

# U DISTRICT URBAN DESIGN DEIS PUBLIC HEARING



Seattle Department of Planning and Development  
May 20, 2014



# Overview

Planning context

EIS proposed action

EIS alternatives

Example impacts and mitigation



# Planning Efforts

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## U District Partnership

- U District Next (2012-2013)
- Strategic Plan (2013)
- Non-profit community organization (ongoing)
- Alley activation (2014)
- Open Space Forum (2014)

## Urban Design Framework (DPD, 2013)

- Streetscape designs (2014)
- Comp Plan amendments (2015)
- Zoning (2015)
- Design guidelines (2016?)



# Community Participation

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## Urban Design Working Group

- A year of meetings to develop & review recommendations.
- Participants: residents, developers, businesses, UW, social services, City staff...

## Broader public input

- Walking tours
- U District Next
- Open House
- 150+ meetings





# What is an Urban Design Framework?

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A shared community vision for coordinated improvements in a neighborhood

Consider the full range of physical factors: streets, parks, buildings, etc.

A conceptual plan to guide specific policy changes



# UDF: Guiding Principles

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Recognize light rail as a catalyst for change

Balance regional influences with local character

Provide a network of great streets and public spaces

Grow and diversify jobs

Welcome a diversity of residents

Improve public safety

Encourage quality and variety in the built environment

Build an environmentally sustainable neighborhood

Improve integration between UW and the U District

Support walking, biking, and transit

# UDF: Building Height

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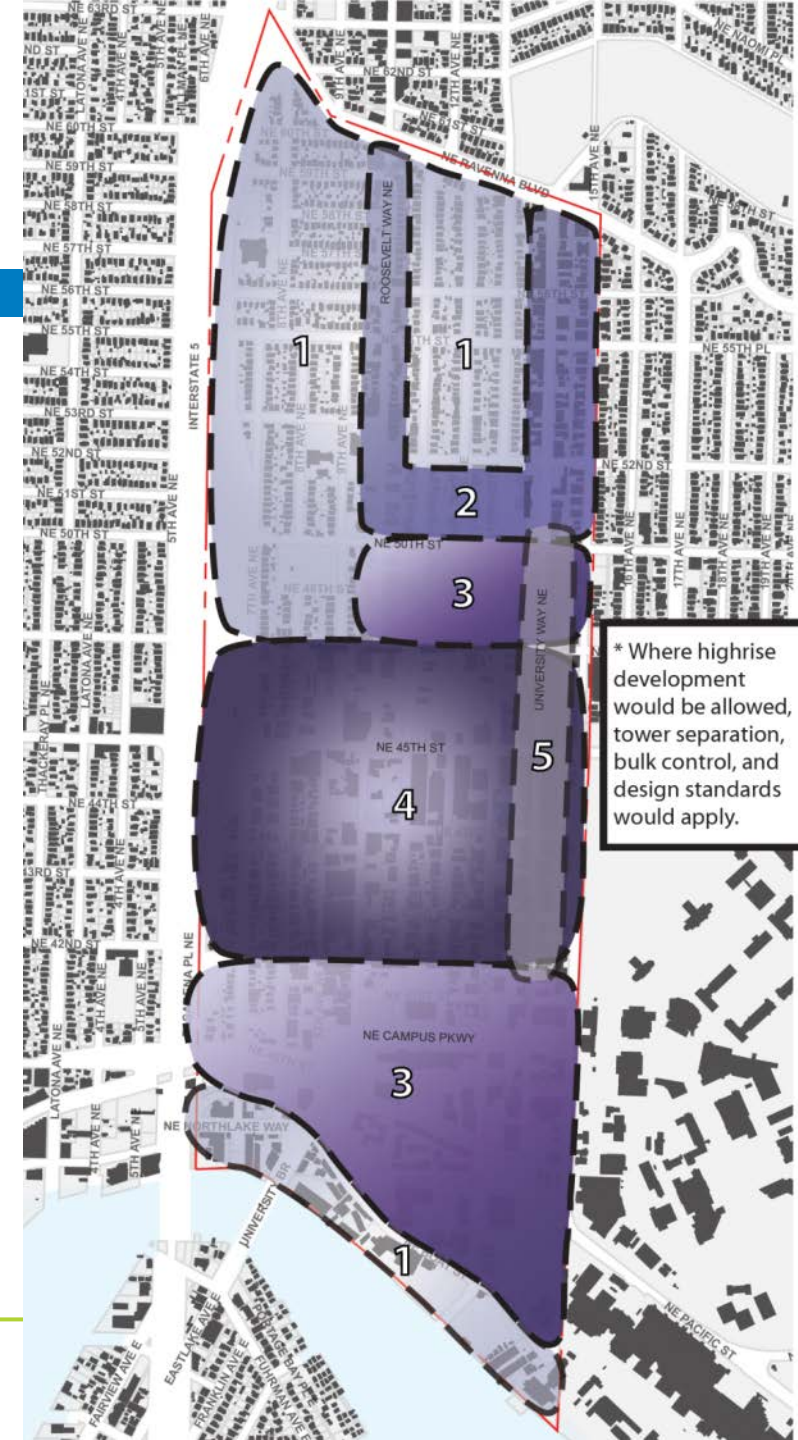
Lowrise in the north, highrise in the core (160'-300')

Rationale: increase variety of buildings, focus growth, provide public benefits

Standards: tower separation, bulk control...

