

Appendix A

Transcripts of Two Public Meetings and Responses to Comments

APPENDIX A – TRANSCRIPT OF TWO PUBLIC MEETINGS

Downtown Height and Density Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing Comments – December 15th, 2003

TESTIMONY

Richard Stevenson

I'm Richard Stevenson from Clise Properties, and we've been a part of the Denny Triangle and the Denny Triangle neighborhood for a long time. Specifically, I think Alternative 1 doesn't go far enough. The Downtown Core is the economic engine of Seattle. It's the best thing that we can do for our tax base. It's the best thing we can do for our environment, by creating jobs and housing closer to one area and have people like John who can walk to work, if you so choose. And we're also spending \$7 billion on public transportation which is all aimed at having public transportation move people in and out of the city, create jobs and homes in a dense area. And, you know, that has been sort of the long term goal of the City, to have this growth in the dense area.

But the reality of what's happened is in the last 6-7 years over 50% of the commercial office space has been in the Downtown or near-Downtown area, has been outside of the Downtown area. And the reason it's done that is for economics. You can build less expensive buildings that are smaller, that have as much parking as they want, and that may be fine for some neighborhoods and it may be great for the City. But, by inducing growth and development elsewhere, we aren't creating affordable housing, we aren't capitalizing on the public infrastructure, that we need, and we aren't, in my opinion, taking advantage of the best history of what Seattle and the future has to offer. The intent of the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan is to increase heights and densities so that we can have commercial office space moved around within a site, we can have the space that it was moved from, either for housing or for open space. When we created 1707 Seventh, we took commercial office space, moved it across an alley, and created 65 units of affordable housing. While doing that, we also left view corridors.

The other thing that I don't think the EIS addresses is the issue of upper level setbacks and the prescriptive code. Some of our newest and best buildings in Downtown Seattle are going to be the new Federal Courthouse, the public library, the new municipal campus, and none of those are written under the prescriptive code. That code says that when you go up a certain height you have to step the building back in,

and so you end up with all of these wedding cake looking buildings, which won't allow taller, thinner buildings, won't allow great architects to get together with developers and create interesting buildings that would then go before Design Review. And instead of having a specific descriptive code of how these setbacks should be created, we need to have a larger guideline of "what is good design" and "what's good for neighborhoods" so we aren't building these short fat towers that block views and squander land and don't create affordable housing.

So, to my way of thinking, any kind of a downzone is a horrible mistake. We need to have height limits which probably should exceed [Alternative] #1. I think that in order to incentivize commercial development in areas where we want it, you need to have an incentive. Currently, we would pay about \$23 a foot for about 60% of any commercial office building and that would go in the form of housing or TDRs. And that's fine. But if you're building outside of the Downtown core, you aren't paying for any of that. So you have expensive buildings on expensive land, with 60% of it paying about a 10% surcharge to build the space. And I would just suggest that, you know, they don't "pencil" when it comes to designing and building a building, and then having someone pay rent that will support that kind of expense. So we need to incentivize commercial development that—a byproduct of that commercial development is high-rise housing that may be market. It will also most definitely be affordable housing, and I think that middle strata, you know, which is pretty elusive, is workforce housing and that will come along with it. Thank you.

Lyn Krizanich

I am Lyn Krizanich. I'm from the Denny Triangle. I'm here tonight in place of Dana Bollinger, our current president. She couldn't be with us tonight, so I'm speaking on behalf of her, and of course our entire neighborhood association.

The Plan was completed in '98, the City Council approved it in 1999. Our Plan adopted the City of Seattle's targets of accommodating 23,000 new jobs and about 3,800 new residential units by the year 2014. In order to achieve these goals, our plan, our main priority, top priority was then and is now increasing height and density in order to encourage commercial development, leverage that development to create housing, and particularly for all income levels, but most especially for the low moderate and affordable housing where we have a large gap. The Denny Triangle Plan also called for reducing or relaxing upper level setback requirements.

As you know, we've waited a long time for a plan to be implemented. In 2001, the Downtown TDR and Bonus program was amended as Phase One in the step toward implementing the DUCPG or Downtown Plan and the Denny Triangle Plan. We've waited two years for Phase Two, which is increasing the height and density. Unfortunately, in the interim we not only missed the opportunities during a good strong economic cycle, but by having only those amendments to the Bonus and TDR provisions as Phase 1, it actually served as a disincentive to development.

So the Draft EIS Alternative #1 is a composite plan. It doesn't clearly represent the Denny Triangle or the DUCPG Plan. So we suggest that the EIS consider increasing height and density incentives outlined in Alternative #1 to produce significant quantities of new low-income housing Downtown and to accommodate more jobs. Current height and density restrictions restrict opportunities for additional housing and open space opportunities as well. Another reason for the EIS to investigate greater height and density is to make better use of the investments in mass transit, as Richard talked about, that are happening throughout the Downtown. The EIS should address the need for greater design flexibility, and again I'd like to echo on those comments that the current setback requirements have added unnecessary cost and created the blocky, thick look-alike buildings. In summary, the EIS should honor the neighborhood planning process, and we'd like to get prepared for the next economic cycle so the Denny Triangle can help bring new jobs and residents to Downtown.

Catherine Stanford

Hi, I'm Catherine Stanford and I am currently the chair of the Downtown District Council which represents the five neighborhoods that make up Downtown, and am also - have taken over the stewardship responsibilities of the Downtown Urban Center Plan, which process I also chaired. We really appreciate the opportunity to be able to comment tonight and also appreciate the fact that we are moving forward with this. I won't go into detailed history in the three minutes or so, but I do want to say that it was really in 1997 that we started to identify the issues that led to our land use proposal. And our land use proposal was really the cornerstone of our plan and our planning process. And that's one thing that I would really encourage in looking at the EIS also is, in thinking about these things, that they form a comprehensive whole. We can't talk about downzoning or changing land use in one area without taking a hard look at what impact that might have in another part of the plan. We, as Lyn mentioned, we went to the City Council and the Plan was adopted in 1999. And the Plan was really linked to accepting the Comp Plan

targets, and not only "accepting" but I would say "embracing," because it was a consensus that we built Downtown in looking at the Comp Plan growth targets particularly jobs and housing, and saying the Downtown is the area to accept those kinds of growth targets. And looking at that also, hopefully that would kind of work to support some of the outlying neighborhoods who didn't want that kind of density in their neighborhoods. The vision was again to accept it, it was the cornerstone of our Plan.

And really one of the things that we talked about was "Downtown is for everybody" and that's how we got to the low-moderate housing. There were a number of studies that we did that showed that there was funding for the kind of very low housing that was available, and that the market rate would take care of itself. And the critical piece is really for the "low and moderate" housing or the "working" housing. We do want to make a couple comments in that context, that a number of us were disappointed that the EIS, although it was identified as Alternative 1, was that the DUCPG Plan – that it didn't specifically include all of the elements of the Plan as it was proposed. And it certainly wasn't the intent to have the level of height that is shown along First Avenue in particular. And as Lyn mentioned, at the time the Plan was accepted by the City Council and then in 2001, Phase One was adopted with the understanding that Phase Two would come in a timely manner after that. Also as Lyn and Rich had mentioned, by not implementing Phase Two – that acted as a disincentive to developers. They really needed – again this is a comprehensive whole we were looking at with this, and all the pieces tie together. One of the things we talked about in the planning was that in order to meet these growth targets to fund low-moderate housing, that's 50-80% of median income, and to have quality development, we needed to attract quality developers and developments to the Downtown. And certainly, developers have a lot of other choices of places to go other than the Downtown area. And we wanted to make sure that they came to Downtown, that they were welcomed down here and even talked about "let's market Downtown as a great place to come and make developments." So, certainly with having disincentives of either downzoning or in the disincentive of not passing the Phase Two immediately, I don't think that particularly encourages development in the Downtown core. I encourage you to move forward with this process. I know that there are some other thoughts about some other things that we might do. But I think that let's move forward with this and get some zoning and changes in place so that we can start looking perhaps at other areas or other zoning or land use changes.

And John, I appreciate your comments about looking at the Center City. I think as you know and many of you in the room know, the

Downtown District Council has hosted forums over the last two or three years that brought the Center City neighborhoods together, and we certainly recognize as we did with the five neighborhoods during the Downtown planning process, that we have some real similarities with our needs, and looking at this as more "the urban center as an extended area." So I appreciate that that's part of the next steps to look at that. But I encourage you to move forward with this.

John Rahaim: Could I ask you just one clarification question? You said that you didn't anticipate – the DUCPG plan didn't anticipate – the height along 1st Avenue. Do you mean that the Alternative is showing a height that is too tall or too low on the waterfront?

Catherine Stanford: It was higher than what we had proposed for First Avenue.

Rahaim: You proposed a lower height than what Alternative 1 is showing?

Stanford: Right.

Rahaim: Thank you.

