

LAND USE—HEIGHT, BULK, SCALE AND COMPATIBILITY

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

“Height, bulk and scale” relates to the size of buildings and their relationship to surrounding properties. The City’s environmental policies recognize that physical characteristics of buildings affect the character of neighborhoods. The policies also recognize an interest in addressing building height, bulk and scale to maintain smooth transitions from one zone to another.

Pioneer Square

Pioneer Square’s dominant building pattern consists of buildings built abutting all property lines including alleys. This contributes to a continuity of street-level uses adjacent to public sidewalks and creates street corridors that are well-defined by the bulk of buildings on both sides of the street. This is most evident along 1st Avenue S., portions of 2nd and 3rd Avenue north of Yesler Way, and in the vicinity of S. Jackson Street and S. King Street, where the height of the buildings averages roughly 70-90 feet. Near Occidental Park and eastward to approximately 3rd Avenue, the predominant building scale is somewhat lower, in the range of 10 to 50 feet. However, several taller buildings such as the Frye Hotel, Smith Tower and King Street Station’s clock tower tend to create a variety of heights in the built environment. The intermittent presence of vacant properties or parking lots provides some visual relief in portions of this area, but also creates gaps in the continuity of streetfront uses.

A distinctive aspect of Pioneer Square architecture is a frequent incidence of floor-to-floor heights that are larger than 10 feet. Heights of street-level spaces can range up to 15 feet. This tends to result in distinctive architectural treatments and shapes of windows (sometimes tall and narrow, sometimes large in both dimensions), and a perceived moderation in building scale due to the appearance of fewer but taller floors. The distinctive historic architecture and building materials also lend a grace and visual interest to a viewer’s perception of the urban environment.

The northernmost portion of Pioneer Square is adjacent to the Downtown core, which includes larger-scale buildings nearby. In addition, the sloping streets of James, Cherry and Columbia Streets create a different street environment on east-west streets (including fewer ground-level uses) and increase the elevation of buildings on nearby blocks. These factors contribute to a transitional environment in building height, bulk and scale between Pioneer Square and Downtown.

Chinatown/I.D.

In Chinatown, both sides of S. King Street west of I-5 feature historic buildings ranging from 3 to 6 stories, approximately 30 to 70 feet in height. Other buildings in the immediate vicinity of S. Jackson and S. King Streets contribute to a concentration of development that is mostly continuous in street-level uses and roughly similar in average building height, bulk and scale. The primary exception is the old Uwajimaya grocery site near 6th Avenue S. and S. King Street which includes a large parking lot and low-scale building. Most of the buildings in this vicinity include Asian-American and/or historic architectural design features, many with brick facades, distinctive parapets and signage that help define the area’s visual character.

In the vicinity south of S. Weller Street, typical buildings are lower in height, bulk and scale than along S. King Street. The development pattern south of S. Weller Street includes numerous parking lots and buildings widely varying in age, size and architectural design quality. The Uwajimaya mixed-use development is the largest structure in this area, filling much of a city block to a height of approximately

75 to 85 feet. A few relatively new residential and mixed-use buildings are also present, generally in the range of 5 to 7 stories. However, one-to-two story buildings and parking lots are the most common building pattern in this area.

Japantown has a somewhat different development pattern than Chinatown. Japantown includes an area in the National Register Historic District with several low- to moderate-scaled buildings along Main Street and 6th Avenue S. In addition, this immediate vicinity includes two senior apartment towers ranging up to approximately 150 feet in height. A variety of other residential buildings on the hill south of Yesler Way are generally in the range of 70 feet. In addition, an office building and the Downtowner Apartments, both at approximately 100 feet in height, are present between 4th and 5th Avenues near S. Jackson Street. Throughout this vicinity, parking lots and one-story buildings are also interspersed, contributing to a varied character in land use, building height, bulk and scale, but also adding to a sense of “missing teeth,” breaking the continuity of the district.

Little Saigon

Given its location east of I-5 and current zoning, the pattern of building height, bulk and scale is lower than most other areas in the Downtown Urban Center. Most buildings in this vicinity are 10 to 30 feet tall, several with parking lots located between the building and the sidewalk. These are generally single-purpose retail buildings or multi-tenant strip shopping centers. However, several other buildings are built to the property line, contributing to a widely varying pattern and character of development. Vacant lots are also present on S. Jackson and S. King Streets, and a few single-family residences remain. The tallest buildings in this vicinity are the Pacific Rim Center at approximately 65 feet, an office building on S. Weller Street at approximately 60 feet and a retail center near 12th Avenue S. and S. Jackson Street, at approximately 40 to 50 feet. Along Rainier Avenue S., the commercial buildings are generally one or two stories. East of Rainier Avenue S., a few commercial-oriented buildings sit behind and above the Rainier Avenue-abutting buildings, but further eastward the pattern immediately transitions to low-density single-family residences. Southeast of Rainier Avenue S./S. Dearborn Street, newer multistory apartment residences lie behind and slightly above the low-density commercial uses along Rainier Avenue S.

South-of-Dearborn

This longtime industrial area is low-scaled, primarily consisting of one-to-two story warehouses, up to three-to-four story commercial buildings and the former INS Building, which is roughly 50 feet in height. Much of the development extends to or near the property lines, with parking lots interspersed. These characteristics contribute to an environment that is well-defined at the sidewalk edge in some places, but also relatively open to light and air. At the eastern and southern perimeters of this area, I-5 and the I-90 ramps provide a visual boundary that separates it from Beacon Hill to the east and the rest of the Duwamish industrial area to the south. The Charles Street Yard, encompassing several City operations facilities, is located in the eastern portion of this vicinity adjacent to I-5.

Stadium Area

Building heights in the Stadium Area cover a range that reflects a diverse mixture of low- and moderate-scale building types, from 1-2 story structures to buildings up to approximately 80 feet in height, some of which are located within Pioneer Square zoning. Building patterns generally reflect the transitional nature of this vicinity. Along 1st Avenue S., typical buildings are typically lower to the south, with an increasing presence of buildings in the 50-80 foot range further to the north, in proximity to Pioneer Square neighborhood boundaries. In the middle of this transitional area along 1st Avenue S., the new Silver Cloud Hotel (in Pioneer Square zoning) reaches a height of 85 feet. Along 4th Avenue S. just north of Royal Brougham Way, the building heights range up to 40-60 feet. North of Airport Way the typical scale on the east side of 4th Avenue S. ranges up to approximately 150 feet. In addition, this vicinity

includes the Qwest Field and Safeco Field complexes that are over 260 feet in height, tall and massive structures that reflect a larger scale of development and define street corridor spaces along 1st Avenue S., Occidental Avenue S., 4th Avenue S., and S. Royal Brougham Way. Safeco Field's massing includes concourse areas that are scaled at approximately 65 feet along 1st Avenue S., reflecting the approximate proportions of other buildings in this corridor. A multi-story parking garage and large plaza associated with Safeco Field contribute to the streetscape character of Occidental Avenue S. one block south of Edgar Martinez Way (S. Atlantic Street). A proposed commercial building extending the full length of the Home Plate Parking property (south of S. Atlantic Street, west of 1st Avenue S.) also is expected to contribute to a larger building scale and denser presence of building bulk in this vicinity. However, at present, large segments of the 1st Avenue S. streetfront remain in groups of relatively low-scaled structures conforming to the long north-south rectangular blocks in this vicinity. This includes the low-scaled warehouse structures currently present on the WOSCA property.

One interesting height-related juxtaposition in this vicinity is the extension of Pioneer Square zoning—PSM 85'/120'—on the east side of 1st Avenue S. as far south as Royal Brougham Way. This existing zoning affords the potential for 120-foot buildings if three-quarters of the building space is in residential use. Given the availability of some vacant parcels in this vicinity, there is a possibility that future development under existing zoning would result in buildings to that 120-foot height.

COMPATIBILITY AMONG EXISTING USES

Land Use Patterns and Height Transitions

Pioneer Square

This neighborhood is completely within a City-defined historic preservation district, and most of it also is located within a National Register Historic District. Only the Pioneer Square-zoned portion on the east side of 1st Avenue S. south of Railroad Way is outside of the National Register Historic District. Land use and zoning regulations protect historic character by ensuring compatible uses and visual relationships between buildings in the National Register Historic District and City-defined historic preservation district of Pioneer Square. Special Review District regulations and standards address many elements, such as how alterations, new construction, renovations of existing structures, signage changes, building relationships to the streetscape and street level uses may occur in a manner compatible with the historic district.

Actual building patterns exhibit a mix and distribution of buildings that are mostly compatible in terms of land use and heights within Pioneer Square. This is likely due to the preservation of historic buildings, a low amount of infill development, and effectiveness of existing zoning regulations. Taller buildings include the Smith Tower, which at 467 feet towers over other buildings in its vicinity, the King Street Station clock tower at 247 feet, and Qwest Field at 263 feet immediately adjacent to the Pioneer-Square zoned area.

Zoning regulations that affect height compatibility include: the zoned height limits, and a variable height limit in the PSM 100' zone, which indicates, "no structure shall exceed by more than 15 feet the height of the tallest structure on the block or the adjacent block front(s), to a maximum of 100 feet." On the whole, these rules promote similarity of new buildings to existing building heights. However, despite its intentions, the variable height limit does not preclude the possibility of variations up to 75 feet in height between buildings. Also, the variable height limits can change over time. For example, if a building on a neighboring block becomes taller through renovation or new construction, the height limit affecting a nearby block face would increase, though it could not exceed 100 feet.

Chinatown/I.D.

This neighborhood is within a City-defined historic preservation district (extending east to 12th Avenue S.), a subset of which is a National Register Historic District, located approximately between Main Street and S. Weller Street, 5th Avenue S. and I-5. As with Pioneer Square, compatibility among uses and structures is an important purpose of the land use and zoning regulations. The Special Review District regulations are comparable to Pioneer Square's, but adapted in ways that address particular aspects of the neighborhood's visual character and use patterns. Similar to Pioneer Square, the zoned height limits accommodate more building height for residential uses in peripheral areas of the neighborhood, up to 150 feet in the IDR zone. The central part of the Chinatown neighborhood is currently limited to a maximum building height of 85 feet for structures with a majority of space in residential use, and 75 feet for structures with a majority of space in non-residential use.

These rules promote compatibility of land use and building heights. However, a few interesting implications of the current zoning patterns are noted.

- The boundary between the IDR 150' and IDM 75'/85' zones that is one-half block north of and parallel to S. Jackson Street creates a condition where maximum-height 150-foot buildings would be notably different in scale to the existing low-scale buildings along S. Jackson Street that are part of the National Register Historic District. Relatively steep up-sloping topography further contributes to this potential difference in height.
- SEPA view protection policies may be a constraining factor on the full use of the IDR 150-foot height limit along S. Main Street (east of 6th Avenue), if a building would substantially block views from the Kobe Terrace Park and Danny Woo Gardens property.
- The Chinatown/I.D. zone regulations do not include a "variable height limit" as described for Pioneer Square.

Helicopter flight paths to and from Harborview Hospital are another potential influence on building height in the Japantown hill vicinity. Maintaining sufficient clear airspace to allow helicopter inbound and outbound movements is preferred for aircraft safety. This airspace is located in the general vicinity of Harborview Hospital and Interstate 5. This is a potential influence on building height limit choices for the portion of the Japantown hill near Yesler Way and I-5.

Little Saigon

Existing land use regulations, the height limit of 65 feet, and past market forces have contributed to the existing pattern of automobile-oriented uses and low-rise building forms. The area is predominantly commercial but has residential uses in some peripheral locations. Zoning accommodates a wide variety of commercial uses, and some industrial uses east of 12th Avenue S. Topographical breaks provide natural transitions that aid in maintaining overall compatible conditions.

