

City of Renton Planning Commission

Towing Docket Item 06-15

March 12, 2008

The Docket Request



- Request from Lee Isben of Lee's Towing Service.
 - Allow tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards in the Industrial Light (IL) and Commercial Arterial (CA) zones with conditions.
 - Vehicle storage must be contained inside a building. There are to be no exceptions to this requirement.
 - No heavy-duty (Class C) tow trucks and/or trucks that exceed 26,000 gross vehicle weight will be permitted on the premises.

Key Issues for Discussion



- Should tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards be allowed in the IL zone?
- Should tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards be allowed in the CA zone?
- If it should be allowed, what restrictions are appropriate?

Background



- Currently, the City allows tow truck operations/auto impoundment yards in:
 - Industrial Heavy zone – permitted
 - Industrial Medium zone – Hearing Examiner Conditional use
 - Excluded within the area south of I-405 and north of SW 16th Street.

IH and IM Zone



INDUSTRIAL	
(IL) Industrial - Light	
(IM) Industrial - Medium	
(IH) Industrial - Heavy	

IH and IM zone



INDUSTRIAL	
(IL) Industrial - Light	
(IM) Industrial - Medium	
(IH) Industrial - Heavy	

Towing Vehicle Classes

Tow Vehicle Class



• Class A



• Class B



• Class C

Tow Vehicle Class



- Class E



- Class D

Tow Vehicle Class



- Mr. Isben's request restricted tow facilities from keeping heavy duty (Class C) trucks on the premises.
- **It is recommended that only Class A, B, and E be allowed.**



Class A



Class B



Class E

Towing in the IL Zone

Purpose Statement – IL Zone



- *“to provide areas for low-intensity manufacturing, industrial services, distribution, storage, and technical schools. . . Uses allowed in this zone are generally contained within buildings. Material and/or equipment used in production are not stored outside. Activities in this zone do not generate external emissions such as smoke, odor, noise, vibrations, or other nuisances outside the building. Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses in the zone are also allowed.”*

Towing in IL Zone



- With Mr. Isben's suggestion of the condition of keeping tow truck operations/auto impoundment within a building the purpose of the IL zone is met.
- **It is recommended that tow truck operations/auto impoundment be allowed in the IL zone when it occurs within a building.**
 - Class A, B, and E tow vehicles only.

The CA Zone

Purpose Statement – CA Zone



- *“to evolve from “strip commercial” linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning, incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities and boulevard treatment. The CA Zone provides for a wide variety of indoor and outdoor retail sales and services along high-volume traffic corridors. Limited residential uses may be integrated into the zone if there are permanent physical connections to commercial uses.”*

CA Zone



- Towing is a service
- However, CA also seeks to encourage residential use and pedestrian activity particularly in the business districts.
 - Business districts are predominately zoned CA.

Business Districts Purpose



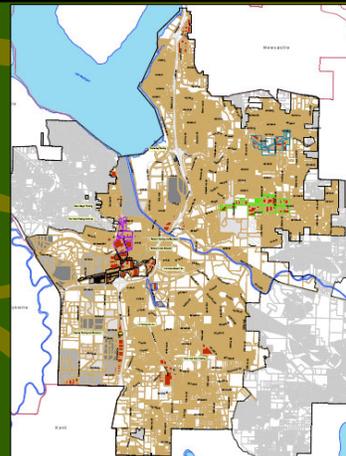
- Seek the “*redevelopment of strip commercial urban forms into more concentrated urban forms, provide for design guidelines for residential development within the district, enhance the pedestrian environment, make the commercial environment more attractive, improve the City’s tax base, and result in a more successful business district.*”

