



Seattle

Code Amendments for Indoor Sports and Recreation

**Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)
Director's Report and Recommendation
July, 2021**

Proposal Overview

The Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) is proposing to amend the Land Use Code, SMC Title 23 to permit indoor sports and recreation uses up to a maximum size of 50,000 sq. ft. in Industrial General (IG) zones on lots in the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center (BINMIC) that meet criteria limiting eligible geographic locations. The current maximum size of use for indoor sports and recreation facilities is 10,000 sq. ft. in the IG zones. The proposal would also amend minimum parking requirements to decrease the amount of required parking from 1 space per 500 sq. ft., to 1 space per 2,000 sq. ft. for indoor sports and recreation facilities that exceed 25,000 sq. ft. in size in the BINMIC. Indoor sports and recreation facilities are differentiated from spectator sports facilities (which would draw crowds) and regulations limiting spectator sports facilities would be unchanged by this proposal.

Background and Purpose

The current 10,000 sq. ft. maximum size limit for indoor sports and recreation uses in Industrial General zones is too small to accommodate certain facilities such as indoor sports courts or indoor sports fields. The amendment is proposed to allow new relatively larger indoor sports and recreation facilities under limiting conditions that would minimize adverse impacts on a surrounding industrial area and would limit the number of instances when a larger-sized indoor sports and recreation facility could be created. The proposal is intended to support sports and recreation opportunities in the city, which provide important recreational, health, and cultural benefits to the public. The proposal would allow indoor sports and recreation facilities up to a size of 50,000 sq. ft.

Examples of the type of sports courts that could be created that would typically exceed 10,000 sq. ft. and be less than 50,000 sq. ft. include basketball/volleyball gyms, indoor soccer fields, indoor hockey rink, bowling alley, etc. One potential entity that could apply to construct an indoor sports and recreation facility is the Seattle Storm professional women's basketball team. The Seattle Storm has expressed interest to the City in funding and building its own practice facility. The Storm is one of Seattle's most accomplished professional sports teams of all time and provides a model of success for athletes of all ages including girls and boys. Several of Seattle's men's professional sports teams have been supported directly by the City, County, and State to construct expensive new stadiums.

Indoor sports and recreation facilities can be used for a variety of sports and purposes. Such facilities provide space for recreation, training, camps, and youth development activities. One of the limiting criteria discussed below, would target the location of indoor sports and recreation facilities using this code amendment close to other public parks with active recreation uses. This would allow for functional clusters of recreational activities that could support a variety of camps, competitions, and training opportunities.

Limiting Conditions and Parking

The code amendment would allow a maximum size of use for indoor sports and recreation uses up to 50,000 sq. ft. only under several strict limiting conditions. The conditions are intended to align the proposal with policy objectives and limit the potential for adverse impacts on surrounding industrial

areas. The limiting conditions are listed below with a discussion of the rationale for each. All conditions would have to be met for a lot to be eligible for the relatively larger-sized indoor sports and recreation facility.

Must be located in the Ballard-Interbay-North End Manufacturing Industrial Center (BINMIC).

The BINMIC already contains a greater variety of mixed uses than the Duwamish / MIC and the proposed use would be relatively compatible with the already-varied mix. The BINMIC is much smaller than the Duwamish MIC in size, with a gross acreage of 879 acres. A 2018 study found that, excluding rail yards, 51% of BINMIC parcels were in industrial use and 49% were other uses.

Must be within 300' of an existing Settle Mixed or Neighborhood Commercial zone.

Locating a non-industrial use near the edge of a manufacturing / industrial center is likely to be less disruptive to industrial uses and activities. NC and SM zones are found in urban villages and other dense urban areas next to or outside of MICs. NC and SM zones typically have more complete non-motorized transportation networks and transit service than large contiguous areas of industrial land. NC and SM zones also provide other services such as grocery stores that could serve the needs of patrons of an indoor sports and recreation facility.

Must be within ¼ mile of a Seattle Park with active recreational uses (courts, ball fields etc.).

The larger-sized indoor sports and recreation use would complement other existing recreational activities in the area, facilitating coordinated activities such as sports camps.

Must not be within 500' of the shoreline.