Mixed opinions about the Ave

Concern from some northern neighbors





# Draft EIS

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## DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement

*for the*

### U District Urban Design Alternatives



City of Seattle  
Department of Planning & Development

April 24, 2014



# Programmatic SEPA Review

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## Purpose

- ◆ Disclose environmental information to inform plan-level decisions

## Project Area

- ◆ Typically subarea or jurisdiction-wide

## Level of Detail

- ◆ Analysis is broad and cumulative
- ◆ Sufficient to support policy decisions by Mayor/Council

## Future Use

- ◆ Platform for future SEPA plan-level and site-specific review

ISSUE DETERMINATION  
OF SIGNIFICANCE &  
SCOPING NOTICE



CONDUCT SEPA  
SCOPING



PREPARE DRAFT EIS



ISSUE DRAFT EIS



DRAFT EIS PUBLIC  
COMMENT PERIOD

WE  
ARE  
HERE



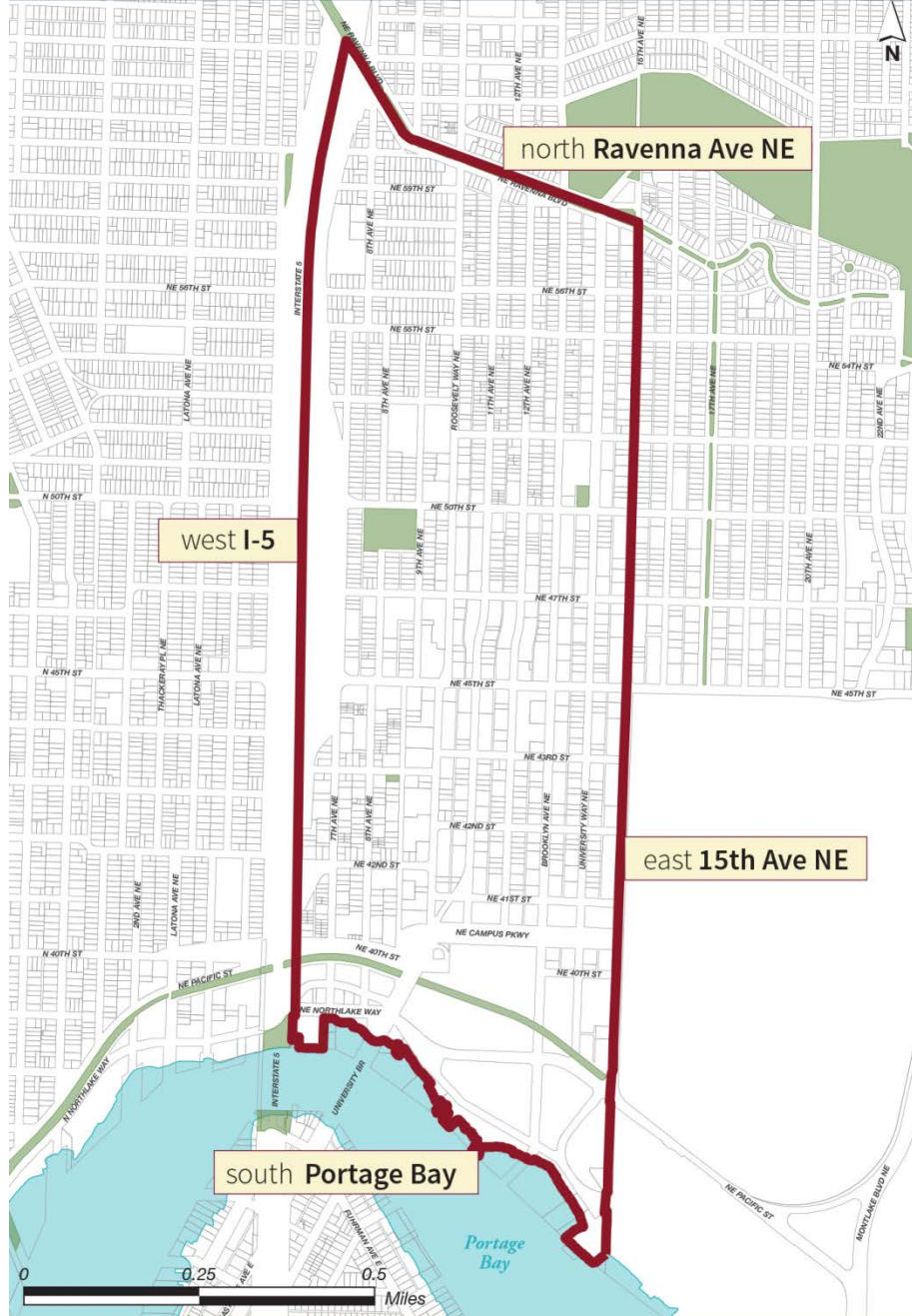
PREPARE FINAL EIS



ISSUE FINAL EIS



CITY ACTION



# Proposed Action

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code

Incentive program for affordable housing and public amenities

New development standards



# Alternatives

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**2 Action Alternatives** assume different code standards

