



# Better Housing by Design:

An update to Portland's Multi-Dwelling Zoning Code

## Recommended Draft Zoning Code Amendments

### Overview

August 19, 2019



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.



# Project Purpose and Scope

- **Revise Zoning Code development and design standards** to improve outcomes in Portland's multi-dwelling zones outside the Central City.
  - *Better Housing by Design Project (BPS)*
- **Develop new approaches to creating street and pedestrian connections** in places that lack them.
  - *Connected Centers Street Plan (PBOT)*

# Relationship to other Zoning Code projects



Residential Infill Project  
Single-Dwelling Zones

Better Housing by Design  
Multi-Dwelling Zones  
(R3, R2, R1, RH)

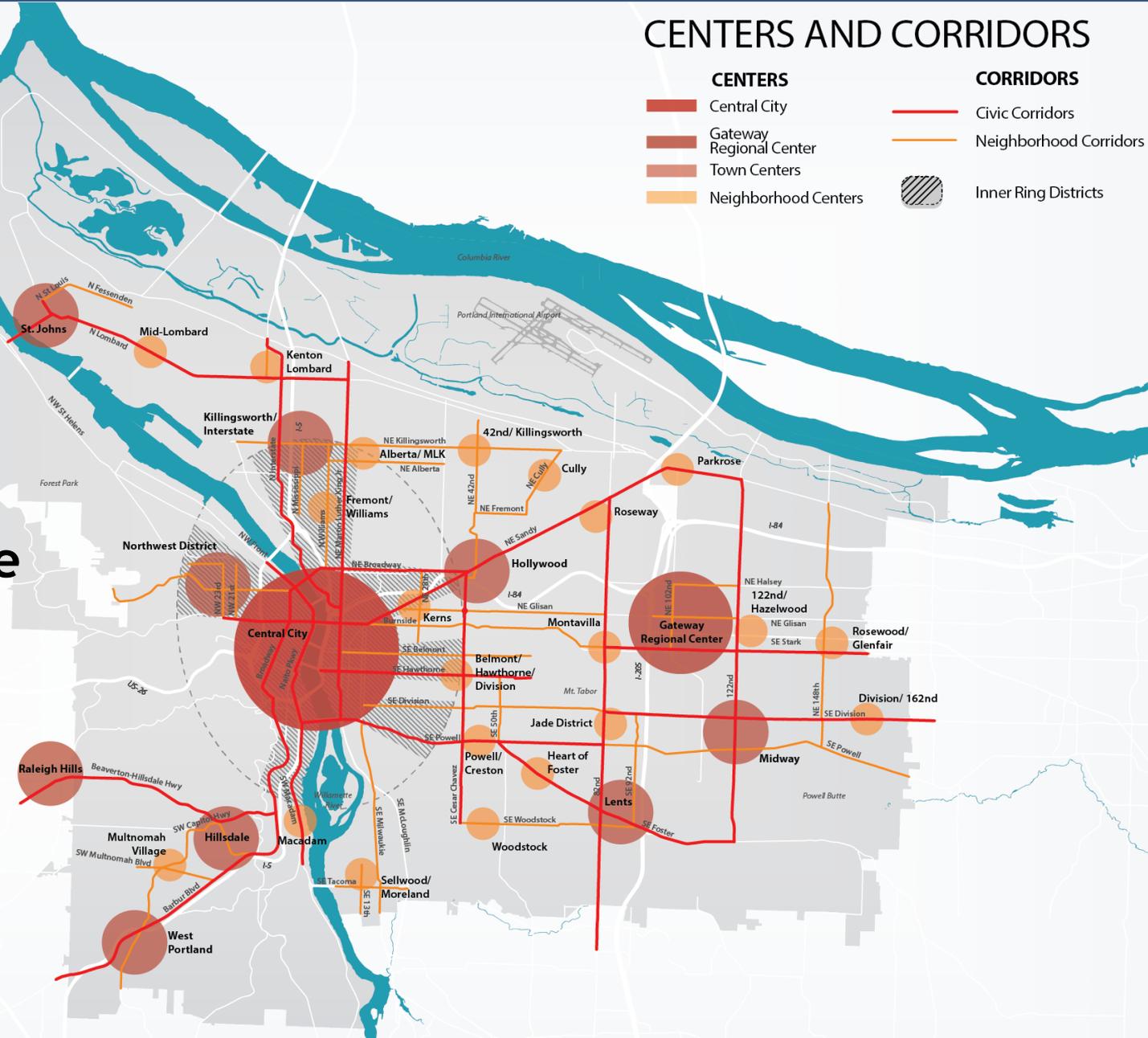
Mixed Use Zones Project  
Commercial/Mixed Use Zones

# CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

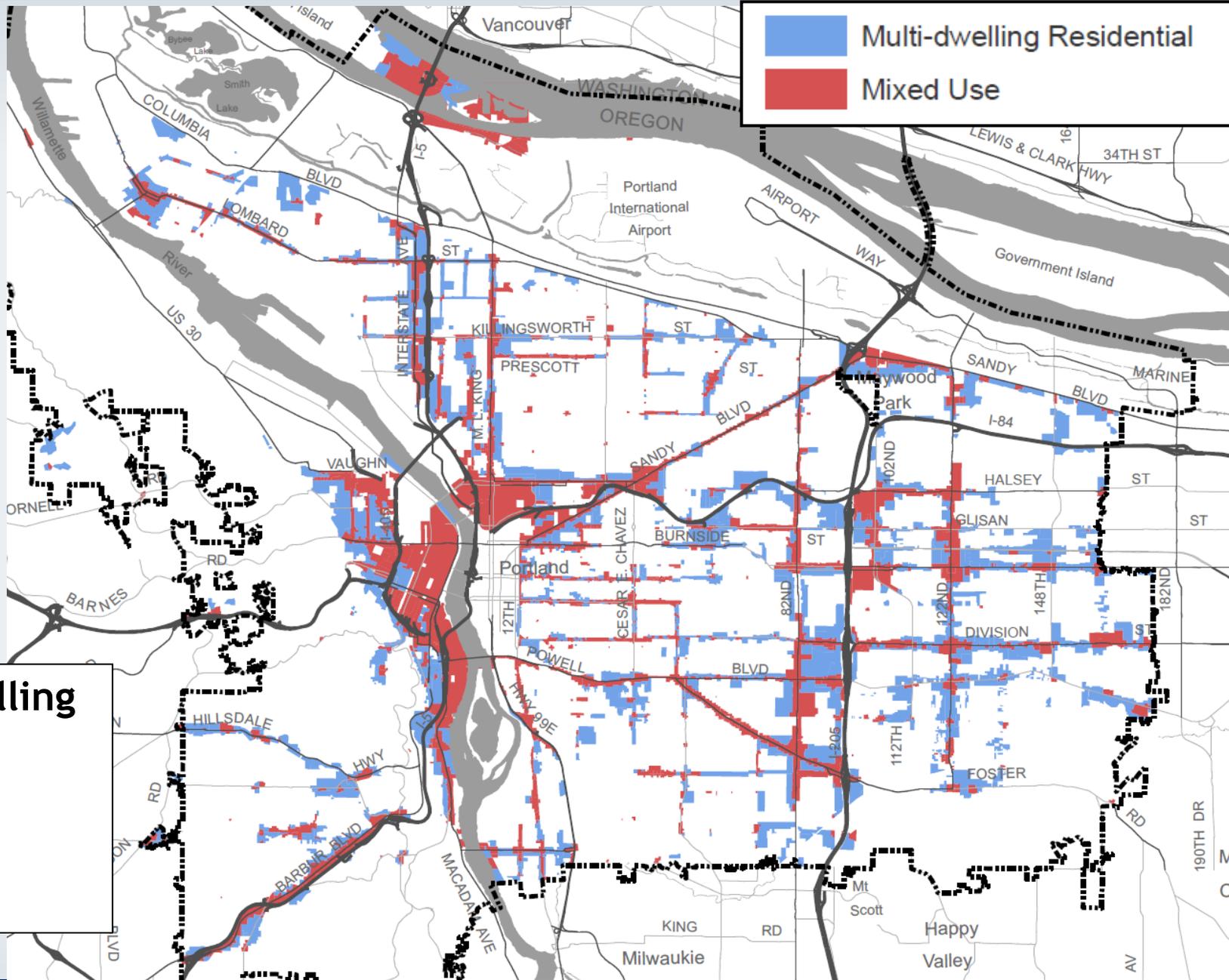
- | CENTERS   | CORRIDORS  |
|---|--|
|  Central City            |  Civic Corridors        |
|  Gateway Regional Center |  Neighborhood Corridors |
|  Town Centers            |  Inner Ring Districts   |
|  Neighborhood Centers    |  |

## Comprehensive Plan

50% of growth focused in and around centers and corridors outside the Central City



# Zoning



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

# What's the problem we're trying to solve?

- Policies guide us to make rules to encourage:
  - **Housing diversity**, including **affordable** and **accessible** housing
  - **Pedestrian-oriented street environments**
  - Respect for **neighborhood context**
  - Housing that supports residents' **health and active living**
  - **Nature and green infrastructure** in the urban environment
  - **Resource-efficient design and development**
  - **Street and pedestrian connections** that are safe and convenient
- Gap between these goals and what is being built.

