



# Better Housing by Design:

An update to Portland's Multi-Dwelling Zoning Code

## Recommended Draft Zoning Code Amendments

### Briefing to Historic Landmarks Commission

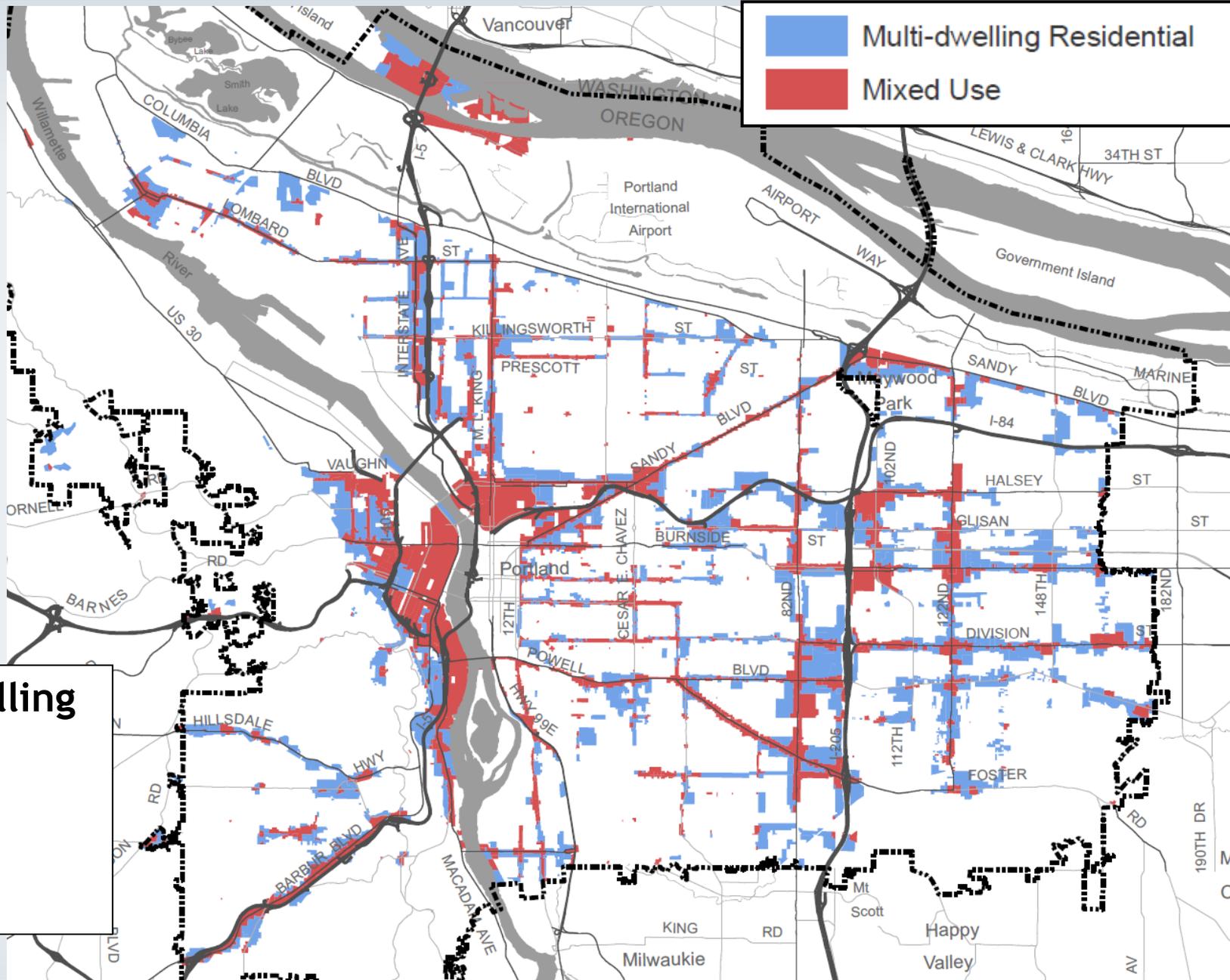
August 12, 2019



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
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# Zoning



**Multi-Dwelling  
Zones:  
8% of  
Portland's  
land area**

# Major Topics

**Diverse Housing Options  
and Affordability**



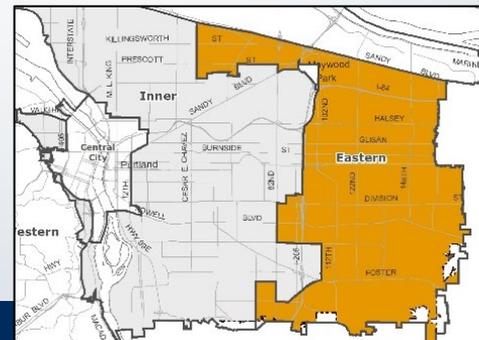
**Outdoor Spaces  
and Green Elements**



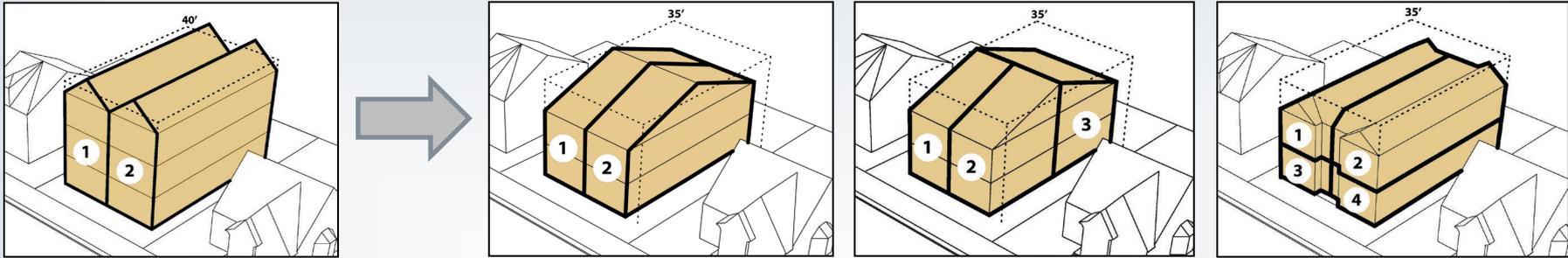
**Building Design and Scale**



**East Portland Standards and  
Street Connections**



# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



## Major Proposals - Continued in Recommended Draft

- **Regulate by building scale** instead of unit density.
- **Expand affordable housing provisions** - increase inclusionary housing development bonus, new deeper affordability bonus, and provide a family housing bonus.
- **Allow FAR transfers for preservation:** existing affordable housing, large trees, or historic resources.
- **Allow small-scale commercial uses on major corridors.**

# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



Duplex



Fourplex



Courtyard Apartments (12 units)



Duplex - small lot



Apartments (9 units)



Courtyard Apartments (39 units)

**Historic examples of multi-dwelling housing**  
*Only the duplex is allowed in the current R2 zone, which is intended for 2-3 story buildings.*

Allowed in R2 zone



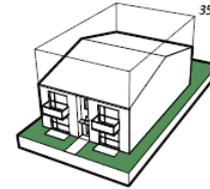
# New Multi-Dwelling Zones

**New Zone: RM1**  
 Current Zones: R2 and R3

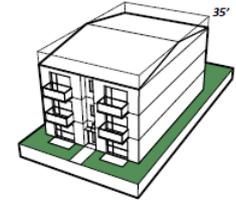
Maximum Height: 35 feet  
 Max. Building Coverage: 50%  
*(63% of MDR zoning)*

Base FAR

Bonus FAR



1 to 1



1.5 to 1

**New Zone: RM2**  
 Current Zone: R1

Maximum Height: 45 feet  
 Max. Building Coverage: 60% or 70%  
*(29% of MDR zoning)*



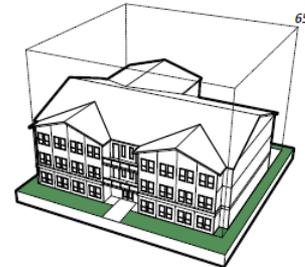
1.5 to 1



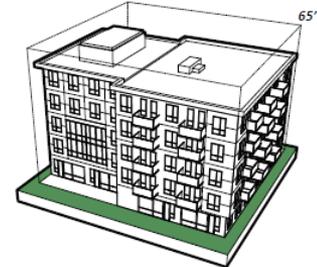
2.25 to 1

**New Zone: RM3**  
 Current Zone: RH (2:1 FAR)

Maximum Height: 65 feet  
 Max. Building Coverage: 85%  
*(5% of MDR zoning)*



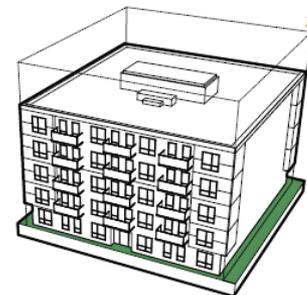
2 to 1



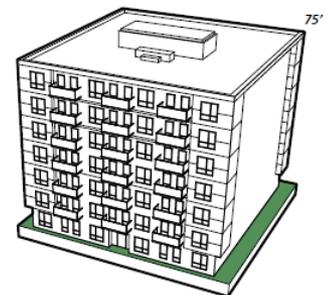
3 to 1

**New Zone: RM4**  
 Current Zone: RH (4:1 FAR)

Maximum Height: 75 - 100 feet  
 Max. Building Coverage: 85%  
*(3% of MDR zoning)*



4 to 1



6 to 1

# FAR Bonus and Transfer Options

**Base  
FAR**

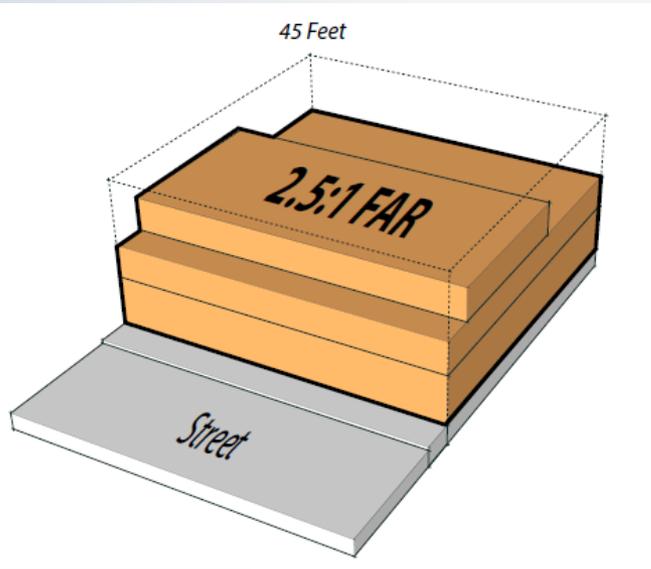
**+50%**

**+100%**

Base FAR	Bonus FAR Up to 50% above base	Bonus FAR 100% above base
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed by right</li> <li>Varies by zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Inclusionary housing: full 50% bonus</b></li> <li><b>Moderate income family housing: 25% bonus</b></li> <li><b>Visitable units: 25% bonus</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Special bonus for deeper housing affordability</b> (At least half of units must be affordable at 60% MFI)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FAR transfers from sites preserving:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing affordable housing</li> <li>Trees</li> <li>Historic resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>All bonuses and transfers allowed in historic districts</i></p>

