DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FOR

DOWNTOWN HEIGHT AND DENSITY CHANGES

November 2003

City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

Prepared in compliance with:
State Environmental Policy Act
Chapter 43.21, Revised Code of Washington
Chapter 197-11, Washington Administrative Code

PREFACE

Introduction

On May 3rd, 2001, the City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office issued a SEPA Determination of Significance (DS) for a proposal to change several existing zoning provisions for a portion of Downtown Seattle. This proposal originates from concepts expressed in the neighborhood plans for the Denny Triangle neighborhood and the Commercial Core, as well as the plan prepared by the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group (DUCPG). Numerous discussions between neighborhood representatives and City staff since 1999 have helped define a proposal that is being advanced for further discussion and decisionmaking.

EIS ORGANIZATION

This EIS is organized as follows: **Chapter 1** provides an overview of the proposal, impacts and mitigation measures; **Chapter 2** contains a description of the alternatives; and **Chapter 3** contains impact analysis for the elements of the environment identified in the EIS scope. The elements of the environment studied for this proposal include: Population/Employment, Housing, Land Use, Height/Bulk/Scale, Historic Preservation, Public Views and Aesthetics, Climate—Shadows and Wind, Pedestrian Amenities and Open Space, Transportation, Parking, Energy, Water Utilities and Sewers/Stormdrains.

SEPA NON-PROJECT REVIEW

Pursuant to the State's SEPA requirements, this environmental impact statement has been prepared to examine the potential for environmental impacts from this proposal. This is a "non-project" proposal in that it involves decisions on policies, plans or regulations rather than a single site-specific project. In this case, the proposal is for changes to regulations in the Land Use Code. The analysis is intended to describe how the proposed regulatory changes would affect future long-term development patterns, and whether those changes would result in significant adverse impacts. The intent of this EIS is to provide substantive analysis of impact implications (at a programmatic level of detail), to aid in making final decisions on the proposal.

The State's SEPA rules and handbook provide for flexibility in the content and formatting of environmental review for non-project proposals, because details about the proposal are typically limited. Topics that should be addressed include: background, objectives, existing conditions, description of the proposal and alternatives, and environmental impact analysis. The level of analysis should be consistent with the specificity of the proposal and available information.

Broad analyses of non-project proposals can facilitate "phased review" by addressing bigger-picture concerns and allowing review of future proposals to focus on a smaller range of more specific concerns. This means that future proposals in the study area could incorporate or refer to portions of this EIS to fulfill their SEPA requirements. This could increase the efficiency of environmental review and expedite permitting processes.

FACT SHEET

Project Title

Downtown Seattle Height and Density Changes

Nature and Location of Proposal

This EIS examines four alternatives that cover a range of possible actions for the City Council's consideration. Three of the alternatives consist of different combinations of increases in allowable maximum heights and densities (volumes) of buildings in several Downtown zones. A "No Action" Alternative is also included to assess what is likely to occur over time under the current Land Use Code.

The area affected by the proposal includes portions of the Denny Triangle, Commercial Core and Belltown neighborhoods within Downtown, but does not include the retail core (zoned DRC), the International District, or Pioneer Square neighborhoods.

Alternative 1 (High End Height and Density Increase) would increase height and density provisions in portions of Downtown zoned Downtown Office Core 1 and 2 (DOC 1, DOC 2), and Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC). The proposed density changes would increase allowable densities by 3 or 4 FAR (floor area ratio), equivalent to three or four times the property area of a given site. Within the affected area, maximum heights under Alternative 1 would increase by up to:

- 135 feet in the central DOC 1 zone;
- 100 feet in all of the northern DOC 2 and DMC zones in the Denny Triangle;
- 40 and 48 feet (approximately 30 percent increase) in the central DMC zones along 1st Avenue between Pike and Virginia Streets, and in the Western Avenue vicinity, respectively; and
- 72 feet (30 percent increase) in the southern DOC 2 zone, and the DMC zone along 1st Avenue between Union and Columbia, adjacent to the central office core.

The other alternatives consist of height and density increases in fewer areas or lesser amounts of change. Alternative 2 (Concentrated Office Core) would limit changes to the Downtown Office Core zones. Alternative 3 (Residential Emphasis) would increase height and density in most of the office core zones, but would re-orient zoning in some areas to better encourage housing production.

Proponent

City of Seattle

Lead Agency

City of Seattle Dept. of Planning and Development
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98104-5070

Responsible Official

Diane Sugimura

Date of Implementation

The City Council anticipates making decisions on this proposal in 2004.

Contact Person	Dennis Meier City of Seattle Dept. of Planning and Development 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000 Seattle, WA 98104-5070 206-684-8270
Required Approvals	Actions on the proposal will require approval by the City Council.
EIS Authors and Principal Contributors	**Primary author, EIS coordination** City of Seattle Dept. of Planning and Development staff: Dennis Meier, Gordon Clowers, Lish Whitson **Real Estate/Economic consultants** Craig Kinzer & Associates The Seneca Group Cushman & Wakefield **Transportation consultant** Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. **Urban Design consultant** Otak, Inc.
Location of Background Data	City of Seattle Dept. of Planning and Development 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000 Seattle, WA 98104-5070
DEIS Date of Issuance	November 7, 2003
Date Comments are Due	January 31st, 2003
Public Hearing	A public hearing on the Draft EIS is tentatively scheduled for December 10th, at the Seattle Police Department's West Precinct building at 810 Virginia Street (check www.seattle.gov/dpd for up-to-date meeting information).
Nature and Date of Final Action	The City Council is expected to take action in 2004 on the proposal to amend the allowable heights and densities within portions of Downtown.
Cost of Draft EIS	Copies of the Draft EIS are available for public review at several branches of the Seattle Public Library. Interested parties may purchase copies of the Draft EIS for $10 at DPD, 20th floor Key Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue. An appendix volume of technical analyses is also available for a purchase price of $10. Please send your request to the Dept. of Planning and Development (address above) with a check made payable to "City of Seattle."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Chapter One

Summary

CHAPTER ONE

SUMMARY

Introduction

Chapter One is a summary of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on proposed changes to height and density limits in some Downtown zones. The chapter briefly describes background, features of the four alternatives (including a No Action Alternative), anticipated impacts, major issues to be resolved and mitigation strategies. At this stage, a preferred alternative has not been identified. A chart included in this chapter is a comparative overview of impacts identified for each alternative. For a more detailed discussion, please see Chapters 2 and 3 and the accompanying technical appendices.

Background

The City engaged in an extensive neighborhood planning process following the adoption of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan in 1994. As part of this process, neighborhood plans were developed for five subareas of the Downtown Urban Center. Some of these plans included proposals for changes to height and density limits in some Downtown areas. As part of ongoing planning, the City has studied and made decisions on a number of individual proposals:

- With the City Council's initial approval of Downtown neighborhood plans in early 1999, proposals for rezones in the Commercial Core and Pioneer Square neighborhoods were implemented, along with limited amendments to bonus and TDR provisions.
- In collaboration with King County and the Denny Triangle, the Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program was adopted in late 1999, which allowed for a 30% height increase for residential and mixed-use development in zones within the Denny Triangle to preserve rural lands and generate resources for public amenities in the neighborhood. An area of approximately four acres was also upzoned from DMC 240 to DOC 2 300' to increase employment capacity in the neighborhood.
- More recently, the City amended the provisions of the Downtown bonus and TDR programs through legislation adopted in mid-2001. Conditional height increases ranging from 10% to 30% were also adopted under this legislation for DOC 1, DOC 2 and portions of DRC zones. The bonus and TDR programs specify how projects can gain approval for greater density by providing for affordable housing, public open space, landmark preservation, human services and other public amenities.

This EIS studies another discrete set of actions that could be taken to implement changes recommended by Downtown neighborhood plans. It analyzes changes to height and density limits in three Downtown zones (see Study Area Map, Figure 1). The alternatives represent a range of possible actions that would increase zoning capacity within these areas to accommodate additional employment and residential growth. Alternative 1 represents the "high end" of possible changes, while Alternatives 2 and 3 emphasize changes supporting the commercial core and residential uses, respectively. A preferred alternative has not been identified. It is likely that City decisionmakers will combine actions from different alternatives as a result of public input and the findings of the EIS.

The purpose of this EIS is to disclose impacts associated with actions proposed under each alternative. This analysis makes it possible to compare outcomes of these different actions. It assists in identifying major issues that should be addressed in the course of developing a final proposal for implementation. Public review of this document and discussion of these issues will provide additional input about desired outcomes and the best approach for achieving them. This review will also help focus on key concerns that

may require further attention, either with additional work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement or as part of developing mitigation strategies to accompany a final proposal.

Features of the Alternatives

SUMMARY OF THE ALTERNATIVES

- **Alternative 1.** Alternative 1 is a composite of proposals included in different Downtown neighborhood plans and recommendations by the advisory committee that participated in revising the Downtown bonus and TDR programs. This alternative calls for the greatest increases to both base and maximum density limits and height limits for all DOC 1, DOC 2 and DMC zones within the study area.
- **Alternative 2.** This alternative limits height and density increases to the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones and maintains existing limits in the DMC zones within the study area. There would be no changes to base density limits, and use of housing bonuses or housing TDR would be required to gain all floor area above base density (FAR) limits.
- **Alternative 3.** Alternative 3 would further limit height and density increases to DOC 1 and a portion of DOC 2. To increase capacity for housing, mixed-use provisions would apply to DMC zones, and some DMC areas would be rezoned to DMR/C, a more residential-oriented zone.
- **Alternative 4.** Alternative 4 is a No Action Alternative reflecting current zoning conditions, including the previously-adopted amendments that helped implement neighborhood plans.

ASSUMED AMOUNT OF GROWTH

Different proposals for height and density increases vary the capacity of commercial and residential growth that can ultimately be accommodated within Downtown under each alternative. However, the projected demand for housing and commercial floor area Downtown over the 20-year period between 2000 and 2020 is assumed to be constant, regardless of overall zoning capacity. Because developers build for perceived demand rather than building the maximum that zoning will allow, the zoning changes will not significantly alter Downtown's growth over twenty years. Therefore, for all alternatives, the assumption is that from 2000 to 2020, the Downtown Urban Center will add 70,000 jobs and housing to accommodate 17,500 households (equivalent to 18,400 units).

- **Employment growth.** The majority of the employment growth—90% (63,000 jobs)—is assumed to occur within the study area where height and density increases are being considered, with the remaining 10% (7,000 jobs) occurring in Pioneer Square, the International District, the retail core and Belltown.
- **Residential growth.** Of the 18,400 units added Downtown, approximately 7,350 units (40%) would be accommodated in development within the study area, with the remaining 11,050 units occurring in other areas, including Belltown, Pioneer Square and the International District. It is estimated that accommodating 11,050 units outside the study area would require utilizing about 87% of the remaining development capacity in these areas. Depending on the alternative, between 69% (Alternative 3) and 87% (Alternative 4) of the total available development capacity would be needed to accommodate the additional 7,350 units forecasted for the study area.

ASSUMED PATTERN OF GROWTH

- Infill and growth outward from the core. The analysis assumes future development will seek to infill remaining sites in the Downtown Office Core (DOC 1 and DOC 2) zones, and also grow outward from the office/retail core. Thus, redevelopable properties in or near the existing core are likely to be the most attractive for the next round of development.

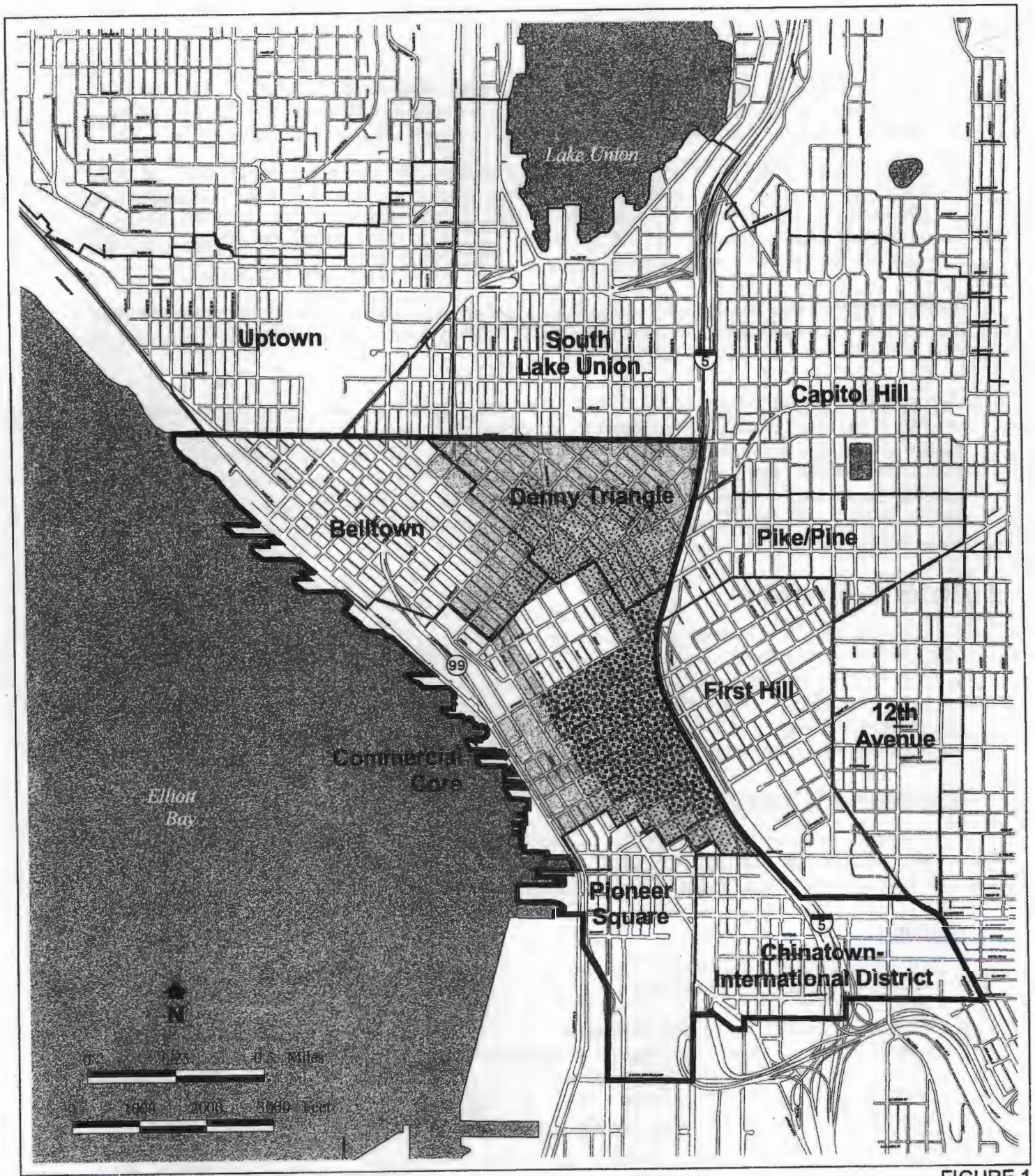


FIGURE 1

DOWNTOWN EIS STUDY AREA

Downtown Urban Center Boundary

Urban Center/Urban Village Boundaries

EIS STUDY AREA:

DOC1 Zone

DOC2 Zone

DMC Zone

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 17, 2002

dwntwneis\eis_studyarea.apr

- **Larger sites and sites already assembled are more attractive.** The "grow from the core" assumption is tempered by an assumption that larger sites under single ownership will be as likely to develop as sites in better locations that are challenged by small site sizes or multiple owners.
- **Similarities among alternatives in the pattern of growth.** Under all of the alternatives, most of the growth projected for the 20-year period can be accommodated on the same sites, resulting in only limited distinctions between alternatives in the geographic distribution of growth. However, more distinctive growth patterns would likely emerge as additional growth occurs in later years, due primarily to changes in the DMC zones affecting available capacity for housing.

Relationship to Plans and Policies. All of the alternatives provide sufficient capacity to accommodate housing and job growth targets established for the Downtown Urban Center in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

The various Downtown Neighborhood Plans and the Downtown Urban Center Plan include a wide range of goals and policies about how Downtown should grow and the desired type of urban environment. Of particular relevance to this EIS analysis are housing affordability goals and policies with regard to lower-income households. Other relevant goals and policies seek to maintain the positive characteristics of existing development conditions, promote high-quality livable residential environments, and maintain desired physical relationships between Downtown areas and adjacent neighborhoods. Impacts related to these goals and policies are discussed in more detail below.

Major Conclusions

Development over 20 years under existing zoning, as reflected in Alternative 4, will result in substantial changes to some Downtown areas, particularly the Denny Triangle. For some studied topics, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would result in only subtle differences in impacts from the 20-year "baseline condition." But for quite a few topics, future development under these alternatives would likely generate distinctly different levels of impacts. This section discusses several overall conclusions. Table 1 later in this chapter compares the impacts of the alternatives.

Population and Employment

- Depending on the source of the projection, Downtown Seattle is expected to grow by 16,000-26,000 new residents and 50,000-70,000 new employees. This level of population and employment growth can be accommodated through development permitted by the zoning under all alternatives.