# Major Topics

**Diverse Housing Options  
and Affordability**



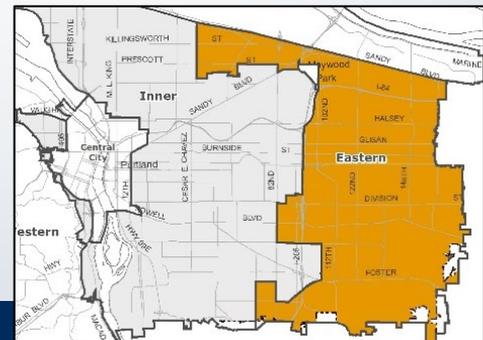
**Outdoor Spaces  
and Green Elements**



**Building Design and Scale**



**East Portland Standards and  
Street Connections**



# TOPIC

## Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



Duplex



Fourplex



Small Apartment Building (eightplex)



Courtyard Apartments

**Historically (pre-1959) - broad range of low-rise multi-dwelling housing types were built in Portland's neighborhoods.**

# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



Duplex



Fourplex



Small Apartment Building (eightplex)



Courtyard Apartments

**Historically (pre-1959) - broad range of low-rise multi-dwelling housing types were built in Portland's neighborhoods.**

**Today - only the duplex is allowed in the R2 zone (Portland's predominant multi-dwelling zone, intended for 2-3 story buildings).**

# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability

Past



Duplex



Fourplex

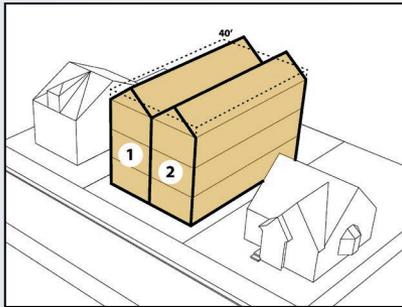


Small Apartment Building (eightplex)



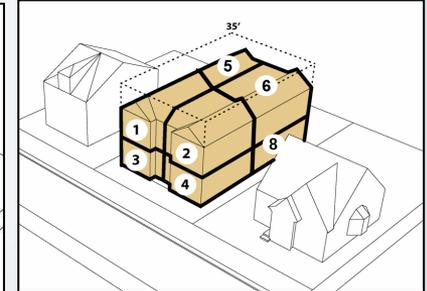
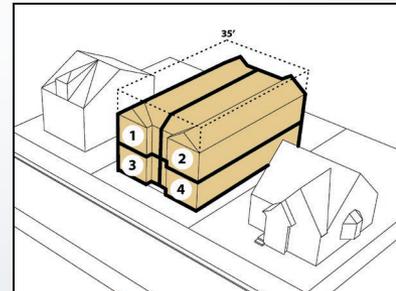
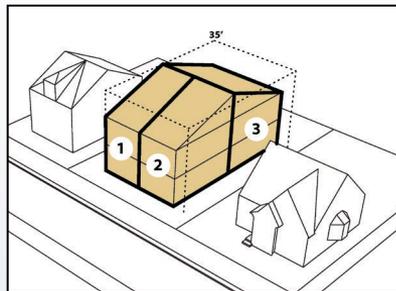
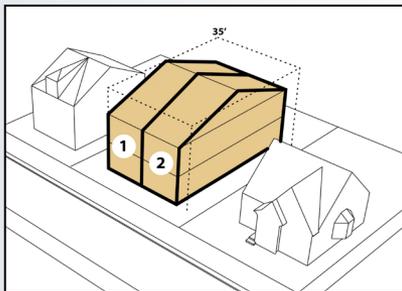
Courtyard Apartments

Present



*R2 zone regulated by unit density (maximum 2 units on 5,000 sq.ft. lot)*

Proposed



**Proposal:** regulate by building scale instead of unit density  
*(allowing more diverse, less expensive housing options)*

# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability

## 1. Regulate by building scale instead of unit density

Both in R1 zone



34 units on 10,000 SF site  
*(3 times more than current maximum density)*

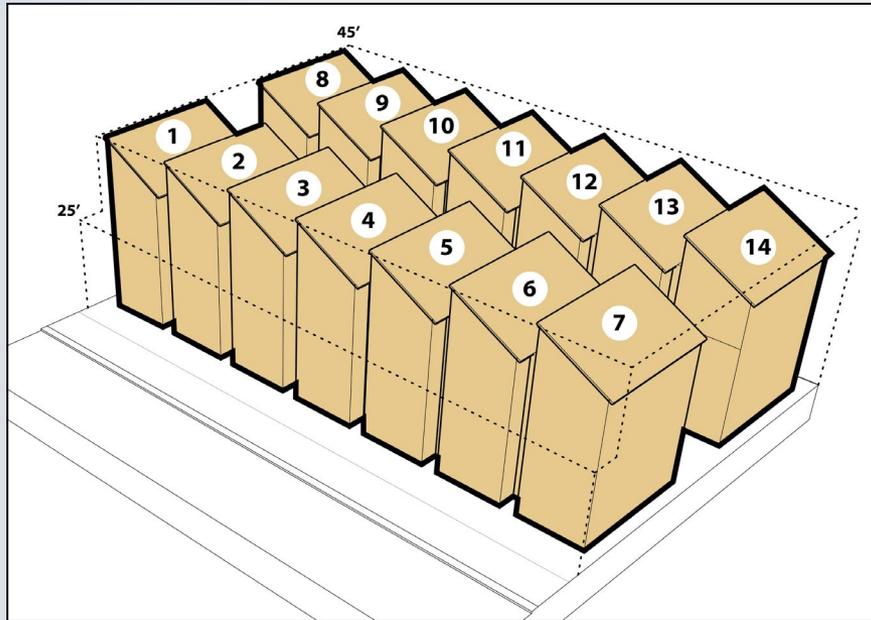


18 units on 18,000 SF site  
*(maximum current density)*

**RM2 zone (current R1) - common along transit corridors**

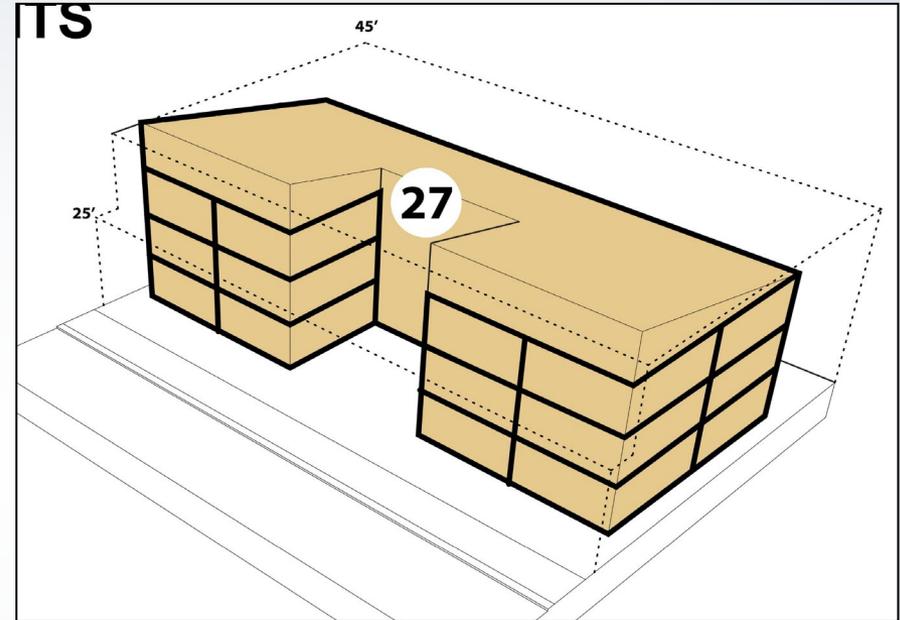
# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability

## 1. Regulate by building scale instead of unit density



### Current Approach

*(maximum 1 unit per 1,000 sq. ft. of site area)*



### Recommended New Approach

*(regulate by size of building - FAR)*

### RM2 zone (R1)

- 1.5 to 1 FAR, keep 45' building height

# New Multi-Dwelling Zones

- All new zones regulated by size of building
- Flexibility for numbers of units

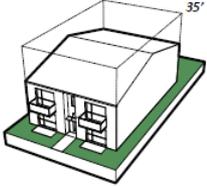
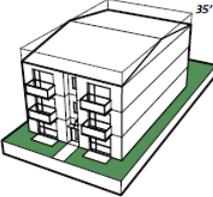
## New Zone: RM1

Current Zones: R2 and R3

Maximum Height: 35 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 50%

(63% of MDR zoning)

Base FAR	Bonus FAR
 <p>1 to 1</p>	 <p>1.5 to 1</p>

## New Zone: RM2

Current Zone: R1

Maximum Height: 45 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 60% or 70%

(29% of MDR zoning)

 <p>1.5 to 1</p>	 <p>2.25 to 1</p>
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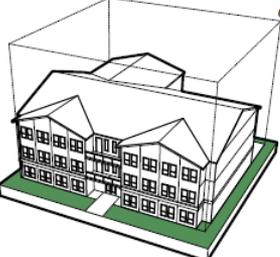
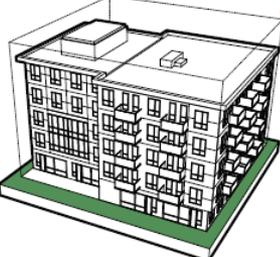
## New Zone: RM3

Current Zone: RH (2:1 FAR)

Maximum Height: 65 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 85%

(5% of MDR zoning)

 <p>2 to 1</p>	 <p>3 to 1</p>
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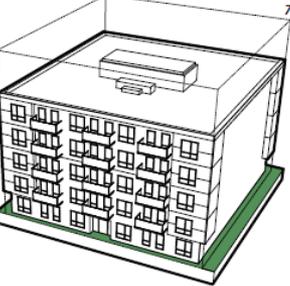
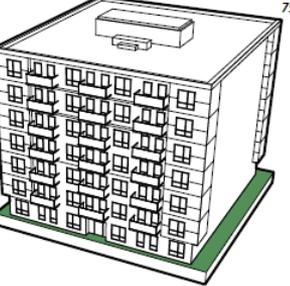
## New Zone: RM4

Current Zone: RH (4:1 FAR)

Maximum Height: 75 - 100 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 85%

(3% of MDR zoning)

 <p>4 to 1</p>	 <p>6 to 1</p>
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# New Multi-Dwelling Zones

## Greater scale allowed for:

- Affordable units
- Accessibility
- Preservation of
  - Existing affordable housing
  - Trees
  - Historic buildings

### New Zone: RM1

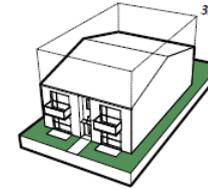
Current Zones: R2 and R3

Maximum Height: 35 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 50%

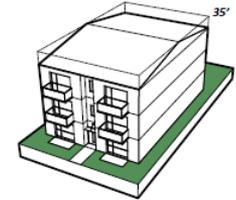
(63% of MDR zoning)

