

U District SEIS Workshop

Current Proposal

The City is studying whether to rezone and implement Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) in the remaining commercial and multi-family areas of the U-District. A prior EIS in 2015 already analyzed combinations of zoning changes and additional growth in the U-District over a 20-year time horizon. However, new information is available and the current proposal for MHA zoning changes differs from the one studied in the 2015 FEIS. Therefore the 2015 EIS is being supplemented to reflect current conditions and consider new alternatives.

Workshop Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to get your input on the issues and alternatives that should be studied in the supplemental EIS for the focus area. Specifically, we are very interested in community-generated suggestions and ideas for Alternative 5.

2015 U-District Urban Design Framework and EIS

The City issued a Final EIS in January of 2015 that analyzed several options for future growth, and allowing greater height and density in the core of the U-District near the future light rail station.

2017 U-District Rezones

The City adopted Ordinance 125267 that rezoned most of the land studied in the 2015 FEIS. Blocks along The Ave., and several blocks outside of the commercial core of the U-District were not rezoned in the final Ordinance that was approved. Everywhere that was upzoned, the City's Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements were put into place.

2019 MHA Citywide Rezones

In March of 2019, the City Council voted to rezone most commercial and multi-family zoned lands throughout the city, and land in urban villages. MHA was implemented in all those rezone areas. Land within the study area of the 2015 U-District EIS was not included in the 2019 citywide MHA rezones.

ALTERNATIVES

The SEIS alternatives differ in whether the MHA program is implemented and in allowed building height and floor area.

ALTERNATIVE 3 (NO ACTION)

MHA is not implemented; no zoning changes.

(Very similar to Alternative 3 of 2015 U-District FEIS.)

ALTERNATIVE 4

Implement MHA and increase floor area and/or height by one to two stories.

ALTERNATIVE 5

Implement MHA in a different pattern that balances rezones in some areas, while conserving existing character in others.

