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Seattle, WA 98102-3278

February 23, 2019

City Councilmembers Rob Johnson and Kshama Sawant  
601 Fifth Ave., Floor 2, P.O. 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

City Councilmembers Sally Bagshaw, Lorena Gonzalez, Debora Juarez, Bruce Harrell,  
Lisa Herbold, Teresa Mosqueda, and Mike O'Brien  
601 Fifth Ave., Floor 2, P.O. 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Mayor Jenny Durkan  
601 Fifth Avenue, Floor 7, P.O. Box 94749  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

**AMENDMENTS NEEDED IN CB 119444'S EASTLAKE MHA ZONING MAP**

To Councilmembers Johnson, Sawant, Bagshaw, Gonzalez, Juarez, Harrell, Herbold,  
Mosqueda, and O'Brien, and Mayor Durkan:

Summary: The Eastlake Community Council requests that the City Council remove amendment 4-18 from the consent package and urges Councilmember Johnson to either withdraw the amendment or to extensively revise it to genuinely step down the allowable building heights in Eastlake. Midrise zoning on Boylston Avenue East will cause noise problems uphill, is not consistent with Eastlake's status as a residential urban village, and will destroy much of our neighborhood's remaining affordable rentals.

This letter offers urgent comments by the Eastlake Community Council regarding the Eastlake zoning map that is in Council Bill 119444 (Mandatory Housing Affordability program). Eastlake is in City Council District 4, and Boylston Avenue East abuts City Council District 3. A companion letter summarizes the proposals we've previously made for improvement of the text of CB 119444 and other ordinances and resolutions.

Councilmember Johnson, at the January 14 meeting of the Select Committee on Citywide Mandatory Housing Affordability, introduced Amendment 4-18. This amendment would

bring midrise zoning for the first time to Eastlake, a designated residential urban village whose multifamily zoning is entirely lowrise.

The proposed mid-rise zoning would be imposed on all seven residentially-zoned blocks of Boylston Avenue East between Newton and Shelby Streets. In addition, the new mid-rise zoning would be imposed on the east side of Franklin Avenue East for one block between Hamlin and Shelby Streets. This last-minute zoning amendment applies even to Seward School, Seattle's oldest continuously operated public school and now a designated City landmark and on the U.S. government's National Register of Historic Places.

**Sacrifice of very affordable housing on Boylston Avenue E.** Most of Boylston Avenue East consists of older buildings, and it has the highest concentration of very affordable rentals in the entire Eastlake neighborhood and probably also in North Capitol Hill. All of these properties would be subject to the low-rise upzone proposed in 1944, and thus are vulnerable to the resulting redevelopment. The proposed rezoning to midrise would make it even more likely that these affordable rentals would be swept away.

The City Council should not impose midrise zoning on Boylston Avenue East's many low-income residents and the landlords who keep their rents low. The resulting higher property taxes will force higher rents, and development pressure will eliminate this island of affordability while replacing it with unaffordable units.

As explained in our February 8 e-mail and our December 20 and February 21 letters that were addressed to all City Councilmembers, the MHA ordinance as currently designed will use Eastlake as a "cash cow." Developers will use the in-lieu fee to buy out from needing to build any affordable housing in Eastlake. Non-profit developers will use the in-lieu fees to build affordable housing far from Eastlake, while our affordable housing on Boylston and other streets will disappear.

**Blight and noise to come.** This mid-rise zoning proposal's inclusion of the east side of a long block of Franklin Avenue East will not only displace existing affordable housing, but will ruin the block's village-like ambience, overshadowing one of the oldest and best preserved of Seattle's historic homes which was among the earlier official City landmarks to be protected.

The noise from Interstate 5 on Boylston Avenue East has long been deafening, one reason why the Eastlake Community Council worked with adjoining neighborhoods and WSDOT to get noise walls installed. Although the noise walls reduce the din in Eastlake, they reflect some of the noise to parts of Capitol Hill. If Boylston and Franklin retain their lowrise zoning but receive the original MHA height increase, some noise will be reflected onto homes on Capitol Hill. The much higher midrise zoning now proposed will increase this noise further. None of this noise was anticipated by MHA's environmental impact statement. We urge that the move to midrise zoning not be considered until the environmental impact statement is supplemented

with data and analysis of the level and location of increased freeway noise that will be experienced by our neighbors across the freeway.

**“Stepping down the height” is being practiced as spot zoning rather than good planning.**

In selling his midrise proposal to the City Council, Councilmember Johnson has not heeded public input. Both the written summary and the map summary of the March 6, 2017 City Council-sponsored workshop make it clear that the public harbored significant opposition to the midrise proposal on Boylston. Any public support for it was conditional on stepping down the allowable building heights from Boylston Ave. E. as blocks reached closer to Lake Union.

Unless Councilmember Johnson comes up with changed heights below Boylston Ave. E. that follow his stepped-down rationale, the City Council should remove the Boylston midrise from the consent agenda and not pass it as an amendment. Otherwise, Eastlake is left with a crazy quilt with Lowrise 2 zoning on the two blocks of Franklin Avenue East that directly abut to the south of the proposed new Franklin Ave. midrise zone. The rest of Franklin Ave. E. further to the south is Lowrise 3. Downhill across Eastlake Avenue on the west side of Yale Avenue East, the zoning map now in CB 119444 proposes a height increase to Lowrise 3, a little more than a block from Lake Union.

With all of the height reductions in other neighborhoods across Seattle that the City Council is now considering from the heights proposed in the existing CB 119444, Eastlake is among the few neighborhoods with no reducing amendments, and with its only amendment being a dramatic height increase. It is our first midrise zoning that is not consistent with Eastlake’s status as a residential urban village.

Thank you for your considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Ann Prezyna, President  
Eastlake Community Council