Base FAR



1 to 1

Bonus FAR



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

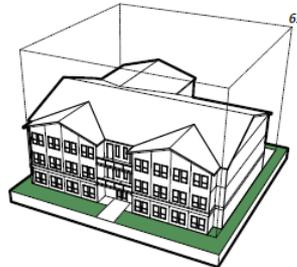
### New Zone: RM3

Current Zone: RH (2:1 FAR)

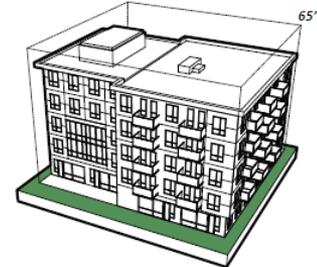
Maximum Height: 65 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 85%

(5% of MDR zoning)



2 to 1



3 to 1

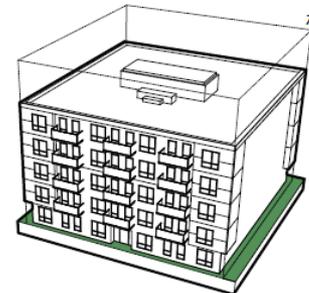
### New Zone: RM4

Current Zone: RH (4:1 FAR)

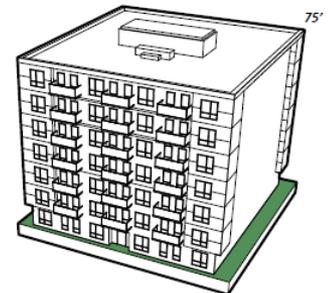
Maximum Height: 75 - 100 feet

Max. Building Coverage: 85%

(3% of MDR zoning)



4 to 1



6 to 1

# FAR Bonus and Transfer Options

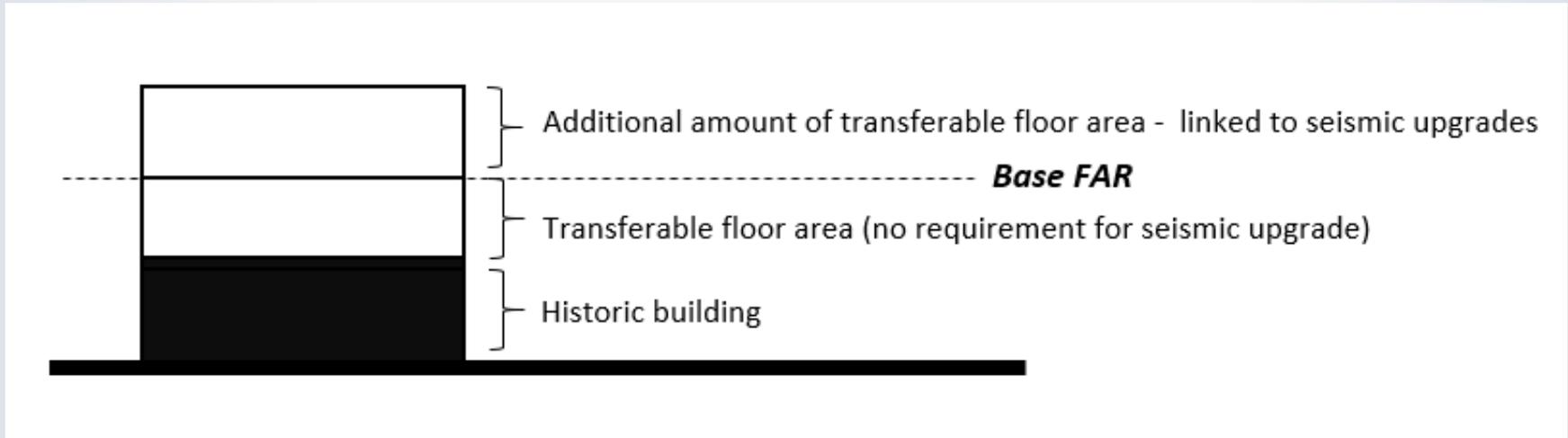
**Base  
FAR**

**+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> <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>	<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>

# Development Transfers for Seismic Upgrades

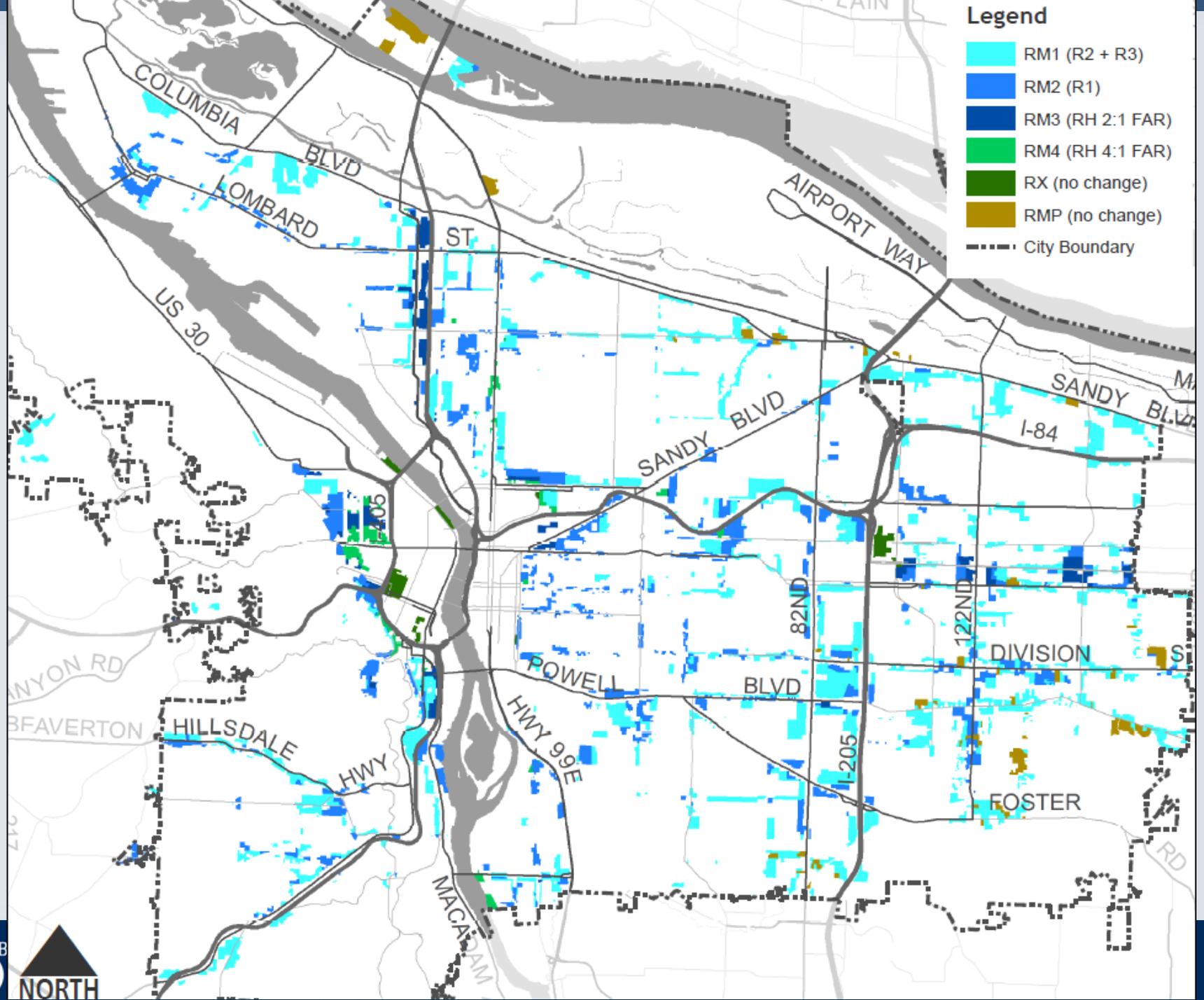


Allow an additional amount of FAR to be transferred from sites with historic resources, in conjunction with seismic upgrades.