South-of-Dearborn

Existing land use and building patterns, along with a consistently-scaled zoned height limit of 85 feet, have contributed to good compatibility between uses. The area is undergoing change, with the introduction of retail and housing in recent years. Pacific Food Importers is an existing retail use, and a multi-block BMW dealership is proposed. The William Booth Center provides transitional housing, located at S. Charles Street/Maynard Avenue S., across the street from the General Industrial 2 zone.

Stadium Area

The range of land uses, daily activity patterns, and the street environment in the stadium area influence overall compatibility. Events at Qwest Field and Safeco Field on many days create influxes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic ranging as high as 50,000-60,000 people. This can impact small and medium-sized commercial, warehouse and light industrial uses that operate in the vicinity, due to parking demand, pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and street closures. Large events can increase the difficulty of Port truck and rail traffic movements on all streets in the local street network, which access the heavily used Seattle International Gateway rail yard near this vicinity. Physically, local blocks include warehouse load/unload spaces that must remain open for efficient business activity. Trucks at times are parked perpendicular to and partially blocking streets. No sidewalks are present along these block faces, which, along with increased event-related pedestrian volumes, may encourage pedestrians to walk in the street. Food vending along certain street edges such as Occidental Avenue S. near Qwest Field also occurs during events. Major streets including 1st Avenue S. and S. Atlantic Street are key commuting corridors, adding to the potential for pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.

Existing zoning in the area provides some transition in zoned height limits, including 85-foot maximum heights south of S. Atlantic Street and 65-foot maximum heights north of S. Atlantic Street. These limits contrast with the 120-foot height limit present in the nearby Pioneer Square zoning on the east side of 1st Avenue S., and with the much taller presence of the athletic stadia.

Light and Glare Compatibility

Exposure of residential uses to excessive light or glare is an unfavorable condition. The level of exposure and proximity of the light source to the receivers are important factors. Glare issues can arise if reflections from glassy or shiny portions of new buildings adversely affect residents or passing motorists.

Sources of light/glare in the study area vicinity include: the athletic facilities, major highway and street arteries, port operations, and local commercial and business operations. Existing conditions are not known to create significant light/glare issues presently, except headlights from SR99 traffic passing near upper floors of Pioneer Square buildings may create unwanted light/glare for building occupants. Port facilities and athletic stadium facilities lighting contribute to illumination in the vicinity.

Shadows on Open Spaces

The City's SEPA regulations pertaining to shadow impacts are narrowly defined for Downtown. The policy background statement in SMC 25.05.675 Q recognizes that:

- access to sunlight is an amenity of public spaces;
- the Downtown land use code provides some protections against shadow impacts (through height, bulk and setback controls); but
- it is not practical to prevent shadowing at all public open spaces Downtown.

The SEPA policy defines five open spaces in Downtown where shadow impacts may be mitigated, including Freeway Park, Westlake Park/plaza, Victor Steinbrueck Park, Convention Center Park, and Kobe Terrace Park/Danny Woo Gardens (located in the Chinatown/I.D. neighborhood). Potential mitigation measures can include limiting the height and bulk of a proposed building, redesigning its profile or altering other building details, or adjusting its location on a property.

In the existing condition at Kobe Terrace/Danny Woo Gardens, there is one existing senior apartment building that reaches to approximately 150 feet in height located just southwest of the garden area. At certain times of day and certain times of year, this building likely casts shadows on portions of the garden.

The garden is located on a slope that otherwise has good southern exposure toward sunlight. Another apartment building adjacent to the north has no probable shadowing effect on the garden. Other buildings nearby to the south, including a new 7-story apartment building, have no influence on sunlight access at the garden due to up-sloping topography.

In other portions of the study area, existing tree canopies and the characteristics of many existing buildings create conditions at street level that are often shaded. Other areas have fewer trees and lower buildings such that shadowing is not a significant factor affecting the streetscape.

Please see other discussion of compatibility-related topics in the Environmental Health section in Chapter 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The height and shape of buildings are two of the most direct influences on the character of an urban environment and on perceptions of compatible land use patterns. For this reason, Livable South Downtown planning emphasizes careful consideration of the height and bulk dimensions of future development. The preferred approach is to accommodate taller residential buildings in targeted areas around the edges of core neighborhoods, and allow infill of other buildings with contextually-appropriate heights and density limits in the historic cores.

The following discussion summarizes conclusions made about the potential for significant adverse impacts with future development under the EIS alternatives. More details on the analysis leading to these conclusions are provided in Appendix B to this Draft EIS. Also, see the Land Use—Zoning, Land Use and Development Patterns section, Economic and Business Impacts section, Environmental Health and Historic and Cultural Preservation sections in Chapter 3 and Appendices A, C, F and H for other impact discussion.

HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

Pioneer Square

In Pioneer Square, the range of alternatives addresses different height, bulk and scale levels for different parts of the neighborhood. Individual areas examined within Pioneer Square include the “core” area, the Qwest Field north parking lot, the “over-tracks” properties, and the “railroad gap” vicinity west of 4th Avenue S. and north of S. Jackson Street. In many cases, the alignment of height/density limits with favored land use patterns should help to limit the potential for impacts. However, for certain alternatives involving a greater increase in the scale of possible development, significant adverse height, bulk and scale impacts are identified. These conclusions relate to the worst-case outcomes if building bulk and scale is not adequately controlled. In all of the cases where significant adverse impacts are identified, it would be possible to implement mitigation strategies to mitigate these impacts. This would be expected to occur through the rezone process and subsequent City decision-making processes.

“Core” area:

In the Pioneer Square “core” area, the range of zoning proposals in the alternatives would not be expected to generate significant adverse height, bulk and scale impacts. Protections afforded by the existing PSM zone and special review district processes, the limited extent of change, and the targeting of height increases (in Alternatives 1 and 2) to vacant and non-historic contributing properties would help avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts. Alternative 3’s height limit at 100 feet would generate the least potential for significant impacts.

Qwest Field north parking lot:

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, maximum height limits would reach 180 feet and 240 feet respectively (see Figure 3-3). Compared to surrounding building scale and zoned height limits, these maximum building heights would represent “moderate-to-large” and “large” differences in scale, respectively. Even though bulk controls are included in these alternatives, significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts could result with future development, if those controls are not specified in sufficient detail. Alternative 3’s maximum height limits would reach 150 feet, which is assessed as generating potential “adverse” impacts but not “significant adverse” impacts related to height, bulk and scale (see Figure 3-4). This relates to the 150-foot maximum height leading to future building development that would be closest in scale to the prevailing Pioneer Square building scale. For Alternatives 1 and 2, mitigation strategies to further influence the height, bulk and scale of future development should be implemented to protect against such adverse impacts.

“Over-tracks” properties:

Based on a rationale similar to that stated above for the Qwest Field north parking lot, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 could result in significant adverse impacts related to height, bulk and scale with future development. Proposed height limits under these alternatives would be 150 feet under Alternative 1 (see Figure 3-5), and 180 feet under Alternatives 2 and 3 (see Figure 3-6 and 3-7). These conclusions indicate the importance of defining bulk controls in sufficient detail so that building designs avoid arrangements of bulk that might relate poorly to the 4th Avenue S. corridor, King Street Station, Qwest Field and the Qwest Field north parking lot. This means that mitigation strategies to further influence the height, bulk and scale of future development should be implemented to protect against such impacts.

“Railroad gap” properties north of S. Jackson Street:

In this area at the edge of the Pioneer Square historic core along 4th Avenue S., Alternatives 1 and 2 identify increased height limits to 180 feet and 150 feet, respectively. No changes in this area are proposed under Alternatives 3 and 4.

Under Alternative 1, future development rising to a maximum of 180 feet would present a relatively large contrast to the surrounding lower-scaled building pattern. Due to the magnitude of this difference and the sensitivity of the historic district context, significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts could occur with future development (see Figure 3-8).

Under Alternative 2, the proposed zone would define a 150-foot maximum height limit for an area east of 3rd Avenue S. that includes the “railroad gap” properties but also other historically-contributing properties in the Pioneer Square historic district. This larger area with an increased height limit would mean an increased amount of total building bulk in future development that could contrast with nearby historic properties in Pioneer Square, such as the Union Gospel Mission. This could generate significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts with future development, given the sensitivity of the historic context. However, limiting the 150-foot zoned height limit only to the “railroad gap” areas, as a mitigation strategy, would avoid these significant adverse impacts, due to its avoidance of zone changes on properties with historically contributing structures, a building scale that is closer to what is permitted in the adjacent Pioneer Square Mixed zone, and also due to the transitional nature of the “railroad gap” areas to the Japantown vicinity properties (see Figure 3-8).

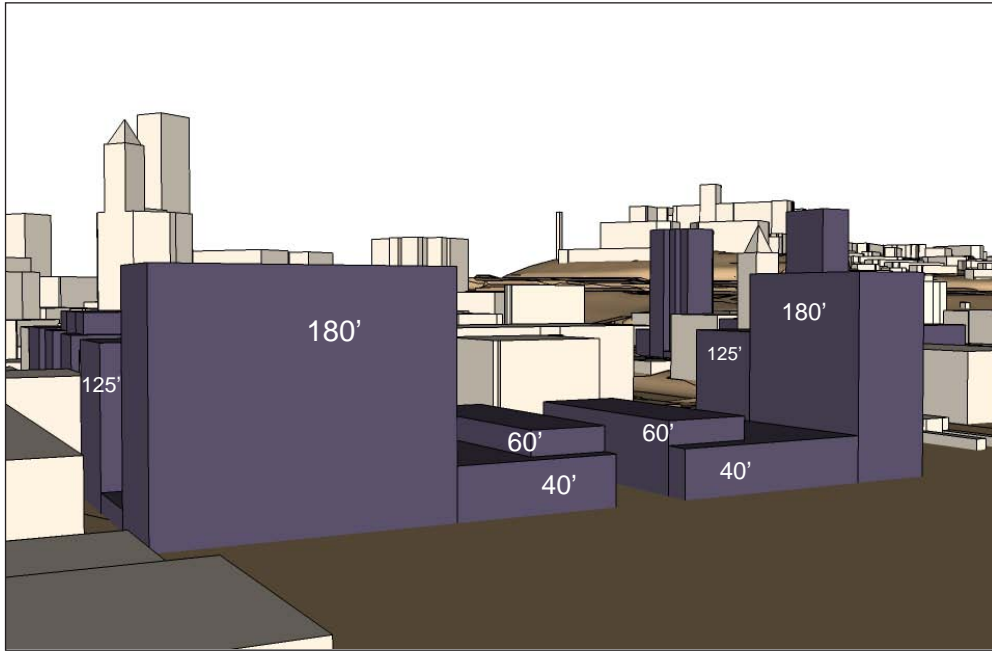
Variable height limit:

Part of all three zoning alternatives is to discontinue the variable height limit, because it would conflict in intent with other zoning strategies addressing height. The variable height limit conceptually appears beneficial. However, the standard does not guarantee predictable or equitable outcomes in its regulation of building heights. The net result of discontinuing this regulation would be the accommodation of building heights potentially reaching 130 feet on non-historically-contributing properties, and potentially reaching 100 feet on a variety of properties with historic structures.