Kate Joncas

I'm Kate Joncas, president of the Downtown Seattle Association. We do not believe that the alternatives in this EIS went far enough to meet what was our neighborhood plan vision for high-quality dense neighborhoods in the future with jobs and housing appropriate to each neighborhood's needs and wants. We just don't think this went far enough to what our vision was when we were doing this. There have been significant changes since we started talking about this in 1997. I just went back to look and it has been since 1997 since we've been talking about this. And it's a completely different Downtown and I think that the community – not only Downtown but the community – has a different vision I think of what Downtown could be. And this reflects what we knew in 1997. You know, we're very supportive of that neighborhood plan, participated in it very strongly, with its priority for housing and jobs growth. We really wanted to have a plan that would help us concentrate regional growth in Downtown to prevent sprawl, to make it more attractive to develop in Downtown than in Bothell. And we don't think this DEIS goes far enough in helping us to do that in this environment that we have right now.

Think of what's happened. We weren't even thinking about biotech in South Lake Union then, we weren't thinking about the visions that we have seen about South Downtown and Pioneer Square and South Pioneer Square. We've had a lot of discussions with the community about learning from Vancouver. We talked about Vancouver a lot in our planning process. That was our model, in terms particularly in housing growth, much more dense than we are. And now the whole community has been talking about that. And the billions of dollars in transit that were beginning to be talked about then. So this is really a different environment. I think we need to think about "are we doing the kind of changes now to maximize all these opportunities that are happening, and into this different kind of environment?"

In reading the DEIS, actually I have to say, from our point of view of doing the neighborhood plan, it was very concerning to see density equated with a poor pedestrian environment. To make conclusions that if you increase density in the Denny Triangle, which was specified as "bulk," that would result in a lower quality pedestrian environment. That's clearly not what we were thinking about in our neighborhood planning process. We had a lot of discussions about "what are the best cities that you go to where you have a great pedestrian environment?" And we would think of London, and we'd think of San Francisco, and we'd think of Paris and we'd think of Vancouver, clearly much more dense cities than we [are]. So from our neighborhood planning view, density is absolutely equated with a much higher quality pedestrian environment. So we want to have that pushed back into the plan.

And Gordon, I know you were talking technically, but I can't tell you how difficult it was to hear you say that the "worst case maximum growth." To us that's the best case, we were absolutely looking - and I know that's a technical term in the plan - but to us that's the best case and not the worst case. So we have to be careful about how we talk about that.

Finally, in moving forward for this, a couple of things that we would like to discuss with you, and work into how we go forward. Let's take another look at the options presented. Do these recommendations really take us where we want to go in terms of the quality Downtown environment that we want for the future? Second, we want to continue to link job growth to affordable housing. We spent a couple of years talking about ways to get more affordable housing in Downtown, and we don't have a lot of incentives, we don't have TIFs, we can't make loans. But one way to do it is to allow developers to buy height, and put all that into a fund for affordable housing. We need thousands of units more affordable housing. So we need to link that to job growth,

and we want to continue that strong link in the plan. That's a really easy way, easier than others, to get that housing and we really need it.

And then last, I'd really like to move from reactive in planning, although I know that is part of the EIS structure, to proactive. Let's not talk about what growth we think is coming or that we expect, let's talk about what growth we want, and where we want to be, and "how do we use this tool that we have to get from here to there?" To have the kind of – not like [the growth] we think we're going to get or have to accept, but where do we want to be, and what we want it to look like. So, thanks for the opportunity to talk.

Jim Ferris

I'm Jim Ferris and I'm the executive director of the Housing Resources Group. We're a non-profit affordable housing organization that has been working in the Downtown neighborhoods since 1980. We have been very fortunate to have been using the TDR and housing bonus program over that time period, to serve the Downtown community with affordable workforce housing. Approximately 75-80% of the residents that live in HRG's buildings work Downtown, so they walk to work or they take the bus and get to their jobs. And we believe that that housing strategy has been really important to not only creating neighborhoods Downtown, but also creating a synergy between commercial development and residential development, and how those two are really inextricably tied.

I was just tallying up – I was trying to determine how many different affordable housing projects that we have been involved with that have used the program. We've actually used the TDR program five times, and probably one of the more notable TDR transactions that occurred is the Eagles Auditorium, where HRG and ACT Theater are actually – would coexist in the same building. And without the TDR program, that would not have been possible. We have recently completed two new-construction affordable housing projects in the Downtown, one in the Denny Triangle, in a neighborhood that was very embracing of affordable housing, as well as in the retail core, at the corner of Third and Pine. The project is known as the Gilmore. And that really talks about having synergy of affordable housing near jobs, and as soon as that project was completed, it only took as many times as we could schedule move-ins and using the elevator to get families and individuals into that apartment building. So, people want to live Downtown and people with lower-income jobs want to live Downtown as well.

So, we really see that the opportunity right now to do more now is evident. I would say that with the Gilmore project, the challenge that we have had, and the city has been very helpful in doing this, is that we have not been able to find a commercial development that is willing to buy our housing bonus that we have generated from that site, because of the lack of moving forward on this plan. We have been looking for a commercial developer for over 3.5 years, but until this program has been defined and implemented, many commercial developers, and especially office buildings in the Downtown neighborhoods, were unwilling to move forward until they saw that there was an incentive for them to actually create the office development and the retail development and the hotel development that would actually have an opportunity to purchase that housing bonus.

So, I would ask you to reconsider the alternatives, and I reiterate really what both Lyn and Kate have said that, Alternative 1 doesn't really get to the original Downtown Plan or the advisory committee's role, in which I participated. And I'd actually ask DPD to consider as we look at whatever alternative will move forward, is that we actually commit to doing that in 2004. That I think time is wasting, and that commercial development is still going to sit on the sidelines until this program has been defined, and I think we're losing the opportunity to create more jobs and more affordable housing Downtown until this program is actually implemented. So, thank you.

Joe Quintana

I'm Joe Quintana. I reside at 2053 41st Avenue East in Seattle. First, I want to thank the Mayor and the Department for actually bringing this up and finally getting underway with this. It's over-needed. And, one suggestion for improvement is that the EIS discuss the need and impacts in a larger context. Right now it's confined to the study area. And yet, it does not recognize under growth management or under just our own common sense, the unique role that Seattle plays under growth management in the entire region in terms of its jobs, housing and other development goals. In that discussion, I think you should consider a number of things. One is that the Growth Management Act and the other policies since then have always reflected the reality that it's either "you grow up or you grow out." And if we do not grow up in Downtown Seattle, given its unique place, we will grow out, increasing sprawl, increasing the environmental degradation, decreasing the effectiveness of mass transit, and lessening of opportunities for affordable housing for those that can't - don't have mass transit capabilities in particular.

On the flip side of that, I think that the EIS should discuss the context for why this is even being proposed. It basically says that it is, but it doesn't say it is being proposed for these reasons. And those would be the benefits, some of which I've outlined and others that exist that you're well aware of. Frankly, I think it should also discuss the various planning processes, rather than just enumerate them, discuss the various planning processes. How they occurred, including the neighborhood planning processes, like the much-referred-to Denny Triangle planning process, and the blood, sweat and tears that went into their development and why they should be honored.

And additionally, I think it should discuss the impacts - I know you can't go and study the whole thing - but just discuss the potential impacts outside the Downtown area, particularly on the neighborhood character of other neighborhoods in Seattle, if in fact height and density were not increased Downtown.

On another point, the density transfer of development credits [TDC], if there was a role of change. Frankly, as I read it, the assumptions in the DEIS are extremely liberal. At a very minimum, the "would" increase capacity by X number of units in Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 should at a minimum be "could" since experience to date suggests that number may well be zero. And, if the developers I know and talk to perhaps are right, it will be zero, that there's just not going to be any takers. And it's assumed that they will in fact be somewhere near that capacity, or it appears to be, as currently written. When in fact they may not realize that, and if not, then Alternative 1 looks less-has less impacts in terms of the affordable housing question, because almost all of the additional housing in [Alternatives] 2, 3 and 4 are a result of the TDC program as I read it, and beyond in some cases. So those are some of the specific comments. Lastly - it's not lastly since I wrote some other things - is the need for greater design flexibility. I don't know if the DEIS can specifically cover it, but it's certainly disgusting, because - ugly and expensive really shouldn't be an option, which is sort of what we are getting right now. And from the work of a number of us, we know that Design Review is a superior regulatory framework for this sort of activity.

And then lastly, I would say the mandatory mixed-use housing really is unnecessary, won't work, really hasn't worked in the areas where it's been tried. You know, we've had all sorts of Murphy's Law of unintended consequences, as I know the Department is well aware of. And so, trying to force it in an area like the Downtown area, with its unique role in job growth, and the ability, the proven ability in some areas already, through TDRs and other things to, you know, have

affordable housing, trying to force it you could very well visit those unintended consequences once again. So, thank you very much.

