

Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Implementing Zoning Maps



PRELIMINARY Summary of input from the HALA Community Focus Groups

November 2016



Introduction

Background

As part of the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), the City of Seattle is committed to a goal of building or preserving 20,000 affordable homes over 10 years. A critical part of achieving this goal is the implementation of Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA). MHA will create 6,000 homes affordable for 75 years to households earning no more than 60% of the area median income (AMI). Under MHA, multifamily and commercial development will be required to contribute to affordable housing, with additional development capacity allowed to minimize the impact of MHA requirements on the cost of new housing. These housing contributions are consistent with a state-approved approach for similar programs. (See <http://tinyurl.com/MHA-overview> for background on MHA.)

Community Focus Groups

The Community Focus Groups comprise resident volunteers from neighborhoods across the city, who informed the HALA process. A key topic for the Community Focus Groups is land use and zoning changes that can affect neighborhoods.

- Community Focus Groups meet monthly, March–November 2016.
- Each of the four groups is composed of 20–40 people.
- Groups include representatives of every urban village and neighborhood area in Seattle.
- The meetings are intended to elicit constructive dialogue about housing programs.
- Meetings are open for other members of the public to observe and provide comment during a set time on the agenda.

The City values participation by a broad range of community members who reflect our City's diverse population. Focus Groups are assembled to provide balanced representation

from a range of different demographics and perspectives including:

- Traditionally under-represented groups, including minorities, immigrants, refugees, and non-native English speakers
- Renters
- Households with children
- Experienced neighborhood advocates

PRELIMINARY Focus Group Input on Draft MHA Maps

To implement MHA, the city is seeking community input on a set of zoning changes in existing commercial and multi-family zones and in urban villages and centers. In March through June, Focus Group members provided input on a set of Principles to guide the possible zoning changes. (See the summary of Focus Group input on principles, and the principles statements on page 4.)

Based on the principles, city staff prepared Draft MHA zoning maps for review, releasing a set of maps for an example urban village for each Focus Groups in September. In October, draft maps for all remaining urban villages and centers were provided for comment to Focus Group members and other community members. The draft maps are online for dialogue at HALA.Consider.it.

This document is a preliminary summary of Focus Group member input on the Draft MHA maps. We collected input in the following ways:

- **September 2016 Meeting:** Focus Group members reviewed one example map from each Focus Group.
- **Distribution Online:** Participants received the draft

MHA Maps for review online via e-mail in advance of the October meeting.

- **October 2016 Meeting:** Focus Group members participated in an exercise and a group discussion of each map for that Focus Group.
- **Individual Focus Group Member Comments:** Some Focus Group members communicated in e-mails, phone calls or informal dialogues with city staff.
- **November online meeting and drop-in hours:** Focus Group members will review this preliminary summary and provide additional input.

While this preliminary summary does not reproduce every specific comment received, it seeks to summarize themes and attempts to capture all specific MHA zoning map suggestions. During discussion of the maps, many comments addressed broader MHA program concepts. General input about MHA is summarized as part of the discussion themes for each Focus Group.

MHA Principles

The MHA Implementation Principles

The City developed a set of Principles to help guide MHA implementation choices. The statements reflect what the City heard during months of in-person and online conversations in neighborhoods. The Principles guide choices about future changes to zoning or urban village boundaries for MHA implementation in neighborhoods.

Principles that form the foundation of MHA

- 1 Contribute to the 10-year HALA goal of 20,000 net new units of rent- and income-restricted housing. Specifically, the MHA goal is at least 6,000 units of housing affordable to households with incomes up to 60% of the area median income (AMI), units that will remain affordable for 50 years. In 2016, 60% of the AMI is \$37,980 for an individual and \$54,180 for a family of four.
- 2 Require multifamily and commercial development to contribute to affordable housing.
- 3 Contributions to affordable housing will be provided by including affordable housing on site or by providing a payment to the Seattle Office of Housing for creation of new affordable housing.
- 4 Ensure MHA creates affordable housing opportunities throughout the city.
- 5 In alignment with a state-approved affordable housing based incentive zoning approach (37.70A.540), new affordability requirements are linked to allowing some additional development capacity in commercial and multifamily zones (in many cases this includes one additional floor).

- 6 Allow a variety of housing types in existing single-family zones within urban villages.
- 7 Expand the boundaries of some urban villages to allow for more housing near high-frequency transit hubs.
- 8 Maintain Seattle as an inclusive city by providing housing opportunities for everyone: people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds and households of all sizes, types, and incomes.
- 9 Evaluate MHA implementation using a social and racial equity/justice lens.

Community generated principles that will guide MHA implementation

1 Housing Options

- a Encourage or incentivize a wide variety of housing sizes, including family-sized homes and not just one-bedroom and studio homes.
- b Encourage more small-scale multi-unit housing that is family friendly, such as cottages, duplexes or triplexes, rowhouses, and townhouses.

2 Urban Design Quality: Address urban design quality, including high-quality design of new buildings and landscaping.

- a Encourage publicly visible green space and landscaping at street level.
- b Encourage design qualities that reflect Seattle's context, including building materials and architectural style.
- c Encourage design that allows access to light and views in shared and public spaces.

3 Transitions: Plan for transitions between higher- and lower-scale zones as additional development capacity is accommodated.

- a Zone full blocks instead of partial blocks in order to soften transitions.
- b Consider using low-rise zones to help transition between single-family and commercial / mixed-use zones.
- c Use building setback requirements to create step-downs between commercial and mixed-use zones and other zones.

MHA Principles

4 Historic Areas

- a In Seattle's Historic districts, do not increase development capacity, even if it means these areas do not contribute to housing affordability through MHA.
- b In other areas of historic or cultural significance, do not increase development capacity, even if it means these areas do not contribute to affordability through MHA.

5 Assets and Infrastructure

- a Consider locating more housing near neighborhood assets and infrastructure such as parks, schools, and transit.