**1 No-Action Alternative** assumes growth under current Land Use Code

All alternatives **assume same growth**

No-Action Alternative establishes **baseline**

## Planning Estimates for Growth

**3,900**  
Housing Units



**4,800**  
Jobs

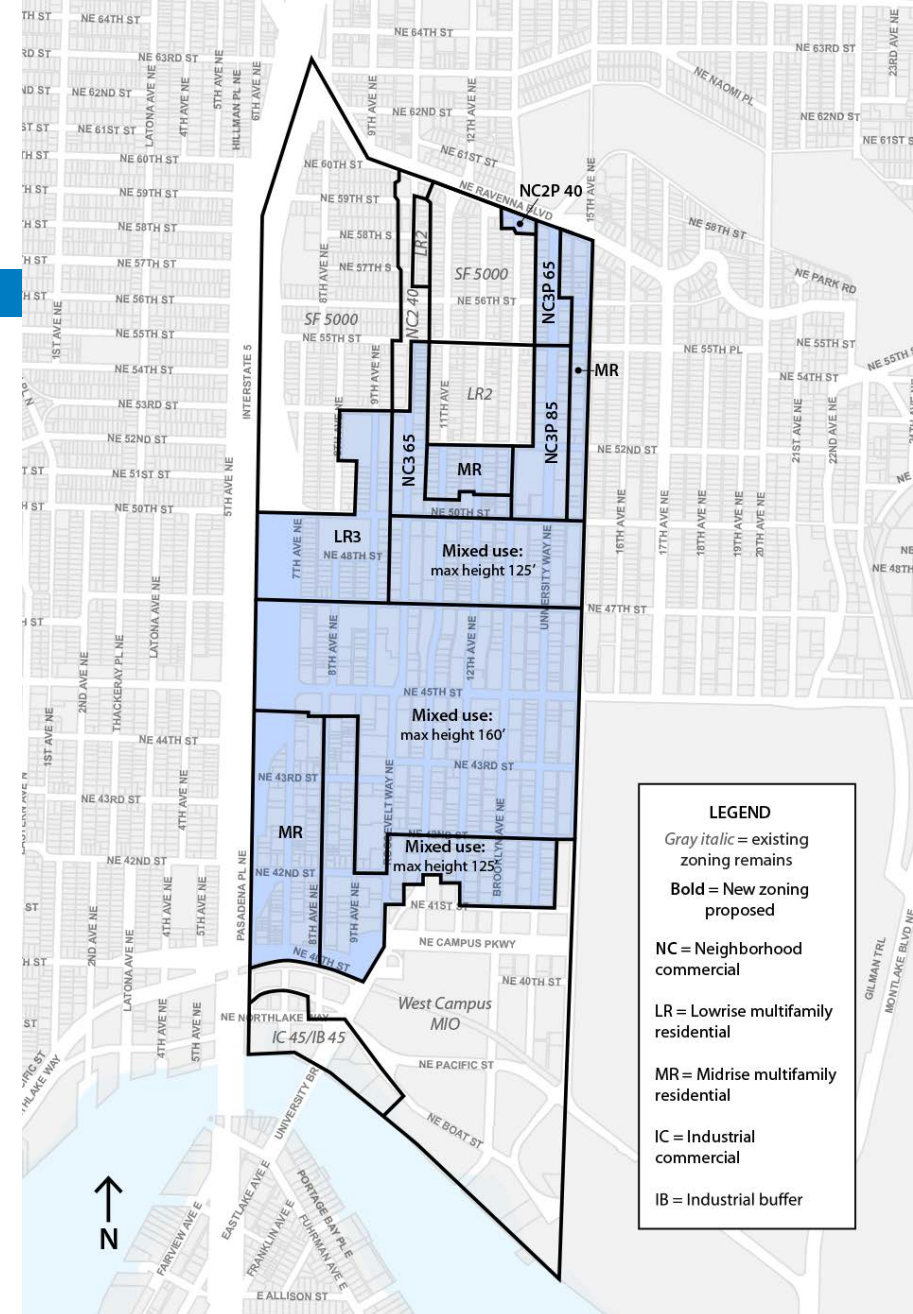


# Alternative 1

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## Lower high-rises in moderately dispersed pattern

- ◆ More dispersed than Alt 2
- ◆ More concentrated than Alt 3
- ◆ Maximum heights 125 to 160 feet (on the Ave too)
- ◆ Mid-rise development north of 50th
- ◆ High-rise buildings closer together
- ◆ Landscaped setbacks + widened sidewalks