Adrienne Quinn

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony tonight. My name is Adrienne Quinn. And I also wanted to thank City staff, in particular Gordon Clowers and Dennis Meier for several years of very hard work on this EIS. I know it was a monumental undertaking and many of us having been waiting for this whole process to conclude as much as seven years. So, we're looking forward to our neighborhood plans being implemented. I want to talk about two things. First, I wanted to put my comments in context and secondly I wanted to make three or four points about the EIS itself. First, I was the chair of the land use committee for the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group and as you probably know the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group was a coalition of all five Downtown neighborhoods. And the purpose of this was to make sure that all the five Downtown plans were coordinated, to make sure that we didn't have conflicts on borders and things like that. And so it was in that context that we developed our plan. That's why it is with some disappointment that I see comments in the EIS about impacts on Belltown from Downtown height and density increases. Because in the DUCPG plan we had a lot of provisions and a lot of thought went into making sure we didn't have those kinds of conflicts.

Secondly, the DUCPG plan was also done in the context of Growth Management Act and all of the Comprehensive Plan for Seattle. And so for that reason, I think it is very important that the EIS be amended for the Final EIS in the following way. I think that one of the primary things that is missing is a discussion about how these changes to the Downtown would affect all of comprehensive planning and all of growth in all of Seattle. Because you can't just look at the Downtown plan in isolation. So, for example, if Downtown is able to take on more development and the incentives are in the right place to take on more development, does that release pressure on other neighborhoods so that we can maintain the character of single-family neighborhoods throughout Seattle? Otherwise what we experience is lots being divided smaller and smaller, pressure to develop critical areas, and if we're able to have that housing and job growth Downtown, then we will fully implement the purposes of the Growth Management Act. Also, with regard to commercial development, if we don't have incentives to have commercial development in Downtown: we see what happened in Fremont for example, where we have several large structures along the – such as the Adobe buildings there – where we don't have the infrastructure to take care of commercial uses there, we don't have the

transportation, we don't have the other infrastructure, but we've created incentives to do very large commercial development outside of the Downtown core, and does that fit within the larger Downtown Seattle Comprehensive Plan? Another point that I think that you should consider and should be changed for the Final Environmental Impact Statement is building on some of the comments that John made at the beginning. I recognize this EIS was begun quite awhile ago, but since that time Sound Transit has received its funding, Monorail is moving forward, the Streetcar has gotten partial funding. So I don't think that the statements in the EIS currently that say automatically there is going to be adverse traffic impacts, still hold value. I think there needs to be a supplemental analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement to talk about Sound Transit, Monorail, Streetcar. Because if all of those transportation systems are put in place, then it is far more appropriate to have even a higher level of density Downtown, and we will not have those adverse impacts. And this again goes to my first point, which is it relieves impacts on other neighborhoods.

A third point I'd like to make is, right now, because only half of this plan has gone into effect, we are not seeing much development in terms of the 50-80% for low-income housing. Right now under the housing levy dollars, 50-80% levy dollars can only be used outside of Downtown because it was thought that the bonus and TDR money from Downtown would be able to be used to create those housing units Downtown. However, because we've only implemented half of the proposed neighborhood plan since 1999, we're not seeing that development going forward.

And finally, with regard to the TDC program, I see a lot of discussion with regard to the TDC program, and a couple of points I'd like to make with regard to the TDC program. First, though I believe it was well-intentioned at the time that it was developed, I think it's significant that no one has developed under that program. I also think it is significant that it was not part of the neighborhood plan and that the City has spoken strongly of getting feedback from neighbors and in fact the neighborhood plans have talked about creating low-income housing, and the TDC program doesn't really necessarily have benefits to Denny Triangle - it's for preservation of rural land in King County. So, I think in terms of consistency with neighborhood plans, it's far more important that we focus on: "is the neighborhood plan, and are the development proposals currently being considered?" and "does the EIS adequately consider how these programs will actually create the jobs and housing Downtown that the neighborhood plans have sought?" Thank you.

Jack McCullough

I'm Jack McCullough and I signed up on the sheet. I'll find something new to say here. I kind of feel, looking at this crowd, like I'm teaching at a college class here. Everyone's sitting in the back of the room, and the front seats are empty. I will be supplying some written comments later on, and tonight I just want to talk about three things, which actually all of them touched on already—History, Density and Opportunity.

Let's look back at history for a second. The Downtown Plan under which we're currently operating was initially adopted in 1985 after a three-year effort: it's called the Land Use and Transportation Plan. And in 1985 it represented about a 30% downzone in the major commercial development zones Downtown, over what had been possible pre-1985. Four years later, we saw another downzone, in the form of CAP, which was another approximately 30% downzone. So now we sit here in almost the year 2004 looking at permitted densities Downtown that are frankly less than half of what was possible 20 years ago. And what's happened this 20 years as you've heard and more recently is that we're investing 3-4 billion dollars or more in light rail and commuter rail to serve Downtown from the region, a billion and a half dollars for the Monorail, and all the other transportation infrastructure improvements that you've heard about. The density is something that – you know, it's trite to say – that people believe that growth management is a great thing as long as it's not in my neighborhood. But I think most people will agree that if density belongs anywhere in the region, it belongs Downtown. Downtown is just under 2% I think of the land area – is that right Kate? – [but] you find 40% of Seattle's jobs and 22% of its tax generation revenue.

You find HOV and transit penetration rates that are probably 7-8 times what you'll find anywhere else in the region. So if we're serious about trying to combat sprawl and create open space and protect our neighborhoods and protect other outlying communities – then this is the place that density belongs. And we've had a lot of arguments about this infrastructure I mentioned. About light rail, monorail, and there've been pitched battles about whether to build many of these improvements. But those really have been resolved now. And so the big mistake for us would, after having seen those decisions made, be not to build the city that this infrastructure requires. And that is I think really the challenge the city faces today and is represented in this EIS. So from a density point of view, it really would be I think fundamentally wrong to look at downzoning any part of Downtown such as Alternative 3 discusses, and the EIS should really look at the impact that would have on shifting density, housing, jobs,

outside of the Downtown. Because that's what would happen into Seattle's neighborhoods and the suburbs.

And as you've heard tonight, Alternative 1 really doesn't even get us back to 1985, doesn't get us back to where we were 20 years ago, when we didn't have light rail, commuter rail, monorail on the horizon. So, I'd strongly suggest that we look at greater opportunities for height and density in the key Downtown [areas] – the Denny Triangle, the DOC1, and the DMC, the other key areas Downtown.

Finally, the third thing – Opportunity. Development Downtown is all about windows of opportunity. And the real enemies of a successful Downtown I would say are half measures and delay. The buildings that are built Downtown, that have been built, and that will be built in this next cycle will survive well into the 22nd Century. And so the real risk to us as a region is not that we build these buildings too big, or too dense or too tall. The real risk is that we don't build them big enough to serve the region from a long term point of view. And these development cycles that we see really only happen – although it feels like when we're in Downtown there's building going on all the time – these cycles only happen once every ten years. And so you have a limited window of opportunity when the stars between tenant availability and capital availability coincide to actually attract new investment to Downtown. And that is when you forge the changes that can make a new life in Downtown possible. And so you have to be ready to take advantage of those opportunities. My suggestion would be that the FEIS look at, therefore, exploring alternatives for enhanced density and height beyond what is set forth in Alternative 1. And secondly, that we all work with all deliberate speed we can. As we've heard tonight, if this measure is not enacted in 2004, then I'd think you run a serious risk of – the city will again as we did in 2001 – missing the opportunity to influence the next development cycle, which will mean we will be waiting another decade. Thanks.

John Pehrson

My name is John Pehrson. I'm the chair of the Belltown Housing and Land Use Committee. Everybody's broken the rules so far – nobody has been three minutes. But at least I'll use some charts. I want to use them because I made them in my basement and on the dining room table, with the help of Kinko's. And I'm kind of proud of them. I represent not only the Belltown Housing and Land Use Committee, but the Belltown Community Council. We took a position on this study about two years ago in writing and our position hasn't changed. We recently reviewed it this month and we still all felt the same. So I want to advocate that. First I want to say, about the City Center plan, this

is what Belltown is really working toward, what you said. Because we know more people will give us more security, more active streetfronts and more business. A great neighborhood, not one with bulky tenements, but a great neighborhood, and housing. And just to indicate that we walk what we talk, in the last year in Belltown there's only been four buildings of major consequence changed, all of those low-income housing. And we have two more on the burner now. So, you know, that's what we are all about.

Now in contrast to the other people who took a broad position, I'm going to take a narrow position, not because I'm a narrow person, but I'm representing Belltown. I think I talk loud enough that your recorder will hear me. What I'm talking about is a small corner of Belltown in the south part of Belltown that is currently zoned DMC 240'. It is proposed in Alternative 1 that that area be increased to 312 feet and with essentially no constraints on residential development, it would result in buildings that are 312 feet high and built essentially lot line to lot line. That is not the kind of Belltown that we want.