6 Urban Village Expansion Areas

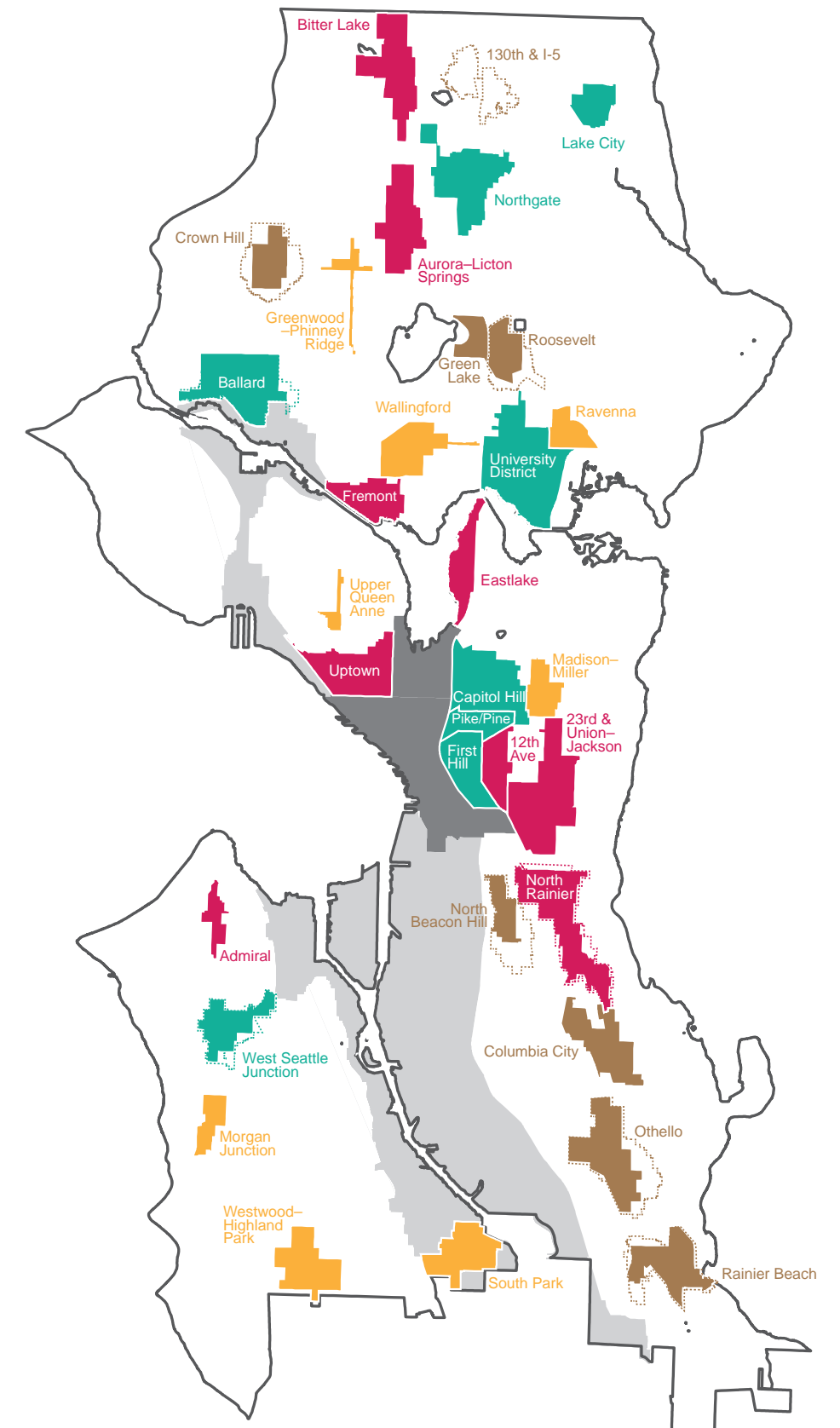
- a Implement the urban village expansions using 10-minute walksheds similar to those shown in the draft Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update.
- b Implement urban village expansions recommended in Seattle 2035 but with modifications to the 10-minute walkshed informed by local community members. Consider topography, "natural" boundaries, such as parks, major roads, and other large-scale neighborhood elements, and people with varying ranges of mobility
- c In general, any development capacity increases in urban village expansion areas should ensure that new development is compatible in scale to the existing neighborhood context.

7 Unique Conditions

- a Consider location-specific factors such as documented view corridors from a public space or right-of-way when zoning changes are made.

8 Neighborhood Urban Design

- a Consider local urban design priorities when making zoning changes.



Medium Density Urban Villages

Admiral

Aurora–Licton Springs

Bitter Lake

Eastlake

Fremont

North Rainier

Uptown

12th Avenue

23rd & Union–Jackson

Discussion themes

Transportation

Focus Group members emphasized the importance of transportation in making land use decisions. Some were concerned about parts of their neighborhood that offer only limited access to transit.

Infrastructure

The City should make investments in infrastructure (e.g., pedestrian improvements, opens spaces, etc.) as growth unfolds to ensure services keep up with proposed increases in development.

Transitions

The Focus Group encouraged careful attention to transitions between zones. Avoid incompatibilities between adjacent zones and consider development standards within zones to mitigate transitions.

Housing for larger household sizes

Focus Group members supported standards to ensure that new development of housing and affordable housing includes larger units and family-sized units, particularly in Lowrise Multi-family (LR) zones.

Consider more areas of the city for MHA

Focus Group members suggested that other areas of the city outside of urban villages and existing multifamily and commercial zones should be considered for MHA and zoning changes so that new development contributes to affordable housing.

Provide notice about MHA zoning changes

Focus Group members emphasized the importance of communicating directly with people who will be affected by the zoning changes and who may not yet be involved in the MHA process, especially people living in single family areas. It is also important to communicate what urban villages are.