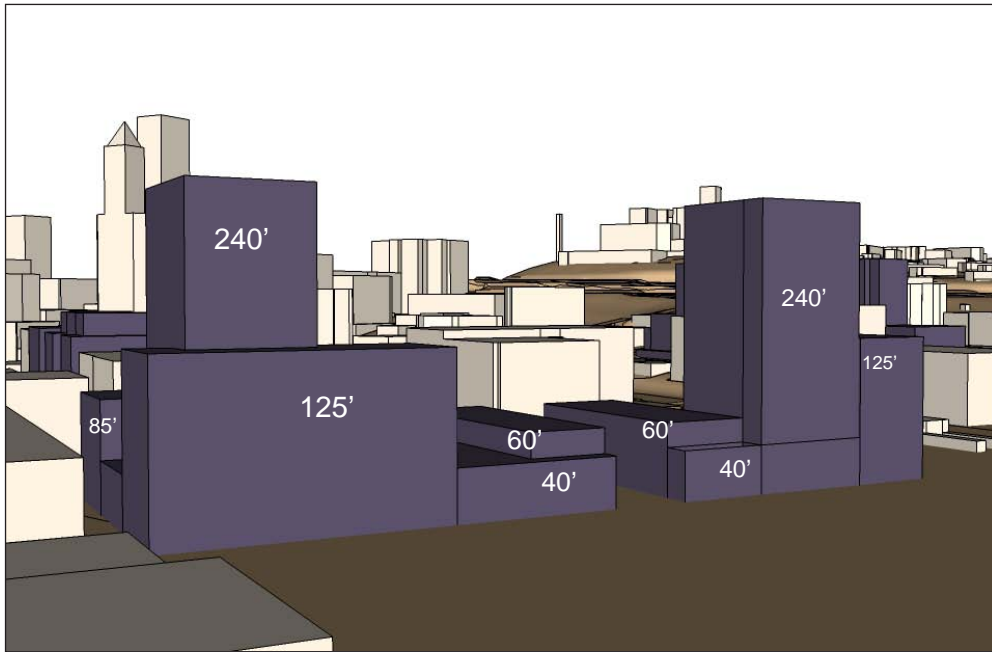
Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

Under Alternative 4, with no regulatory changes there would be no potential for significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts. Future development, including in the Qwest Field north parking lot, would be assumed to occur according to the existing zoned height limits and other provisions of the Land Use Code (see Figure 3-4).

Alternative 1



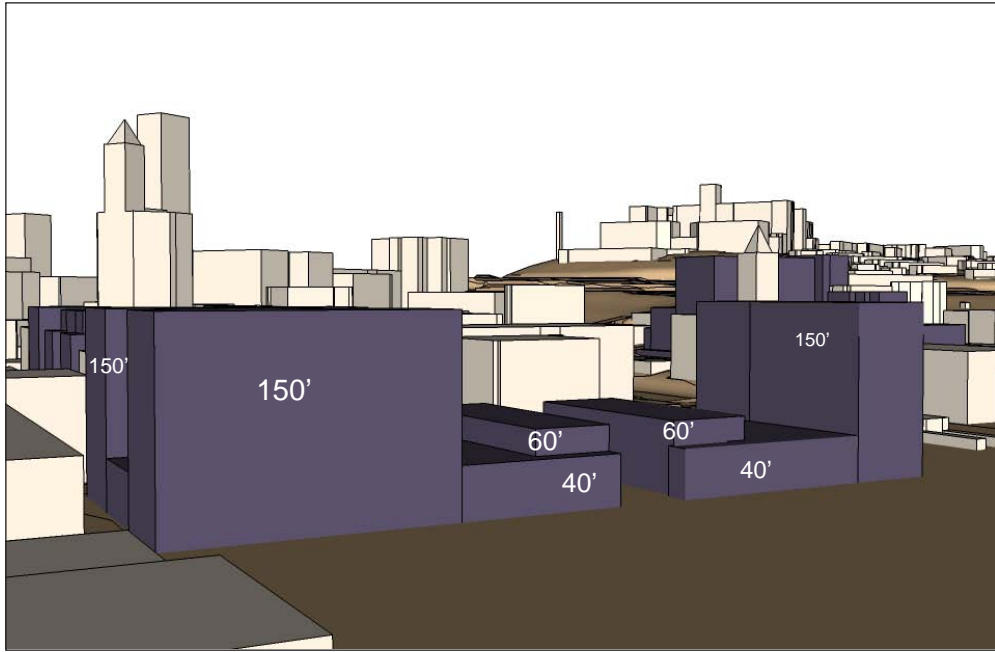
Alternative 2



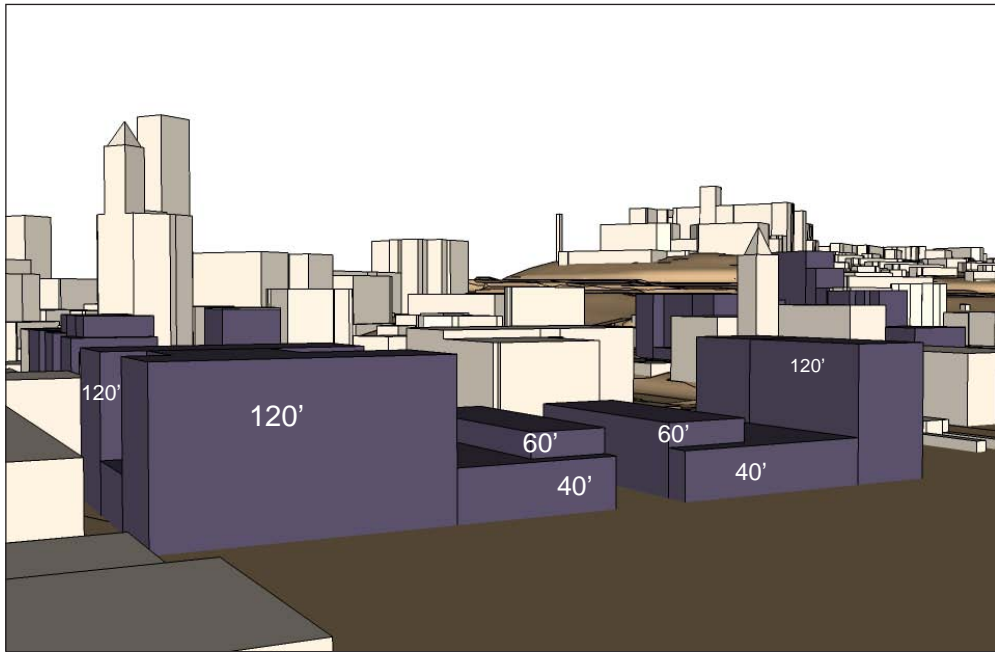
Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario. Density limits and bulk controls would influence how building bulk is arranged.

Figure 3-3
Hypothetical Height and Bulk at North Parking Lot, Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternative 3



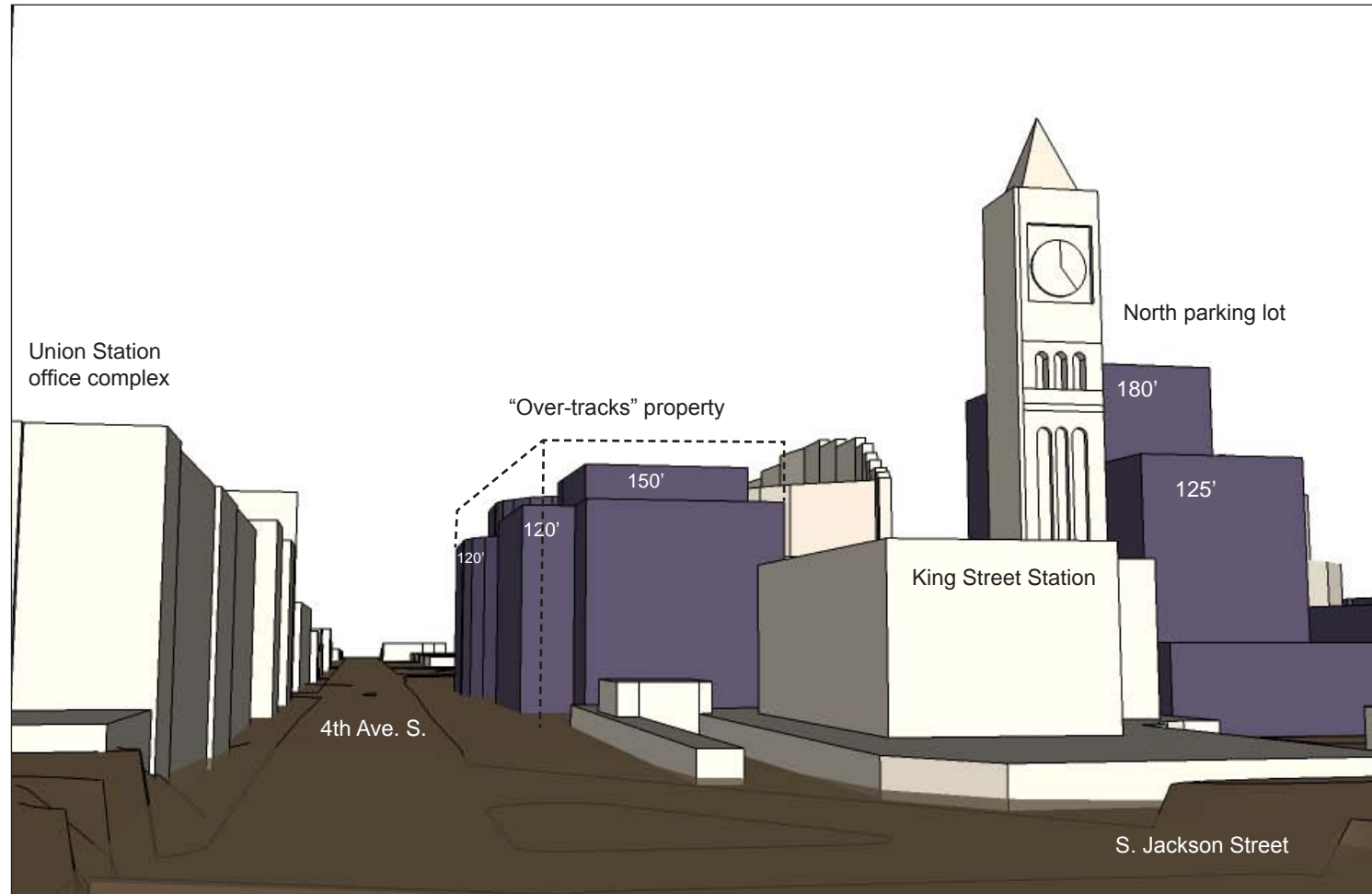
Alternative 4



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario. Density limits and bulk controls would influence how building bulk is arranged.

Figure 3-4
Hypothetical Height and Bulk at North Parking Lot, Alternatives 3 and 4

