

Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Implementing Zoning Maps



PRELIMINARY Summary of input from the HALA Community Focus Groups

November 2016



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
AND LIVABILITY AGENDA



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

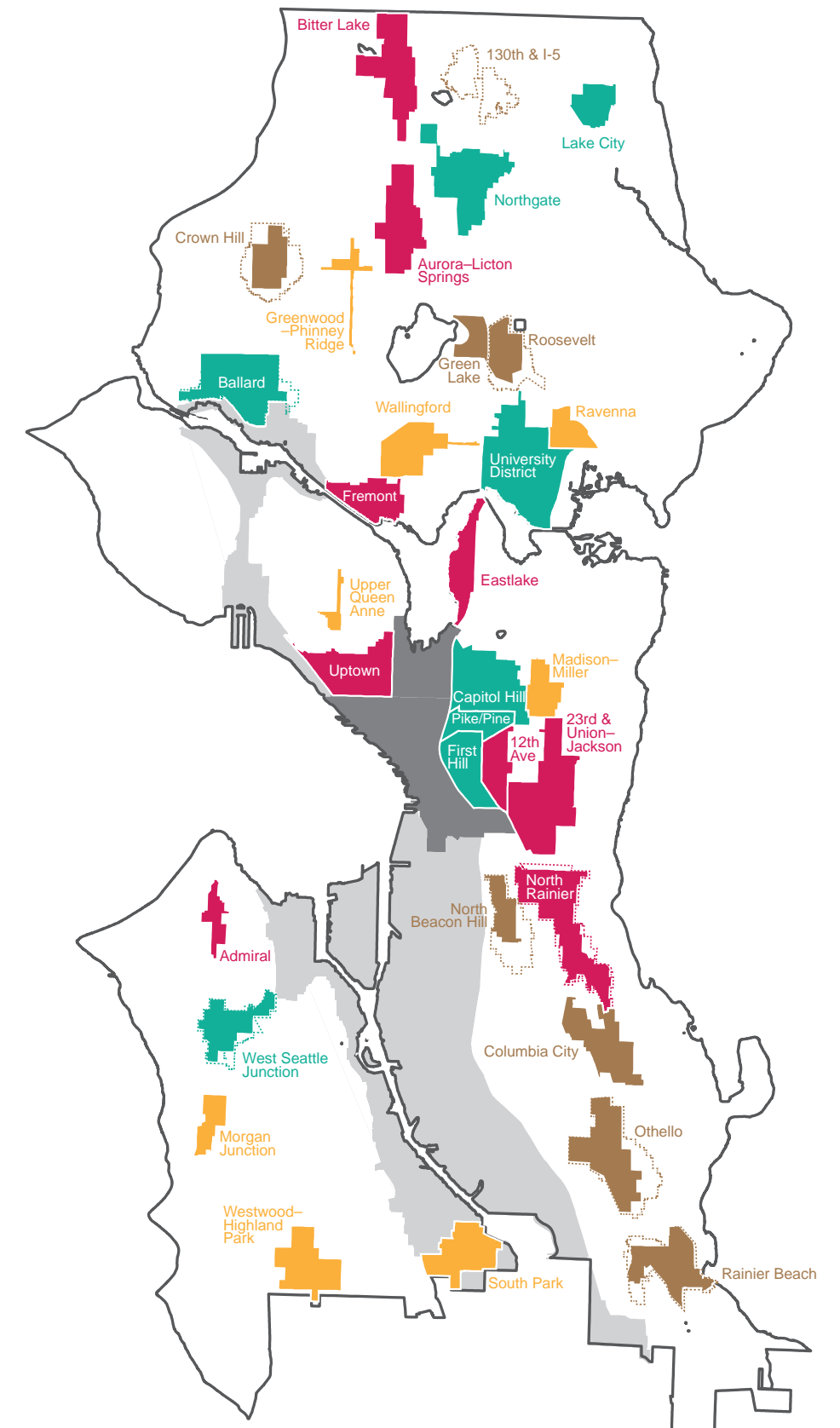
- a Implement the urban village expansions using 10-minute walksheds similar to those shown in the draft Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update.
- b Implement urban village expansions recommended in Seattle 2035 but with modifications to the 10-minute walkshed informed by local community members. Consider 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.



Lower Density Urban Villages

Greenwood–Phinney Ridge

Madison–Miller

Morgan Junction

Ravenna*

South Park

Upper Queen Anne

Wallingford

Westwood–Highland Park

Magnolia**
outside area

Sand Point**
outside area

* The Focus Group did not review a map for Ravenna because parts of Ravenna are being considered as part of a more in-depth [University District planning process](#).

** Because these areas are not urban villages, the Focus Group did not review maps of Magnolia and Sand Point. An interactive map of draft MHA zone changes for all areas, including areas outside urban villages, is available at www.Seattle.gov/HALA.

