



Legislative Department
Seattle City Council
Memorandum

Date: February 18, 2011
To: Councilmembers Sally J. Clark, Tim Burgess, and Sally Bagshaw
Committee on the Built Environment (COBE)
From: Martha Lester and Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff
Subject: February 23, 2011, COBE Meeting: South Downtown Zoning Proposal

Council Bill (C.B.) 117073 would amend the Land Use Code to revise zoning regulations in South Downtown. Councilmembers have discussed possible amendments at several meetings of the Committee on the Built Environment (COBE).

Part A of this memo lists one specific amendment that is ready for COBE vote related to parking east of I-5.

Part B of this memo presents two options for increasing maximum heights allowed in Pioneer Square. If Councilmembers give us direction at the February 23 COBE meeting, we will then prepare specific code amendment language for the preferred option for a vote at a future COBE meeting.

Part C of this memo presents additional information about the parameters that would govern a mid-block corridor that is part of a project taking advantage of incentive zoning in the area east of I-5 and south of S. King Street.

A. Parking East of I-5 – Amendment to C.B. 117073 for COBE Vote on February 23

Allow a maximum of 2 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of non-residential floor area for (a) general sales and service uses, and (b) eating and drinking establishments, in the area east of I-5. (This would retain the maximum of 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of floor area for other non-residential uses, including office. Special exception and administrative conditional use processes under which a developer could apply to provide additional parking would continue to be available.)

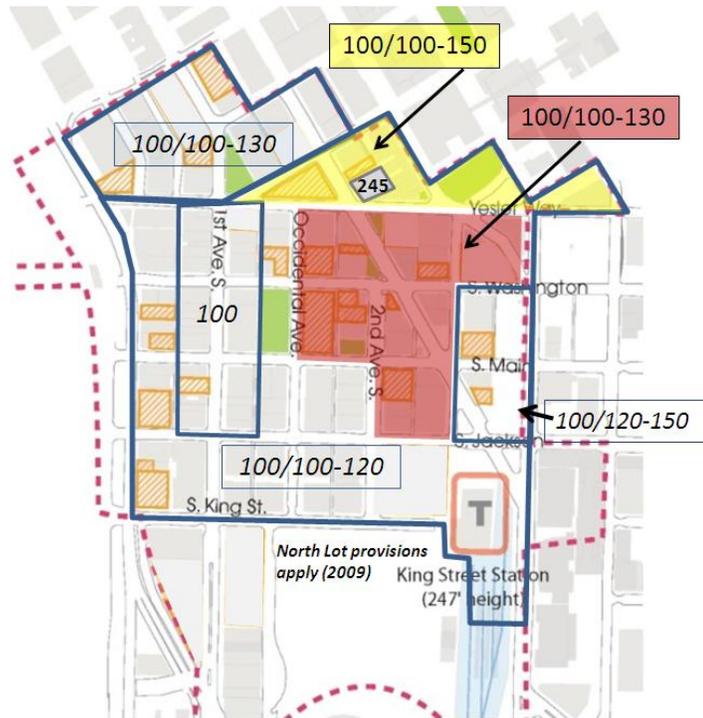
Require that additional accessory parking of 20 or more spaces, even if within the maximum set by code, be in a structure; and require that any accessory parking above the maximum, permitted by special exception, be in a structure.

Specific amendment language is on pages 7 to 9.