Seattle's policies for industrial lands give a very high priority to preserve shoreline-proximate areas for maritime activity. This criterion would avoid creating pressure to convert lands with access to water to sports and recreation. The city's shoreline master program applies within 200' of shorelines. The proposal would provide a much larger 500' buffer from shorelines.

May not be located within one mile of another increased-size indoor sports and recreation facility.

The criterion would not allow an indoor sports and recreation facility exceeding 10,000 sq. ft. if it is within one mile of an existing sports and recreation facility in an Industrial General zone that exceeds 25,000 sq. ft. in size. The effect of this provision would be that no more than one increased size facility could be built in a one-mile radius. This precludes a proliferation that could displace industrial activities.

Map of potentially eligible areas

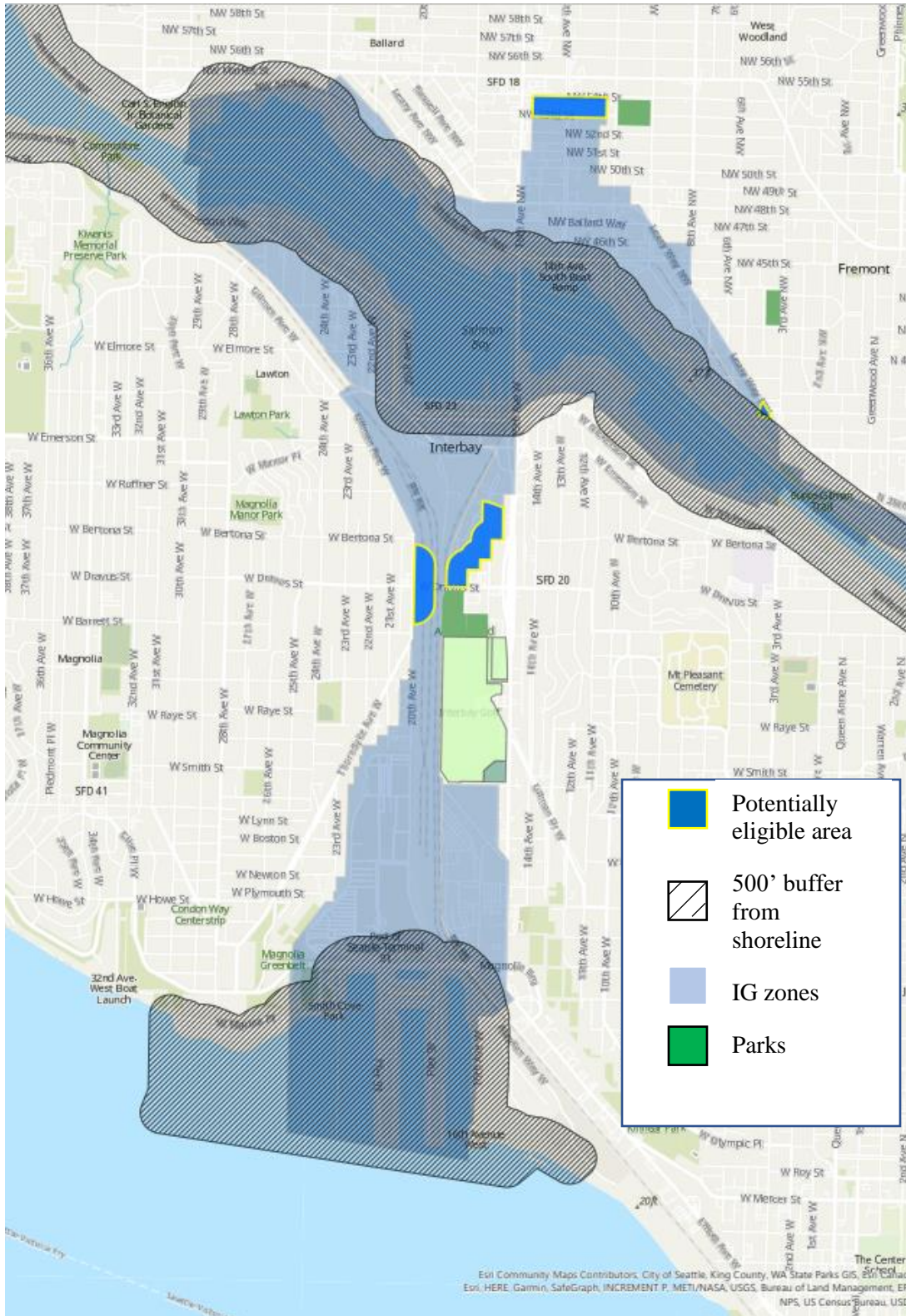
A map analysis of the eligible locations is provided below. Solid blue areas are the only eligible locations. Light/transparent blue areas are the candidate Industrial General zones in the BINMIC. Hatched areas are ineligible because they are within 500' of a shoreline.