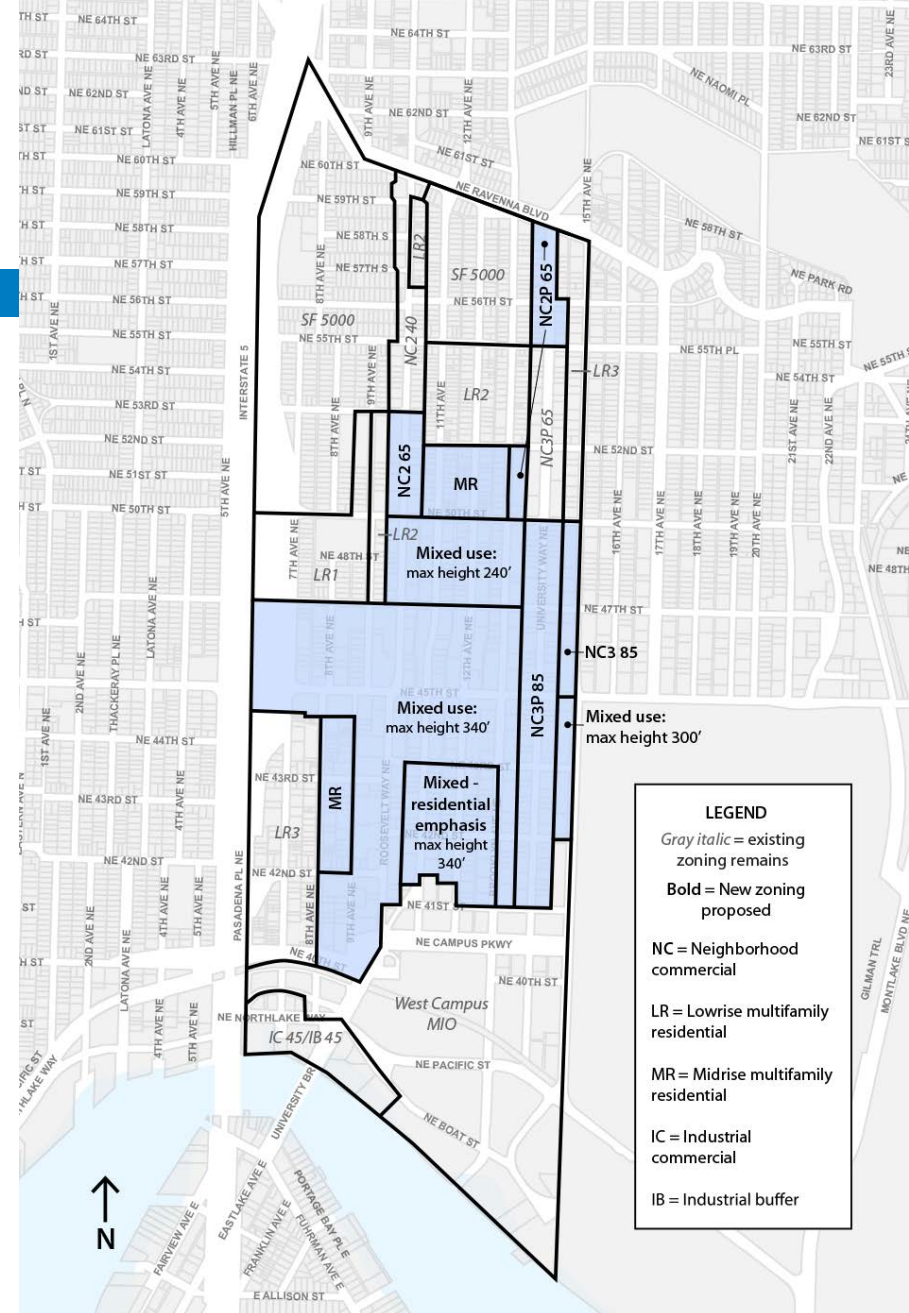


# Alternative 2

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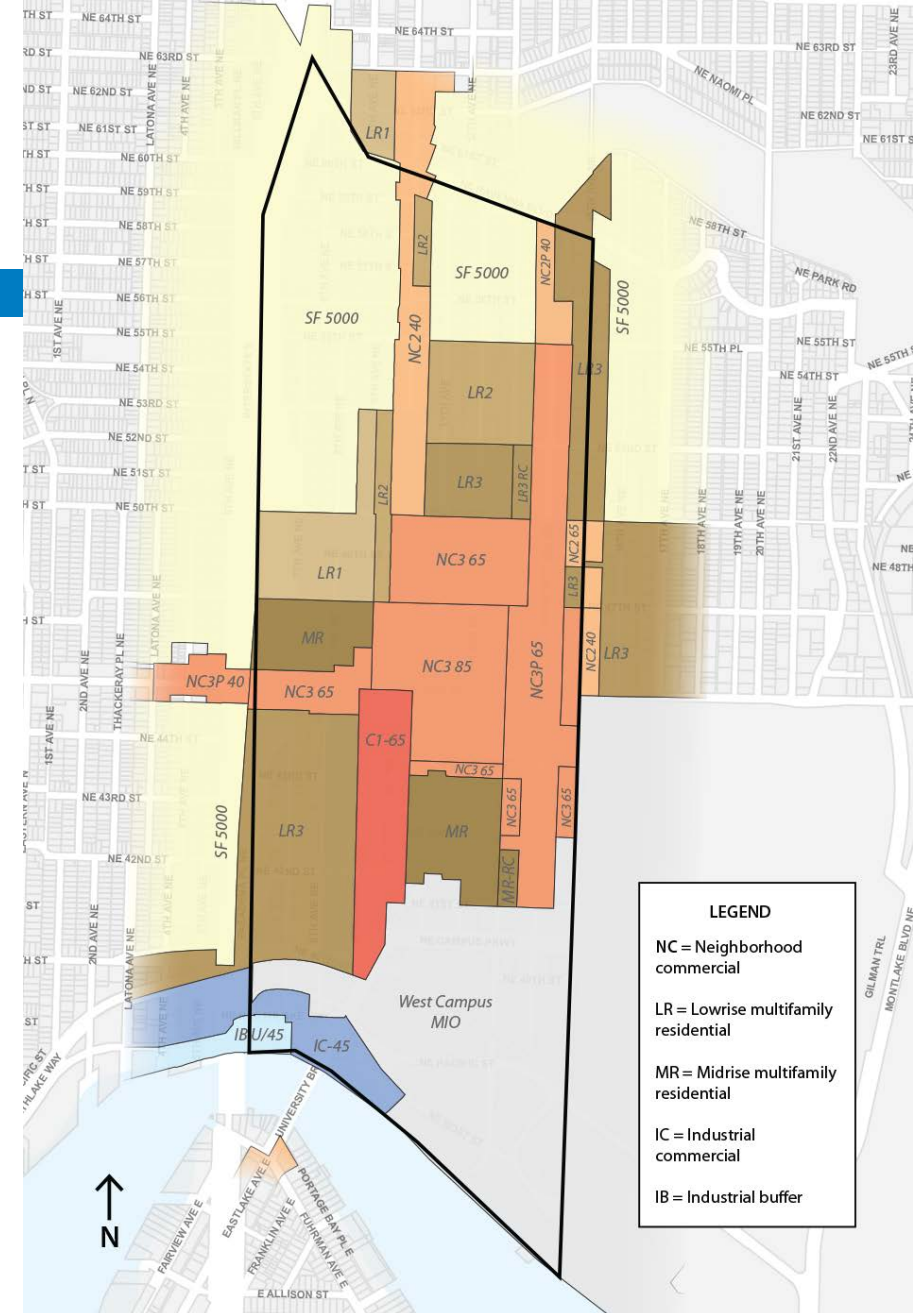
## Taller high-rises concentrated around transit center

