



result, the proposal will give greater emphasis on design, to pedestrian amenities and neighborhood protections in exchange for some added development potential.

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 6, 2012 the City Council gave staff direction to pursue these code amendments to support Council Goal 1: Strengthen Shoreline's economic base-

1. Improve and streamline the City's development regulations for commercial zones

Over the last decade the City has had iterations of commercial design standards that staff has administered and developers have navigated. These include the 2000 Commercial/ Mixed Use, NCBD, PA2, and MUZ design standards. In July 2011 the Council unanimously adopted the Town Center Development Code. The three year review and adoption process for the subarea plan involved substantial city-wide participation and support. This resulted in improved and coordinated design standards to make commercial areas within the Town Center subarea more pedestrian-friendly and viable as places to shop and live. In November 2011, the Council, with the adoption of the Southeast Neighborhood Legislative Rezone, stated the need for improved and consolidated commercial design standards for applicable zoning designations throughout the City.

The Town Center Development Code includes the most recent commercial design and development standards for the City. Rather than having each area with slightly different or redundant standards Council has recommended consolidating and streamlining the code for all commercial zones using the core design standards of Town Center. In addition, the City has redundant commercial zoning designations with identical land use and dimensional standards. These zones can be consolidated without changing the existing development potential or regulations.

### **Public Outreach Meetings – 2012**

- June 20<sup>th</sup>: Open house - notified by mail to all commercial zoned properties and the surrounding 500 feet of residential properties in addition to Currents and the City webpage.
- June 21<sup>st</sup>: SE Shoreline - regarding commercial development in their subarea plan.
- June 27<sup>th</sup>: Chamber Government Affairs Committee - representing Shoreline business interests.
- September 5<sup>th</sup>: Council of Neighborhoods – representing all neighborhood associations.
- October 29<sup>th</sup>: Commercial Developer focus group – sampling of area developers.
- Group email list updates – people participating in the above meetings.
- To date, no comment letters have been received

## Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission completed recommendations for the Comprehensive plan Land Use Chapter on October 18th. In the plan policies LU-9, 10, and 11 and the Land Use map MU-1 and MU-2 designations were amended to support the code amendments to consolidate redundant zoning and commercial design standards.

### Mixed Use and Commercial Land Use

- LU9: Through a commercial zoning consolidation process, create a new zone to replace the Mixed-Use Zone and the Industrial zone, combine redundant commercial standards, and base transition and design standards on Town Center Subarea Plan, using “form-based” rather than maximum densities.
- LU10: The Mixed Use 1 (MU1) designation encourages the development of walkable places with architectural interest that integrate a wide variety of retail, office, and service uses, along with form-based maximum density residential uses. Transition to adjacent single-family neighborhoods may be accomplished through appropriate design solutions. Limited manufacturing uses may be permitted under certain conditions.
- LU11: The Mixed Use 2 (MU2) designation is similar to the MU1 designation, except it is not intended to allow more intense uses, such as manufacturing and other uses that generate light, glare, noise or odor that may be incompatible with existing and proposed land uses. The Mixed Use 2 (MU2) designation applies to commercial areas not on the Aurora Avenue or Ballinger Way corridors, such as Ridgecrest, Briarcrest, Richmond Beach, and North City. This designation may provide retail, office, and service uses, and greater residential densities than are allowed in low density residential designations, and promotes pedestrian connections, transit, and amenities.

## SEPA

The City issued a Determination of Non-significance for the comprehensive plan and specifically this proposal to consolidate commercial zoning categories and design standards on October 3, 2012 (Attachment C). The comment/appeal period ended October 17, 2012.

## Required Process

This proposal to amend the Development Code and Zoning Map is a legislative action.

### Code Amendment Criteria – 20.30.350 (Type L – Legislative action)

A. Purpose. An amendment to the Development Code (and where applicable amendment of the zoning map) is a mechanism by which the City may bring its land use and development regulations into conformity with the Comprehensive Plan or respond to changing conditions or needs of the City.

B. Decision Criteria. The City Council may approve or approve with modifications a proposal for the text of the Land Use Code if:

1. The amendment is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan; and
2. The amendment will not adversely affect the public health, safety or general welfare; and
3. The amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Shoreline.

## **PRIMARY CHANGES**

Housing Density – In commercial zones other than TC and NCBD density is determined by units per acre. Frequently, the maximum density allowed cannot be reached because of it conflicts with the height limitations. Even with incentives (below), development has not been able to achieve greater height. In TC and NCBD density is determined by the building bulk limitations only. *This amendment proposes to extend the density limitation by building bulk as found in TC and NCBD to all commercial zones. Staff finds that the existing layers of requirements are redundant and barriers to redevelopment. The SEPA review has analyzed the potential increase of 2,000 housing units mostly in the Aurora corridor.*

