

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

- 9 Consider local urban design priorities when zoning changes are made.

Expansion Area Urban Villages

Columbia City

Crown Hill

Green Lake / Roosevelt

North Beacon Hill

Othello

Rainier Beach

NE 130th St

Discussion themes

Infrastructure

Infrastructure investments should accompany growth that is enabled by the MHA zoning changes. Infrastructure upgrades should happen as urban village boundaries are expanded. Sidewalks and transit capacity were discussed as two types of needed infrastructure.

Address displacement

Focus Groups expressed that MHA should seek to address displacement (direct and/or economic). Ensure communities can benefit from investments that are taking place. Consider how displaced persons in an area can access the housing created.

Density near transit

There was strong support for larger zoning increases directly near to transit stations, including at Columbia City, Rainier Beach, Roosevelt, and possibly NE 130th.

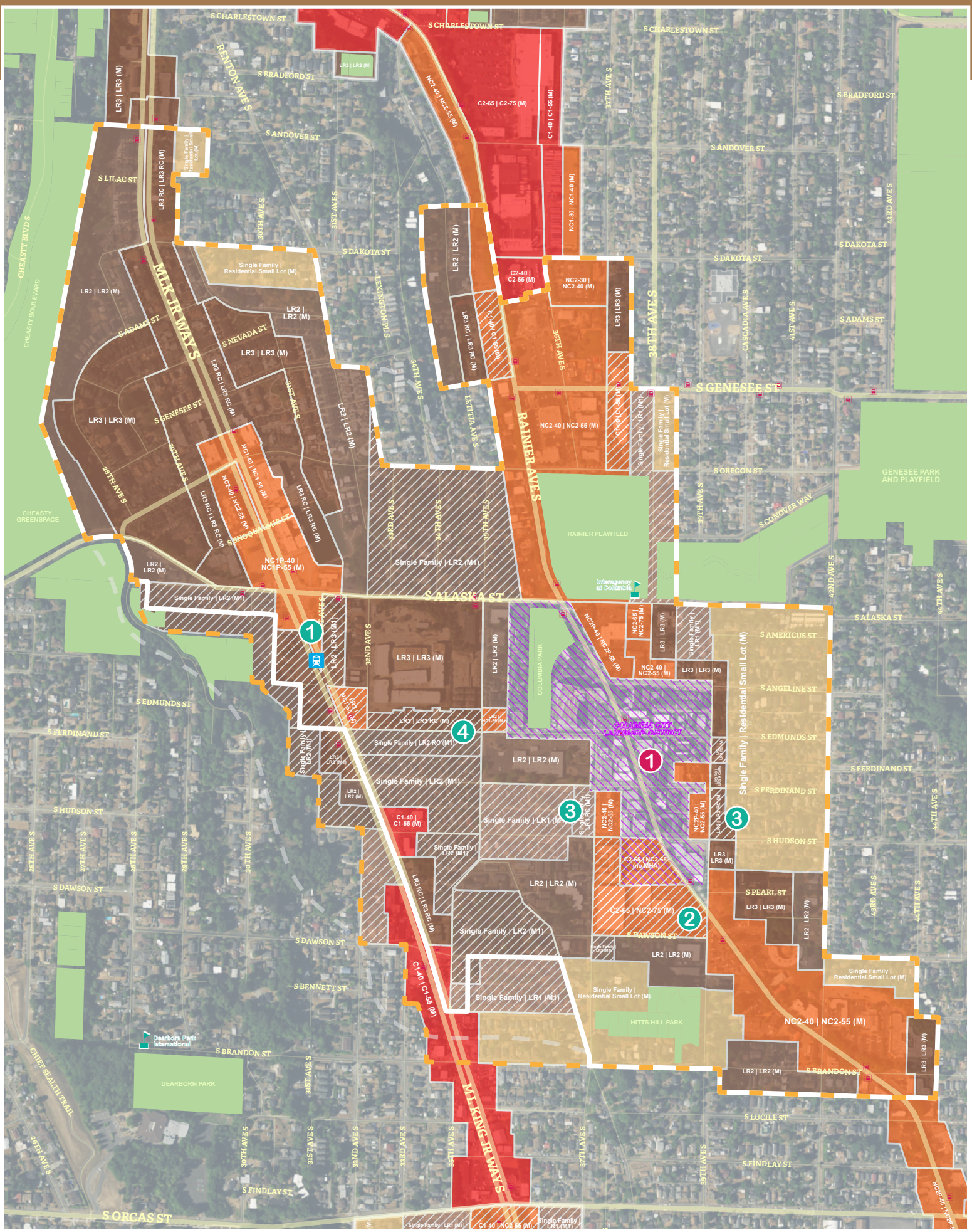
Multi-generational and large households

There was strong support for zoning and development standards to encourage larger housing units to serve a variety of household sizes.

Provide notice

Several focus group members suggested that the City should be sure to provide notice to residents and property owners affected by potential MHA zoning changes.