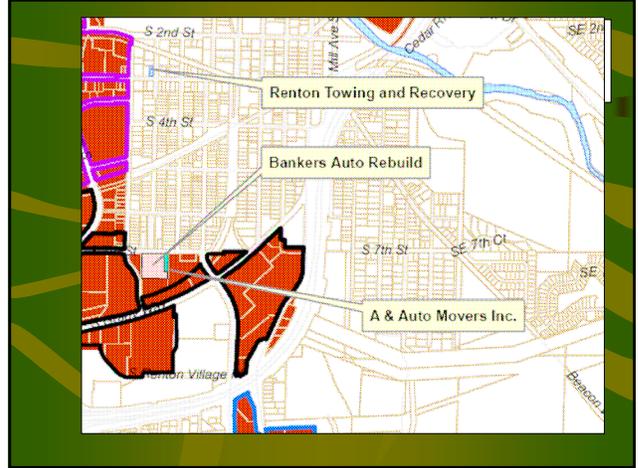
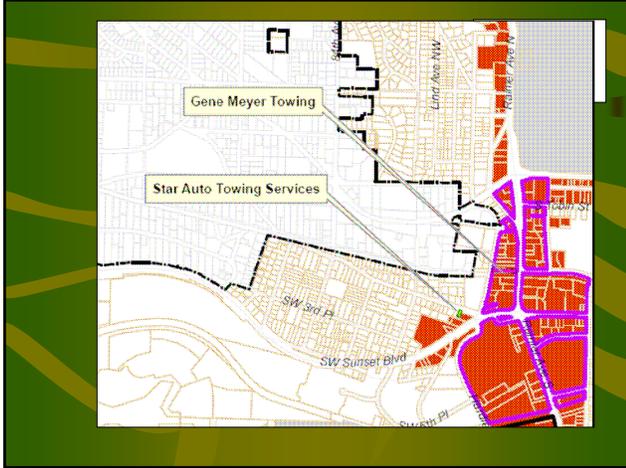
CA Zone



- Business districts allow a maximum residential density of 60 dwelling units/acre in mixed use developments.
- Business districts seek pedestrian activity
 - Linked pedestrian trips
 - Towing is a service that does not encourage linked pedestrian activity.

Existing Towing in Renton

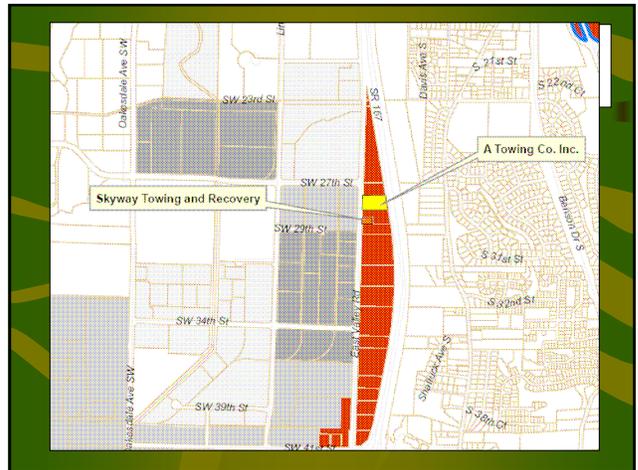




Renton Towing & Recovery

- 322 South 3rd

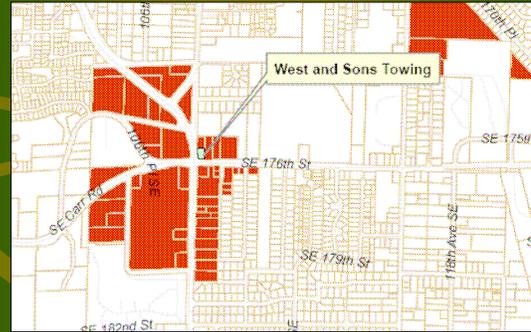
A photograph of a single-story commercial building with a sign that reads 'TRAN'S AUTO REPAIR'. The sign also lists services: 'ENGINE CLUTCH BRAKE & ELECTRICAL REPAIRING'. A dark green van is parked in front of the building. To the right of the text is a small cartoon image of Mater from Disney Pixar's 'Cars'.



