

AMENDMENT 2005-M-7 – SOUTHPORT REDESIGNATION FROM COMMERCIAL/OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL (COR) TO URBAN CENTER NORTH (UC-N)

DESCRIPTION: The area for proposed redesignation was designated COR (Commercial/Office/Residential) in 1999 in support of the Southport development. Southport is a mixed-use Master Plan development of approximately 17 acres, adjacent to Gene Coulon Park on the banks of Lake Washington. The vision for the Southport master plan was to create a vibrant mixed use community that blended recreation, employment, housing, dining, entertainment, and shopping in an urban setting. In many ways, the Southport development typifies the objectives of the Urban Center. It also provides a good example of the conversion of industrial land into mixed use, an important theme in the Comprehensive Plan for the Urban Center- North (UC-N). For these reasons, inclusion of Southport in Renton's Urban Center is desired.

Changing the land use designation from COR to UC-N gives rise to the issue of rezoning the property. Southport's COR zoning is not an implementing zone of the UC-N land use designation. Geographically the development is located adjacent to the Urban Center- North 2 zone (UC-N2). Review of the development standards and uses in the COR zone and the UC-N2 zone shows distinct differences between the two zones.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. Does the Southport area meet the criteria for inclusion in the Renton Urban Center?
2. Should the Southport area be rezoned from COR to UC-N2?

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

The Southport area meets the criteria in the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) and in the Renton Comprehensive Plan for inclusion in Renton's Urban Center. Therefore, it should be redesignated UC-N. UC-N2 zoning ensures more consistent development within the Urban Center and works within the existing implementation context of our Comprehensive Plan.

ANALYSIS:

In the CPP, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) designated 14 urban centers in King County, including the Renton Central Business District. Designation was based upon specific criteria, with the exact boundaries of the Urban Center determined in each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan. The process for designating Urban Centers and the criteria for designation are contained in the CPP's in Policies LU-39 through LU-46. Renton's current Urban Center met all the criteria for designation at the time it was approved by the GMPC. Although there are not specific criteria for jurisdictions seeking to alter Urban Center boundaries, the Renton Comprehensive Plan Objective NN requires consistency with the CPP criteria for designation. These criteria include:

- A maximum of ½ of the employment growth should be located in the Urban Center.
- A maximum of ¼ of the population growth should be located in the Urban Center.

- The Urban Center should not exceed 1 ½ mi² in size.
- Employment density should be planned at a minimum of 50 employees per gross acre.
- Residential density should be planned at a minimum of 15 households per gross acre.

It is important that the Urban Center continue to meet these criteria if any changes are made.

If Southport were added to the existing Urban Center, the center's designation criteria would still be met. Policy LU-4 in the Renton Comprehensive Plan adopts figures for Renton's share of County residential and employment growth. According to these figures, Renton will grow by about 6,198 households and 1,976 jobs over 20 years. Using the criteria above, this means that growth should be split between the Urban Center, with 1,549.5 households and 938 jobs, and the remainder of the City, with 4,648.5 households and 938 jobs. However, Renton has excess capacity for absorbing growth, both inside and outside the Urban Center. Preparing for development that will effectively utilize excess capacity is the basis of good planning. Renton effectively meets the Urban Center criteria if the growth targets (4,648.5 households and 938 jobs) for the areas outside of the Urban Center are accommodated. Therefore, since there is capacity for more than 7,000 households and 28,000 jobs outside of the Urban Center (with Southport redesignated), the first two criteria are met. At approximately 17 acres, Southport would only add about 0.026 mi² to the Urban Center, which is currently about 0.7 mi², consistent with the third criteria that the Center should be less than 1 ½ mi². Additionally, using the projections for employment and number of dwelling units in the master plan documents, Southport was developed to accommodate 100-150 jobs and 22-34 households per gross acre, exceeding the 50 jobs and 15 households per gross acre criteria. Adding Southport to the Urban Center does not negatively affect the ability of the area to meet the criteria from the CPP.

In addition to the designation criteria, the CPP contains a list of land use strategies that are to be used in developing the Urban Center. CPP policy LU-45 suggests the following strategies for Urban Center development:

- Support pedestrian mobility, bicycle use and transit use;
- Achieve a target housing density and mix of use;
- Provide a wide range of capital improvement projects, such as street improvements, schools, parks and open space, public art and community facilities;
- Emphasize superior urban design;
- Emphasize historic preservation and adaptive reuse of historic places;
- Include other local characteristics necessary to achieve a vital Urban Center; and
- Include facilities to meet human service needs.