- ◆ Greatest heights & growth in core area
- ◆ Maximum building heights 240 to 340 feet in core area
- ◆ Reduced appearance of bulk and more separation, compared to Alt 1
- ◆ Along the Ave heights 65 to 85 feet — much less than Alt 1
- ◆ Fewer zoning changes north of 50th, compared to Alt 1
- ◆ Area-specific and landscaped setbacks + widened sidewalks



## 14

- ◆ Retains existing zoning
- ◆ No increased potential for building heights
- ◆ Development pattern most dispersed of all alternatives — new mid-rise buildings extend further north





# Alternative 1

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Lower high-rises in moderately dispersed pattern





# Alternative 2

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Taller high-rises concentrated around transit center

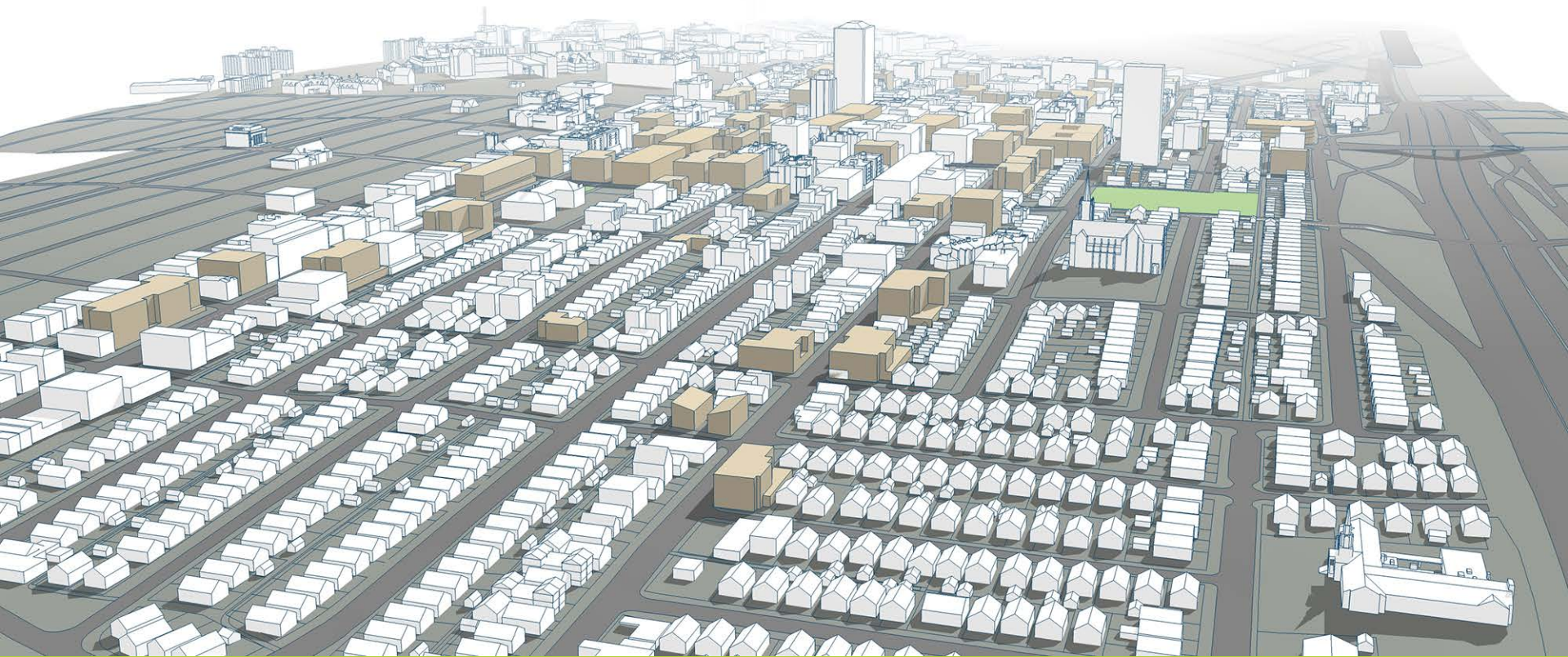




# Alternative 3

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Retain existing zoning designations and standards





# Elements of the Environment

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Land Use/Plans & Policies

**Population, Housing, Employment**

**Aesthetics**

Historic Resources

**Transportation**

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

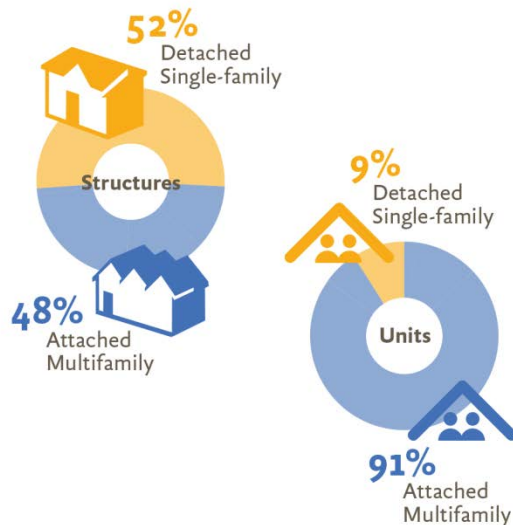
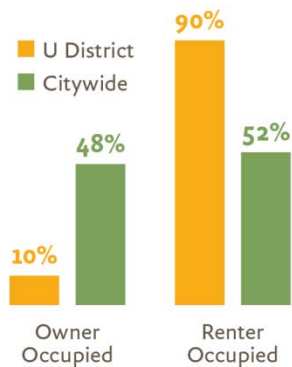
**Open Space & Recreation**