SEPA PROCESS

Issue Determination of Significance & Scoping Notice

Conduct SEPA Scoping

Prepare & Issue Draft SEIS

Draft SEIS Public Comment Period

Prepare & Issue Final SEIS

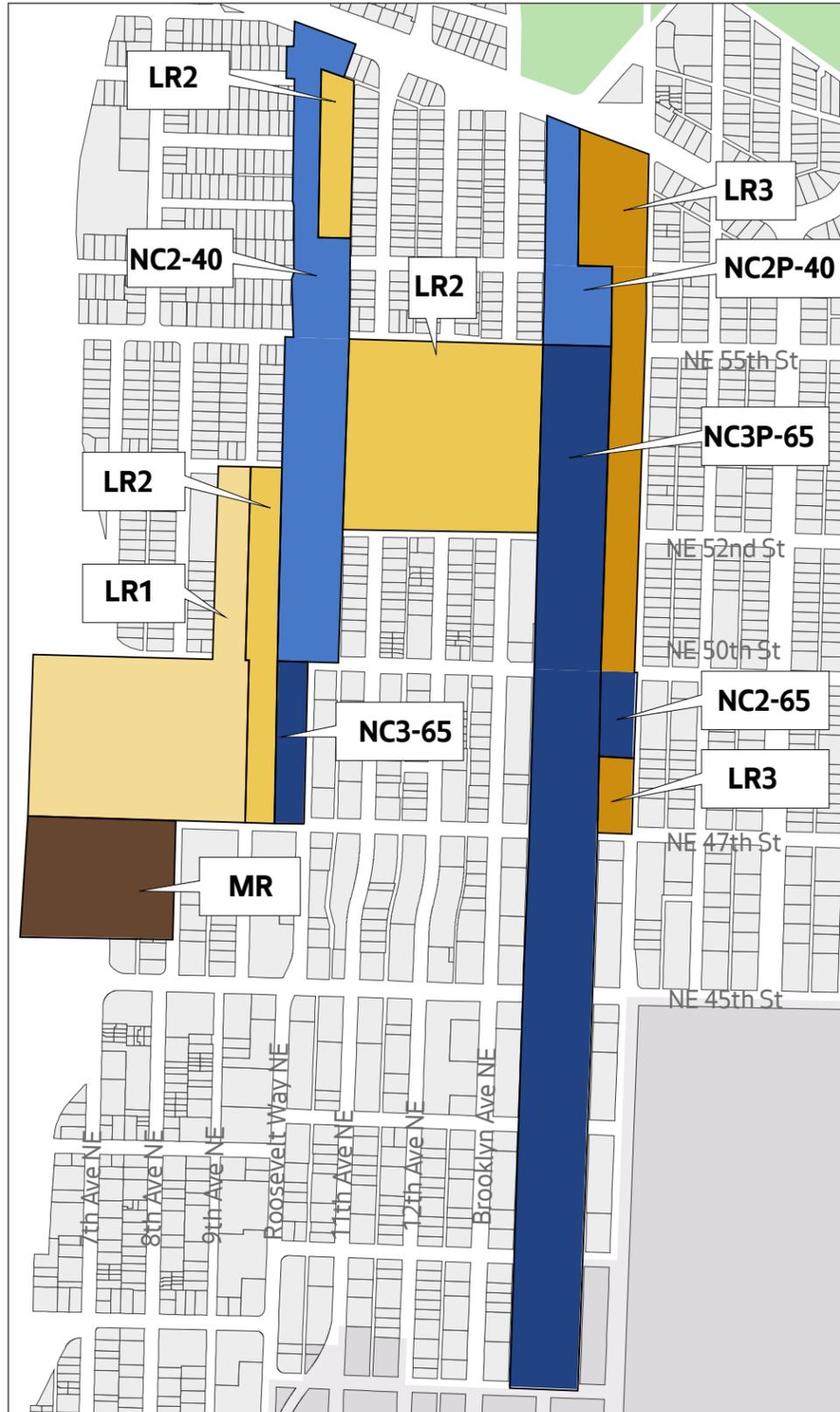
City Action

This workshop is an extended part of the scoping process. You are helping us determine what to study in the Draft SEIS.

This workshop focuses on what you would like to include in Alternative 5.

U District SEIS Workshop

1. Existing zoning



Lowrise Zones (LR)

LR1

- 3 stories
- Residential only
- Townhouses
- Apartments or condos

LR2

- 4 stories
- Residential only
- Apartments or condos
- Townhouses

LR3

- 5 stories
- Residential only
- Apartments or condos

Midrise Zones (MR)

MR

- 7-8 stories
- Residential only
- Apartments or condos

Neighborhood Commercial Zones (NC2 & NC3)

NC2

NC 40/55

- 4-5 stories
- Commercial allowed at street-level
- Residential above
- Apartments or condos

