

Economic Development PEG April 17, 2013, Discussion Guide: What Comprehensive Plan map amendments should be applied in Portland's industrial districts and why?

Industrial and Mixed Employment land retention

- Since 1991, about 190 acres of Industrial zones and 150 acres of General Employment zones were changed in the draft Prime Industrial areas to accommodate commercial and open space uses.
- In 2012, environmental and greenway zoning overlays covered 22% (about 2,600 acres) of the industrial and employment land in Columbia Harbor, and an additional 8% (about 950 acres) is in Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) areas with High/Medium and some Special Habitat Area ranking consistent with environmental zoning proposal in the North Reach Plan. Other types of environmental regulations (e.g., tree code) and green space acquisition could also be applied beyond NRI areas. Much of this protected land is partly developable and has other development constraints.
- Industrial zones prohibit housing and allow modest commercial and community service uses.
- General employment zones (such as flex-space industrial parks near NE Cornfoot and Airport Way and about half of Disperse Industrial areas) allow moderate office development (1:1 floor area ratio) and allow housing by a conditional use permit.

Discussion questions:

1. Prime industrial land protection approaches – What type of retention approach makes most sense to protect prime industrial land:
 - discretionary criteria (e.g., Comprehensive Plan policies, Metro Title 4);
 - prohibit quasi-judicial rezoning (proposed in North Reach Plan);
 - new avoid/minimize/mitigate requirements;
 - another option?
2. Should the same approach apply to new environmental regulations or green space acquisition?
3. Adequate industrial growth capacity – Should existing retention approaches (e.g., Comprehensive Plan policies, Metro Title 4) be strengthened on other industrial lands (not prime) to maintain forecast growth capacity?
4. Restricting non-industrial uses in industrial districts:
 - Should residential use be prohibited in EG zones?
 - Should BPS explore reducing land intensive, non-industrial allowances in industrial zones?

Prime Industrial Land mapping

- The Columbia Corridor and harbor districts have unique, regionally-significant functions for both industrial growth and watershed health.

- Goal 9 strongly encourages comprehensive plans to designate and protect “Prime Industrial Land,” which is defined as land suitable for traded sector and support industries that has characteristics which are difficult or impossible to replicate in the region.
- Relevant Working Draft policies include 3.33 to maintain industrial sanctuaries primarily for manufacturing and distribution use, 3.34 to protect multimodal freight hub industrial districts as Prime Industrial land, and 3.35 to require conversion of Prime Industrial land to be avoided, minimized, and mitigated.
- The preliminary draft map of Prime Industrial land is consistent with Metro’s comparably defined Regionally Significant Industrial Areas (RSIA) protected by Title 4.

Discussion questions:

5. Employment-zoned (EG) areas:
 - Should the Prime Industrial designation be added to employment-zoned lands in industrial or flex space use to prevent conversion for commercial development, such as flex parks near NE Cornfoot and Airport Way and Linnton waterfront?
 - What about industrial headquarters offices such as the Daimler and Fred Meyer sites?
6. Natural areas:
 - Should the Prime Industrial and Industrial Sanctuary designations be removed from industrially zoned RSIA sites that are publicly owned wetlands managed as greenspace, such as Vanport Wetland, Ramsey Wetland, and Catkin Marsh?
 - What about St. Johns landfill?

Expanding Dispersed Industrial Areas

- Portland’s Economic Opportunities Analysis identified a 20% shortfall of Dispersed Industrial land to meet forecast demand to 2035.
- Adding Dispersed Industrial land in East Portland would contribute to implementation of recommendations in the East Portland Action Plan to promote key opportunity sites for economic development and recruitment of target industries.

Discussion questions:

7. Where to rezone – Should planning efforts to expand Dispersed Industrial areas focus in East Portland, in order to expand living-wage job opportunities there? Sites near freeway interchanges and large, vacant commercial sites near existing industrial areas have been suggested as locations to explore – do these approaches make sense?
8. Industrial or employment zoning – Should new Dispersed Industrial lands focus on General Employment (typically flex space and light industrial uses) rather than General Industrial zoning?