Public Services

Utilities

# Housing

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## Supply

- ◆ Capacity exceeds growth estimates
- ◆ Action alternatives increase multifamily housing capacity

## Affordability

- ◆ Lowest cost rentals likely replaced by higher cost units
- ◆ Action alternatives decrease extent of housing demolition, fitting household growth into fewer development sites
- ◆ By square foot, new construction costs more and will rent for more

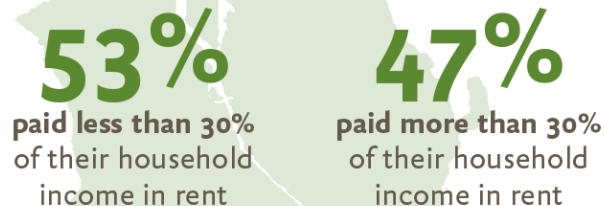
# Housing

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In 2011, of U District study area residents...



In 2011, of all Seattle residents...



## Mitigating Measures

Housing affordability a major challenge

### Possible Actions

- ◆ Expand geographic eligibility of MFTE program
- ◆ Expand incentive zoning
- ◆ Direct funding to build and preserve affordable housing units



# Aesthetics

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## Impacts

- ◆ Height, Bulk and Scale
- ◆ Shadows
- ◆ Light and Glare

## Mitigation

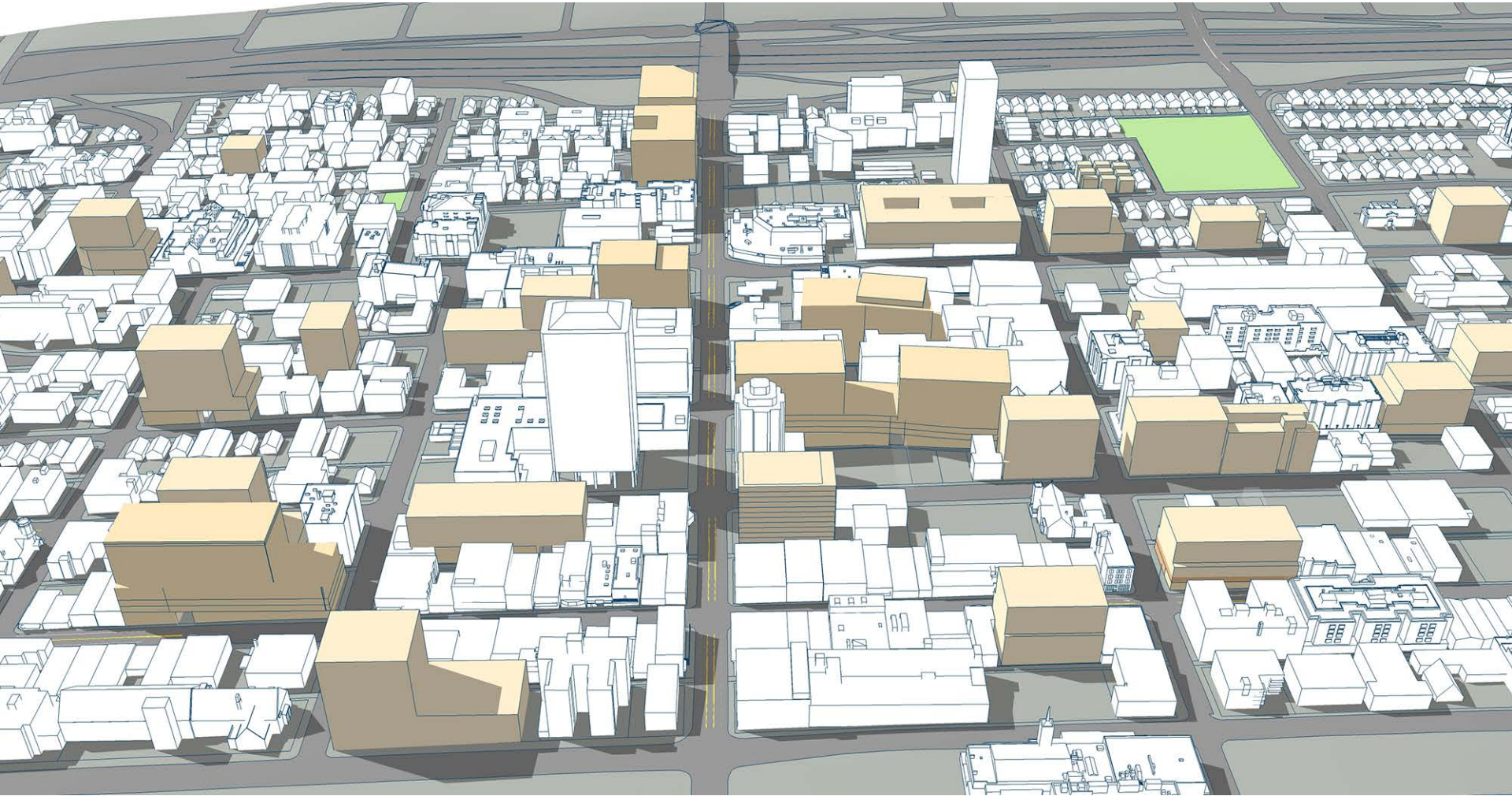
- ◆ Employ measure from Seattle Municipal Code 25.05.665 and U District Urban Design Framework