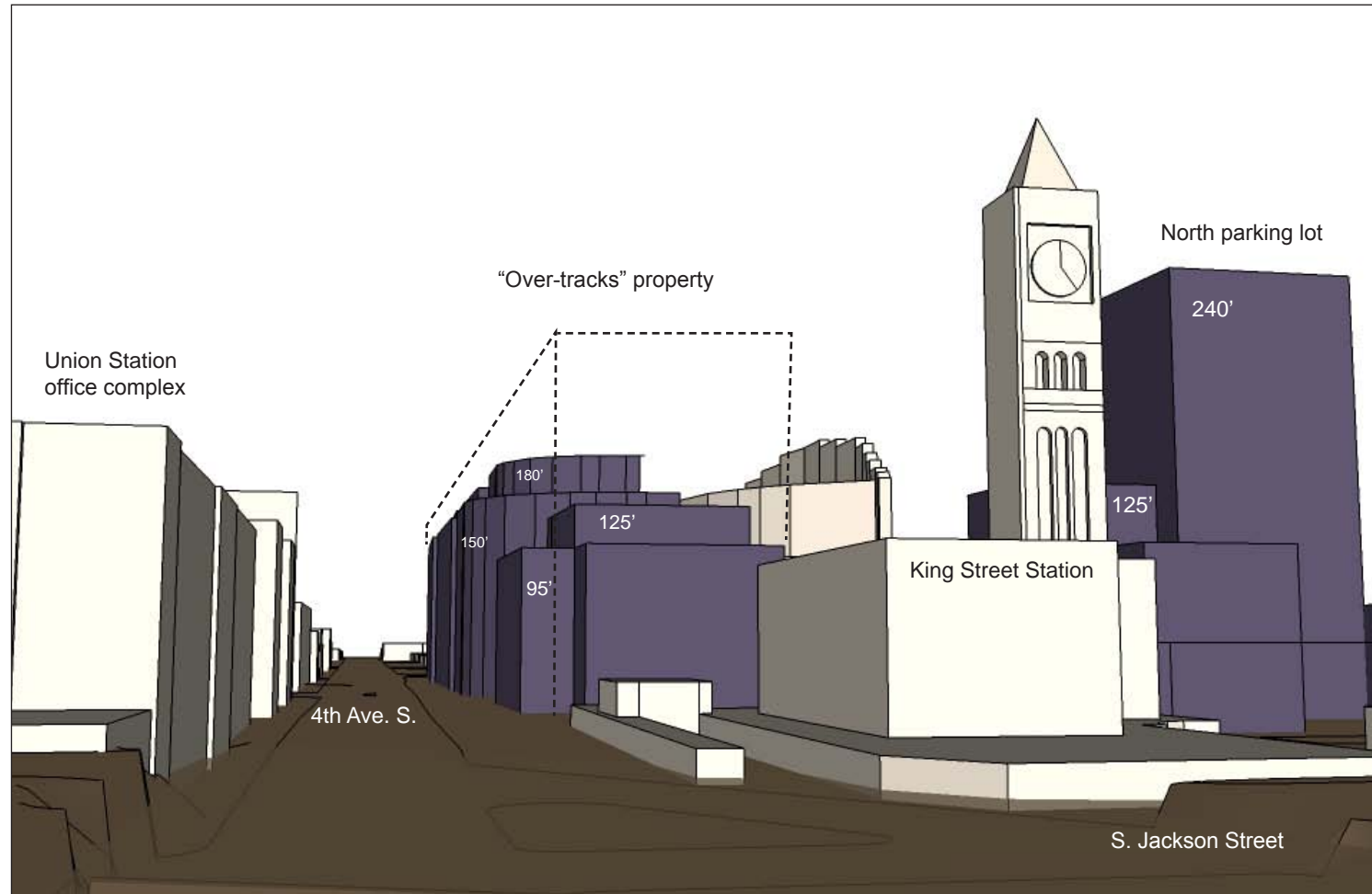
Alternative 1



Note: Buildings shown represent a hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario. Dotted lines indicate a possible maximum "building envelope" defined by the height limit. Density limits and bulk controls would prevent filling the entire building envelope.

Figure 3-5
Hypothetical Height and Bulk at "Over-Tracks" Property, Looking South on 4th Ave. S. from S. Jackson St., Alternative 1

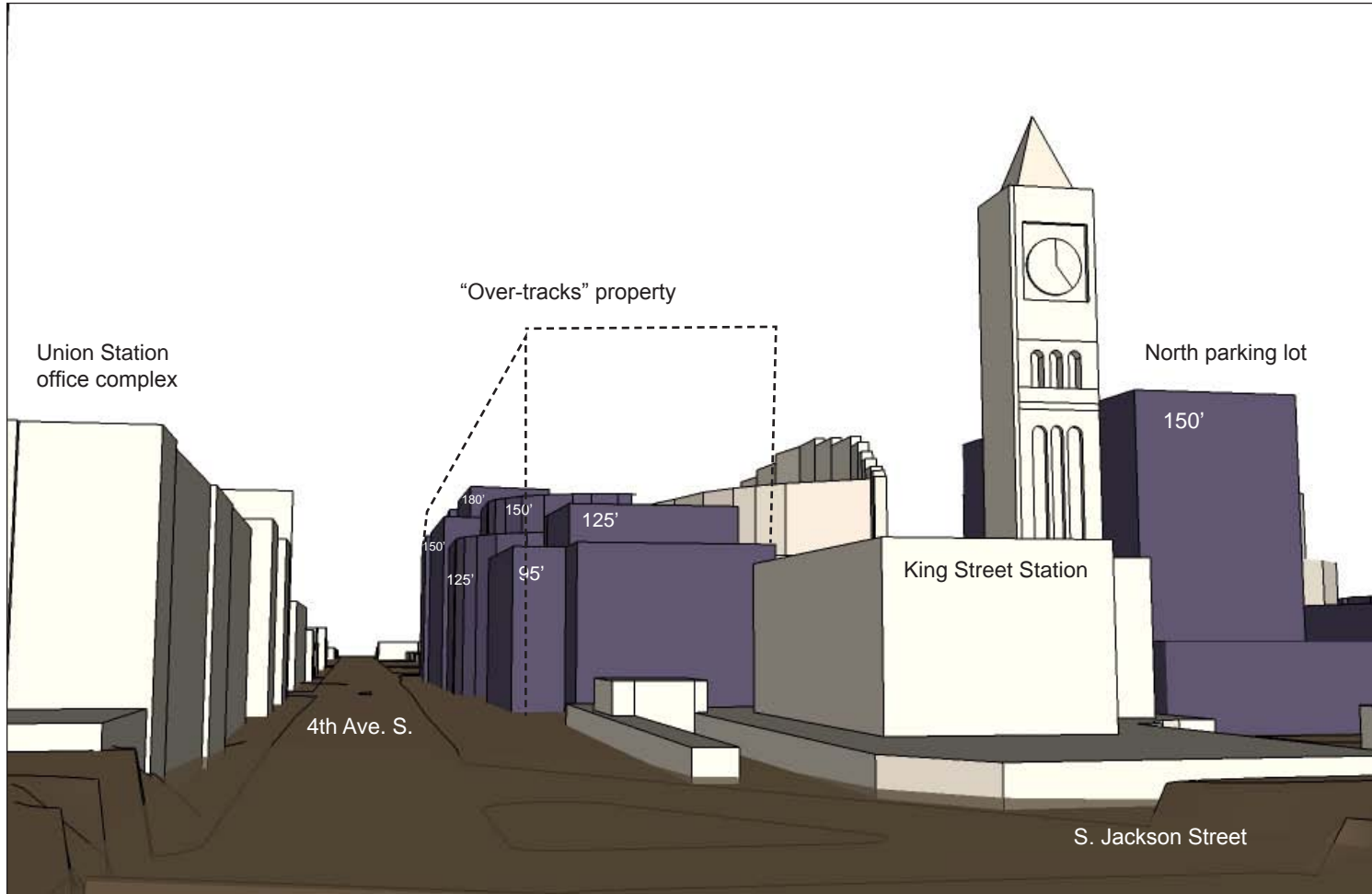
Alternative 2



Note: Buildings shown represent a hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario. Dotted lines indicate a maximum possible "building envelope" defined by the height limit. Density limits and bulk controls would prevent filling the entire building envelope.

Figure 3-6
Hypothetical Height and Bulk at "Over-Tracks" Property, Looking South on 4th Ave. S. from S. Jackson St., Alternative 2

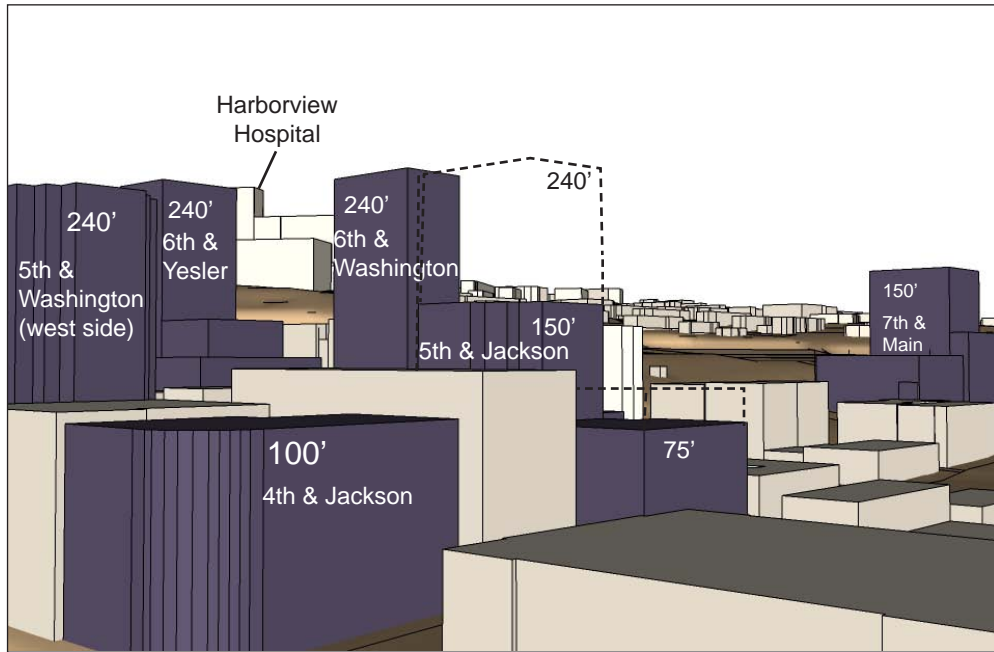
Alternative 3



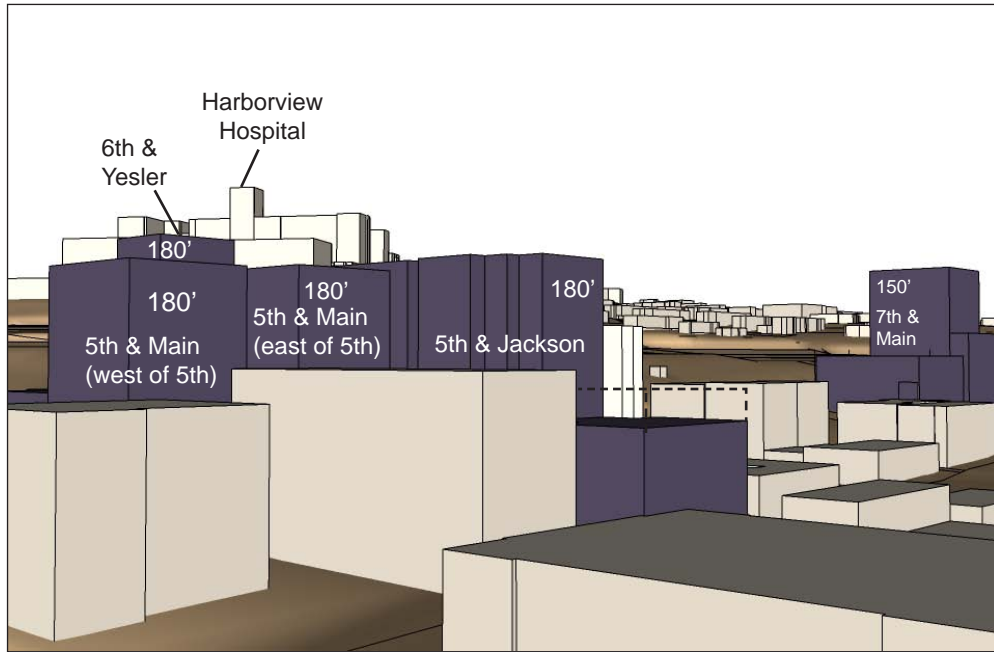
Note: Buildings shown represent a hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario. Dotted lines indicate a possible maximum "building envelope" defined by the height limit. Density limits and bulk controls would prevent filling the entire building envelope.

Figure 3-7
Hypothetical Height and Bulk at "Over-Tracks" Property, Looking South on 4th Ave. S. from S. Jackson St., Alternative 3

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Note: Hypothetical buildings shown, per the EIS growth scenario, except one additional building shown at 6th & Yesler. Dotted lines show a possible maximum "building envelope" only at 5th & Jackson, for illustrative purposes.

