

City of Seattle
Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application (Yesler Terrace)

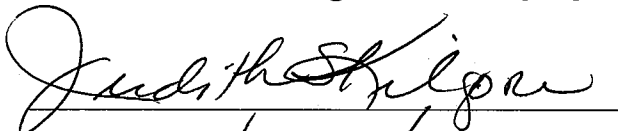
Date: May 15, 2009

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Date: 5/15/09

Note: A Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application was filed on January 6, 2009. However, since then, the City Council passed Resolution 31117, revising the amendment process and application form. This May 15, 2009 Application conforms with the new Resolution and revises and replaces the Application submitted in January 2009.

REQUIRED QUESTIONNAIRE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed amendment and a clear statement of what the proposed amendment is intended to accomplish.

Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) requests that the City Council consider a change to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) on the Yesler Terrace site on the southern ridge of the First Hill neighborhood. The area proposed for change is outlined on the attached map and consists of approximately 30 acres. The area is currently identified on the FLUM as Multi-Family Residential.

The housing at Yesler Terrace is 70 years old and nearing the end of its useful life. SHA, Yesler Terrace residents, and the broader community are engaged in identifying concepts for redevelopment of the site to replace existing housing, and to add new housing, commercial uses to support the redevelopment, and substantial public open space. To help focus the planning effort as to the types of uses that could be considered in various alternatives, SHA requests that the FLUM, and possibly associated policies, identify the site as appropriate for Commercial/Mixed Use.

A Commercial/Mixed Use designation would allow SHA and the community to consider adding commercial uses to the site as part of a mixed use redevelopment. (The zoning that accompanies the current Multi-Family Residential designation does not allow commercial uses.) At present, Yesler Terrace is bounded by both natural and constructed elements (steep slopes, the freeway, and arterials) that create a degree of physical isolation from the surrounding community. There has been strong community support expressed for a mix of uses at Yesler Terrace. A mix of uses has the potential to integrate Yesler Terrace into surrounding neighborhoods and provide more pedestrian friendly streets.

The change to the FLUM is only to address potential uses of the site on a broad level to help focus the planning process. The FLUM change would not determine the particular type, mix, or density of uses; nor would it determine building height. All of those considerations would be addressed through an Environmental Impact Statement prepared by SHA and the City of Seattle as Joint Lead Agencies that would explore a variety of alternatives for redevelopment of the site.

2. Describe how the issue is currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. If the issue is not adequately addressed, describe the need for it.

The land on which Yesler Terrace sits is currently identified on the FLUM as a Multi-Family Residential area. This designation is likely meant to be reflective of the existing use which is almost entirely multi-family residential, augmented by the Yesler Terrace Community Center.

The site is located within the First Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center. This Urban Center is divided into four Urban Center Villages. Yesler Terrace is primarily located within the First Hill Urban Center Village, although a small part (east of Boren Avenue) is located within the 12th Avenue Urban Center Village. The portion of Yesler Terrace east of Boren Avenue is already designated on the FLUM as Commercial/Mixed Use, so no map change is needed for that portion of the site.

As noted previously, the existing development is nearing the end of its useful life. The Multi-Family Residential designation limits SHA's ability to promote redevelopment of the property that will meet or exceed identified goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

A Commercial/Mixed Use designation would be aligned with current goals set under the Housing¹, Human Development², and Affordable Housing Action Agenda Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Other areas that would be met with this FLUM change include new goals and policies approved under the Utilities Element (solid waste and drainage), Transportation (complete streets under Ordinance 122386), Economic Development Element³, Cultural Resources Element (immigrant traditions), Human Development (service delivery, non-English speaking immigrants), and Transportation/Neighborhood Planning Elements (Links Across I-5).

3. Describe why the proposed change meets the criteria adopted in Resolution 30662 for considering an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Is a Comprehensive Plan amendment the best means for meeting the identified public need? What other options are there for meeting the identified public need?