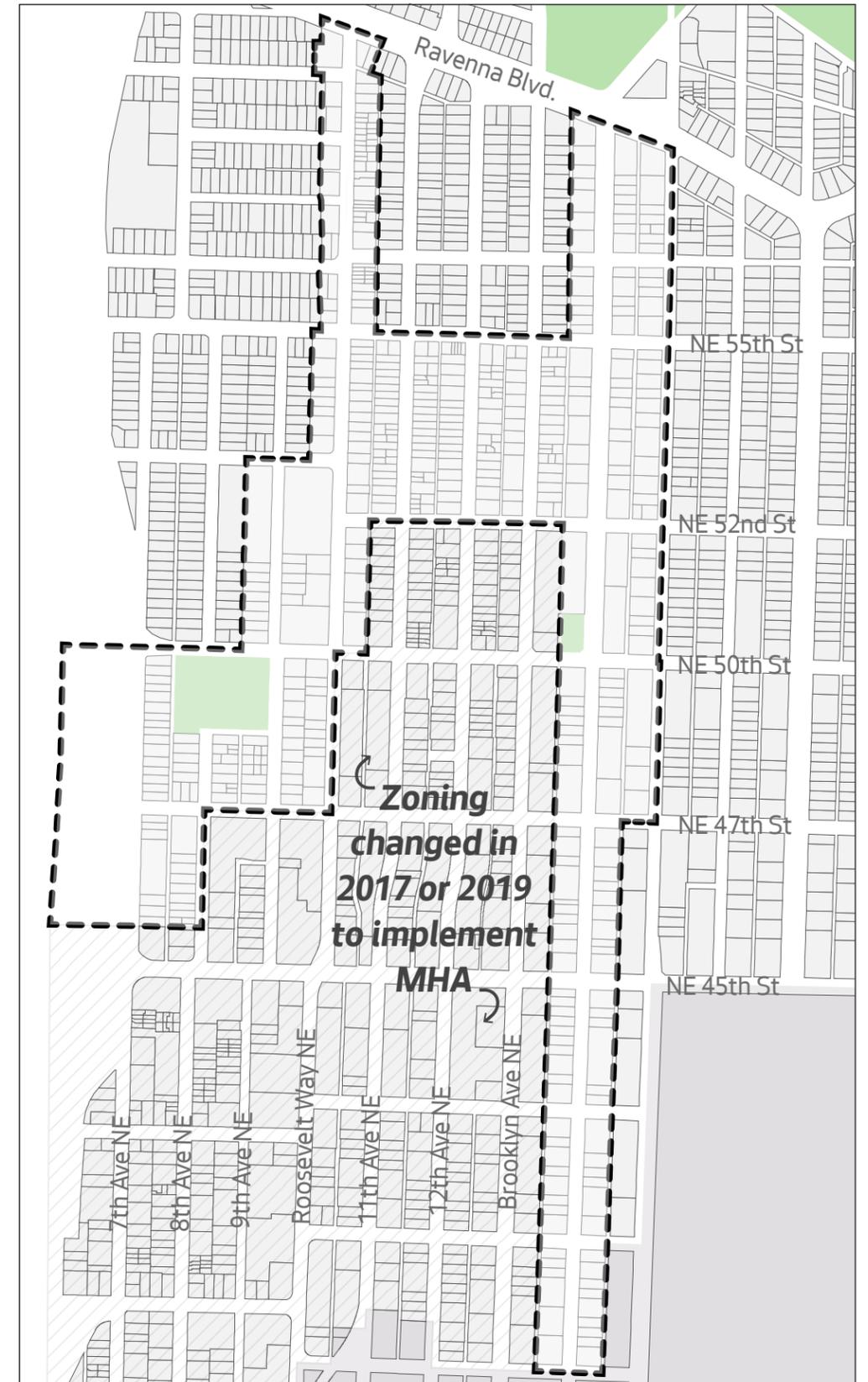
NC3

NC 65/75

- 6-7 stories
- Commercial allowed at street-level
- Residential above
- Apartments or condos

2. Where do you think different types of development should go?

Use this map or the large table map to draw in where you think different types of development should go.



SUGGESTION A - The Ave

ISSUE / COMMENTS: Many stakeholders commented that University Way NE ("The Ave"), has a unique character and heritage--especially the area south of NE 50th Street. There is a concentration of small, locally-owned businesses that community members believe should be protected. "The Ave" has long been a 'college street' serving everyday needs of University goers and those who live nearby. There are several longstanding cultural gathering places including theatres and shops. Numerous historic-aged retail and mixed use buildings date from the 1900 - 1930's and are one to four stories tall.

POSSIBLE ACTION: Create a University Way Conservation Overlay District that incentivizes preservation of existing structures and existing small business spaces. Downzone the Ave., reducing the height limit from 65' to 40' so new buildings are similar in scale with existing structures.

DETAILS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Apply the Conservation Overlay and downzone on half-blocks fronting the Ave., between 41st St. and 50th St..
- Reduce allowed building heights from 65' (NC-65) to 40' (NC-40).
- The conservation overlay district could incentivize preservation of character structures and/or facades.
- Identify aspects of character structures valued for conservation.
- Retain and enhance the existing branded University Way street furniture signage and art.
- Continue to allow infill development on sites without character structures at a scale no greater than 4 stories (40').
- Do not apply affordable housing requirements (MHA) in the area, because there would not be a requisite corresponding development incentive.
- Create development standards for new buildings, such as upper level setbacks
- Add prescriptive standards for narrow storefront widths.
- Allow Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to development elsewhere for conservation on "The Ave."

Comments:

Do you like this suggestion? What comments do you have about it?



Concentration of small, locally-owned businesses. Some consider conserving existing buildings to be a method to reduce the likelihood of losing existing small businesses.



Historic-aged retail and mixed-use buildings range from one story to six stories, some with lower-cost living spaces on upper floors.



The Wilsonian apartments provides well-maintained market rate housing on the Ave. with rents from \$1,500/month for a studio.



University District branded streetscape improvements from the early 2000's would coincide with the Conservation area.



The Ave hosts cultural and bohemian establishments such as the Varsity and Grand Illusion Theatres and Bull Dog News.

SUGGESTION B - University Playfield Area

ISSUE / COMMENTS: Some community members have expressed concerns about safety and activation of the University playground, and a need for improved open spaces. Some community members emphasize concerns about shadowing into the playfield from taller buildings.