Columbia City



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Areas right next to the Columbia City light rail station could have larger capacity increases. Consider height limits of 75-foot in appropriate locations.
- 2 Changes from Commercial (C) to Neighborhood (NC) zoning are welcomed.
- 3 Strengthen the business district with some limited additional commercial zoning.
- 4 Make stronger connections between the business district along Rainier Ave S and the Columbia City light rail station, particularly along S Edmunds St, with the addition of some Lowrise-RC zoning.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Columbia City Focus Group members generally supported not applying MHA in the National Register Historic District. Some focus group members believed that MHA could be applied in historic districts if done carefully.

Green Lake / Roosevelt

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



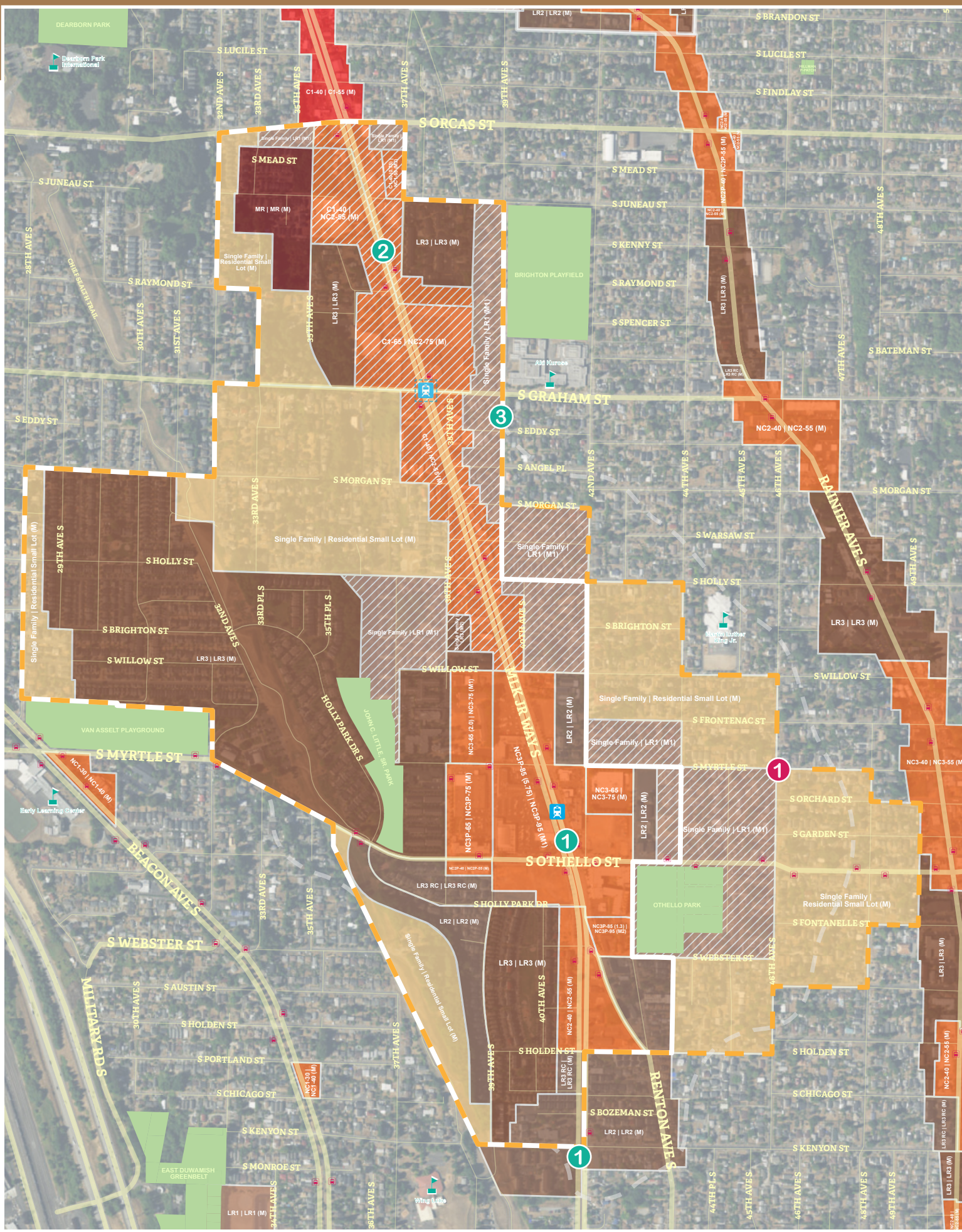
Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Larger zoning increases to (M1) or (M2) amounts could be appropriate near Green Lake Park, consistent with the MHA Principles.
- 2 Support for zoning changes that would allow more people to live in the immediate vicinity of the future Roosevelt light rail station.
- 3 The urban village expansion could extend further to the southwest because an underpass provides a pedestrian connection beneath I-5. This would be consistent MHA Principles for expansion based on the 10-minute walkshed.
- 4 The decommissioned reservoir could be an opportunity for affordable housing if not used for another public purpose. Consider including it within the urban village.
- 5 General support for the addition of Lowrise (LR) zoning in the urban village.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Consider reducing the urban village boundary expansion to the east, limiting it to only along the NE 65th St corridor east of 15th Ave NE.