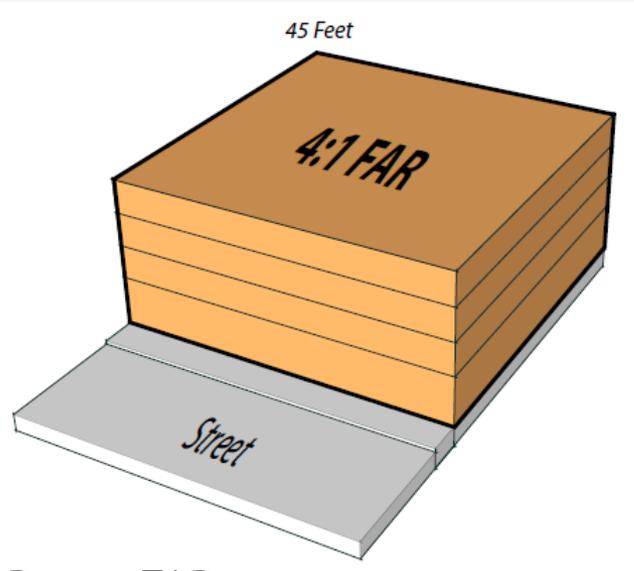
# FAR Bonus and Transfer Options

Allow in historic districts in multi-dwelling and mixed use zones



## Base FAR

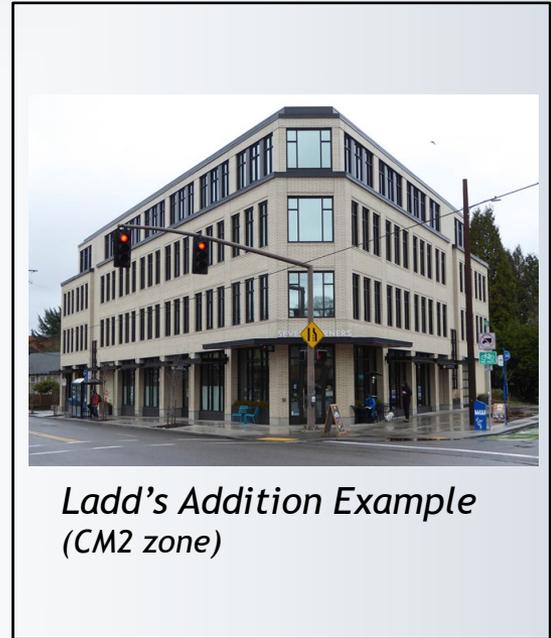
*Current maximum in historic districts*



## Bonus FAR

*Achieved through:*

- *Providing affordable units*
- *FAR transfers from other sites*



## CM2 zone example

- Maximum height remains 45' in historic districts (no fifth-story bonus height)

# Alphabet Historic District - CM2 Zone

Historic



2.8 to 1



3.7 to 1



5 to 1

Newer



3 to 1



3.2 to 1



3.6 to 1

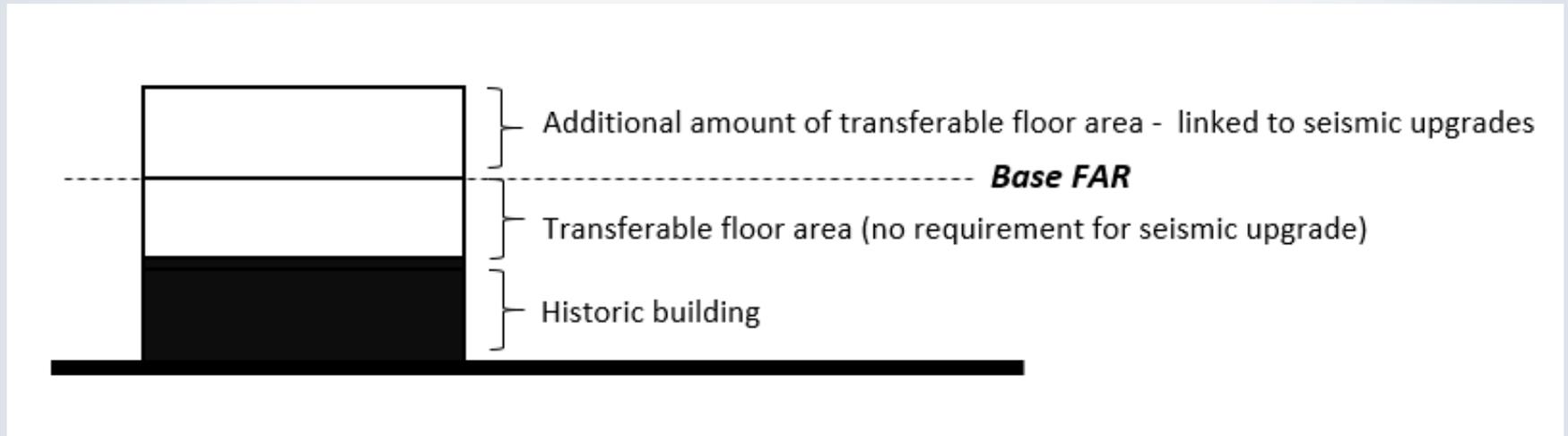
Examples of larger buildings in the CM2 zone along NW 21<sup>st</sup> and NW 23<sup>rd</sup>

# Alphabet Historic District - CM2 Zone



New (left) and historic (right) buildings at NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Irving

# FAR Bonus and Transfer Options



**Allow an additional amount of FAR to be transferred from sites with historic resources, in conjunction with seismic upgrades.**

- Additional transferable FAR would be equal to 50% of the base FAR
- Based on provisions adopted for the Central City

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements



## Major Proposals - Continued in Recommended Draft

- **Require residential outdoor areas in high density zones.**
- **Require shared common areas for large sites.**
- **Allow alternatives to conventional landscaping.**
- **Limit large surface parking lots and asphalt paving.**
- **Reduce parking requirements, especially on small sites.**

# Building Design and Scale



## Major Proposals - Continued in Recommended Draft

- Limit front garages and front parking.
- Require building entrances oriented to streets.
- Require front setbacks to reflect neighborhood patterns and limit privacy impacts.
- Simplify side setback regulations.
- Require height transitions to single-dwelling zones.
- Divide large building facades into smaller components.

# Building Design and Scale

## Changes

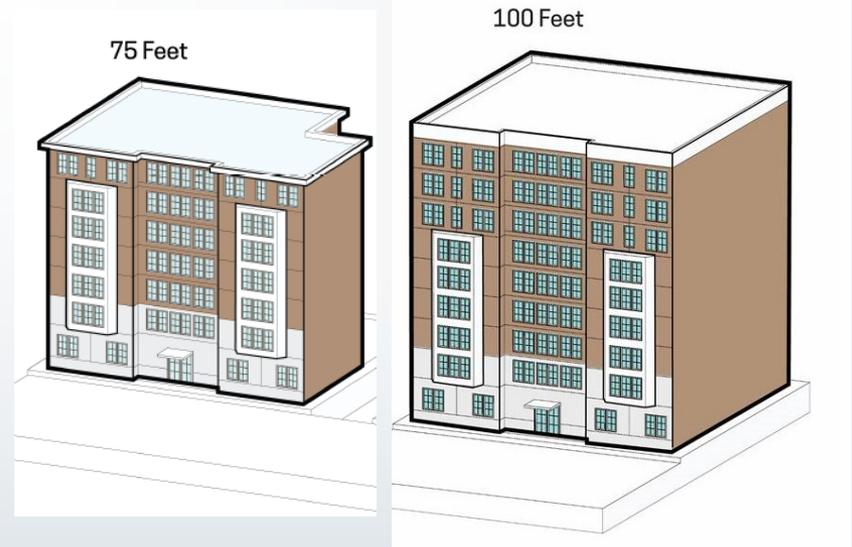
Continue to allow 100' building height in the RM4 zone within 1000' of light rail stations (including in historic districts)

Expand the 100' building height allowance in the RM4 zone to also apply within 500' of frequent transit lines (outside historic districts)

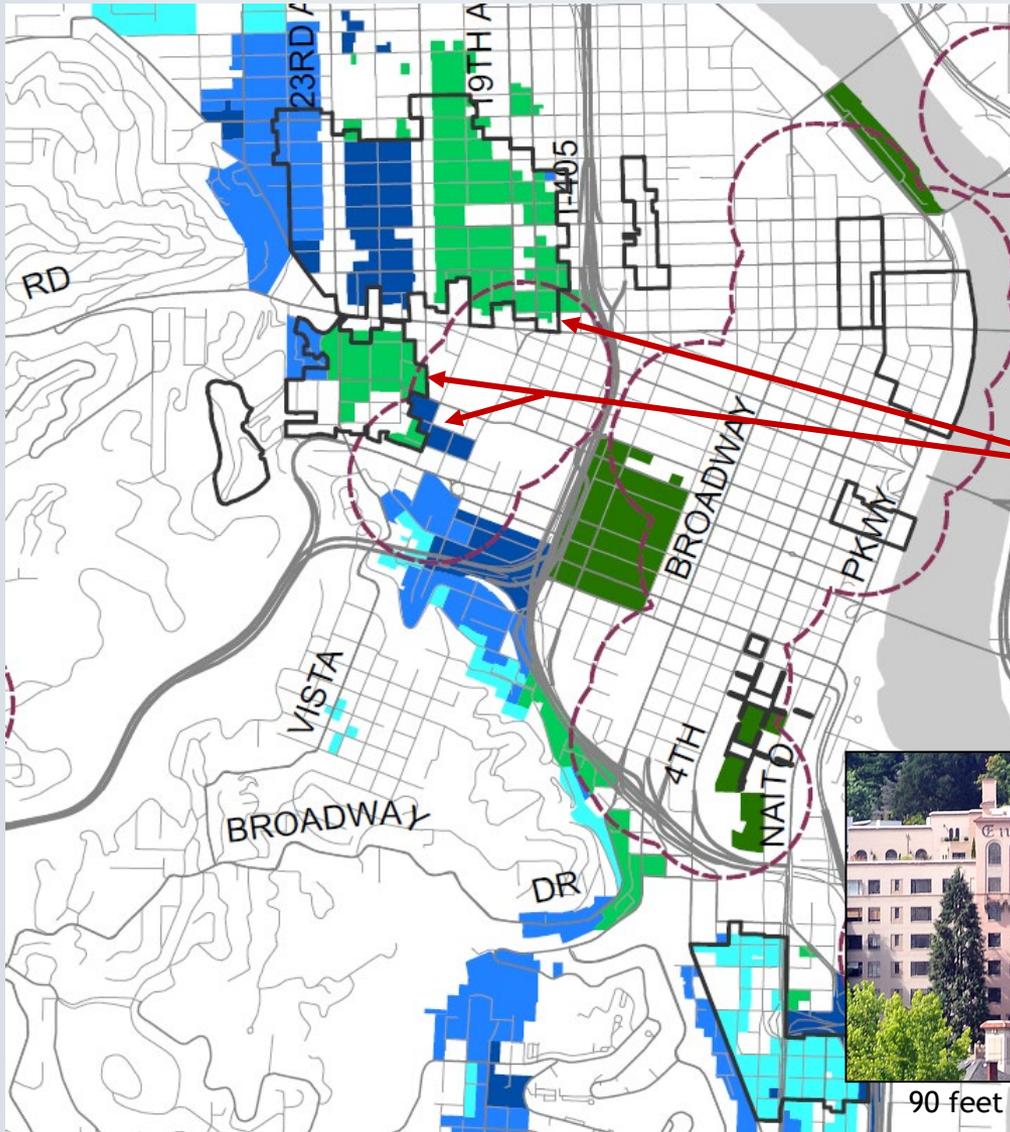
### RM4 Zone

Standard maximum height: 75'