Housing

- All of the alternatives provide enough capacity for new residential units to meet demand between 2000 and 2020. However, after 2020 the capacity for residential development will be limited.
- The Denny Triangle Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program would be eliminated under Alternative 1. This program encourages residential development in the Denny Triangle, provides funds for amenities in the Denny Triangle and preserves land from development in rural King County. Its use would be restricted under Alternatives 2 and 3. By retaining existing zoning under Alternative 4 (No Action), the TDC program would continue to be available throughout the Denny Triangle.
- Funding for low-income housing would increase under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, above that projected with existing zoning. Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 3, would provide the most funds for low-income housing development.
- Six existing residential buildings containing 300 units are identified as sites where redevelopment could occur in the future. Three of the six buildings, with 141 dwelling units, receive subsidies to

keep their units affordable to households earning less than 50% of the median area income. Under all alternatives, more subsidized units would be built through housing bonus funds than might be demolished.

Land Use

- There will be little difference among the alternatives in the mix of land uses in the study area. Under all alternatives, the mix of uses in the Denny Triangle would significantly change with the redevelopment of many of the neighborhood's vacant and underutilized blocks. Alternative 1 would result in fewer but larger office and residential buildings mixed in a high-density environment, whereas Alternative 4 (existing zoning) would likely result in more sites developed with slightly smaller buildings. Alternative 3 would provide the most difference from the other alternatives, with the projected development of residential enclaves in Belltown and the Denny Triangle.
- As redevelopment occurs, less expensive office space is likely to be lost, and those human service providers that do not own their own space may find it more difficult in the future to find affordable space in Downtown Seattle.
- One City of Seattle landmark and a number of buildings considered important to various Downtown neighborhoods were identified as sites where redevelopment might occur, due to the small size of the landmark compared to the potential maximum development permitted on the site.

Height, Bulk and Scale

- Among the alternatives, Alternative 1 allows the greatest increases in height and density throughout the study area. With these increases, projected growth could be accommodated in fewer but larger projects than the other alternatives. Taller, bulkier structures would be permitted in some sensitive transition areas, resulting in a more abrupt change in scale and intensity of development along edges where the study area abuts other neighborhoods.
- Under all the alternatives, the absence of a density limit on residential use, along with exemptions for above-grade residential parking from floor area limits, creates the potential for very bulky residential and mixed-use developments.
- The likely scale and character of residential development, and the general mixing of housing with high-density commercial projects, could hinder development of areas with a strong residential character, except in Alternative 3 where additional residential zones are established in part of the Denny Triangle and the southern edge of Belltown.
- In some zones where the bulky appearance of recent development is attributed to current height limits, the proposed density increases are proportionally greater than proposed height increases. Consequently, the outcome could be taller buildings with similar bulky characteristics rather than more slender, taller towers.
- The narrower street widths and longer block sizes in portions of the Denny Triangle could exacerbate impacts associated with bulkier development.

Pedestrian Amenities and Streetscape

- Only minimal development standards for enhancing the pedestrian environment apply in the portion of the Denny Triangle west of Westlake Avenue. This could result in a low level of pedestrian amenity and limited street level activity in what is likely to emerge as a high-density office district.

Parks and Open Space

- Future development under any of the alternatives will increase Downtown employment and residential populations, creating more demand for the use of existing open space resources. Some of this demand

will be met through open space provided as a result of zoning requirements and incentives, as well as common development practices. Development will provide required open space to meet the needs of building occupants, as well as public open space to help augment existing public resources.

- The greatest increase in employment and residential population is projected for the Denny Triangle, where open space resources are currently limited. Under any alternative, open spaces are unlikely to increase sufficiently to meet all of the open space goals in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Elimination of the Transfer of Development Credits program due to height increases, or reduction of the program's area, represents a potential loss of a funding source for desired open space improvements in the Denny Triangle.

Views and Aesthetics

- Potential impacts on views were considered for public viewpoints, view-protected landmarks, scenic routes, the skyline and other non-protected views. In many cases, differences between the alternatives in visual impacts would be relatively subtle. However, Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 would promote differences in allowable building bulk that would be detectible when viewed from some locations.

Urban Climate (Shadows and Wind)

- Future development of taller buildings in the Denny Triangle, edge of Belltown and 1st Avenue/Western Avenue vicinities would add to the shading of city streets. The possibility of higher building heights on a few properties near Denny Way creates slightly greater potential for shading impacts on Denny Park.
- Future development of new buildings in Downtown would create the potential for additional wind effects near street level, depending upon the design of specific buildings and the general grouping of buildings.

Transportation

- For all alternatives, traffic volumes in 2020 entering and leaving Downtown at the studied locations would increase by approximately 10% in the AM Peak hour and 20% in the PM peak hour compared to existing conditions. This reflects the relatively high level of growth over 20 years studied by this EIS.
- In the northeast corner of Downtown (Denny Triangle), Alternative 1 would generate traffic approaching the rated capacity of key commuting corridors near the Stewart Street and Denny Way intersection by the year 2020. For the other alternatives, traffic volume/capacity conditions in this vicinity would be approximately 5-10% better than Alternative 1.
- Impacts of the alternatives in other portions of Downtown would not be as substantial as in the Denny Triangle.
- By 2020, even with no zoning changes, the number of intersections experiencing significant or severe congestion in the key studied corridors (e.g., Stewart, Howell, Olive Way, Denny Way) would increase from 5 intersections today to approximately 17 intersections in the PM peak hour. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would cause 2 to 5 additional intersections to experience this level of congestion (level of service E or F) in the PM peak hour. This would adversely affect travel times through the studied corridors for general traffic and buses, and cause some queuing (lane backup) issues in several locations.
- Future development over time could contribute to displacement of several existing King County Metro bus layover locations, primarily in the Denny Triangle.

Parking

- With future development under any of the alternatives, at least 17,000 additional off-street parking spaces would be provided, and approximately 7,100-7,500 existing off-street parking spaces would be displaced, largely in the Denny Triangle and edge of Belltown vicinities.
- Future growth would increase overall parking demand, for approximately 19,500 to 23,750 spaces, depending upon how many commuters choose to use transit rather than automobiles. Depending upon the strength of demand, it is possible that developers or private parking providers would provide a greater supply of parking.
- Competition for on-street parking spaces would likely increase, especially in areas of concentrated future development.

Energy

- The EIS growth assumptions are approximately consistent with levels of growth in City Light projections. City Light predicts that a new substation serving Downtown needs to be energized by 2012. Under Alternative 1, potential future development resulting from higher zoning height/density limits in the Denny Triangle area east of 8th Avenue could result in capacity limitations more quickly than would otherwise occur, due to increased commercial loads. These limitations and needed improvements will be closely monitored and addressed in City Light's Capacity Plan in 2004. Alternatives 3 and 4 would generate comparatively lesser impacts on the electrical system than Alternatives 1 and 2.

Water and Sewer/Stormwater Utilities

- The alternatives would generate additional water consumption and sanitary sewage volumes due to future development of commercial and residential uses. However, the capacity of existing systems in general would be adequate to provide for this future growth.
- Better stormwater control requirements with future development will likely improve overall stormwater flow conditions in the combined sewer facilities.

Major Issues to be Resolved

Some questions relating to the magnitude of impacts or the design of mitigation strategies are still unresolved. These issues will be addressed in ongoing review and planning, and in the Final EIS. Major issues requiring further study and resolution include the following:

Balance between employment and housing growth Downtown

The proposed changes studied in the EIS raise an important policy question about Downtown growth that needs to be addressed to guide the City's decisions. Should actions be taken to expand areas Downtown dedicated primarily for concentrated employment growth, with the potential risk of foreclosing opportunities for more housing development in these areas? Or should actions to increase Downtown's capacity for employment growth be balanced with actions to create additional capacity for residential growth?

Below are two potential policy choices related to the nature of Downtown growth:

- **Expand Downtown's role as employment center.** Changes to height and density limits in the study area will expand Downtown's ability to accommodate more jobs by increasing employment capacity. Higher commercial densities beyond the core will provide opportunities for more concentrated employment growth in areas currently intended for a mix of both housing and moderate-density employment activity. As more of the Downtown area absorbs employment growth, housing will be

accommodated in peripheral areas, like Belltown, or in areas adjacent to Downtown where land is available.

As growth continues under the proposed changes, residential capacity will be "built-out" while capacity remains for continued employment growth. Consequently, the amount of housing that can continue to be provided Downtown for Downtown employees will diminish. Housing for Downtown employees will increasingly need to be provided in areas outside of Downtown. With constraints on housing capacity in adjacent areas, including First Hill, Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown Queen Anne, opportunities for housing future Downtown employees in these areas will be limited as well.

- **Promote a balance between both employment and housing growth.** This approach first requires defining the appropriate balance between the amount of jobs and housing to be accommodated Downtown over the long term, beyond the 2014 timeframe of the Comprehensive Plan growth targets. As the Comprehensive Plan is updated in 2004 to cover the timeframe between 2014 and 2024, housing and employment growth targets may be updated to cover those additional ten years. Measures then need to be considered for ensuring sufficient capacity to maintain this balance—either by reserving more areas for housing, linking increased employment density to provisions for additional housing production, or some other means.

Livability of Downtown residential environments

Assumptions about the type and location of housing to be built in the study area in the future imply that a certain type of residential environment will emerge, with larger, denser residential projects mixed with high-density commercial development. These assumptions raise questions about the type of residential environments desired to accommodate future housing, as well as the measures needed to achieve these environments. Included among these questions: how best to accommodate a desired mix of incomes and provide necessary amenities and services needed to support different residential populations? With higher land costs in areas where commercial densities are increased, will subsidized affordable housing continue to be built in these areas? If so, will there be sufficient support services available to this population?

Two options for future Downtown residential environments that are explored in the EIS include:

- General mixing of housing development with commercial development;
- Creation of residential areas or "enclaves" where housing is the predominant use.

Continuation of the Transfer of Development Credit Program

The City established the TDC program in the Denny Triangle jointly with King County in 1999. While no projects have yet purchased development credits, at least a half-dozen have expressed interest, and the County has already committed limited resources to be used in the design and implementation of a demonstration Green Street block.

In varying degrees, the proposed alternatives reduce the area of the Denny Triangle where the TDC program would continue to operate. Alternative 1, with proposals for the greatest height and density increases in the Denny Triangle, would likely result in the elimination of the program altogether. Alternative 2 would keep the program active in roughly half of the area, while Alternative 3 would maintain the program in about 2/3 of the area.

The TDC program provides a means to target public and private resources into a high-growth area. It is also seen as a way to make residential development a more competitive option for developers in zones that allow relatively high densities for commercial development. Because residential use is not subject to a density limit under Downtown zoning, the TDC program provides the only mechanism for requiring market-rate residential development to contribute to public amenities in exchange for allowing additional residential floor area above current height limits.

Accommodating transition between high-density Downtown commercial areas and less intensive adjacent neighborhoods

Downtown zones were originally established and mapped to accommodate a gradual transition in the density, height and scale of development in areas separating the "core" commercial zones and adjacent residential and mixed-use areas. Increases in height and density would create a more abrupt change in the scale and intensity of development along the "edges" of these transition areas.

Under what circumstances should measures be applied to maintain a development transition? This is especially an issue for portions of DMC areas abutting Belltown, the Cascade neighborhood and the waterfront; as well as portions of the DOC 2 zone abutting the historic districts of Pioneer Square and the International District to the south, Pike/Pine to the east, and the residential enclave desired in the northeast corner of the Denny Triangle.

Accommodating additional open space

With only limited open space, the affected area currently has the greatest employment density in the region (over 300 jobs per acre), which is projected to increase further in 20 years to over 460 jobs per acre. Furthermore, projections call for adding a substantial amount of housing to the area—over 7,350 new units. With about 6,000 units currently in the affected area, the amount of housing will more than double, increasing density to about 32 units per acre. With only a limited increase in the amount of open space planned for the area, this additional growth is likely to raise concerns about being adequately served.

Promoting a desired development scale

Preliminary studies have identified several issues related to the bulk of development under any of the EIS alternatives, including:

- **Residential and mixed-use development.** Current conditions create the potential for very bulky residential and mixed-use development due to the fact that FAR density limits do not apply to residential uses and accessory parking provided in above-grade structures. In the absence of such limits, current bulk controls have only a limited impact on overall building bulk. With increased height limits, the issue of development bulk is likely to gain more attention as more residential and mixed-use developments occur in Downtown commercial zones, and projects increasingly push the building envelope to maximize development potential. However, addressing this issue raises another dilemma. Measures to promote more desirable building forms (slender towers, tower spacing, etc.) will reduce the number of units that can be accommodated on a site—appearing to contradict efforts to promote more housing.

- **Commercial development.** Increasing density limits, even when coupled with height increases, could result in the unintended consequence of producing bulkier buildings. For example, the Alternative 1 proposal to raise density limits from 10 FAR to 14 FAR (40% increase) in DOC 2 areas of the Denny Triangle, while increasing height limits from 300 feet to 400 feet (33% increase), will create a similar situation to that of the DOC 1 zone, where problems have been cited with the bulkiness of development built to the current maximum 14 FAR and 450-foot height limit. Given the larger site sizes and lower height limit of the DOC 2 zone, this condition would likely be repeated here. Similarly, the proposed 10 FAR in DMC zones with height limits of 240 feet or less could raise the same issues cited in DOC 2 zones under the current 10 FAR limit and 300-foot height limit.

Table 1
Summary of Impacts

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT Impacts			
• ***Employment Growth:*** Commercial capacity could accommodate as much as 48 years worth of employment growth, resulting in as many as 338,000 employees in Downtown Seattle.	• Commercial capacity could accommodate as much as 42 years worth of employment growth, resulting in as many as 319,000 employees in Downtown Seattle.	• Commercial capacity could accommodate as much as 38 years worth of employment growth, resulting in up to 305,000 Downtown Seattle employees.	• Commercial capacity could accommodate as much as 37 years worth of employment growth, resulting in up to 300,000 employees in Downtown Seattle.
• In 20 years, there could be an increase of between 50,000 and 71,000 new Downtown employees.	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1
• ***Population Growth:*** Residential capacity could accommodate as much as 26 years of demand for Downtown housing.	• ***Population Growth:*** Residential capacity could accommodate as much as 27 years of demand for Downtown housing.	• ***Population Growth:*** Residential capacity could accommodate as much as 30 years of demand for Downtown housing.	• ***Population Growth:*** Residential capacity could accommodate as much as 29 years of demand for Downtown housing.
• In 20 years there could be an additional 21,900 new Downtown Seattle residents in 17,500 new Downtown households.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1
• Approximately 13% of new households could earn less than 80% of the median income in King County.	• Approximately 17% of new households could earn less than 80% of the median income in King County.	• Approximately 15% of new households could earn less than 80% of the median income in King County.	• Approximately 11% of new households could earn less than 80% of the median income in King County.
HOUSING Impacts			
• ***Capacity for Housing:*** There could be capacity for as many as 22,855 new units in Downtown Seattle.	• ***Capacity for Housing:*** There could be capacity for as many as 24,800 new units in Downtown Seattle.	• ***Capacity for Housing:*** There could be capacity for up to 27,440 new units in Downtown Seattle.	• ***Capacity for Housing:*** There could be capacity for as much as 26,410 new units in Downtown Seattle.
• ***TDC Program:*** The Denny Triangle Transfer of Development Credits	• ***TDC Program:*** The Denny Triangle TDC program would	• ***TDC Program:*** The Denny Triangle TDC program would	• ***TDC Program:*** The Denny Triangle TDC program would