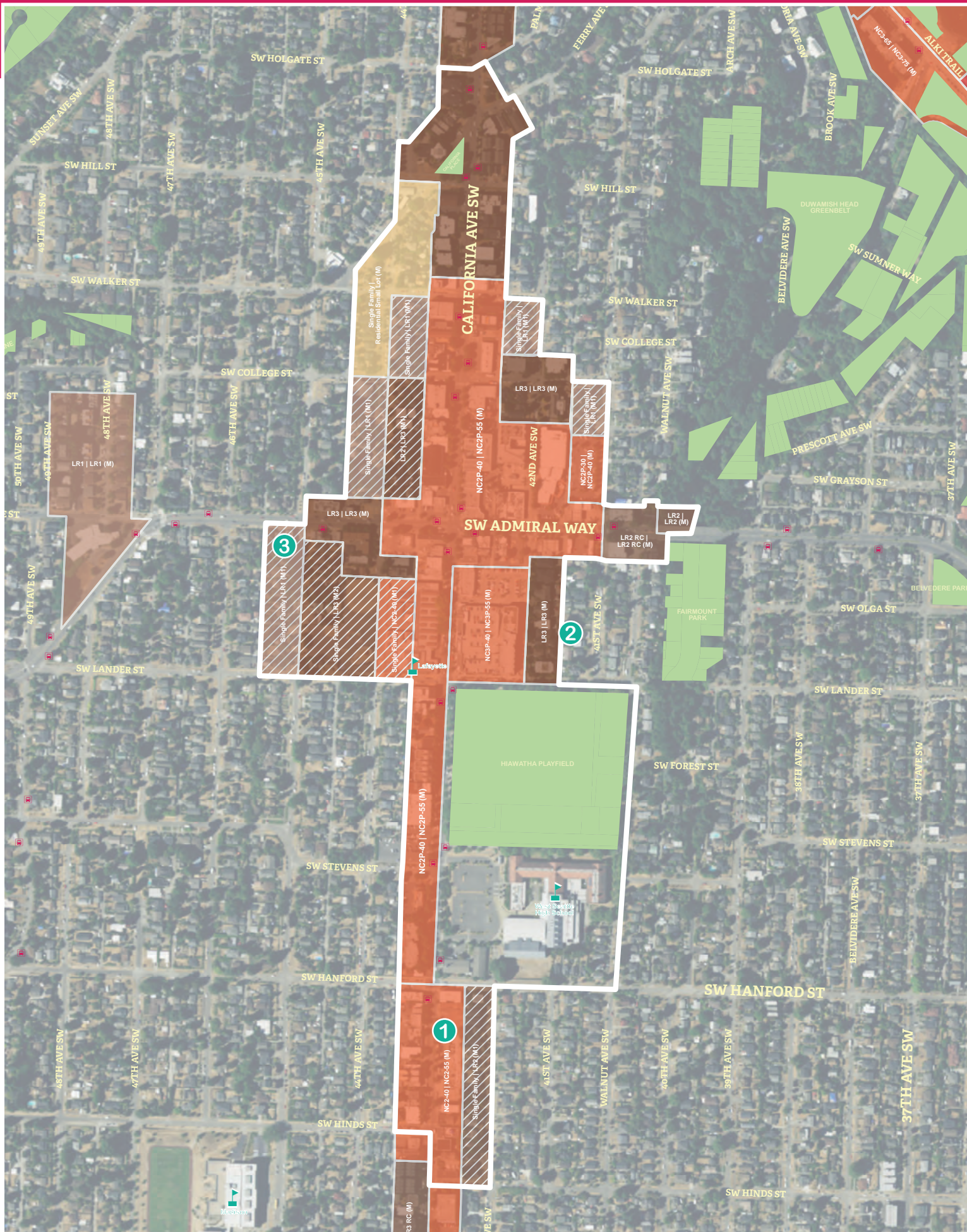
Uptown

Focus Group members from Uptown participated in the discussion about the draft MHA zoning maps. The Uptown planning process has been underway for several years. A separate proposal for zoning changes will implement MHA. Therefore, the Focus Group discussion did not cover map changes for Uptown.