Maximum height near light rail and frequent transit: 100'



# Building Design and Scale



Areas where current RH zoning allows 100' height in historic districts.  
*(10 acres)*



90 feet



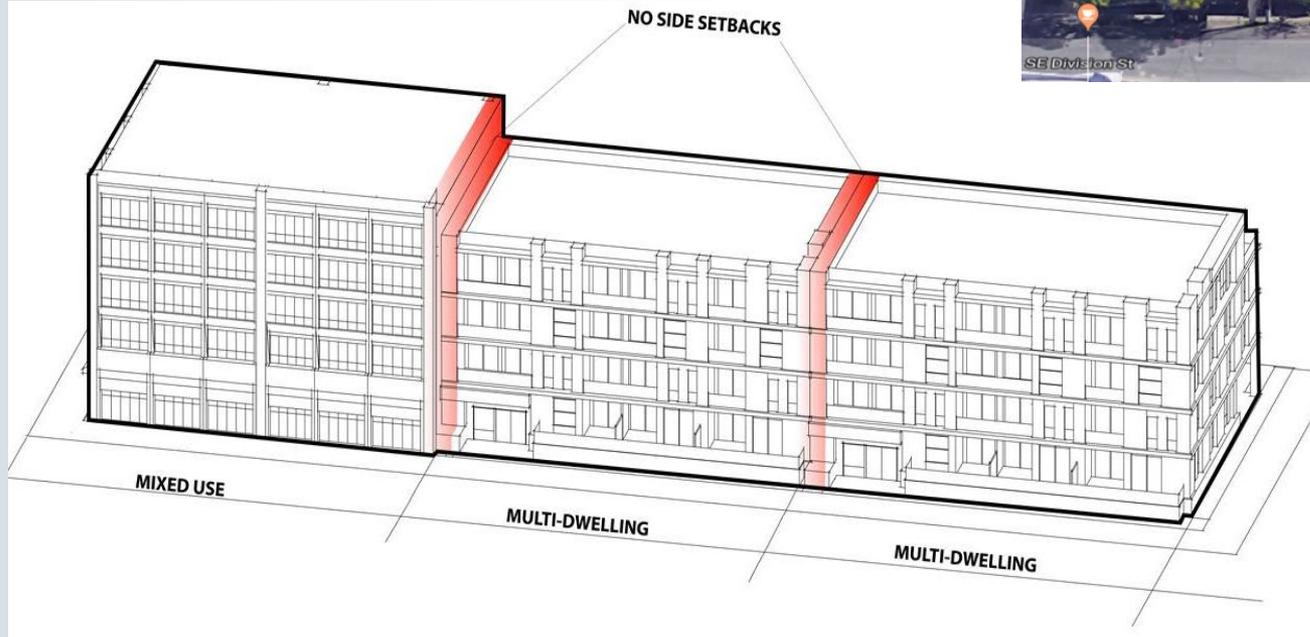
90 feet



115 feet

# Building Design and Scale

Allow for no setbacks between properties in multi-dwelling zones (RM2-RM4) on major corridors. Apply this allowance to Civic and Neighborhood corridors in the Inner Pattern Area.



## High Density Zones in Historic Districts - Issues:

### 1. **Historic Landmarks commissioners:**

Context is key in their reviews - base/bonus scale may not be approved if out-of-scale with context.

### 2. **Planning and Sustainability commissioners:**

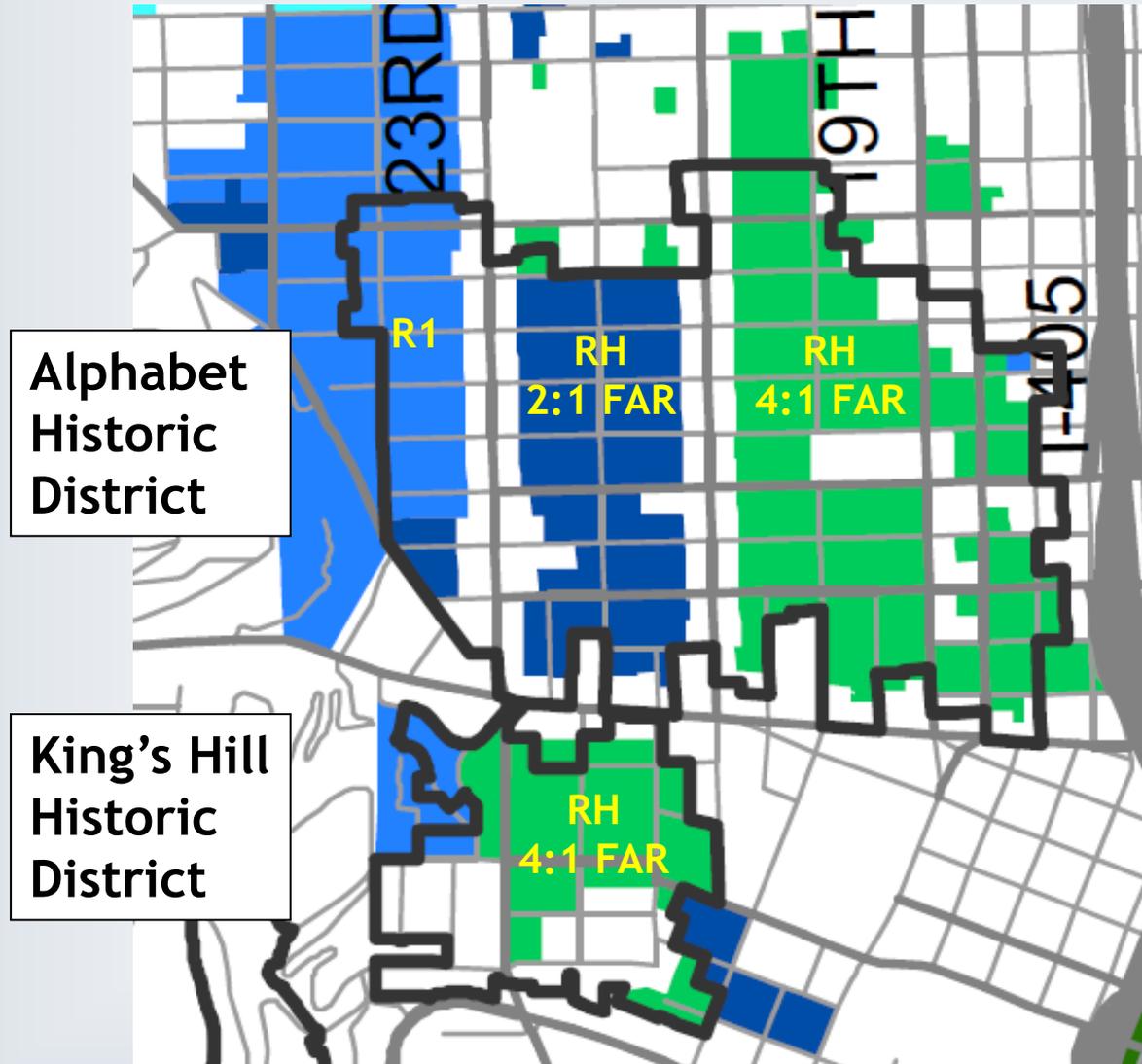
Important to provide incentives for affordable housing in historic districts.

# Historic District Zoning

## Recommended Draft amendments to high-density multi-dwelling zones intended to balance:

- Providing development allowances that relate to the scale of historic districts.
- Accommodating additional housing and providing incentives for affordable housing.

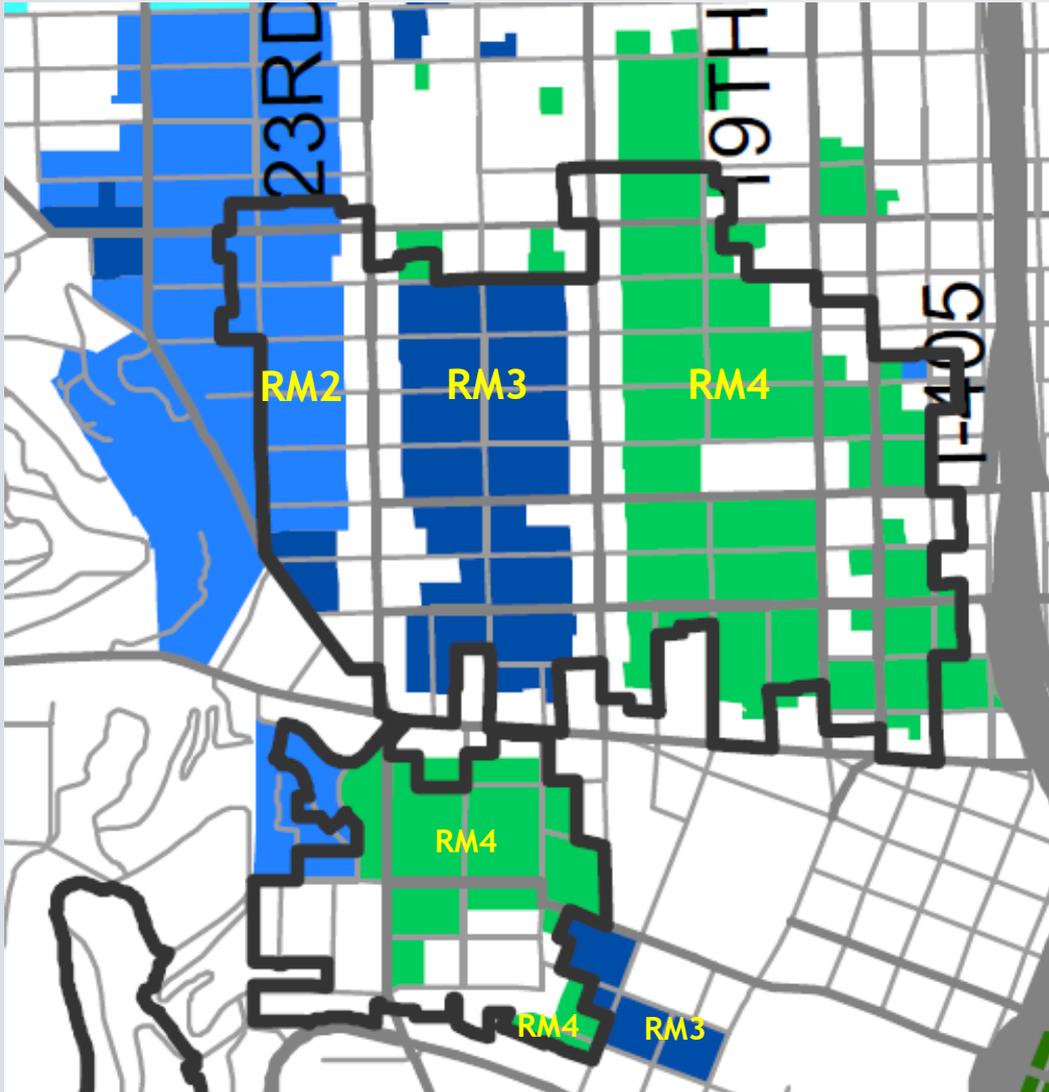
# Historic District Zoning



## Current Multi-Dwelling Zoning

*Alphet and King's Hill historic districts are the only historic districts with RH 4:1 FAR (outside the Central City)*