Figure 3-9
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Japantown, Alternatives 1 and 2,
Looking Northeast Across S. Jackson Street

Chinatown/I.D. West of I-5

In the Chinatown/I.D. neighborhood west of I-5, the range of alternatives addresses height limits for residential development in the IDM zone, ranging from 180 feet for Alternatives 2 and 3 to 240 feet for Alternative 1 in the Japantown vicinity. This vicinity is located generally north of S. Jackson Street, south of Yesler Way and east of 4th Avenue S. In the core of the Chinatown neighborhood west of I-5, the range of alternatives addresses height limits for residential development in the IDM zone, up to 125 feet in Alternatives 1 and 2. These alternatives also include a few possible variations that include extending the 125-foot height limit as far north as S. King Street for the block between 5th and 6th Avenues S., and the potential for residential uses at street level in portions of the vicinity south of S. Weller Street. No zoning changes are proposed in Alternative 3 in the core of Chinatown.

Japantown

The Alternative 1 proposal for a 240-foot height limit extending as far east as 6th Avenue S. could result in 240-foot buildings located at upper elevations on the hill in this vicinity (see Figure 3-9). A building of this height on the hill, adjacent to 6th Avenue, could result in significant adverse impacts of height, bulk and scale with future development. However, no other such impacts are identified for the alternatives in this vicinity, because building bulk controls included in the alternatives would contribute to a moderation of building bulk and scale. Also, the 180-foot height limits associated with Alternatives 2 and 3 would generate less potential than Alternative 1 for adverse height/bulk/scale impacts (see Figures 3-9 and 3-10). These conclusions extend to locations as far south as 5th Avenue S./S. Jackson Street. Despite the relatively tall potential 240-foot maximum height that would contrast with the scale of other existing buildings near 5th and Jackson (including the cluster of Japantown landmark buildings to the northeast), the positive influence of recommended bulk controls (such as probable upper-level setbacks along S. Jackson Street) would help future development at this location to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts.

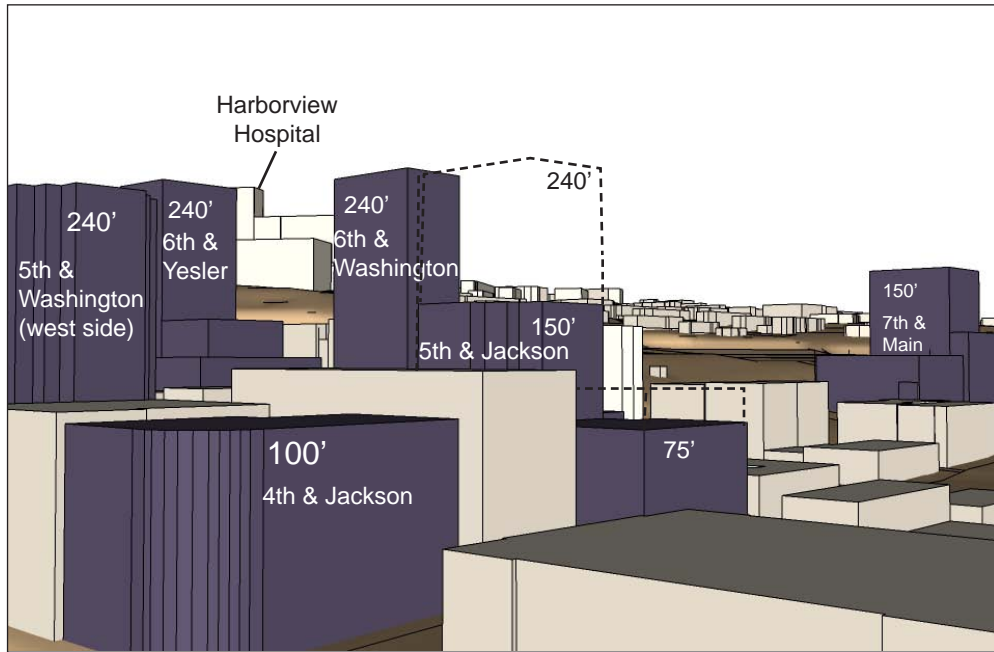
Under Alternative 1, a potential for a 240-foot building located near 6th Avenue/Yesler Way is also identified as generating a “potential adverse height-related impact” because it could potentially intrude slightly into airspace preferred by emergency service providers for emergency helicopter flightpaths to Harborview Hospital. (This airspace is not specifically mandated by federal rules). Because this intrusion could be avoided through future design of such a building, it is not characterized as a significant adverse impact.

Chinatown

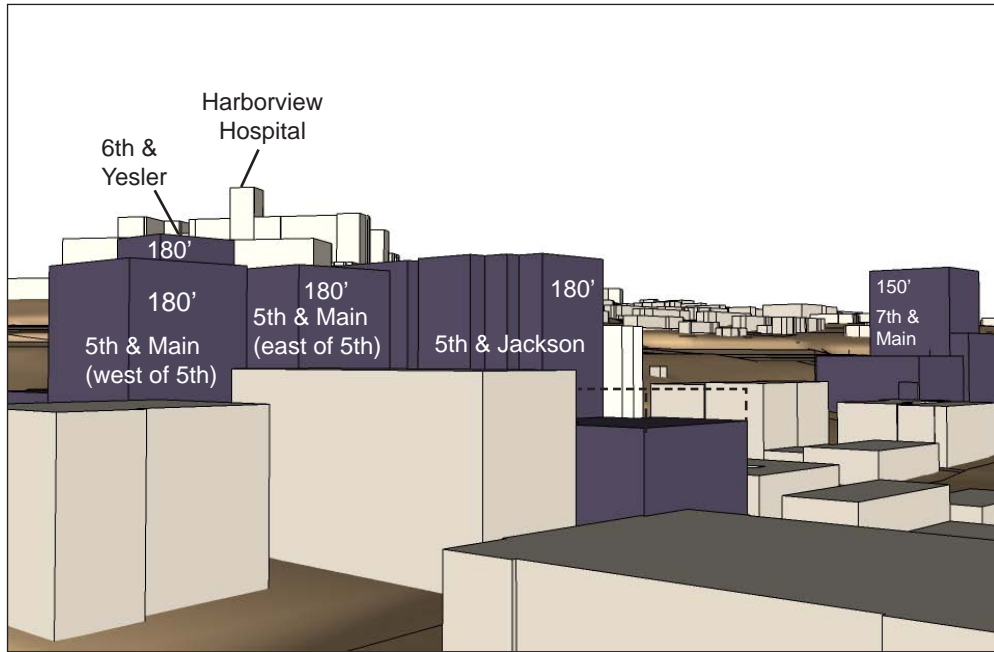
In the Chinatown core vicinity, the Alternative 1 and 2 proposals are for IDM zoning with a maximum height limit of up to 125 feet, 40 feet greater than the existing IDM zoning (see Figure 3-11). The Alternative 1 proposal also includes provisions that would shape the bulk of future development in this vicinity – likely including coverage limits or 15-foot setbacks at a building elevation of 45 feet. This level of change is interpreted to represent a moderate increase in building height and scale—it is higher than the predominant Chinatown height and scale context, but is not considered a “high-rise” scale.

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, within the relatively lightly developed context of blocks south of S. Weller Street, the alternative proposals are not likely to generate significant adverse height, bulk and scale impacts. A similar conclusion applies to the adjacency of that vicinity with the National Register Historic District immediately north of S. Weller Street. However, Alternative 2 also includes an extension of the 125-foot height limit to S. King Street in the block west of 6th Avenue S (see Figure 3-11). In this block, only the Publix Hotel is located within the National Register Historic District, but this block does abut that District on S. King Street and 6th Avenue S. block faces. Due to the combination of increased development scale and sensitivity to maintaining compatibility of development character within and

Alternative 1



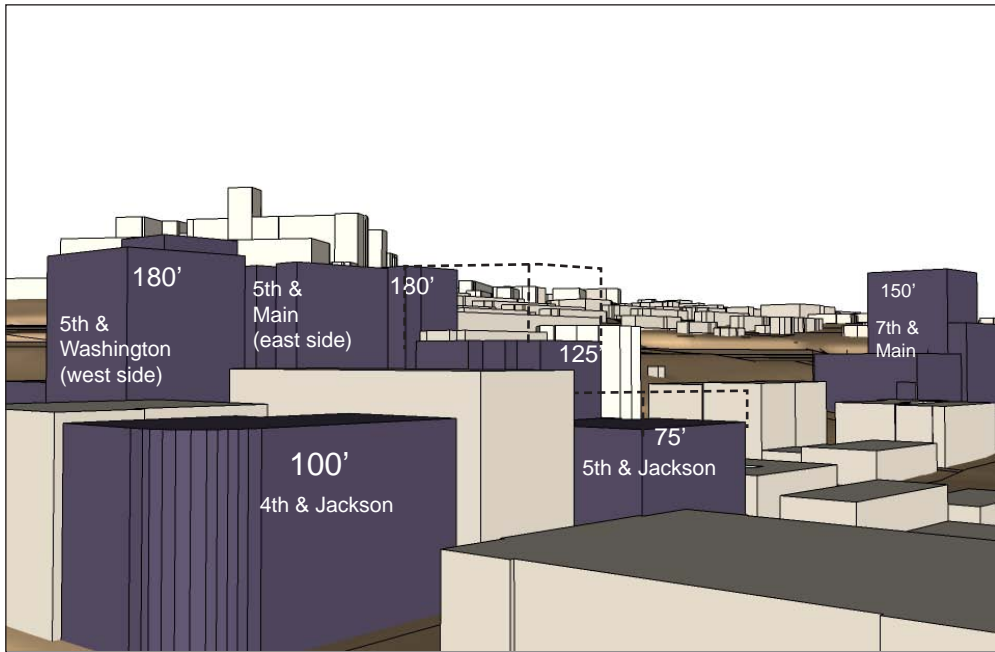
Alternative 2



Note: Hypothetical buildings shown, per the EIS growth scenario, except one additional building shown at 6th & Yesler. Dotted lines show a possible maximum "building envelope" only at 5th & Jackson, for illustrative purposes.

Figure 3-9
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Japantown, Alternatives 1 and 2,
Looking Northeast Across S. Jackson Street