# Aesthetics

ALTERNATIVE 1 Lower high-rises in moderately dispersed pattern

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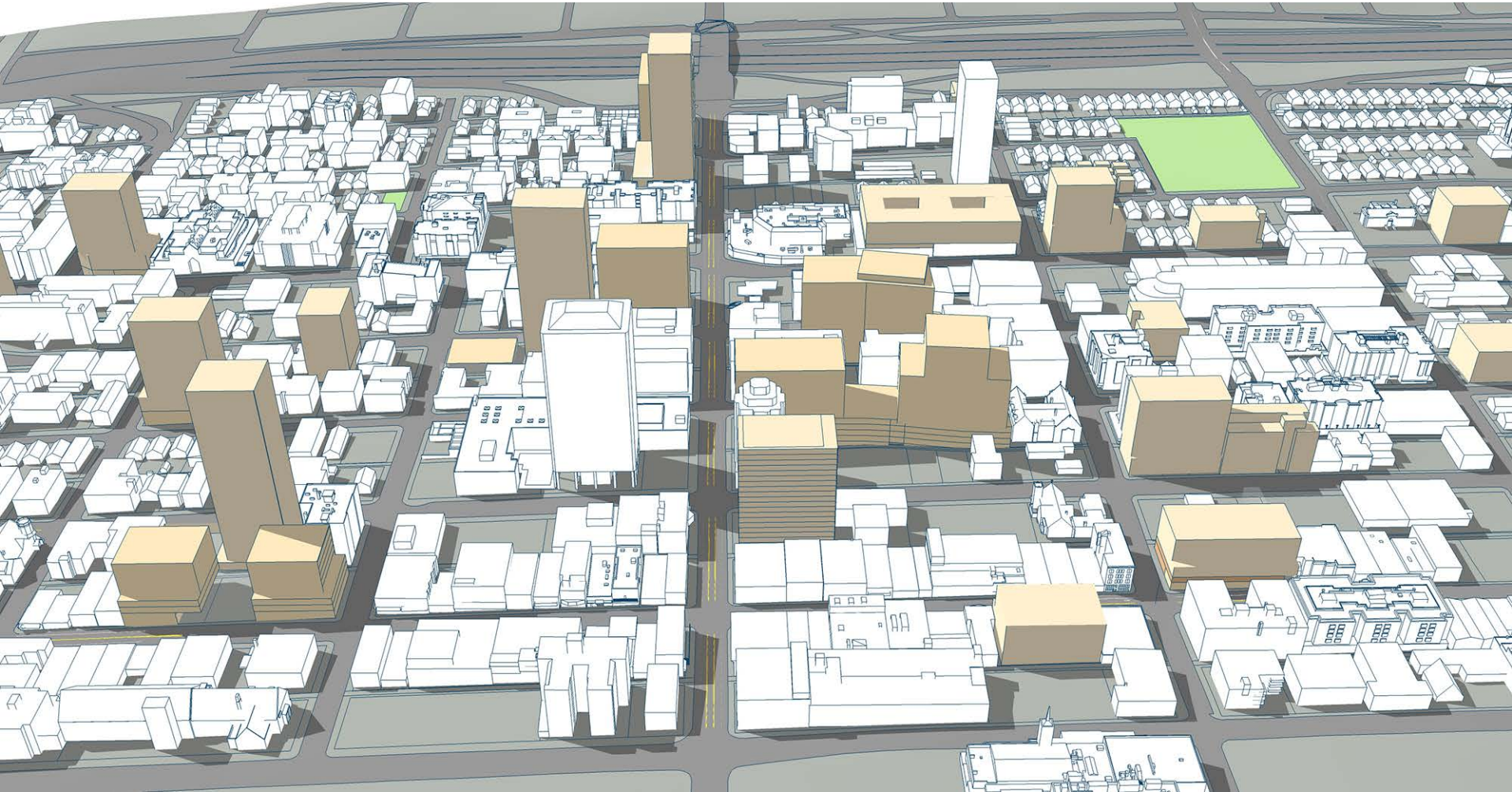




