



Planning Commission

TRANSMITTAL

DATE: November 16, 2017

TO: Mayor Stokes and Members of the City Council

FROM: Stephanie Walter, Chair
Members of the Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Final Review Recommendation for 2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendments
(CPA): **Old Seattle Times Building, File No. 17-121068- AC**

The Planning Commission recommends by a 4-0 vote (Commissioners Laing and Carlson absent) that the City Council adopt the recommended Old Seattle Times Office Building CPA into the Comprehensive Plan.

I. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The Old Seattle Times Building CPA (10777 Main St.) proposes a .95-acre map change from split Downtown Mixed Use (DNTN-MU) and Professional Office (PO) to all DNTN-MU. This site-specific proposal was initiated by the City Council on September 18, 2017, under authority at LUC 20.30I.130.B.1. See Attachment A.

II. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission finds that all the Final Review Decision Criteria have been met for this proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment as set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC 20.30I.150). The Commission's recommendation highlights the following decision criteria conclusions:

The proposed amendment *addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city* because the city now has the policies and tools to manage transitions between similarly-situated Downtown neighborhoods and their adjacent, high-density neighborhoods; and by ensuring the city has the land use and building types that it needs to adapt to changing markets.

The proposed amendment *addresses significantly changed conditions* (since the last time the pertinent CP map or text was amended) affecting the subject property. There is a strong public interest and established policy in having a stable and predictable boundary for the city center. The split designation has created a constraint, since implementing the Comp Plan should not prevent compatible redevelopment. Implementing this has been resolved for other similarly-situated property.

III. BACKGROUND

The City Council initiated the Old Seattle Times Building Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) on September 18, 2017.

During scoping for the major Comprehensive Plan Update (CPU) work programs, owners of property split by the southern Downtown boundary asked the city, based on previous individual Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) submittals in 2008 and 2009, to examine the impact of adjusting the boundary. Council included the issue in the Comprehensive Plan Update work program, directing its examination in a more comprehensive way along this entire southern boundary. Unlike the clearly defined west, north and east Downtown boundaries, the south boundary is jagged, splitting some parcels and buildings as it makes its way between 100th Avenue and 108th Avenue.

The city's 2015 major Comp Plan Update action amended four of the five identified split parcels along this line (this site was not included because attempts to contact the property owner did not receive any responses) acknowledging community interest in making the boundary more regular and to resolve some of the odd parcel configurations, while maintaining the established policy direction of not extending Downtown development into residential neighborhoods to the south.

IV. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

The City Council directed Final Review of the site-specific Old Seattle Times Building Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) by initiating it into the work program on September 18, 2017. On October 4, 2017, the Planning Commission held a study session to review the proposed amendment. Notice of the November 1, 2017, Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on October 12, 2017, and included notice sent to parties of record.

The applicant offered testimony at the November 1, 2017, public hearing. No other testimony was given.

V. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)

The Environmental Coordinator reviewed the proposal under the State Environmental Policy Act and determined that it will not result in any probable, significant adverse environmental impacts, and therefore issued a Determination of Non-Significance on October 12, 2017.

VI. REVIEW PROCESS AND APPLICATION OF DECISION CRITERIA

The Planning Commission finds that the Final Review Decision Criteria have been met for this proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment as set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC 20.30I.150). A proposal must be found to have met all the decision criteria to be recommended for approval.

A. There exists obvious technical error in the pertinent Comprehensive Plan provision, or

Not applicable to this proposal.

B1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies of the city, the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), the Growth Management Act and other applicable law; and

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it was the approach used to amend such split, similarly-situated designations through the 2015 major Comprehensive Plan Update; and it is consistent with “...a major objective of the Land Use Element to maintain the vitality, quality, and character of Bellevue’s neighborhoods while recognizing that neighborhoods will continue to adapt even while maintaining their character.” (Land Use Element – Residential Areas). “[T]he city’s land use strategies work to ensure that new infill development appropriately fits into existing neighborhoods.”

There is a strong public interest in having a stable and predictable boundary for the city center. The burden of proof for change lies with the affected property to show that any change to the existing boundary is clearly in the public interest. Moreover, it is important to note that in no case is a change to a higher zoning designation for these properties needed for the City to have capacity to meet its growth targets.