The strategy outlined in LU-45 is closely aligned with the master plan already in place for Southport.

There are numerous policies in the Renton Comprehensive Plan that set criteria pertaining to the designation and development of the Urban Center. Policy LU-195 states that the boundaries of the Center should be set with regard to a major change in land use intensity, consideration of natural features, along public rights-of-way or property lines, and within walkable distance of one or two focal points. Policy LU-197 states that the boundaries of the Urban Center may only be changed if the original mapping failed to consider a natural feature

or land use that would make the boundary illogical, or, if the amount of land in the Center is inadequate to allow the envisioned development to occur. In the case of Southport, it is a logical inclusion in the Urban Center: Lake Washington is a natural physical boundary and ideal focal point for Center development and the Southport master plan represents a significant mixed-use development concept that fits well with the vision for the Urban Center North. Objective LU-BB specifically states that as industrial property is surplus, District Two will transition to high-quality living, shopping and work environments that take advantage of access to the shoreline. Overall, inclusion of Southport in the Urban Center fits the strategies for development of the Center in Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-211, including: creating investment opportunities in quality urban-scale development, promoting housing near commercial areas and employment opportunities, reducing dependency on automobiles, using land more efficiently, reducing the time and cost of permitting, maximizing public investment in infrastructure and services, and providing for the evaluation and mitigation of environmental impacts.

Southport's zoning is another area for analysis. Southport comprises the third district of the COR zone (COR 3). If the Comprehensive Plan was amended to allow Southport into the Urban Center-North, either the COR 3 area would need to be rezoned to UC-N2 to match the surrounding area, or the COR 3 zone would need to be made an implementing zone of the UC-N land use designation. There are advantages and disadvantages to both situations.

The COR zone still allows a very wide variety of uses, whereas the UC-N2 zone tends to be more restrictive. COR zoning allows a assortment of uses (some conditional) including: wireless communication facilities, model homes, some utility uses, medium and heavy manufacturing, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, veterinary clinics, group homes, dance halls and clubs, convalescent centers, recycling stations, and indoor storage related to retail/commercial uses. All such uses are prohibited in the UC-N2 zone, but most of these uses are unlikely to develop as part of Southport. COR regulations also tend to be less restrictive for some of the uses that are allowed in both zones, such as service and social organizations, marinas, and eating and drinking establishments. The UC-N2 zone does allow a few uses that are prohibited in the COR zone, but could be integrated into the Southport development if desired, such as transit centers, light manufacturing, and laboratories. Given the types of uses proposed in the Southport master plan, it probably makes very little difference if the zoning is changed to UC-N2 or if it stays COR.

Examination of the difference between the development standards in the COR and UC-N2 zones shows another area of difference. COR 3 development standards are more open ended and flexible, relying heavily on site development review. The development regulations for the UC-N2 zone are much more prescriptive, for example with specified yard and setback standards. These standards were created to ensure consistent, urbane development of the urban center. Although the UC-N2 development standards are less flexible than the COR 3 standards, they would easily fit with the Southport development plan. The only standard that creates a major problem is building height, since the COR building height of 75' within 100' of the shoreline and 10 stories or 125' elsewhere is much greater than the UC-N2 standard of 10 stories along a primary or secondary arterial and 6 stories along residential or minor collectors. Unfortunately amending such a standard is difficult due to a development agreement in place with the Boeing Company. Under this development agreement, the City is

not allowed to adjust the UC-N2 zoning regulations for several years without first amending the Boeing agreement.

If Southport were to remain zoned COR, COR must be allowed as an implementing zone of the UC-N land use designation. Assigning COR 3 as an implementing zone of the UC-N designation might allow any property in the Urban Center- North to be rezoned COR 3. Given that the COR 3 standards are more flexible, this could potentially undermine planning efforts for the Urban Center. According to RMC 4-2-0200, the purpose of the COR zone is to *“provide for a mix of intensive office, hotel, convention center, and residential activity in a high-quality master planned development that is integrated with the natural environment.”* An applicant wishing to rezone property to COR 3 could do so as part of a master planned development proposal, which would include several levels of review and negotiation. While this arrangement provides maximum flexibility for the developer, it also gives the City less control over the zone.

