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June 7, 2024

Rico Quirindongo, *Director*
Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

RE: One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

Dear Rico Quirindongo,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments about the One Seattle Plan. We'd especially like to thank Michael Hubner for taking the time to present the Plan update to the Magnolia Community Council's Land Use Committee.

MCC has reviewed and discussed the One Seattle Plan updates. MCC's thoughtful comments, concerns, recommendations and questions are listed below.

Urban Residential Zone:

- We generally support the increased zoning, but have a number of concerns about **preserving neighborhood character.**
- We oppose a generic or "blanket" approach that merely increases density in single family zones and **assumes "trickle down affordability"** without providing clear and viable options or **incentives that promote affordable home ownership.**
- **Loss of Tree Canopy**: Our community is very concerned that the new zoning will substantially diminish Seattle's (and our neighborhood's) tree canopy, which will counter the city's tree canopy goals and increase potential for urban heat islands.
- **Encourage front yards, not expansive concrete driveways**. Please consider more substantial setbacks in the front yards (10'+) that allow for larger trees, more landscaping and personalized stoops. Discourage wide/shared concrete tile driveways/entryways that cover more than 25% of lot width, and encourage or require the planting of new trees.
- **Consider height or density bonuses** (or reductions in setback requirements) for builders who strive to preserve existing trees (esp. substantial trees).
- **Onsite Parking:** We believe that there should still be a requirement for *some* onsite parking. New fourplexes may bring with them up to 8 cars, which may be too much for street parking to bear over time.
- **Diverse housing types**: Consider encouraging more diverse housing types. Many design and real estate professionals (and tenants) decry the proliferation of 10' wide rowhouses. NOTE: Baltimore City and Baltimore County, home to tens of thousands of rowhouses, do NOT allow rowhouses narrower than 15' because anything less is deemed undesirable and/or unlivable.
    - 10' wide rowhouses are not family-friendly and do not appeal to older or physically impaired homebuyers.

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Urban Residential Zone (continued):

- **Allow for flexibility** when it comes to setbacks and building massing**.** With a substantial increase in residential density, encourage flexibility that allows for:
    - Front yards/landscaped areas (not just stoops), and/or shared communal greenspaces.
    - More diversity in for-sale product types (Think about ground floor units or stacked flats that appeal to older homebuyers).
- **Neighborhood Character/Design Guidelines:** Consider including design guidelines/recommendations that will preserve general neighborhood character and encourage builders to think about neighborhood/site context, rather than just build a "generic box" housing product that may be out of scale or place for a neighborhood.
- **Preserving our City's Character:** Remember, Seattle is NOT San Francisco (or San Francisco's Daly City). What makes our city and neighborhoods unique and livable is its expansive green canopy and interconnected greenspace. We do not support zoning that promotes the reduction of the tree canopy and substantially reduces opportunities for landscaping, which is also necessary for wildlife.

Neighborhood Centers:

- There is consensus in our neighborhood that Magnolia Village is substantially underdeveloped and has great potential for growth. We applaud the opportunity for more robust zoning (65') and look forward to the discussion.
- We were surprised that the proposed **North Magnolia Neighborhood Cente**r was dropped from the NC designation. This part of Magnolia (along 34th Ave and at the intersection of Government Way) is near the entrance to Discovery Park and has seen mid-rise, multifamily development for more than 50 years, including several low-income senior housing projects. This part of the neighborhood is ripe for additional development due to a number of factors:

    - Mid-rise development has occurred here for more than 50 years
    - Area is served by 2 bus lines (24 and 33)
    - Located right next to the entrance to Discovery Park, Seattle's largest park
    - Major grocery store located here (Met Market)
    - Shops and services already exist, primarily in several mid-rise multifamily buildings
    - Close to planned affordable housing village at nearby Ft. Lawton

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Infrastructure (Costs, Capacity):

- Is the City confident that the current level/design of civil infrastructure (water/sewer/electric) in our single family neighborhoods will support the proposed Plan development?
- We are concerned that without any infrastructure funding (or incentives/ rebates to builders), the cost of building multiple residences on many single family lots may be prohibitively expensive, and/or may result in much higher home prices for new housing (builder passing on the cost of infrastructure to the homebuyer).
- Is the City going to provide any assistance or incentives to offset the costs of infrastructure where it may be prohibitively expensive and/or act as a deterrent to building on some lots?
- Is the City going to identify lots that either:
  1) can easily be developed in a cost-effective manner or,
  2) are challenged because of location and/or proximity to existing civil infrastructure?

Station-area Planning

- There is general consensus that LINK station-area zoning may be too conservative. TOD neighborhoods like Capitol Hill, Northgate, and even Ballard could likely support much taller, denser buildings. The approach that Vancouver and Burnaby, BC take is more urban and promotes much more housing at rail stations.

Transit Streets:

- We would appreciate clarification on what streets will be considered "high-transit" capacity (other than those that serve Bus Rapid Transit lines), and what the implications are for land use changes or upzoning. For example, the intersection of 28th and Blaine in Magnolia is at the convergence of 3 routes (31, 33 and 24) and often has service every 15 minutes or less during mid-day. Will this area be considered and/or affected?

Please feel free to contact us. We look forward to engaging with OPCD this fall and focusing on the proposed changes coming to Magnolia and our Seattle communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Scott Surdyke
Chair, Magnolia/Interbay Land Use Committee Trustee
Magnolia Community Council

Alison Kan Grevstad
President, Magnolia Community Council