A few charts, and I will give you copies of all these. And you cannot see these, but maybe you can get the trend. That currently what's allowable in the square feet above 125 feet in height, in the DMC office is 8,000 square feet on a 20,000 square foot lot, 41% [coverage]. In DMR residential: 8,000 square feet on a lot that's 20,000 square feet. In DOC 2 Office: 8,000 square feet on a lot that's 20,000. In DMC for residential: 16,000 square feet or 82% is allowed. Interestingly enough, that's 82%. If the lot were just a little smaller like 15,000 [square feet], it could be 100%. The zoning currently allows you to build straight up on [a] 15,000 [square foot lot]. I live in a highrise that's on a 17,000 square foot lot. It happens to cover 41% of it. So this is what we currently allow. Now it's not theory, it not abstract. You can look around in Seattle right now. The Centennial Tower, which all of you know at 7th and Virginia, is built essentially from lot line to lot line with 16 feet space so they could put windows in. Envision, any of you who know Denny Terrace, have you seen Denny Terrace? It's at Melrose and Denny. This is a bad picture of it. Imagine it two or three times that high and that same width. So next time you drive across the freeway on that street look at Denny Terrace and say "wouldn't it be nice if it was two to three times as high?" That's what's being proposed. Again, it isn't abstract.

One more point. We are continually talked [about] here in Seattle and badmouthed in comparison to Portland and Vancouver. I see it about once every three months in the editorial page. In Portland,

residential development is subject to the same FAR as office is. In Seattle, it is essentially unconstrained. I just went up to Vancouver, and I didn't see blocky buildings like this in Bayshore. I saw small thin towers with a hundred feet in between them. So, if we think that's great, we're not heading that way. When I talked to the land use people in those two towns, both of their comments were, Seattle builds very bulky, dense, ugly buildings. Again it's not abstract, on the left is a view of the Cristalla that's being built right now, that's ¼ of a block. Next door the land is owned by one person, it's zoned the same way. You could get a building just like it. So the zoning now would encourage this kind of development in the current way. That's not exactly what we want in Belltown. I rode the ferry one day and with my camera took a picture of my area. I live in One Pacific Tower, there's Market Tower, Marketplace North, the Terminal Building, and I think you can see the Josephinum. If these were built, this is what it will look like in ten years. Now, we can wait that long, and then say, "we shouldn't have done that," or can we look ahead and see in our mind, what do we want to Seattle to be like and then lay out something. I don't necessarily advocate the wedding cake [approach to controlling bulk.] [TAPE ENDS] [Mr. Pehrson's comments concluded shortly thereafter. He supported bulk controls that would achieve view corridors and thinner building forms.]

Bob Klug

Dennis, John, Gordon, thank you. I am from Seattle City Light, and I just want to make a couple of comments. If you look on page 1-7 of the summary you'll see a very strong paragraph for a City document saying we absolutely need a substation in the Downtown area within the next ten years. Actually, it's less than that. And beyond that, we probably need three substations total in the north part of Seattle in that same time period, mindful that we haven't built one in the last twenty years. So this is a big undertaking. And it's a significant undertaking.

So here's the points I want to make tonight. One, we're probably going to see power densities in the Denny Triangle and South Lake Union that are greater than what exists in the CBD right now. The buildings that are being built use 2-3 times the power of a traditional office building and that's going to be a significant new development for Denny Triangle and the South Lake Union.

The other thing I want to point out is that on the substation, we are going to need a new substation location in the Denny Triangle area, and the question is, "how do you go about it?" And I want to throw your eyes north to Vancouver B.C. and have you look at a place

called Cathedral Square in downtown Vancouver where the substation is completely underground. And there is a city park on top of it. Now, City Light can't afford to build underground substations, so we're going to have to get some sort of cooperation from the community as a whole as how to go about funding this. And we can look to Vancouver as an example, and I'm not going to go into tonight how they went about it. But it was a partnership between the utility, the city and the development community. And it also fits the goals of the Downtown Plan as to how do you get more open space into a very compact area. Interestingly enough, they use the heat from the transformers to run the greenhouse on the site. So it is an ecologically sound design.

The other point I want to make here tonight is that we are strongly encouraging sustainable building design in every way possible. And I hope you work with our conservation staff and whomever else is available to see that that happens. And particularly now that we're looking at the possibility of an energy district in the Denny Triangle/South Lake Union area, as a way of reducing the heating and cooling loads on the new buildings that come into the area, as a way of leveling out the power demand. Because it's the peaks that create problems with the electrical system, it's when we have a very cold day or a very warm day that we need excess heating capacity or excess chilling capacity that it puts an exceptional strain on our system. So if we can level out those peaks we get a more reliable system that produces better power quality and helps everyone. So, when you go to design your new building for this area, think of building hydronic buildings that are heated and cooled by water that can be eventually connected to an energy district. Because this is the way of the future. Thank you.

Greg Smith

My name is Greg Smith. I reside at, offices at 810 Third Avenue, Suite 615. I have to say, I echo most of what I've heard before, so I'm not going to regurgitate it all. And I also echo what the gentleman said from Belltown, I think what Vancouver has done, has done taller buildings a little narrower to provide those view corridors that you're seeking in Belltown. I do think the one thing that's kind of an overall that we have to keep in mind, the one thing that Seattle doesn't have is more land and the one thing it is going to have is more people. And so we really need to take into consideration the concept of density in urban centers. This plan I think talks about, it works until 2020 after that it's not sure what's going to happen. That's 17 years from now. That's like the snap of a finger. We should be talking about creating a city that can handle growth for the next 50 years not the next 16 years. Therefore, I

think that all alternatives don't go far enough as far as creating density. So they should encourage higher heights, yet maintaining the view space, which we're seeing in other cities—Vancouver, San Diego. I did develop IDX Tower, I sold, I developed IDX Tower. I developed a permit for the site and sold it to the developer. I developed the Millennium Tower, which is the mixed-use building at Second and Columbia – it's 20 stories. I do agree with the comments about providing more flexibility in design, because those buildings are dictated, the shapes of them are dictated by current code. And the architects' community, even the Design Review board will acknowledge that there is not enough opportunity to create interesting architecture that is what the public wants. I'd also like to include in this, the DOC 1 even though this deals a lot about DOC 1, DOC 1 as a zone is already developed, it's maxed, there's very few sites left in the DOC 1 core to develop. So though were talking about an upzone of the Downtown office core, which is a good thing, it's already happened there. It's either going to happen north, or it's going to happen south of the city. I'd like to see this whole plan really look at from the University of Washington south down to South Downtown. I realize it doesn't. I see John smiling. So the one thing I do think it needs to focus on however is the Downtown Retail Core. This talks about zones that circle the Downtown Retail Core, which is also a zone that was created back in the Eighties. Property that we own there, for instance, is a property we'd like to create residential high rise, along the lines that have been discussed—higher, taller. Yet the zoning there is inadequate, it's outdated, it doesn't provide for us to create that residential density in that strategic area of the city. Now looking outside of this plan, this study area, I do think that we shouldn't just leave a donut hole in the middle, we should study the DRC zone as well, and really take under consideration what can happen there. I guess the last thing I think, about affordable housing, it's important to keep in mind that if we want affordable housing in this city, which we have to have, affordable housing is protected by increased density, because the less density you have in a land restricted area, the higher the prices of land are going to be and the less it becomes affordable. So we really need to keep that in mind when we're talking about land use policies. We should try to increase density, on a per-acre or per-square-foot basis as much as possible. That is the best friend to affordable housing. Thanks.

Irene Wall

I hadn't planned on making a comment, but since you've invited me I will. And I will be sending in some written comments as well. I can't help but thank you Kate for making that comment earlier in the

evening about wonderful cities that have great ambience for pedestrians. And you mentioned Paris. One thing about Paris is that there are no very, very tall buildings in the downtown of Paris and that does contribute to its wonderful ambience. I'm not suggesting that all tall buildings are bad things.

But the other kind of comment that I've heard all night is that somehow having very tall buildings in Downtown Seattle is going to save Snohomish County or eastern King County or Skagit. And until we really tighten up the connections between the willingness of the City of Seattle to accept more density, and there being big disincentives in other places to create sprawl, then I'm afraid that's a wonderful theory but we really haven't seen it borne out.

The other comment had to do with the requirement that the City has as a center city place to accept a great deal of density in the regional scheme of things. But we should also remember that we are not the only city center that is designated in the region's comprehensive plan. There are other cities too that are striving to see their sort of economic development agendas met. And we can kind of laugh and say Federal Way is not a real place and Lynnwood is not a real place yet. But, you know, they want to be real places. And as long as the city of Seattle desires to sort of be the "great sucking sound" for growth, they will be kind of shut out. So I think the development community has a bit of an obligation here to say "what is the greater regional requirement?" We do talk about the investments that we're making in transportation and it's true most of them still do lead to Downtown, but where are they coming from? They are coming from other potential regional centers where people already live. So I think we should bear that in mind before we try to accept the burden of all regional growth in Downtown Seattle. Thank you.

Downtown Height and Density
Comments on the Draft EIS at the Downtown Neighborhoods Forum
February 24th, 2004

TESTIMONY

Heather Trim - People for Puget Sound

We very much like the idea of increasing density in Downtown and going to the Vancouver B.C. model. But we'd like to (inaudible) [point out that] the amenities and the open space are reduced with all 3 alternatives. And, we are especially concerned about greenspace. If you're going to double the population of Downtown, then we need to double the amount of greenspace. The modeling, and I guess the previous zoning, are done on "per 1,000 households," where much of the standards used in the country are actually done on "per 1,000 residents." So we actually fall quite short, when using those kinds of standards.