Discussion themes

Context

Focus Group members emphasized that the City should consider local context (physical, socio-economic, cultural) when implementing MHA, including zone choices and development standards for specific areas.

Review urban village geographies

It was noted that some of the urban villages in this focus group are drawn with narrow boundaries (e.g., Greenwood–Phinney Ridge, Upper Queen Anne, and portions of Wallingford). This presents challenges creating transitions and limits opportunities for more housing. Consider a review of urban village geographies for more consistency.

Infrastructure

Investments in infrastructure (transportation, services, wastewater, etc.) should be made along with growth to ensure services keep up with proposed increases in development.

Transitions

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

More housing in strong market areas

Some Focus Group members stressed the importance of relatively larger MHA zoning increases in areas with strong markets in order to expand housing opportunity in high-demand locations.

Provide notice about zoning and urban villages

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.

Support affordable housing in smaller-scale buildings owned by local landlords

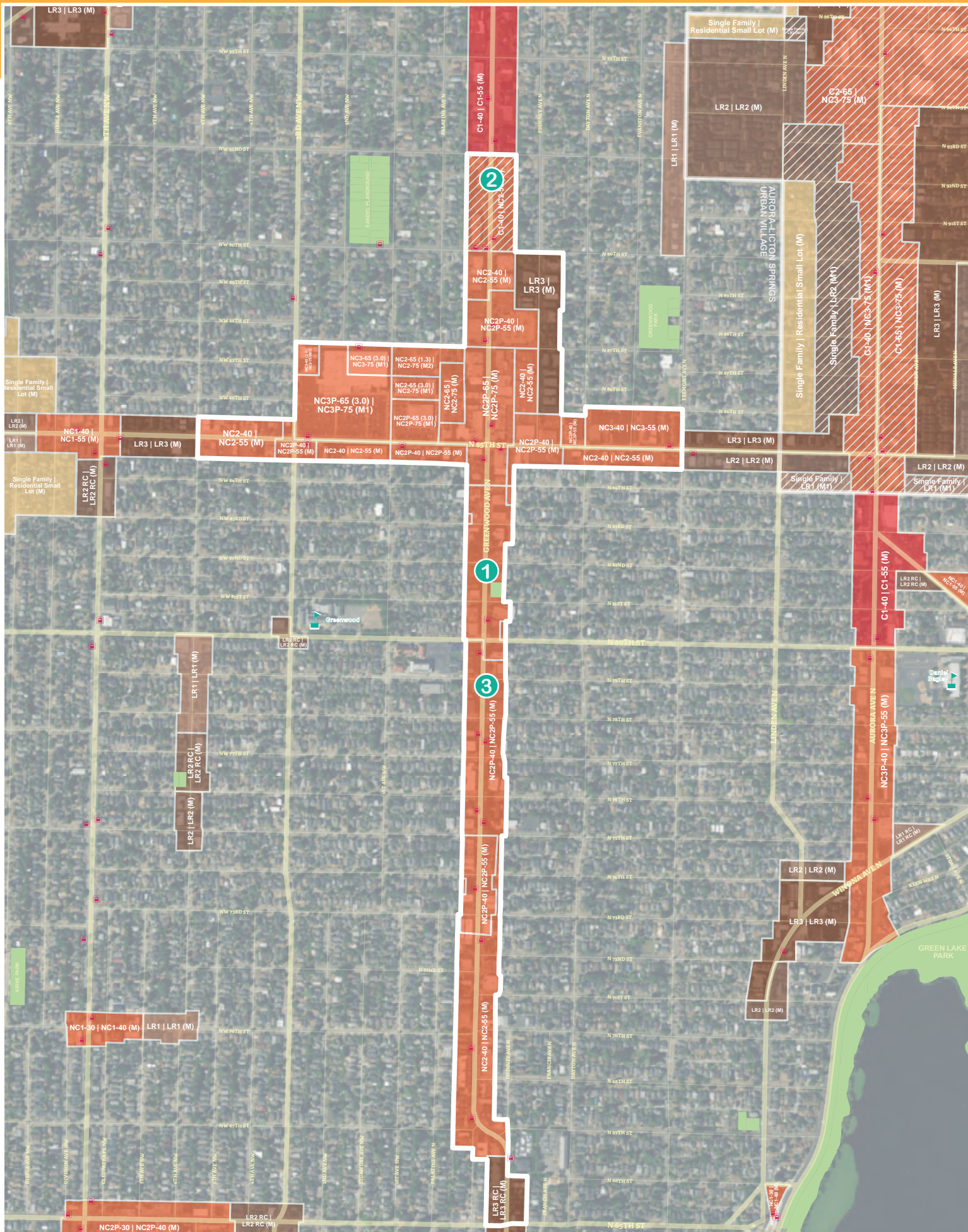
Focus Group members discussed how small scale existing housing, often owned by local landlords, is a good source of lower-cost housing. Explore how MHA funds can incentivize provision of affordable housing in existing small-scale housing.