# Alphabet and King's Hill Historic Districts



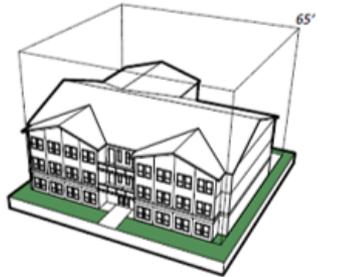
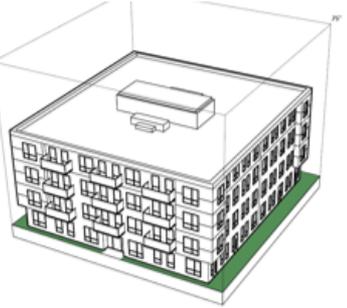
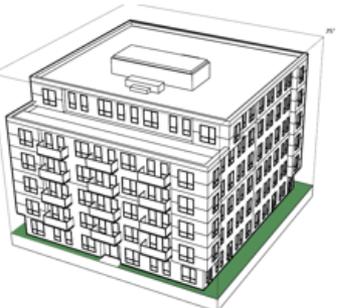
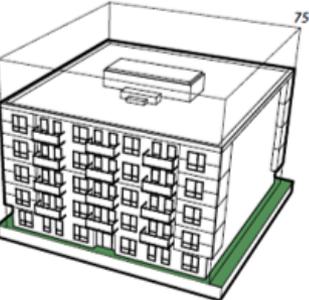
## Proposed Draft Multi-Dwelling Zoning

	Base FAR	Bonus FAR
<b>RM2</b> <i>(R1)</i>	 1.5 to 1	 2.25 to 1
<b>RM3</b> <i>(RH 2:1)</i>	 2 to 1	 3 to 1
<b>RM4</b> <i>(RH 4:1)</i>	 4 to 1	 6 to 1

# 1. Approach for RM4 Zones in Historic Districts

## Recommended Draft Proposal:

In the RM4 zone in historic districts, provide base and bonus FARs of 3:1 and 4.5:1 (instead of 4:1 and 6:1)

	Base FAR	Bonus FAR	Deeper Affordability Bonus
RM3	 <p>2 to 1</p>	 <p>3 to 1</p>	4 to 1
RM4 (historic districts)	 <p>3 to 1</p>	 <p>4.5 to 1</p>	6 to 1
RM4 (outside historic districts)	 <p>4 to 1</p>	 <p>6 to 1</p>	7 to 1

# Alphabet Historic District



3.9 to 1 FAR



3.3 to 1 FAR

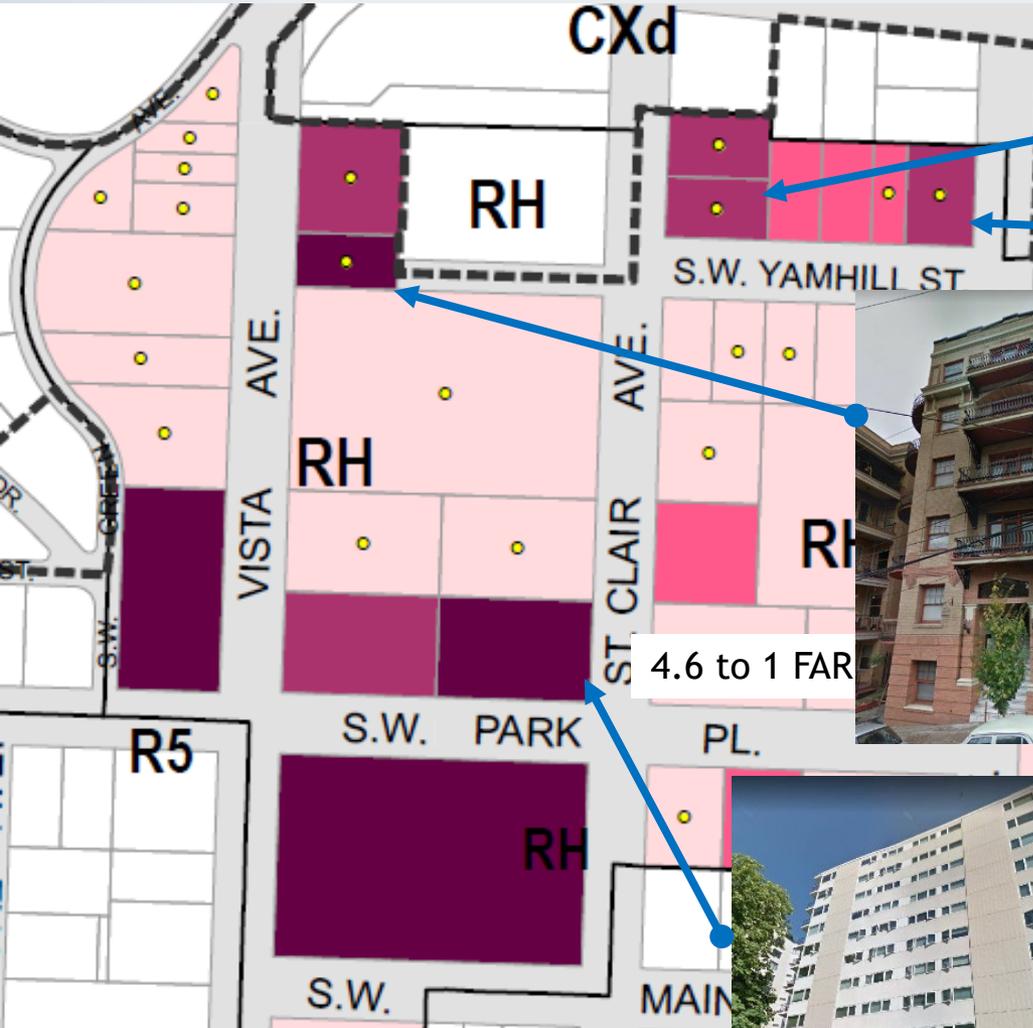
4 to 1 FAR



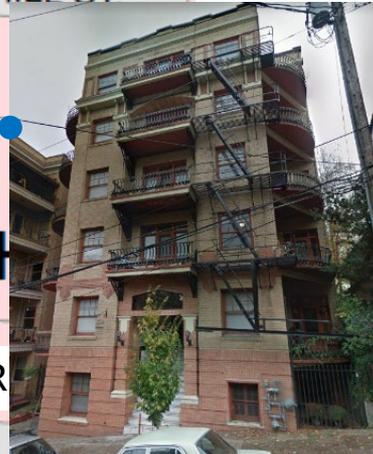
4.3 to 1 FAR



# King's Hill Historic District



3.9 to 1 FAR



4.6 to 1 FAR



3.1 to 1 FAR



4.3 to 1 FAR

# 1. Approach for RM4 Zones in Historic Districts



3 to 1



3.3 to 1



4.3 to 1



3 to 1



3.7 to 1



4.7 to 1

3 to 1



4.5 to 1

**Base and bonus FARs of 3:1 to 4.5:1 will allow new buildings similar to the scale of larger historic apartment buildings**

# 1. Approach for RM4 Zones in Historic Districts



3.6 to 1



3.6 to 1



3.9 to 1

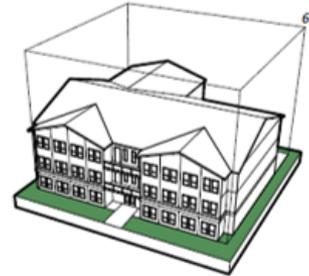
**Recently built or approved large-scale historic district development**  
- All would be allowed by 4.5 to 1 FAR Bonus

# 1. Approach for RM4 Zones in Historic Districts

*Deeper  
Affordability  
Bonus*

**RM3**

Base FAR



2 to 1

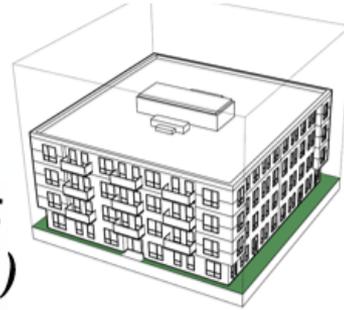
Bonus FAR



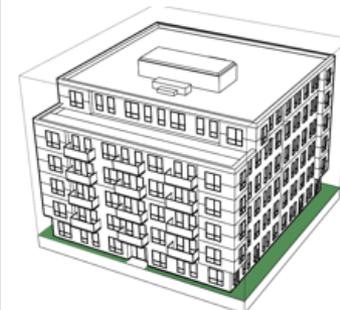
3 to 1

4 to 1

**RM4  
(historic  
districts)**



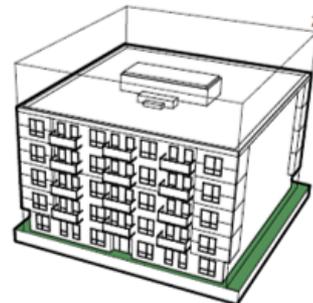
3 to 1



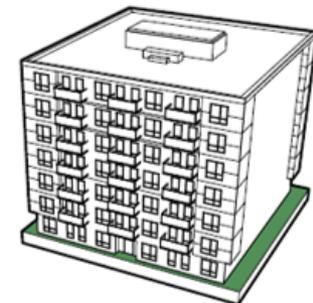
4.5 to 1

6 to 1

**RM4  
(outside  
historic  
districts)**



4 to 1



6 to 1

7 to 1

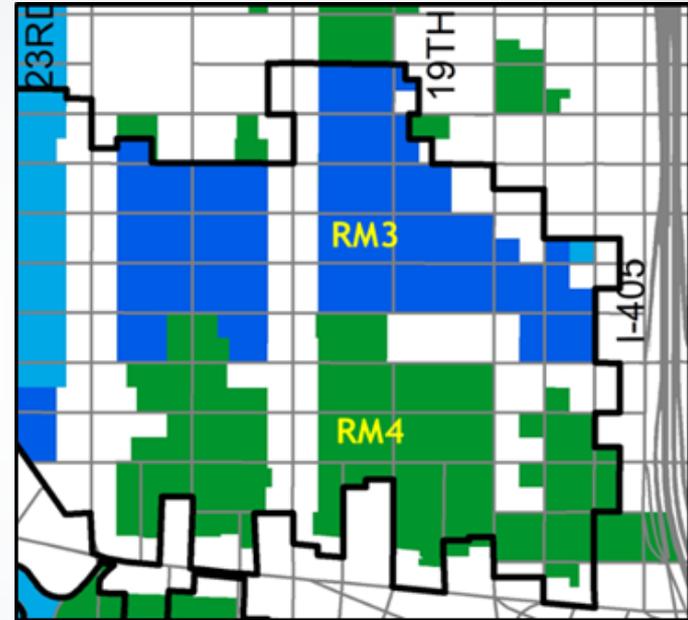
**Proposal:**

In the RM4 zone in historic districts, provide base and bonus FARs of 3:1 and 4.5:1 (instead of 4:1 and 6:1)

## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



**Original Proposal**  
*(based on existing zoning)*

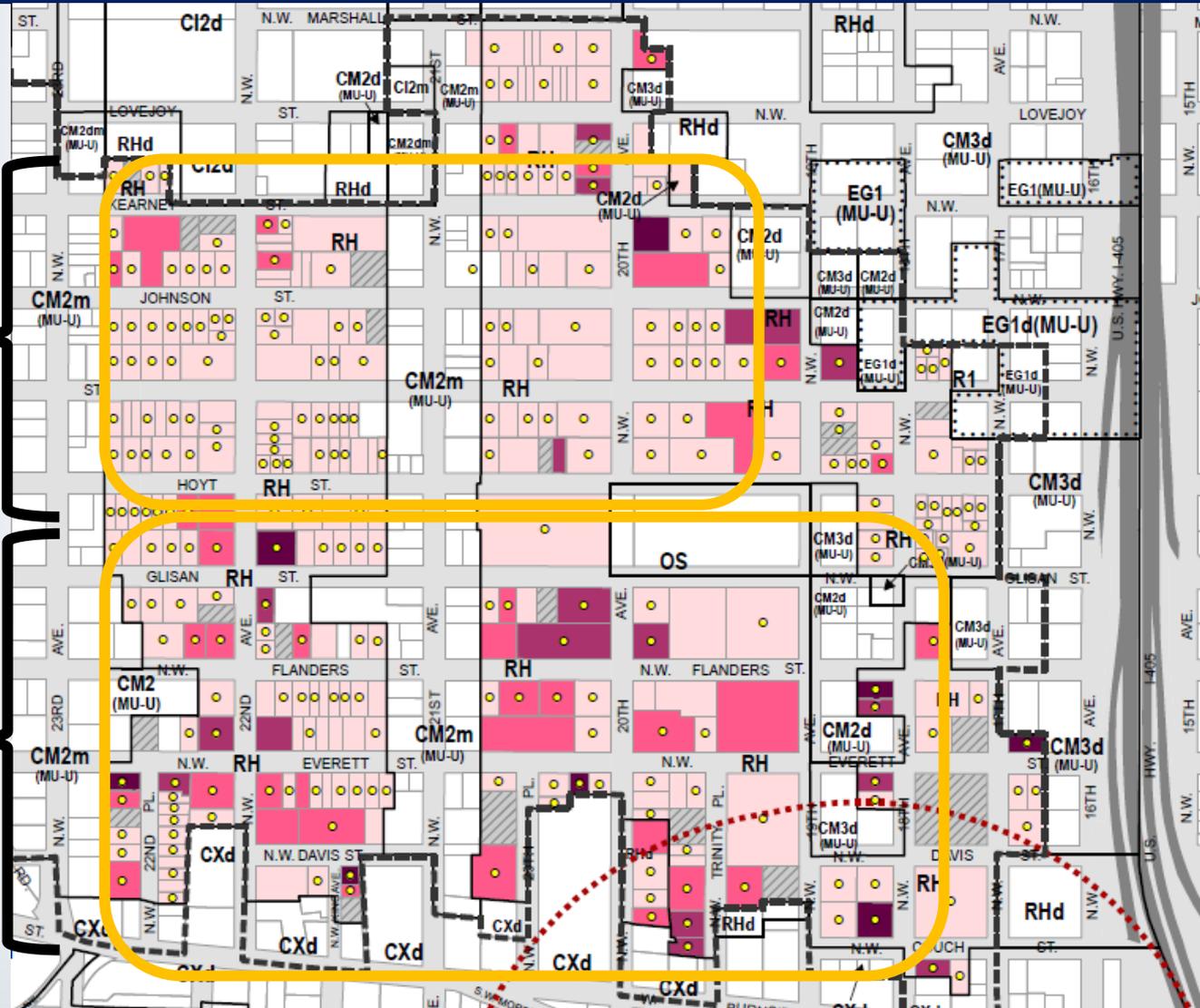


**Recommended Changes**  
*(based on historic patterns)*

# 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns

Smaller buildings clustered to north

Larger buildings clustered to south



City of Portland, Oregon  
Bureau of Planning & Sustainability  
Geographic Information System

## Existing Building Floor Area Ratios

### Alphabet Historic District

- Legend
- Alphabet Historic District
  - Building FAR**
    - Up to 2:1 FAR
    - >2:1 to 3:1 FAR
    - >3:1 to 4:1 FAR
    - More than 4:1 FAR
    - Vacant Land
    - Contributing Buildings
    - Yamhill MAX station buffer
    - Zoning Lines
    - Comp Plan lines

The information on this map was derived from City of Portland GIS databases. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". The City of Portland cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions or positional accuracy.

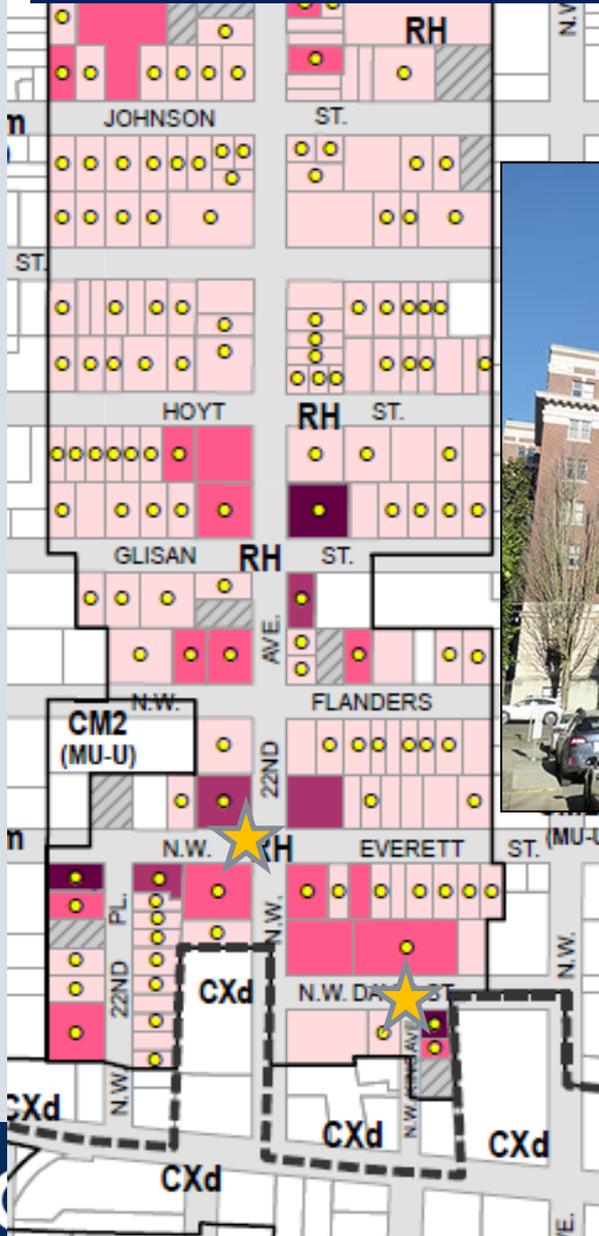
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## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



NW Davis & King



NW Everett & 20th

**RH zoning between NW 21<sup>st</sup> & NW 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
*(currently base FAR of 2 to 1)*



## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



4.1 to 1 FAR



3.7 to 1 FAR

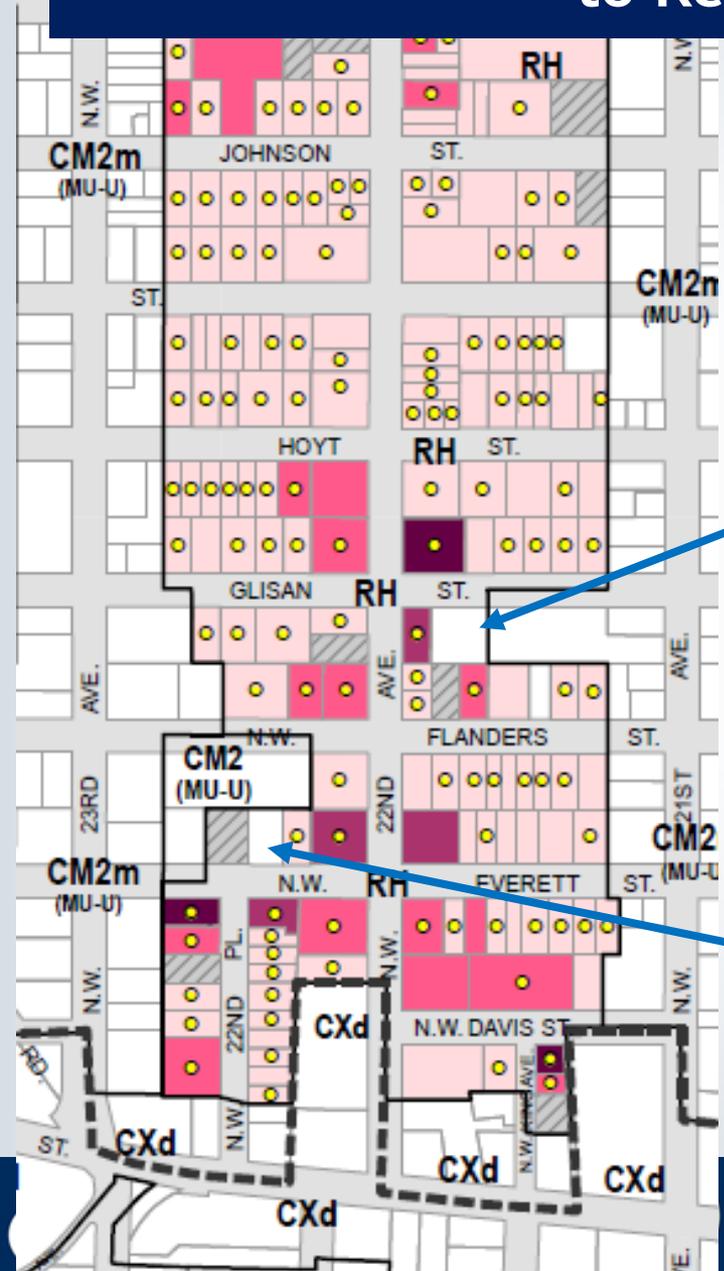
5 to 1 FAR



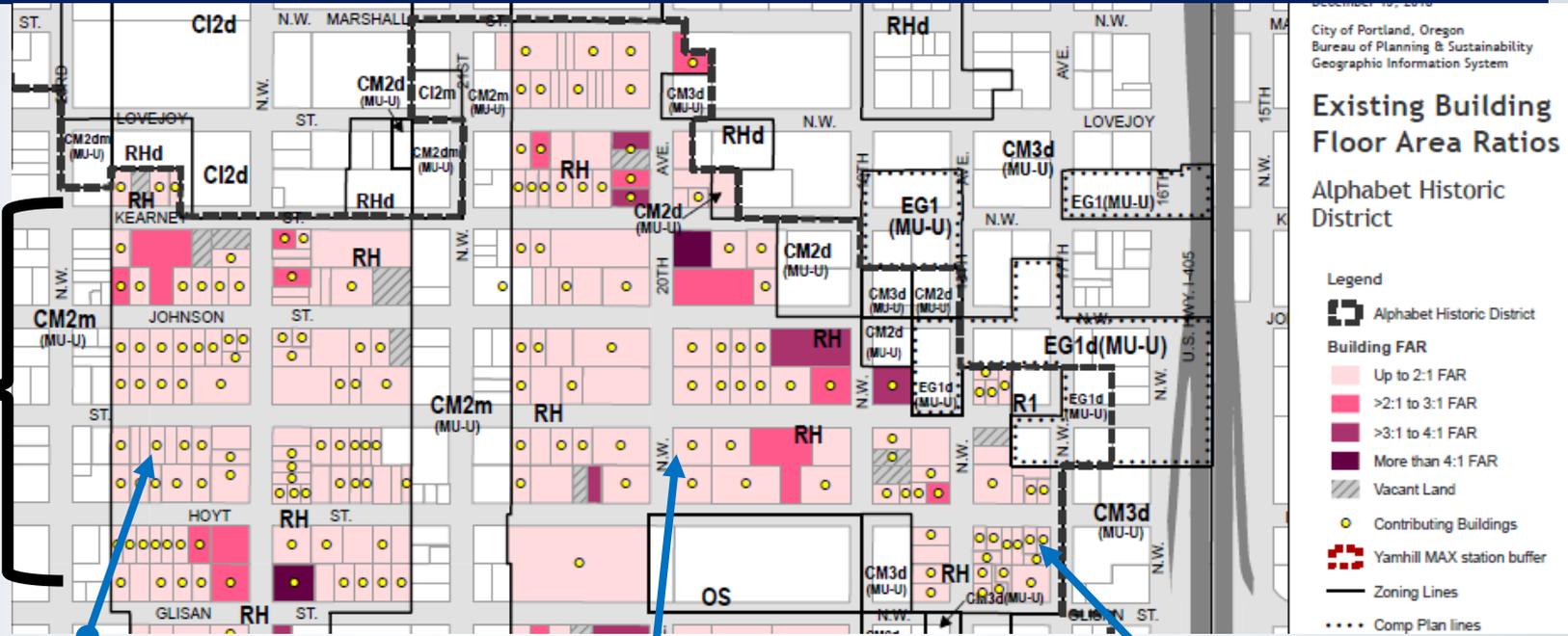
4.7 to 1 FAR



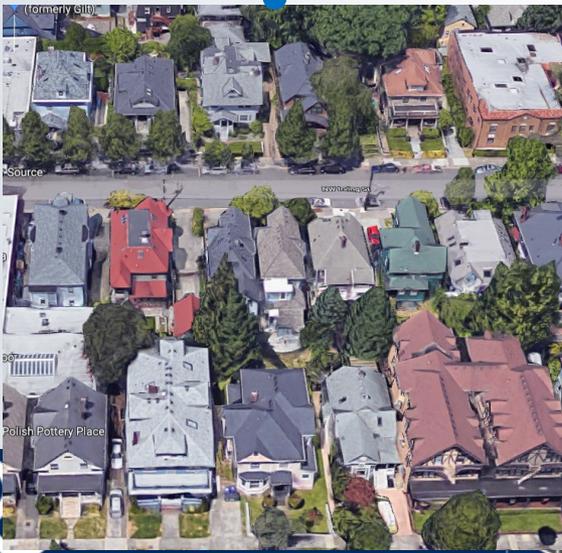
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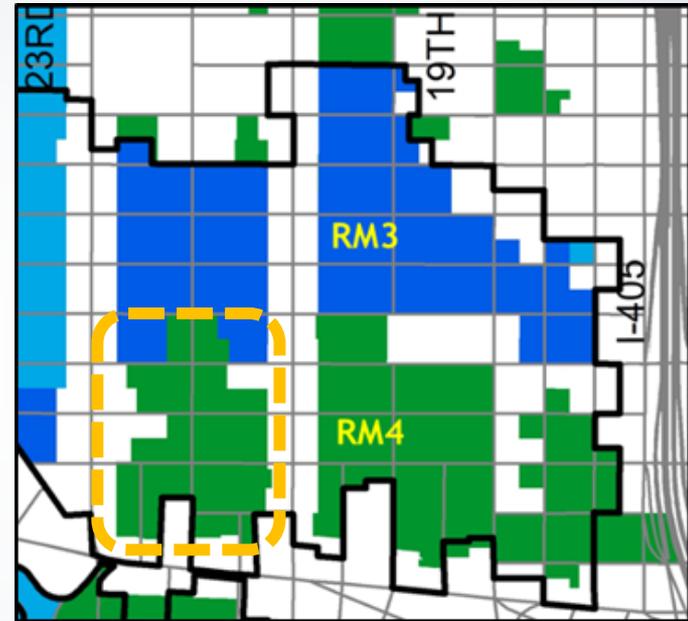
Smaller buildings clustered to north



## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



*Original Proposal*  
(based on existing zoning)



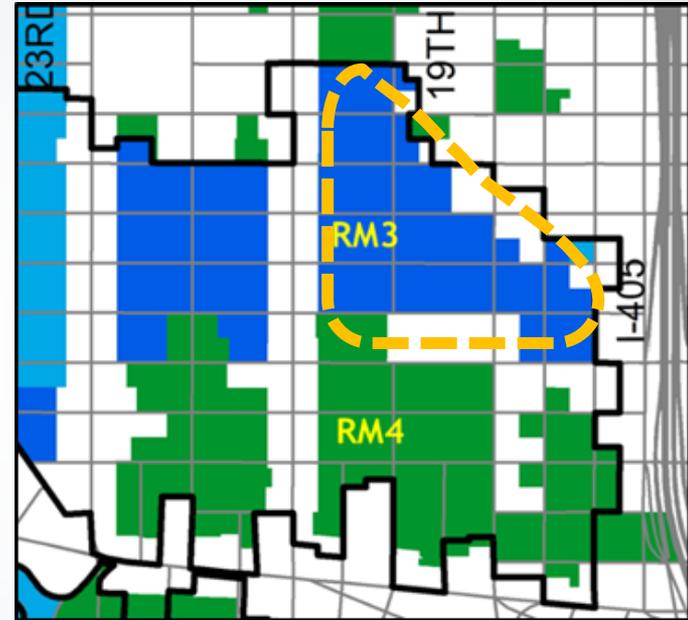
*Recommended Changes*  
(based on historic patterns)

- (1) Apply RM4 zoning between NW 21<sup>st</sup> & NW 23<sup>rd</sup> south of Glisan/Hoyt
- (2) Apply RM3 zoning east of NW 21<sup>st</sup> north of Glisan/Hoyt

## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



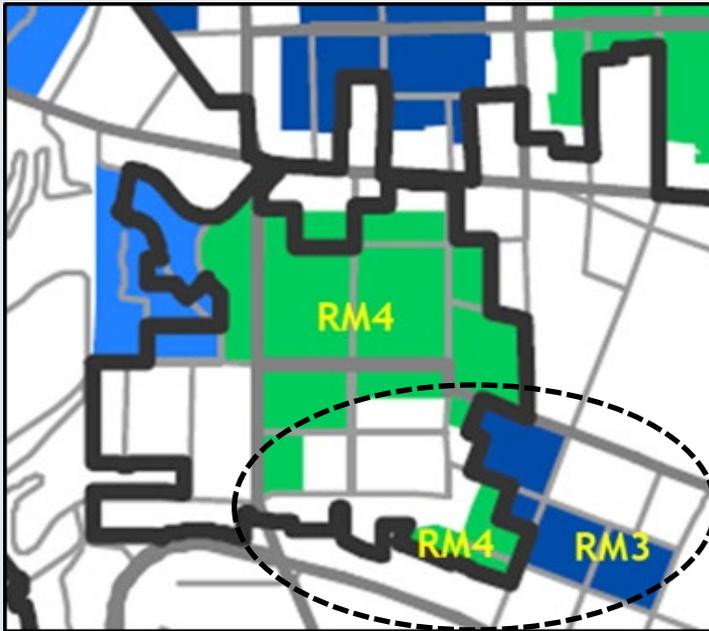
*Original Proposal  
(based on existing zoning)*



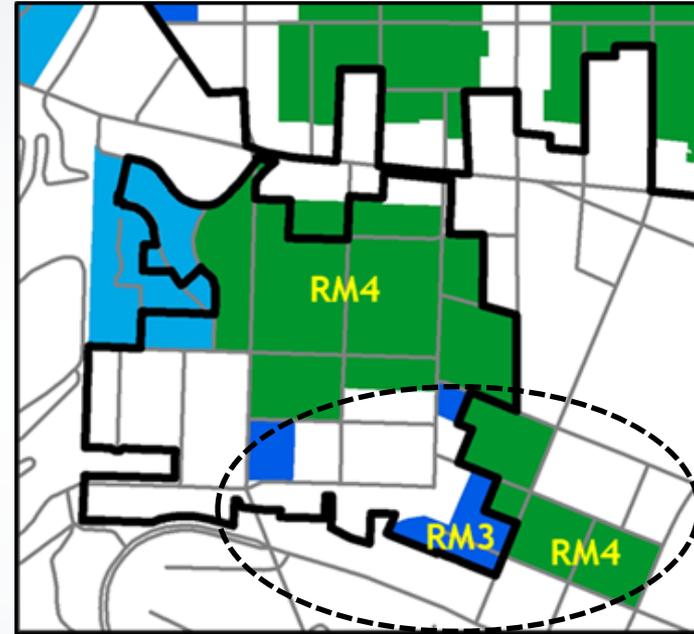
*Recommended Changes  
(based on historic patterns)*

- (1) Apply RM4 zoning between NW 21<sup>st</sup> & NW 23<sup>rd</sup> south of Glisan/Hoyt
- (2) Apply RM3 zoning east of NW 21<sup>st</sup> north of Glisan/Hoyt

### 3. For the King's Hill Historic District, Reassign RM4 & RM3 Zoning at its Southern Edges to Reflect Development Patterns