Admiral

Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

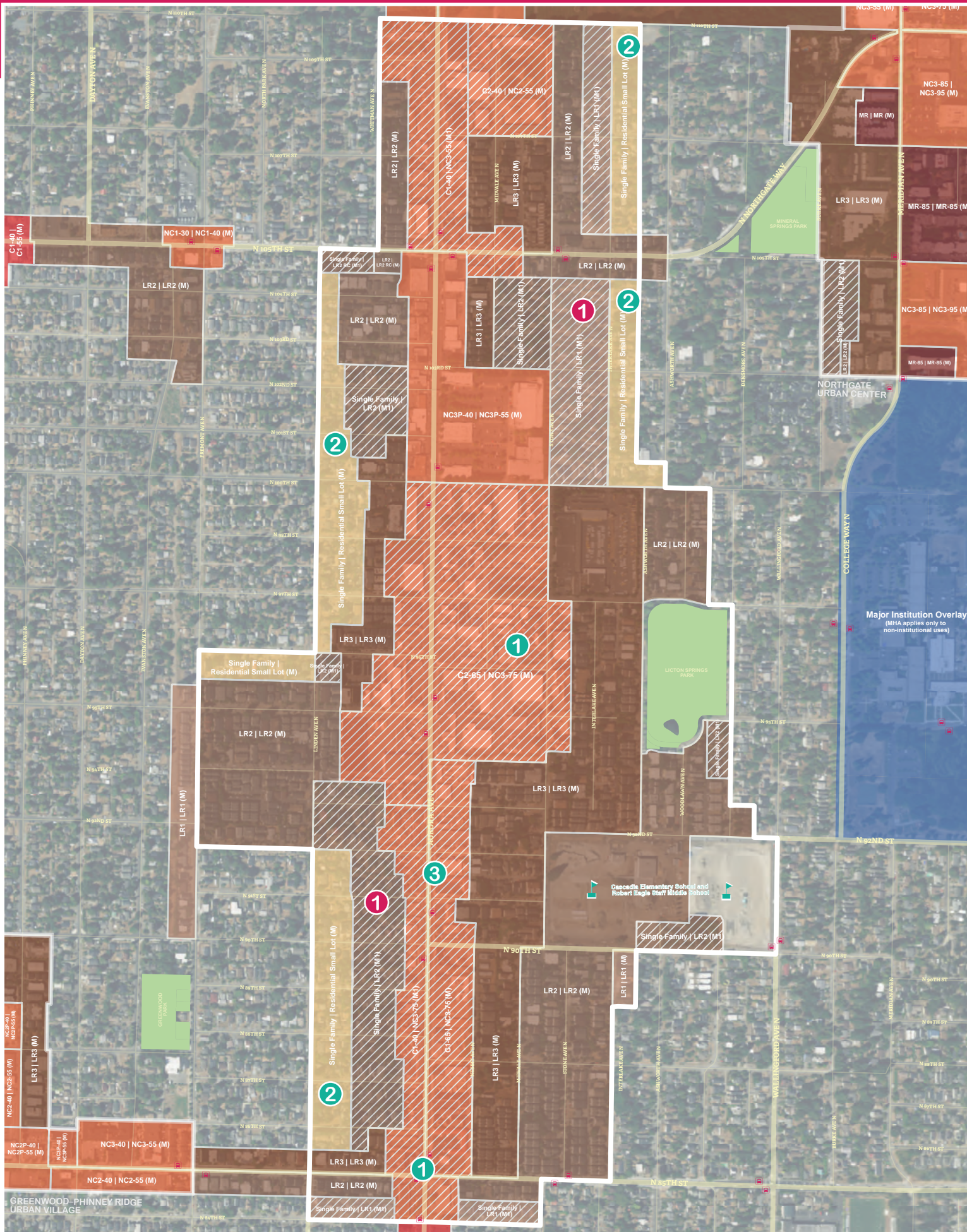
- 1 It may be difficult to achieve appropriate zoning transitions due to the shape of the urban village. Future boundary expansions to the east and west would help soften transitions from one zone to the next.
- 2 Consider topography when making zoning changes. Higher zones can be placed on downslopes to make them less conspicuous.
- 3 Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning may be more effective than Lowrise 1 (LR1) as a transition between single family and multifamily zones.



Varied Opinions

Aurora–Licton Springs

Expansion Area Urban Villages
Hub Urban Villages
Medium Density Urban Villages
Lower Density Urban Villages



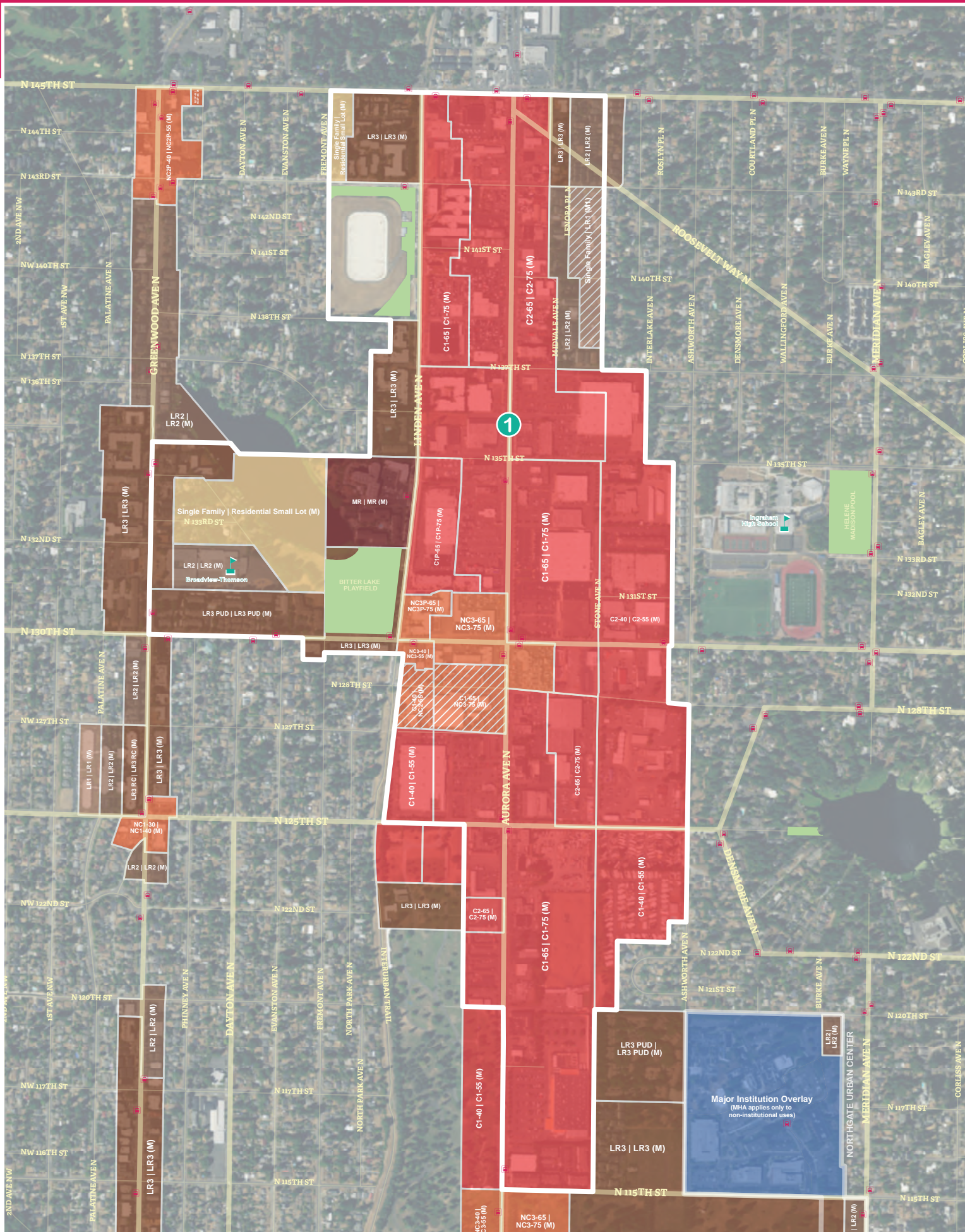
Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Consider zoning choices that create “node” or focused density at certain locations along the Aurora Ave N corridor. This could mean increasing to NC-75 in selective areas.
- 2 Support for creating a transitions by locating Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning at the edges of the urban village.
- 3 Support for the change to Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning from Commercial (C) zoning along Aurora Ave N to allow and encourage housing and more walkability.
- 4 There is a need to improve walkability and connections across Aurora Ave N as new development occurs.
- 5 There is a lot of room for growth along the Aurora Ave N corridor. Seek to encourage growth and new housing in those areas first.

