



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
NEIGHBORHOODS, AND STRATEGIC
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 18, 2008

TO: Ray Giometti, Planning Commission Chair
Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Angie Mathias, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: **Docket- 06-07 Commercial-Office-Residential Zone**

ISSUES: Should COR 1, COR 2, and COR 3 be consolidated into one COR zone? What is the appropriate minimum density for a consolidated Commercial-Office-Residential (COR) zone? What is the appropriate maximum density for a consolidated Commercial-Office-Residential (COR) zone? Should the Urban Center Design guidelines be applied to the COR zone?

RECOMMENDATION: Consolidate the three COR zones into one zoning designation. Based on Comprehensive Plan policies establish an appropriate minimum density (30 dwelling units/acre) and apply the maximum density of the COR 3 zone (50 dwelling units/acre) as a standard to all of the COR. Place the consolidated COR zone in the Urban Center Design District C.

BACKGROUND:

Consolidation of Three COR Designations

Currently, in the City of Renton there are three different COR zones (COR 1, COR 2, COR 3) with varied development standards. These three different designations have two different maximum densities, two different bonus possibilities, and different criteria to achieve those bonuses. The exiting three COR zones are outlined below.

	COR 1	COR 2	COR 3
Location	Stoneway Concrete	Port Quendall	Southport and Fry's
Minimum Density	Mixed use – 16 du/acre Other – 5 du/acre	Mixed use – 16 du/acre Other – 5 du/acre	Mixed use – 16 du/acre Other – 5 du/acre
Maximum Density	25 du/acre	25 du/acre	50 du/acre
Density bonus	Up to 5 du/acre	Up to 2 du/acre	None
Criteria	Provision of balance of height, bulk, and density	Provision of: • Continuous pedestrian access to shoreline • Additional 25'	None

		shoreline setback • Establishment of view corridor • Establishment of water related uses • Daylighting of piped streams	
Maximum Height	10 stories/125 ft.	10 stories/125 ft. (if there is a balance in height, bulk, and density)	10 stories/125 ft. (75 ft when within 100 ft of shoreline)
Height Bonus	Amount of additional height not specified	None	None
Criteria	Provision of any of the following: • Pedestrian access to shoreline • 5 affordable units/50 units • Additional 25' shoreline setback • Establishment of view corridor • Establishment of water related uses	None	None

Table 1: Existing COR Zones and Standards

When the three COR designations were established each different designation was generally assigned to single large properties. The intent was to address the varied conditions of the sites including their environmentally sensitive features, but also to address their potential for large and significant development. Those three areas in general were: Stoneway Concrete, Port Quendall, and the area of Southport and Fry's. Several of those properties have been developed or are currently being developed. The parcels that were in the COR 3 zone were rezoned as Urban Center North 1 in 2005. Currently, those parcels are largely built out with projects that are completed or underway. The COR 2 zone has two projects that are underway, leaving only one parcel in the COR 2 designation. This leaves only the COR 1 as a COR designation that bears the same conditions that were in place when the COR zones were assigned. These conditions make the specialized need for three different sub-zones no longer particularly useful or necessary. Additionally, the critical areas and shoreline updates supercede the need to address the environmentally sensitive features of the three different sites also making three different sub-zones unnecessary. It is recommended that the three different sub-zones be consolidated into one COR zone.

Minimum Density

The purpose statement of the COR designation is: *“The Commercial/Office/Residential (COR) designation provides opportunities for large-scale office, commercial, retail, and multi-family projects developed through a master plan and site plan process incorporation significant site amenities and/or features. COR sites are typically*

transitions from an industrial use to a more intensive land use. The sites offer redevelopment opportunities on Lake Washington and/or the Cedar River". Currently, the minimum density in COR depends on the type of development: 16 dwelling units/acre for mixed-use and 5 dwelling units/acre for any other type of development. Originally, the designation was not intended to develop with single use projects, but the practicality of listing the allowed uses on the zoning table lead to the interpretation that single uses were allowed. However, the minimum density of 5 dwelling units/acre for projects when they are residential does not meet the purpose or intent of the designation.