Alternative 3



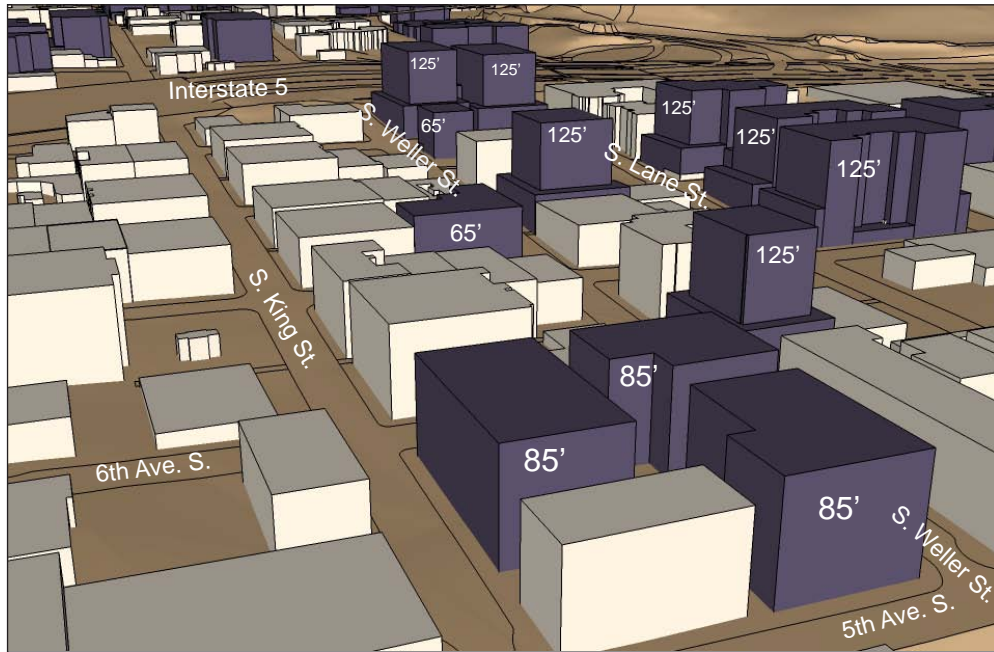
Alternative 4



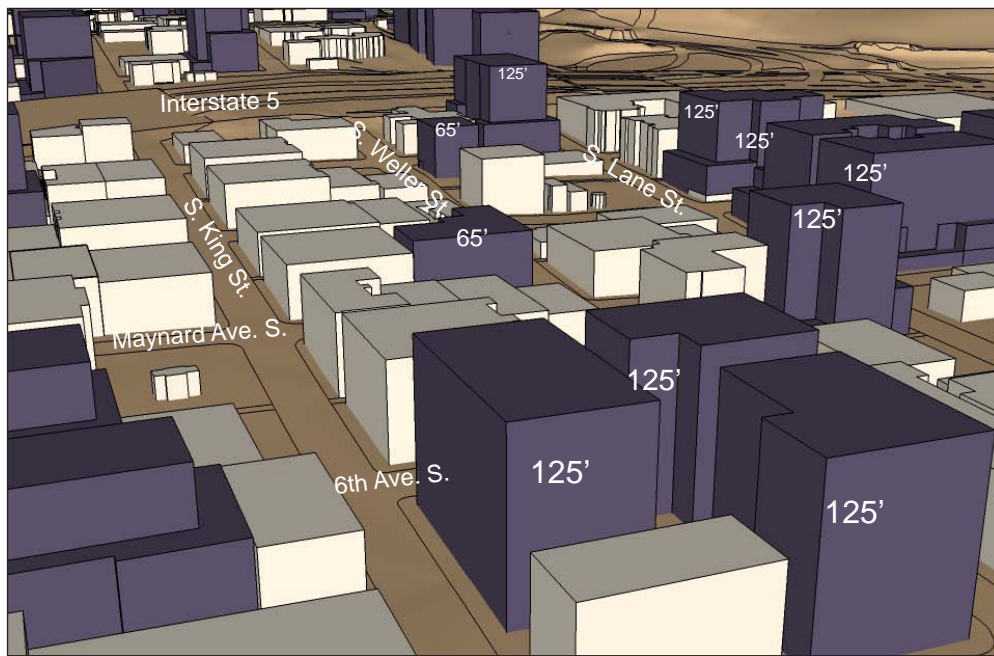
Note: Hypothetical buildings shown, per the EIS growth scenario, except one additional building shown at 6th & Yesler. Dotted lines show a possible maximum "building envelope" only at 5th & Jackson, for illustrative purposes.

Figure 3-10
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Japantown, Alternatives 3 and 4,
Looking Northeast Across S. Jackson Street

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-11
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Chinatown, Alternatives 1 and 2

adjacent to the National Register Historic District, Alternative 2's extension of a 125-foot height limit to this particular block could result in significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts with future development, depending on the design and siting of new buildings. Mitigation strategies to further influence the height, bulk and scale of future development should be implemented to protect against such impacts. Under Alternatives 3 and 4 with no zone changes, there would be no potential for height, bulk and scale impacts.

Little Saigon

In the Little Saigon neighborhood east of I-5, the range of alternatives includes height limits up to 85 feet under Alternatives 1 and 3, and height limits up to 125 feet under Alternative 2 (refer to Chapter 2 for other details). The increases to 85 feet in Alternatives 1 and 3 represent a minor increase in building height and scale that would not generate significant adverse height, bulk or scale impacts with future development (see Figures 3-12 and 3-13). Under Alternative 2, applying a 125-foot height of future development to the proposed area would result in a somewhat larger contrast in building scale with surrounding zones and existing buildings than zoning under Alternatives 1 and 3. However, the recommended bulk controls included in Alternative 2, as well as the design review process, would help future development to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts by moderating the effects of height and bulk.

Under all alternatives, the study area portion east of Rainier Avenue S. in the Jackson Place vicinity would have minimal potential for significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts due to no increase in the proposed height limits and a density increase of less than 2 FAR compared to existing zoning. Also, sloping topography in most of this vicinity would help moderate the potential effects of future development. Under Alternative 4, there would be no potential for height, bulk and scale impacts due to no zoning changes.

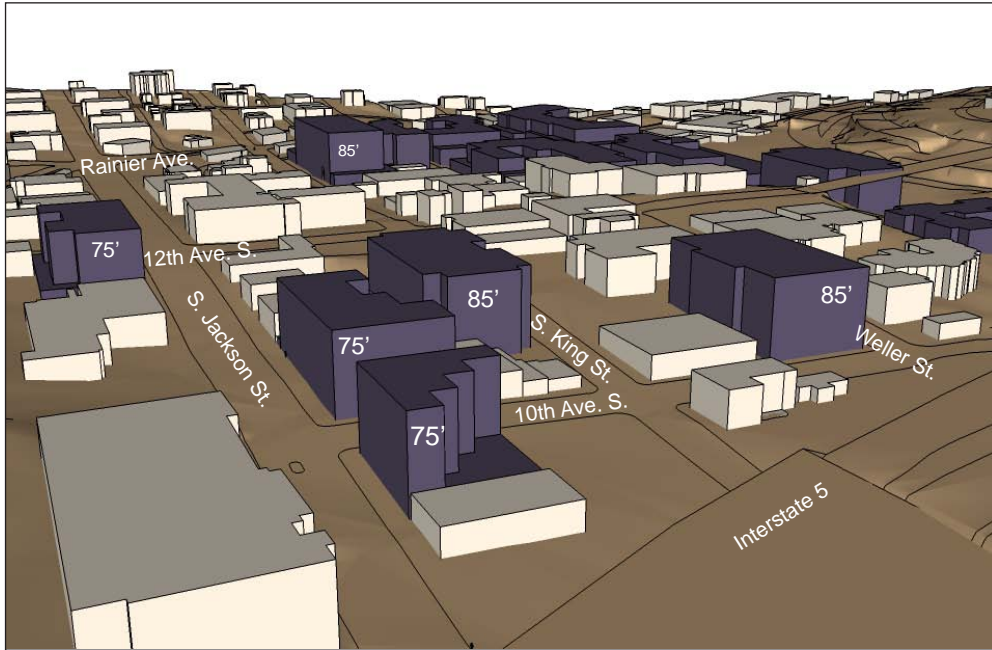
South-of-Dearborn

Under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 the height, bulk and scale implications of future development in this vicinity are influenced by the relationship between height and density regulations and the pattern of single-ownership for several properties along 6th Avenue S. Alternative 1 zoning would increase maximum height limits to 125 feet, while Alternatives 2 and 3 zoning would increase height limits to 160 feet (see Figures 3-14 and 3-15).

Assuming commercial office uses would be the favored future use, zoning under any of these alternatives may result in the development of fewer but taller buildings that consolidate development capacity from many properties into a single large office project. Under Alternative 1, this probable pattern of future development and the proposed density limits would limit the potential total amount of building bulk that could be added to this vicinity. Smaller properties, with fewer options in siting, might be designed in buildings ranging from 40 to 70 feet in height if they fully used the maximum possible density. Future possible development in adjacent zones, proposed with height limits of 125 feet or higher, and the presence of the elevated freeway ramps and sloping topography are factors that would moderate the perceived building scale. Under Alternative 1, the additional height and bulk of future development would likely represent an "adverse" impact, but it would not likely result in "significant adverse" height, bulk and scale impacts.

In contrast, under Alternatives 2 and 3, the proposed 160-foot height limit and higher densities (and mixed-use development under Alternative 3) could result in significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts, based on a worst case scenario of poor design and siting decisions and insufficient controls on building bulk and scale. Under Alternative 3 only, a special review process required by the SDM zone would help

Alternative 1



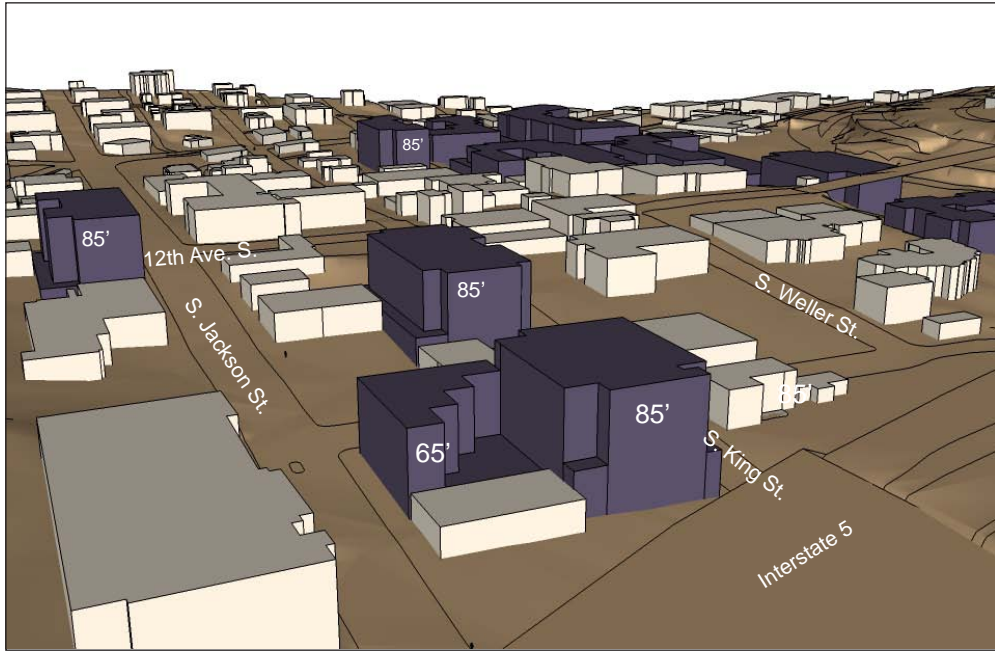
Alternative 2



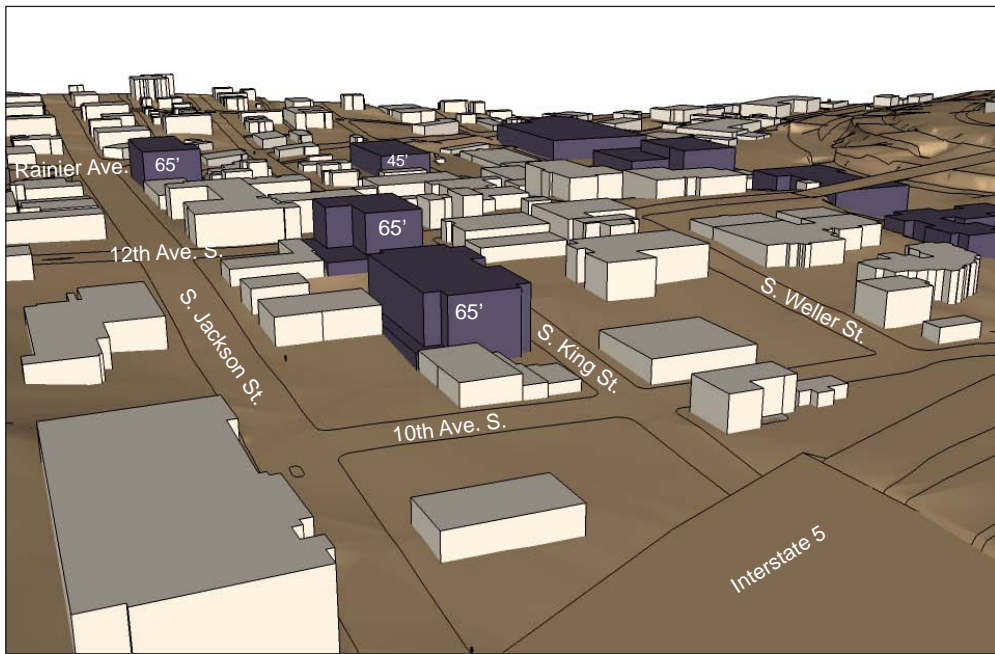
Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-12
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Little Saigon, Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternative 3