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

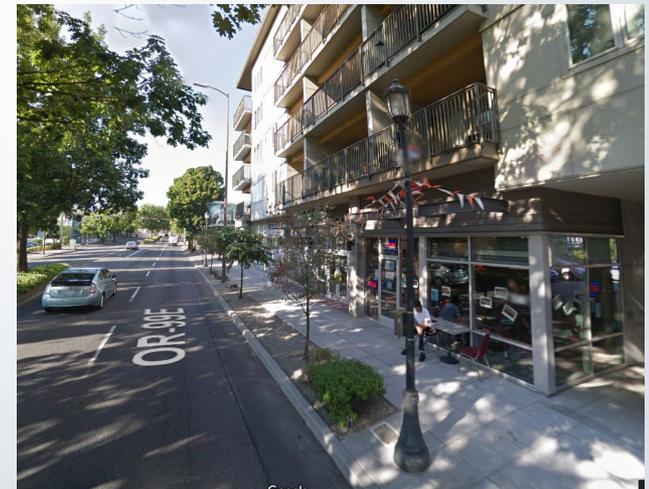
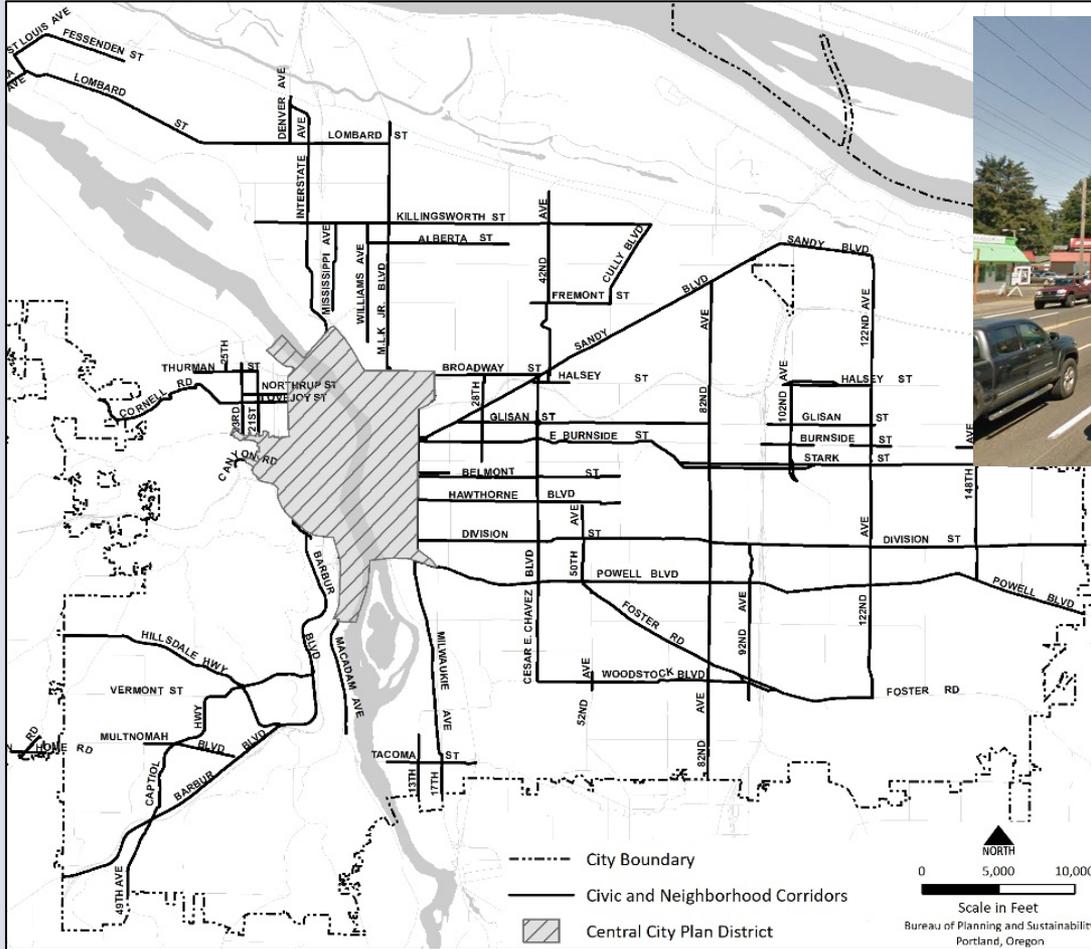
### Legend

- RM1 (R2 + R3)
- RM2 (R1)
- RM3 (RH 2:1 FAR)
- RM4 (RH 4:1 FAR)
- RX (no change)
- RMP (no change)
- City Boundary



# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability

- 5. Allow small-scale commercial uses on major corridors.  
Allow daycares in all multi-dwelling zone locations.



# TOPIC

## Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements



# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 6. Require residential outdoor areas in high density zones

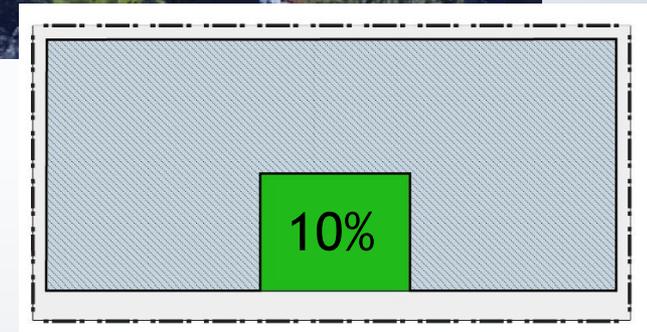


### High-Density Residential Zone (RH)

- No outdoor space currently required.
- **Proposal:** Require outdoor areas in the RM3 and RM4 (RH) zone.

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 7. Require shared common areas for large sites



- **Proposal:** Require common areas for large sites (more than 20,000 sq.ft.) - equivalent to 10% of total site area.
- Up to half of this amount can be indoor common area.

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 8. Allow alternatives to conventional landscaping



### Proposal:

Allow urban green options (ecoroofs, raised courtyards & stormwater planters) to meet landscaping requirements.

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 9. Reduce urban heat by limiting large parking lots and asphalt

*RH zone  
development with  
large surface  
parking lot*



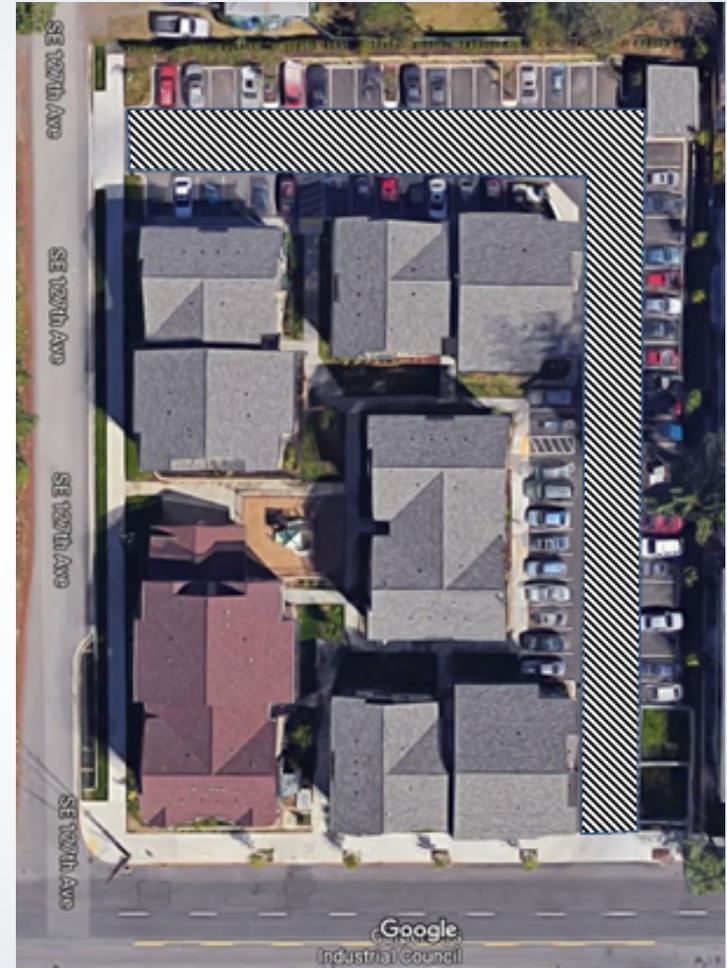
**Proposal:** Limit paved vehicle areas to 30% of site area.

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 9. Reduce urban heat by limiting large parking lots and asphalt



*Other materials (concrete, paving blocks, etc.) needed for surfacing the rest of the allowed vehicle area (up to total of 30% of site)*



**Proposal:** Limit asphalt paving to 15% of site area.

# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

## 10. Reduce parking requirements, especially on small sites



*Project providing current required 1 to 1 parking ratio*



*Five-plex with no parking on small site*

### **Proposal:**

- Small sites (up to 10,000 SF): no parking required for up to 30 units
- Other sites: require 1 space per 2 units (*also in mixed use zones*)

## **Proposal:**

# **Require Transportation and Parking Demand Management (TDM) in the multi-dwelling zones**

**Apply to buildings with more than 10 units located close to frequent transit**

**Option for “pre-approved” TDM plans:**

- **Multimodal Financial Incentives** - fee per unit equivalent to cost of TriMet pass (currently \$1,100 for market-rate units) - applied toward TriMet passes, bike share membership, or car share programs.
- **Education and Information**
- **Annual Transportation Options Surveys**

# TOPIC

## Building Design and Scale



# Building Design and Scale

## 11. Limit front garages and parking along street frontages



### Proposals:

- Limit front garages and structured parking (maximum 50% of building frontage)
- Require parking access from alleys (where exist)

# Building Design and Scale

## 11. Limit front garages and parking along street frontages



Allow:

- Rear or no parking options
- Front garages when no more than 50% of frontages

# Building Design and Scale

## 11. Limit front garages and parking along street frontages



*Not allowed*



*Parking allowed to the side of building front*

### Proposal:

- Disallow parking between the front of buildings and streets.

# Building Design and Scale

## 13. Require front setbacks that reflect neighborhood patterns and limit privacy impacts

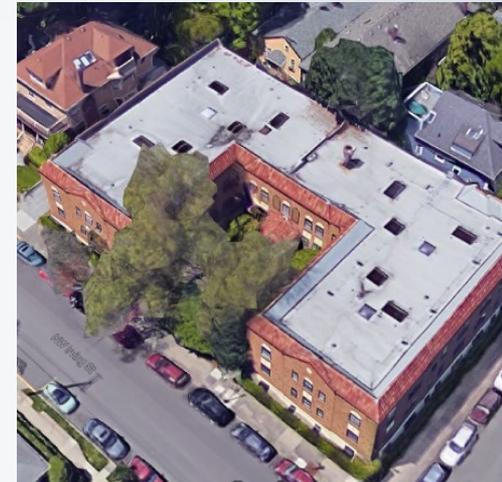


*Current front setback requirements are 3' in R1 and zero in RH*

**Proposal:** Require 10' front setbacks in the RM2 (R1) and RM3 (RH) zones.

# Building Design and Scale

## 13. Require front setbacks that reflect neighborhood patterns and limit privacy impacts



**10' setbacks**  
- continuity with existing residential characteristics

**Allowances for smaller setbacks based on:**

- Adjacent buildings
- Raised ground floors
- Courtyard buildings
- Ground-floor commercial

# Building Design and Scale

## 15. Require building height transitions to single-dwelling zones



### Proposal

- Limit building height to 35' within a 25' distance from adjacent properties with single-dwelling zoning.