South Park has unique conditions

South Park was discussed as being distinct from other urban villages because of its proximity to industrial areas, high displacement risk, and few direct connections to other urban villages. Consider giving special consideration to how MHA is applied in South Park.

Greenwood–Phinney Ridge

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



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

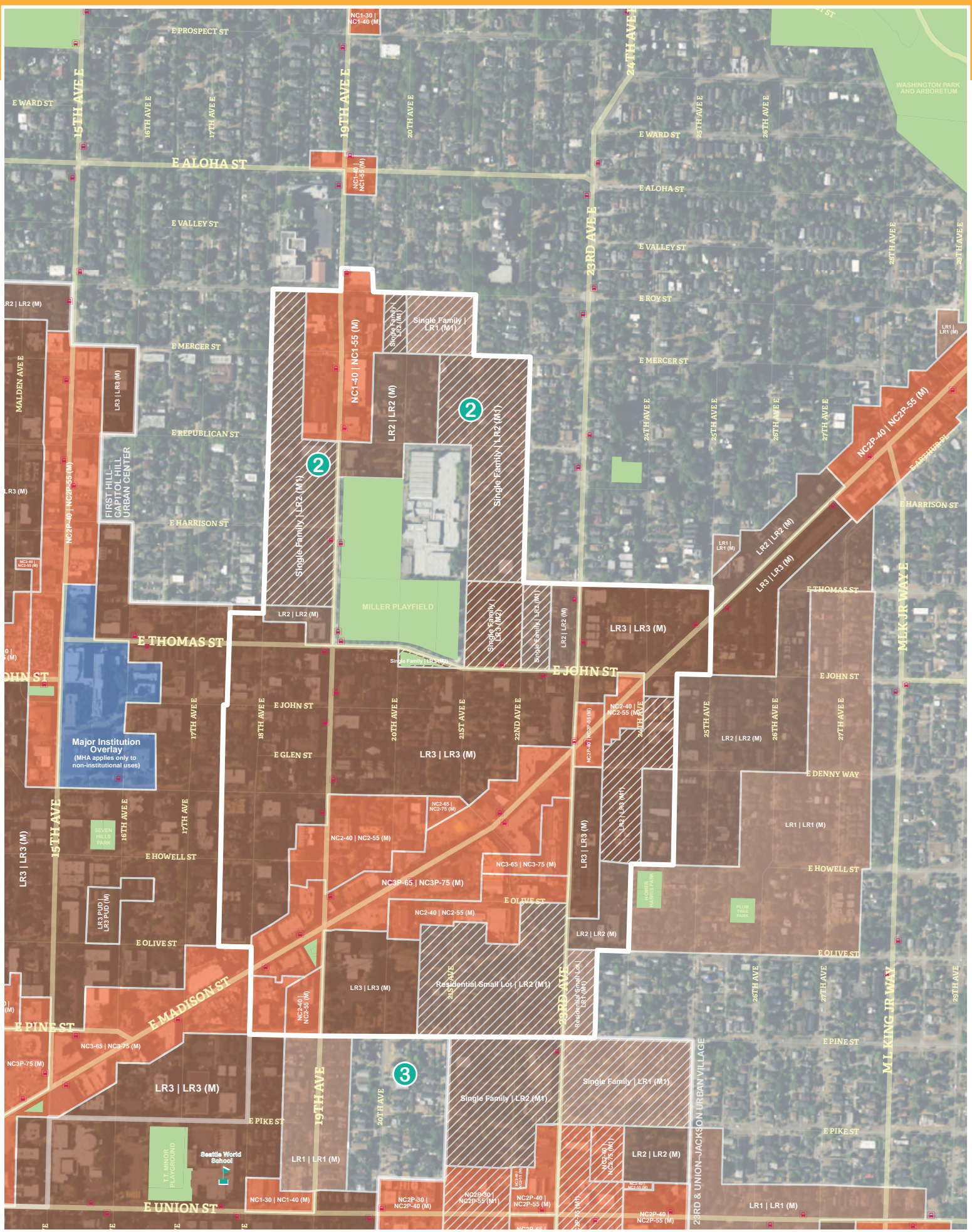
- 1 The urban village boundary is drawn very narrowly. Consider expanding the urban village to a watershed in order to establish a more logical urban village extent and create more opportunities for housing.
- 2 The change from Commercial (C) to Neighborhood Commercial (NC) at the north edge of the urban village seems appropriate to support a walkable neighborhood.
- 3 General support for the increase in Neighborhood Commercial areas to NC-55. However, buildings taller than the five stories allowed by the NC-55 designation might be out of scale with context on Greenwood Ave N and could create abrupt relationships with adjacent areas.

