

South Lake Union Zoning Changes

Summary



Future view of 8th Avenue looking north from Denny Park.

In January 2008, DPD began working with the South Lake Union Community to develop proposals for new allowable heights and development density that would advance the Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan Goals for future development of the neighborhood.

By designating South Lake Union as an Urban Center, it is the City's goal to support and encourage development of South Lake Union as a neighborhood with a concentration of jobs and housing of regional significance.

The proposed South Lake Union rezoning changes include proposed development regulations that incorporates an incentive for increases in height and floor area that will provide important neighborhood amenities to ensure that as growth continues, it contributes to promote the area's livability and sustainability.

The proposed rezoning will allow for 12,000 new housing units and 22,000 jobs.

Key Components of the Zoning Change

- Rezoning Industrial Commercial (IC) zoned properties to Seattle Mixed (SM).
- Establishing new development standards to ensure towers are well-spaced and floorplates are limited to preserve openness to the sky and public views through the neighborhood;
- Ensuring active public spaces through well-designed ground floor retail along key streets, façade transparency and parking standards, and pedestrian pass-throughs on large blocks; and
- Strengthening incentives to preserve landmark properties and existing open spaces.

This proposal is the culmination of a -year process that included participation by a diverse and engaged community working with the City to define a clear vision for the future of South Lake Union.



Key Development Standards

New development standards are proposed to ensure a quality pedestrian environment with access to sunlight and openness and to help to preserve views to and through the neighborhood.

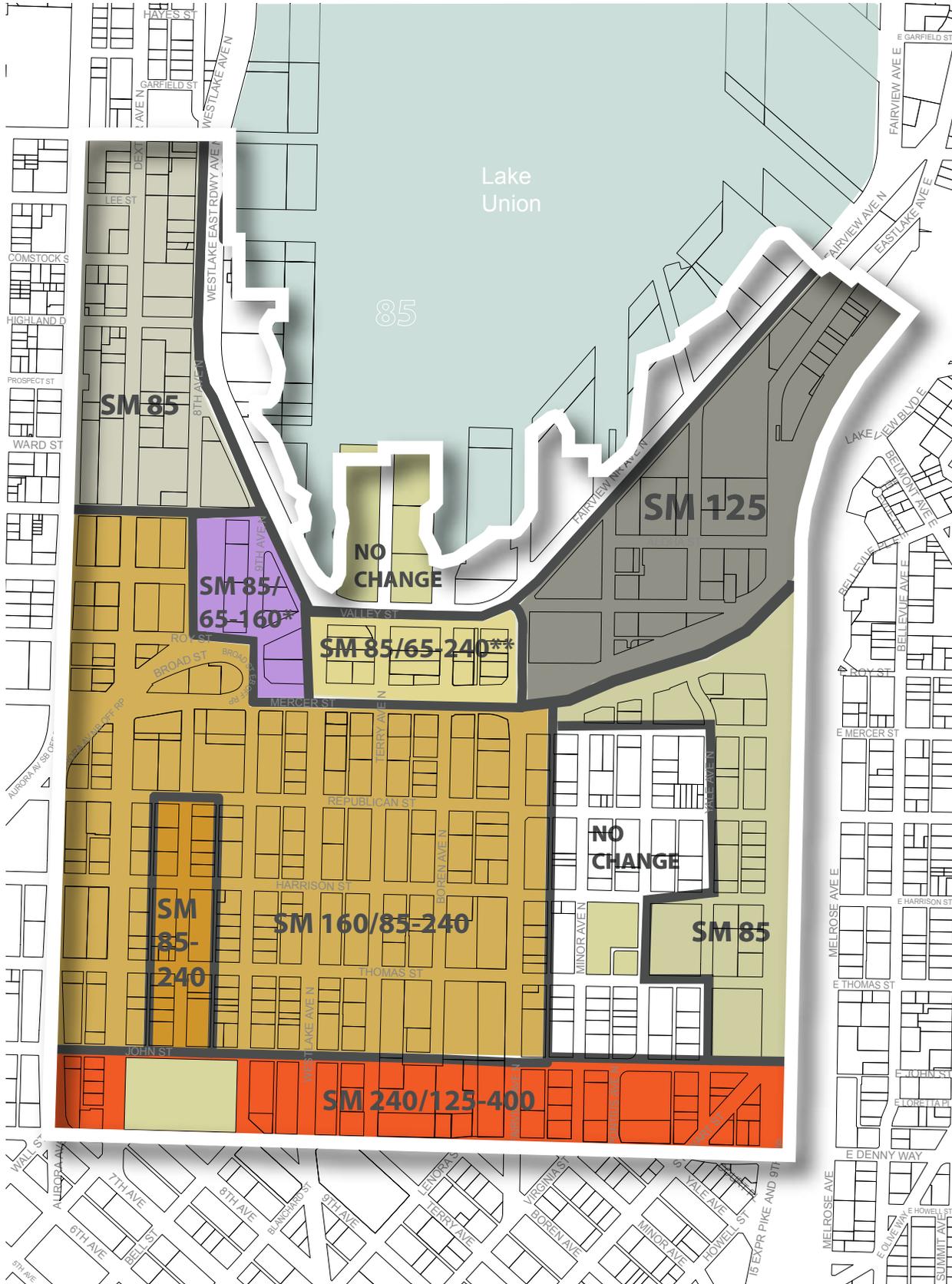
- Residential Floor Plate Size. Towers taller than 160 feet would be limited to 10,500 square feet. A tower at 160 feet or less would be limited to 12,500 square feet.
- Commercial Floor Plate Size. 24,000 square feet, except on Fairview Blocks.
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR: the ratio of floor area in a structure to the size of a lot on which the structure is built). Commercial FAR would be limited to 7.
- Tower lot coverage. A residential tower could not cover more than 50 percent of the development site.
- Towers per block. A limit of two residential towers per block throughout the neighborhood, and one per block closer to the lake, is proposed. No more than one commercial tower would be allowed on a block unless proposed on a site at least 60,000 square feet in size and includes a through-block passage for pedestrians.
- Tower Setbacks: Above 85 feet, a tower would be required to setback on key streets to preserve public views of, to, and across Lake Union and to the Space Needle.