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
(TDC) program would no longer be viable under this Alternative.	only be active in the DMC zones. It would create additional capacity for as many as 2,630 new units.	be active in the DMC zones and portions of the DOC2 zone. It would create additional capacity for as many as 4,400 new units.	be active in all Denny Triangle neighborhoods. It would create additional capacity for as many as 5,300 new units.
• ***Housing Types:*** Market-rate housing is most likely to be built in towers as part of mixed-use projects. Subsidized units are more likely going to be built in lower-scale residential structures.	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1
• ***Housing Bonus Program:*** The Housing bonus program might leverage sufficient funds to build up to 2,675 units affordable to households earning less than 80% of King County's Median Household Income (MAI) over twenty years.	• ***Housing Bonus Program:*** The Housing bonus program might leverage sufficient funds to build up to 3,225 units affordable to households earning less than 80% of MAI over twenty years.	• ***Housing Bonus Program:*** The Housing bonus program might leverage sufficient funds to build up to 2,775 units affordable to households earning less than 80% of MAI over twenty years.	• ***Housing Bonus Program:*** The Housing bonus program might leverage sufficient funds to build up to 2,025 units affordable to households earning less than 80% of MAI over twenty years.
• ***Demolition of Existing Residential Buildings:*** Up to six residential buildings with 300 residential units are on sites that could be redeveloped. Three of the six buildings, with 141 dwelling units, receive subsidies to keep their units affordable to households earning less than 50% MAI.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
LAND USE **Impacts**			
• ***Development Capacity:*** There would be capacity for over 38 million square feet of new commercial space and 10,500 new units within the study area.	• ***Development Capacity:*** There would be capacity for over 33 million square feet of new commercial space and as many as 11,900 new units within the study area.	• ***Development Capacity:*** There would be capacity for over 30 million square feet of new commercial space and as many as 14,600 new units within the study area.	• ***Development Capacity:*** There would be capacity for over 28 million square feet of new commercial space and 13,750 new units within the study area.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• Up to 244 Downtown parcels containing 72 acres have been identified as potential sites for redevelopment.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
• Over twenty years, approximately 17.5 million square feet of commercial space would be built in the study area. Almost 45% of the commercial space might be built within the Denny Triangle DOC2 zone, with another 25% built in the Commercial Core DOC1 zone.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.
• Over twenty years, approximately 7,400 units would be built within the study area. Approximately 60% of those units might be built in mixed-use projects in the Denny Triangle DOC2 zone.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.
• One City of Seattle Landmark and one site on the National Register have been identified as potential development sites.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE Impacts			
• ***Height: New buildings by height range:*** Approx. 36 structures greater than 250 feet in height (65% of new structures).	• Approx. 31 structures greater than 250 feet (55% of new structures).	• Approx. 28 structures greater than 250 feet (47% of new structures).	• Approx. 26 structures greater than 250 feet (41% of new structures).
• ***Bulk/Density:*** Predicted to result in 39 devs with 55 structures by 2020.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1—40 devs with 56 structures.	• Bulk would be spread across more projects: 44 devs and 60 structures.	• Bulk would be spread across more projects: 48 devs and 63 structures.
• Additional bulk from exempted residential uses and a few "other" uses would contribute to actual	• Similar to Alt. 1, but fewer devs would achieve the higher end of densities.	• Fewer devs than Alt. 1 or 2 would reach higher densities, due to lower height limits and	• Similar to Alt. 3.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
building bulk legally exceeding maximum density limits.		more bulk controls.	
• ***Bulk Massing Patterns:*** Greatest massing of bulk would occur in the Denny Triangle. Rectangular shape of blocks would contribute to perceived bulkiness of development in the Denny Triangle.	• Similar to Alt. 1, but lower scale of development at periphery.	• Retention of existing height and density at east and west edges of Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone would provide some "stepping down" in massing of bulk.	• Similar to Alt. 1, but less-bulky development spread over more sites in Denny Triangle.
• New development in peripheral areas would be more dispersed, except for potential concentration at edge of Belltown.	• Similar to Alt. 1, but lower scale of development at periphery.	• Similar to existing zoning, but more bulk controls in some areas may result in residential towers that are more slender.	• Similar to Alt. 3 but no additional bulk controls would allow some bulkier new development.
• ***Bulk—Height/density relationships:*** Alt. 1 changes may not resolve an existing zoning issue (relating to allowable height and bulk) that results in bulkier building designs.	• Similar to Alt. 1	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• The existing zoning issue would remain.
• It may be difficult to fit all of the maximum commercial density within proposed DMC height limits between 165 and 225 feet (near Denny Way, and 1st Ave/Western Ave vicinity).	• Without these changes, this impact would not occur.	• Without these changes, this impact would not occur.	• Not applicable.
• ***Scale—Transitions:*** Greatest differences among the alternatives in zoning height/density with adjacent areas (Pike/Pine, Denny Way, Belltown, Pioneer Square/Int. District, harborfront, retail core).	• Fewer changes in transitions than Alt. 1, due to no changes in zoning near Belltown, Denny Way, or 1st Ave/ Western Ave vicinity.	• Lower commercial density limit and additional bulk limits for towers would make transitions more gradual in the Denny Way, Belltown and 1st Ave./ Western Avenue vicinities.	• Transitions provided by the existing zoning pattern would be maintained.
• ***Scale—Compatibility with existing development:*** Intensity of new development in Denny Triangle would generate greatest differences in compatibility with existing	• Less impact than Alt. 1 in the peripheral DMC zones. Similar impacts to Alt. 1 in Commercial Core.	• Alt. 3 changes would promote greater compatibility in residential-oriented zones. Similar to Alt. 1 for the DOC office core zones.	• Similar to Alt. 1, except for DMC zones where no zoning changes would occur.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
development.			
• ***Scale—Effect on development diversity:*** The amount of redevelopment in Denny Triangle could potentially result in a more homogeneous character.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• Similar to Alt. 1, but broader potential range of scale in new structures.	• Similar to Alt. 1, but the broadest potential range of scale in new structures.
• ***Scale—Effect on residential character:*** Overall additional bulk of development and mixing of residential and non-residential projects could discourage achievement of a beneficial residential character.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• Residential-oriented zoning in some areas creates some greater potential for achieving beneficial residential character.	• Similar to Alt. 1.
PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES & STREETSCAPE **Impacts**			
Positive Impacts:	***Positive Impacts:***	***Positive Impacts:***	***Positive Impacts:***
• Narrow sidewalks would be widened. • Additional street trees would be provided. • Green Street improvements would be provided. • Continuous street level uses would be promoted along several streets, aided by infill development over time. • New public open spaces in developments should benefit pedestrians.	• Similar to Alt. 1. Even in areas with retained zoning (in DMC zones), the streetscape conditions as perceived by pedestrians would not be much different than would occur under Alt. 1.	• Similar to Alt. 1, except greater chance for positive street environment in the residential-zoned areas, due to lower bulk limits. Lack of zone changes in some DOC 2 areas would avoid some streetscape effects related to greater building bulk.	• Same amount of growth would be accommodated on more properties than under Alt. 1, providing more opportunities for streetscape improvements, including Green Streets.
Adverse Impacts:	***Adverse Impacts:***	***Adverse Impacts:***	***Adverse Impacts:***
• Above-grade parking could detract from street-level character. • In some areas, non-requirement of street level uses could limit street level activity in buildings. • There would be a greater sense of	• Similar types of impacts as under Alt. 1. However, lack of zone changes in DMC areas would mean buildings less dense and lower in height in	• Similar types of impacts as under Alternative 1, but somewhat less potential for impacts, due to residential-oriented zoning changes in some areas, and lack of	• Same amount of growth on more properties than under Alt. 1 would have additional risk of adverse impacts occurring along some streets, as listed

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
"enclosure" within several streets. • In some areas, possible loss of older structures may diminish variety and pedestrian orientation at street level.	these areas than under Alt. 1.	change in some DOC 2 areas.	under Alt. 1.
PARKS & OPEN SPACE **Impacts**			
• ***Predicted on-site open space developed in future projects:*** 1.7 acres	• 1.9 acres	• 1.9 acres	• 2.9 acres
• ***Use of open space TDR:*** The potential supply of open space TDR is approx. 1-1.3 million sf. Demand not expected to exceed supply.	• Supply would remain the same. Changes in DOC zones would increase demand similar to Alt. 1.	• Similar to Alt. 1 and 2, but areas rezoned to DMR/C would allow slight increase in use of open space TDRs.	• Supply would be less than under Alt. 1, but Alt. 4 would allow for the greatest use of open space TDR among the alternatives.
• **Open space required for office uses:** 7.9 acres	• 7.7 acres	• 7.8 acres	• 7.8 acres
• **Common rec. area open space required for residential uses:** 7.2 acres	• 7.2 acres	• 6.5 acres	• 6.5 acres
• **Predicted Contributions to TDC Amenity Credit Fund:** None, since Alt. 1 would likely terminate the use of the TDC program.	Est. $1.2 million	Est. $3.5 million	Est. $4.3 million
• **Relationship to Open Space Goals - *Denny Triangle*** Even with predicted open space in future developments, this area would fall a bit short of meeting the residential and employee-oriented open space goals. However, would likely meet the distribution goal.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1, except residential-zoned area could promote more residentially-oriented open space.	• Slightly more open space in Denny Triangle, possibly spread over more area than Alternative 1.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
Open Space - *Commercial Core*			
• Would meet or exceed the residential and employee-oriented open space goals, and would likely meet the distribution goals.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.
• **Number of future development sites adjacent to Green Streets:** 10 sites	• 10 sites	• 11 sites	• 14 sites
VIEWS AND AESTHETICS Impacts			
Public Viewpoints			
• ***Harborview Viewpoint:*** Possible future development at a site between Yesler Way and Jefferson St., 5th and 6th Avenues would block a view toward the south end of Elliott Bay from the Harborview Viewpoint.	• Same impacts as Alternative 1.	• Same impacts as Alternatives 1 and 2.	• No impacts. Slightly less potential for view impacts than Alternatives 1, 2 or 3 due to lower height limits in property.
• ***Four Columns Park:*** With future development in the Denny Triangle, views from Four Columns Park toward the Space Needle, Olympic Mountains and Queen Anne (including the landmark Q.A. High School) would gradually be obscured. The additional increment of height/density would obscure additional sky area, but would not cause different types of visual impairment than are already possible under existing regulations.	• Similar impacts to Alternative 1, but slightly less potential for impairment of more northerly views toward the vicinity near I-5 and Denny Way. Similar to Alternative 1 in potential for impairment of Space Needle and Olympic Mountains views.	• Similar impacts to Alternative 2, but less potential for impairment due to omission of DOC 2 zone change east of 8th Avenue. However, similar to Alternative 1 in potential for impairment of Space Needle and Olympic Mountains views.	• No impacts. However, similar to Alternative 1 in potential for impairment of Space Needle and Olympic Mountains views. Generally, less potential for impacts than Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
Views Toward Landmarks			
• Additional building bulk (greatest allowable under Alt. 1) adjacent to or near some landmarks would	• Less potential for impacts than Alternative 1 because Terminal Sales Building and 1st Avenue	• Slightly less potential for impacts than Alternatives 1 or 2, because of modest changes	• No impacts. However, the potential for impacts on views to landmarks is roughly similar

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
contribute to their diminished prominence in the urban setting. Examples include the Camlin Hotel, Rainier Club & Terminal Sales Bldg.	group of landmark buildings would not be subject to influence of zone changes.	near Terminal Sales Building and 1st Avenue group, and lack of rezone adjacent to the Times Square Building.	under any alternative.
Skyline Views			
• ***Kerry Park:*** Future development in the Denny Triangle vicinity would further obscure views toward Cascade foothills to the southeast (already partially blocked by existing development).	• Slightly less potential for impacts than Alternative 1 due to omission of some zone changes.	• Slightly less potential for impacts than Alternative 1 due to different set of zone changes that maintains transitions.	• No impacts. Somewhat less potential for identified types of view impacts with future development.
• ***Belvedere Viewpoint:*** Future development in the Denny Triangle would fill in a portion of the skyline and further obscure views toward Cascade Mountains in the background of views from the Belvedere (W. Seattle) viewpoint.	• Slightly less potential for impacts, due to lesser bulk and height in the 1st Avenue and Western Avenue vicinity.	• Slightly less potential for impacts than Alternatives 1 and 2.	• No impacts. Somewhat less potential for identified types of view impacts with future development.
• ***Other skyline views:*** Changes in skyline views would be most apparent in views from the east, from Pike-Pine and Capitol Hill areas, and views from the north.	• Somewhat less potential than Alternative 1 for skyline view impacts from the east and north due to omission of zone changes in the Denny Way vicinity.	• Somewhat less potential than Alternatives 1 or 2 for skyline view impacts due to omission of zone changes in portion of Denny Triangle.	• No impacts. However, existing opportunities for height increases would remain. Over time, future development will change the skyline in ways similar under any alternative.
Scenic Routes			
• Changes in views from scenic routes would primarily involve changes in the skyline and greater presence of denser buildings in the middle ground and background. Routes most affected include: Westlake and Fairview Aves, I-5 southbound between Lakeview Blvd and Olive Way, Yesler Way, Dexter Avenue, and SR 99 southbound before Battery Street Tunnel.	• Slightly less potential for impacts due to omission of zone changes in the Denny Way and 1st Avenue and Western Avenue vicinities.	• Slightly less potential for impacts due to different zone changes in the Denny Way and 1st Avenue and Western Avenue vicinities.	• No impacts. Over time, future development will add building bulk in ways generally similar under any alternative.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
CLIMATE—SHADOWS AND WIND **Impacts** **Shadows**			
• Taller buildings in all of Denny Triangle would add to shading of city streets.	• No zone changes in peripheral areas of Denny Triangle would result in somewhat less potential for shading of city streets than Alternative 1.	• Less intensive zoning in peripheral areas of Denny Triangle would result in less potential for shading of city streets than Alternatives 1 or 2.	• No changes, but future developments under existing height/density limits could add to total extent of shading of city streets.
• Taller buildings in 1st/Western Ave. vicinity and edge of Belltown would add to shading of city streets.	• No zone changes in 1st Ave./ Western Ave. vicinity or edge of Belltown would avoid additional shading effects.	• Less intensive zoning in edge of Belltown and 1st Avenue/ Western Ave. vicinities would result in less potential for shading of city streets than Alternatives 1 or 2.	• No changes, but future developments under existing height/density limits could add to shading of city streets.
• Additional shading of Downtown SEPA-identified parks not likely to occur due to zoning changes.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• No changes relative to Downtown SEPA-identified parks, although future development closer to protected parks could possibly trigger the need to use SEPA protections.
• The possibility of higher building heights with future development near Denny Park at Denny Way creates slightly greater potential for shading impacts on the park.	• No zone changes near Denny Way would avoid additional shading effects on Denny Park.	• Changes would not affect zoned height/density near Denny Way, thus avoiding additional shading effects on Denny Park.	• No changes
Wind			
• Future new buildings in the office core and some peripheral areas would create the potential for additional wind effects near street level. However, interspersing of new buildings with existing buildings may help protect them from some wind exposure.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.	• Slightly less potential for wind effects than Alternatives 1 or 2.	• Slightly less potential for wind effects than Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
• The additional bulk and distribution	• Due to somewhat less height	• Somewhat less potential for	• Slightly less potential for wind

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
of future development in the Denny Triangle may provide some additional buffering of winds from the north. However, the new buildings at the northern periphery would be exposed to those winds and their effects.	and bulk of future buildings in the Denny Triangle and peripheral areas, potential wind effects would be somewhat less than for Alternative 1.	wind effects than Alternatives 1 or 2.	effects than Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
ENERGY **Impacts**			
• City Light predicts that a new substation serving Downtown needs to be energized by 2012. Growth rates studied in the EIS are comparable to City Light load growth projections.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.
• Factors that could accelerate growth in electrical loads include: --higher-than-forecasted economic activity; --greater-than-expected high-density loads (such as "server hotels") --higher "system redundancy" needs.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
• Potential future development arising from higher zoned height/density limits in the Denny Triangle area east of 8th Avenue could result in capacity limitations more quickly than would otherwise occur, due to increased commercial loads. These limitations and needed improvements will be closely monitored and addressed in City Light's Capacity Plan in 2004.	• Impacts approximately similar to Alternative 1, except slightly less-intensive zoning changes in portions of Denny Triangle east of 8th Avenue could reduce the worst case potential for electrical infrastructure impacts in that area.	• Impacts slightly less than Alternative 1 and 2. Alternative 3's greater residential emphasis in zoning of the portion of Denny Triangle east of 8th Avenue would reduce the magnitude of impacts on the electrical system compared to Alternatives 1 and 2.	• Under Alternative 4 (existing zoning), impacts would be nearly the same as for Alternative 1. However, growth may spread over a few more properties in the Commercial Core, and overall commercial development capacity would approximately 25% less than Alternative 1 (and residential capacity 19% less).