Varied Opinions

Madison–Miller

Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 This is a very good area for zoning that allows more housing because there is clearly a high demand.
- 2 There is general support among Focus Group members for the changes to Lowrise multifamily from Single Family zoning in the vicinity of Miller Playfield.
- 3 The Focus Group found it odd to retain small areas of Single Family zoning outside, but surrounded by, urban villages, such as the area along 20th Ave.



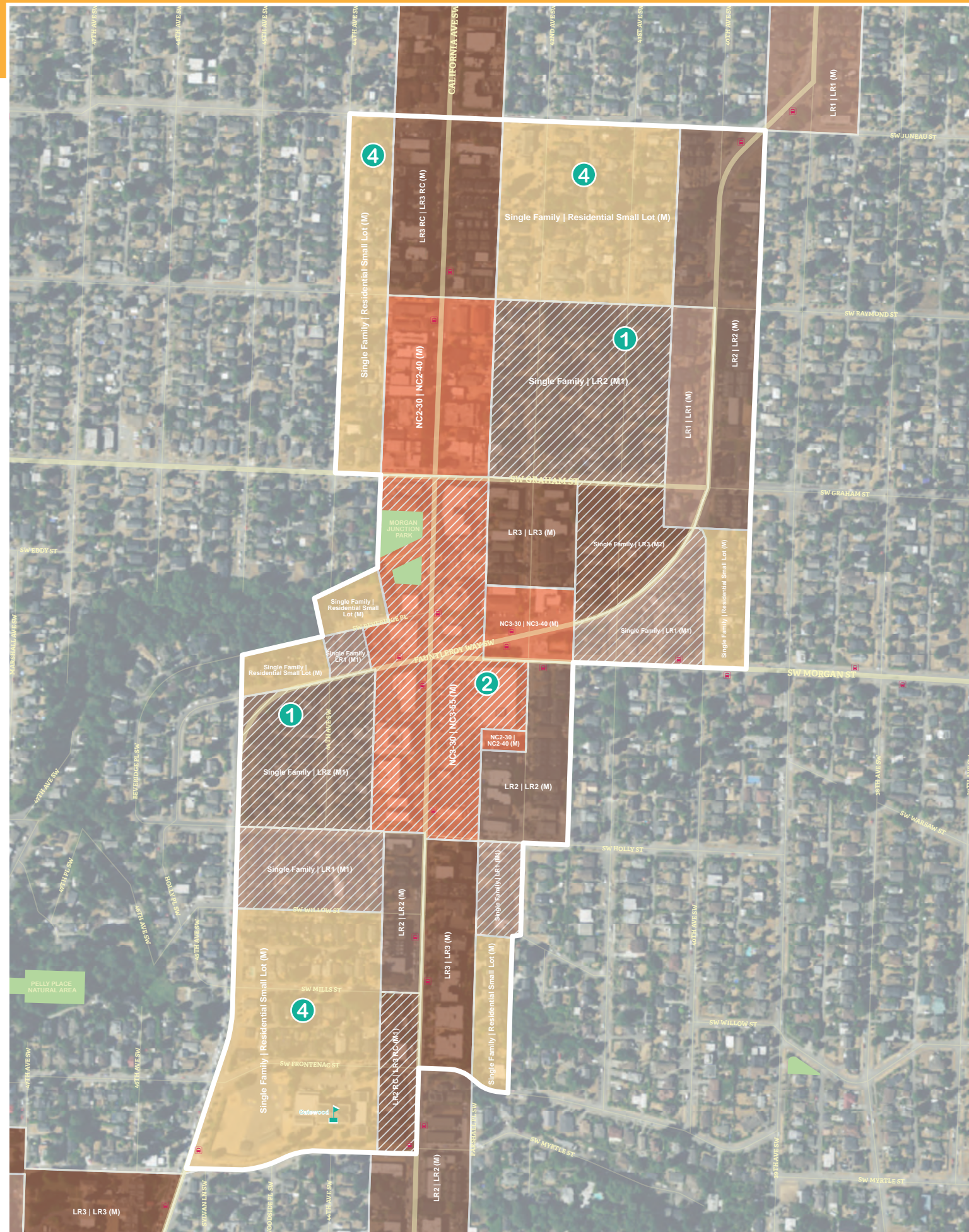
Varied Opinions

Morgan Junction

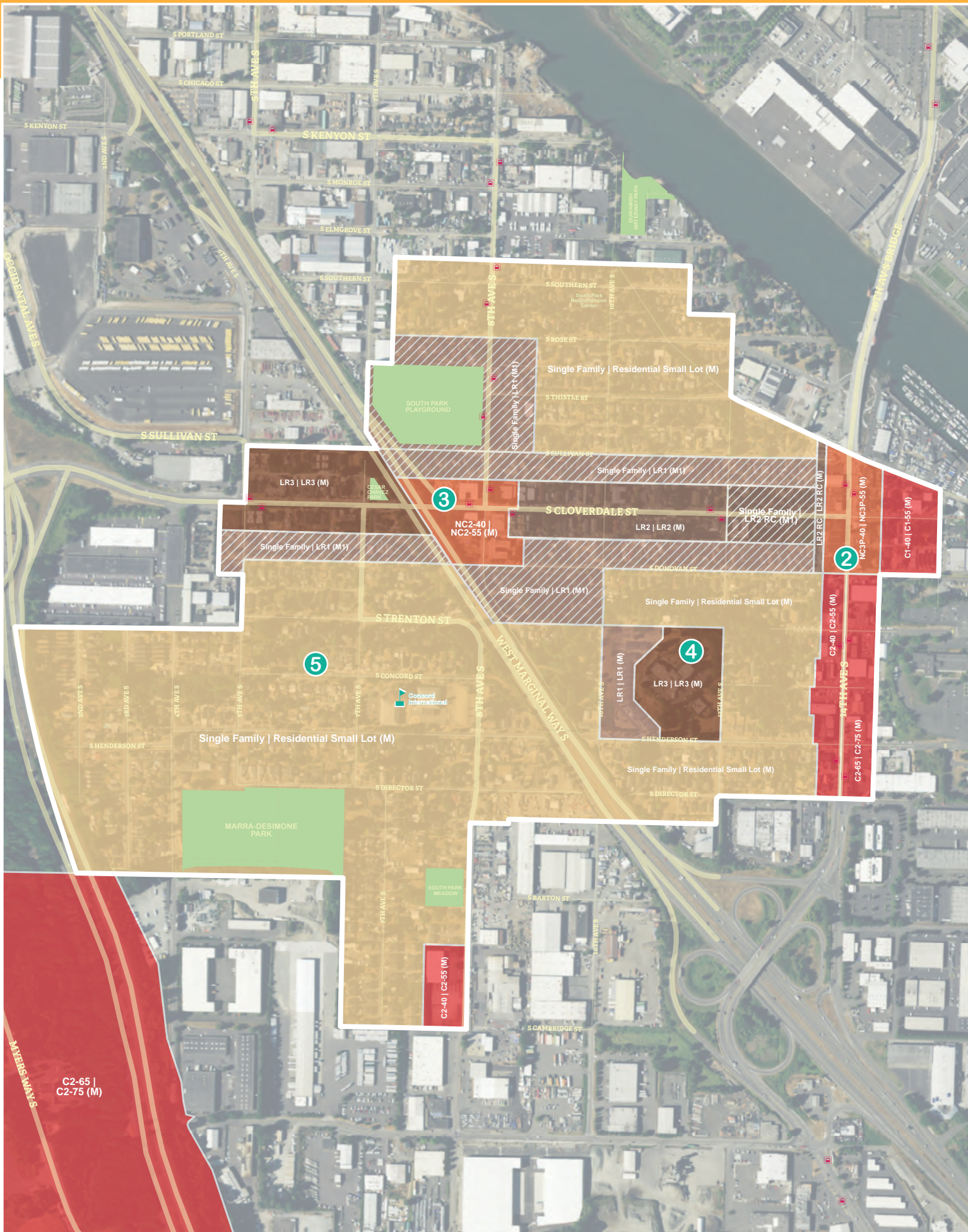
Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1** Make sure to provide notice to residents. Many Morgan Junction residents are seniors and may not be aware of possible MHA zoning changes. This is most important in areas changing to Lowrise (LR) from Single Family in this neighborhood.
- 2** General support for the increase to NC-55 in the center of the business district. However, even if the zoning changes, redevelopment could take a number of years to become viable here.
- 3** When making zoning changes, consider parking and traffic congestion due to ferry traffic to and from Fauntleroy.
- 4** General support for the transition to Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning at the edges of the neighborhood.