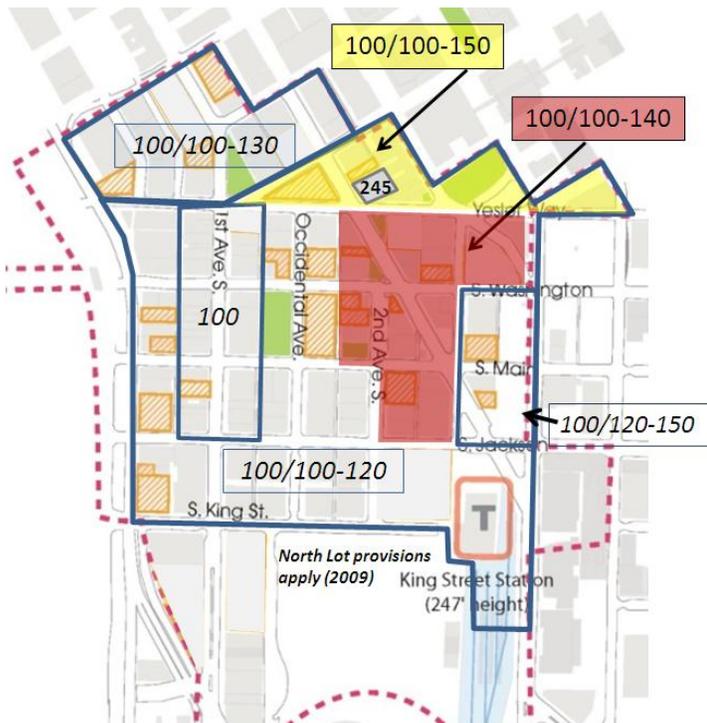
COBE vote:

B. Pioneer Square Height Limits

Option 1 (Councilmember Clark):



Option 2 (Councilmember Bagshaw):



C. Mid-Block Corridor

Background: As amended by the Committee, the proposed South Downtown zoning east of I-5 and south of King Street would allow development to exceed 85 feet in height, up to a maximum of 150 feet, if the developer participates in the incentive zoning program and provides a mid-block corridor. On the long blocks in this area, a mid-block corridor can provide a more convenient pedestrian route through the neighborhood as well as additional open space.

At the Committee meeting on January 12, you requested that staff review the standards for mid-block corridors, and recommend changes to improve corridor usability and safety. On January 26, you provided further direction based on examples of similar corridors in recent Seattle developments.

In the legislation proposed by DPD, the detailed standards for mid-block corridors are proposed to be located in SMC Section 23.58A.016. However, the standards for bonusable open space amenities in other parts of downtown are located in a separate document, the Downtown Amenity Standards. This document includes the following general standards that apply to all amenity features, as well as specific requirements for each one:

- Installation Timeframes
- Public Access and Hours of Operation
- Maintenance [of amenity features over time]
- Combination of Features
- Art in Bonused Public Spaces
- Use of Bonused Public Spaces
- Landscaping and Furnishings
- Safety
- Identification
- Information in Permit Application and Recording Conditions

We recommend that the standards for the four open space amenities proposed for South Downtown (mid-block corridors, green street setbacks, neighborhood open spaces, and residential hillside terraces) be incorporated in the Downtown Amenity Standards. The general standards listed above would then apply to the South Downtown amenity features, and would not have to be repeated in the Code. The general standards would address several of the concerns raised by the Committee, such as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and corridor lighting. The requirement that the corridor be open 16 hours per day, which was approved by the Committee at the January 26th meeting, would be moved to the Downtown Amenity Standards.

In addition to moving the standards out of the Land Use Code, we recommend changing the specific provisions for mid-block corridors to address the Committee's interest in making the corridors as welcoming and pedestrian-friendly as possible. For example, in order to avoid the perception that the corridor is not open to the public, as implied by the gate to Fountain Court walkway (see photograph below), we are proposing specific standards for gate width.



We are also recommending changes to the standards for how much of the corridor can be covered. The standards would continue to allow 35 percent coverage of the main corridor, as proposed by DPD. This would permit coverage slightly less than what was provided at the Alley 24 project (photograph below). However, the additional 1,500 square feet of open space that is required to abut the corridor would have to be open to the sky, except for retail kiosks or overhead weather protection that make the space more comfortable and usable. We also recommend that landscaping be required for the open space component of the corridor.