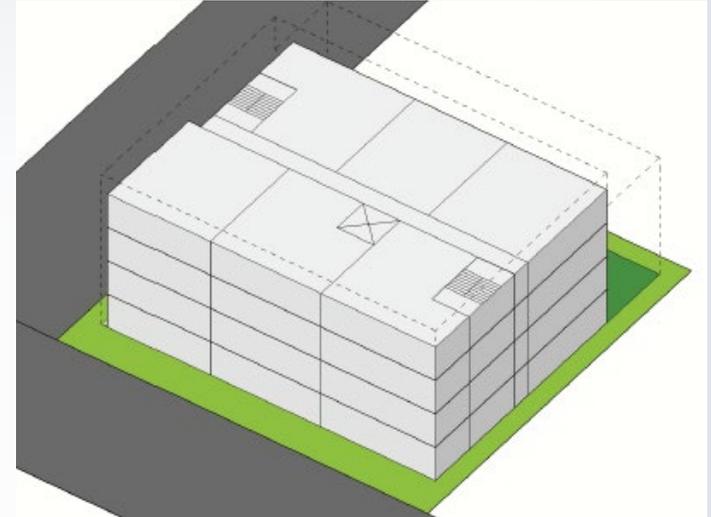
# Building Design and Scale

## 16. Require large building facades to be divided into smaller components

*Façade articulation*



*With*



*Without*

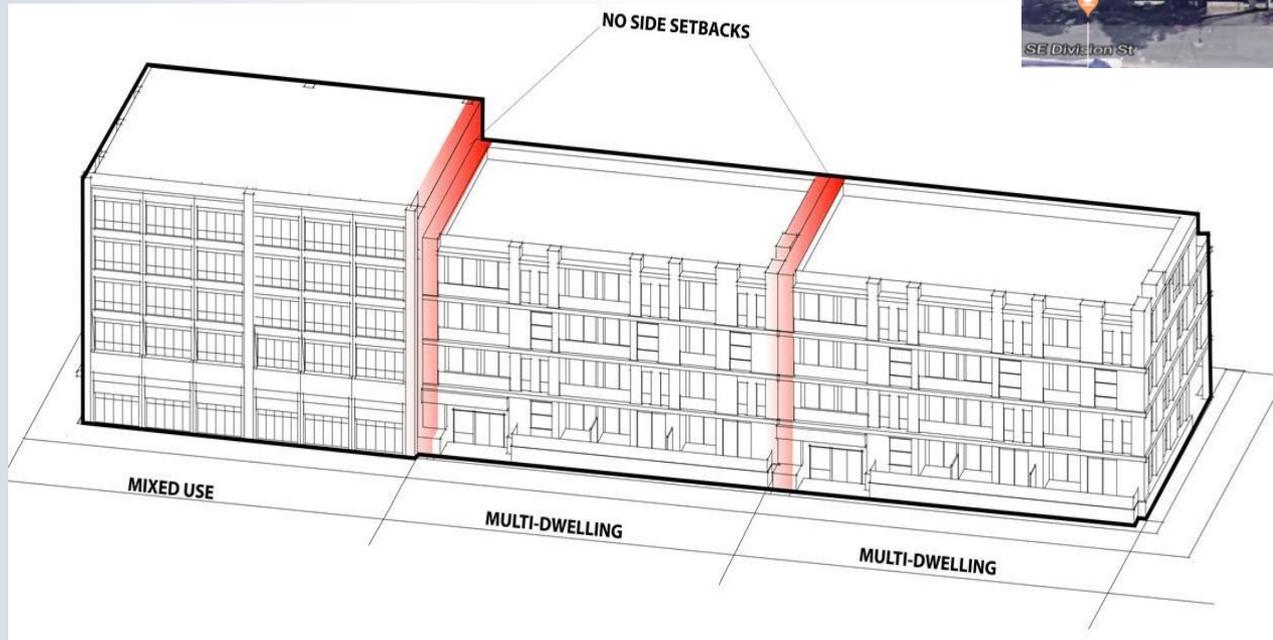
### **Proposal:**

**Require large facades to be divided into smaller components (25% of façade offset).**

- **RM2 (R1): required when over 35' and over 3500 SF area**  
(more than 3 stories and 100' wide)
- **RM3 & RM4 (RH): required when over 45' and over 4500 SF area**  
(more than 4 stories and 100' wide)

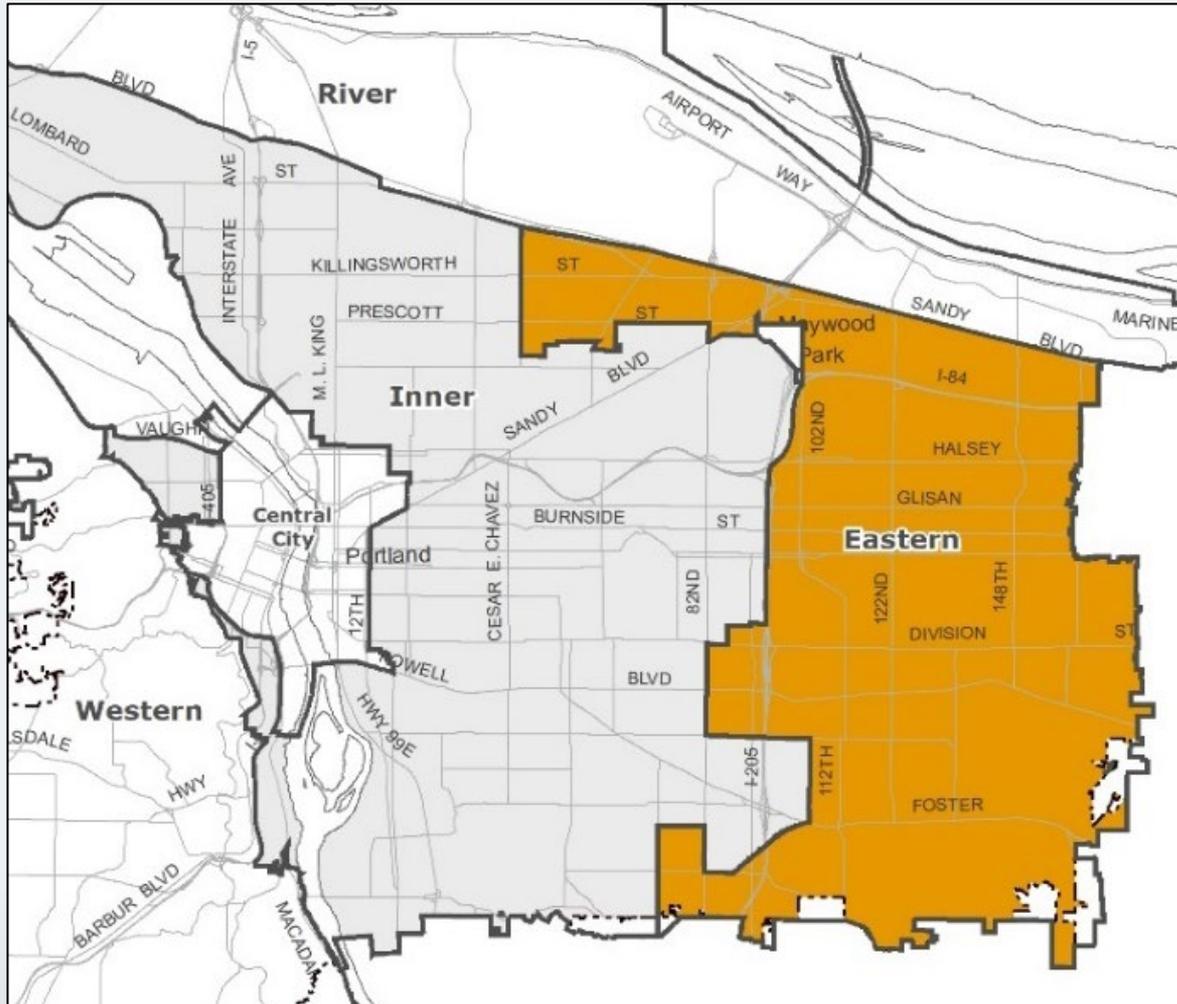
# Building Design and Scale

17. 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.

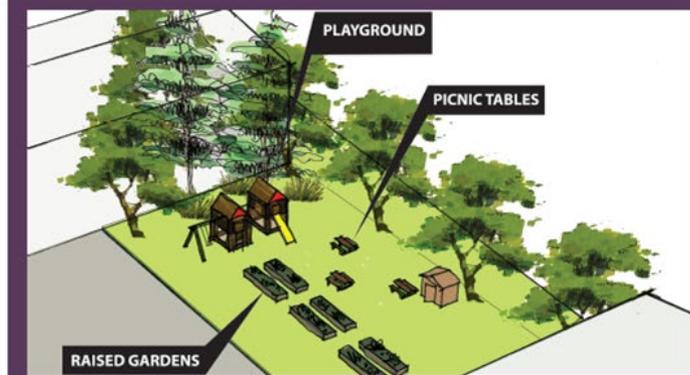


# TOPIC

## East Portland Standards and Street Connections



# East Portland Standards and Street Connections



Common open space areas



Space for large trees



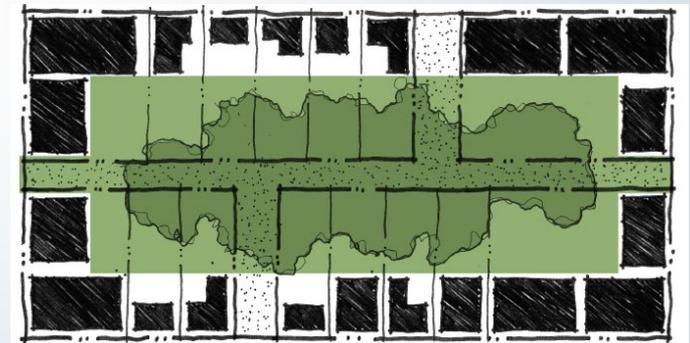
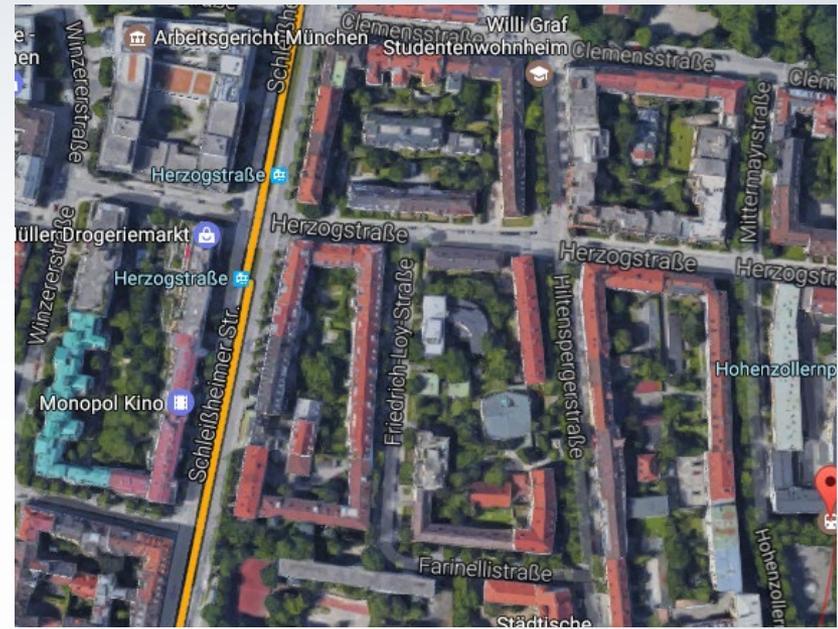
Landscaped front setbacks