Varied Opinions



South Park



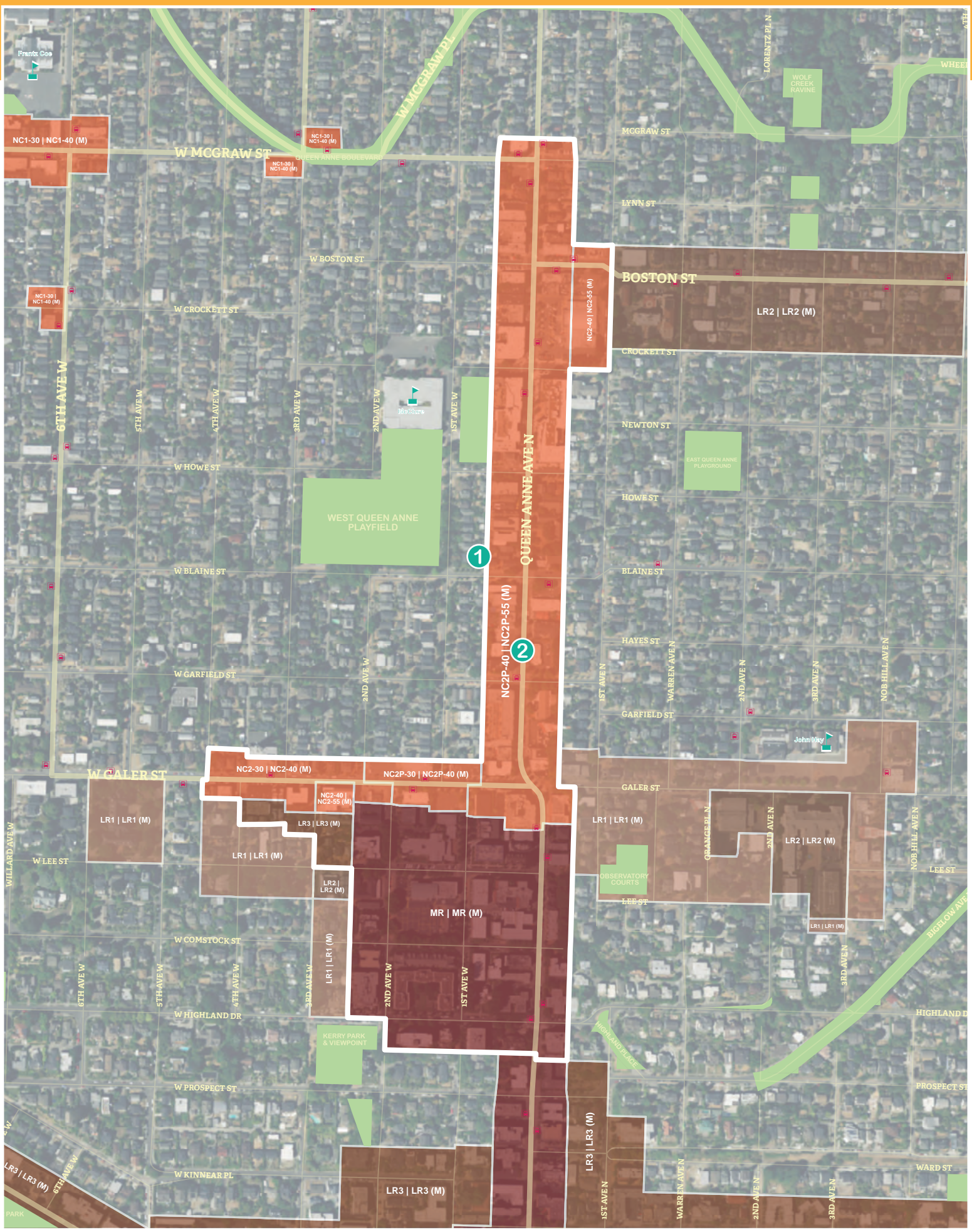
Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Applying MHA zoning changes in South Park may require a different approach because South Park has unique constraints, including limited connectivity to other neighborhoods, adjacency to an industrial area, and high displacement risk.
- 2 There are vacant businesses in the commercial core of South Park. MHA zoning changes should consider how to support the business district. Consider more Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning near S Cloverdale St and 10th Ave S to strengthen the business district.
- 3 The area near S Cloverdale St and 8th Ave S is not a good location for additional mixed-use development. Don't encourage a neighborhood center here.
- 4 Consider connecting the existing multifamily housing at S Henderson St and 12th Ave S with other multifamily and mixed-use areas in the neighborhood.
- 5 Many of the existing single family zoned lots in the area already small lots. The change to RSL would not be a big change. Consider how the change would affect longtime homeowners.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Some Focus Group members suggest that, because South Park has unique constraints (see 1 above), the City should consider not applying MHA in the near term in this urban village. Other Focus Group members seemed to support MHA in the neighborhood.

