

D# 121 DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

General Description

There are different ways that the City's Downtown is mapped in City Code. This can be challenging, as well as confusing for staff and applicants in the administration of the Code. This docket item seeks to adopt the mapped area identified by the Planning Commission and City Center Community Plan Advisory Board in 2014.

Impact Analysis

Effect on rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan

Not applicable. There is no anticipated effect on the rate of growth, development, and the conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan.

Effect on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities created by the proposed changes

Effect on the rate of population and employment growth

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the rate of population and employment growth created by the proposed changes.

Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable

The Vision seeks a *"revitalized Downtown that functions as a 24-hour living, working, and entertainment area"* that *"will emerge through planning for a balance of residential, commercial, and office uses with a distinctive, local identity"*. It would be beneficial to have clarity regarding what specific area constitutes the Downtown Business area.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on general land values or housing costs created by the proposed map changes.

Whether capital improvements or expenditures are being made or completed as expected

Not applicable.

Consistency with GMA and Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed map changes are consistent with the statewide Growth Management Act and City Comprehensive Plan which call for sound planning.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

Mapping the Downtown will not have any effect on how critical areas and natural resource lands are managed.

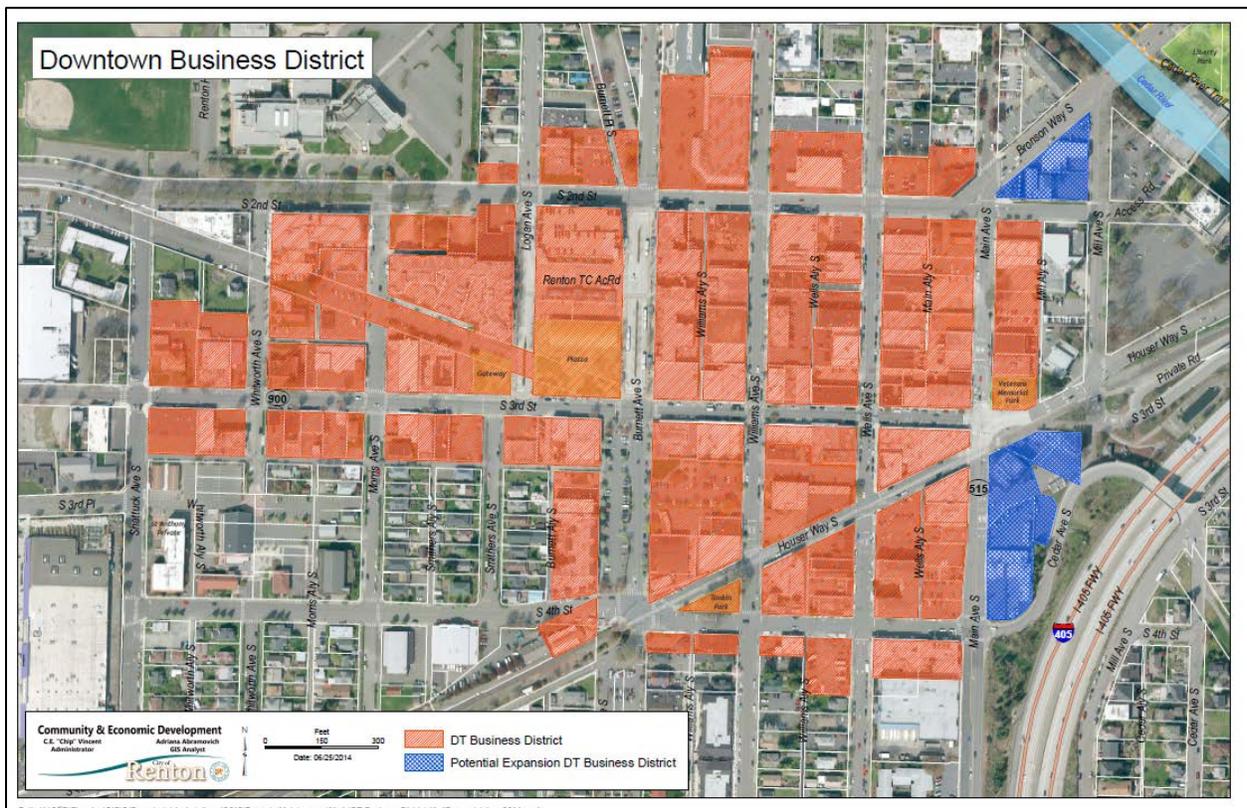
Discussion

Within Renton Municipal Code there are many references to uses that are allowed or things that are required of properties that are within the “Downtown Pedestrian District”. It is mapped in 4.2.080D (shown in tan) and is defined in 4.11.040 (shown in yellow) as: “Those uses, buildings and walkways along either side of South Third Street between Burnett Avenue South and Main Avenue South, and along either side of Wells Avenue South between South Second Street and Houser Way South.” As is shown in the map at right, the mapped area and the defined area do not match. Another concern with the map as it is currently adopted is that it does not indicate actual parcels that would be included within the Pedestrian District, only streets. According to the Code definition, it is intended to include the parcels that abut specified streets. So, the map in the Code should show those parcels.



In 2014, the City Center Community Plan Advisory Board and the Planning Commission reviewed the comments made by the Planning and Development Committee and both bodies went Downtown to walk the area to physically identify the boundary of the Downtown. The map generated from those walks is below. In general terms, both bodies felt that the area was best served by a concentrated boundary, not by expanding it to include the VFW, Red House and/or Service Linen or at the western boundary along South 3rd Street. If, over time, the need arises to expand the boundary or identify another second tier, that could be done. However, at present the area identified as Downtown should be concentrated and fairly narrowly focused.

One of the most significant outcomes was to consider the area the Downtown Business District, not the Pedestrian District. Both groups felt that all Downtown businesses should be pedestrian friendly and have features that encourage pedestrians and that a Business District can be more easily utilized in other ways beyond city code. For example, the Economic Development Division and Code Enforcement Section have utilized it as the area for targeted code enforcement work. Another significant outcome was the removal of the Civic Node area, old City Hall, Library, History Museum, and Fire Station. Both groups felt that even though it is close in proximity, the area is distinctly different from Downtown and is not a part of the Downtown business area.



Staff recommends adopting the boundary as drafted by the Planning Commission and City Center Community Plan Advisory Board into Code.