Mid-block open space

**Background**  
**Desired site design elements in East Portland**

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections



## Background

Community interest in keeping mid-block areas greener, less built up

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections

## 18. Continue East Portland mid-block areas through requirements for deep rear setbacks



*Example of recent development*



*Example of 25% depth-of-site setback*

### **Proposal:**

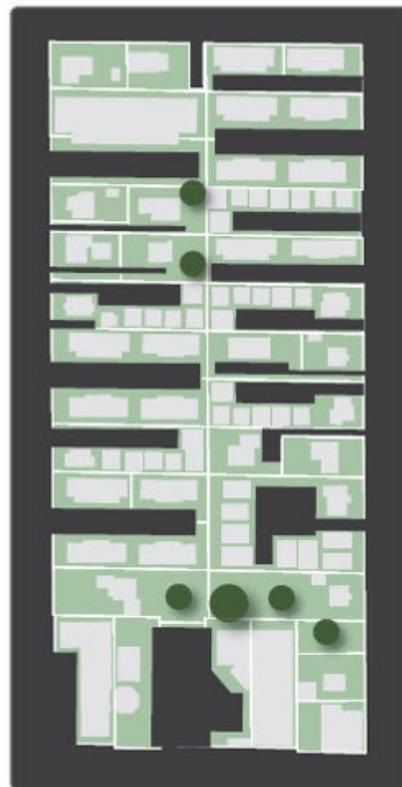
**Require rear setbacks equivalent to 25% of site depth**

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections

## 18. Continue East Portland mid-block areas through requirements for deep rear setbacks



Existing



Continuation of current trends



Mid-block open areas



Mix of mid-block open areas and central courtyards

*Exemptions for projects providing large centralized outdoor space or streets*

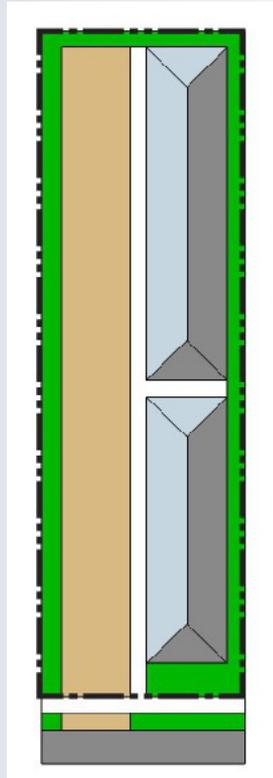
# East Portland Standards and Street Connections



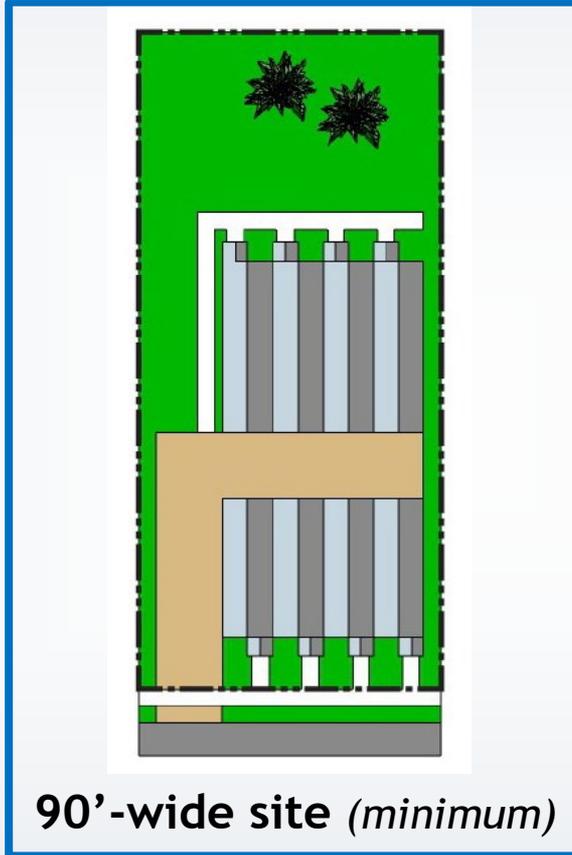
## Background East Portland narrow sites

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections

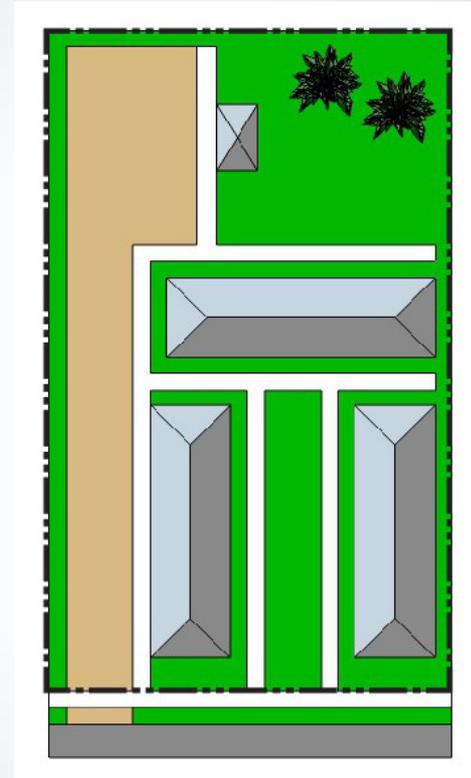
## 19. Require street frontages wide enough for quality site design and to provide space for street connections



60'-wide site



90'-wide site (*minimum*)

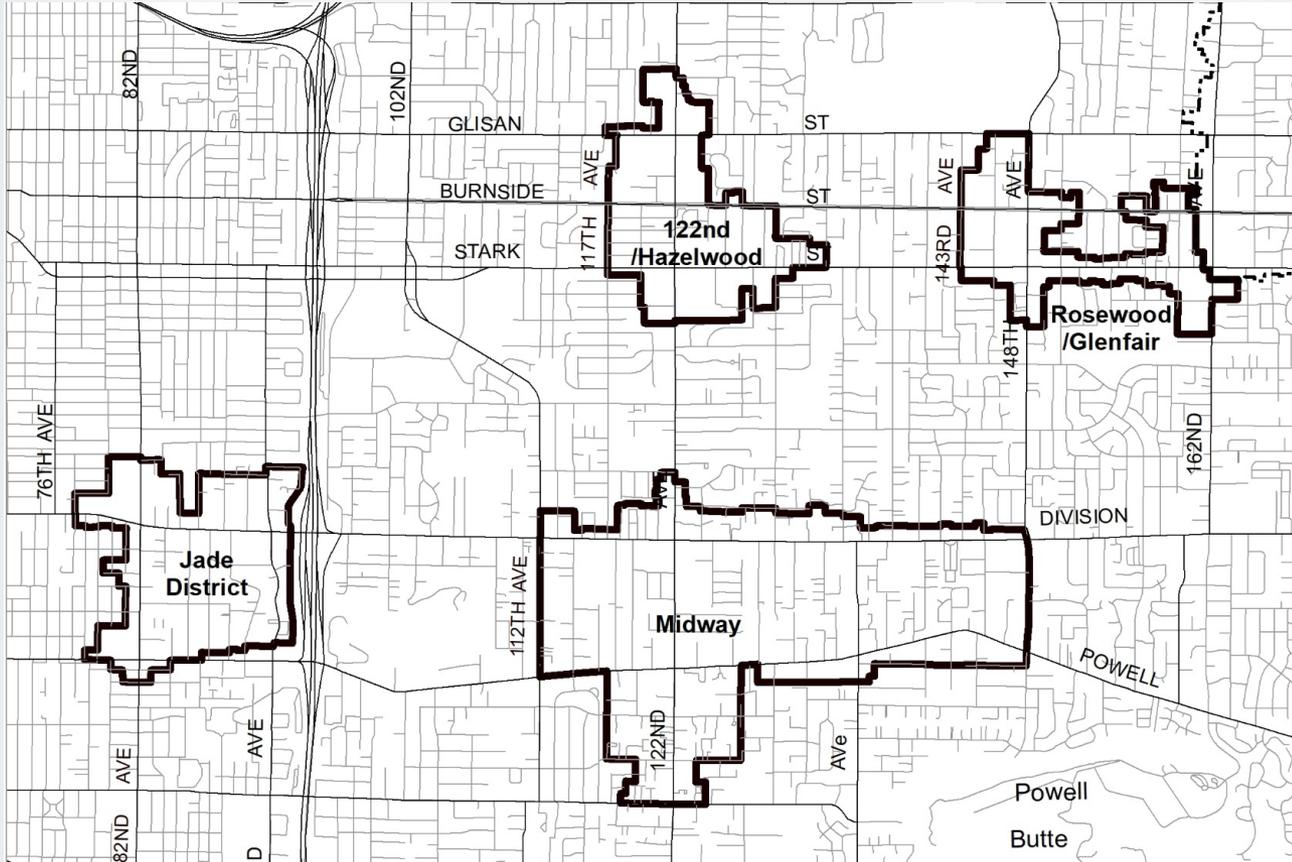


120'-wide site

**Proposal:** For sites more than 160' deep within East Portland centers, require a minimum street frontage of 90' for new development.