Othello



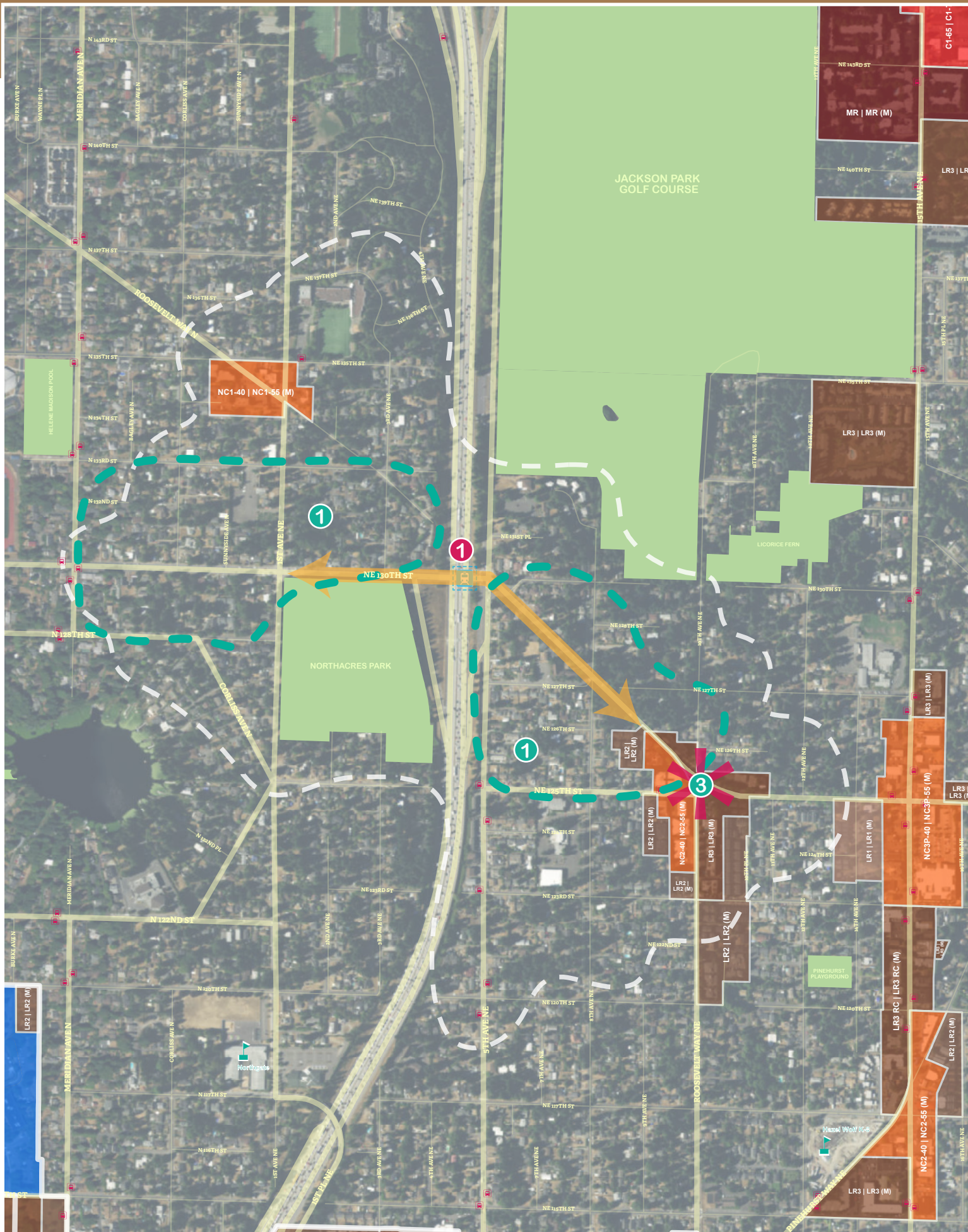
Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Zoning increases could be large near the Othello light rail station and along the MLK Jr Way S corridor, especially in lower Othello along MLK Jr Way S, to take advantage of transit at Othello and Rainier Beach.
- 2 Support for changing existing Commercial (C) zoning to Neighborhood Commercial (NC).
- 3 If a light rail station at S Graham St is added, consider how the urban village boundary could be modified for the presence of the new transit station.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Displacement is a concern for residents of the neighborhood, but some Focus Group members believe reducing the urban village boundary expansions and the amount of potential new housing is not the best way to do it. More housing is needed to address displacement.

NE 130th St



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 There is a lot of potential for more housing and growth into an urban village if Sound Transit builds a light rail station at NE 130th St. However, it is difficult to imagine.
- 2 Upgrades to pedestrian connections would be necessary to support additional growth as an urban village. The blocks in this neighborhood are large and make it difficult to get around the area by walking. The neighborhood needs safe pedestrian connections to schools.
- 3 The intersection of NE 125th St and 15th Ave NE seems like a good location for a neighborhood center in a future urban village.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Even though a new light rail station will not be constructed in the near term, we should consider zoning changes soon to provide affordable housing and anticipate future growth. There should be an MHA zoning proposal for this area.