Since the Southport development is highly compatible with the purpose of the UC-N designation, it should be made a part of the Urban Center. UC-N2 zoning, although prescriptive, is preferred over amending the Comprehensive Plan to allow COR as an implementing zone in the Urban Center. The opportunity for plans for the Urban Center North to be undermined through COR rezoning are too great to keep Southport zoned COR.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS:

Whether or not the underlying zoning would remain the same, there is no overall change in capacity since Southport is subject to a master planned development. However, the capacity for up to 2,584 jobs and 581 households would be added to the designated Urban Center and taken out of the Non-Urban Center area.

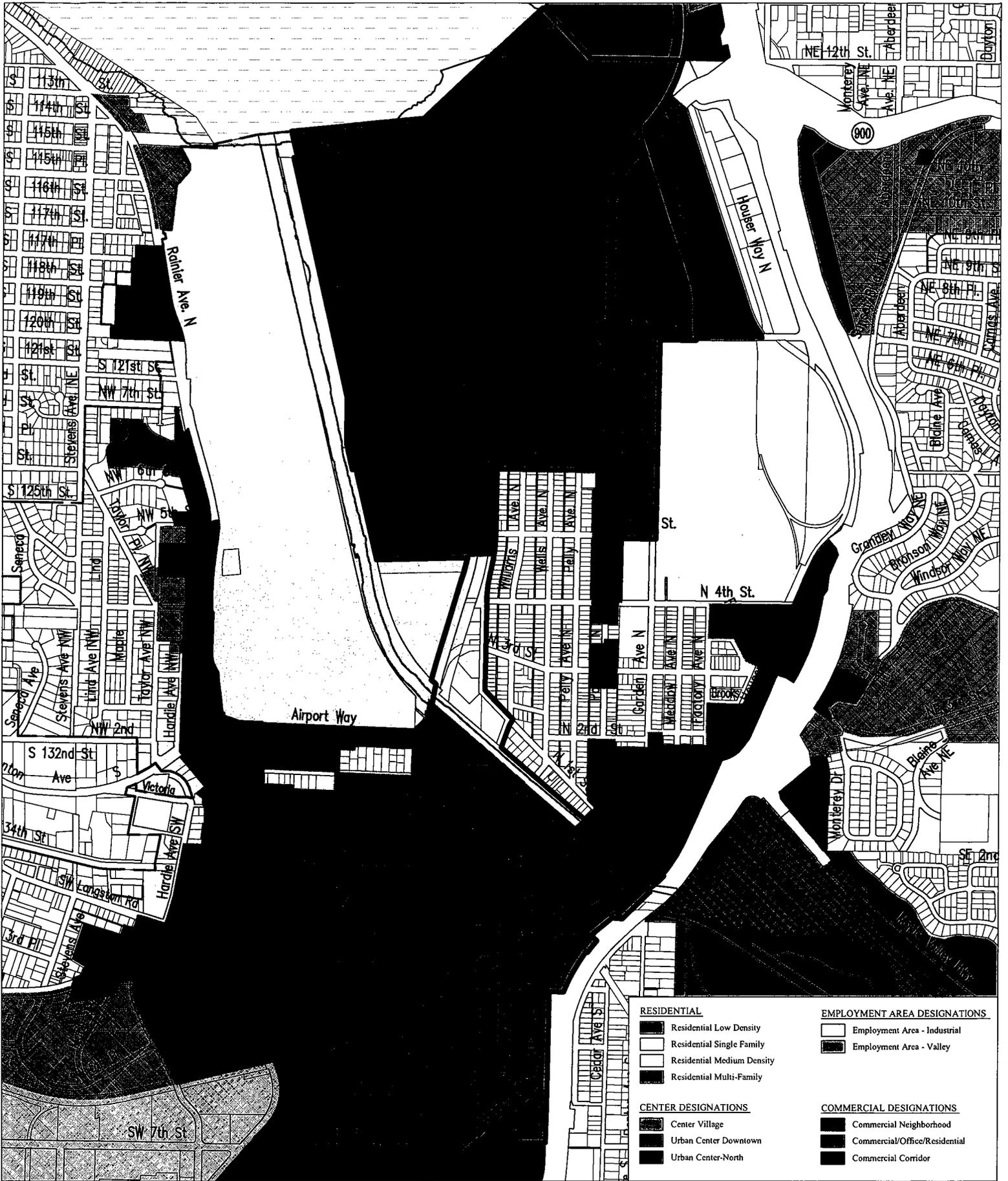
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

This proposal meets all the review criteria for Comprehensive Plan Amendments found in Title IV 4-9-020 (at least one must be met):

1. *The request supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan, or*
2. *The request supports the adopted business plan goals established by the City Council,*
or
3. *The request eliminates conflicts with existing elements or policies, or*
4. *The request amends the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate new policy directives of the City Council.*

CONCLUSION:

Southport and the plan for Renton’s Urban Center developed along different tracks, but this master planned development exemplifies the type of mixed use development envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan. Adding Southport to the Urban Center North and rezoning it UC-N2 provides the best alternative for integrating the area into the designated Urban Center.



