



U District Small Businesses & Nonprofits  
University District, Seattle  
[udistrict.biz](http://udistrict.biz)



January 15, 2019

Re: Proposed Amendment to the MHA Citywide Rezone

Dear Councilmember Rob Johnson,

We represent the many owners, customers, employees and community members who love and depend upon the small businesses that are the foundation of our U District community. The variety of our unique, legacy businesses and nonprofits is why people visit the U District.

When the U District Rezone was adopted in February of 2017, the U District Small Business Association, and with your help, successfully negotiated a delay of the upzone to the Ave so that we might study the impacts to our business community. Our nonprofit raised funds and conducted our own professional survey of 123 small businesses along the Ave under the direction of Peter Steinbrueck's consulting firm.

This survey uncovered that a majority of our businesses are small, owned by a woman or person of color, owner-operated, rent their spaces, and are therefore vulnerable to displacement. But what makes the U District truly unique is that many of our small businesses have remained in operation for 25, 50, and in some cases, 75 plus years.

We seek support from the City to save our endangered business district and the community built around it. Upon the adoption of the previous rezone, the City resolved to mitigate these impacts; but that assistance has not yet arrived. We are trying to save one of the most diverse small business districts in Seattle, and we need your help.

To address our on-going concerns, we submit the proposed amendment to the rezone legislation for your consideration and support, and we request that our amendment be adopted by the MHA Select Committee and by the full City Council. The proposed language follows:

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**DISTRICT 4: Potential changes to the proposed zoning map**

Submitted on January 15th, 2019

Map ID: TBD

**Address/Area:** University Way NE from NE 41st Street to NE 52nd Street

**Description:** Amendment to remove the proposal to rezone the Ave (University Way NE) between NE 41st Street and NE 52nd Street from Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a Pedestrian designation and 65 foot height limit (NC3P-65) to Neighborhood Commercial 3 with

a Pedestrian designation and 75 foot height limit (NC3P-75 M) and retain the U District Station Area Overlay District.

**Rationale:** This area was pulled from the original University District Rezone prior to its passage in February of 2017. At the time, Councilmembers recognized the outpouring of community concern for role of the Ave in the community, the high level of minority- and woman-owned small businesses, the risk of affordable housing displacement, and the likelihood of historic and cultural loss\* on the Ave due to the proposal. Study of those impacts and commitments to mitigate them with a well-considered plan for this diverse and culturally significant street have yet to happen.

The subsequent EIS (2018) to consider impacts of MHA-HALA on the citywide upzone excluded this area from consideration. Therefore, the impacts of rezoning this area to incorporate MHA-HALA have not been adequately studied and it is inappropriate and premature to include the area in the zoning proposal.

\*Landmark-eligible buildings: United States Post Office, University State Bank Building, among others.

**Current Zoning:** NC3P-65

**MHA Proposal:** NC3P-75 (M)

**Requested Amendment:** NC3P-65 (M)

**Studied in Alternative 2:** N/A

**Studied in Alternative 3:** N/A

**EIS Status for Requested Amendment:** Not in FEIS Study Area. Inappropriate to include the area in this rezone proposal.

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We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and advice. Please help us to [Save the Ave!](#)

Thank you,

The signers of the petition to Save the Ave.