Varied Opinions

- 1 The changes from Single Family zoning to Lowrise zoning should not be undertaken without direct engagement with the property owners of those single family homes. Those locations are the most affected by the proposed MHA zoning changes.

Bitter Lake

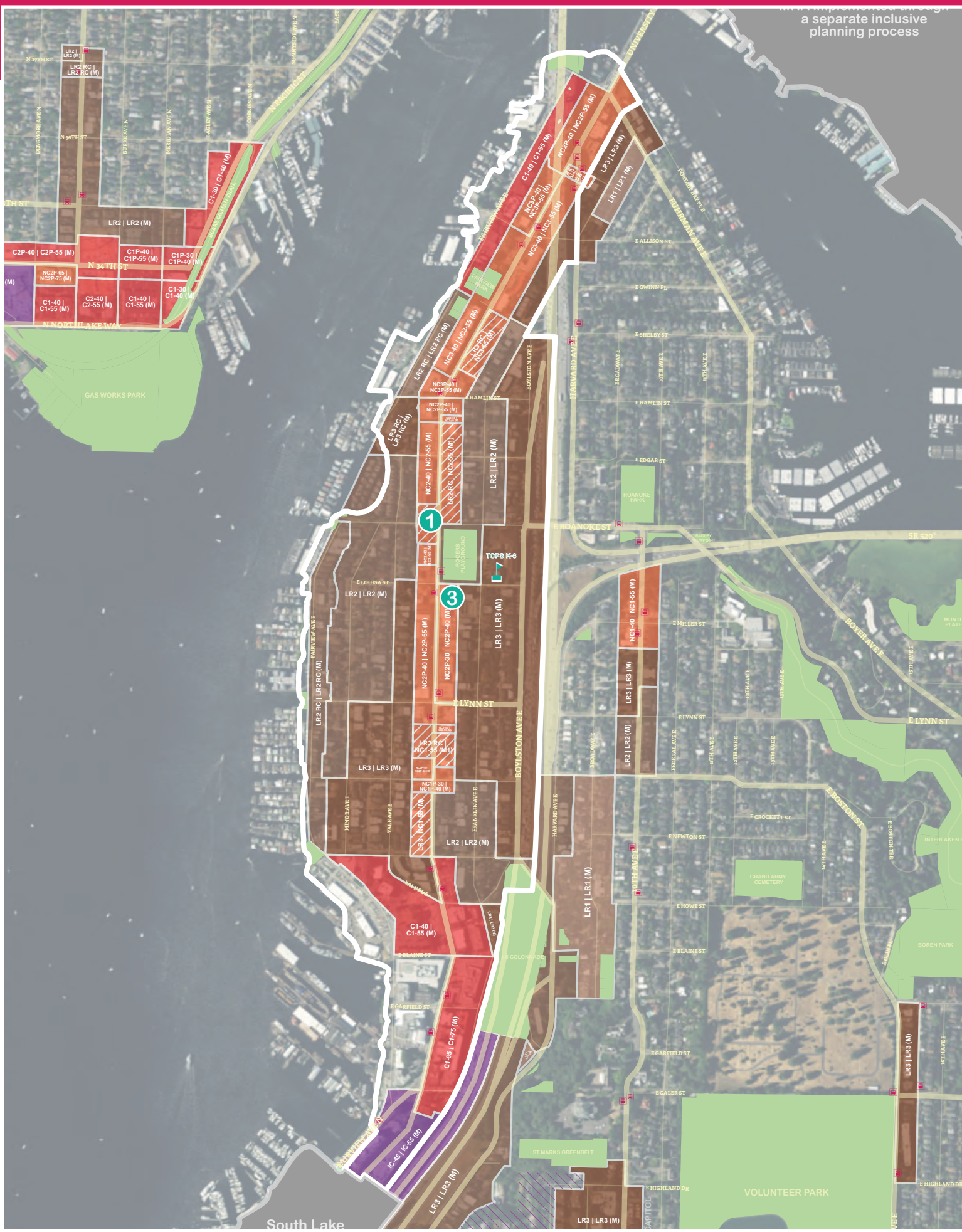


Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Similar to the Aurora-Licton Springs area, there needs to be improved walkability and connections across Aurora Ave N as new development occurs.
- 2 In general, this is a good location for additional growth, including market-rate and affordable housing.