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• There is considerable potential for additional growth in both Downtown and South Lake Union. However, due to the presence of separate distribution systems for these two areas, they would not compete for the same substation transformer or distribution capacity.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.	• Similar to Alternative 1.
TRANSPORTATION **Impacts**			
• Approximately 1.285 million person trips are projected to have an origin and/or destination in Downtown Seattle on an average weekday in year 2020, 58% greater than today's 815,000 person trips. This reflects the high-end growth forecast used in this EIS.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
• For Alternative 1, volumes across all screenlines are projected to increase by 10.1% in the AM peak and 20.9% in the PM peak hour (year 2020).	• For Alternative 2, volumes across all screenlines are projected to increase by 9.3% in the AM peak and 19.7% in the PM peak hour.	• For Alternative 3, volumes across all screenlines are projected to increase by 10.1% in the AM peak and 20.4% in the PM peak hour.	• In 2020 Baseline Condition, volumes across all screenlines are projected to increase by 9.4% in the AM peak hour, and by 19.4% in the PM peak hour.
• At Screenline 8 (NE Denny Triangle), eastbound PM peak hour traffic is projected to be approximately 8% greater than projected for the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	• At Screenline 8, eastbound PM peak hour traffic is projected to be approximately 1.3% greater than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	• At Screenline 8, eastbound PM peak hour traffic is projected to be approximately 2.3% greater than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	• At Screenline 8, eastbound PM peak hour traffic is projected to be approximately 41% greater than existing conditions.
• At Screenline 8 (NE Denny Triangle), the predicted PM peak hour volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio would reach 1.20 by 2020. A v/c ratio of 1.20 is the City's maximum arterial level of service standard.	• Predicted v/c ratio of 1.13 by 2020, 0.07 less than predicted for Alternative 1.	• Predicted v/c ratio of 1.12 by 2020, 0.08 less than predicted for Alternative 1.	• Predicted v/c ratio of 1.11 by 2020, 0.09 less than predicted for Alternative 1.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• Other screenlines' v/c ratios for the 2020 PM peak hour include: --approx. 0.80-0.84 in both directions on Avenues near Seneca St.;	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.
--approx. 0.90 for eastbound traffic near 9th Ave in Denny Triangle;	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.
--approx. 0.93 for eastbound traffic near 6th Ave in the Commercial Core.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.	• Nearly the same as Alt. 1.
• In the studied corridors of Denny Way, Stewart St., Olive Way and Howell St., 13 of 38 intersections in the AM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or F.	• In the studied corridors, 8 of 38 intersections in the AM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or F.	• In the studied corridors, 8 of 38 intersections in the AM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or F.	• In the studied corridors, 10 of 38 intersections in the AM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or F. This would be 8 more than under existing conditions.
• In the studied corridors, 19 of 38 intersections in the PM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or worse.	• In the studied corridors, 19 of 38 intersections in the PM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or worse.	• In the studied corridors, 22 of 38 intersections in the PM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or worse.	• In the studied corridors, 17 of 38 intersections in the PM peak hour are projected to experience operating conditions at LOS E or worse. This would be 12 more than under existing conditions.
• ***Travel Times:*** For the 2020 PM peak hour, westbound Stewart St. would be approximately 6 minutes slower than the 2020 Baseline Condition. However, travel times would be 3 minutes faster westbound on Denny Way and one minute faster eastbound on Olive Way.	• For the 2020 PM peak hour, westbound Stewart St. travel time would be slightly faster than the 2020 Baseline Condition. Travel times would also be 5 minutes faster westbound on Denny Way and 2 minutes faster eastbound on Olive Way.	• For the 2020 PM peak hour, westbound Stewart St. travel time would be approximately 3 minutes slower than the 2020 Baseline Condition. Also, travel times would be 3 minutes faster westbound Denny Way and approximately one minute slower eastbound on Olive Way.	• For the 2020 Baseline Condition PM peak hour, westbound Stewart Street travel time would be approximately 9 minutes slower than existing conditions. Also, travel times would be nearly 14 minutes slower westbound on Denny Way, and 2 minutes slower eastbound on Olive Way.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• ***Transit Service:***			
--North of Seneca Street screenline: Similar to the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	-- North of Seneca Street screenline: Similar to the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	-- North of Seneca Street screenline: Similar to the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	-- North of Seneca Street screenline: Nearly the same level of delay in the AM peak hour as existing conditions. Modest increase in transit delay could occur, on 2nd, 3rd and 4th Avenues.
--Olive/Stewart corridors: The cumulative amount of travel time spent by transit vehicles in these corridors would increase by 10% and 24% in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively.	--Olive/Stewart corridors: The cumulative amount of travel time spent by transit vehicles in these corridors would decrease by 1% and 15% in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively.	--Olive/Stewart corridors: The cumulative amount of travel time spent by transit vehicles in these corridors would decrease by 4% in the AM peak but increase by 25% in the PM peak hours.	--Olive/Stewart corridors: The cumulative transit travel time in these corridors would increase by 40% in the AM peak and 45% in the PM peak hour, compared to existing conditions.
--Denny Way screenline: Similar (2% less) than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	--Denny Way screenline: Transit delay notably greater (21%) than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	--Denny Way screenline: Sum of AM and PM peak hour transit delay approximately the same as Baseline Condition. However, this occurs with a 28% (18-minute) improvement in the AM peak hour and 18% (20-minute) degradation, compared to the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4).	--Denny Way screenline: Total minutes of transit delay projected to increase by 34 minutes (115%) in the AM peak hour and 68 minutes (168%) in the PM peak hour, compared to existing conditions.
• ***Transit Layover:*** Slightly less impact than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4). Potentially, 5 existing layover locations displaced.	• Slightly less impact than the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4). Potentially, 5 existing layover locations displaced	• Similar impact to the 2020 Baseline Condition (Alt. 4). Potentially, 10 existing layover locations displaced.	• Worst-case transit layover impact: future development by 2020 could displace 10 existing Metro layover locations.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• Queuing (lane back-up) problems are predicted at several locations, mostly similar to the 2020 Baseline Condition. However, fewer queuing impacts on Olive Way for the eastbound PM peak, compared to the 2020 Baseline.	• PM peak hour impacts would be generally similar to the Baseline Condition, but with fewer queuing impacts on Olive Way than Alternative 1 or the Baseline Condition.	• PM peak hour impacts would be generally similar to the Baseline Condition, except conditions would be slightly worse along Stewart Street and somewhat improved along Denny Way, Olive Way and Howell Street.	• Queuing problems for some traffic movements would occur at a greater majority of intersections along Stewart, Denny Way and Olive Way, compared to existing conditions.
PARKING **Impacts**			
• Future residential and employment growth would increase overall parking demand, for approximately 19,500 to 23,750 spaces, depending upon the amount of commuters that choose to use transit rather than automobiles.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.	• Slightly less than Alternative 1.	• Slightly more than Alternative 1.
• An estimated supply of approximately 17,005 off-street parking spaces would be provided with future development.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.	• Slightly less than Alternative 1.	• Nearly the same as Alternative 1.
• Approximately 7,137 existing off-street parking spaces would be displaced by development through 2020, largely in the Denny Triangle and edge of Belltown.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Approximately 180 more spaces displaced than Alt. 1.	• Approximately 410 more spaces displaced than Alt. 1.
• Competition for on-street parking spaces would likely increase, especially in the areas of concentrated future development.	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Slightly more probable impact than Alternative 1.	• Somewhat greater impact than Alternative 1.
WATER UTILITY **Impacts**			
• An additional 6.3 to 7.1 million gallons per day of water demand if full buildout was achieved, a 24-	• An additional 5.7 to 6.4 million gallons per day of water demand if full buildout was	• An additional 5.4 to 6.0 million gallons per day of water demand if full buildout was	• An additional 5.4 to 6.0 million gallons per day of water demand if full buildout was

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
25% increase over buildout of existing zoning. Less than 1 percent of total city water demand.	achieved, a 12-13% increase over buildout of existing zoning. Approximately 0.5 percent of total city water demand.	achieved, a 6% increase over buildout of existing zoning. Approximately 0.25 percent of total city water demand.	achieved.
• No significant adverse infrastructure capacity impacts identified. Two existing minor deficiencies relating to fire flows can be corrected over time.	• Less potential for adverse impacts than Alternative 1.	• Less potential for adverse impacts than Alternative 1.	• No impacts identified.
• The typical location of water meters within public rights-of-way makes accessibility and repair costly and difficult.	• Same as Alternative 1	• Same as Alternative 1.	• Same as Alternative 1.
SEWER & STORMWATER UTILITIES **Impacts**			
• Future development could occur in a denser manner and generate more total sanitary sewage volume than development under current zoning.	• Similar to Alt. 1, with slightly greater sewage volumes in the Denny Triangle.	• Similar to Alt. 1, with slightly greater sewage volumes in the Denny Triangle.	• Similar to Alt. 1, with slightly lesser sewage volumes in the Denny Triangle.
• By 2020, peak sanitary sewage flows in the Denny Triangle would be approximately 3,750 gallons per minute.	• By 2020, peak sanitary sewage flows in the Denny Triangle would be approximately 3,822 gallons per minute, 1.5% greater than Alt. 1.	• By 2020, peak sanitary sewage flows in the Denny Triangle would be approximately 3,805 gallons per minute, 1.5% greater than Alt. 1.	• By 2020, peak sanitary sewage flows in the Denny Triangle would be approximately 3,616 gallons per minute, 3.6% less than Alt. 1.
• Better stormwater controls required with future development would reduce peak stormwater volumes, thus helping to avoid or minimize the risk of overflows during major storm events.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• Improvements will occur even under the No Action Alternative.
• No significant adverse sewer/ drainage infrastructure or capacity impacts identified.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• Similar to Alt. 1.	• No impacts identified.

Alternative 1 High End Height and Density	Alternative 2 Concentrated Office Core	Alternative 3 Residential Emphasis	Alternative 4 No Action Alternative
• Worst-case additional sewage volume from full buildout would represent approximately 0.75 percent of treatment plant annual average daily flow.	• Worst-case additional sewage volume from full buildout would represent less than 0.5 percent of treatment plant annual average daily flow.	• Worst-case additional sewage volume from full buildout would represent less than 0.2 percent of treatment plant annual average daily flow.	• No additional impacts from this No Action Alternative.

Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Population and Employment

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts are identified for any of the alternatives. Over the long term, the alternatives could have differing impacts on the number and composition of Downtown households and Downtown employees, but none of these impacts are identified as significant unavoidable adverse impacts.

Housing

Under all alternatives, large public and private subsidies would be required to meet ambitious targets for housing preservation and production. If these subsidies are not available, some buildings currently providing affordable housing may be lost and other potential housing opportunities may not be created.

In spite of the number of programs currently available to assist households earning less than 30% MAI with housing, some households with employees in new Downtown Seattle office buildings and hotels would have difficulty finding affordable housing to meet their needs in King County. They would need to live in overcrowded conditions, pay more than 30% of their income for rent, or commute from lower-priced housing outside of King County. Those few households not able or willing to make these choices could potentially become homeless.

The TDC program would be eliminated under Alternative 1. The TDC program would no longer be available to projects in some portions of the Denny Triangle DOC2 zone under Alternatives 2 and 3.

Land Use

Under all alternatives, if forecasted development occurs, land uses in the study area would be significantly transformed by the increased density of residential and commercial development. This transformation is interpreted to be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans for the study area, and is not interpreted to be a significant unavoidable adverse impact.

Similar to existing conditions, some City of Seattle landmarks, some existing housing and some buildings containing human service uses might be demolished. This could occur under any of the alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, and is not interpreted to be a significant unavoidable adverse impact.

Urban Design: Height, Bulk and Scale

Additional height and bulk enabled by proposed zoning changes would add incrementally to the scale of development, resulting in greater differences from the development authorized by existing zoning. This increase in the scale and intensity of development would have the greatest impact in transition areas separating Downtown commercial zones from less intensive residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

Urban Design: Streetscape and Pedestrian Amenity

Under all the alternatives, future development will reduce solar access to the pedestrian environment and increase the physical enclosure of the street level environment.

Urban Design: Parks and Open Space

Under all the alternatives, the per capita amount of public open space available for use by Downtown residents and employees will diminish.

Views and Aesthetics

Additional height and bulk enabled by proposed zoning changes would add incrementally to the potential future impairment or blockage of views from some areas, predominantly portions of the Capitol Hill (south of Denny Way), Pike/Pine and First Hill neighborhoods.

Climate—Shadows and Wind

None are identified.

Transportation

Without mitigation, future development through the year 2020 would generate additional traffic volumes and increase congestion in portions of Downtown, most notably in the Denny Triangle area. Much of this impact would occur with or without zoning changes. However, if Alternative 1 or Alternative 3 is implemented, congestion in the northeastern Denny Triangle could be approximately 5-10 percent worse than under the other alternatives, including the 2020 baseline condition (Alternative 4 - No Action). Under all the alternatives considered, additional congestion will likely increase overall travel times on Denny Way, Stewart Street and Olive Way, including transit travel time. Implementation of mitigation strategies, at the City's discretion, would likely improve overall transportation conditions, so that a portion of the impacts of traffic congestion could be avoided.

Parking

Additional development over the long term would contribute to increased commuter vehicle trips to and from the Downtown study area, and increased parking demand.

Energy

With implementation of recommended mitigation strategies, significant unavoidable adverse energy impacts are unlikely to occur.

Water Utility

None identified.

Sewer and Stormwater Utilities

None identified.

Mitigation Strategies

A range of possible mitigation strategies for key topics analyzed in this EIS is summarized below. Most of these mitigation strategies are not considered mandatory actions that must be taken if any of the alternatives are chosen. However, the City should consider implementing several strategies to avoid or reduce negative consequences that may occur over time with future development Downtown, as identified in this EIS.

Land Use

- **Residential Character.** Rezones of some areas to promote residential uses could encourage the type of residential character envisioned in some of the Downtown neighborhood plans.
- **Human Services.** A variety of measures are proposed that would encourage the retention of existing buildings currently housing human service agencies and the development of new space for human service agencies, including the development of a human services bonus or TDR program.
- **Historic Preservation**. The City currently has a number of programs in place to help preserve City Landmarks. The City could take a number of measures to direct those resources in ways that would help protect the most threatened structures.

Housing

- **Funding for Low-Income Housing**. The City could undertake a number of different measures to increase the amount of floor area that would be subject to the low-income housing bonus program, including increasing the maximum floor area limit, or applying the program to DMC zones.
- **Capacity for residential development**. A number of changes to Downtown's zoning scheme are identified, to ensure that housing remains a viable component of development Downtown after twenty years.
- **Housing for larger households**. Potential strategies are defined to encourage the development of housing for families with children and other larger households. These include: incentives for units with multiple bedrooms, design review guidelines focused on designing open spaces to meet the needs of families with children, and the development of Downtown facilities for children.

Urban Design

- **Height, Bulk and Scale.** A variety of strategies for addressing bulk issues are identified, including: restrictions on alley vacations; better coordination between height and density limits to ensure desired building forms; density limits and/or additional bulk controls on residential use; special bulk controls in sensitive transition areas and/or areas where more residential character is desired; and provisions conditioning height increases to achieve desired development conditions.
- **Pedestrian and Streetscape Amenities.** Strategies for improving pedestrian circulation and streetscape conditions are identified, especially for areas expected to experience substantial growth.
- **Parks and Open Space.** Potential mitigation strategies include funding key open space improvements by: pooling open space contributions generated through requirements and incentives for individual projects; adding provisions to increase the participation of commercial and residential development in addressing increased demand for public open space; and providing public investments in open space with priorities placed on areas where substantial growth is anticipated.

Views and Aesthetics

Potential mitigation strategies range from:

- exempting the Downtown area and vicinity from consideration of view impacts as currently directed under SEPA; to
- preparing a comprehensive view protection strategy that would identify critical views and the protective measures to be employed.

Transportation and Parking

DEMAND REDUCTION STRATEGIES

- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies.** Continue and strengthen the use of TDM strategies. The City and other public agencies should continue to promote (and require as possible) greater implementation of TDM strategies, coordinated through worksites. The following TDM strategies should be promoted:
  - Discounted transit passes (e.g., Flex Pass)
  - Promotion of other alternative modes (walking, biking)
  - Increased telecommuting
  - Business use of vans
  - Carsharing
  - Preferential parking for carpools/vanpools
  - Guaranteed ride home
  - Enhanced computerized ridematching database and mapping services
  - Parking cashout (discontinuing parking subsidies and providing incentives for alternative modes)
  - Enhanced real-time transit information via Internet and on-street kiosks.
  - FlexCar and residential-based bus pass incentives.

- **Transportation Management Association (TMA).** The City should promote formation of a TMA by Downtown stakeholders to aid in future TDM planning activities.

- **Area-specific rezones.** The City could pursue area-specific rezones to reduce trip generation.

MITIGATION FUNDING STRATEGIES

- **Transportation mitigation program for Downtown.** The City should develop a comprehensive approach to defining transportation mitigation requirements for projects in Downtown or portions of Downtown. A transportation mitigation program could include defining a set of improvements to address significant adverse impacts, and a mechanism by which new development and redevelopment would contribute a fair share toward transportation system improvements. These improvements could address impacts to all mode choices, including roads, transit facilities, bicycle, pedestrian and ride-sharing programs. A transportation mitigation program could provide more certainty and clarity for Downtown property owners and developers, and greater certainty that significant transportation impacts would be remedied over the long term.

MOBILITY STRATEGIES

- **Define physical improvement options that would enhance the capacity of the transportation network.** A comprehensive set of physical improvement options or specific improvement projects could be identified, and related to a transportation mitigation program. This could include previously-identified capital improvement projects, new capital improvements and/or changes (such as lane restriping or designation changes) that would make better use of existing rights-of-way. It could also

include projects needing additional right-of-way, such as adding travel lanes or turn lanes to streets, and/or pedestrian/bicycle-oriented improvements, transit facilities, and improvements such as grade-separation of selected intersections. Lane modifications could also include changes to better accommodate transit vehicles and reduce transit delay. The Transportation section of Chapter 3 discusses options for Stewart Street, Howell Street, Olive Way and Denny Way.

- **Curb lane management.** Locate loading zones in alleys or on side streets, and locate access drives (preferably right-in and right-out only) on side streets rather than key arterials. Consider time-of-day restrictions on use of loading zones and pick-up/drop-off zones to avoid peak hour conflicts
- **Retiming traffic signals to optimize corridor traffic flow.** This is a long-term operational strategy best implemented within the context of the entire Downtown street network, and on an ongoing periodic basis as actual changes in traffic volumes and patterns are experienced. More funding would allow more frequent updates to signal timing to better meet changing demands and travel patterns.
- **Funding for additional staffing of the City's Traffic Management Center.** More funding would allow the City to increase staffing and better utilize the capabilities of its traffic management center, including providing quicker signal timing responses to incidents, special events or other fluctuations in day-to-day traffic flows.

PARKING STRATEGIES

Other possible mitigation strategies that could be pursued:

- **Financial mechanisms.** Influence parking demand through financial mechanisms, such as taxes or other user fees.
- **Reduce parking requirements.** Lower the minimum and maximum parking requirements in Downtown, to encourage transit and carpool modes and discourage single-occupant-vehicle commuting by employees.
- **Area-specific rezones.** The City could reduce potential parking demand and trip generation through area-specific rezones.

Energy

To mitigate identified impacts, a combination of mitigation strategies should be selected from the following range of possible strategies, or other strategies not yet identified.

- **Implement recommendations of City Light's Capacity Plan:** Complete City Light's Capacity Plan in 2004 and implement the recommendations that result from that Plan.
- **Strategically address high-energy-demanding uses:** A combined land use and energy strategy could be developed to address impacts of new large loads or staged new large loads in the Downtown.
- **Incorporate LEED into the Downtown Density Bonus program:** Incentives or requirements to use the LEED system's Green Building energy efficiency strategy could promote better energy conservation in future development. In response to the City Council's Resolution 30280, City staff have discussed integration of sustainable building incentives into the building permitting process, and integration of the LEED system into the Downtown density bonus system. The LEED system could be required for participation in the Downtown Density Bonus program as a mitigation strategy to help offset impacts on the electrical system.