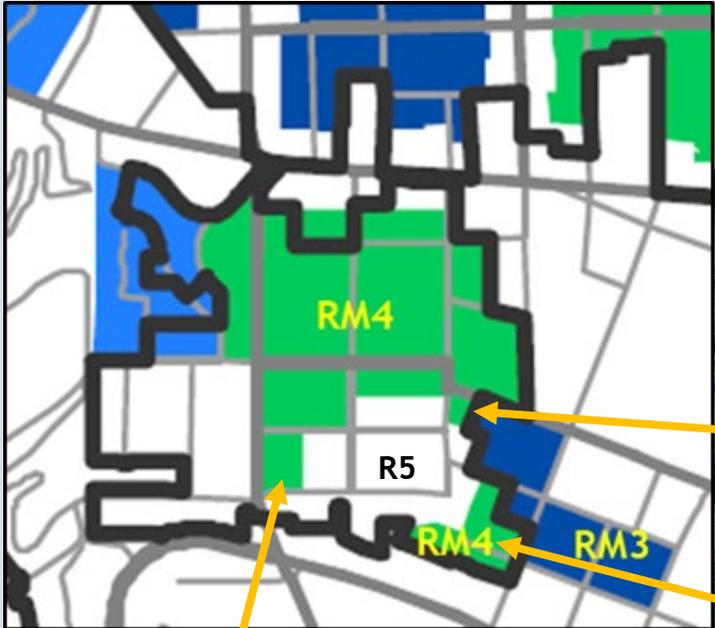


**Original Proposal**  
*(based on existing zoning)*

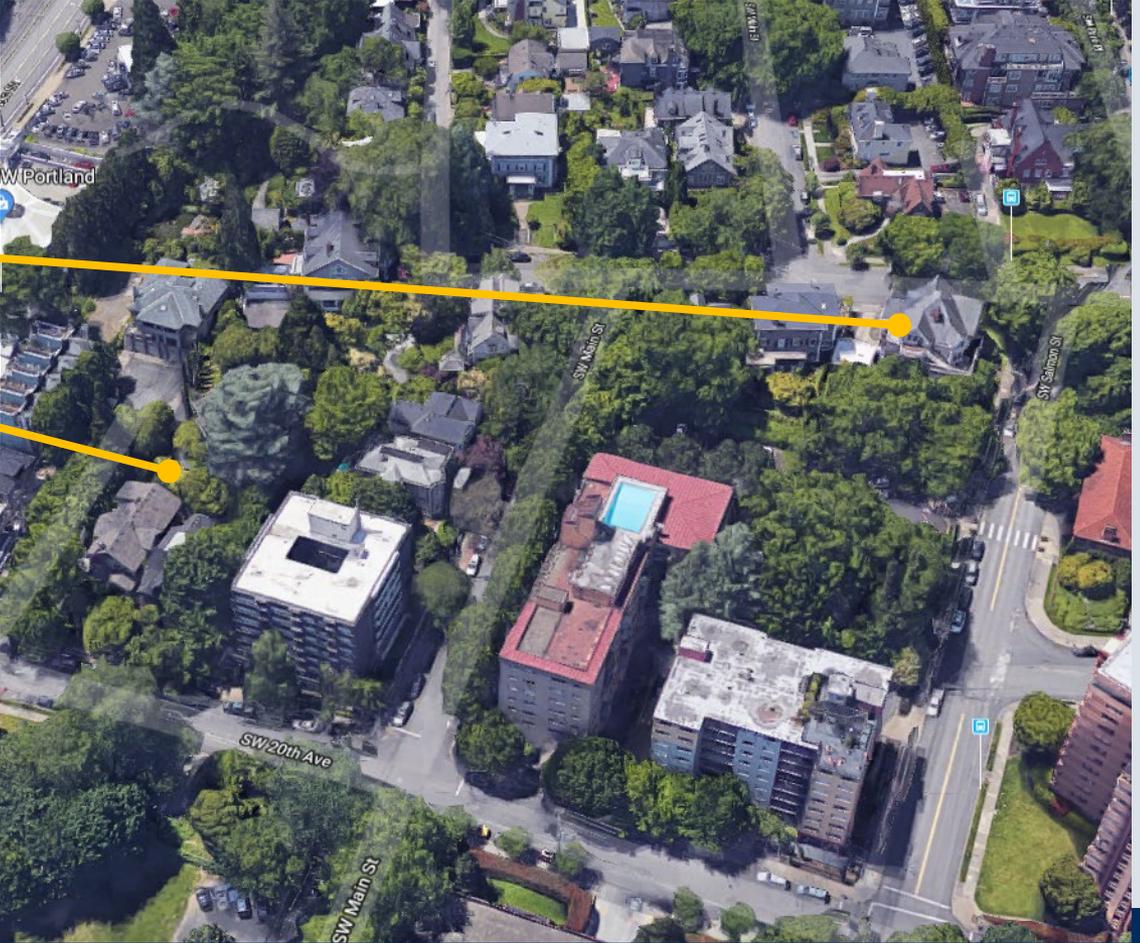


**Recommended Changes**  
*(based on existing patterns)*

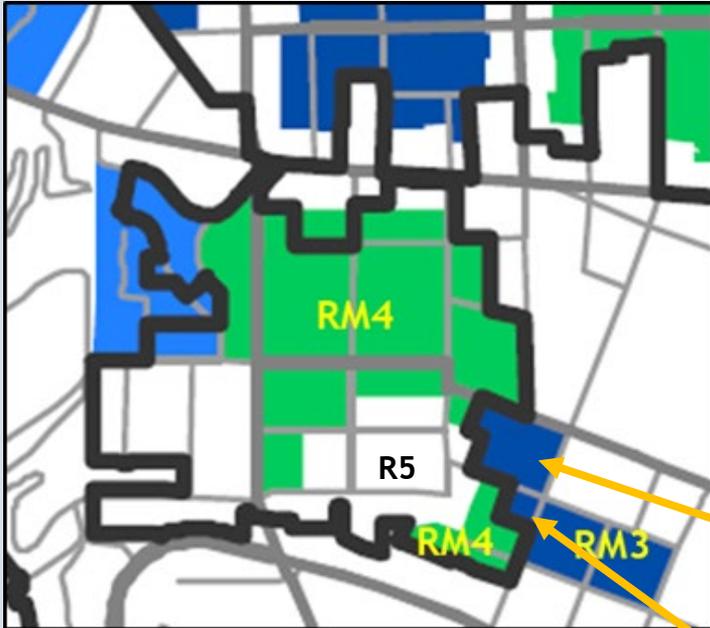
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*Original Proposal  
(based on existing zoning)*

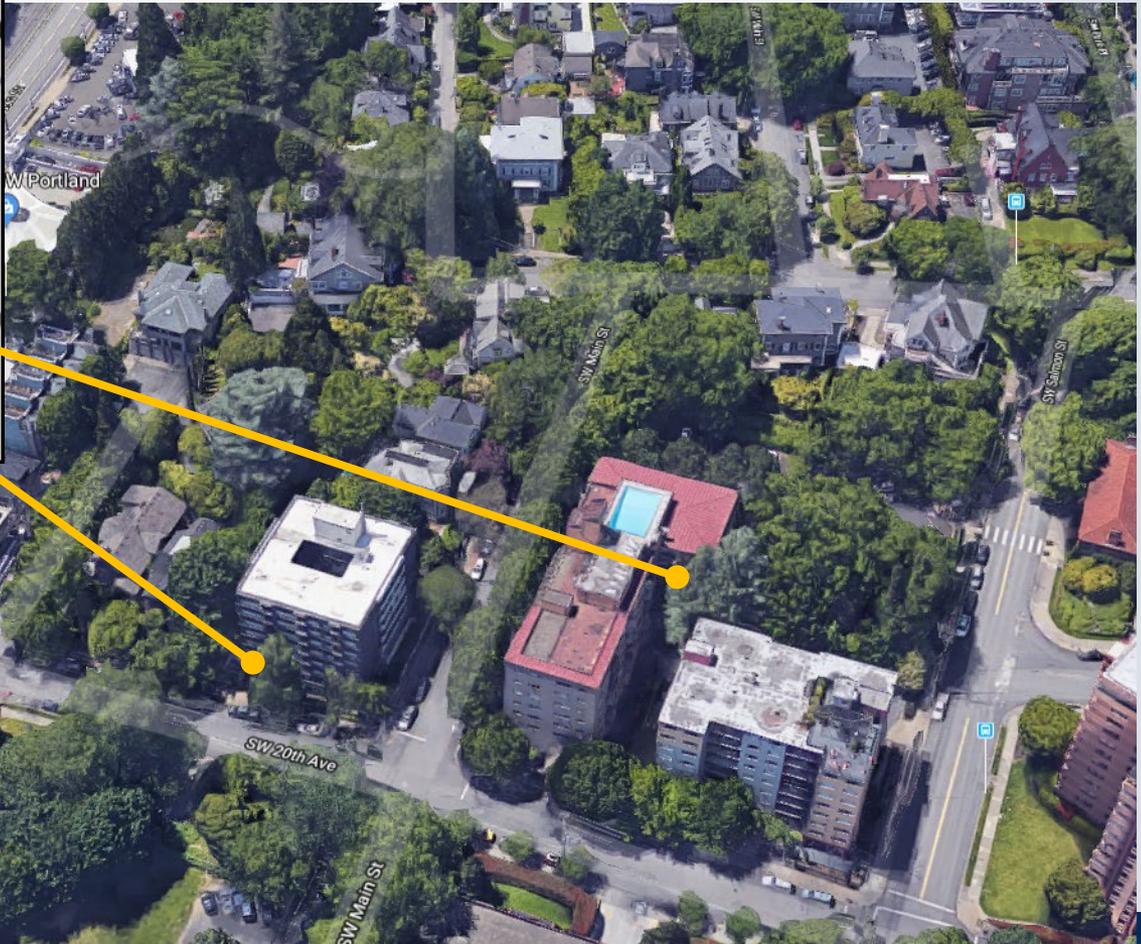


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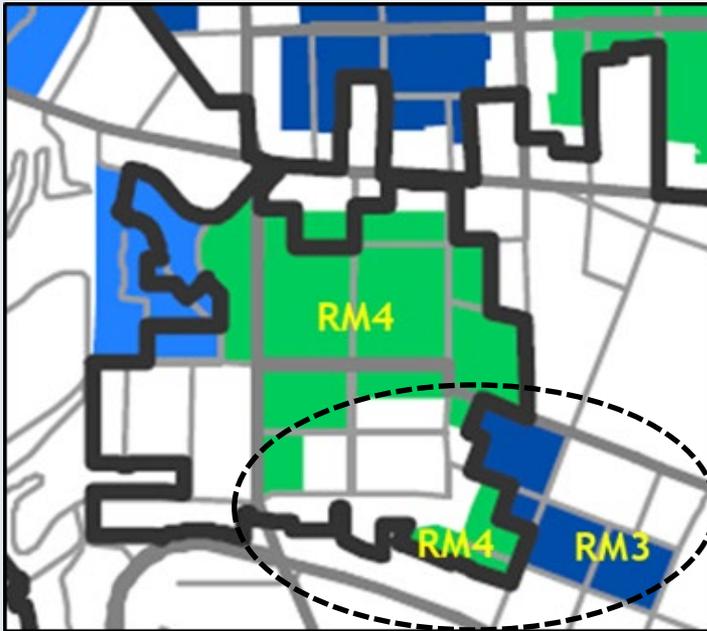