# Aesthetics

ALTERNATIVE 2 Taller high-rises concentrated around transit center

23

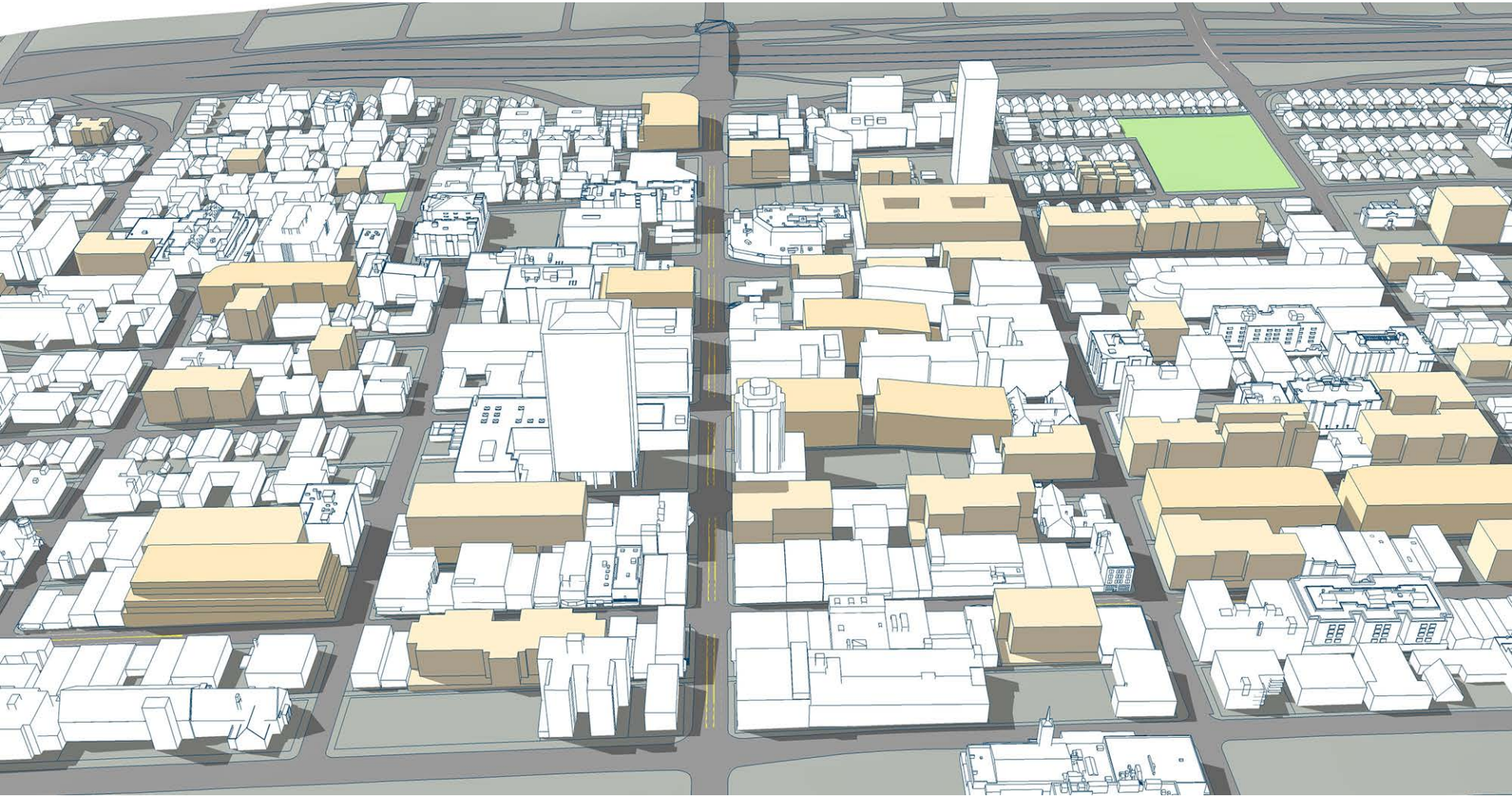




# Aesthetics

## ALTERNATIVE 3 Retain existing zoning designations and standards

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# Aesthetics

ALTERNATIVE 1 The Ave, looking north from 41st — Lower high-rises in moderately dispersed pattern, substantial upzone on the Ave

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# Aesthetics

ALTERNATIVE 2 The Ave, looking north from 41st — Taller high-rises concentrated around transit center, relatively small upzone on the Ave

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# Aesthetics

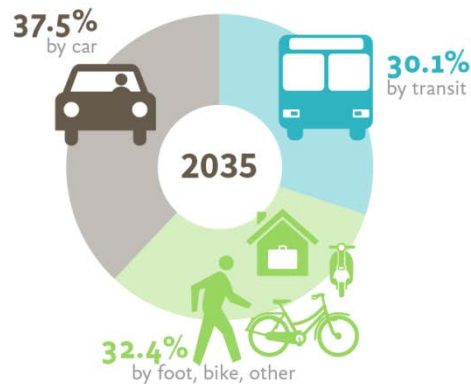
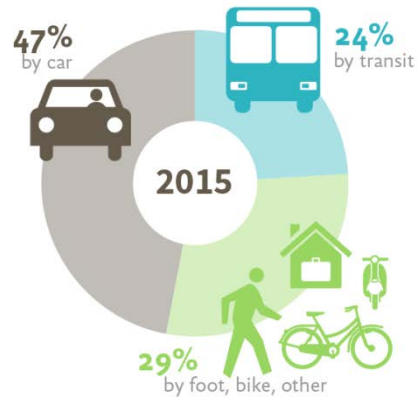
ALTERNATIVE 3 The Ave, looking north from 41st —  
Most dispersed development pattern

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# Transportation Impacts

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## Auto & Freight

- ◆ 5 corridors operate with substantial congestion

## Transit

- ◆ 3–6 corridors operate with substantial congestion

## Pedestrians & Bicycles

- ◆ Increase in mode share

## On-street Parking

- ◆ Impacts spread over large area

# Transportation Mitigation

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## Auto & Freight

- ◆ Manage demand to reduce congestion
- ◆ Encourage parking for car-share and bike-share

## Transit

- ◆ Consider projects in Seattle Transit Master Plan
- ◆ Install transit signal priority on key corridors
- ◆ Implement transit-only or Business Access and Transit lanes

## Pedestrians & Bicycles

- ◆ Consider projects in PMP, BMP, UATAS and UDF
- ◆ Modify zoning codes to require wider sidewalks in key locations

## On-street Parking

- ◆ Revise parking minimums and limit new parking spaces
- ◆ Upgrade parking revenue control systems (PARC)



# Open Space

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Population growth will outpace growth of parks and recreation facilities — deficiencies get worse under all alternatives

3 acre deficiency today —  
5 acre deficiency in 2035 —  
even with planned parks

Gap for specific facilities:  
recreation center and  
community gardens



# Open Space Mitigation

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Acquisition and improvement of new properties by Seattle Parks — fund through levy, open space impact fees

Provide dedicated public spaces as part of private development

On-site amenity space to be used by building occupants

Improvement of designated green streets and "festival" streets







# Public Comment

Names will be called  
from sign-in sheet

Please limit comments to  
3 minutes

Written and verbal  
comments will be  
considered equally