



ROOSEVELT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION: COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO HALA REPORT & DRAFT PLAN

by the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (RNA)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes feedback from the broader Roosevelt community on the City of Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda's (HALA's) Draft Zoning Change plan released in October 2016. Feedback was collected via a community meeting on December 10, 2016 and an online survey, both organized by the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association.

Overall, Roosevelt community members welcome increased density in the neighborhood, though there were a diversity of views on how and where to incorporate new housing units. Opinions were split on a number of issues such as: the effectiveness of transitions, whether the plan will actually increase the number of units and diversity of housing, and if the plan allowed more people to take advantage of community assets.

Many participants were encouraged by the MHA requirements that will increase affordability, though a great deal of people wanted to ensure: (1) affordable "family-sized" units be created in addition to studio and 1BR apartments, and (2) affordable housing be located within Roosevelt, and not simply see developers pay into a fund to create affordable units elsewhere in the city.

There was general support for the increased zoning, particularly near the "urban core," provided that the plan fostered walkable and pedestrian features and preserved or added community assets. This could be done, for example, by ensuring wider sidewalks and greater setbacks, plus incorporating community gathering spaces into new construction. Lastly, some viewed the Urban Village expansion (particularly east of 15th Ave NE) as "natural", although there was often strong opposition from many Ravenna community members whose properties would now be located within the urban village and thus impacted by zoning changes.

In conclusion, the RNA supports:

- The proposed rezoning & MHA policy, though refining the transitions noted, especially increased setbacks for enhanced landscaping in all LR & MR zones (10' similar to RSL).
- Expansion of the Urban Village, acknowledging divergent views in the affected community that opposes it.
- Neighborhood planning to include community needs: open space and parks, additional school/s, and pedestrian safety.

DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

On December 10 2016, the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association's (RNA) Land Use Committee organized a Community Forum (one of a series in "Land Use Academy" [LUA] workshops) following the release of proposed zoning changes in October 2016 by the City of Seattle's HALA Committee. The workshop aimed to educate Roosevelt community members on proposed zoning changes to the Roosevelt Urban Village and collect community feedback to be submitted to the city. In addition to the workshop, community members could submit responses to an online survey through January 7th, 2017.



More than 70 participants attended the event on December 10th, and were divided into 8 discussion groups that addressed themes like zoning changes, livability and neighborhood character, and the urban village boundary. There 26 respondents to the online survey, the majority of whom did not attend the workshop. The following is a synthesis of comments from the **more than 70 participants** in attendance and the **26 survey respondents**.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Zoning Changes

Overall, there is significant support for increased density in the Roosevelt neighborhood and participants agreed the plan would lead to more density. Participants almost unanimously supported increased zoning density closest to the Roosevelt commercial/urban core, where the zoning currently is NC & MR. There were also many requests for additional community gathering and green/open space within these areas. *[Note: There are different views on what constitutes (and should constitute) the “Roosevelt urban core”. In this report, the urban core is generally understood to be the area between Roosevelt & 12th Ave NE, between NE 63rd St and NE 67th St.]*

About half of the participants agree that the draft plan encourages a wide variety of housing options and locates housing near community assets, though about a third disagree; survey respondents were similarly divided on these issues. There is strong desire for “family-sized” housing units (2+ BR) - a mix of housing in the neighborhood, not just Studio and 1BR housing that are common in new market-rate housing constructions. Roosevelt is a neighborhood that has substantial benefits and assets for families (access to parks, schools, transit), so ensuring more housing-type diversity is greatly needed. Only slightly more than half of survey respondents believed that the plan located enough housing near community assets.

One topic addressed was the potential impact on individual property owners based on various up-zones (from SF to RSL, LR1, etc). Property values in the Roosevelt neighborhood are currently high, significantly surpassing land values at which developers may desire to purchase individual parcels zoned RSL & LR1, coupled with the marginal development difference between SF & RSL, development potential for RSL & LR1 properties is less likely in the Roosevelt area. It is important to note that there were many misconceptions about RSL zoning: many participants feared significant increases in housing stock and size in proposed RSL zones, even though the proposed changes would not inevitably lead to these results (again, especially given the value of existing single family homes in this area).

Specific comments/suggestions made by two or more participants dealing with specific zoning changes:

- Increase density closer to I-5, west of Roosevelt. This has already begun to take place north of 65th St (for example, the Eleanor Apartments), so some participants called for further increases both south of NE 65th St, as well as up to at least 69th St. A survey respondent noted that taller buildings adjacent to I-5 might even dim highway noise in parts of the neighborhood, minimizing noise pollution and preserving a community asset (quiet streets).
- Similarly, increase the zoning on the block between 8th Ave NE and Roosevelt Way, between NE 68th St and NE 69th St (currently where the Christian Cavalry Assembly sits). This was viewed as prime real estate near the urban core that currently offers no housing units. There was support for not only increasing the zoning along Roosevelt Way NE on this block, but also for increasing the zoning from LR2 to at least LR3 on the remainder of the block.



- Transitions: participants overall seemed to approve of the transitions between zoning areas, although survey respondents were split on whether the plan effectively used low-rise zones to transition between commercial and residential zones. Some, however, made the following suggestions to create smoother transitions.
 - There is a section between 15th and 16th Ave NE, south of 65th St NE, where there is a proposal to change a SF zone to NC1-55; this not only seemed a drastic change, but also lacking transitions, as it is adjacent to a proposed RSL zone. Aligning the south extension of this NC zone with those west of 15th Ave NE seems more suitable than currently presented.
 - The proposed zoning change to LR2 on the blocks between 12th Ave NE and 15th Ave NE, from NE 68th St to NE 70th St. Suggestion: only up-zone the north half (north of 69th St) to LR1.
 - Some survey participants remarked on the abrupt change between proposed zoning on Roosevelt Way NE north of 70th St (proposed NC2-55) and the adjacent residential areas (proposed LR1).
- Participants were split on support for the zoning in the southeast quadrant of Roosevelt (south of NE 65th St and east of 12th Ave NE), particularly the area proposed to be up-zoned to LR2. A few supported increased density in this area, while many residents voiced many objections to these changes.