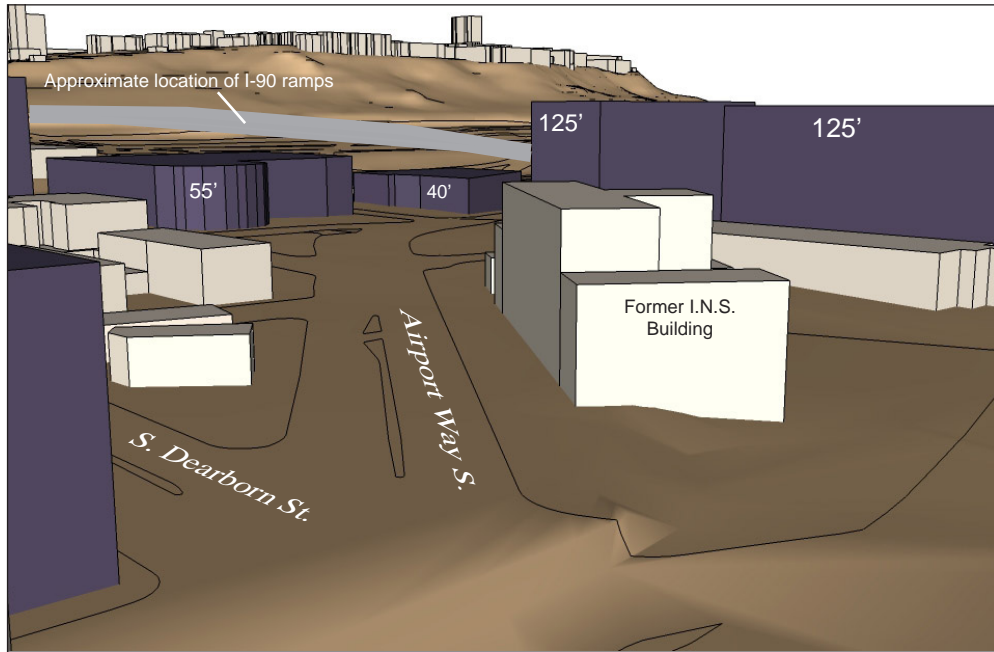
Alternative 4



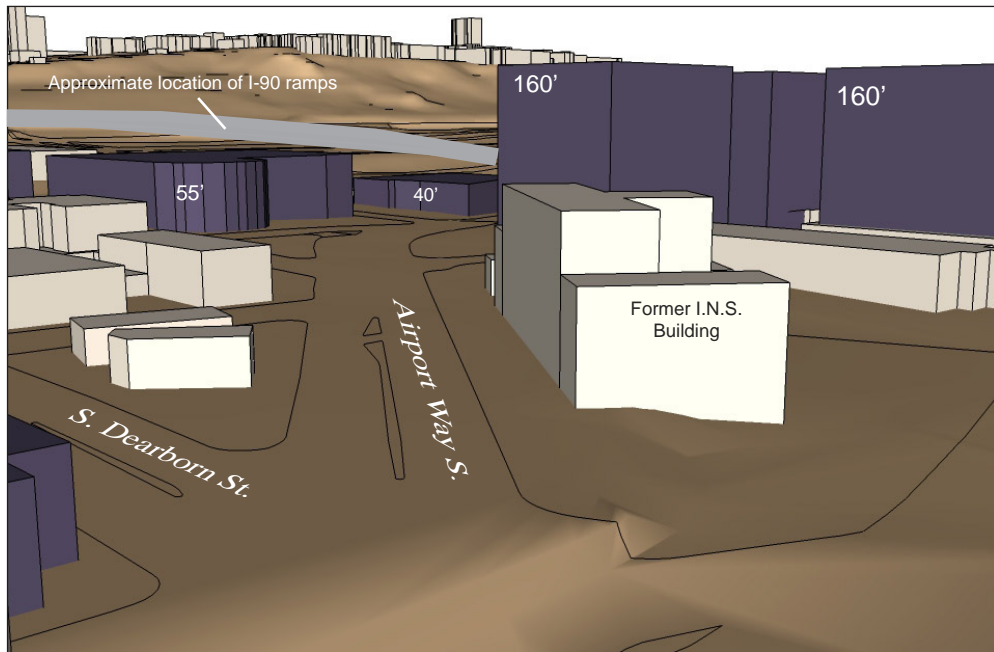
Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-13
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, Little Saigon, Alternatives 3 and 4

Alternative 1



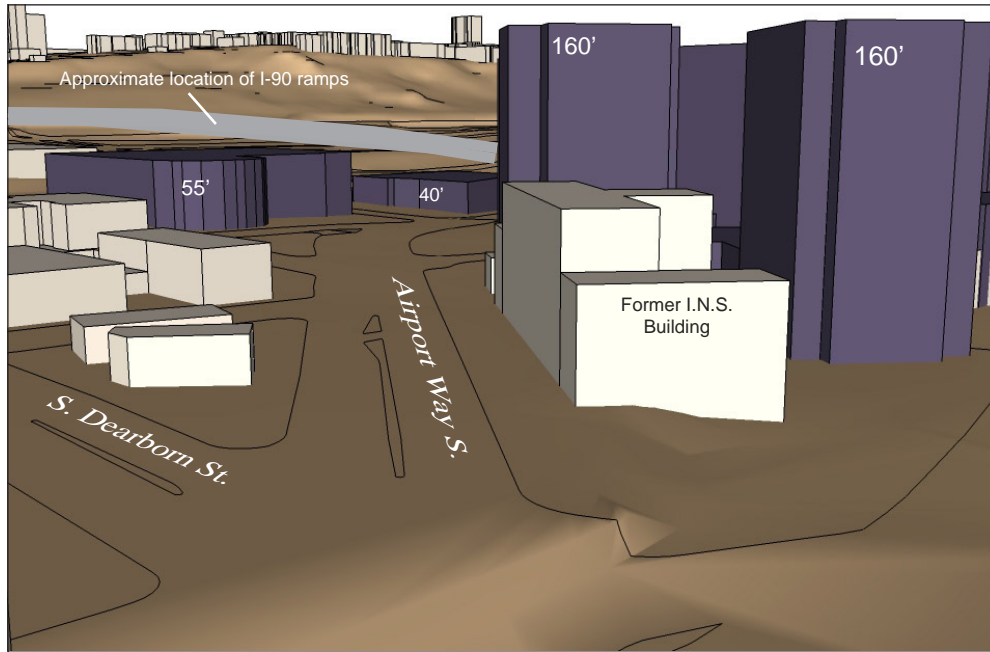
Alternative 2



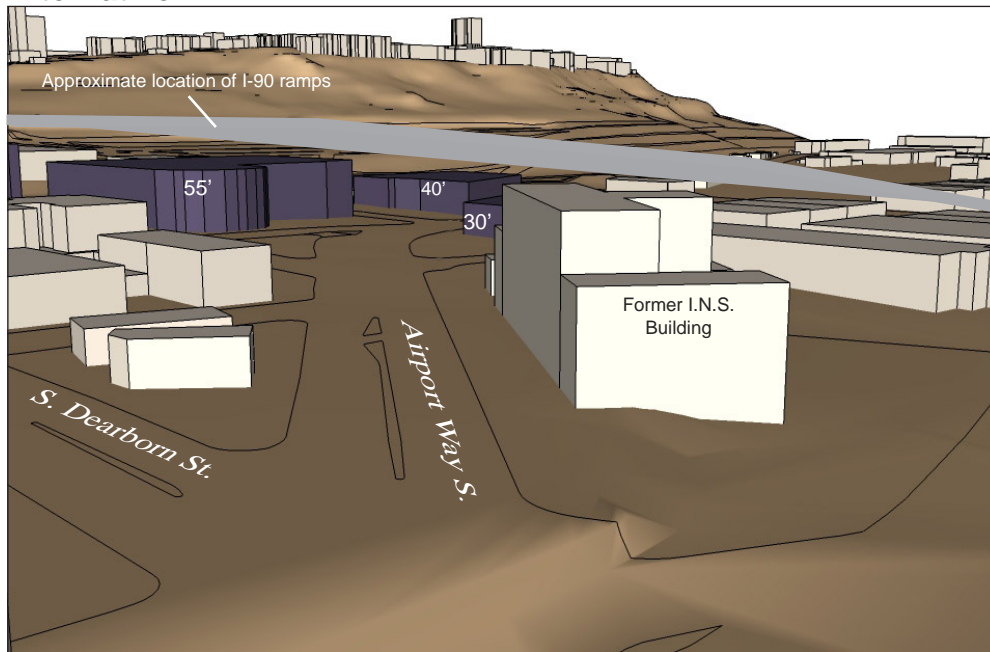
Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-14
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, South-of-Dearborn, Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternative 3



Alternative 4



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-15
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, South-of-Dearborn, Alternatives 3 and 4

address such impacts. However, under either Alternative 2 or 3, mitigation strategies to further influence the height, bulk and scale of future development should be implemented.

Alternative 4 – No Action

In this vicinity, no changes from existing zoning would mean no potential for significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts.

Stadium Area

The Stadium Area as defined in this analysis includes the 1st Avenue S. and 4th Avenue S. corridors, the latter covering the area south of Pioneer Square zoned area. Along the 1st Avenue S. corridor, Alternative 1 includes height limits of 85-160 feet, Alternative 2 includes height limits of 65-100 feet, and Alternative 3 includes height limits of 85-120 feet. Along the 4th Avenue S. corridor north of S. Royal Brougham Way, the alternatives include height limits of 125 feet, 240 feet and 85 feet for Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

The location, land uses, zoning and building patterns in the Stadium Area define its role as a transition between the Downtown Urban Center to the north and the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center to the south. Building density and scale (except for the athletic stadia) gradually decreases from north to south, illustrating past development history and the greater development capacity afforded through Downtown zoning. Also, the SR99 Alaskan Way Viaduct is immediately adjacent to and west of this vicinity, forming a fence-like edge, while the large-scale athletic stadia are nearby to the east. Nearby to the west are the Port of Seattle terminal facilities. These physical patterns and features form the context for evaluation of height, bulk and scale impacts. This area's orientation along a corridor and the presence of a few large properties influences potential future development. The use of the western half of the WOSCA property by SR99 construction would further influence the location and design of buildings, limiting future development to an area roughly one-half block, around 120 feet in width, abutting the west side of 1st Avenue S.

Along the 1st Avenue S. corridor, if not positively influenced by regulatory or design review guidance, the shape of potential future buildings under Alternatives 1 and 3 could be long in the north-south dimension, potentially interrupted only by vehicle access drives. Similarly, worst-case architectural designs might consist of monotonous and minimally-shaped treatments of an entire street-facing façade. Resulting buildings could be long rectangular forms with minimal architectural treatments that would not respond well to neighborhood context, and would negatively affect the pedestrian environment along 1st Avenue S. Proposed density limits would play a role in constraining total building bulk, but would not by themselves ensure that optimal arrangements of building bulk would occur in future development. This type of development in the worst case scenario could result in significant adverse height, bulk and scale impacts under Alternatives 1 and 3. Under Alternative 2, the lower height limits ranging from 65 feet to 100 feet could result in “adverse” but likely not “significant adverse” height, bulk and scale impacts (see Figures 3-16 and 3-17).

Alternative 1 and 3 would avoid the worst case potential outcomes through the use of a special review process mandated by the proposed South Downtown Mixed (SDM) zoning, as well as a design review process. The expected result would be building design treatments that would include façade modulation, use of context-appropriate façade materials, shaping of building bulk, and pedestrian features along 1st Avenue S. These would improve overall design quality and help avoid potential significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts on the immediate built environment. Under Alternative 2, the required design review process would be expected to help avoid worst case adverse design outcomes.