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections

## 19. Require street frontages wide enough for quality site design and to provide space for street connections



East Portland centers where minimum street frontage requirements would apply

# East Portland Standards and Street Connections

## 20. Calculate development allowances prior to street dedication to facilitate street connections



**Public Street**

*Currently, street space is subtracted from development allowances*



**Private Driveway**

# CONNECTED CENTERS STREET PLAN

DRAFT

ROSEWOOD

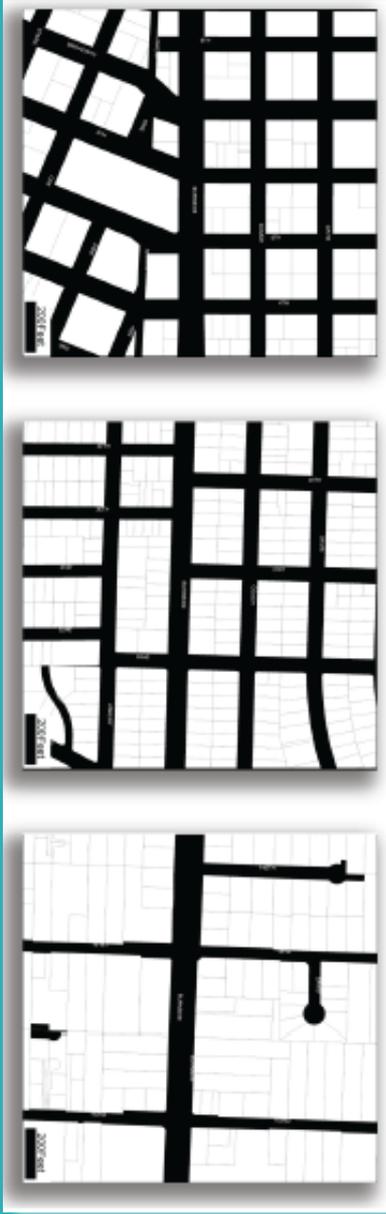
JADE  
DISTRICT

*A strategy for improving street and pathway connectivity in the  
Jade District and Rosewood/Glenfair Neighborhood Centers*

I-205

MAY, 2018

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION



# PBOT

# New ROW Connection Approach



**OPTION 1**  
52' ROW

↓ If not feasible

**OPTION 2**  
38' ROW



**OPTION 3**  
35' ROW  
(Phase 1 of 52')



**OPTION 4**  
28' ROW  
(Phase 1 of 38')



**OPTION 5**  
23' ROW  
(Phase 1 of 43')

OR →

**OPTION 5**  
24' ROW  
One-way Street



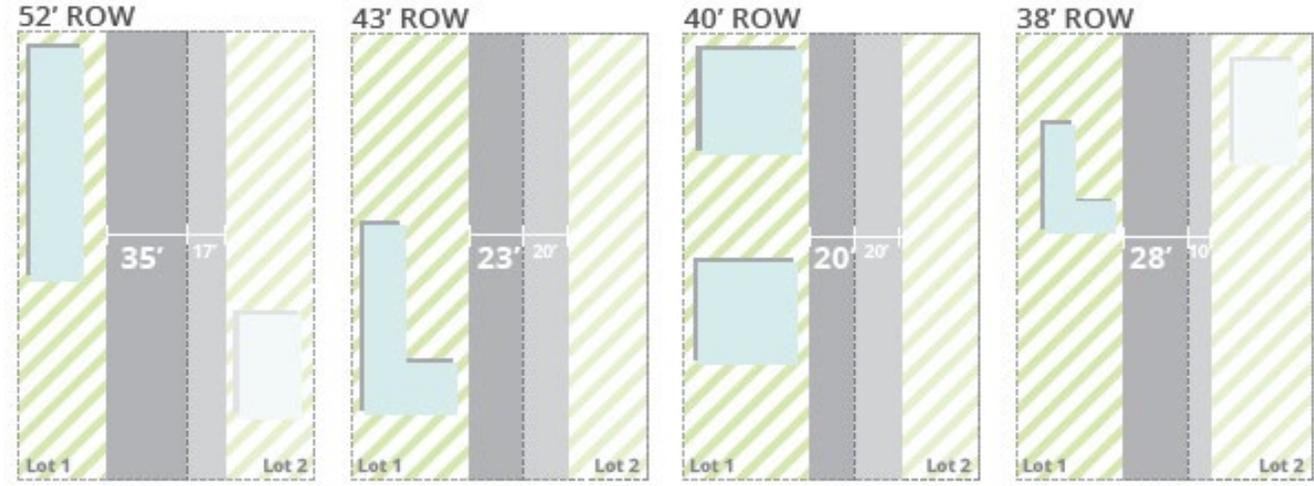
**OPTION 6**  
20' ROW  
(Phase 1 of 40')

→

**OPTION 7**  
20' ROW  
Multi-Use Path

→

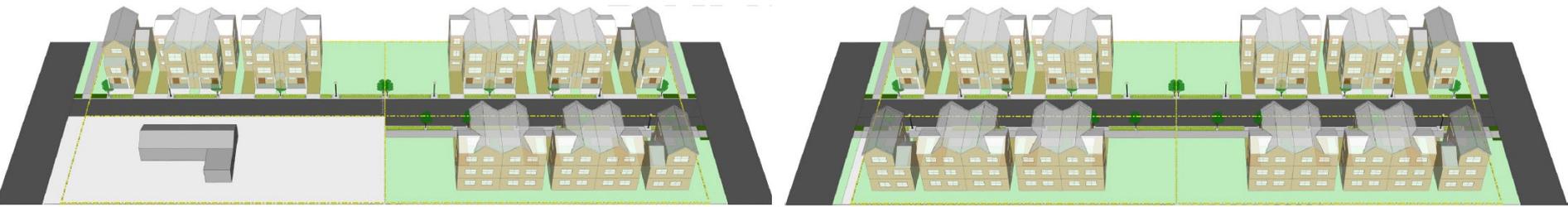
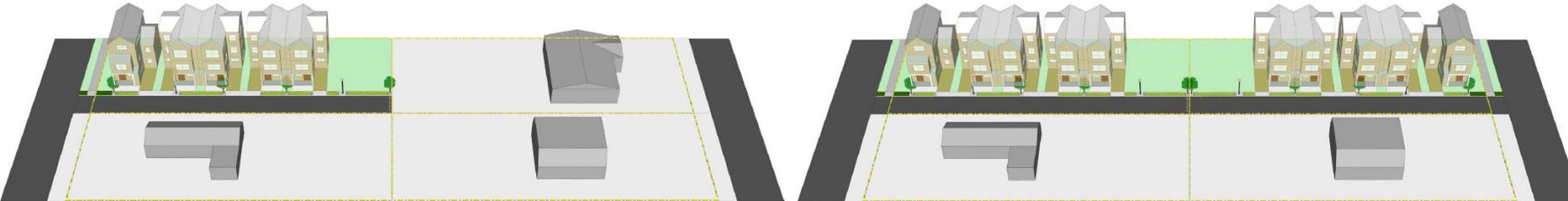
**NO CONNECTION**



Examples of how the burden of building a full street can be phased between two lots. In these examples, Lot 1 is the first to be developed, leaving the remaining right-of-way to be built when Lot 2 gets developed.



# Infill street improvement

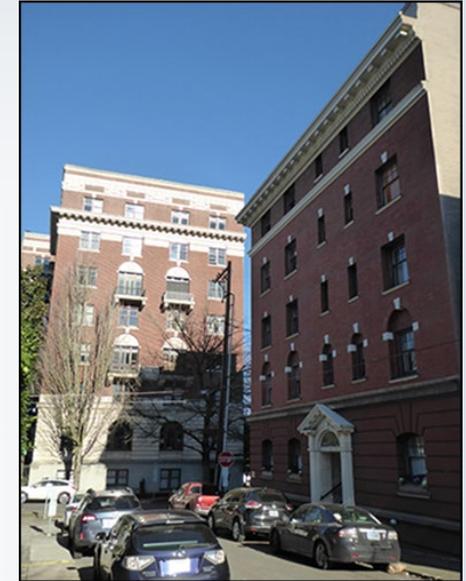
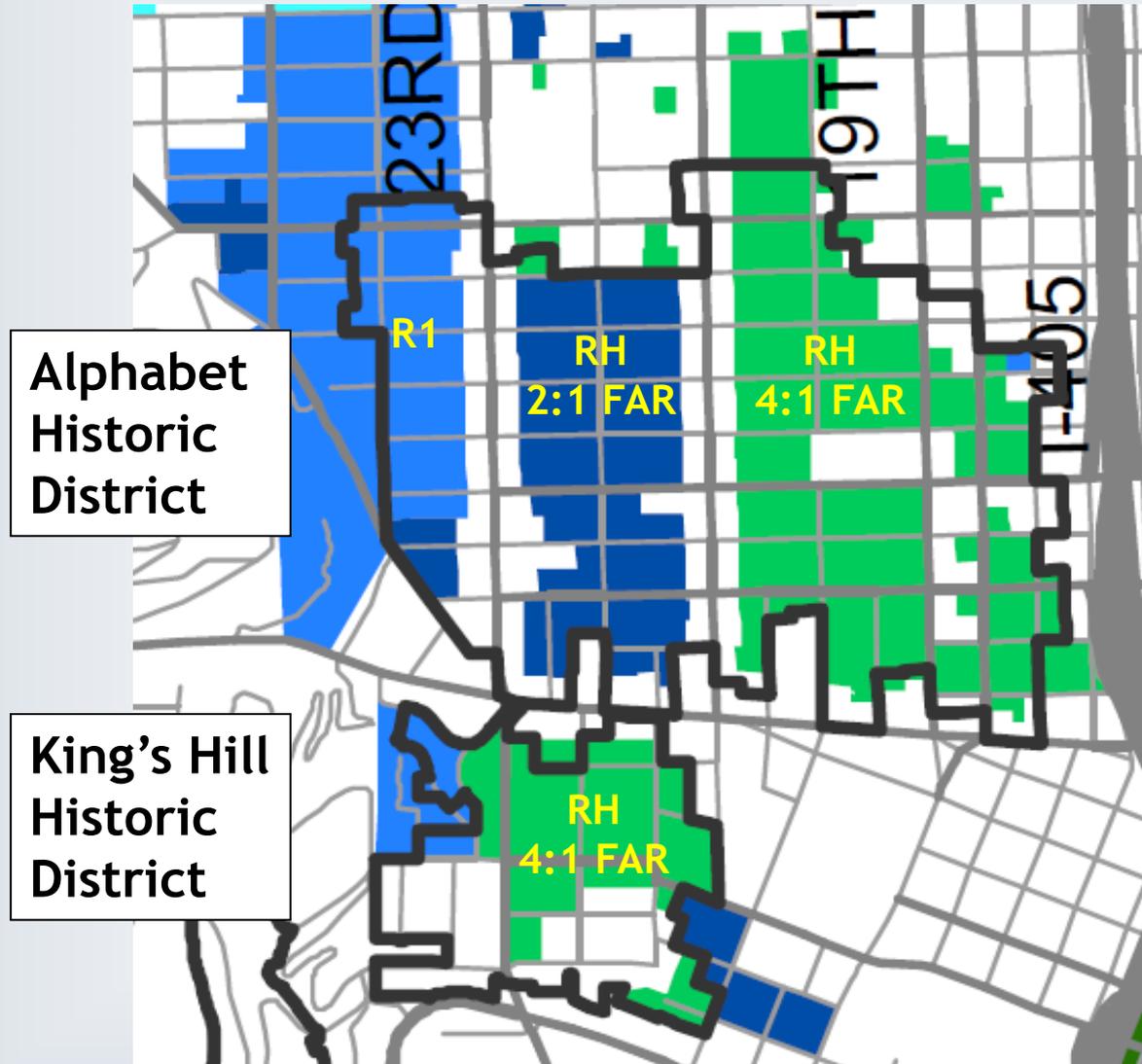