  A particular threshold of performance in the energy category could be established. Consistent with the City's own internal sustainable building policy, this requirement could be set as a minimum achievement in energy efficiency.

A minimum overall LEED performance could also be set in order to capture other benefits of the program, such as mitigating increased demands on water and wastewater infrastructure, reduction of stormwater impacts, and mitigation of global climate effects. If this was implemented, a development project would go through the certification process administered nationally by the US Green Building Council. A copy of the certification package could be submitted to the City to endorse the required participation in the program. Since LEED certification is not fulfilled until after construction, a strategy would be needed to handle projects that did not meet performance targets when built.

- **Incorporate LEED into Land Use Code, Design Review, or Building Code:** Alternatively, the City could seek to incorporate elements of the LEED system into the Land Use Code, the design review guidelines, and potentially the Building Code. Measures and tools developed as part of LEED would be required or encouraged to be met before a project receives its land use approval. For example, the Downtown design guidelines could be amended to include guidelines on floorplate design, encouraging designs that would allow natural light to intrude to the center of buildings, potentially reducing the amount of lighting required during the day.
- **More efficient design of buildings' electrical systems:** Developers could be required to design their buildings' electrical services so that their average monthly power factor is no less than 0.97. The present financial penalty for having a power factor below 0.97 could be increased to encourage installation of better equipment and/or power factor correction equipment.
- **Coordination with the building permit process:** DPD and City Light will continue their efforts to work with developers during the pre-application process, before issuing building permits.

Water Utility

In response to an existing shortcoming of development regulations, a potential mitigation strategy is:

- Implement code changes to require future development to locate water meters in on-site spaces, to improve accessibility and avoid needless utility maintenance work within public rights-of-way. This would also contribute to better metering of water use and greater cost-effectiveness in the City's utility operations.

Chapter Two

Description of Alternatives

CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

This EIS studies three alternatives for possible changes to height and density regulations within portions of the Downtown Urban Center, plus a No Action Alternative. These changes, if adopted, would influence the maximum height and size of future building projects allowed in the Commercial Core, Denny Triangle and an edge of Belltown. None of the alternatives have been chosen as a preferred alternative. Rather, this EIS is intended to analyze the impact implications of alternative courses of action, for the benefit of decisionmakers, agencies and interested citizens.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The following are general objectives of the alternatives studied in this EIS.

- Designate adequate zoned development capacity in the Downtown Urban Center to encourage long-term residential and commercial growth and economic development in a manner consistent with Downtown's position as the largest urban center in the metropolitan area.
- Define regulatory requirements that will encourage development consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans, and will support Downtown's vibrant urban character. Make changes that will aid in realizing a mix of low, moderate and market rate affordable housing throughout Downtown, particularly in areas intended to be "residential enclaves."
- Study possible changes to height and density regulations in selected Commercial Core (particularly Office Core zones), Denny Triangle and Belltown portions of Downtown.
- Determine how to best accommodate growth while maintaining a functional transportation system, including the street network, transit, and non-motorized modes of travel. Similarly, determine how to best accommodate growth while maintaining the function and capacity of utility systems, including but not limited to electrical energy, water, sewer and stormdrain systems.
- Achieve a high quality urban environment that can accommodate high-density development while ensuring livability and enhancing Downtown's positive existing characteristics.

All of the Alternatives analyzed provide sufficient development capacity to accommodate the next 20 years of projected growth. The various actions proposed under any of the Alternatives are not expected to influence the amount of growth occurring in the affected area within this timeframe. The proposed changes may influence the distribution of growth within the study area and the character of development that accommodates it, and these conditions are analyzed in this EIS to help decisionmakers evaluate different approaches to managing the next 20 years of Downtown growth.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulatory context of Downtown includes its Urban Center designation, the City's Comprehensive Plan (and relationship to State growth management requirements), neighborhood plans, land use policies, the Land Use Code and other procedural requirements such as master use permits and design review.

The City's **Comprehensive Plan**, *"Toward a Sustainable Seattle,"* is a 20-year policy plan completed in 1994 that articulates a vision of how Seattle will grow. The Comprehensive Plan makes policy choices and provides a flexible framework for adapting to real conditions over time. The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes an "urban village" strategy seeking to promote and reinforce the pattern of residential and employment growth in larger urban centers and several smaller "urban village" neighborhood districts spread throughout the city. The Plan includes 20-year growth targets for the urban centers and villages. The Comprehensive Plan satisfies requirements of the State's Growth Management Act and fits within King County's framework of Countywide Planning Policies. The Urban Center designation for Downtown is part of the regional growth strategy outlined in the Countywide Planning Policies calling for the concentration of a significant share of the region's employment and housing growth within a limited number of urban centers linked together by high capacity transit. In addition, the City's Comprehensive Plan includes numerous **Land Use Policies** that help define the basis for the City's zoning and Land Use Code regulations.

Following adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan, approximately 37 **neighborhood plans** were prepared through the Neighborhood Planning Office to address future conditions in subareas in and around urban centers and villages. Within Downtown, five neighborhood plans were prepared for Belltown, Denny Triangle, Commercial Core, Chinatown/International District, and Pioneer Square. Also, an overall plan addressing the entire Downtown Urban Center was prepared. The alternatives in this EIS include actions to implement recommendations included in these neighborhood plans.

The **Land Use Code** contains extensive land use and zoning regulations addressing the various zones within the City, including several distinct zones defined for Downtown. The Land Use Code defines numerous requirements for future development, such as setbacks, allowable heights and densities, and parking requirements to name a few. Applications for development are reviewed through the City's Master Use Permit (MUP) process, and often go through the "design review" process that provides for public input and City input on how a development is designed, with the intent of improving overall design quality.

Certain other land use regulatory concepts are defined within the Code, such as "transfer of development rights" (TDR), bonus features, and "transfer of development credits" (TDC). These are concepts that allow for some flexibility in the amount of development that can occur in different Downtown locations.

- ***TDRs*** allow transfer of unused portions of allowable density from one property to another. TDRs can help preserve desirable features such as landmark structures, affordable housing, and public open space that otherwise might be threatened by redevelopment.
- ***Bonus features*** allow additional height or density to be obtained if a developer provides features or amenities that have public benefit or offset impacts.
- ***TDC*** is a program that allows a developer to purchase development rights from rural lands in King County to gain additional density in portions of Downtown, to aid in preservation of rural land and accommodate more residential growth in Downtown.

Several sections in Chapter 3 and selected appendices further discuss the alternatives' relationship to plans and policies.

BACKGROUND

The proposal to consider changes to zoned height and density arises from neighborhood plans for the Denny Triangle and Commercial Core neighborhoods, as well as the overall urban center plan prepared by the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group (DUCPG). These plans contain visions, goals, policies and action recommendations to achieve the vision for future growth in the Downtown Urban Center. All

of the plans include objectives of promoting vibrant, diverse mixed-use neighborhoods containing housing for households of all income ranges, as well as objectives for open space, urban design character, transportation and other matters. These plans recommend changes to zoning and land use regulations to promote their objectives.

The Commercial Core, Denny Triangle and DUCPG plans all included proposals for increasing the capacity of the Downtown area, intended to accommodate further employment and residential growth, stimulate residential development and provide resources for affordable housing. To implement these proposals, major revisions to the incentive zoning Downtown were recommended, including an overhaul of the bonus and TDR programs to reprioritize their focus on achieving housing goals. In the Commercial Core Plan, interim height and density increases through a "super bonus" were also proposed to capture opportunities for increasing development density and the use of incentives during the economic boom underway at the time. Permanent height increases were also proposed to promote less bulky development and achieve other urban design objectives. The Denny Triangle Plan included recommendations for permanent height and density increases for all zones in that neighborhood.

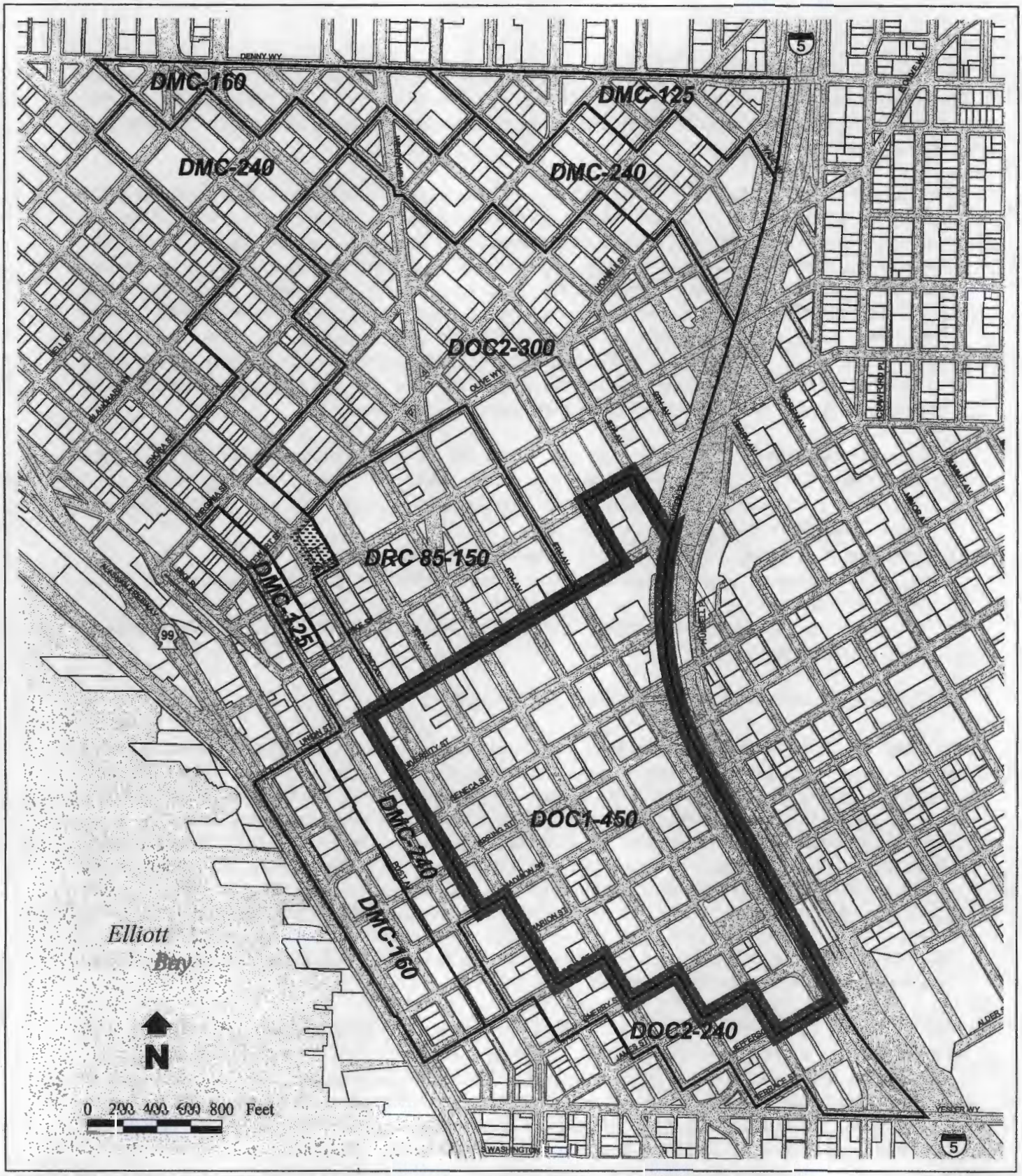
Immediately following the City Council's approval of the Downtown neighborhood plans in early 1999, a limited number of proposals were implemented through revisions to the Land Use Code, including:

- expanding the use of TDR to allow mixed-income structures including low- and low-moderate income housing to qualify as TDR sending sites;
- removing some density restrictions on residential use in the DOC 1 zone;
- rezoning portions of Pioneer Square and the northwest corner of the retail core to promote mixed use development; and
- amending the Pioneer Square Preservation District provisions to better promote neighborhood development objectives.

The locations where these changes apply are shown on Figure 2.

In November of 1999, the City enacted the Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) program in the Denny Triangle to allow height and density increases as an incentive for residential development. The TDC program allows up to a 30 percent increase above mapped height limits for residential and mixed-use projects that purchase conservation credits from rural properties in King County and contribute to an amenity credit fund for open space and Green Street improvements consistent with the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan. The program also establishes a partnership with King County for ongoing public investment in amenities in the area, in conjunction with the purchase of development credits by private developers. Also as part of the TDC legislation, an area of approximately 4.5 acres adjacent to the office core zoned Downtown Mixed Commercial 240 (DMC 240) was rezoned to Downtown Office Core 2 300' (DOC 2 300') to expand the office core and increase capacity for commercial development. Figure 3 shows the areas affected by these changes.

As part of the City's ongoing neighborhood plan implementation activities in 2000 and 2001, City staff met frequently with an advisory committee of Downtown stakeholders to discuss regulatory changes that would further support and foster the types of changes advocated by the neighborhood plans. As a result of this work, additional proposals for addressing height and density increases were recommended for further consideration. These proposals were documented in a report entitled, "City of Seattle TDR/Bonus Program Review Advisory Committee Recommendations," dated May 31, 2000.



CHANGES IMPLEMENTED FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF DUCPG PLAN
February 1999

FIGURE 2

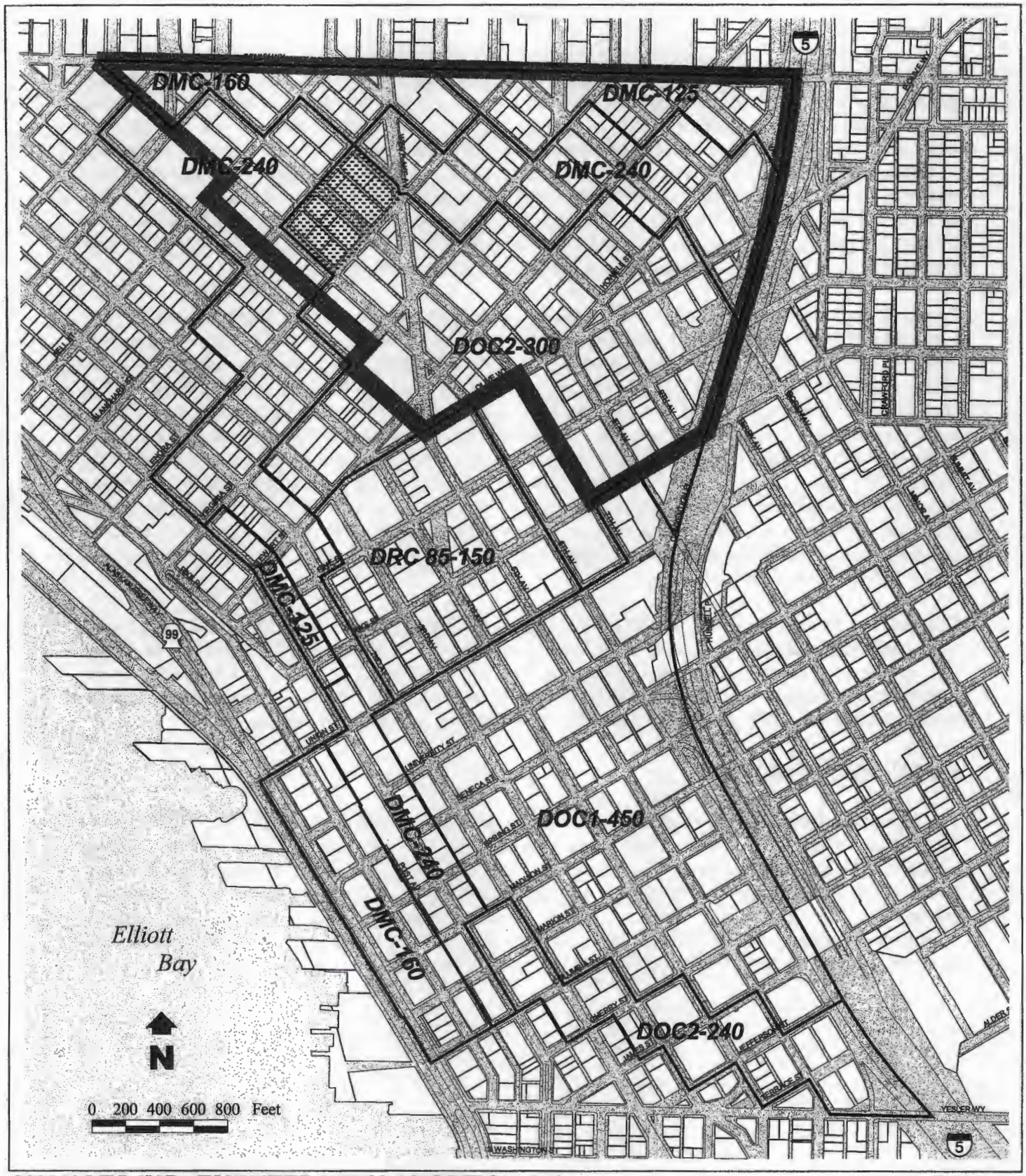
Reduced Restrictions on Residential Density in DOC1

Rezone Portion of Retail Core (DRC 85-150) to DMC-240

Note: Extend eligible TDR sending sites to include mixed income housing with units affordable to households with incomes up to 80% of median.

