



City of Seattle
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

April 17, 2018

Honorable Bruce A. Harrell, President
Seattle City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98199

Dear Council President Harrell:

I am pleased to transmit the attached legislation to increase development capacity to facilitate transit-oriented development and affordable housing near the future Northgate Light Rail Station. These zoning changes support the partnership between City of Seattle and King County to directly fund the creation of at least 200 units of rent- and income-restricted housing on the site of the King County Transit Center. The zoning changes complement the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by King County and Seattle Office of Housing (OH) in November of 2017 inviting developers to create a mix of affordable and market rate housing and open space on the current transit center site. This legislation is also a key piece of the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), a multi-pronged comprehensive approach to address the housing affordability crisis in Seattle, since it activates Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements in the Northgate transit-oriented development area.

MHA requires that commercial and multifamily developers address housing affordability by providing affordable homes or by making a payment to OH to support development of affordable housing throughout the city. When fully implemented, MHA is projected to create an estimated 6,000 affordable housing units over the next 10 years, which is a significant portion of the City's overall goal of 20,000 affordable housing units. It is estimated that the proposed MHA requirements for the Northgate transit-oriented development area could produce more than 400 of these new affordable housing units.

Legislation implementing MHA in other parts of the city including Downtown/South Lake Union, University District, and Uptown was approved by City Council in 2017. Legislation to implement MHA in urban villages and commercial and multi-family zoned areas throughout the city was transmitted to City Council in November of 2017. The proposed legislation for the Northgate transit-oriented development area is presented as a stand-alone ordinance in case City Council wishes to accelerate action to support affordable housing and transit-oriented development in the area.

Outreach on this proposal began in 2011 as part of a broad discussion about transit-oriented development in the Northgate urban center in anticipation of Light Rail service beginning in 2021. Based on the station area planning effort a Transit Oriented Development Urban Design Study was released in 2012. Additional outreach was conducted during 2016 and 2017 as a part of the proposal to implement MHA in Northgate and other neighborhoods.

This legislation represents a unique opportunity to harness Seattle's growth to increase the supply of affordable and market-rate housing and employment directly adjacent to our region's investment in Light Rail transit. This action supports an effective partnership between City and County government and Sound Transit to reach shared goals for mobility and equitable growth. I ask the Council to move swiftly to review and pass the Northgate Transit Oriented Development zoning proposal to implement MHA.

Thank you for your consideration and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Assefa, Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development, at (206) 386-1183.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny A Durkan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council