Upper Queen Anne

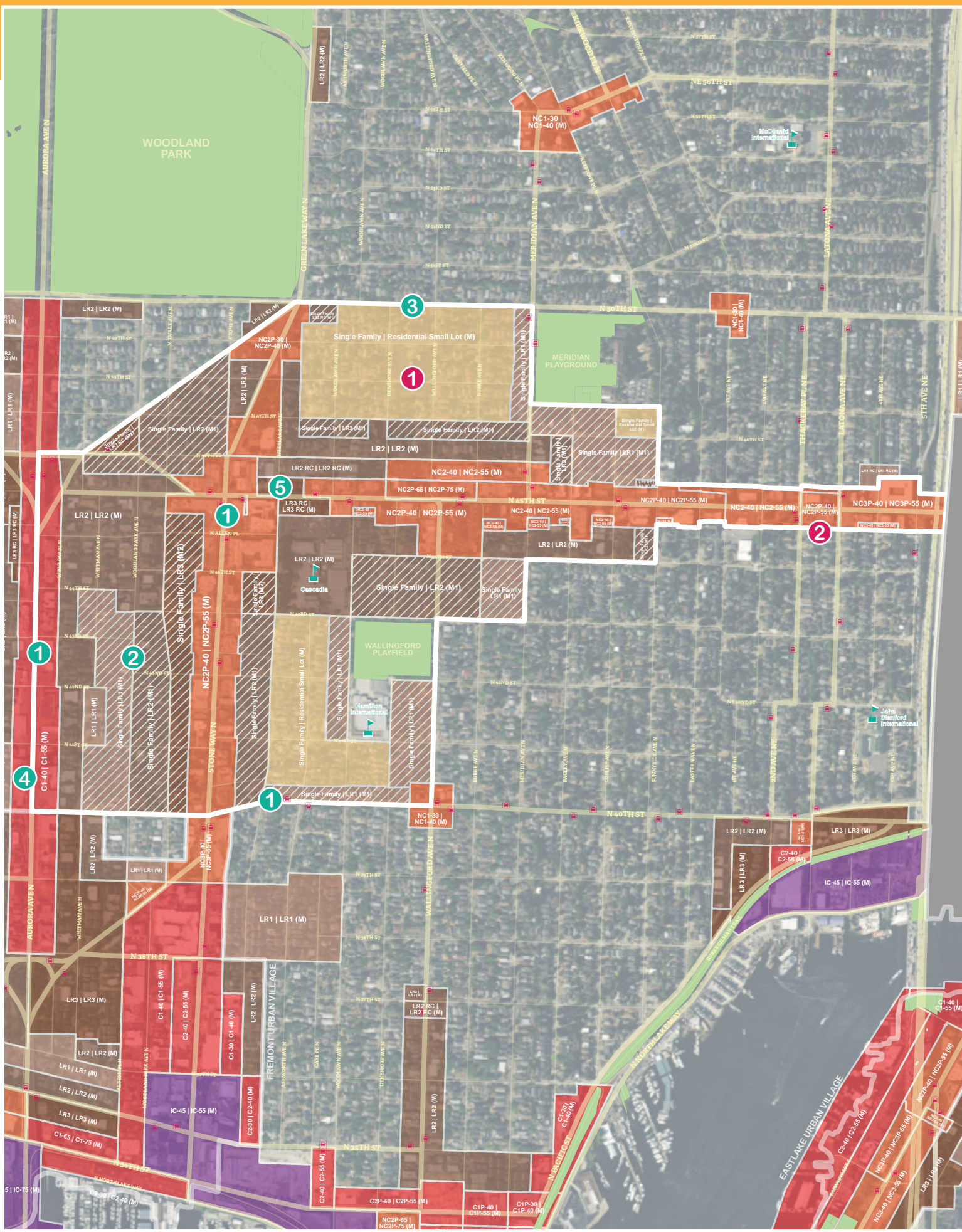


Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 The urban village boundary is drawn very narrowly. Consider expanding the urban village to a walkshed in order to establish a more logical urban village extent and create more opportunities for housing.
- 2 Transitions are important because the proposed NC-55 zoning would be adjacent to single family zoning. Consider development standards or other measures to preserve a step-down for new buildings along Queen Anne Ave N.