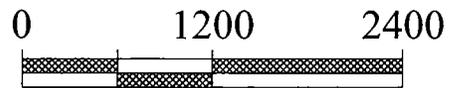
Southport Redesignation CPA (2005-M-07)

Proposed Landuse Designation and Urban Center

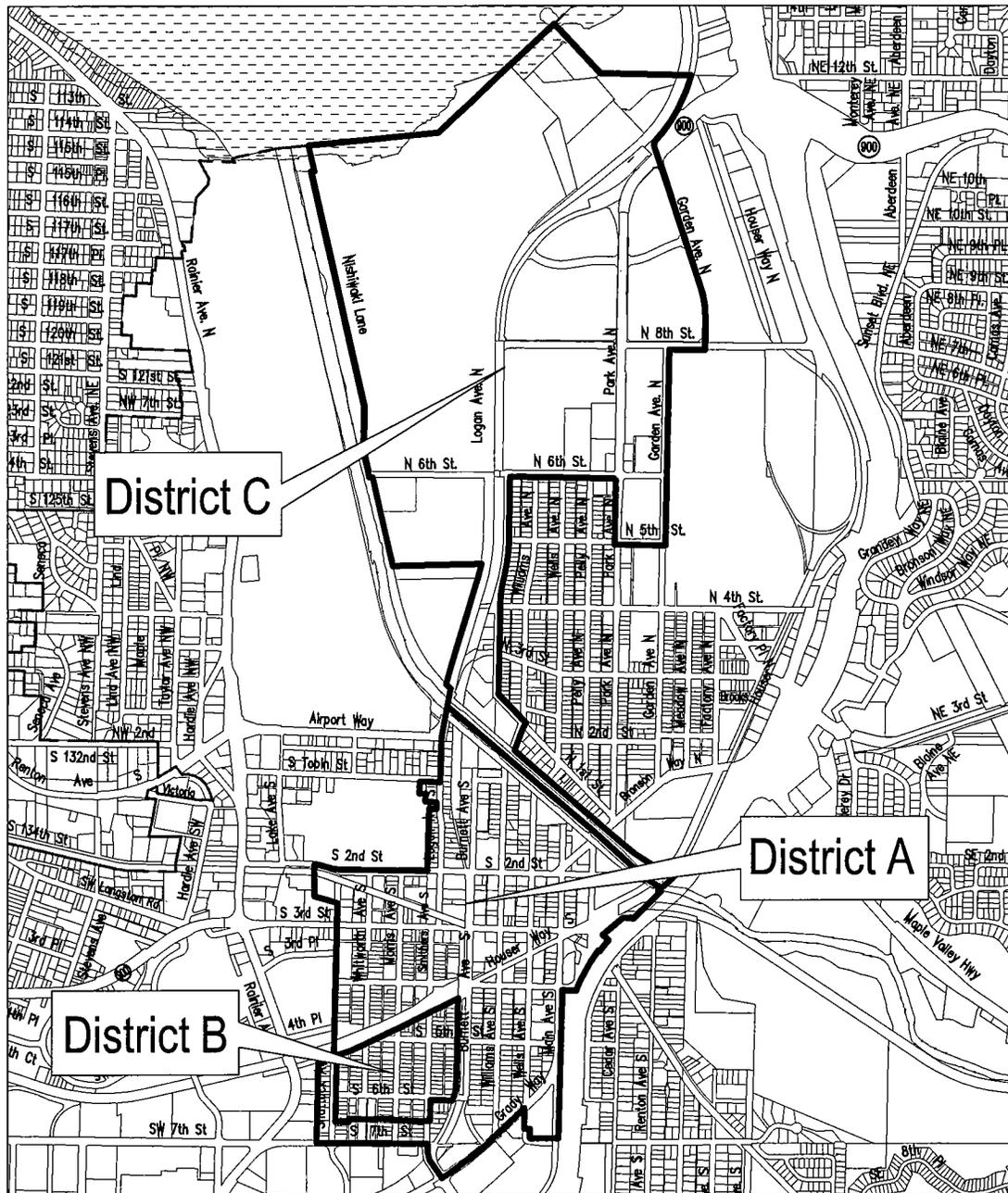


Economic Development, Neighborhoods and Strategic Planning
 Alex Pietsch, Administrator
 G. Del Rosario
 24 August 2005