Comprehensive Plan Policy Framework

In general, the Comprehensive Plan framework draws from the Downtown and Southwest Bellevue Subarea Plans and from the Urban Design Element to provide protection between the various neighborhood densities, and assures an urban design focus on the relationship between Downtown and surrounding land uses through consistent perimeter densities, building scaling and pedestrian access. It intends to create viable, livable and memorable places to live, shop and work regardless of location along the boundary:

- ***Policy LU-1:*** *Promote a clear strategy for focusing the city’s growth and development as follows:*
 1. *Direct most of the city’s growth to the Downtown regional growth center and to other areas designated for compact, mixed use development served by a full range of transportation options.*
 2. *Enhance the health and vitality of existing single family and multifamily residential neighborhoods.*
 3. *Continue to provide for commercial uses and development that serve community needs.*
- ***Policy LU-20:*** *Support Downtown’s development as a regional growth center, with the density, mix of uses and amenities, and infrastructure that maintain it as the financial, retail, transportation, and business hub of the Eastside.*

- ***Policy UD-3:*** *Encourage a variety of site and building designs which are compatible and consistent with surrounding development and that implement the policies of this Plan.*
- ***Downtown Urban Design Goal:*** *To develop a functional and esthetically pleasing Downtown which creates a livable and highly pedestrian-oriented urban environment that is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.*
- ***Policy S-DT-38:*** *Minimize the adverse impact of Downtown development on residential neighborhoods with consideration of through-traffic, views, scale, and land use relationships.*
- ***Policy S-DT-7:*** *Encourage Downtown to continue to serve surrounding residential areas as a neighborhood retail district.*
- ***City Center South***
The City Center South District is emerging as a true mixed-use neighborhood. New and exciting restaurant, retail, and residential uses are adding a greater level of activity in this area. The proximity to the Surrey Downs and 108th Avenue neighborhoods provides an opportunity to have appropriately-scaled transitional uses along the edge of Downtown.

Growth Management Act

The proposed amendment is consistent with GMA urban growth planning goals encouraging development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed amendment is consistent with Countywide Planning Policies' Urban Design vision: "...intended to integrate urban development into existing built and natural environments in ways that enhance both the urban and natural settings. These elements include high quality design, context sensitive infill and redevelopment, historic preservation, and the interdependence of urban and rural and agricultural lands and uses."

Goal statement: *The built environment in both urban and rural settings achieves a high degree of high quality design that recognizes and enhances, where appropriate, existing natural and urban settings.*

DP-39: *Develop neighborhood planning and design processes that encourage infill development, redevelopment, and reuse of existing buildings and that, where appropriate based on local plans, enhance the existing community character and mix of uses.*

DP-44: *Adopt design standards or guidelines that foster infill development that is compatible with the existing or desired urban character.*

B2. The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city as identified in its long-range planning and policy documents; and

The city now has the policies and tools to successfully manage the hardline transitions between similarly situated Downtown neighborhoods and their adjacent, high-density neighborhoods; and it is adaptive to changing economic conditions by ensuring the city has the land use and building types that it needs to meet changing markets (Land Use Element – Vision p. 34).

B3. The proposed amendment addresses significantly changed conditions since the last time the pertinent Comprehensive Plan map or text was amended. See LUC 20.50.046 [below] for the definition of “significantly changed conditions”; and

Significantly changed conditions are defined as: Demonstrating evidence of change such as unanticipated consequences of an adopted policy, or changed conditions on the subject property or its surrounding area, or changes related to the pertinent Plan map or text; where such change has implications of a magnitude that need to be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan to function as an integrated whole. *This definition applies only to Part 20.30I Amendment and Review of the Comprehensive Plan (LUC 20.50.046).*

The proposed amendment addresses significantly changed conditions affecting the subject property because of changes related to the pertinent Plan map or text. The split designation has created a constraint—a changed condition, since implementing the Comp Plan should not prevent compatible redevelopment—on realizing the land use vision for Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Implementing this vision has been resolved for other similarly-situated property.

There is a strong public interest and established policy in having a stable and predictable boundary for the city center. These changes seek to create comparable circumstances for property to redevelop. But, the Comp Plan cannot function as an integrated whole if map designations attempt to implement one set of policies (protecting property) while preventing another set (redevelopment) for a specific area. This conflict should be addressed in the Comp Plan, through the amendment process, since stability and predictability need to go both ways.

B4. If a site-specific proposed amendment, the subject property is suitable for development in general conformance with adjacent land use and the surrounding development pattern, and with zoning standards under the potential zoning classifications; and

The proposed amendment could be suitably developed under the potential zoning classifications because the amendment supports effective use of transition elements built into the Land Use Code;

and

B5. The proposed amendment demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare of the city.