Proposed Standards: The following specific standards for mid-block corridors would be moved from the Land Use Code to the Downtown Amenity Standards. Following the format of the Downtown Amenity Standards document, they are divided into “Eligibility Conditions,” which

represent basic requirements that must be met for a floor area bonus to be granted, and “Guidelines,” which are more flexible statements about the characteristics desired for each amenity feature. The DPD Director has the authority to grant departures from the Eligibility Conditions so that a project can better respond to the specific site conditions.

Except for the provision about gate width, the Eligibility Conditions listed below are those proposed by DPD. Almost all of the Guidelines are new. After these specific provisions, we have highlighted for reference some of the general standards in the Downtown Amenity Standards that the mid-block corridor would also have to meet.

Mid-block Corridor (specific standards proposed for the Downtown Amenity Standards)

Mid-block corridors are intended to provide open space and provide public access and pedestrian circulation across extremely long blocks located in the Downtown Urban Center east of Interstate 5.

Eligibility Conditions

1. The mid-block corridor must be located a minimum of 200 feet from the nearest street that is oriented generally north-south.
2. The average width of the corridor must be at least 25 feet, and its minimum width must be at least 15 feet. Any corridor segment that is fully covered from side to side must be at least 20 feet in width.
3. Each entrance to the corridor must be directly accessible from the sidewalk, including access for persons with disabilities. Gates must provide an opening at least 15 feet wide for public access during the hours that the corridor is open.
4. The corridor must be improved with a surface and necessary drainage so as to be suitable for pedestrian use in all seasons.
5. There must be at least one additional open space area on the lot that abuts the mid-block corridor and has an area of at least 1,500 square feet and a minimum horizontal dimension of 30 feet.

Guidelines

1. Where the existing grade is steep the mid-block corridor may include separate multiple levels if they are physically and visually connected and there is access for persons with disabilities through the entire corridor.
2. The required additional open space area that abuts the corridor must be open to the sky, except that portions may be covered to accommodate activities that complement use of the space and make it more comfortable and usable. This coverage may include retail kiosks or overhead weather protection.
3. At least 65 percent of the corridor, not counting the required additional open space area, must be open to the sky. Portions of the corridor that are covered by a building must be at least 20 feet wide. Overhead weather protection and small projections from buildings such as balconies must be a minimum height of 8 feet above the ground. All other portions of buildings that cover the corridor must be a minimum height of 13 feet above the ground.
4. The required additional open space area that abuts the corridor must be landscaped. Landscaping and furnishings, including required art, should lend identity and interest to the space and provide for the comfort of corridor users. Design elements such as walls, low planters or benches, and seating should be used as appropriate. The arrangement of seating and landscaping should enhance the quality of the space and allow a variety of passive recreational activities without obstructing pedestrian movement.

Excerpts from the General Standards that apply to all Bonused Amenity Features (provided for reference)

Use of Bonused Public Spaces

No parking or storage may be established on or above the surface of bonused amenity feature except as provided in these Standards. Use by motor vehicles of public open space for which bonus floor area is granted is not permitted.

Art In Bonused Amenity Features

Subsection 2 about art requirements: Amenities Requiring Art: To make a positive contribution to the identity of the public space, artwork is required in the following amenity features:

* * *

Mid-block corridors

* * *

Subsection 3c about art requirements: The artwork shall be clearly visible to people using the public space, and, wherever possible, should be visible from the street. If it is not visible from the street, it shall be visible from primary circulation paths adjacent to or through the public space. However, it shall not impede circulation in the open space.

Safety

To increase public safety and security, amenity features with public open spaces shall be designed to avoid creation of isolated areas, and to maintain lines of sight into the space from streets and major pedestrian walkways if possible.

- a. **Landscaping:** Trees and shrubs shall be planted and maintained so as to avoid public safety problems that could arise when vegetation interferes with normal lines of sight or negates the effects of nighttime security lighting.
- b. **Lighting:** Lighting shall be provided in bonused public open spaces that are required to be accessible at night and adequate lighting shall be provided along street edges of bonused features.

