following describes the analysis conducted to determine if the proposal is likely to result in *probable significant adverse environmental impacts*. This threshold determination is based on:

- the copy of the of the proposed text amendment, as well as the description above;
- the information contained in the *SEPA checklist* (dated July 17, 2014);
- an analysis of the changes prepared by City staff; and
- the experience of DPD analysts in reviewing similar documents and actions.

ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Short Term Impacts

Adoption of the possible amendments would result in no immediate adverse short-term impacts because the adoption would be a non-project action. The proposed changes may augment the mix of uses in some projects but is not likely to increase the number of projects that would be built in the affected zones. The discussion below generally evaluates the potential long-term impacts that might result from differences in future development patterns due to the proposed amendments.

Long Term Impacts

A. Natural Environment

Earth, Air, Water, Plants/Animals/Fisheries, Energy, Natural Resources, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Noise, Releases of Toxic or Hazardous Materials.

The proposed changes would result in no direct impacts and are unlikely to result in significant indirect or cumulative adverse impacts related to earth, air, water, plants/animals, fisheries, energy, natural resources, sensitive areas, noise, or releases of toxic/hazardous substances. At the non-project stage, it is not possible to meaningfully assess the potential impacts on the natural environment from these modifications, in the absence of a known proposed development project in one of the 57 areas considered for a Pedestrian zone designation or in areas already designated as a Pedestrian zone. Development of specific projects on individual sites is subject to the City's existing regulations, such as the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Ordinance, the Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance, and Noise Ordinance, and will be subject to

environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review). Mitigation, if any is needed, would be identified by such future project-specific reviews including SEPA review.

As Seattle's commercial centers are generally urban areas, most of the area affected by the proposed action is dominated with impervious surfaces (paving, rooftops, etc) with little vegetation (except for street trees and required landscaping on residential and mixed use properties) and few animals except common birds, insects and urban mammals. Each neighborhood that will be affected by these code revisions has a network of sewer/stormdrain utility systems to handle much of its surface stormwater runoff. Despite daily traffic congestion, air pollutant levels rarely if ever exceed significant levels, due to the progressively improving emissions-reduction performance of the region's automobiles.

Within the context of the affected areas, there is minimal potential for additional future development that may result from the proposed changes that would generate significant adverse natural environmental impacts. By following the established rules that require proper design of sewers/stormdrains, construction practices that minimize grading, drainage and dust impacts, and other applicable City regulations, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts will be limited. Future project-related SEPA review would also afford the opportunity to identify and mitigate any site-specific impacts as anticipated in SMC 25.05.330.

Energy-intensive uses are those that use computers and other technical equipment requiring large amounts of electrically-powered heating, air conditioning and ventilation. In comparison, residential energy demands are relatively low. There is minimal likelihood that additional energy use from future development (related to this proposal) would cause significant adverse impacts on energy systems.

B. Built Environment

Land and Shoreline Use, Height/Bulk/Scale, Housing and Historic Preservation.

Land Uses

The proposed changes would continue to allow and encourage land uses compatible with the existing Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans. The proposal would represent a moderate change in the types of land uses allowed at street-level and add some new development standards. The proposal is intended to implement Comprehensive Plan land use goals and policies for a broad range of pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development. On balance, the indirect, long-term cumulative impacts on land uses would be positive in that the proposed land use code changes further the preferred land use pattern as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation plans, Neighborhood Plans and various policies and goals of the City of Seattle. The proposed regulation would not directly impact the city's shorelines as pedestrian zones are not located within these areas.

Height/Bulk/Scale

The areas considered for a Pedestrian zone are in areas already zoned Neighborhood Commercial and do not impact the development capacity of the area (i.e. does not increase or decrease the maximum height or density for new development). The Pedestrian zone designation would in some cases help implement neighborhood plans and would help provide a geographically-oriented

preferred focus for street-level commercial activity at key locations in the neighborhood business districts, through additional regulations that would help shape future development. The city's Design Review guidelines also provide for examination of height, bulk and scale issues and the possibility of mitigating potential impacts.

Housing

Future buildings would not be larger than the maximum of what is anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning code. The proposed changes would not likely alter the feasibility or design of housing. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of this legislation.

Historic Preservation.

It is not anticipated that the expansion of the Pedestrian zones would impact the city of Seattle's historic buildings. These buildings and district would remain protected by city ordinance and any proposed revisions would be evaluated by the Department of Neighborhood's Historic Preservation Program.

Noise, Shadows on Open Spaces, Light & Glare, Environmental Health, Public View Protection

Future buildings would not be larger than the maximum of what is anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning code. SEPA regulations would continue to allow analysis and potential mitigation of projects that generate noise, shadow, light and glare, and environmental health issues. SEPA regulations would continue to allow for the review and mitigation of significant intrusions into public views.

Transportation, Parking, Public Services and Utilities.

Transportation and Parking

The proposed changes would not likely result in direct impacts to the city's transportation network. Parking demand generated by commercial uses in a Pedestrian zone would most likely be less than demand from more automobile-oriented parts of the city, as more people are assumed to make the choice to walk, bike, or use transit to visit such uses. Over time, denser and clustered business districts distributed through the city would be more likely to facilitate increased incidence of pedestrian travel and transit-based travel for daily activities, which could limit the potential for impacts on transportation with growth over the long term.

Further, the proposal eliminates parking waivers specific to Pedestrian zones. Since parking waivers specific to Pedestrian zones were first adopted, the city has taken steps to implement a citywide approach to minimum parking requirements that implement Comprehensive Plan goals and the urban village strategy. Further, this regulation is the first time that the Pedestrian zone will be used extensively outside of urban centers and villages and outside areas with existing or planned frequent transit service where there may be a greater need for parking. By eliminating parking waivers specific to Pedestrian zones, this proposal will not increase or decrease parking requirements in the areas considered for a Pedestrian designation. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Public Services and Utilities

Because the changes would not increase the amount of development that is permitted in commercial zones, no potentially significant adverse impacts are anticipated as a consequence of the proposed changes. Future development would not be larger than the maximums anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations. Any additional future development may contribute to overall cumulative increases in demand for public services and utilities. However, the proposed changes are not expected to generate significant adverse impacts as a result of additional amounts or locations of potential future growth.

DECISION --SEPA

- Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).
- Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS--SEPA

None

Signature: On File Date: _____
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Land Use Services