And finally on stormwater, it's inadequate for us that you talk about "better stormwater controls will likely improve stormwater flow into the CSOs." We want to see better treatment and that would include infiltration, greenspace, porous pavement. So we would basically like to see that written into the document at this point, and more of a commitment to that at this point.

Lyn Krizanich - Denny Triangle, Clise Properties

Lyn Krizanich, co-chair of the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Planning process, and I work for Clise Properties. And I wanted to add that, having been engaged in this process for, well since 1996, the Denny Triangle Plan first of all it embraces increased density, and it has from the very beginning and how we did that, we crafted it very carefully. We want to be able to achieve our goals in both commercial, which means jobs, and employment as well as housing. We didn't want to achieve one of those at the expense of the other. So we would like to see the height and the FAR (the density) increased. What that does is that it gives you taller buildings and you use the land differently. It frees up the site so that what's remaining after you've taken your commercial development and put it in a taller building, which again allows for view and better building character and building tops. It leaves the rest of the property available for two things. Open space, which is critically important to livability for these neighborhoods with this density, and housing.

And specifically, the Neighborhood Plan was crafted to be compatible with the Downtown Urban Center Planning Plan of the other neighborhoods, to put the height and density primarily in the Denny Triangle and not in some of the other neighborhoods that didn't want the increased density and height. But specifically to make sure that we would get the affordable housing. And [we] have this gap that exists. There are some mechanisms for both the low-income housing and market rate housing - we welcome it all by the way - but we specifically crafted this so that it could be a win all the way across the board. And at the last hearing, there was an enormous amount of testimony for just that kind of scheme. And, as one of us who has been long at this, Catherine said [for] the stakeholders, "we're still here and we still want a Downtown that meets all of those needs."

John Rahaim: Thanks, Lyn. Yes, a question.

[Crowd member]: So which alternative do you propose?

Lyn: It has to be... None of these represent the DUCPG or the Denny Triangle Plan. The one that comes closest is [Alternative] Number 1, but it has some elements in there that frankly cause a little confusion, in putting some of the height in Belltown where it wasn't desired. But we think that actually we can do better. With the passage of time, I think we need to be bold. We need to look at what more we can do to get the jobs and housing that we want. So I'd say it's Alternative 1 with some changes and some extra height and density.

Pete Mills - Historic Seattle

Hi, my name is Pete Mills and I'm a council member with Historic Seattle. I speak primarily for myself, but Historic Seattle does support the increased density in the area. One thing I'd like [us] to consider in the Draft [EIS] is something that Gordon Price mentioned. I saw on the website that his presentation, it was really eloquent, it really made me very interested in potentially living Downtown. One of the things he mentioned was, as an ingredient to the success of your Downtown, would be diversity...diversity of tenure, diversity of buildings, diversity in use, diversity in several different areas. But diversity in tenure gives you a fabric of a community that is more livable. And that is really what I'd like to see in the Downtown and also included in the EIS. And Historic Seattle is submitting a letter with more specifics in it.

Nancy Bagley - League of Women Voters

Hi, I'm Nancy Bagley, and I'm representing the League of Women Voters of Seattle tonight. The League has studied and acted on Downtown land use issues for over 20 years. We were actively involved in the development of the Downtown Plan in 1985 and the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. We continue to follow the City's land use planning and regulations with an eye toward preserving and enhancing our vision of a most livable city. So, a few comments on the Draft EIS.

First, the proposed changes and their relationship to the Growth Management Act and the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. We acknowledge and endorse the city and state goals of directing growth to urban areas, reducing sprawl and accommodating increased density of commercial and residential buildings in the study area of Downtown Seattle. We learned from the Draft EIS that current zoning, Alternative 4, is adequate to accommodate the employment and residential growth projected through the year 2014 under the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1994. We question whether substantial changes in zoning, such as the substantial height and density changes proposed in Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, should be undertaken before the Comprehensive Plan is thoroughly reviewed and updated to address the following twenty years, from 2014 through 2034.

Major changes are underway, as we've already heard from Ms. Sugimura, in areas close to the study area, such as the Waterfront, port properties in North Bay, the SODO area, South Lake Union, and the east Pike/Pine and Madison areas. A broader look at the entire Downtown and the nearby areas cited should be undertaken as part of the required once-a-decade review of the city Comprehensive Plan. These other areas could provide opportunities for residential growth, including affordable housing. Their residents could work Downtown, provided public transit is available.

Major transportation projects, such as the Viaduct, the Waterfront plan, the monorail, the bus tunnel closure for light rail should be reviewed for their impacts on the study area, and all of Downtown before substantial changes are made in Downtown zoning.

Many of the changes in zoning height limits and bonuses recommended by the Downtown neighborhood plans have already been addressed by the City Council and were adopted in 1999 and in 2001. It may be premature to change the rules substantially again, before we know how the recent changes are working. We question the elimination of the Transfer of Development Credits program in some of the

Alternatives. This program has the potential to encourage residential development and provide funds for amenities in the Denny Triangle.

The following are areas that we think need more thorough analysis of impacts and possible mitigation strategies in the Final EIS. First, housing. The League supports the goal of increasing the amount of housing in the study area. But we look at Table 25 in the Draft EIS which projects the number of potential residential units under each alternative and we see that the totals for all four alternatives are quite similar, ranging from over 7,300 under Alternative 4 No Action, to over 7,600 units under Alternative 2. We question the tradeoff of a few more residential units for the substantial increases in height and density proposed in Alternatives 1, 2 and 3. We urge that the Final EIS include a more thorough review of the possible mitigation strategies listed in [Draft EIS] Chapter 3, page 3-28. Because we do recognize that the challenge of finding funding for low-income and affordable housing in the study area will be great under all four of the alternatives. Current incentives fall short of meeting the real financial costs of creating low-income and affordable housing in the Downtown. More attention should be given to meeting the housing and service needs of families with children that do or might live in Downtown.

The rezone proposed in Alternative 3 to DMR/C for a residential mixed-use area with reductions in FAR looks promising and should be reviewed more intensively in the Final EIS. We support a clustering of residential uses in order to provide more of a feeling of living in a neighborhood. In addition we propose that the Final EIS include a review of a new provision for limiting the density of residential buildings in the study area.

Under Height, Bulk and Scale, the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for Downtown place a special emphasis on the quality of the pedestrian environment. The increases in height and bulk proposed in Alternatives 1 and 2, and in Alternative 3 for the commercial core, would negatively affect the pedestrian experience with taller and bulky buildings towering over the narrow streets and sidewalks in the study area. The Final EIS should more thoroughly review these negative impacts.

Do the tradeoffs of increased space for jobs and housing outweigh the negative impacts on the pedestrian experience, on aesthetics and ultimately on the livability of the city? The League supports zoning and policies included in the 1985 Downtown Plan that require a smooth transition in scale and density of development from the areas of greatest height and density to areas of lowest height and density.

Alternative 1 includes unacceptably abrupt increases in height, bulk and scale along the edges of sensitive transition areas.

And finally, open space and parks. This Draft EIS exposes the current and future inadequacies in the amount of open space and parks available to residents and employees in the study area under all four alternatives. The Final EIS should explore the other possible mitigation strategies outlined in [Draft EIS] Chapter 3, page 3-125. Since the likelihood of adding major open space to the study area in the foreseeable future seems remote, attention should be given to improving the pedestrian connections between Downtown and major nearby open spaces, such as the Waterfront, the Seattle Center and South Lake Union. Increasing height and density without significantly addressing the already inadequate amount of open space in the study area is unacceptable. Thank you for this opportunity to present our comments from the League of Women Voters.

William Justen

I'm William Justen, I've worked Downtown for 35 years and lived Downtown for 27 years. I walk to work, don't use a car, and I also represent Samis Land Company, it's a major property owner in Pioneer Square and the Commercial Core. I think Alternative 1 gets close but doesn't get far enough. We really need to take advantage, and contrary to the previous speaker, I don't think we should wait, that we've already lost much opportunity as we've developed or are developing the last parcels of land Downtown, this is the time we ought to take maximum advantage of that, to increase the density to accomplish the goals of a livable Downtown.

I think we need to increase the FAR and height in Alternative 1 with special attention to slender towers getting a bonus, probably 20% additional height for residential buildings over Alternative 1 that can be tall slender structures. So, I think Alternative 1 is close but not far enough.

As far as the Draft EIS goes, the concern I have is that it does not recognize Downtown residential use as a mitigating measure to traffic and parking, and I believe as a resident Downtown, and many of my friends that are, we really do consider living Downtown a form of mitigation. I walk to work, sometimes if I have to go further I'll take the free bus ride Downtown. I don't need two parking places, and the Draft EIS really anticipates a parking place for every new residence and a parking place for every new job. You don't need to double up. About 1/3 of the job growth in the Draft EIS, about 70,000 jobs, about 30% or so of that will really be coming from the new

residential growth Downtown. I don't think that was anticipated. So, the EIS really needs to look at this mitigating aspect on parking and transportation-traffic-for this Downtown population that is also coming as part of the growth. The growth is going to happen, this is where it should happen, and I'm very excited about the opportunity to make this city tall, slender, high-density and livable.