## Three-block area east of historic district:

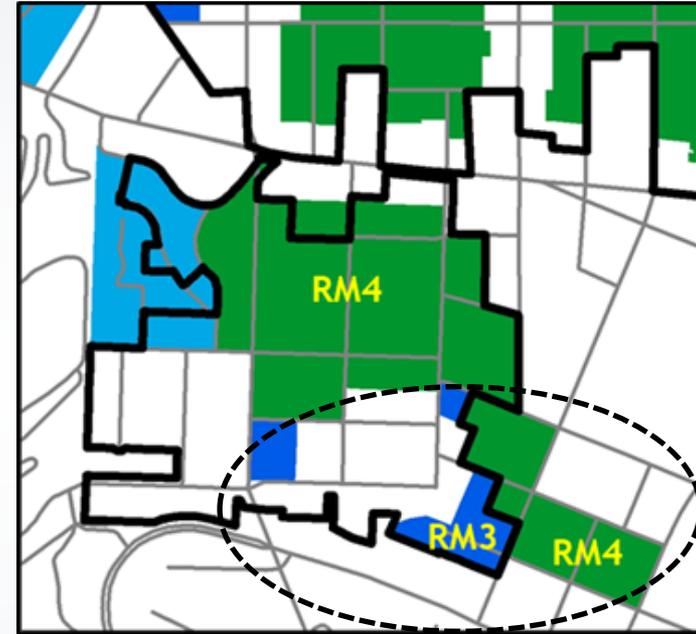
- Currently RH zoning
- Central City Plan District 4:1 FAR
- Two eastern-most blocks currently allow 100' height



### 3. For the King's Hill Historic District, Reassign RM4 & RM3 Zoning at its Southern Edges to Reflect Development Patterns



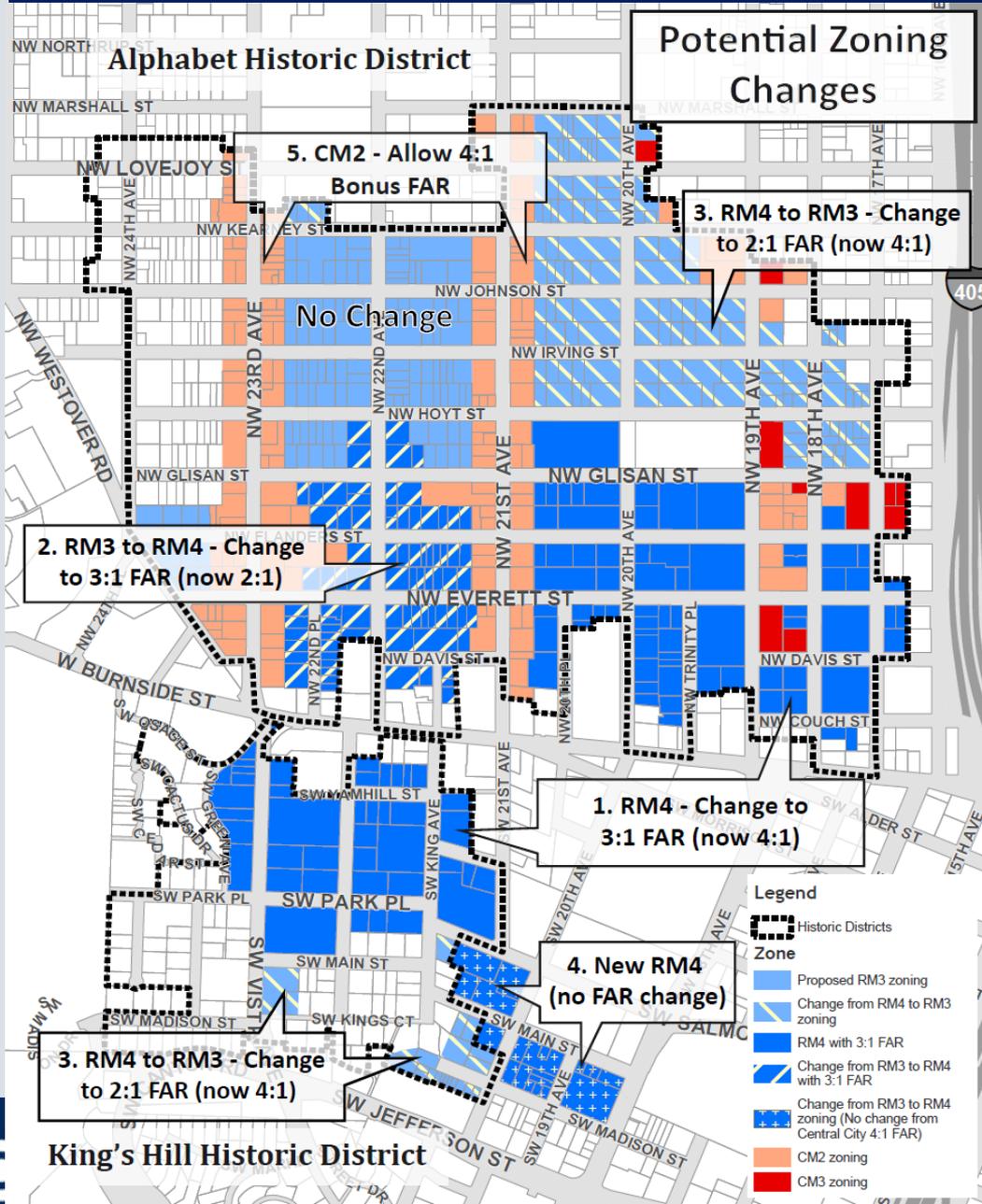
*Original Proposal*  
(based on existing zoning)



*Recommended Changes*  
(based on existing patterns)

- (1) Apply RM3 zoning to properties in the historic district with small historic structures at southern edge
- (2) Apply RM4 zoning to 3-block area east of the historic district

# Historic District Zoning



## Combined Proposals

1. In the RM4 zone in historic districts, provide a base and bonus FARs of 3:1 and 4.5:1 (instead of 4:1 and 6:1).
2. In the Alphet Historic District, apply RM4 zoning south of Glisan/Hoyt and apply RM3 zoning to the north.
3. In the King's Hill Historic District, apply RM3 zoning at its southern edges and apply RM4 zoning to the east of the district.

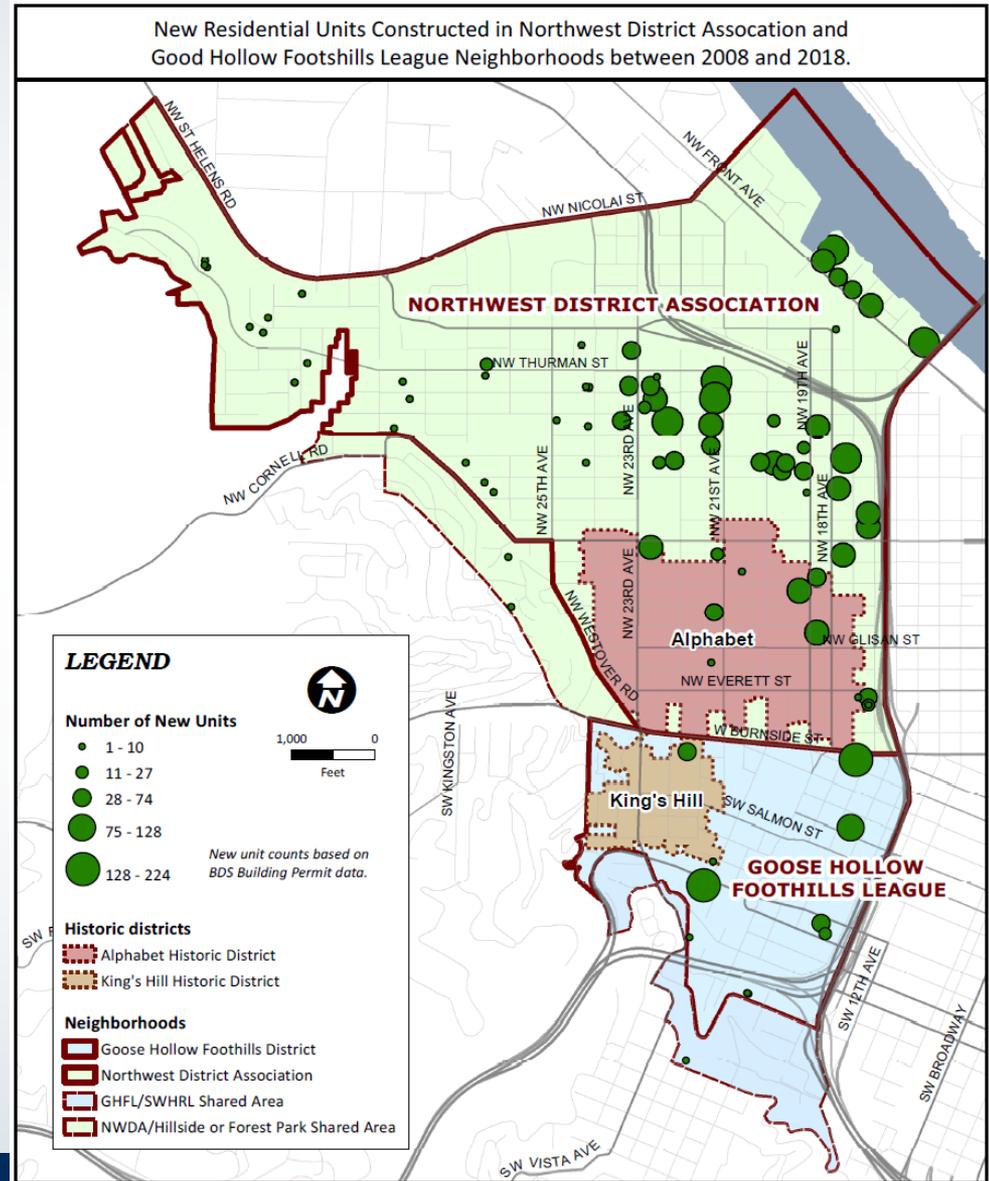
# Historic District Zoning - Housing Capacity

## Impacts on Housing Capacity

- Capacity for over 12,000 housing units in Northwest District and Goose Hollow.
- Proposals reduce housing capacity by 200 units (*only considering base FAR changes*).
- No loss in capacity if increased bonus FAR capacity considered for large sites.

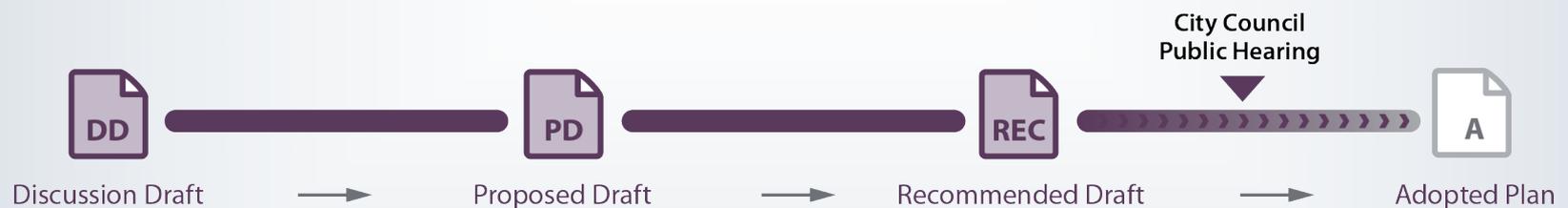
## Past ten-year trend:

The Northwest District and Goose Hollow neighborhoods were the location for over 4,000 new housing units. Only 8% (332 units) have been built in the historic districts.



# Schedule

- **Publish Recommended Draft:** **August 2019**
- **City Council Public Hearing:** **October 2019**
- **City Council Deliberations/Decision:** **Oct/Nov 2019**
- **Effective Date:** ***TBD – typically 30 days after adoption***



**Project website:** [www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing)



# Questions?

Better Housing by Design project:

[www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing)

Bill Cunningham, Project Manager:

503-823-4203



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