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 17, 2002

dwntwnels\impichanges\ducpg2.apr



CHANGES IMPLEMENTED WITH ADOPTION OF TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT CREDIT (TDC) PROGRAM
November 1999

FIGURE 3

Denny Triangle TDC Area: 30% height increase above existing mapped limits (and additional 37.5' and 90' depending on zone) for mixed use and residential projects

Rezone Area: Approximately 5.5 acres of DMC-240 rezoned to DOC2-300

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 17, 2002

dwntwnels\impchanges\tdc2.epr

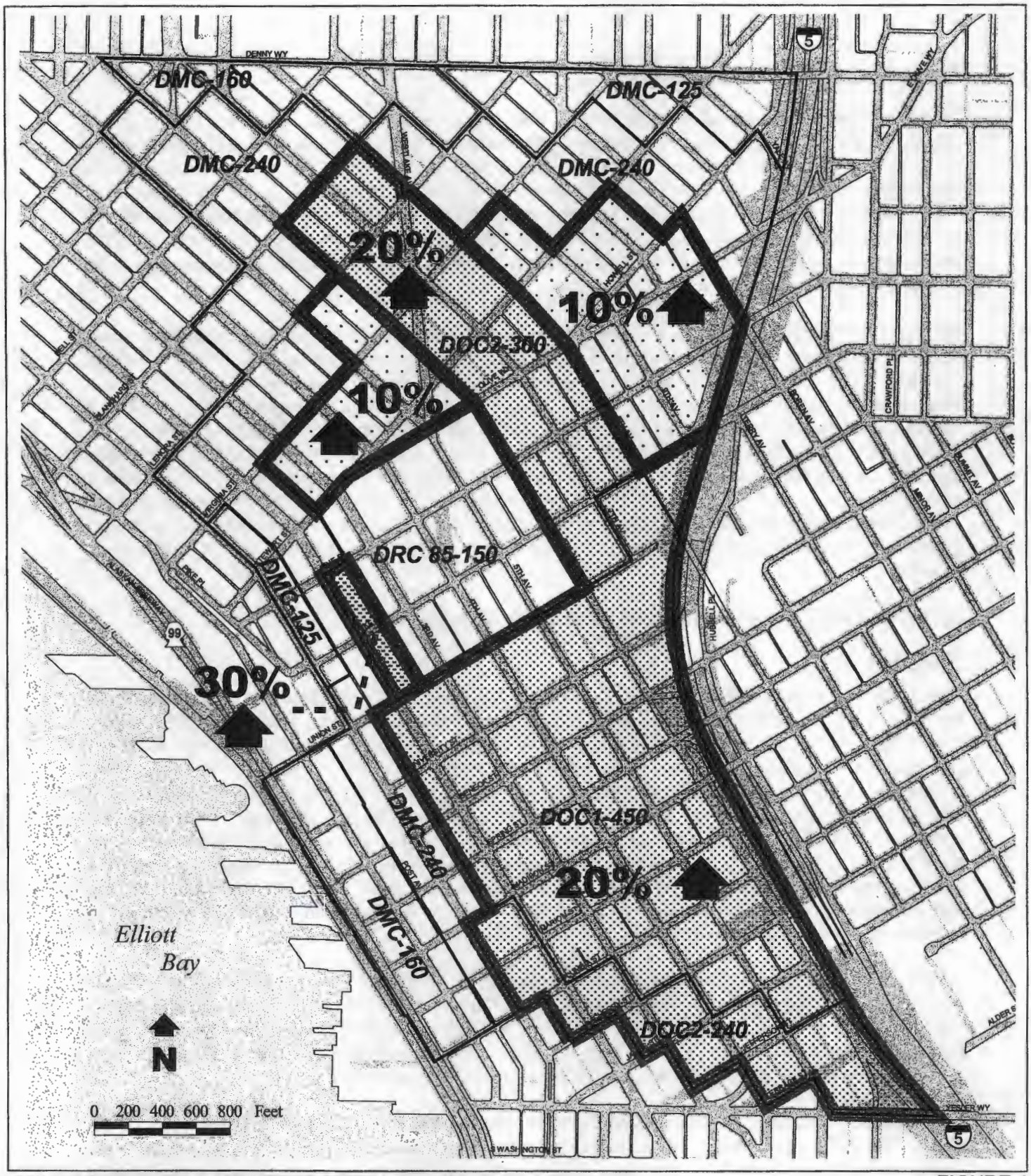
Upon reviewing the breadth of these requested changes, the decision was made to first pursue revisions to the bonus and TDR provisions of the Downtown incentive zoning, within the context of the existing maximum density limits. Because this set of changes did not substantively change the permitted density or location of future development, environmental review proceeded with expeditious review and issuance of a Determination of Non-Significance. In July 2001, the City Council adopted revisions to the bonus and TDR provisions, as well as: 1) related increases to the base FAR limits in the office core (DOC 1 and DOC 2) and retail core (DRC) zones; 2) allowances for increasing height by 10 or 20 percent, without any increase in permitted density, in specified areas of the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones; and 3) limited adjustments to height and bonus provisions in the DRC retail core zone (see Figure 4).

Proposals for increasing maximum density limits and height limits are a second set of actions now proceeding through the SEPA process to assess potential adverse impacts on the Downtown area. On May 3rd, 2001, the Strategic Planning Office issued a Determination of Significance indicating that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for this proposal. In preparation for this EIS, City staff examined the neighborhood plans and advisory committee recommendations, considered the input from interest groups and citizens during the EIS scoping process, and defined alternatives that cover a range of possible actions. One of these alternatives includes proposed regulatory changes that collectively represent the maximum extent ("high-end") of changes requested by the neighborhood plans, as well as additional recommendations made by a citizen advisory committee convened to guide the development of proposals undertaken in the first phase. The other alternatives include a No Action Alternative, and two intermediate alternatives defining different options for height and density changes that could support the City's and neighborhoods' goals.

City staff conducted a "scoping" period for this EIS, to receive public comments about EIS study topics and definition of alternatives. Several citizens and groups submitted written and verbal comments during the scoping period. A formal scoping meeting was held on May 23rd, 2001, and a general forum summarizing Downtown planning activities was held on May 16th, 2001. These comments were considered in defining the alternatives and elements of the environment studied in this EIS.

Location of Proposal

The proposal affects portions of the Downtown area generally bounded by Denny Way, Interstate 5, Yesler Way, Alaskan Way, as well as Lenora Street and 5th Avenue in the Belltown vicinity (refer to Figure 1). The areas most affected by the proposal include the following zones: Downtown Office Core (DOC 1 and DOC 2), and Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC). While the proposals are primarily focused on the Commercial Core and Denny Triangle neighborhoods, edges of the Belltown neighborhood zoned DMC 240' and DOC 2 300' are also included in the study area. No changes are proposed to the Downtown retail core (DRC) zone in any of the alternatives.



CHANGES IMPLEMENTED WITH ADOPTION OF REVISED BONUS/TDR PROVISIONS

July 2001

FIGURE 4

· · · · · 10% Height Increase in Portions of DOC2-300

20% Height Increase in DOC1 and Portions of DOC2

30% Height Increase on Western Edge of Retail Core (DRC)

Base density limit increased by 1.0 FAR in DOC1 and DOC2 and 0.5 FAR in DRC.

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

dwntwnels\imp\changes\bonustdr2.epr

Description of Alternatives

This EIS examines a total of four alternatives that cover a range of possible actions. Three of the alternatives consist of different sets of changes in allowable maximum height and density of development (measured by floor area) in several Downtown zones. Alternative 4—the "No Action" Alternative—is also included to assess what is likely to occur over time if no changes are made to the Land Use Code. This "baseline" alternative assumes that projected development will occur under the height and density limits that now apply (including July 2001 amendments) to accommodate changes to the bonus and TDR provisions that apply to zones in the study area. A summary and comparison of the alternatives is provided in Table 5 on page 2-23.

For all of the Alternatives, the same amount of residential and commercial growth is assumed to occur within the study area over the 20-year planning horizon. This amount, approximately 63,000 additional jobs and 7,350 additional residential units, represents a relatively high forecast of 20-year growth. Preliminary economic analysis indicated that this level of growth could be accommodated under existing zoning conditions, and that changes to zoning would not alter the demand for residential and commercial space generating the growth. Consequently, even though the actions proposed in different alternatives may add capacity for future growth, the actual demand for additional commercial space and residential units is expected to be the same for the 20-year study period. Therefore, the differences between alternatives are not in the overall amount of growth accommodated, but rather in how the same amount of growth may be accommodated differently in terms of the number, size, location and type of projects required.

ALTERNATIVE 1 – HIGH END HEIGHT AND DENSITY INCREASE

Overview

Alternative 1 is a composite of the initial recommendations for height and density increases included in Downtown neighborhood plans, supplemented by later recommendations from the Bonus/TDR Advisory Committee. As such, it represents the higher-end of possible changes to height and density, related to concepts from the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan (refer to Figure 2) and the Commercial Core Neighborhood Plan (refer to Figure 3), with the support of the DUCPG Downtown Urban Center Plan. It also includes recommendations from the TDR/Bonus Program Review Advisory Committee for consideration of additional changes (not from neighborhood plans) on the edges of Belltown and within the Commercial Core neighborhood (refer to Figure 4). The primary intent of proposals for increasing height and density limits is to: 1) provide sufficient zoned capacity to accommodate continued residential and employment growth Downtown, 2) stimulate housing production, and 3) provide resources to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Alternative 1 proposes the greatest magnitude of changes in height and density studied in this EIS, for areas including all of the Denny Triangle, most of the Commercial Core, and the southern and eastern edges of the Belltown neighborhood. Specific proposals from each of the sources of Alternative 1 are presented below. For the purposes of EIS analysis, those recommendations calling for the highest increases to height and density limits in an area were incorporated in this alternative.

Commercial Core. Both the Commercial Core Neighborhood Plan and the DUCPG Downtown Urban Center Plan include a proposal for a "super bonus" that was intended to allow height and density increases during the peak of the last economic cycle as an incentive to stimulate housing production. As initially proposed, the super bonus concept would have applied on an interim basis in the DOC 1, DOC 2 and DMC 240 zones of the Commercial Core, allowing increases in the base and maximum floor area ratio (FAR) limits and a 30% height increase for projects including a specified housing incentive bonus package. Proposals for permanent changes to height controls in the Commercial Core Plan were limited

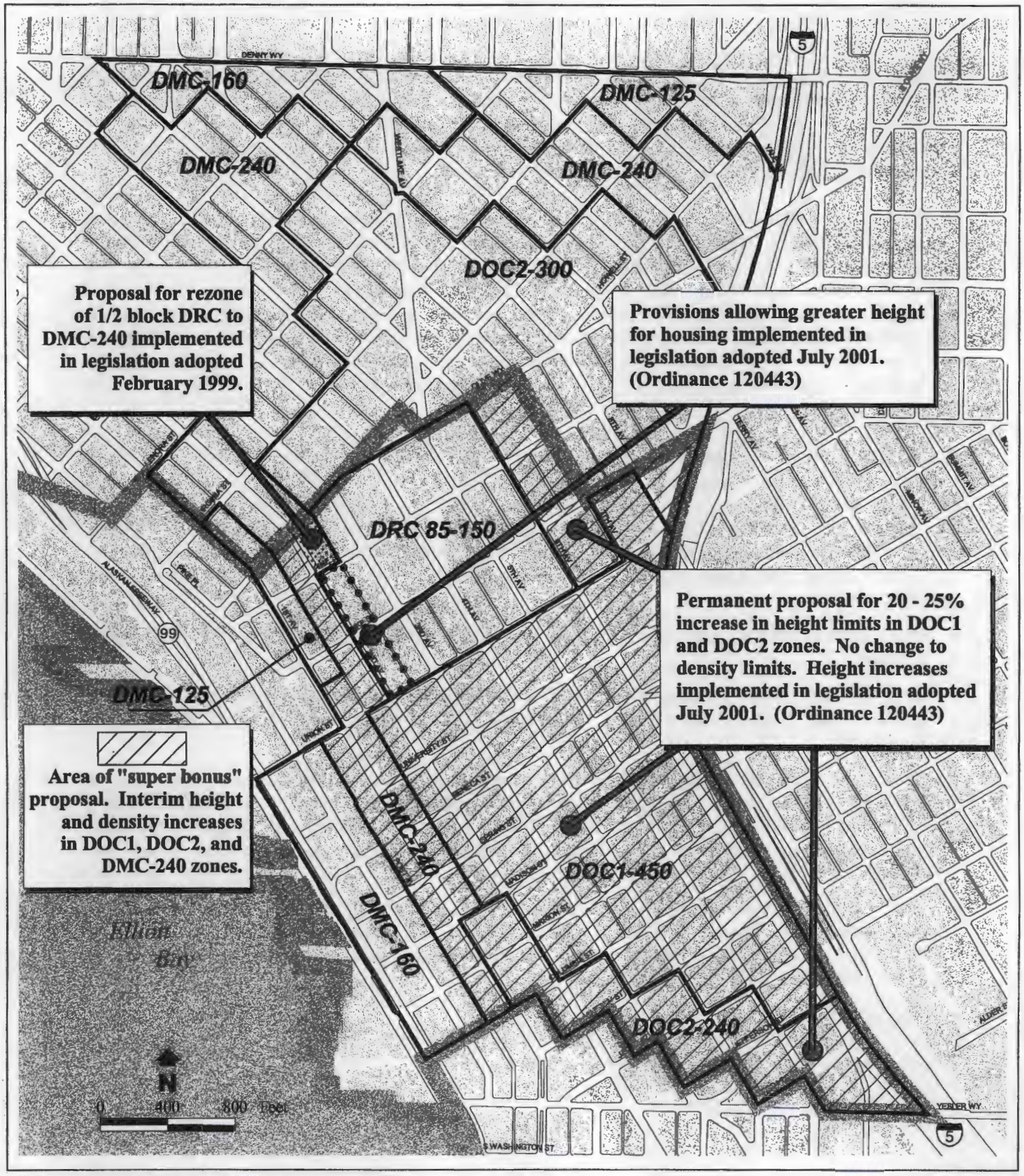
to increasing height limits by 20 to 25% in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones though a building height variance, while maintaining "current FAR provisions to control overall building bulk." This proposal was implemented as part of the legislation amending the Downtown bonus/TDR provisions adopted by Council in July 2001, and therefore is represented in Alternative 4: No Action. Proposals from the Commercial Core Neighborhood Plan are presented on Figure 5.

Denny Triangle. The Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan calls for increasing height limits in all zones in that neighborhood by 100 feet. This Plan also includes proposals for specific increases to base and maximum FAR limits in the DOC 2 zone, with increases also to be considered in all DMC zones. The proposed increases were not linked to a super bonus and were intended to be permanent. The extent of the height increases, which in some areas represent an 80% increase above existing limits, and the intended purpose to increase capacity for both employment and residential development, would supplant the existing transfer of development credits (TDC) provisions, which only allow a 30% height increase and limit the incentive to residential and mixed-use developments. Proposals from the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan are presented on Figure 6.

Bonus/TDR Advisory Committee. The recommendations of the TDR/Bonus Program Review Advisory Committee included proposals for increasing height and density limits in the DOC 1, DOC 2 and DMC 240 zones, as called for in the Commercial Core "super bonus" proposal, but on a permanent rather than interim basis. Furthermore, increasing height and density limits was recommended throughout all DMC zones "consistent with requirements developed for other zones." The report, "Advisory Committee Recommendations," dated May 31, 2000 calls for consideration of the following increases to height and density limits:

- DOC 1 Zone: 2 FAR increase in base FAR and 3 FAR increase in Maximum FAR; 30% height increase.
- DOC 2 Zone: 2 FAR increase in base FAR and 3 FAR increase in Maximum FAR; 30% height increase (note: these are lower than recommendations in Denny Triangle Plan for DOC 2 zone in that neighborhood).
- DMC Zone: Consider increases in height and density throughout the DMC zones; for the area north of Union, not in Denny Triangle, consider mirroring TDC program features as the DMC zone is further considered for additional height/density consistent with requirements developed for other zones. (note: density increases not specified; does not address any changes to DMC zones in Denny Triangle).
- DRC Zone: 1 FAR increase in Base FAR; replace 85-foot height limits with 150-foot height limits; consider increase above 150 feet for housing only (up to 30% increase in height). (note: changes to height and density limits in the DRC Zone were implemented under previous legislation related to revisions to bonus/TDR bonus programs).
- DMR Zone: no change.

The location of these proposed changes are shown on Figure 7.