Development Incentives – Typically incentives are used to promote features or improvements that may be beyond the development market to promote affordable housing, green building, and amenities in exchange for greater development potential. The current code has these incentives under MUZ and PA2 zones. The use of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) incentive to gain greater building height also has not been used, does not increase density potential, and conflicts with height standards. None of these incentives have been used since the City adopted its own Development Code in 2000. *The amendment will propose to allow full development potential without incentives because they are not used or do not coincide with the current development market. The strongest incentive at this point is the shedding of unnecessary requirements.*

Parking – TC, PA2, NCBD, and the remainder of the City have their own parking standards. TC parking requirements were reduced from 1.2 to 1.5 spaces to .075 spaces per one-bedroom unit and from 1 space for 300 square feet of commercial to 400 square feet for retail and 500 square feet for office. *The amendment will propose using the reduced standard of TC for all commercial zones.*

Thresholds for Site Improvements and Frontage – The Development Code has articulated thresholds for when a project proposes to make partial improvements, such as an addition or remodel, and when full site improvement or frontage improvement are triggered. It is based on a threshold of the construction value of the project compared to the assessed value of the property. The Development Code has different thresholds for TC, NCBD, commercial development, multifamily development, and frontage improvements. A threshold has three triggers to full site improvements for.

1. All new development, which is not defined and redundant of the third threshold;
2. 20% addition of a 4,000 square foot building, which means any addition over 800 square feet without regard to the size of the property; and
3. 50% of assessed value of property and structure or with some other thresholds assessed by structure only.

*The amendment will propose one threshold for all development based on property and structure values, development that involves more than one property, and a set time period where different, smaller construction permits can add up to a full site improvement threshold.*

Administrative Design Review (ADR) – Currently the ADR process pertains to all development in MUZ, TC, PA2, and similarly in NCBD under Planned Action Approval. The criteria are that the development has to show how it meets the design standards or if they request a departure from those standards how the departure still meets the intent of the applicable code section. Unchanged, departures cannot be requested for dimensional and Transition Area requirements. *This amendment proposes that all commercial zones require an ADR only if they request a departure from the design standards.*

Exemption for Plazas and Front Parking – Currently, there are no exemptions for smaller parcels from front of building parking and plaza development. This threshold is needed so that small lots can have all of their other site requirements fit on the property. *This amendment will propose an exemption so that smaller lots can have more flexible parking lot standards and not be required to add a plaza space.*

Transition Areas to Single Family - Transition Areas are added requirements to step down the bulk of development, provide landscape buffers, and control vehicle access and traffic impacts toward single family zoned neighborhoods. The Development Code currently has 4 different standards in 4 different code sections as they relate to CB and I, NCBD, MUZ, and TC. *The amendment will propose to raise all the standards for all commercial zones to the TC standards when they abut or across the street from R-4, R-6, and add R-8 zones.*

Arterial Business – Arterial Business is located along Aurora Avenue north and south of TC. The City needs some land available for big box development along arterials that do not emphasize pedestrian amenities other than sidewalks. *This amendment proposes that parking be allowed between street frontage and buildings and that building articulation and design features not be required above the first floor level in Arterial Business zones.*

## **SECONDARY CHANGES**

Land Use Charts – Current land use charts do not include TC and PA2. Also, there have been problematic items on the chart that staff will propose to be improved. *The amendments will move the land use charts from TC and PA2 to the main land use chart with the other zones and suggest changes to a small variety of land uses.*

Dimensional Charts – There are dimensional charts each for residential zones (R-4 to R-48), residential development in commercial zones, and commercial development in commercial zones, TC, PA2, and NCBD. *The amendment will propose that only 2 charts are needed – one for residential zones and one for commercial zones.*

Neighborhood Business Height Increase – The Development Code allows for a height increase from 35 feet to 50 feet if 25% of the building floor area has residential units. *The amendments will propose 50 feet in height without incentive for all development in NB zones because commercial areas can have residential development and that the impacts of upper floors in residential or commercial or negligible.*

Special Overlay Districts – This zoning category in which the Development Code or zoning map have designated actual districts. *This amendment proposes to remove this category.*

SEPA – TC and NCBD are the only two districts with Planned Action Approvals, which have SEPA determinations for the development potential of each district. That means they are exempt from project related SEPA review. Amendments to the general SEPA exemptions will be separate and coming to the Commission for consideration. *The amendment will have a separate section to explain Planned Areas Approvals and maps that demarcate the two districts.*

## **TIMING AND SCHEDULE**

- Notice of amendments was sent to the Department of Commerce - October 2, 2012.
- SEPA adoption notice sent to Department of Ecology - September 27, 2012.
- The City issued a SEPA Determination of Non-significance - October 3, 2012.
- Notice for the upcoming December 20<sup>th</sup> public hearing – October 31, 2012 (Attachment D).

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Commission's next meeting is December 6 for study and discussion of the proposed amendment language. On December 20 the public hearing will be held with possible Commission recommendations. No other additional meetings are scheduled at this time.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Existing Zoning Map  
Attachment B – Proposed Zoning Map  
Attachment C - SEPA Determination  
Attachment D - Notice of SEPA Determination, Amendments, and Public Hearing