Tony Puma

I'm Tony Puma. I'm just clarifying a thought. The last two speakers talked about open space. There's a presumption that the increased density creates demand by that very density. The roof of this building and the roof of the building across the street are green. And this suggests that if you do have some sort of wedding cake kind of formula [for building setbacks], where there is a certain portion of the site that is horizontal at a higher level, and that that becomes a green space, that you're offsetting some of the demand that would occur at the ground floor, where it is most expensive to do (and in large measure falls to the public [sector] to do, as opposed to the private sector to do). So, in particular you might want to think about some sort of a formula that ties this sort of narrow slender tower that William described, with the provision for development of the other flat portion of the site, at whatever level, in order to capture that opportunity. And particularly when they're planning it. I find it ironic that you can't get on this roof.
[applause]

Tory Laughlin Taylor

I'm Tory Laughlin Taylor, affordable housing developer, and also serve on the Seattle Design Commission. I think several of the comments, and a concern of mine in this whole process in reviewing this Draft EIS is, it's really challenging to extricate pieces of (inaudible) [an effective strategy]. The fine tuning you need to get to is, there's an issue of height and bulk - sorry, excuse me, there's a "height versus bulk" issue really. I think there has been a general acknowledgement - and somebody mentioned what Gordon Price talked about - that a mitigating factor is getting taller but skinnier towers.

And I think that however we come out of this EIS process, we need to start getting that layer of detail in there, so that we start talking about the pronouncing of [different options, such as] you can get the additional height, maybe not in combination with additional bulk and width. That dovetails with the question of residential development versus and in combination with commercial development.

Because at least in this market you're really talking about two different footprints. And the commercial is going to tend to be a bulkier footprint in current demands versus residential. So I just look to getting that into our next level of analysis.

And then the other issue which I'll just touch on briefly is the issue of infrastructure needing to be enhanced. And I think there are ways that the city, and if already [doing so], to continue to coordinate the development of infrastructure, so that we're not talking about a development-by-development [approach which results in] the sometimes ludicrously expensive development of infrastructure.

John Pehrson

I'm John Pehrson with the Belltown Housing and Land Use Committee, a part of our community council. And we've taken a position on this relative to south Belltown, which is a part of the area covered. The DMC zone in that area puts essentially no constraints on bulk for residential development. And if you have, say, a 15,000 square foot lot, you have no constraints. You can build it from lot line to lot line up to the max height. This kind of development is visible in our area at 7th and Virginia at the Metropolitan Tower, and they're currently building the unit at 2nd and Lenora. So, we believe strongly that that should be changed. The emphasis on residential has gotten too far.

Other areas - we need some space between those towers, and other cities like Vancouver and Portland have restrictions on the distance between those towers. So, that's why we took a position for a change similar to Alternative 3. We would welcome less prescriptive things than the wedding cake approach now prescribed, but certainly something that limits the bulk in these areas.

John Fox

My name is John Fox. I'm the coordinator of the Seattle Displacement Coalition. We will be providing some written comments in a lot more detail before the 29th. Our organization participated in the process of developing the Downtown Plan twenty years ago. And I can't help but compare the process that we're going through now to the process the City went through twenty years ago.

That process at the time included a limited growth option, not just the status quo and then options that would add either varying amounts of office or residential. And there was a limited growth option which the City ultimately did not implement, which subsequently

led to the CAP Initiative that led to a lot of the limitations or provisions that we have that remain in the Code today. There should be, we believe, a limited growth option that assesses costs and benefits of actually reducing densities in Downtown and particularly the office core densities in the central core.

We're also struck by an absence of an assessment, a thorough assessment outside the core in the neighborhoods that ring the Downtown core, particularly with reference to transportation impacts, but also impacts on affordability. To the extent that the additional densities that are added Downtown (office densities) generate demand. And with only a portion of those folks living Downtown we believe, as was done 20 years ago, there needs to be a more thorough assessment of impacts on all our neighborhoods, both with respect to transportation and affordability, accompanying each of these alternatives.

Also there was in the process 20 years ago, the City hired Gruen and Gruen, to do a thorough cost/benefit analysis of the options, both again from the standpoint of added infrastructure and looking at both tax revenues that were generated for the City and then the budgetary costs that would be accompanying those options. It was a thorough assessment and we'd like to see a similar kind of assessment accompanying these options, to get a clearer understanding of what really the costs are, particularly the fiscal costs for the City of Seattle.

We also want to echo the concerns that the League has articulated. We had the opportunity of working with them on that plan 20 years ago, and some of the concerns about "why now?" when again, there are all these other things going on. We did very recently adjust the programs, the bonus programs, TDR and so on. Again, some concerns we have about acting now rather than sort of letting these other processes play out a bit.

The last issue is housing mitigation, and the document is wholly inadequate right now in terms of - I was pleased to see that the document did, and for the first time, acknowledge that the City has lost a substantial amount of low-income housing in Downtown. Twenty years ago the City as part of the Downtown Plan made a commitment to preserve 7,300 units of low-income housing priced at or below 50% of the median. They at that time also, there was also a multifamily housing task force, or it was a Downtown housing task force, to review the yearly numbers showing loss and increases across the range of housing units and then recommending changes or adjustments in the plan on a yearly basis. There was a demolition control ordinance that was part of that plan, an anti-abandonment law, a range of solutions that

are obviously not within the realm, or are not included here in the Draft. And there is a lot more – at least we have an acknowledgement – I think they identify 5,800 units, so we've fallen some 1,500 units short of the commitment we made 20 years ago to preserve what's left of the lower priced units. Obviously, one thing we would want is to be more aggressive in subsequent plans of addressing that failing. And unfortunately this document is even less adequate because we now are without some mechanisms we had following that plan, and now we are going ahead and adding density. So I again underscore the need to have much more aggressive regulatory approaches within the framework of what is legally acceptable, to ensure that we don't continue to lose housing in the face of these added densities you're prescribing.

Jim Ferris

Jim Ferris with Housing Resources Group. We're a non-profit affordable housing developer and manager. We've preserved or created approximately 1,600 units, about 25 different apartment projects around the Downtown area, and Capitol Hill and 1st Hill. What John was just describing about preservation and the amount of need for more incentives, the Housing Resources Group sees that the program as it originally existed did a lot to preserve historic buildings in neighborhoods like Downtown and Belltown in particular. And it was very successful in maintaining or trying to preserve the existing housing stock. Where we are 20+ years later is that Downtown has changed by virtue of the existing zoning to the point where it is very difficult to create new housing and down to the affordable housing stock because the land prices Downtown are extremely difficult and a challenge for non-profits to provide affordable housing in this environment.

Housing Resources Group is very encouraged about seeing something even more aggressive than Alternative 1 actually being looked at as mitigation to create affordable housing. Right now in the Downtown neighborhood, the housing levy is available to be used for housing for people earning below 50% of the median income. The Downtown growth targets for the people earning 50-80% of the median – and I'll be the first to say, 50% and below median income, we are not meeting those targets – where we have an even much bigger problem to solve is income loans for the 50-80% median.

And the Downtown TDR bonus program is the only tool available for affordable housing to be created. And so, HRG has been able to use the housing bonus program twice. Once at 8th and Stewart, Stewart Court, working in collaboration with Clise Properties, to develop housing next to their new office building. And we just finished the

renovation and construction at 3rd and Pine, the Gilmore project, which also has used the housing bonus program.

Our ability to do more affordable housing Downtown serving the workforce and earning 50-80% of median is not going to happen. We've created some changes to the zoning to create an additional cost to commercial developers of \$22 per square foot to help pay to mitigate for affordable housing. But there has been no change in zoning to allow commercial developers to build buildings to create those incentives, so we have an imbalance in the program right now, in our opinion. And until we see additional density in commercial development you will see no more affordable housing Downtown. So we encourage Alternative 1 and we encourage you to pass it through the Council this year, because we're losing the window of opportunity for more affordable housing to get built in the next real estate cycle. Thank you.

Jack McCullough

I'm Jack McCullough. I run a small business Downtown. Just three quick points. One is, the process we're in, just to underscore what Catherine said earlier, the process we're in is the culmination of something that started in 1994. This is one of the – this is really the last neighborhood plan that hasn't been finished in the City of Seattle. And so the reason we're doing it now is that we're finishing what we started when growth management started here in the city.

The second point was just to pick up on the one Jim just mentioned, which was the idea of market opportunity. Now, there was a code that the League mentioned adopted in 1985. And unfortunately, the development that occurred in the latter part of that decade was not affected by the code because the code was adopted too late and missed the opportunity to really maximally impact that. We saw code amendments Downtown in 1999 and 2001 but again we missed the opportunity to affect the round of development that occurred. Because these rounds of development only occur once about every 6 or 7 or 8 years, we missed the opportunity to affect that [last round].