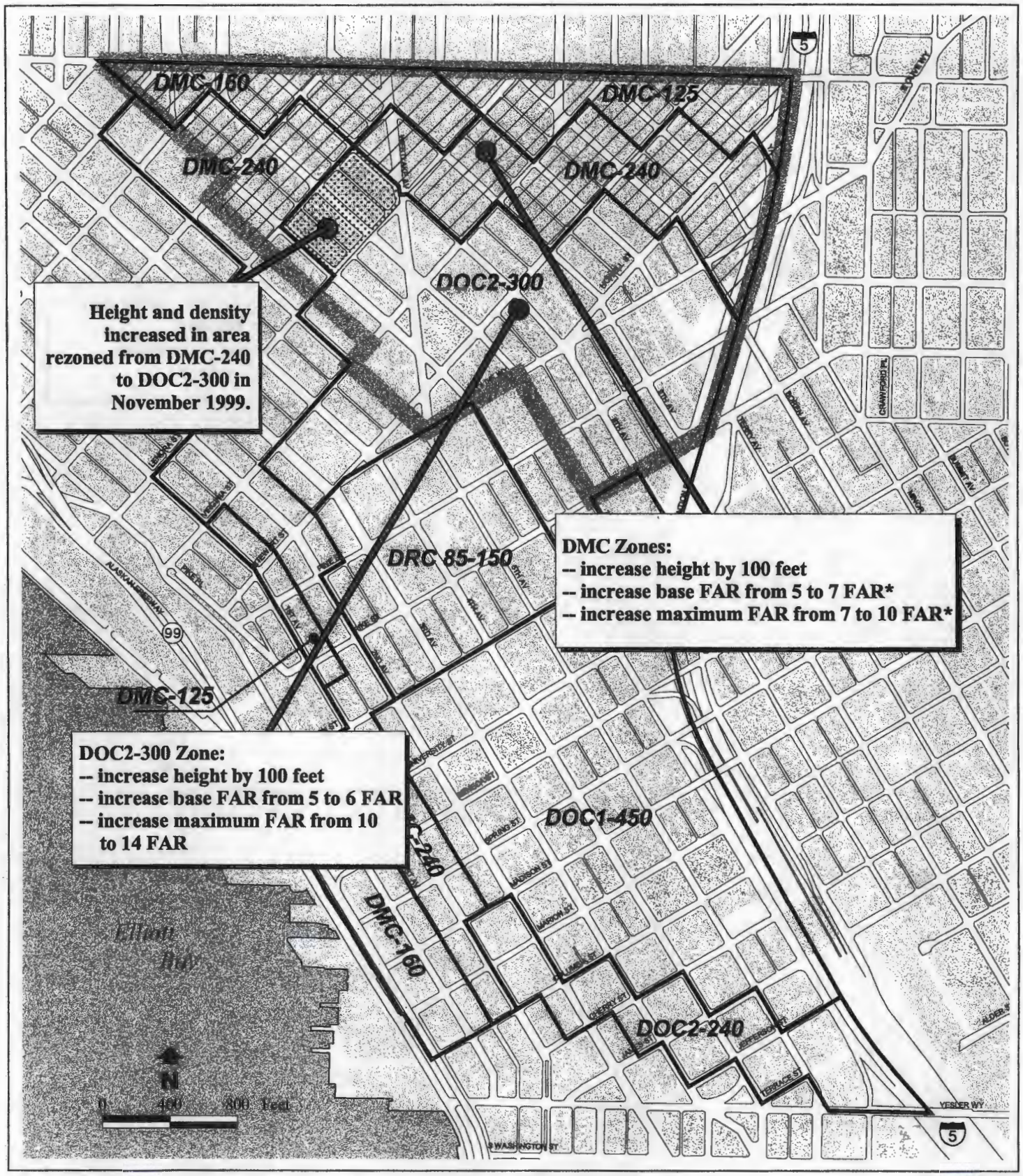
Height and Density Increases Recommended in COMMERCIAL CORE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

FIGURE 5

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

Commercial Core Urban Center Village Boundary

dwntwnelv\recommend\cc_rplan.apr



Height and Density Increases Recommended in DENNY TRIANGLE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

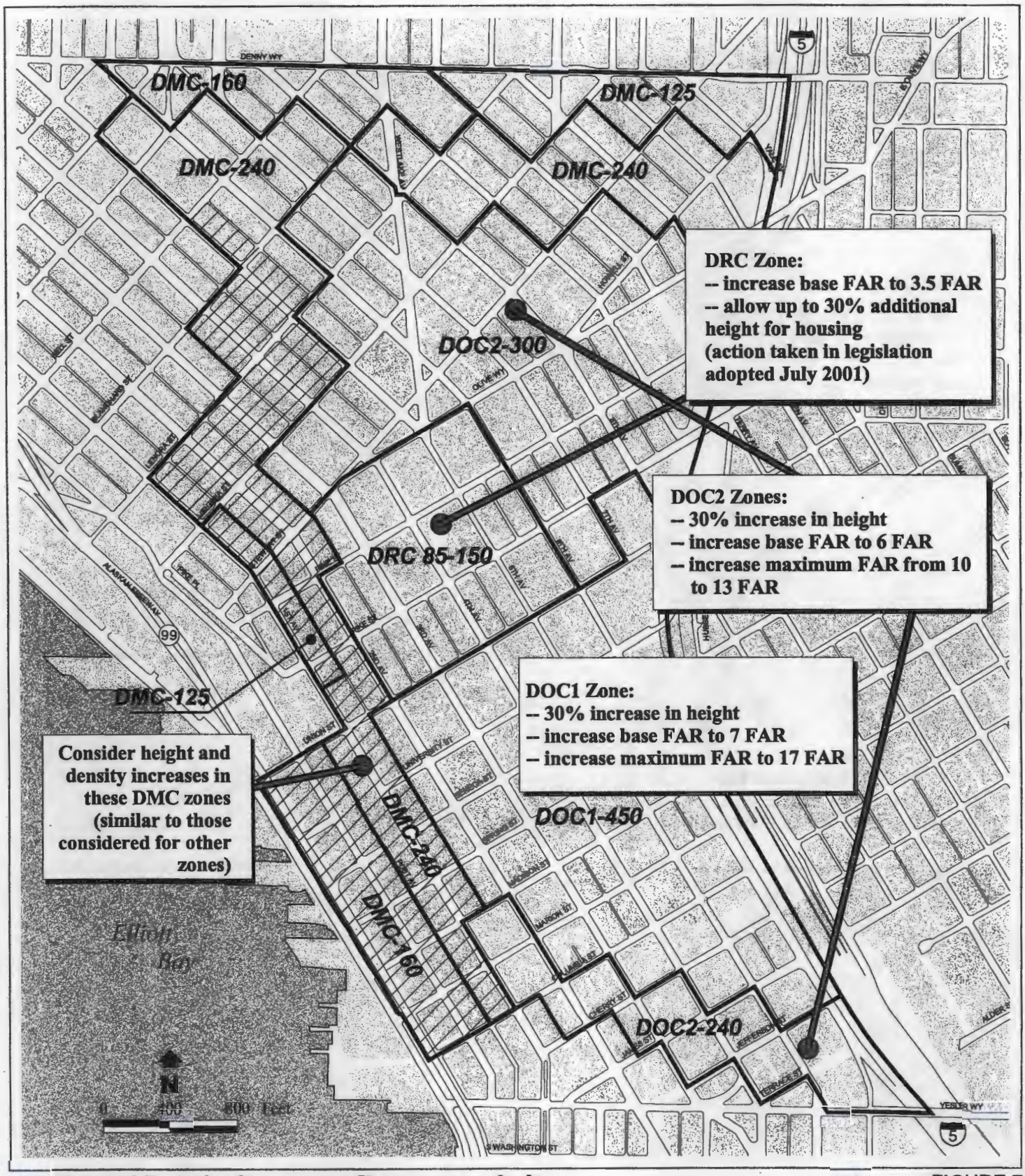
FIGURE 6

Denny Triangle Urban Center Village Boundary

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

*The Denny Triangle Plan does not provide a specific proposal for an increase to FAR limits in DMC zones. The 7 FAR base and 10 FAR maximum represent increases that are proportionately similar to those proposed in the Plan for the DOC2-300 zone.

dwtowns\recommend\dtrl_nplan.apr



Height and Density Increases Recommended for Further Consideration by BONUS/TDR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FIGURE 7

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

dwntwnelsrecommendbnsidr_adv.apr

Alternative 1 Height and Density Changes

The proposed height and density changes in Alternative 1 would add 72-135 feet and 3-4 FAR (floor area ratio[1]) to the office core zones, and would also extend similar increases to DMC zones across the rest of the Denny Triangle neighborhood south of Denny Way (see Figure 8). Given the existing height limits of 125-240 feet of zones in this area, the proposed heights would represent an increase of 40-80% in allowable heights; the proposed increases of 3-4 FAR would represent an increase of 30-43% in allowable density.

Alternative 1 also includes a proposal for a 30% increase in height and 3 FAR increase in density (over the existing 7 FAR) for the Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) zones at the periphery of the office and retail cores. These areas include the southern edge of Belltown, the area east of the Pike Place Market, and the 1st Avenue and Western Avenue corridors. Existing height limits in these areas are 125 feet, 160 feet, and 240 feet.

Height: Within the affected area, maximum height limits would increase by:

- 135 feet in the central DOC 1 zone;
- 100 feet in all of the northern DOC 2 and DMC zones in the Denny Triangle;
- and 48 feet (30% increase) in the central DMC zones along 1st Avenue between Pike and Virginia Streets, and in the Western Avenue vicinity, respectively; and
- 72 feet (30% increase) in the southern DOC 2 zone, the DMC zone on the southern edge of Belltown and along 2nd Avenue on the western edge of the retail core, and the DMC zone along 1st Avenue between Union and Columbia, west of the central office core.

Density: The proposed density increases for this alternative would increase maximum FAR by 3 (additional floor area equal to three times the area of a given site) in most areas and by 4 in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone. Specific proposed density and height changes for the various zones are summarized on Table 2, below.

Bonus/TDR provisions. Under Alternative 1, all floor area above the new base FARs in the DOC 1, DOC 2 and DMC zones would be gained through bonuses and/or the transfer of development rights (TDR) according to a split that requires 75% of the additional floor area to be gained through affordable housing TDR, payment to an affordable housing/child care fund, and/or a bonus for providing affordable housing. The remaining 25% can be gained through other eligible bonuses or TDRs, including specified open space and on-site amenities, human services, open space TDR, variable scale TDR, and landmark TDR, within the limits and conditions prescribed in the Code. In the DMC zone, the current option to use the newly adopted bonuses and TDR provisions establishing the 25%/75% split, or to use the bonus options available prior to this amendment, would be eliminated. Also, the provision that now allows a wider range of bonus choices to be used to gain the first FAR above the base FAR in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones would be eliminated.

[1] Floor area ratio is a measure of allowable building density. On any given site, the FAR value multiplied by the site area is the total floor area allowed to be built. On a 10,000 square foot site, an FAR of 5 allows a 50,000 square foot building.

FIGURE 8

Alternative 1: High End Height and Density Increases
(Downtown Neighborhood Plans and Advisory Committee Proposals)

1. EXISTING OFFICE CORE
   - increase maximum FAR from 14 to 17
   - increase height limit from 450' to 585'
2. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/DENNY TRIANGLE
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 14
   - increase height limit from 300' to 400'
3. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/SOUTH DOWNTOWN
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 13
   - increase height limit from 240' to 312'
4. COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREA/DENNY TRIANGLE
   - increase maximum FAR from 7 to 10
   - increase height limits by 100' (125' to 225', 160' to 260', 240' to 340')
5. COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREA/ SOUTH BELLTOWN AND COMMERCIAL CORE
   - increase maximum FAR from 7 to 10
   - increase height limits by 30% (125' to 165', 160' to 208', 240' to 312')

Faded text
No change from existing conditions

N

0 2 4 6 8 10
SCALE IN 100 FEET

Table 2
Alternative 1—High End Height and Density Increases

ID #	Location	Existing Zone	Maximum Density (FAR)		Maximum Height (feet)	
			Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
1	**Commercial Core** *Advisory Committee Recommendation as permanent action; Comm. Core and DUCPG Plan recommendation as interim "super bonus" proposal*	DOC 1 – 450'	14	**17**	450 ft.	**585 ft.**
2	**Denny Triangle—office expansion area** *Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan recommendations*	DOC 2 – 300'	10	**14**	300 ft.	**400 ft.**
3	**Commercial Core—southern edge** *Advisory Committee Recommendation as permanent action; Commercial Core and DUCPG Plan recommendation as interim "super bonus" proposal*	DOC 2 – 240'	10	**13**	240 ft.	**312 ft.**
4	**Denny Triangle—mixed use area** *Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan recommendations*	DMC – 125' DMC – 160' DMC – 240'	7 7 7	**10*** **10*** **10***	125 ft. 160 ft. 240 ft.	**225 ft.** **260 ft.** **340 ft.**
5	**Commercial Core—1st and 2nd Avenue Corridor** *Advisory Committee Recommendation as permanent action; Commercial Core and DUCPG Plan recommendation as interim "super bonus" proposal*	DMC – 240'	7	**10**	240	**312 ft.**
6	**Commercial Core—western edge, Belltown—southern and eastern edges** *TDR/Bonus Advisory Committee Recommendation*	DMC – 125' DMC – 160' DMC – 240'	7 7 7	**10** **10** **10**	125 ft. 160 ft. 240 ft.	**165 ft.** **208 ft.** **312 ft.**

* The Denny Triangle Plan does not include a specific proposal for increase to maximum FAR in DMC zones; 10 FAR represents an increase that is proportionally similar to what the Plan proposes for the DOC 2 Zone.
TDC=Transfer of Development Credits. DOC=Downtown Office Core. DMC=Downtown Mixed Commercial.

ALTERNATIVE 2 – CONCENTRATED OFFICE CORE

Overview

Alternative 2 would limit height and density changes to the existing office core zones, DOC 1 and 2. Zoning would not change in the DMC zones peripheral to the office core, where it is desirable to balance residential and employment growth and maintain a gradual transition between the concentrated development intensity in the office core zones and surrounding neighborhoods of Belltown, the Harborfront, Pike/Pine and South Lake Union (see Figure 9). Height increases through the TDC program would still be possible, to provide height incentives for mixed-use and residential development in the

DMC zones of the Denny Triangle. However, the 100-foot height increase in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone would displace TDC provisions for height increases in that zone.

Alternative 2's theme is that greater height and density for office/commercial development is most preferable in central core areas where Downtown zoning favors high concentrations of development and there is sufficient infrastructure to accommodate growth. Within the office core zones of the Commercial Core, the proposed changes in height and maximum density are the same as for Alternative 1. In the Denny Triangle, the maximum density in the DOC 2 zone would increase by 3 FAR rather than the 4 FAR increase proposed in Alternative 1. The concentrated office core theme is similar to concepts of urban growth expressed in past Downtown land use planning, emphasizing continued concentration of higher-density employment growth and redevelopment within the existing DOC 1 core, with limited expansion into adjacent DOC 2 areas, primarily in the Denny Triangle.

Alternative 2 Height and Density Changes

Height: Within the affected area, maximum heights would increase by:

- 135 feet in the central DOC 1 zone;
- 100 feet in the northern DOC 2 zone; and
- 72 feet (30% increase) in the southern DOC 2 zone.

Density: The proposed density increases for Alternative 2 would increase maximum FAR by 3. However, no density changes would occur in the DMC zones in the Denny Triangle, Commercial Core or Belltown edge. Specific proposed density and height changes are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Alternative 2—Concentrated Office Core

ID #	Location	Existing Zone	Maximum Density (FAR)		Maximum Height (feet)	
			Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
1	Commercial Core	DOC 1 – 450'	14	**17**	450 ft.	**585 ft.**
2	Denny Triangle—office expansion area	DOC 2 – 300'	10	**13**	300 ft.*	**400 ft.**
3	Commercial Core—southern edge	DOC 2 – 240'	10	**13**	240 ft.	**312 ft.**
4	Denny Triangle—mixed use area and Belltown—southern edge	DMC – 125'	7	**7**	125 ft.*	**No change**
		DMC – 160'	7	**7**	160 ft.*	**No change**
		DMC – 240'	7	**7**	240 ft.*	**No change**
5	Commercial Core—western edge	DMC – 125'	7	**7**	125 ft.	**No change**
		DMC – 160'	7	**7**	160 ft.	**No change**
		DMC – 240'	7	**7**	240 ft.	**No change**

Notes: *Height increases up to 30% above mapped height are allowed in the Denny Triangle through the TDC program. TDC = Transfer of Development Credits. FAR = floor area ratio. DOC = Downtown Office Core. DMC = Downtown Mixed Commercial.

FIGURE 9

Alternative 2: Concentrated Office Core

0 2 4 6 8 10
SCALE IN 100 FEET

1. EXISTING OFFICE CORE
   - increase maximum FAR from 14 to 17
   - increase height limit from 450' to 585'

2. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/DENNY TRIANGLE
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 13
   - increase height limit from 300' to 400'

3. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/SOUTH DOWNTOWN
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 13
   - increase height limit from 240' to 312'

Faded text
No change from existing conditions

Bonus/TDR provisions. Under Alternative 2, no changes to current base FARs are proposed. All floor area above the base FAR would be gained through bonuses and/or transfer of development rights (TDR) according to a split that requires 75% of the additional floor area to be gained through affordable housing TDR, payment to an affordable housing/child care fund, and/or a bonus for providing affordable housing. The remaining 25% can be gained through other eligible bonuses or TDRs, including specified open space and on-site amenities, human services, open space TDR, variable scale TDR, and landmark TDR, within the limits and conditions prescribed in the Code. In the DMC zone, the current option to use the newly adopted bonuses and TDR provisions establishing the 25%/75% split, or to use the bonus options available prior to this amendment, would be eliminated. Also, the provision that now allows a wider range of bonus choices to be used to gain the first FAR above the base FAR in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones would also be eliminated.

ALTERNATIVE 3 – RESIDENTIAL EMPHASIS

Overview

Alternative 3 places a greater emphasis on regulatory changes tailored to specific areas to help encourage provision of housing. This alternative's theme supports increased height and densities in the office core zones, but with transitions in development intensity provided by sub-areas of variable height and density limits in the DOC 2 zones in Belltown and the eastern portion of the Denny Triangle. While the TDC program would be displaced for a portion of the DOC 2 zone in the Denny Triangle allowing the greatest increase in commercial density, the program would continue to provide height incentives limited to housing and mixed use projects in other DOC 2 and DMC areas of the Denny Triangle (see Figure 10).