If a facility were built in one of the eligible areas, the limit prohibiting another indoor sports and recreation use larger than 10,000 sq. ft. in size within one mile would rule out other eligible areas such that a second facility would be prevented. The solid blue patch west of the BNSF rail tracks is not practically an eligible site because it is owned by BNSF and is part of their rail yard which will not change. There are approximately 45 total tax parcels that would be eligible (in solid blue areas). According to this preliminary analysis, no other locations citywide would qualify.

Parking

The proposal would also amend minimum parking requirements to decrease the amount of required parking from 1 space per 500 sq. ft., to 1 space per 2,000 sq. ft. for indoor sports and recreation facilities that exceed 25,000 sq. ft. in size in the BINMIC. The intent of this change is to limit the amount of parking that would be required to encourage access to indoor sports and recreation facilities by transit or non-motorized alternative to drive alone trips. The eligible areas map identifies potentially eligible locations that are close to transit service on 15th Ave. and close to potential future light rail stations. If a maximum sized 50,000 sq. ft. indoor sports and recreation facility were constructed, a minimum of 25 parking stalls would be required to be provided.

Map of Potentially Eligible Areas



Consistency and Compatibility

OPCD considered the proposal's consistency with comprehensive plan policies and compatibility with nearby land uses. The proposal could facilitate the future development of one or more indoor sports and recreation facilities exceeding 10,000 sq. ft., but less than 50,000 sq. ft. in size in the BINMIC, which may appear to potentially contravene with certain comprehensive plan language to the extent that the proposal facilitates the introduction of increased non-industrial activities – in the form of indoor sports and recreation – into a designated MIC. (i.e. LU 10.2, and LU 10.1.). The proposal, however, would facilitate only one or two facilities and is consistent with other policies concerning recreation and arts/culture and on balance does not create a conflict.

Regional and city policies suggest that amounts of non-industrial activity and some non-industrial uses are allowable in MICs. PSRC's criteria for MIC designation acknowledge that half of the employment in a MIC may be non-industrial and that 25% of zoned areas do not have to be zoned for core industrial uses. City policies LU 10.10 and 10.28 address limiting commercial uses, specifically referencing office and retail as uses that should be limited in MICs. The proposal would facilitate a sports and recreation use, which is not a retail or office use.

Some non-industrial activities can be compatible with industrial uses or compatibility with an industrial character. Indoor sports and recreation facilities have the potential for compatibility with the character and function of an industrial area for several reasons. Recreation uses are noisy and not sensitive to noise impacts. Space and design requirements for sports and recreation facilities call for large structures with high clearances and large open bays similar to industrial structures. Such structures provide potential for reuse over time with either industrial or recreation uses. Indoor recreation uses have a relatively lower intensity of visitation and activity patterns by patrons and employees compared to retail or office uses. Indoor sports and recreation facilities are differentiated from spectator sports facilities (which would draw crowds) and regulations limiting spectator sports facilities would be unchanged by this proposal.

Policies from the Parks and Open Space chapter of the comprehensive plan are also relevant, including P G1 that calls for providing a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces throughout the city for all people to play, learn, contemplate, and build community and P 2.3, which calls for establishing partnerships with public and private organizations to supplement recreational programming that supports residents' needs and interests. To the extent that the proposal would facilitate creation of one or more relatively large indoor sports and recreation facilities, it would support these goals for recreation. Spaces for indoor recreation could also support the city's goals for equity and inclusion, since such facilities have potential to provide recreational opportunities for members of communities of color and women.

Recommendation

After a review of background information, including the State Environmental Policy Act checklist and Determination of Non-Significance, OPCD recommends legislation to adopt the proposed code changes. The code changes would support City objectives concerning recreation while including limiting conditions adequate to minimize potential adverse impacts to industrial uses in the vicinity of potentially eligible areas.