Affordability

There was no consensus on whether the plan actually supports affordability within Roosevelt, and only about a third of survey respondents agreed that the plan supported affordability. Many expressed concern that while the proposed MHA requirements offer a positive step towards affordability, the current requirements may not lead to the creation of affordable housing within Roosevelt. Almost all participants at both the workshop, and some survey respondents, wanted measures to ensure that affordable housing would be built in Roosevelt proper. Some comments strongly discouraged simply letting developers pay into the fund in lieu of incorporating these units directly into their projects or nearby new builds.

“Where are the middle-income family units?” one survey respondent asked. Again, many called for affordable family-sized units (2+ BR) in addition to affordable studio and 1BR units. In conclusion, there is strong support for affordable housing generally in the Roosevelt neighborhood and people generally supported or called for expanded MHA requirements.

Livability

As previously mentioned, there are many requests for additional community amenities within the Roosevelt neighborhood. This may include infrastructure such as parks, green or open space, schools, a library, a community center with gathering space, etc. Survey respondents were split on if the plan supported livability. In the workshop, there was general support for the increased zoning if setbacks ensure wider sidewalks and space between developments. Participants were split around the most appropriate zoning near parks: some wanted to preserve lower-density zoning near parks like Cowen Park, though others were not opposed to locating additional housing near these assets.

Probably Roosevelt’s most prized asset is its walkability and pedestrian character, plus the accessibility and connectivity of the neighborhood with commercial areas. As a result, there was a hope that new



developments would enhance the pedestrian character and walkability in the neighborhood. Specifically, some suggested increasing front-yard setbacks for landscape, planting, and open space. Others wanted to ensure wide sidewalks and creating safe crossings throughout the neighborhood. Survey respondents generally agreed that the plan supported access to diverse transportation (there's no escaping the Light Rail!).

Another of Roosevelt's strongest assets is the neighborhood character—historic craftsmen homes along quiet tree-lined streets—so some were concerned that increased density may affect the area's character due to the removal of existing homes for new development. Additionally, some participants hoped that future developments along Ravenna Blvd, next to Cowen and Ravenna Park, and adjacent to Roosevelt High School would complement these historical, cultural, and community entities. Many survey respondents did not believe the plan would preserve residences and institutions of historic significance.

Urban Village Boundary:

Overall, most participants from Roosevelt were generally supportive of the proposed expansion of the Urban Village Boundary east of 15th Ave NE. It was called a "natural" extension of the Roosevelt area by a few participants; 15th Ave NE is only three blocks from the future light rail station, so it seemed appropriate for this area to absorb increased density given the proximity to Roosevelt's resources. Additionally, including the area east of 15th Ave NE would make it easier for property owners in those areas to add ADUs and DADUs (due to the lack of additional parking requirements), therefore allowing for potential future density near Roosevelt High School. Many Ravenna participants also supported zoning that encouraged more ADUs and DADUs. Some participants even called for the expansion of the Urban Village and increased zoning south of Ravenna Blvd to NE 63rd St between I-5 and Latona. There was no consensus among survey respondents on whether the expanded urban boundary increased access to community assets.

However, opinions on the Urban Village expansion were more split among Ravenna participants, notably those who would be incorporated into the expanded Urban Village. Over half of Ravenna residents residing in the 'expansion' area, vehemently opposed any expansion, pronouncing a very strong "NO" to any changes in their area. This is consistent with a previous petition signed by 118 residents in the area south of NE 65th, east of 15th Ave NE. Many indicated that 15th Ave NE already presented itself as a clear "boundary", and expressed concern that proposed up-zones were a "stepping stone" to future, more drastic, changes that risked "degrading the character" of the area. Some discouraged increased zoning between 15th & 20th Ave NE, and instead advocated for further increasing the density in the urban core. *Again, the authors note that most of these concerns and suggestions came from Ravenna residents.*

Venturing outside the proposed Urban Village expansion, many participants supported increasing the zoning only along the major arterial of NE 65th St east of 15th Ave NE. This was viewed as a way to connect the Roosevelt core with the Ravenna business district on NE 65th St between 20th & 25th Ave NE. Also of note is that some Ravenna residents wanted increased zoning solely along NE 65th, in place of an urban village expansion east of 15th Ave NE, in order to preserve low-density housing stock on smaller side streets north & south of 65th.

DISCUSSION



The Roosevelt neighborhood, through community forum and online survey, has provided a great deal of feedback on HALA's proposed zoning changes that the RNA hopes will guide the City's ultimate recommended zoning changes. Overall, community members welcome increased density, particularly near the "urban core," provided that the plan fostered a walkable and pedestrian feel and preserves and added community assets. Affordability, particularly of family-sized units located within Roosevelt proper, was identified as a priority and some expressed concern that the MHA requirements did not go far enough or guarantee local affordable units would be created.

Community members also identified several areas of consideration moving forward. First, to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, families, and all community members using diverse transportation modes, street safety improvements in line with the City's Vision Zero campaign, are vital to safely accommodate increased growth around the Light Rail. Furthermore, with more density comes greater need for green/open spaces and community resources, and further community feedback will be needed to help identify specific needs and work with stakeholders to create new community assets, and develop a vibrant future Roosevelt.

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