Varied Opinions

Wallingford

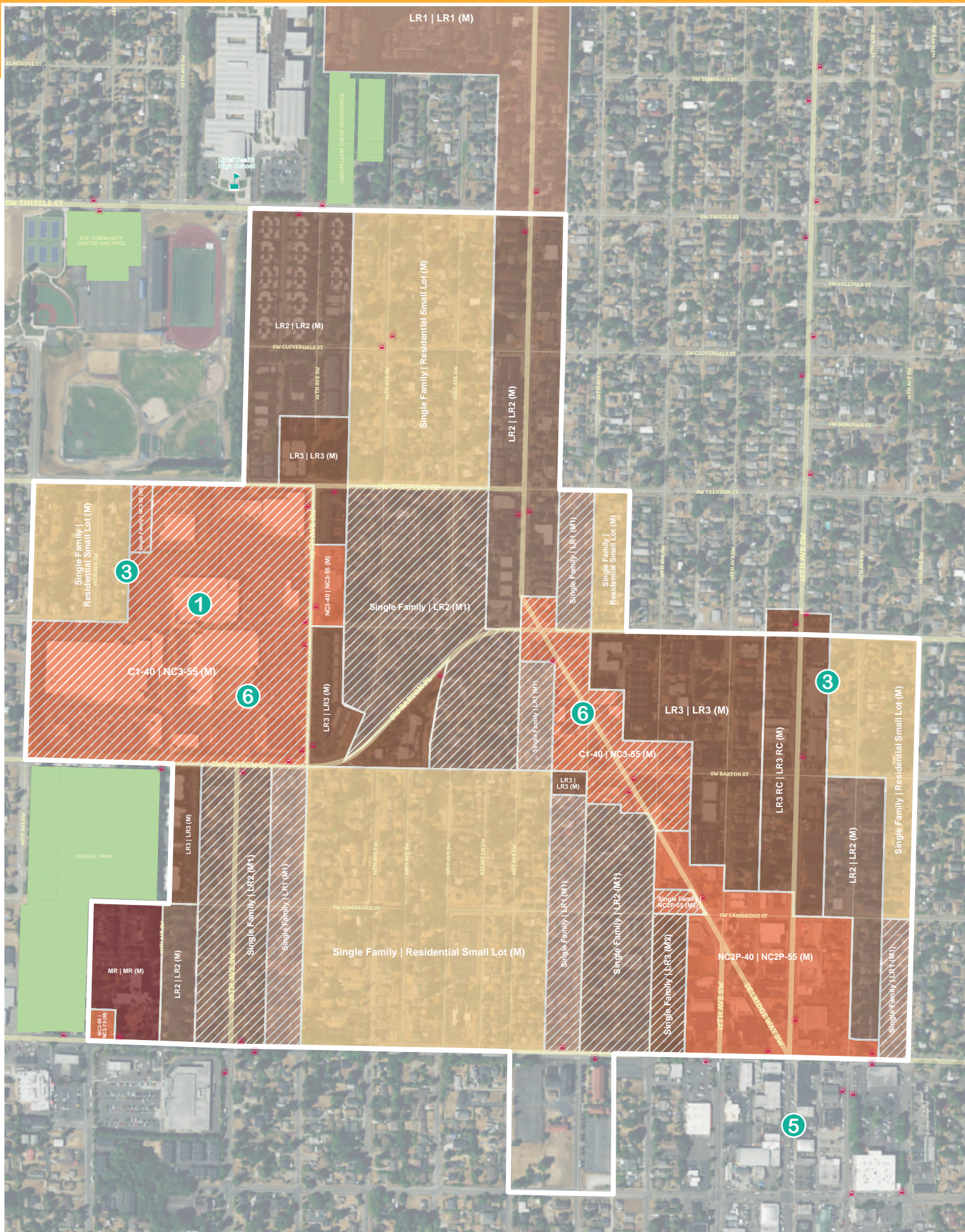


Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 Consider the location of transit when making MHA zoning changes to add more housing. Good transit is present on Stone Way, Aurora Ave N, and N 40th St. Transit on N 45th St is slow due to traffic congestion.
- 2 Focus Group members generally support multifamily zoning in the area located between Aurora Ave N and Stone Way along Midvale and Woodlawn Avenues. It is well served by transit and well located for more housing.
- 3 It could be challenging to locate higher-density development along N 50th St because access from the roadway would be difficult and there is no transit.
- 4 Consider ways to create safe connections across Aurora Ave N to the Fremont neighborhood as growth occurs in the vicinity.
- 5 Consider extending the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning along N 45th St near Stone Way where there is a portion of the frontage that remains Lowrise multifamily zoning.

Varied Opinions

- 1 Some Focus Group members suggested additional Lowrise multifamily zoning in areas proposed for Residential Small Lot (RSL). Others felt a transition to RSL was appropriate.
- 2 Consider increasing the depth of the urban village along the N 45th St corridor at the east end of the urban village.



Comments & Suggestions — Generally Supported

- 1 The site of the big box retail is a good opportunity to add additional housing by building above retail or adding housing where surface parking lots exist today. Consider a larger MHA zoning increase to support this concept.
- 2 Parts of the urban village lack good access to transportation options. Make upgrades to transportation for multiple modes (transit, walking, biking) to support growth. Consider an enhanced transit center at the Rapid Ride station.
- 3 Provide gentle transitions. Several locations propose Lowrise 3 or Neighborhood Commercial zoning adjacent to Residential Small Lot zoning.
- 4 There are few parks or open spaces directly within the urban village. Consider opportunities to add these assets.
- 5 Consider how the urban village would work in tandem with White Center, if White Center were annexed by the City of Seattle. The Delridge Way and 10th Ave SW corridors could become the neighborhood center.
- 6 General support for the proposed addition of Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning.

Varied Opinions