Varied Opinions

Eastlake



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

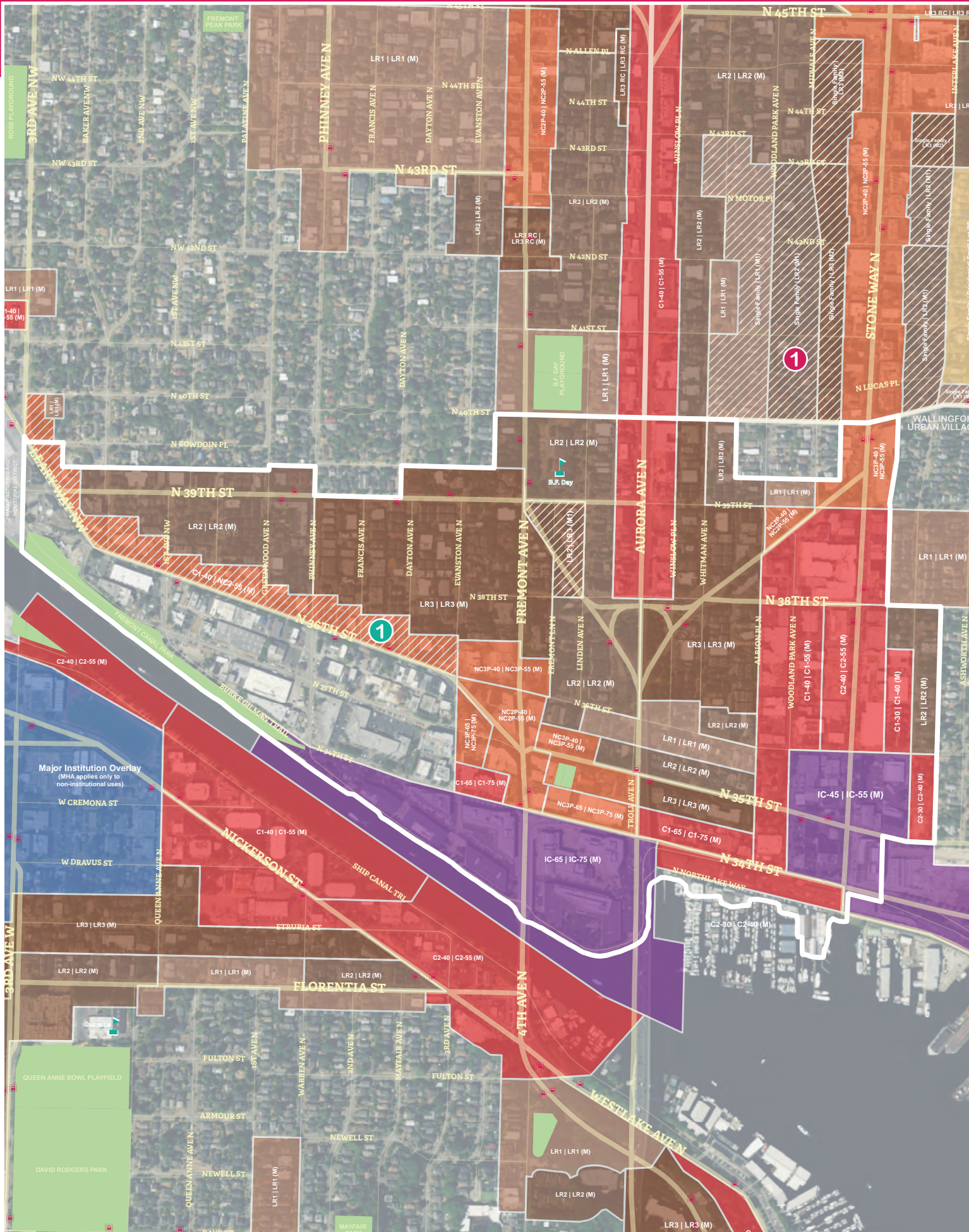
- 1 The proposed height increases along Eastlake Ave E are similar to those along Aurora Ave N, but Eastlake is a much narrower and smaller-scale street. The proposed NC-55 zoning could allow buildings that are too large for the neighborhood.
- 2 The Eastlake urban village is on a hill. Zoning could be higher in some locations where topography would moderate the effect of taller buildings.
- 3 The proposed zoning changes to NC-55 would limit views to and from the Tops K-8 school and its associated public spaces. Consider reducing the zoning change in this area.