Identification

Each bonused public space shall be identified clearly with the City’s public open space logo on a plaque placed at a visible location at each street entrance providing access to the amenity. The plaque shall indicate, in letters legible to passersby, the nature of the bonus amenity, its availability for general public access, and additional directional information as required by the Director.

Allow 2 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area for certain uses east of I-5; and require that additional accessory parking of 20 or more spaces, or parking permitted as a special exception, be in a structure.

excerpts from C.B. 117073 (v12), pages 64-66, and pages 76-77

Section 14. Subsections C and H of Section 23.49.019 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which section was last amended by Ordinance 123046, are amended as follows:

23.49.019 Parking quantity, location and access requirements, and screening and landscaping of surface parking areas.

* * *

C. Maximum Parking Limit for Nonresidential Uses.

1. Except as provided in subsections [23.49.019.C.2](#), [23.49.019.C.3](#), and [23.66.342.B](#)(~~(below)~~), parking for nonresidential uses is limited to a maximum of one parking space per (~~one thousand (1,000)~~) 1,000 square feet.

2. [Parking for nonresidential uses in excess of the maximum quantities identified in subsections 23.49.019.C.1 and 23.49.019.C.3](#) (~~(More than one (1) parking space per one thousand (1,000) square feet of nonresidential use)~~) may be permitted as a special exception pursuant to Chapter 23.76. When deciding whether to grant a special exception, the Director shall consider evidence of parking demand and alternative means of transportation, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Whether the additional parking will substantially encourage the use of single occupancy vehicles;
- b. Characteristics of the work force and employee hours, such as multiple shifts that end when transit service is not readily available;
- c. Proximity of transit lines to the lot and headway times of those lines;
- d. The need for a motor pool or large number of fleet vehicles at the site;
- e. Proximity to existing long-term parking opportunities downtown which might eliminate the need for additional parking on the lot;
- f. Whether the additional parking will adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the area;

g. Potential for shared use of additional parking as residential or short-term parking((-));

h. The need for additional short-term parking to support shopping in the retail core or retail activity in other areas where short-term parking is limited((-));

i. Whether the area is located at the edge of the Downtown Urban Center where available short-term parking and transit service is limited.

3. In the area east of Interstate 5, parking for general sales and service uses and for eating and drinking establishments is limited to a maximum of 2 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet.

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Section 20. Section 23.49.045 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which section was last amended by Ordinance 122054, is amended as follows:

23.49.045 Downtown Office Core 1, Downtown Office Core 2, and Downtown Mixed Commercial principal and accessory parking((-))

The provisions of this ~~((section))~~ Section 23.49.045 apply in DOC1, DOC2, and DMC zones. DMC zoned areas within the International Special Review District are also subject to Chapter 23.66. If there is any conflict between this Section 23.49.045 and Chapter 23.66, Chapter 23.66 applies.

* * *

B. Accessory Parking.

1. Accessory parking garages for both long-term and short-term parking are permitted outright, up to the maximum parking limit established by Section 23.49.019 (~~((, Parking quantity, access and screening/landscaping requirements))~~).

2. Accessory surface parking areas are:

a. Permitted outright in areas shown on Map 1I (~~((when containing))~~) if they contain a total of ~~((twenty-20))~~ 20 or fewer parking spaces on the lot; and

b. Permitted outside South Downtown as administrative conditional uses pursuant to Section 23.49.046 (~~((when))~~) if located in areas shown on Map 1I on a lot containing more than ~~((twenty-20))~~ 20 parking spaces; and

c. Prohibited in areas not shown on Map 1I ~~(((-));~~) and

d. Permitted outright for replacement of a short-term surface parking area with more than 20 parking spaces in existence before December 31, 2009, if the original location and new location are both located in a DMC zone in South Downtown, and if the existing and replacement parking are accessory to the same principal use.

3. Temporary principal and accessory surface parking areas may be permitted as conditional uses pursuant to Section 23.49.046.

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