In Downtown areas peripheral to the office and retail core, maximum commercial densities would not increase, but would be reduced in some areas by rezoning to designations that promote residential development and limit commercial development. In addition to increasing residential capacity, the intent of regulatory changes in these peripheral areas is to provide zoning that will: 1) ensure a concentration of housing consistent with neighborhood plan objectives for creating "enclaves" of residential development in the north central portion of the Denny Triangle, 2) increase the emphasis on housing and promote a more compatible residential scale of development along the southern edge of Belltown to extend the predominantly residential character emerging throughout the rest of the neighborhood, and 3) encourage mixed uses by requiring housing in projects developed to maximum commercial density limits in other DMC zones within the study area. The latter objective would occur by making non-residential density (above the base density) contingent upon providing on-site housing.

Alternative 3 Height and Density Changes

Height: Within the affected area, maximum heights would increase by:

- 135 feet in the central DOC 1 zone;
- 100 feet in the portion of the DOC 2 zone in between 8th Avenue and 5th/6th Avenues; and
- 72 feet (30% increase) in the southern DOC 2 zone;

Density: In the DOC 1 and approximately half of the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone, the maximum density would increase by 3 FAR. In other portions of the DOC 2 zone, the maximum density would remain unchanged. Densities in DMC zones would not change, but portions of the DMC zone in north central Denny Triangle and the southern edge of Belltown would be rezoned from DMC to Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial (DMR/C). With this zone, the maximum density would decrease from 7 to 4 or 5. This is summarized in Table 4.

FIGURE 10

Alternative 3: Residential Emphasis

1. EXISTING OFFICE CORE
   - increase maximum FAR from 14 to 17
   - increase height limit from 450' to 585'

2a. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/DENNY TRIANGLE
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 13
   - increase height limit from 300' to 400'

2b. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/DENNY TRIANGLE
   - no change to maximum FAR of 10
   - no change: 300' height limit can be increased by 30% through TDC or by 10% under specified conditions

3. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/SOUTH DOWNTOWN
   - increase maximum FAR from 10 to 13
   - increase height limit from 240' to 312'

4. RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE AREA
   - rezone to DMR/C
   - maximum FAR reduced from 7 FAR to 4 or 5 FAR, depending on height limit
   - existing height limits retained (125', 160', 240'); 30% height increase allowed in Denny Triangle through TDC

5. COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREA
   - maximum FAR remains 7 FAR, but increases above base 5 FAR requires that housing be included on-site.
   - existing height limits retained (125', 160', 240'); 30% height increase allowed in Denny Triangle through TDC

Faded text
No change from existing conditions

N

0 2 4 6 8 10
SCALE IN 100 FEET

Table 4
Alternative 3—Residential Emphasis

ID	Location	Existing Zone (zone change in bold)	Maximum Density (FAR)		Maximum Height (feet)	
			Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
1	Commercial core	DOC 1 – 450'	14	**17**	450 ft.	**585 ft.**
2a	Denny Triangle—office expansion, 5th to 8th	DOC 2 – 300'	10	**13**	300 ft.*	**400 ft.**
2b	Denny Triangle —office expansion, between 8th and Boren	DOC 2 – 300'	10	**10**	300 ft.*	**300 ft.***
	Belltown, office expansion, between 3rd & 5th and Olive and Virginia	DOC 2 – 300'	10	**10**	300 ft.	**300 ft.**
3	Commercial core—southern edge	DOC 2 – 240'	10	**13**	240 ft.	**312 ft.**
4a	Denny Triangle—mixed use area, roughly between Westlake, Howell, and Minor	DMC → **DMR/C**	7	**4**	125 ft.*	**125 ft.***
		DMC → **DMR/C**	7	**5**	160 ft.*	**160 ft.***
		DMC → **DMR/C**	7	**5**	240 ft.*	**240 ft.***
5a	Belltown—southern edge	DMC → **DMR/C**	7	**5**	240 ft.*	**240 ft.***
4b	Denny Triangle—mixed use areas west of Westlake, and near I-5	DMC – 125'	7	**7****	125 ft.*	**125 ft.***
		DMC – 160'	7	**7****	160 ft.*	**160 ft.***
		DMC – 240'	7	**7****	240 ft.*	**240 ft.***
5b	Commercial core—western edge	DMC – 125'	7	**7****	125 ft.	**125 ft.**
		DMC – 160'	7	**7****	160 ft.	**160 ft.**
		DMC – 240'	7	**7****	240 ft.	**240 ft.**

Notes:
* Height increases up to 30% above mapped height are allowed in the Denny Triangle through TDC.
**Increases in non-residential density above base FAR would be contingent on including on-site housing.
FAR = floor area ratio. TDC = Transfer of Development Credits. DOC = Downtown Office Core.
DMC = Downtown Mixed Commercial. DMR/C = Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial.

Bonus/TDR provisions. Under Alternative 3, current base FARs would remain for DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones and areas proposed to remain designated DMC. In DMC areas proposed for a DMR/C designation, the base FAR would be reduced from 5 to 1 or 2 FAR, depending on the height limit of the zone. In DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones, all floor area above the base FAR would be gained through bonuses and/or the transfer of development rights (TDR) according to a split requiring 75% of the additional floor area to be gained through affordable housing TDR, payment to an affordable housing/child care fund, and/or a bonus for providing affordable housing. The remaining 25% can be gained through other eligible bonuses or TDRs, including specified open space and on-site amenities, human services, open space TDR, variable scale TDR, and landmark TDR, within the limits and conditions prescribed in the Code. The provision that now allows a wider range of bonus choices to be used to gain the first FAR above the base FAR in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones would be eliminated. The DMC zone would continue to allow the option to use the newly adopted bonuses and TDR provisions establishing the 25%/75% split, or to use the bonus options available in this zone prior to this amendment. The DMR/C zone would have more options for gaining floor area above the base FAR, including gaining floor area according to the prescribed 25%/75% split, or through the use of available bonuses for on-site amenities and the full range of TDR choices.

ALTERNATIVE 4 – NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Overview

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing zoning and Land Use Code regulations would continue to apply for the foreseeable future. Projected economic growth would continue to generate demand for additional residential and nonresidential development in the City as well as the region. However, this alternative assumes no major changes would be made to further augment the zoned development capacity in the Denny Triangle or Commercial Core, or to increase or reduce the emphasis on particular uses beyond conditions established under current zoning. The general development pattern of a concentrated commercial core surrounded by less intensive mixed-use areas promoted under existing zoning would be maintained.

Current Height and Density Limits

The maximum allowable densities and mapped height limits would continue to apply, with the existing opportunities to gain additional height above these limits (see Figure 11). These include: 10% additional height in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones when prescribed measures are taken to control the overall bulk of a project; 20% additional height in DOC 1 and some DOC 2 areas with bulk controls and open space provision, landmark preservation or small-scale structures on-site; and up to 30% additional height for residential and mixed-use development through participation in the TDC programs in the Denny Triangle.

Bonus/TDR provisions. Under Alternative 4, in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones, there are two options for gaining floor area above the base FAR. One option allows additional floor area to be gained through bonuses and/or the transfer of development rights (TDR) according to a split that requires 75% of the additional floor area to be gained through affordable housing TDR, payment to an affordable housing/child care fund, and/or a bonus for providing affordable housing. The remaining 25% can be gained through other eligible bonuses or TDRs, including specified open space and on-site amenities, human services, open space TDR, variable scale TDR, and landmark TDR, within the limits and conditions prescribed in the Code. The other option allows a wider range of bonus choices to be used to gain the first FAR above the base FAR, with any additional floor area gains subject to the 25%/75% split.

In the DMC zone, developers have two choices for increasing floor area above the base FAR. The first is through the use the newly adopted bonuses and TDR provisions establishing the 25%/75% split. The other choice is to use the bonus options available prior to this amendment.

FIGURE 11

Alternative 4: No Action

N

0 2 4 6 8 10
SCALE IN 100 FEET

Existing Regulations

1. OFFICE CORE
   - maximum FAR 14
   - 450' height limit with up to 20% increase allowed (540') under specified conditions

2a. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA
   - maximum FAR 10
   - 300' height limit with up to 30% increase allowed through TDC (390') in Denny Triangle or by 20% (360') under specified conditions

2b. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/NORTH DOWNTOWN
   - maximum FAR 10
   - 300' height limit with up to 30% increase through TDC (390') in Denny Triangle or by 10% (330') under specified conditions

3. OFFICE EXPANSION AREA/SOUTH DOWNTOWN
   - maximum FAR 10
   - 240' height limit with 20% increase (288') allowed under specified conditions.

4. COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREAS
   - maximum FAR 7
   - 125', 160' and 240' height limits; 30% height increase allowed in Denny Triangle through TDC.

Table 5
Alternative 4—No Action

ID	Location	Zone	Maximum Density (FAR)	Maximum Height (feet)	
				Existing mapped limit	Optional height increases
1	Commercial core	DOC 1 – 450'	14	450 ft.	+20% w/bulk limits and open space, or landmark, small bldg. preservation.
2a	Denny Triangle—office expansion, 5th to 8th	DOC 2 – 300'	10	300 ft.	+20% as above, or +30% with TDC
2b	Denny Triangle—office expansion, transitioning east and west	DOC 2 – 300'	10	300 ft.	+10% with bulk limits, or +30% with TDC
	Belltown, office expansion, between 3rd & 5th	DOC 2 – 300'	10	300 ft.	+10% with bulk limits
3	Commercial core—southern edge	DOC 2 – 240'	10	240 ft.	+20% w/bulk limits and open space or landmark, small bldg. preservation.
4	Denny Triangle—mixed use area	DMC – 125' DMC – 160' DMC – 240'	7 7 7	125 ft. 160 ft. 240 ft.	+30% with TDC +30% with TDC +30% with TDC
5	Commercial core—western edge	DMC – 125' DMC – 160' DMC – 240'	7 7 7	125 ft. 160 ft. 240 ft.	None None None
	Belltown—southern edge	DMC – 240'	7	240 ft.	None

Notes: Optional height/density increases are opportunities in the Land Use Code for additional height if certain conditions are met. FAR = floor area ratio. TDC = Transfer of Development Credits.
DOC = Downtown Office Core. DMC = Downtown Mixed Commercial.

Table 6
Comparison of Alternatives

Alternative 1-High End Height and Density Increases	Alternative 2 – Concentrated Office Core
• 135-foot height increase in DOC 1 and 100-foot increases in all Denny Triangle zones • 30% height increase in zones at edge of office and retail cores • 4 FAR maximum density increase in Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone and 3 FAR maximum density increase in other zones • 1 FAR increase in base FAR in DOC 1 zone and DOC 2 zones outside Denny Triangle; 2 FAR increase in base FAR in DMC zones and DOC 2 zone in Denny Triangle. • No TDC in Denny Triangle zones	• 100 and 135-foot height increases to the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones • 30% height increase only at southern edge of office core • 3 FAR maximum density increases in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones • No increase in base FAR • No height or density changes in western or northern DMC zones at periphery of the office/retail core • TDC limited to DMC zones in Denny Triangle
Alternative 3 – Residential Emphasis	**Alternative 4 – No Action**
• 135-foot height increase in DOC 1 and 100-foot increase in Denny Triangle DOC 2 between 5th/6th and 8th Avenues, west to Blanchard St. • No other height increases • 3 FAR maximum density increase in DOC 1 and same DOC 2 area described above • No increases in base FAR • Rezone Denny Triangle mixed use area between Westlake, Howell and Minor Ave. from DMC to DMR/C, lowering density from 7 FAR to 5 and 4. This re-orients the zoning to mixed residential development. • Rezone Belltown southern edge from DMC to DMR/C, lowering density from 7 FAR to 5. • In other Denny Triangle and Commercial Core DMC zones, require the development of non-residential density (above the base) to be contingent upon including on-site housing. • TDC remains in all Denny Triangle zones except portion of DOC 2 with height and density increases.	• No changes in allowable height or density • Existing optional height increases would be available, through use of bulk limitations, use of TDC program, preservation of landmarks or small structures on-site, or provision of on-site open-space usable to public. • Optional height increases range from 10% to 30% above mapped height limits.

Source: SPO, 2002

Recent Regulatory Changes

In 2001, the City Council approved several changes to Downtown land use regulations, including changes to the system of obtaining bonuses, using transfer of development rights (TDR), options for obtaining additional height, and adjustments to base densities in some zones. This section summarizes these changes, for the information of the reader.

Downtown regulations continue to govern density in most zones by establishing a base and maximum floor area ratio (FAR), varying among the Downtown zones. The 2001 amendments fundamentally changed the system for increasing floor area above the base FAR and related development standards, including height provisions. The following is a summary of the major amendments:

PROVISIONS FOR HEIGHT INCREASES

An increase in height of up to 10% above current mapped height limits is allowed for occupied floor area in the Downtown Office Core 1 (DOC 1) and Downtown Office Core 2 (DOC 2) zones as a replacement for the sculptured building top bonus. A reduction in floor size for the upper portion of the structure is required to achieve a less bulky appearance, and the height increase does not permit increases in density beyond established maximum FAR limits. The 10% additional height allowed for unoccupied rooftop features is permitted above the 10% height gain.

A height increase of up to 20% in the DOC 1 zone and a limited portion of the DOC 2 zone is also now allowed to further promote less bulky development and to achieve enhanced conditions at the street level of tall structures. In addition to the reduction in floor size for the upper portion of the tower, special conditions are required at the street level, including the provision of open space, low-scale structures and/or preservation of a landmark structure on the development site.

CHANGES TO DENSITY LIMITS

Maximum FAR Limits. There were no increases to maximum FAR limits. In the DRC zone, the maximum FAR was reduced from 6 FAR to 5 FAR.

Base FAR Limits. Permitted base FARs were increased in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones by 1 FAR, and by 0.5 FAR in the DRC zone. These changes re-establish a graduated range of base FARs reflecting a land use pattern that focuses greatest density on the Downtown office core in the DOC 1 zone, with the next greatest density permitted in the DOC 2 zone. Increases in the base FAR also offset the elimination of floor area bonuses previously allowed for required features, such as sidewalk widening. In the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones, the first FAR above the base FAR can still be gained by providing a variety of on-site amenities, such as street-level retail shopping uses, short-term parking, and public open space features.

CHANGE TO BONUS/TDR PROVISIONS

The original incentive provisions allowed incremental increases in floor area above the base FAR through the use of certain types of bonuses or by acquiring development rights from eligible properties that could be transferred to the development site (TDR). Under this system, use of housing bonuses and TDR from affordable housing structures was reserved for the uppermost increments needed to reach the maximum FAR.

Under the new provisions, the maximum FAR can be achieved in several ways, including:

- Transfer of development rights (TDR);
- Floor area bonuses when certain impacts of development are mitigated by voluntary agreements to provide or contribute to housing and child care ("facilities bonus"); or
- Floor area bonuses when certain impact-mitigating features are provided ("amenity bonuses").

The bonus and TDR options have been re-prioritized under the amended provisions to focus on mitigation of housing impacts. In DOC-1 and DOC-2, seventy-five percent (75%) of any floor area above 1 FAR above the base FAR must be earned by TDR transferred from qualified housing sites or by facilities bonuses that involve mitigation of housing and child care impacts. Twenty-five percent of the floor area above 1 FAR above the base FAR must be earned from other (non-housing) development rights transfers or amenity bonuses, or both. Five percent (one-fifth of the 25%) must be achieved through TDR from Landmark structures when available. In DRC, the 75%-25% split would be applied to all chargeable floor area above the base FAR.

Some bonus features, including major performing arts theaters, sculptured building tops, and major retail stores, have been eliminated.

The first FAR above the base in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones can be gained through by using amenity bonuses, including short-term parking and retail uses, or non-housing TDR. In DMC zones, floor area increases above the base FAR can be gained by using one of two options: a) the rules governing floor area in general and for gaining bonus floor area that applied prior to the amended provisions, or b) the newer bonus and exemption rules described above.

CHANGES TO TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) OPTIONS

The use of TDR continues to allow the unused base density permitted on a site to be transferred to other sites within the same block or transferred between blocks from eligible sites in some areas of Downtown to other areas. Transfers continue to be permitted from sites developed with landmark structures and from sites with housing for households with incomes up to 80% of median income, provided a minimum amount of housing for households with incomes up to 50% of median income is included. The area where landmarks are eligible as TDR sending sites was expanded to include zones north of Virginia Street to Denny Way. Transfers are no longer permitted from Pioneer Square infill sites, from sites occupied by new housing or from new or existing performing arts facilities (except landmarks).

A new provision allows for the transfer of development rights from sites provided as Downtown public open spaces, subject to special conditions. All transfers are subject to limitations, some of them new (for example, in many areas a lower FAR is used to calculate floor area available to transfer from sending sites).

CHANGES TO RETAIL CORE PROVISIONS

The use of specific bonus features and conditional use approval is no longer required for structures to exceed the 85-foot base height up to the maximum height of 150 feet. Certain types of mixed-use development that include residential use or a minimum amount of retail and/or entertainment uses are permitted up to the maximum height of 150 feet without additional conditions. In addition, up to 30% more height is permitted on two half-blocks along the western edge of the retail core on the east side of 2nd Avenue between Pine and Union Streets.