Varied Opinions

Fremont

Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

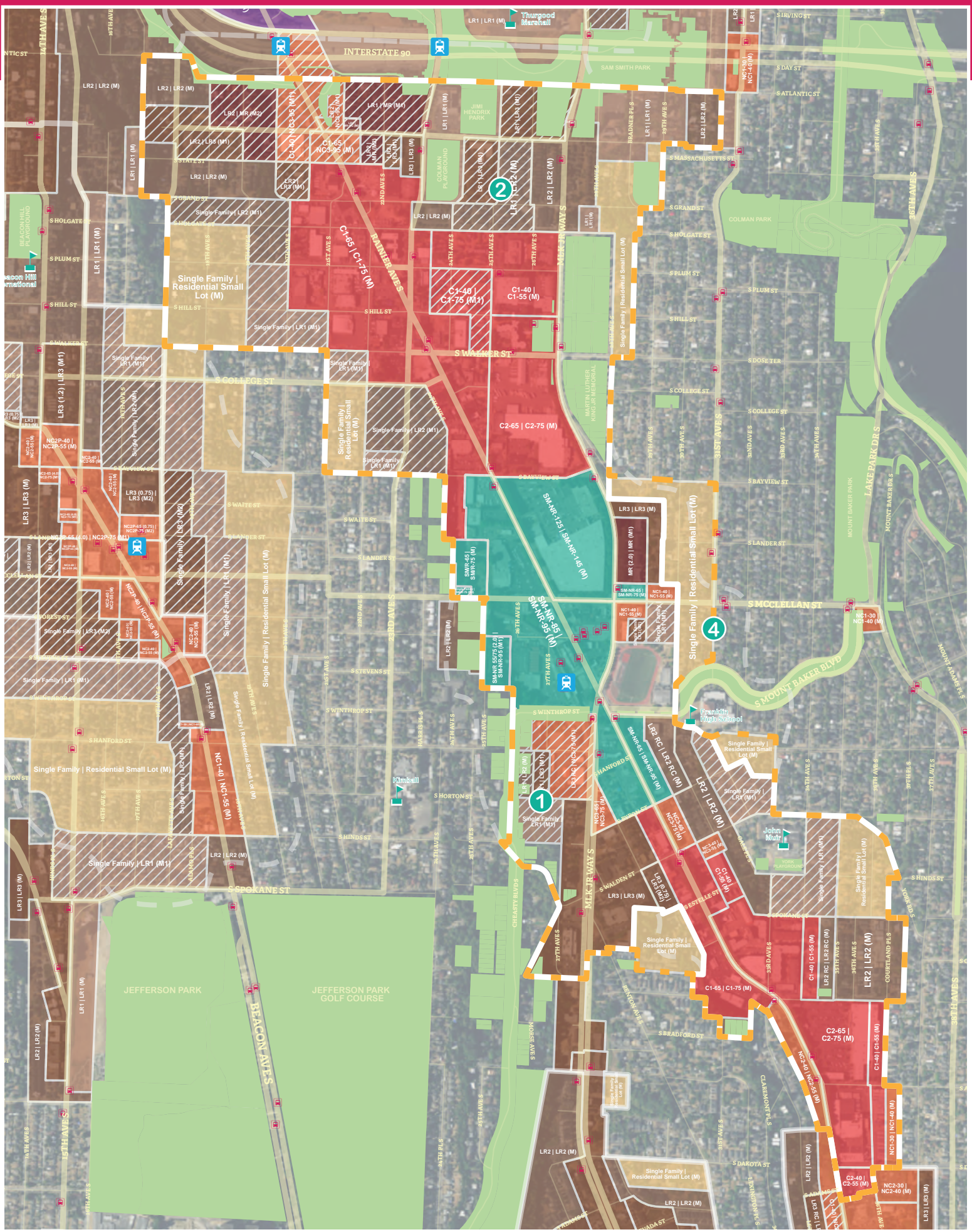
- 1 There was general support for Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning where Commercial (C) zones exist today, particularly along Stone Way.
- 2 Fremont needs more parks, better transit, and a community center.



Varied Opinions

- 1 Consider smaller zoning changes in the east Fremont area, which is actually within the Wallingford Urban Village, adjacent to Fremont. Zoning for the single family areas between Aurora Ave N and Stone Way should be RSL.

North Rainier



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

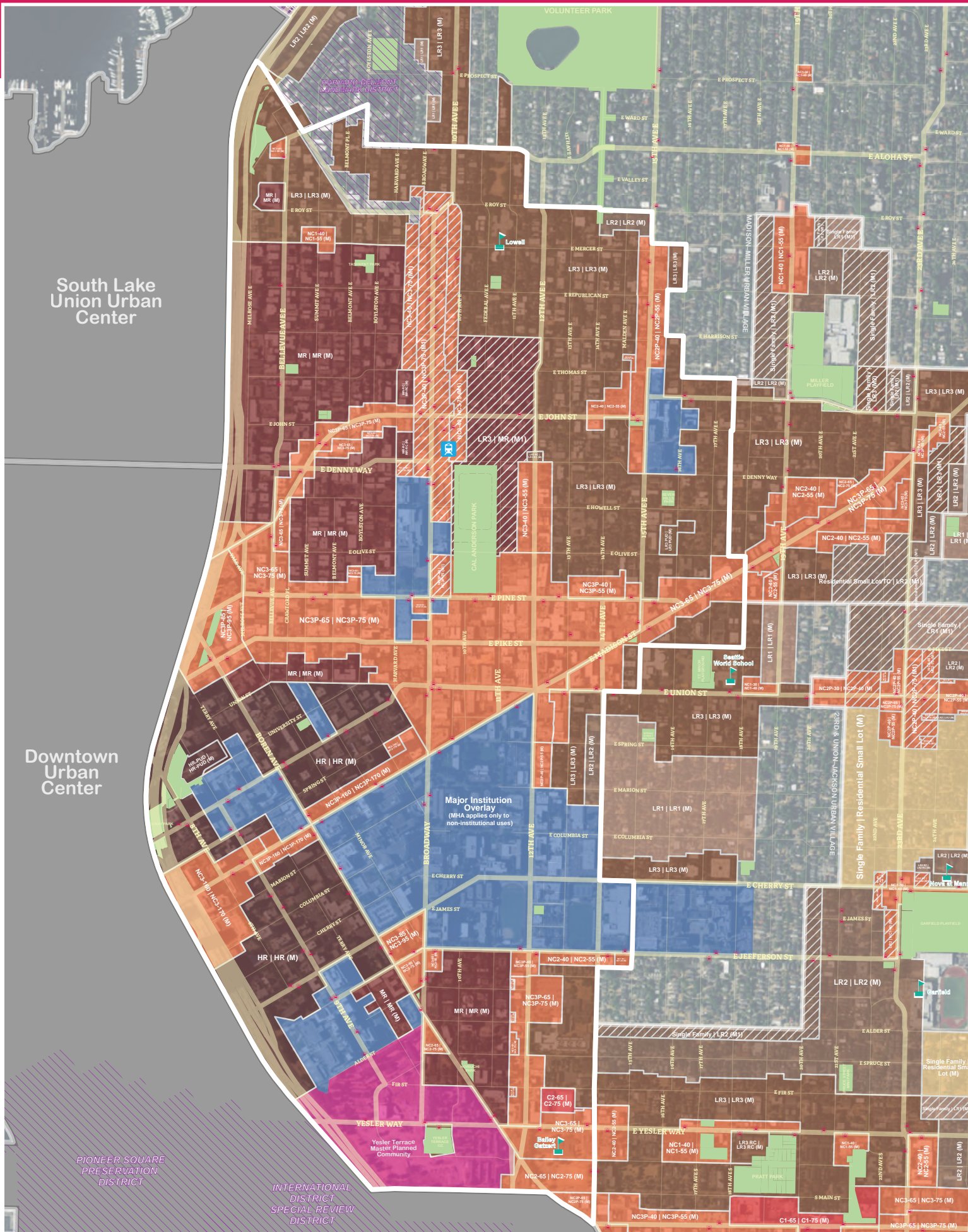
- 1 Areas near the future Judkins light rail station are currently proposed for Lowrise 1 (LR1) zoning. Consider at least Lowrise 3 (LR3) instead in order to take advantage of this important investment in transit infrastructure.
- 2 Many streets in North Rainier are very narrow and include traffic circles, so substantial additional vehicle traffic could be challenging.
- 3 There are several affordable housing developments already in the areas owned by Capitol Hill Housing. These are an asset. Ensure that these affordable housing buildings would continue.
- 4 The urban village boundary expansion could be larger, and the proposed zoning changes could go beyond RSL, in the areas near Franklin High School and the Olmsted Mt Baker Boulevard at the east edge of the urban village so that more residents can access these amenities.