A Quality Pedestrian Environment

Providing a superior pedestrian experience in the South Lake Union neighborhood has been a consistent goal throughout the planning process. The proposal addresses how development meets the public right of way, and complements plans for right of way improvements.

- The base or podium of a building is limited to a height that maintains a pedestrian scale at the street.
- Transparency or windows along sidewalk facing facades would be required for visual interest to the pedestrian.
- The proposal incorporates incentives for ground floor retail uses to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Parking at the ground level is required to be screened with retail or residential uses.

Proposed Heights



Heights

	85		160/85-240
	85/65-240*		85-240
	125		240/125-400
	85/65-160		

*No more than one tower per block.

**No more than one tower per block. Height above 160 feet requires added public benefit.

Incentive Zoning

Under the proposed rezone, additional height and floor area may only be gained through the City's incentive zoning program. Developers who choose to build above a base height and FAR to a maximum of 7 FAR, will be required to contribute public amenities in proportion to the amount of extra floor area gained. The specific types of public benefits required vary by building type. For commercial development, 75% of the floor area could be gained through the provision of affordable housing and child care, and the remaining 25% through transfer of development rights. For residential development, 60% would go to affordable housing and 40% through transfer of development rights.

Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program (LCLIP)

This program, recently adopted by state legislation, allows cities to use a portion of future county property tax revenue generated from new development to fund local improvements if they establish an incentive zoning program that supports conservation of farm and forest land. This program would be implemented concurrently in both Downtown and South Lake Union. Under this program, a portion of extra floor area would be gained by purchasing development rights from County identified farms and forest. In exchange, King

County will give the City a portion of future property taxes generated on the value of new development to fund local infrastructure improvements. This money would be invested in a variety of open space and transportation investments and other public infrastructure, including green street improvements and funding for a community center.

Incentive Zoning Program Benefits

Over the next 25 years, this program is anticipated to result in the following direct benefits:

- \$45 million in affordable housing investments
- \$28 million in open space and transportation investments
- Preservation of over 25,000 acres of working farms and forests
- Funding for childcare



Future view looking west on Thomas St. at Fairview Ave.

Contacts

Please direct comments or questions to:

Jim Holmes
(206) 684-8372 or jim.holmes@seattle.gov

Brennon Staley (Incentive Zoning)
(206) 684-4625 or brennon.staley@seattle.gov

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