

Seattle City Council Briefing, February 6, 2017

Subject: Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) and Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Implementation Update

Attachment D: MHA Guiding Implementation Principles

There are several foundational objectives and principles that are guiding MHA implementation that stem from the HALA recommendations and the statutory framework that authorizes the MHA mechanism. They include that MHA implementation will:

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 developments 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 program 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.

In addition to these foundational principles, staffed derived the following community generated principles through public engagement at community meetings, online surveys, and the Community Focus Group process. These community-generated principles have guided MHA program development, especially how additional development capacity would be applied to neighborhoods throughout the city. The principles include:

1. Housing Options
 - a. Encourage or incentivize a wide variety of housing sizes, including family-sized units and not just one- bedroom and studio units.
 - b. Encourage more small scale multi- unit housing, such as cottages, duplexes or triplexes, rowhouses, and townhouses, that are family friendly.

2. Urban Design Quality: Address urban design quality, including 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. 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.
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 & Infrastructure
 - a. Consider locating more housing near neighborhood assets and infrastructure such as parks and schools.
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 the following conditions: topography; “natural” boundaries such as parks, major roads, and other large-scale neighborhood elements; 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 zoning changes are made.

Staff has produced a [summary of the Focus Group MHA principles](#), and a [summary of public survey feedback about the MHA principles](#). Staff used these community-generated principles to shape the draft MHA maps issued in October 2016.