We're sitting here in a point in history where we have the opportunity to affect a round of development that is going to start to occur in three years. And I think if we don't take this opportunity, then what we are doing is we are foregoing the chance to impact what the Downtown looks like in a favorable way probably for at least another decade.

And the final point I have is just to encourage John and the good folks in the Planning Department to do what the city has done best, really, in the code is to focus on incentives. You hear a lot about regulation, but the only regulation that is sure to work and the easiest one is to say "no" to something. The challenge is to try to forge a set of incentives – only, market-based incentives – in your regulations [that] will attract the kind of development that you want to see, not hold it off. So, hopefully in this next cycle we can do that, and we think we've got a good team to do it. Thanks John.

Gabriel Scheer

My name is Gabriel and I'm just here as a citizen and a resident. So I'm not representing anybody in particular. I just wanted to make my thoughts known on the proposals. I think Proposal [Alternative] 1 is heading in the right direction. I think that Vancouver and Portland set some really good examples. Downtown Vancouver with their soaring buildings, I think would be a wonderful thing to see in Seattle. I think we need to increase our density, because if we don't were going to end up like L.A. and sprawl all over the place and I don't want to see that.

And second to that, in terms of incentives and speaking to the comments we just heard. I think that incentives can be a wonderful thing if they're planned carefully. And I think in keeping with that, I'd like to see some of the incentives used to develop Downtown Seattle much further to try to be pedestrian friendly as she was talking about – the representative of the League of Women Voters – and trying to be environmentally friendly. Giving different FAR rules if you're using development of more green spaces either on green roofs or just down on the streetscapes themselves. Or stormwater mitigation, a variety of things can be used. And I think that incentives are a great tool, but they have to be used carefully. So those are my thoughts. I think we do need to increase the density, but let's do it well.

Dan Abramson

Hi, my name is Dan. I respectfully disagree with the League of Women Voters as far as it being time to wait. I think I understand those needs. But the fact that there is the Viaduct, Sound Transit, WSDOT, South Lake [Union] with Paul Allen and all that is exactly why Seattle needs to really look at their zoning. The zoning has been dating. And unfortunately, whether we like it or not, growth is happening. This is a great area, people are coming here, and managing it is a much better option than denying it.

The only thing that I'd ask on the EIS is that there is some consideration for the low-income and entry-level housing which is terribly sparse in this area. I think it provides a nice input to the community, with the first view. And so to mitigate the balance between commercial and residential, having some offset from commercial incentives to low-income housing in some designated areas or cluster homing would be a benefit to everyone.

Responses to Comments in Public Hearings

December 15th, 2003 Meeting

Richard Stevenson

1. Your comments endorsing greater density than studied under Alternative 1 are noted.
2. Your comments on the differing economic considerations of developing Downtown versus other areas are noted.
3. Your comments opposing the existing upper level setback requirements and endorsing design flexibility are noted.
4. Your comments opposing downzones and endorsing incentive-based approaches are noted.

Lyn Krizanich

1. Your comments supporting the commercial and residential objectives of the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, and criticizing delays in decisionmaking on this zoning proposal, are noted.
2. Your comments endorsing greater height and density than studied under Alternative 1 are noted. The recommendations in the Draft EIS for Alternative 1 are taken directly from the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, to the extent that the plan provided specific information. Height increases of 100 feet were recommended throughout the area, and base and maximum FAR increases to 7 and 14 respectively were proposed. While specific FAR limits were not identified for the DMC zone, the plan indicated that the increases should be similar in relative magnitude to those for DOC 2, so the base FAR was increased to 7 and the maximum FAR increased to 10. This assumption is consistent with recommendations made by the Advisory Committee reviewing changes to the bonus and TDR programs that were to be considered in conjunction with recommended height and density increases.
3. Your comments opposing the existing upper level setback requirements and endorsing design flexibility are noted.

Catherine Stanford

1. Your comments on the coordinated nature of the Downtown neighborhood plans, and the endorsement of housing objectives in those plans, are noted.
2. Please see the response to comment 2 by Lyn Krizanich, above, in this transcript discussion. Your comments disagreeing with the level of height increase in Alternative 1 for First Avenue are noted. Please see the response to comment 4 of your remarks, below.

3. Your comments on the need for additional regulatory changes to implement the neighborhood plans, the disincentives inherent in the current regulations, and encouragement to move forward with decisionmaking, are noted.
4. Pages 2-8 through 2-12 in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS described how the Commercial Core Neighborhood Plan endorsed “super bonus” proposal changes with interim height and density increases that would have applied to the DMC 240’ zone along First Avenue. Further, it illustrates how the later Bonus/TDR Advisory Committee requested consideration of height and density increases in the DMC zones similar to those considered for other DMC zones. The comparable DMC zones in the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan were requested to be increased by 100 feet with no specific level of density increase requested. The formulation of Alternative 1 was, therefore, set according to the directions indicated by the neighborhood plans and subsequent advisory committees.

Kate Joncas

1. Your comments on the scope of the alternatives and other trends affecting the need to support Downtown development are noted. This EIS reflects up-to-date consideration of the status and needs of Downtown. The recommendations in the Draft EIS for Alternative 1 are taken directly from the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, to the extent that the plan provided specific information. Height increases of 100 feet were recommended throughout the area, and base and maximum FAR increases to 7 and 14 respectively were proposed. While specific FAR limits were not identified for the DMC zone, the plan indicated that the increases should be similar in relative magnitude to those for DOC 2, so the base FAR was increased to 7 and the maximum FAR increased to 10. This assumption is consistent with recommendations made by the Advisory Committee reviewing changes to the bonus and TDR programs that were to be considered in conjunction with recommended height and density increases. While the plan does call for increasing potential for commercial development, it also specifies objectives to “encourage a mix of low, moderate and market rate affordable housing throughout the neighborhood with project specific mixes of commercial and residential development,” and to “encourage a “residential enclave” of predominantly residential development along key green streets ...”
2. The Draft EIS did not “equate density with a poor pedestrian environment.” Further, the mere presence of additional bulk in buildings does not automatically “equate with a much higher quality pedestrian environment.” In fact, the arrangement of building bulk next to sidewalks can greatly influence perceptions of comfort and pedestrian quality. Buildings that rise in sheer faces without setbacks or ground-level architectural treatments tend to create environments perceived as threatening or inhospitable, along with environmental effects such as excessive shading and downdraft winds directed onto pedestrians. However, if buildings are well-designed with good aesthetic treatments and well-designed arrangements of bulk, the impacts on the street-level environment may be effectively resolved.

The Draft EIS strove to provide a balanced evaluation of impacts on streetscape and pedestrian amenity (see pages 3-112 to 3-114 and 3-119 to 3-121). This included listing several positive impacts that would occur with future development, such as widening of

sidewalks, additional Green Street and street tree improvements, and development of continuous street-level uses. Similarly, adverse impacts were carefully described to provide a balanced and accurate depiction of the impacts. Descriptions of differences in building bulk and arrangement among alternatives aid the reader in visualizing the conditions at or near street level, including solar access and relative openness of the physical setting.

3. A review of the Draft EIS text reveals that it does not use “worst-case” terminology (or similar wording) in a biased manner with regard to any alternative. The Draft EIS was carefully worded to maintain reasonable, objective comparisons among the alternatives, because none of the alternatives was treated as a preferred alternative.
4. Your comments favoring a continued strong emphasis on addressing affordable housing needs, and recommending a look at the content of the alternatives, are noted.
5. Your comments favoring proactive planning are noted.

Jim Ferris

1. Your comments on the need and opportunity to do more for affordable housing development through code changes are noted.
2. Your comments endorsing larger changes than Alternative 1 and expeditious decisionmaking are noted.

Joe Quintana

1. Your comments endorsing additional height and density on the basis of growth management principles are noted. The Draft EIS did include discussion that evaluated the alternatives’ relationship to plans and policies, including those related to bigger-picture growth management concerns.
2. Chapters 1 and 2 of the Draft EIS discussed the context and reasons why the alternatives are being studied, as well as relationship to neighborhood planning.
3. Please see Chapter 3 of this Final EIS for additional discussion of this topic.
4. The Housing impacts discussion on Draft EIS pages 3-17 to 3-27 includes Table 16 that compares the housing capacity of the alternatives with and without the effects of TDC capacity. These quantitative findings primarily illustrate how maximum residential buildout capacities in the studied Downtown zones would be affected by the alternatives' zoning. This type of calculation does not depend upon whether the TDC-related capacity is used for housing in the next 20 years or not. Further, the analysis of 20 years of residential growth does not require that any of the TDC-related capacity is used. So, the analysis is neither liberal nor in error when it provides that calculation of residential capacity.
5. Your comments on the need for design flexibility and in favor of Design Review are noted.

6. Your comments objecting to encouragement of “mandatory” mixed-use development are noted. The provision proposed in Alternative 3 makes mixed-use “mandatory” only in the sense that projects opting to develop above the base FAR would be required to include residential use on the site. Commercial development in the DMR/C zone under Alternative 3 would be permitted to build up to the base FAR of 5 without housing.