To address the criteria in Resolution 30662, we note that the FLUM shows the distribution of uses in the City based on very broad categories. SHA is asking the City Council to consider the policy question of whether a mix of uses is appropriate at Yesler Terrace, as opposed to just Multi-Family residential uses. This is a broad use question which warrants a Comprehensive Plan amendment. Addressing this use question will allow the SHA planning process to proceed with the option of including mixed use development as part of the alternatives to be studied.

This is a policy issue and is not a regulatory measure, or budgetary or programmatic decision. SHA has been engaged in a planning process with residents and community groups for some time, and that process will continue with preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and study of various redevelopment options. The FLUM change will help focus that planning effort, by allowing consideration of commercial uses. Thus, action on the FLUM in this amendment cycle would be timely.

¹ Seattle Comprehensive Plan – Housing Element: HG1, H2 – 4, H9, HG4, HG5, HG7, HG8, HG10, H16-17, H20-21, and H23.

² Seattle Comprehensive Plan – Human Development Element: HDG1-2, HD1, HD3, HDG3, HDG4, HDG7, HDG8.2, HDG9 11.

³ Seattle Comprehensive Plan – Economic Development Element: EDG3, EDG6, EDG 7, and EDG10.

As for other criteria in Resolution 30662, SHA believes the amendment meets existing state and local laws and is consistent with the overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan. For example, a Commercial/Mixed Use designation would allow improved alignment with the objectives of the Growth Management Act by providing increased opportunities for a broad range of housing types in close proximity to commercial uses, thereby increasing access to employment, improving walkability and connections, supporting transit use, and decreasing auto use. Allowing consideration of commercial uses would also advance the goals and objectives of the City of Seattle Growth Plan, Urban Center policies, and Family Friendly Urban Plans.

The neighborhood has been engaged in a review process for quite some time. The vision for a new Yesler Terrace neighborhood began taking shape in 2006 when SHA created a Citizen Review Committee (CRC) to develop a set of Guiding Principles, Definitions, and planning concepts for redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. For over a year, the CRC explored what could be achieved with a new community. The CRC identified four categories of Guiding Principles that were adopted by SHA's Board of Commissioners in December 2007. Since that time, the CRC has been reviewing concepts for the site, and that process continues.

There is a public need to consider redevelopment options for Yesler Terrace, given the age and condition of the housing on the site. Community input has favored a mix of uses, and the FLUM change is the best way to allow consideration of mixed use redevelopment options.

The only alternative to considering this FLUM change in the current Comprehensive Plan cycle is to defer consideration of it to another annual cycle. However, that approach would put SHA in the position of delaying redevelopment for an entire additional year (which is problematic due to the declining condition of the existing housing and its cost of maintenance and repair) or proceeding with its review process and decision without benefit of knowing if the City Council considered commercial uses to be potentially appropriate at Yesler Terrace. SHA believes that the broad use question involved with the FLUM change can and should be made now, so that the SHA review process can proceed in a timely and logical way.

4. What do you anticipate will be the impacts caused by the change in text, including the geographic area affected and the issues presented? Why will the proposed change result in a net benefit to the community?

A change to the FLUM (and possibly associated policies) will greatly enhance the opportunities to develop a 21st Century community at Yesler Terrace and the surrounding communities by providing expanded housing opportunities, enhanced retail and commercial opportunities for the Urban Center, expanded employment opportunities, and a well designed, forward thinking, safe walkable gate-way community for the citizens of Seattle.

One of the primary issues that will impact the community is the relocation of existing residents and the related human services from Yesler Terrace to locations off-site, while redevelopment is underway. This relocation process, as well as their return will be coordinated and managed by SHA.

5. How would the proposed change comply with the community vision statement, goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan? Include any data, research, or reasoning that supports the proposed amendments.