Varied Opinions

12th Avenue

Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 In general, this area is an appropriate area to welcome more housing. The proposed MHA zoning changes seem appropriate.



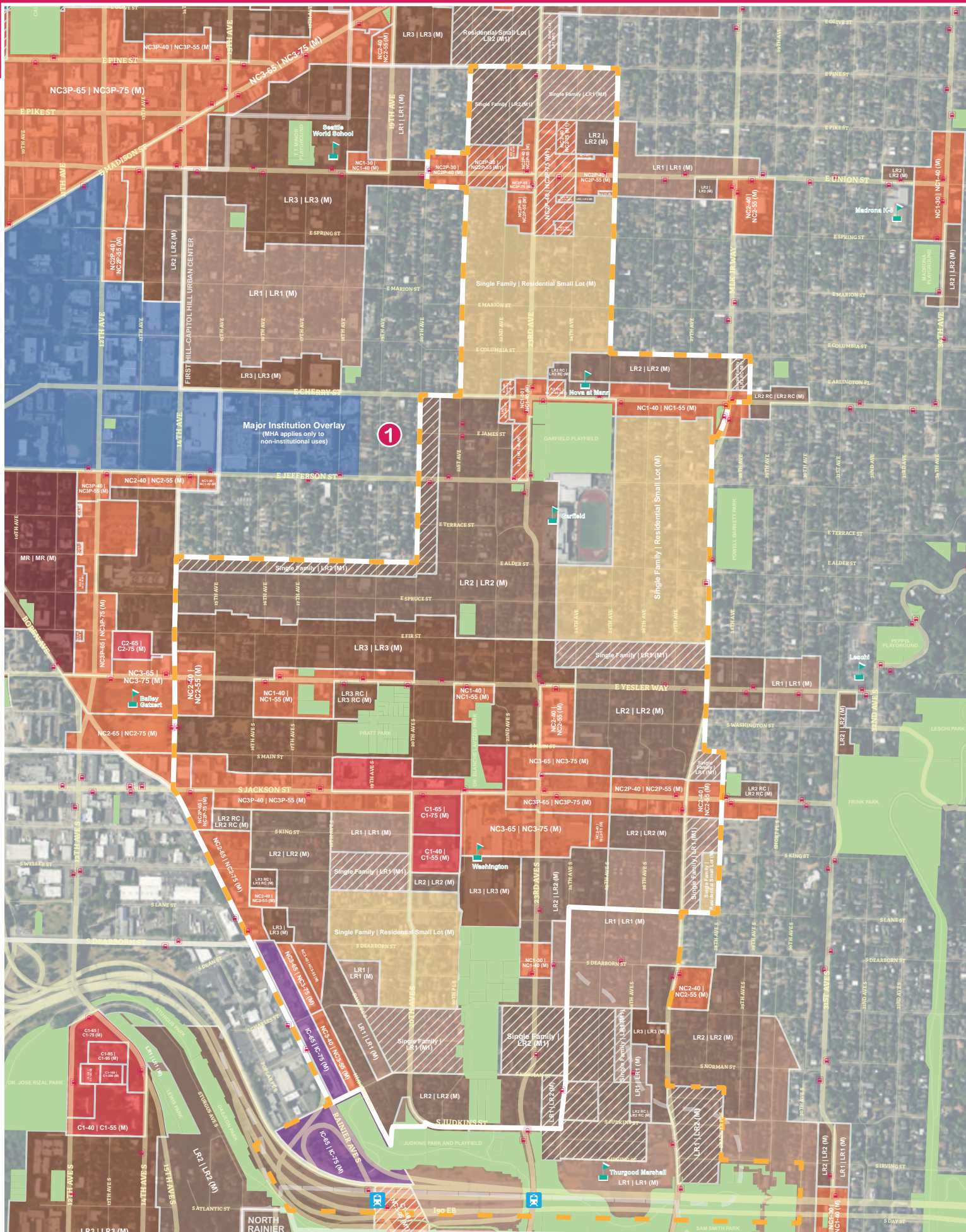
Varied Opinions

23rd & Union–Jackson

Expansion Area Urban Villages
Hub Urban Villages
Medium Density Urban Villages
Lower Density Urban Villages

Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Displacement risk is high in this urban village. Include more zoning with MHA requirements at the (M2) level so that required contributions to affordable housing are higher.
- 2 Displacement is already occurring in the Central Area. MHA and zoning changes are one action that could help, but there needs to be more direct intervention against displacement to make sure people can stay in the neighborhood.



Varied Opinions

- 1 Some Focus Group members questioned why areas surrounded by other urban villages are not in an urban village. They suggested that these areas would be appropriate for MHA.