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-16

Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, 1st Avenue S., Alternatives 1 and 2

Along the 4th Avenue S. corridor north of S. Royal Brougham Way, Alternative 2 could result in significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts with future development in a worst case scenario, due to the proposed height of 240 feet, increased density limits, and the resulting potential scale of development (see Figures 3-18 and 3-19). For other alternatives, no significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts are identified along the west side of the 4th Avenue S. corridor.

Alternative 4 – No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, with no changes in the regulatory environment, there would be no potential for height, bulk and scale impacts. Future potential development in the affected area would be required to fit within the current requirements of IC 65' zoning, or IC 85' zoning south of S. Atlantic Street. Many but perhaps not all possible future developments would undergo design review processes.

COMPATIBILITY

Land Use Patterns and Height Transitions

The evaluations of land use and height, bulk and scale impacts in Chapter 3 and Appendices A and B thoroughly describe several aspects of potential land use and zoning impacts that relate to compatibility. Please review those analyses for further discussion of compatibility topics.

Light, Glare and Shadows

Pioneer Square

No significant adverse light, glare or shadow impacts are identified for this vicinity under any of the alternatives. This vicinity does not contain any of the locations where shadow impacts may be mitigated in Downtown.

Chinatown/Japantown

There is minor potential for adverse glare and shadow impacts with future development in a few locations in this vicinity. However, due to the expected effectiveness of the neighborhood's special review processes, these potential impacts would not likely rise to a level of significant adverse impacts. Under any of the alternatives, new buildings in proximity to Interstate 5 could potentially be designed with glass and reflective surfaces that would generate glare in passing motorists' eyes at certain times of day. The areas where this might occur include: properties in Chinatown, Little Saigon and south-of-Dearborn nearest Interstate 5 and I-90 ramps, and the 6th/Yesler Way vicinity that is visible to southbound I-5 traffic. Adverse shadowing impacts could potentially occur on a segment of Danny Woo Gardens under any alternative if future development occurs on a property west of 6th Avenue S. and south of S. Washington Street. Also, due to proposed adjustments in the IDR 150' zone development regulations, there is a minor possibility of additional shadowing on Danny Woo Gardens if development occurs along S. Main Street. However, because the garden is already protected from adverse shadow impacts by city policy and special review processes, the potential for additional significant shadow impacts would either be avoided altogether or minimized by these future development review processes. No significant adverse light impacts are identified anywhere in this vicinity under any of the alternatives.

Little Saigon

No significant adverse light, glare or shadow impacts are identified for this vicinity under any of the alternatives. There is minor potential for adverse glare impacts, as identified in the discussion above on Chinatown/Japantown glare impacts. This vicinity does not include any identified significant shadow impact issues, nor any of the locations where shadow impacts may be mitigated in Downtown.

Alternative 3



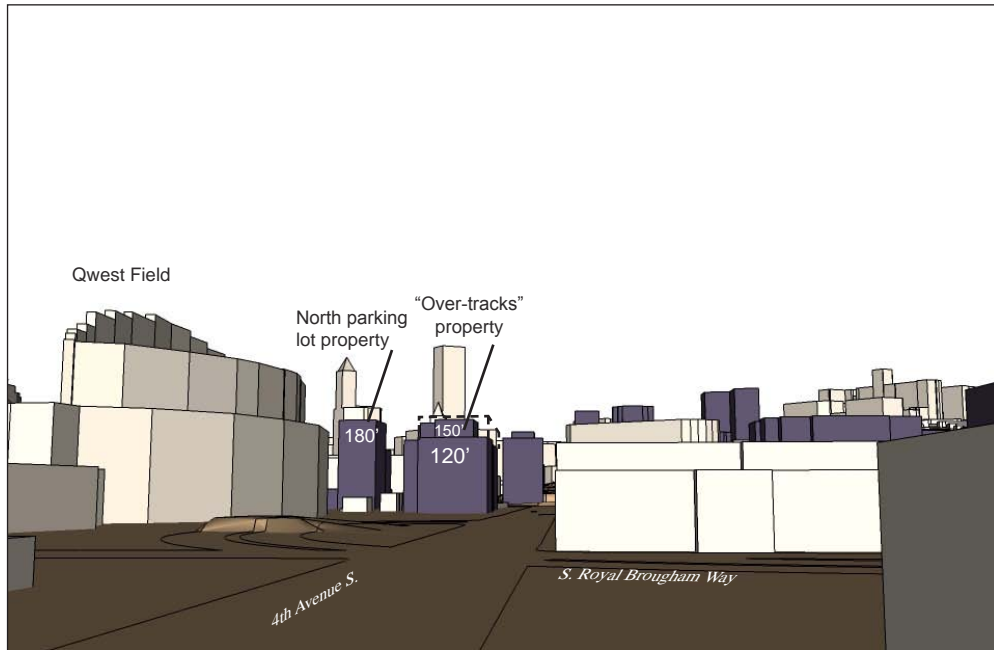
Alternative 4



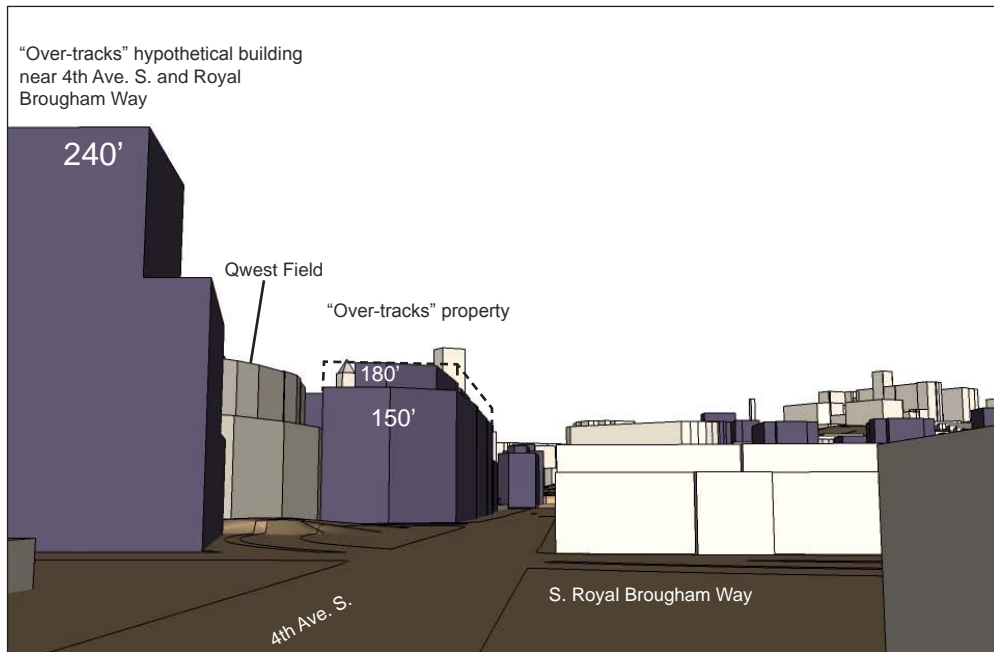
Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development that matches the growth assumed per the EIS growth scenario.

Figure 3-17
Hypothetical Height and Bulk of Future Development, 1st Avenue S., Alternatives 3 and 4

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development. Dotted lines indicate a possible maximum "building envelope" defined by the height limit. Density limits and bulk controls would prevent filling the entire building envelope.

Figure 3-18

Hypothetical Height, Bulk at "Over-Tracks" Property, Looking North, Alternatives 1 and 2

Alternative 3



Note: Buildings shown represent hypothetical development. Dotted lines indicate a possible maximum "building envelope" defined by the height limit. Density limits and bulk controls would prevent filling the entire building envelope.

Alternative 4



Figure 3-19
Hypothetical Height, Bulk at "Over-Tracks" Property, Looking North, Alternatives 3 and 4

South-of-Dearborn

No significant adverse light, glare or shadow impacts are identified for this vicinity under any of the alternatives. There is minor potential for adverse glare impacts, as identified in the discussion above on Chinatown/Japantown glare impacts. This could potentially occur, depending upon the design of future development on properties in general proximity to Interstate 5 or the Interstate 90 highway ramps. Future design review processes on project-specific development proposals could help avoid this potential glare impact. This vicinity, currently located outside the Downtown Urban Center, does not contain any identified significant shadow impact issues.

Stadium Area

Under Alternatives 1 and 3, the proposed zones would allow residential uses in the northern portion of the WOSCA property. Newly allowing such residential uses in an area subject to nearby port/industrial uses' light/glare could result in adverse compatibility impacts. Port facilities, located just to the west across SR 99 and Alaskan Way, include high-volume container transfer facilities that have the potential to contribute to adverse light/glare conditions if residential uses are present in this location. Night-time lighting and activities would be of most concern, as Port lighting would contribute to illumination levels that could affect residences facing toward the west. The severity of this impact would therefore depend on how residential uses would be situated on the affected property. If shielded by other buildings, the severity of the potential impact on residential uses would be lessened.

Other adverse glare impacts from passing vehicles on SR99 would be possible along this corridor, similar to those identified in the Chinatown/Japantown discussion above, under any alternative.

No significant adverse shadow impacts are identified for this vicinity under any of the alternatives.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Pioneer Square

Alternatives 1 and 2

- For the Qwest Field north parking lot and “over-tracks” properties, to avoid potential significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts, define bulk controls in greater detail for future possible development. Also, future development proposals should be evaluated according to Pioneer Square Preservation District guidelines that address building bulk.

Alternative 1

- In Pioneer Square, to mitigate potential significant adverse impacts on nearby historic-contributing structures under Alternative 1, define bulk controls in greater detail for future possible development to 180 feet on the “railroad gap” properties on the west side of 4th Avenue S. north of S. Jackson Street.

Alternative 2

- In the vicinity between 3rd and 4th Avenues S., rezones to a 150-foot maximum height could be limited only to the “railroad gap” areas abutting the west side of 4th Avenue S., to avoid direct impacts to properties with historically-contributing structures.

Alternative 3

- For the “over-tracks” property within the proposed SDM zone, the public process and subsequent design review process associated with the SDM zone should incorporate strategies to influence the arrangement of building bulk to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts from the worst-case scenario.

Chinatown/Japantown

Alternative 1

- In the hilly vicinity along 6th Avenue south of Yesler Way, to avoid potential significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts, define bulk controls in greater detail for future possible development, or select a lower height limit than 240 feet.

Alternative 2

- In Chinatown, for an extension of a 125-foot height limit to the block bounded by 5th and 6th Avenues S. and S. King and S. Weller Streets, which is partly within the National Register Historic District, define bulk controls, relationships to the street-level environment and strategies to maintain compatibility with historic character in greater detail.
- In Chinatown, consider avoiding rezone of properties, such as the Publix Hotel, that are currently within the National Register Historic District.

South-of-Dearborn

Alternative 2

- In order to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts, rezones to an IC 160’ zone could be avoided, the bulk control requirements applicable to future development could be specified in greater detail, and/or design review processes could be better specified.

Alternative 3

- For the South-of-Dearborn vicinity within the proposed SDM zone, the public process and subsequent design review process associated with the SDM zone should incorporate strategies to influence the arrangement of building bulk to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts from the worst-case scenario.

Stadium Area

Alternatives 1 and 3

- For the WOSCA property vicinity within the proposed SDM zone, the public process and subsequent design review process associated with the SDM zone should incorporate strategies to influence the arrangement of building bulk to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts from the worst-case scenario.

Alternative 2

- In order to avoid significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts, rezones to an IC 240’ zone along the west side of 4th Avenue S. north of S. Royal Brougham Way could be avoided, the bulk control requirements applicable to future development could be specified in greater detail, and/or design review processes could be better specified.

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

With implementation of mitigation strategies to address the identified significant adverse height/bulk/scale impacts of the alternatives, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts are expected to occur.