The Comprehensive Plan states the objective for the COR designation is for the development in the zone be *"high quality, landmark developments"* (Objective LU-VVV). Further, *"the intention (of the COR zone) is to create a compact, urban development with high amenity values that creates a prominent identity"* (Objective LU-VVV). This objective makes it clear that the City intends for development in the COR designation to be urban in its features and densities while helping to promote the image of the City as a whole. Criteria number one for mapping the COR designation is for there to be *"potential for redevelopment, or a sufficient amount of vacant land to encourage significant concentration of development"* (Policy LU-406). The Comprehensive Plan is silent on specifics for minimum densities in the COR. However, a minimum of 5 dwelling units/acre is not typically development that is compact or of a type that results in significant concentration. Therefore, in order to ensure development in COR is compact, urban, and of significant concentration, it is recommended that the minimum density for the consolidated COR zone be 30 dwelling units/acre.

Maximum Density

The Comprehensive Plan policies specify that the *"maximum residential density at COR designated sites should range between 30 to 50 dwelling units per acre"* (Policy LU-417). Currently, the range of maximum densities of the three COR zones is between 25 – 50 dwelling units per acre. This bottom threshold of 25 dwelling units/acre for the existing range does not comply with the Comprehensive Plan stated policies of a range of maximum density that starts at 30. The Comprehensive Plan objective and policy that were relevant for establishing the minimum density are also appropriate to the establishment of the maximum density. Therefore, in order to ensure development in COR is compact, urban, and of significant concentration, it is recommended that the maximum density for the consolidated COR zone be 50 dwelling units/acre.

Development Standards

The stated objective of the COR zone is *"development at Commercial/Office/Residential designations should be cohesive, high quality, landmark developments that are integrated with natural amenities. The intention is to create a compact, urban development with high amenity values that creates a prominent identity"* (Objective LU-VVV). The standards sought in Urban Design District C are intended to encourage development that is urban in character, adds ascetic appeal to the community, and encourages active and lively uses. The elements included in these standards apply to features such as: building entry, gateway features, parking, pedestrian features, landscaping, and building architectural design. These standards are of the nature that the City seeks for the COR

zone as outlined in Policy LU-421. “*Commercial/Office/Residential developments should have a combination of internal and external site design features, such as: public plazas, prominent architectural features, public access to natural features or views, distinctive focal features, indication of the function as a gateway, if appropriate, structured parking, and other features meeting the spirit and intent of the COR designation.*”(Policy LU-421). Therefore, in order to help ensure that the development that occurs in the COR zone meets the stated policies and objective it is recommended that the COR zoning designation be placed in the Urban Center Design District C.

The City would like to retain two of the development standards of the COR 3 zone that further help to ensure that development meets the stated policies and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. First, the COR 3 zone requires setbacks on upper stories that are taller than fifty feet. It requires projects taller than fifty feet setback the fifth story and succeeding stories a minimum of ten feet from the preceding story. Second, the City would like to retain the modulation/articulation requirements of COR 3. Specifically, it requires that buildings that are immediately adjacent to or abutting a public park, open space, or trail provide vertical and horizontal modulation of rooflines and facades. The modulation is required to occur at an interval of every forty feet with a minimum two feet wide modulation on the building face. This modulation and articulation is important to all locations of the COR zone, not simply in the locations that are in proximity to public parks, etc. These development standards should both be retained in the consolidated COR zone.

The COR zone is not identified in the number of required parking spaces table in Title IV. This needs to be resolved appropriately. The proposed standards for the COR zone closely match the use for attached dwellings outside the downtown core in the CD, RM-U, RM-T, UC-N1, and UC-N2 zones. The parking requirements for attached dwellings in these zones are: 1.8 parking spaces per 3 bedrooms or larger units, 1.6 parking spaces per 2 bedroom unit, and 1.2 parking spaces per 1 bedroom or studio. Staff recommends placin the COR zone in with these zones, so that the aforementioned standards apply to the COR zone in the future.

