



**Legislative Department
Seattle City Council
Memorandum**

Date: May 24, 2011
To: Committee on the Built Environment
From: Councilmember Sally Clark
Subject: Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the “ South of Charles” Area

Background

On April 25th the Council passed Ordinance 123589, which modified development regulations and increased development capacity for South Downtown. On that same day the Council also passed companion Resolution 31291, which declared the Council’s intent to promote and enhance the livability of South Downtown and set out further tasks for the Council and Executive. Among other things, Resolution 31291 established the Council’s intent to consider a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment for an area known as “South of Charles.”

The “South of Charles” area is generally bounded by Fourth Avenue South to the west, South Charles Street to the north, Interstate Five to the east, and South Royal Brougham Way to the south. Development in the approximately 23 acre area consists of surface parking lots; office, retail, and human service uses in older industrial and warehouse buildings; the city’s Charles Street Yards maintenance and materials storage facility; and two new auto retailers. With Ordinance 123589, the Council rezoned the area from General Industrial 2 with an 85 foot height limit to Industrial Commercial with a base height of 85 feet and maximum height of 160 feet.

In discussing appropriate zoning designations and development standards for the area the Council raised two issues: 1) whether the area should continue to be industrial and contained within the boundaries of the greater Duwamish Manufacturing / Industrial Center and 2), if not, whether the area should be included within the Downtown Urban Center. This proposed amendment would allow the Council to consider those issues and take action.

If the Council and DPD determine that the proposed amendment should be approved, Resolution 31291 requests that DPD submit legislation rezoning the area for concurrent Council consideration with the Comprehensive Plan amendment ordinance.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendments are shown in Figure 1, below. The amendments would change the FLUM by 1) moving the boundary of the Duwamish Manufacturing / Industrial Center south to

Royal Brougham Way and 2) changing the future land use designation for South of Charles from Industrial Area to Downtown Area.

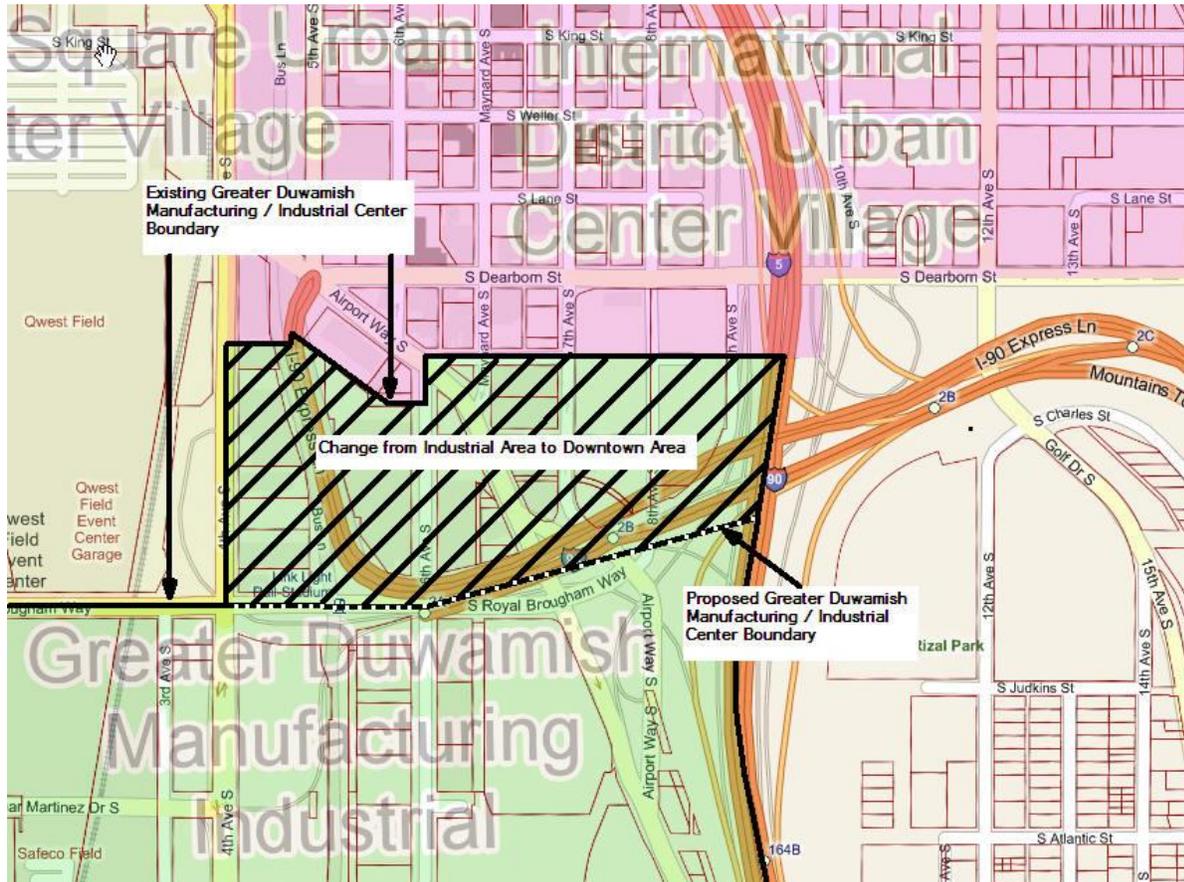


Figure 1

Application of Amendment Criteria

Resolution 30662 sets out criteria the Council considers in determining whether to include a proposed amendment in the Comprehensive Plan docket-setting resolution. Those criteria seek to answer the questions:

- Is the amendment appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan,
- Does the amendment meet existing state and local laws;
- Is it practical to consider the amendment; and
- Has there been a neighborhood review process to develop any proposed change to a neighborhood plan, or can a neighborhood review process can be conducted prior to final Council consideration of the amendment.

Each criterion is discussed below.

Is the amendment appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan?

A determination of whether a large, industrially-designated area is more appropriate for a non-industrial designation is consistent with the role of the Comprehensive Plan as a generalized land use plan and cannot be accomplished through other means, such as a change in regulation alone.

Does the amendment meets existing state and local laws?

The proposed amendment does not contravene any requirements of the Growth Management Act or compel action that would be illegal under the laws of the City of Seattle, State of Washington, or the United States.

Is it practical to consider the amendment?

The South Downtown planning process produced a wealth of information and analyses about this area and surrounding areas. That information is contained in multiple reports including, but not limited to:

- *The Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Livable South Downtown Planning Study.* Department of Planning and Development, May 29, 2008.
- *The Livable South Downtown Planning Study.* Department of Planning and Development, December 2009.
- *An Assessment of Real Estate and Economic Conditions in South Downtown Neighborhoods.* BHC Consultants, LLC and Property Counselors, January 2007.

Thus, there is sufficient existing information for staff and the Council to consider the amendment in the 2011 – 2012 Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle.

Has there been a neighborhood review process to develop any proposed change to a neighborhood plan?

The Livable South Downtown planning process and Council review process was extensive and robust. Between July of 2005 and September of 2007 the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) convened 14 meetings of an advisory group consisting of a cross section of representatives from the broader south downtown community. Additionally, DPD held multiple public meetings and open houses to discuss planning concepts for the Livable South Downtown planning area, which includes the area South of Charles. Finally, the Committee on the Built Environment itself discussed land use issues related to the South of Charles area at multiple meetings.