POSSIBLE ACTION: Allow more multifamily housing around the edges of the playfield, increasing passive surveillance by placing more 'eyes on the park' from new buildings and activity generated by units in those buildings.

DETAILS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase zoning from Lowrise 1 and Lowrise 2, to Midrise (MR) in blocks near University Playfield, as far north as NE 50th St.
- Apply design standards to ensure new development is oriented to activate and increase eyes on the park, especially across the alley behind 7th Ave. NE.
- Apply MHA requirements with the higher requirement levels, since there is a corresponding development capacity increase.



Some edges of the park are not activated, and do not have oversight.



Townhouse development is occurring under existing zoning.



Changing the zoning to MR would allow new housing similar to the area directly across NE 47th St.

Comments:

Do you like this suggestion? What comments do you have about it?

SUGGESTION C - Roosevelt Corridor

ISSUE / COMMENTS: Adding more housing on Roosevelt Way between 50th and Ravenna Blvd may help to balance the reduction of potential future housing on The Ave. Roosevelt Way is an arterial roadway with fewer historic-aged structures, and less concentrated cultural heritage than The Ave.

POSSIBLE ACTION: Increase zoning to allow 6 and 7 story buildings instead of 5 story buildings for properties fronting Roosevelt Way NE, north of NE 50th St.

DETAILS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase zoning to NC-75.
- The existing depth of lots may make redevelopment infeasible; the increased zoning may need to extend up to one parcel deep, providing a better transition to single family areas.
- Include design standards for a stepped transition.
- Apply MHA requirements with the higher requirement levels, since there is a corresponding development capacity increase.



Low scale, including autorepair shops on Roosevelt Way NE.

Comments:

Do you like this suggestion? What comments do you have about it?

SUGGESTION D - Tower heights

ISSUE / COMMENTS: Some community members suggested that instead of expanding MHA into more places, consider allowing slightly taller tower heights where towers are already allowed.

POSSIBLE ACTION: 320' towers are currently allowed in the core of the U-District adjacent to the light rail station. Blocks slightly further from light rail allow 240' towers. Increase allowed height from 240' to 320' wherever the zoning allows for towers already.

DETAILS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase height limit for towers from 240' to 320' in blocks between NE 47th St. and NE 52nd St., and between NE 43rd St. and Campus Parkway.
- Continue to apply the MHA requirements in the area.






 HUB U District, Brooklyn | 4515 / 4525 Brooklyn Ave NE, Seattle WA 98105
 Recommendation Meeting | 3032065-EG | 302149-EG | 04.15.19



The Hub is a proposal in the permitting process within the 320' zone, at 4515 Brooklyn Ave. NE. The proposed building would top out at 265'.

Comments:

Do you like this suggestion? What comments do you have about it?

SUGGESTION E - Delay Action

ISSUE / COMMENTS: Some community members suggested that no further changes to zoning should occur in the U-District until the results of development already taking place in areas rezoned in 2017 are more fully evaluated.

POSSIBLE ACTION: Delay implementation of a zoning change package in the focus area for a period of 5 years. The preferred pattern and degree of zoning changes to put MHA in place could still be identified through this process, even if the implementation date is delayed.

DETAILS & CONSIDERATIONS:

- Study the effects of delaying MHA implementation for 5 years for each alternative.
- Development under existing zoning would continue without affordable housing for the 5 year period.



Existing conditions on the Ave. looking south at the Post Office.



A recently constructed 6 story building on the Ave. at NE 50th St., built under existing zoning.

Comments:

Do you like this suggestion? What comments do you have about it?

OTHER SCOPING COMMENT THEMES

Increase tower heights in areas where the zoning already allows towers.

- Evaluate potential displacement impacts on small and legacy businesses
- Evaluate potential displacement impacts of existing low-cost housing
- Evaluate cumulative impacts with recent ADU legislation
- Update for existing conditions with recent UW campus master plan
- Evaluate for potential effects on social service providers including the network of service providers
- Consider spending MHA payments collected in the U-District only in the U-District
- Evaluate for impacts on availability of parking spaces
- Evaluate for demands on transit service
- Concern about the condition of existing utilities
- Concern about demands on police and fire services
- Concern about loss of tree canopy
- Evaluate for parks and open spaces needs
- Concern about access to daylight and views from parks and open spaces

Comments:

Are there other topics or issues that should be studied in the SEIS?