Skyway Towing & Recovery



- 2980 East Valley Road



West & Sons Towing



- 17426 108th Avenue Southeast



Existing Towing in Renton



- <http://maps.live.com/?v=2&cid=793CDB415CB9ED3B!101&encType=1>
- Skyway Towing & Recovery
 - 1.85 acres, CA zone
- Gene Meyer Towing
 - .38 acres, CA zone, Rainier Business District
- Bankers Auto Rebuild & Towing
 - 2.06 acres, CA zone
- Renton Towing and Recovery
 - .13 acres, CD zone

Existing Towing in Renton



- Stoneway Towing
 - 1.57 acres, UC-N1 zone, shared with other uses
- A Towing Co. Inc.
 - 2.04 acres, CA zone
- Star Auto & Towing Service
 - .39 acres, CA zone
- West & Sons
 - .27 acres, CA zone
- A1 Auto Movers Inc.
 - .26 acres, CA zone

Screened Fences and Buildings



Example of a Screened Fence



- MLK Way - Seattle



Example of a Screened Fence



- Bertona St. - Seattle



Indoor vs. Outdoor Operations



- Modesto, CA – Indoor/Outdoor tow operation

Indoor vs. Outdoor Operations



- Omaha, NE – Police vehicle impound

Towing in the CA Zone

CA Zone



- If allow towing in the CA it would be important to encourage linked visits and emphasize the service aspect of towing.
 - It is reasonable to allow towing operations/auto impoundment when it is a shared use with another auto related use, such as vehicle repair shops.

CA Zone

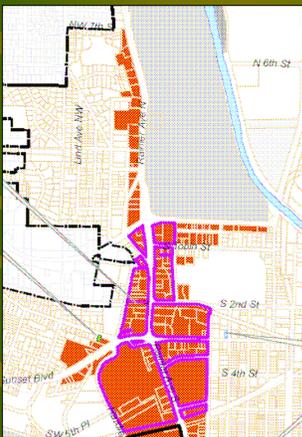


- It would also be important to limit the impact the building storing vehicles had on the pedestrian environment and on neighboring single family residentially zoned properties.
 - Mr. Isben's suggested requirement of garaging the operation would adequately limit the impact on the pedestrian environment.
 - Administrative conditional use would help ensure appropriate scale when located near single family residential.

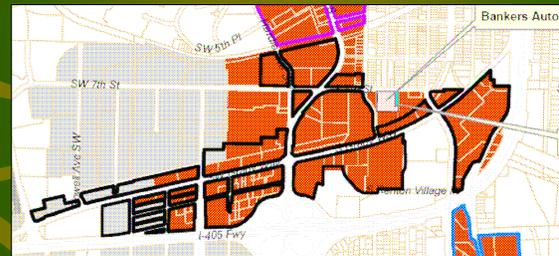
CA Zone



- It is appropriate to allow towing operations/auto impoundment yards in the CA zone outside the Rainier, Automall, and Puget business districts.
 - Rainier and Automall have adequate CA zoned parcels in close proximity
 - Puget is built out
 - NE 4th and Sunset do not have CA zoned properties outside the business districts.



Rainier Business District



Automall Business District

Option 1



- Split the two functions and permit only the towing operations function (“dispatch”), when the use is:
 - shared with an auto repair or auto body shop, and
 - tow vehicles are kept in a building, and
 - tow vehicles are limited to Class A, B, and E

Option 2



- Keep the two functions together as a use and allow towing operations/auto impoundment as an administrative conditional use when the use is:
 - shared with an auto repair or auto body shop, and
 - tow vehicles are kept in a building, and
 - tow vehicles are limited to Class A, B, and E, and
 - auto impoundment occurs entirely within a building, except that:
 - a maximum of five (5) impounded or towed vehicles which are fully operable may be kept outdoors no longer than 72 hours per vehicle.

Conclusion



- Planning Commission feedback on:
 - Option 1 or 2 for towing in the CA zone.

Recommendation



- Permit towing in the IL zone when:
 - tow vehicles are limited to Class A, B, and E, and
 - the use occurs entirely within a building.
- Allow towing in the CA with option 1 or 2.