Elimination of the Bonus Criteria

The bonus criteria that are currently included in the COR zone are generally associated with shoreline regulations. These bonus criteria were developed in 1993; prior to revisions of the shoreline regulations that make several of the items listed as bonus criteria mandatory. Additionally, the City has begun a new process to rewrite the shoreline regulations. The State has directed municipalities to achieve a balance of the natural, recreational, and economic uses of shorelines in their shoreline regulations. This current initiative is expected to ensure that all of the items that are included as bonus criteria will be encompassed in the regulations.

The remaining bonus criterion is targeted towards affordable housing. To achieve a height bonus, one of the options is to provide five units of affordable housing per every fifty units of market rate housing. The City defines affordable housing as: “*Housing used as a primary residence for any household whose income is less than eight percent (80%)*”

of the median annual income adjusted for household size, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area, and who pay no more than thirty percent (30%) of household income for housing expenses. Affordable housing used to satisfy zoning requirements, whether for inclusionary or bonus provisions, must be secured to remain affordable in perpetuity, as determined by the City Attorney.” This bonus in the COR zone has never been used. The R-14 zone also has a density bonus. One of the four options is: for the provision of two affordable units per net developable acre, a range of between one to four units of additional housing over the maximum density is allowable. There has been interest in the

Unit Size	%100 Median Income	80% Median Income	50% Median Income
0 Bedrooms	\$1,361	\$1,090	\$680
1 Bedroom	\$1,459	\$1,169	\$730
2 Bedrooms	\$1,752	\$1,403	\$877
3 Bedrooms	\$2,025	\$1,620	\$1,012

utilization of this affordable housing bonus. A few preliminary plans have been brought forward, but have not moved forward as projects. The issue of affordable housing and the development of units that are considered affordable is a large issue that goes beyond just the COR zone.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development establishes the maximum rent that can be charged to affordable housing tenants by county. The 2007 table for King County is below. These figures also are to include utilities paid by the tenant.

Many of the market rate apartments available in the City of Renton meet the threshold for the 80% median income category, but not the 50% median income category. The table below includes information about current rents at 95 Burnett which is a brand new apartment building located in downtown Renton, Brighton Court which is an apartment built approximately in the 1980’s located on NE 4th, and Springbrook which is a an apartment building that was built in the early 2000’s and located on Talbot.

Unit Size	95 Burnett Monthly Rent	Brighton Ridge Monthly Rent	Springbrook Monthly Rent
0 Bedrooms	\$915- \$950	n/a	n/a
1 Bedroom	\$1165 - \$1250	\$790- \$875	\$1060 - \$1100
2 Bedrooms	\$1465 - \$1580	\$975 - \$1005	\$1175 - \$1535
3 Bedrooms	n/a	n/a	\$1665 - \$1715

The bonus criteria that are included as options for the COR as it exists and the R-14 zone do not specifically target any subcategory within the affordable housing thresholds. Any housing that is targeted toward at least 80% median income residents would qualify for a bonus. The market as it exists in Renton is already meeting much of this need. The subcategory of affordable housing that is not being met is at the lower levels, such as 50%. The bonus criteria and the definition of affordable housing do not mandate for accommodation for any median income level lower than 80%. Thus, it appears that the elimination of the COR height bonus and its option for a provision of affordable housing would not cause harm to the affordable housing that is needed in Renton.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: These changes comply with the Comprehensive Plan objective for COR zone, which call for compact, urban development that is of a high quality and serve as landmark developments (Objective LU-VVV).

CONCLUSION: Consolidating the COR zone into one designation is appropriate and simplifies existing code. Applying a minimum density of 30 dwelling units/acre and a maximum density of 50 dwelling units per acre is appropriate in fostering the Comprehensive Plan intension of creating compact urban development. The proposed standards are outline below. Additionally, in order to ensure that the development that occurs fulfills the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan for the COR zone should be place in Design District C.

COR	
Location	Stoneway Concrete and Port Quendall
Minimum Density	30 du/acre
Maximum Density	50
Density Bonus	None
Criteria	None
Maximum Height	10 stories/125 ft.
Height Bonus	None
Criteria	None

Table 2: Proposed COR Zone and Standards

AVAILABLE APPEALS: Appeals regarding these zoning text changes can be made to the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board.