This proposal complies with the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan, the First Hill Neighborhood Plan, and is in keeping with the Yesler Terrace community vision statements as goals as defined through the community-adopted Guiding Principles and Definitions. Specifically, the proposed FLUM change is consistent with the following community vision statements, goals, objectives and policies, among others:

Preferred Development Pattern – Urban Center Strategy

- “Regulate the location of off-street parking and the size and location of curbcuts to reduce parking and vehicle traffic impacts on pedestrians and residential and commercial streetscapes, and to prevent obstacles to commerce and traffic flow.” LUG5
- “Allow residential use in commercial areas to encourage housing in close proximity to shopping, services, and employment opportunities. Encourage residential uses in and near pedestrian-oriented commercial areas to provide housing close to employment and services.” LU113

The proposed FLUM change allowing a mix of uses would support walking and the use of public transportation by residents and employees working at a redeveloped Yesler Terrace, as well as mitigate the impact of parking and vehicle impacts on pedestrians.

- “Accommodate the greatest concentration of housing in desirable, pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhoods having convenient access to regional transit stations, where the mix of activity provides convenient access to a full range of residential services and amenities, and opportunities for people to live within walking distance of employment.” LG16
- “Permit street level commercial uses serving the needs of the residential population in order to promote an active street environment and allow for greater access to services in high-density neighborhoods.” LU101
- “Use zoning incentives and other development-related tools to provide for, or preserve, public benefits. Public benefits or other features may include housing

affordable to low- and moderate-income households, preservation of historic resources or provision of new public open space.” LU102

The proposed FLUM change will enhance the character of Yesler Terrace and the surrounding area by permitting the creation of a high quality residential project within an overall mixed use development.

- “Create strong and successful commercial and mixed-use areas that encourage business creation, expansion and vitality by allowing for a mix of business activities, while maintaining compatibility with the neighborhood-serving character of business districts, and the character of surrounding areas.” LUG17
- “Support the development and maintenance of areas with a wide range of characters and functions that provide for the employment, service, retail and housing needs of Seattle’s existing and future population.” LUG18
- “Include housing as part of the mix of activities accommodated in commercial areas in order to provide additional opportunities for residents to live in neighborhoods where they can walk to services and employment.” LUG19
- “Designate as mixed-use commercial areas, existing areas that provide locations for accommodating the employment, service, retail and housing needs of Seattle’s existing and future population. Allow for a wide range in the character and function of individual areas consistent with the urban village strategy.” LU105
- “Encourage residential development in mixed-use buildings to ensure healthy business districts that provide essential goods, services, and employment to the residents of Seattle.” LU114

The proposed FLUM change would allow consideration of mixed-use commercial development at Yesler Terrace, to support the goals and objectives of the City and neighborhood. Yesler Terrace is in close proximity to downtown, and commercially zoned and developed properties are to the south and southeast. Harborview Medical Center is immediately to the north.

First Hill Neighborhood Plan Objectives

- “An active, pedestrian-friendly Urban Center Village that integrates residential, commercial, and institutional uses, and maintains strong connections to surrounding neighborhoods and the Urban Center.” Community Character Goal FH-G2
- “Encourage longer hours of operation and an increased variety of businesses in First Hill.” FH-P6

- “Promote community connections and cohesion by encouraging opportunities for people to come together, interact, support, and get to know each other and participate in a range of activities.” FH-P15

At present, Yesler Terrace is disconnected from the surrounding neighborhood due to topography, the bisecting nature of Yesler Way, the heavily traveled Boren Avenue, and the lack of inviting pedestrian connections. Adding commercial uses to the list of potential uses for Yesler Terrace will allow consideration of how better to connect Yesler Terrace with its surroundings. Housing and commercial uses together can create synergies, such as pedestrian-friendly streets and connections.

6. Is there public support for this proposed text amendment (i.e. have you conducted community meetings, etc.)? Note: the City will provide a public participation process, public notice, and environmental review for all applications.

Yes. SHA has conducted over 25 public meetings with residents, community stakeholders, and other interested parties on concepts for redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. There has been strong community support to consider a mix of uses at the site.