Adrienne Quinn

1. Your comments registering disappointment with the findings of impacts in Belltown, in light of coordinated planning of the neighborhood plans, are noted.
2. Please see Chapter 3 of this Final EIS for additional discussion of this topic.
3. The Streetcar concept is the only potential transit investment that was not explicitly considered in the Draft EIS transportation analysis. The presence of the Sound Transit and monorail systems were assumed in the study's mode split assumptions. While the Streetcar project is potentially beneficial for transit accessibility to/from South Lake Union, its presence is not likely to alter the findings of the EIS transportation analysis. Therefore, the validity of the adverse transportation impacts identified in the Draft EIS is not challenged by this comment, and no supplemental analysis is necessary.
4. Your comments noting lack of housing development as a result of regulatory shortcomings are noted.
5. Your comments noting lack of support for the TDC program are noted. The TDC program was structured to accrue benefits to the Denny Triangle in the form of streetscape improvements and additional housing development.
6. The recommendations in the Draft EIS for Alternative 1 are taken directly from the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, to the extent that the plan provided specific information. Height increases of 100 feet were recommended throughout the area, and base and maximum FAR increases to 7 and 14 respectively were proposed. While specific FAR limits were not identified for the DMC zone, the plan indicated that the increases should be similar in relative magnitude to those for DOC 2, so the base FAR was increased to 7 and the maximum FAR increased to 10. This assumption is consistent with recommendations made by the Advisory Committee reviewing changes to the bonus and TDR programs that were to be considered in conjunction with recommended height and density increases. While the plan does call for increasing potential for commercial development, it also specifies objectives to “encourage a mix of low, moderate and market rate affordable housing throughout the neighborhood with project specific mixes of commercial and residential development,” and to “encourage a “residential enclave” of predominantly residential development along key green streets ...”. Please see Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS for additional description of the relationship of the alternatives to the neighborhood plan.

Jack McCullough

1. Your comments describing past changes in Downtown regulations and factors supporting additional density in Downtown are noted.
2. Your comments opposing Alternative 3 are noted. Please see the responses to comments in your letters (#20 and #21) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS for further discussion.
3. Your comments on development cycles, long-term density needs, and the need for timely action are noted.

John Pehrson

1. Your comments about concerns with excessive building bulk and the need for effective bulk controls are noted.

Bob Klug, City Light

1. Your comments about the future need for additional substations are noted.
2. The Draft EIS indicated that expected power densities for many new developments would be greater than past traditional Downtown buildings.
3. The City recognizes that further City Light system planning and capacity analysis will likely alter the scenarios and types of improvements suggested in Mr. Klug's testimony.
4. Your comment reinforces the need for sustainable building design.

Greg Smith

1. Your comments endorsing additional density Downtown and a long-term perspective on growth needs are noted.
2. Your comments endorsing greater height and density to accommodate building design flexibility are noted.
3. Your comments that the DOC 1 zone is already fully developed, and the need for additional planning for areas north and south of Downtown, are noted. Additional Center City planning will continue to evaluate next steps for long-term growth needs.
4. Your comments on the Downtown Retail Core (DRC) zone are noted. Amendments to height provisions in the DRC zone adopted in 2001 did provide additional flexibility for increasing the base height of 85 feet to the maximum height of 150 feet in the zone, while also allowing a further 30% increase in height for residential and mixed-use projects along the western edge of the zone. Additional inclusion of rezones in DRC at this time is not anticipated within this EIS.

5. Your comments favoring density for the sake of accommodating affordable housing are noted.

Irene Wall

1. Your comments on the relationship of pedestrian qualities and building bulk are noted.
2. Your comments on challenges in achieving better regional growth management are noted.
3. Your comments endorsing a bigger-picture perspective on where and how much growth should occur and consideration of regional growth management purposes are noted.

February 24th, 2004 Meeting

Heather Trim – People for Puget Sound

1. Please see the responses to Comments 1 and 2 in your letter (#11) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
2. Please see the responses to Comments 1 and 2 in your letter (#11) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
3. Please see the response to Comment 3 in your letter (#11) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.

Lyn Krizanich

1. Your comments on the intentions of the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, including its support of residential development, commercial development and open space, are noted.
2. Your comments encouraging adjustment of Alternative 1 with additional height and density, and changes to the Belltown elements of Alternative 1, are noted. Please see Chapter 1 of this Final EIS for discussion of the Preferred Alternative.

Pete Mills

1. Your comments describing the benefits of diversity, including diversity in housing, uses and building types, are noted.

Nancy Bagley – League of Women Voters

1. Please see the responses to Comment 1 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.

2. Please see the responses to Comment 1 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
3. Please see the responses to Comment 1 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
4. Please see the responses to Comment 2 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
5. Please see the responses to Comments 3, 4 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
6. Please see the responses to Comment 5 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
7. Please see the responses to Comment 6 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
8. Please see the responses to Comments 6, 7 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.
9. Please see the responses to Comment 8 and other comments in your letter (#10) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.

William Justen

1. Your comments, encouraging additional height and density above Alternative 1, with special attention to bonuses for slender towers, are noted. Please see Chapter 1 of this Final EIS for discussion of the Preferred Alternative.
2. Please see the responses to Comments 2 and 3 in your letter (#18) in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS. The EIS analysis did not assume two parking places for Downtown residents that are also Downtown employees. Instead, it accurately accounted for reduced residential parking demand from Downtown residents as well as levels of employment-based parking demand.

Tony Puma

1. It is acknowledged that different arrangements of bulk on a site may create opportunities for open space features on above-ground rooftop or plaza spaces. This could potentially be included in the codes as a bonusable feature. Please see Chapters 1, 3 and 4 for further discussion of the Preferred Alternative.

Tory Laughlin Taylor

1. Your comments about the need to start identifying more detailed options for height and bulk controls are noted. This Final EIS provides additional information that seeks to illuminate the

choices and tradeoffs that are inherent in making Downtown zoning changes. Regarding commercial and residential development, in some cases it may be possible to develop these two types of uses in separate towers within the same development.

2. Your comments in favor of coordinated development of infrastructure are noted. The Draft EIS identifies a number of strategies that could be employed to improve the transportation and street system to handle projected congestion, as well as with regard to electrical infrastructure.

John Pehrson

1. Your comments about concerns with residential building bulk and the need for creative, effective bulk controls are noted. Please see Chapter 1 of this Final EIS for discussion of the Preferred Alternative.

John Fox – Seattle Displacement Coalition

1. Your interest in including a limited growth option is noted. The EIS provides required environmental review for a set of rezone proposals based on already-adopted neighborhood plans. The purpose and parameters of the environmental review process are quite different from broader Downtown planning efforts that occurred for the 1985 Downtown Plan. The EIS includes the required analysis of a “No Action” Alternative addressing what would happen if no zone changes occurred. SEPA does not require other inclusion of limited growth options.
2. Additional analysis of the alternatives’ transportation impacts in an extended area surrounding Downtown would be overly speculative and is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Regarding housing affordability, it is beyond the scope of this EIS to speculate on affordability trends in Seattle neighborhoods as a result of growth. Further, the projection and study of future growth is not in itself an impact of the alternatives. The EIS was oriented to identifying the differences in impacts that would arise with the same amount of growth in Downtown areas under different zoning requirements. The potential impacts of future growth have already been analyzed in documents such as the environmental review for the City’s 1994 Comprehensive Plan which introduced the Urban Village strategy.

3. SEPA does not require a cost/benefit analysis of the alternatives as suggested in this comment. Such an analysis would be beyond the scope of this EIS. The analysis does indicate financial implications in some of its findings, such as differences in projected funds generated for housing under the alternatives.
4. Your concerns regarding the need to make changes in Downtown zoning are noted.
5. Your concerns regarding protection of housing resources are noted. It is the intention of City policy to maintain and enhance housing resources particularly for below-median income households. Numerous programs and policies are in place to encourage those objectives. The

Draft EIS included numerous possible mitigation strategies that could be employed to provide greater housing protections. The Preferred Alternative described in Chapter 1 of this Final EIS also includes mitigation strategies related to housing. Decisionmakers will consider the implications of the alternatives on housing resources.

Jim Ferris

1. Your concerns regarding the ability to develop affordable housing in Downtown are noted.
2. Your concerns regarding the need for changes in zoning to spur additional development of residential and commercial buildings are noted.

Jack McCullough

1. Your comments on the timing of this process are noted.
2. Your comments encouraging the use of market-based incentives in development regulations are noted.

Gabriel Scheer

1. Your comments favoring greater density and Vancouver-style building forms are noted.
2. Your comments endorsing careful use of incentives, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and environmentally-friendly development strategies are noted.

Dan Abramson

1. Your comments on the need to proceed with zoning reform to address growth and change are noted.
2. Your concerns that low-income and other affordable housing opportunities should be more available, and that housing-oriented regulatory provisions should be included in some areas are noted.