— Urban Center Boundary
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3. Urban Center Design Overlay District Map

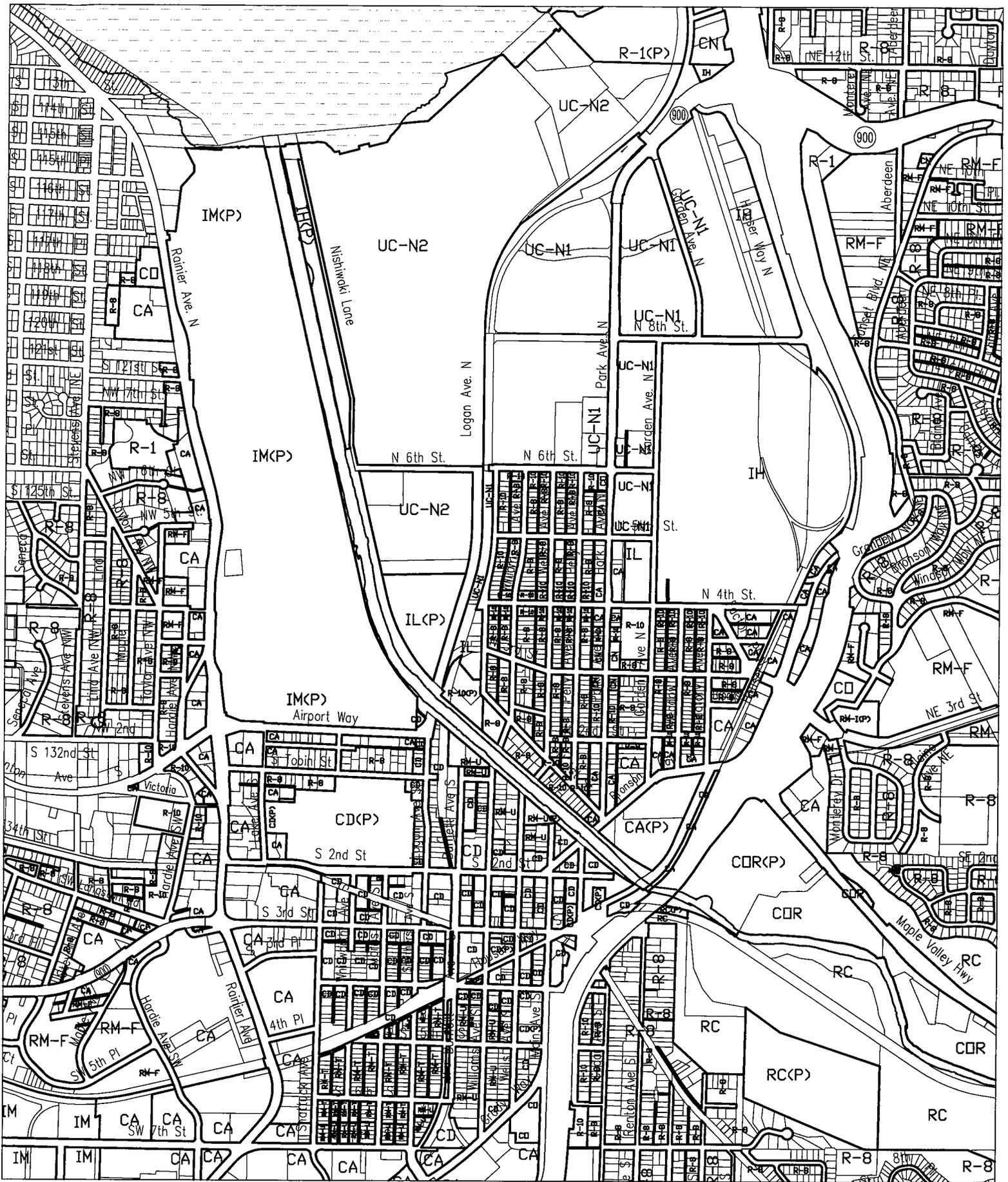


Urban Center Design Overlay District Map



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Proposed Zoning



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