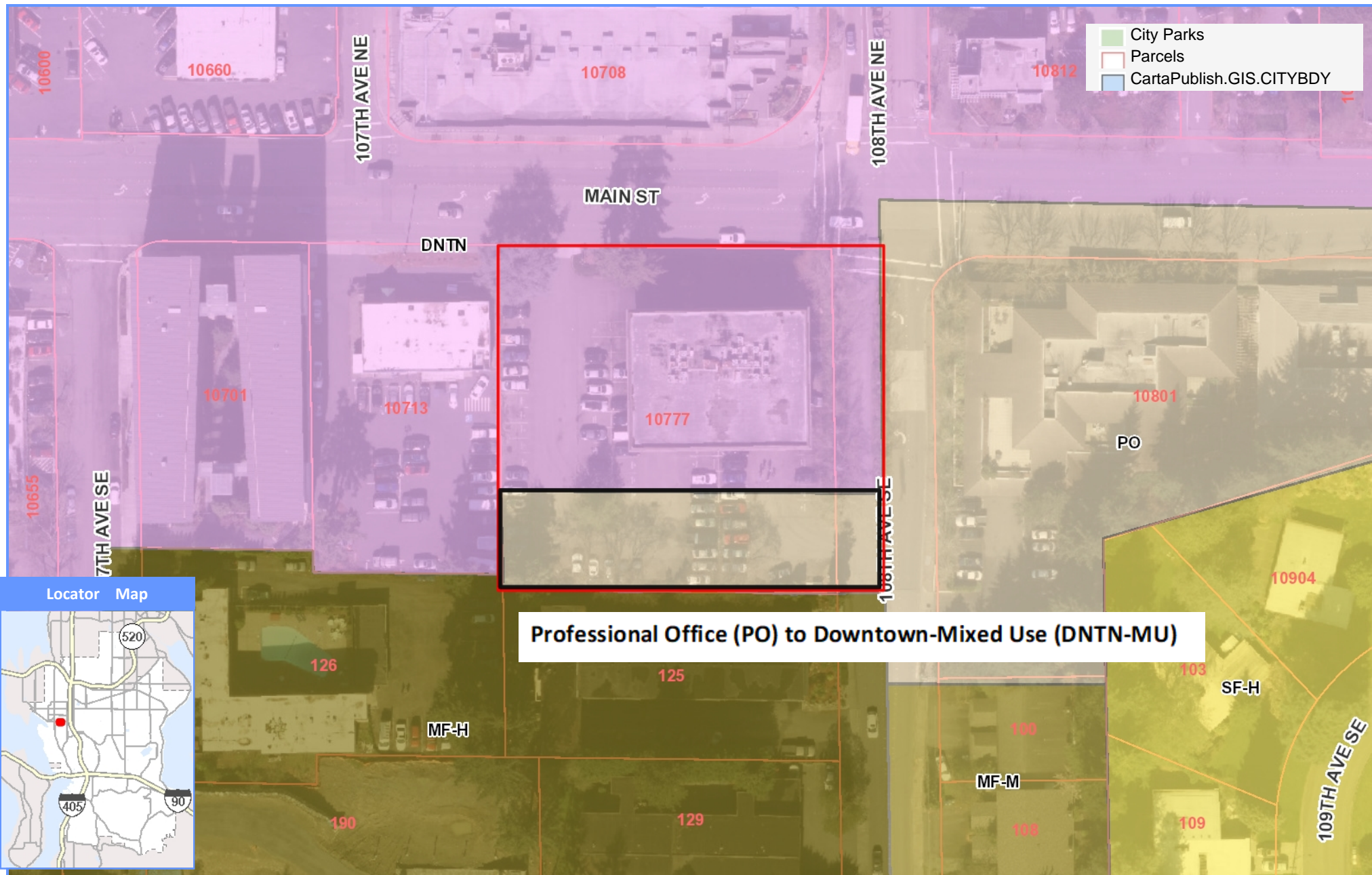
The proposed amendment demonstrates such benefit and enhancement because the amendment acknowledges community interest in making the boundary more regular and to resolve some of the odd parcel configurations while maintaining established policy direction of not extending Downtown development into the residential neighborhood to the south.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Planning Commission recommends by a 4-0 vote (Commissioners Laing and Carlson absent) that the City Council adopt the Old Seattle Times Building CPA into the Comprehensive Plan.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

C1. Old Seattle Times Building – Planning Commission Recommendation



Old Seattle Times Building CPA