# Historic District Zoning

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

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

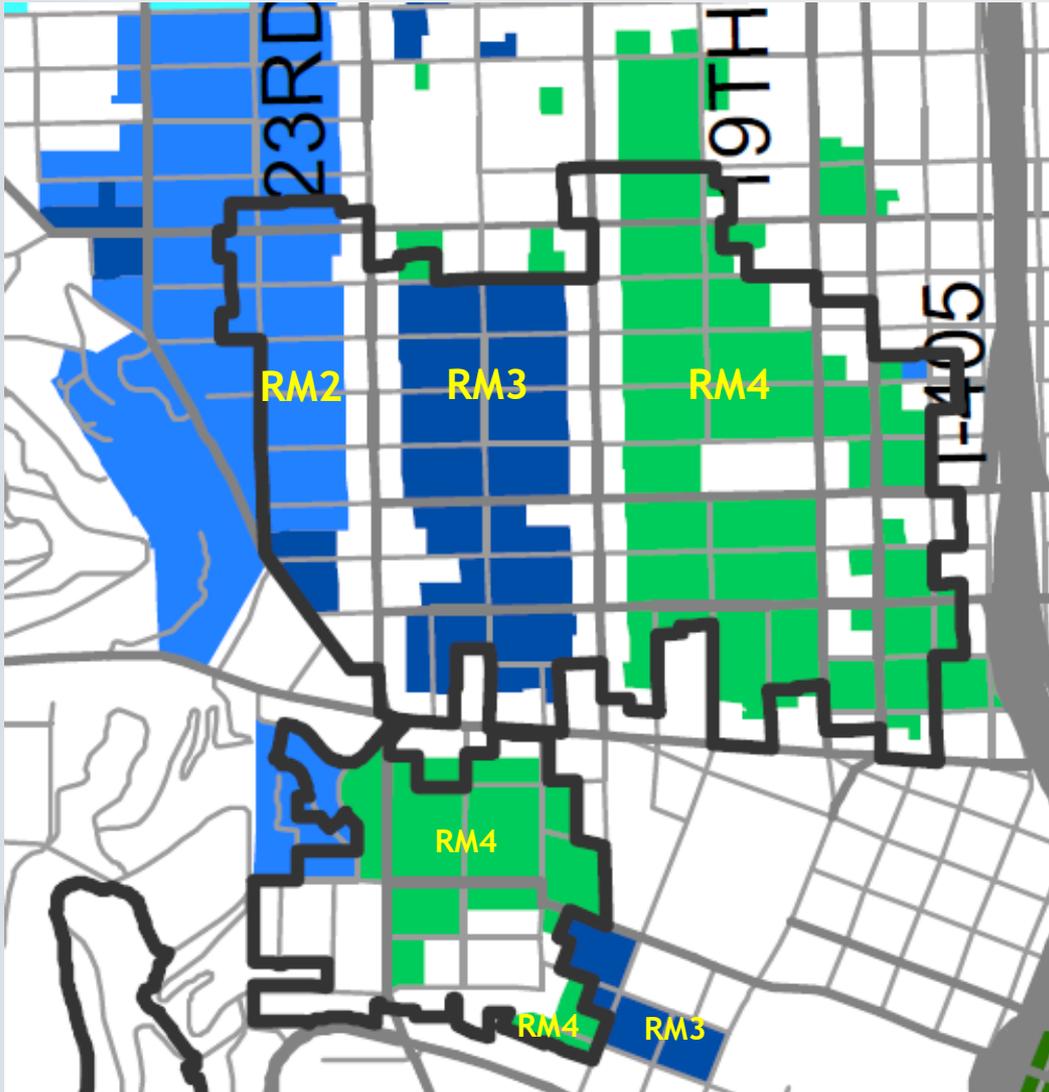
# Historic District Zoning



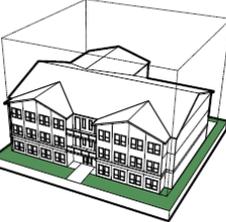
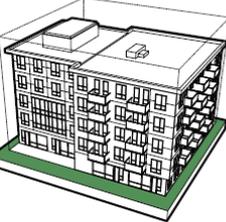
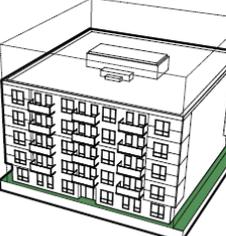
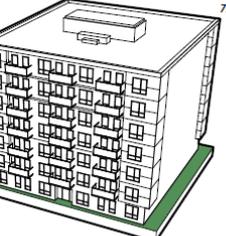
## Current Multi-Dwelling Zoning

*Alphabet 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



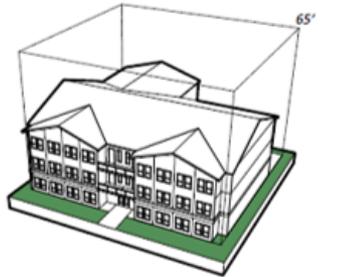
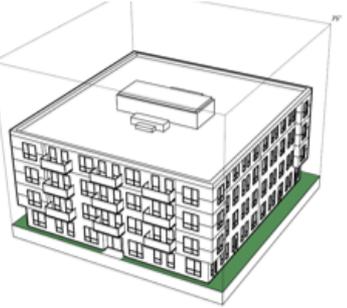
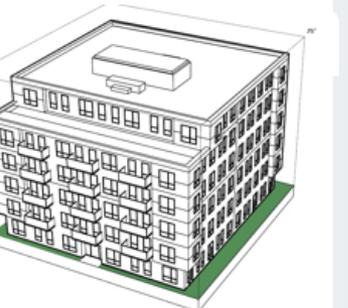
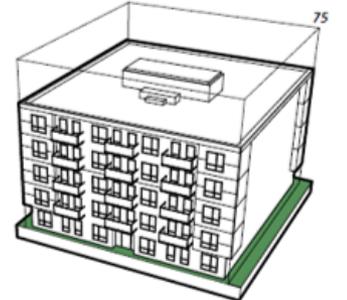
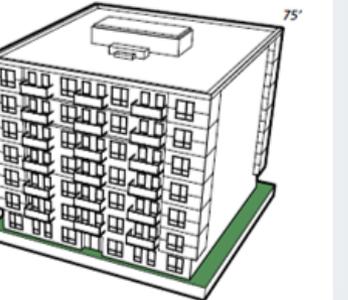
## Proposed Draft Multi-Dwelling Zoning

	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
<b>RM3</b>	 <p>2 to 1</p>	 <p>3 to 1</p>	4 to 1
<b>RM4 (historic districts)</b>	 <p>3 to 1</p>	 <p>4.5 to 1</p>	6 to 1
<b>RM4 (outside historic districts)</b>	 <p>4 to 1</p>	 <p>6 to 1</p>	7 to 1

# 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

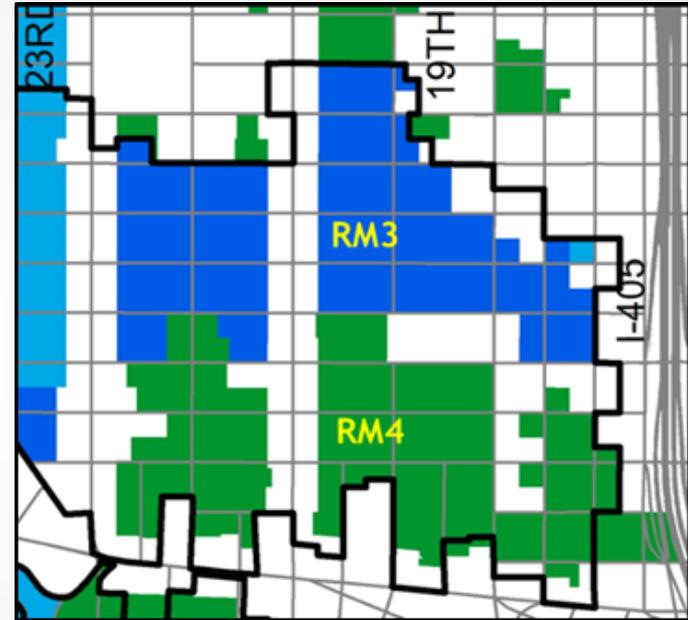
3 to 1 —————→ 4.5 to 1

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

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



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

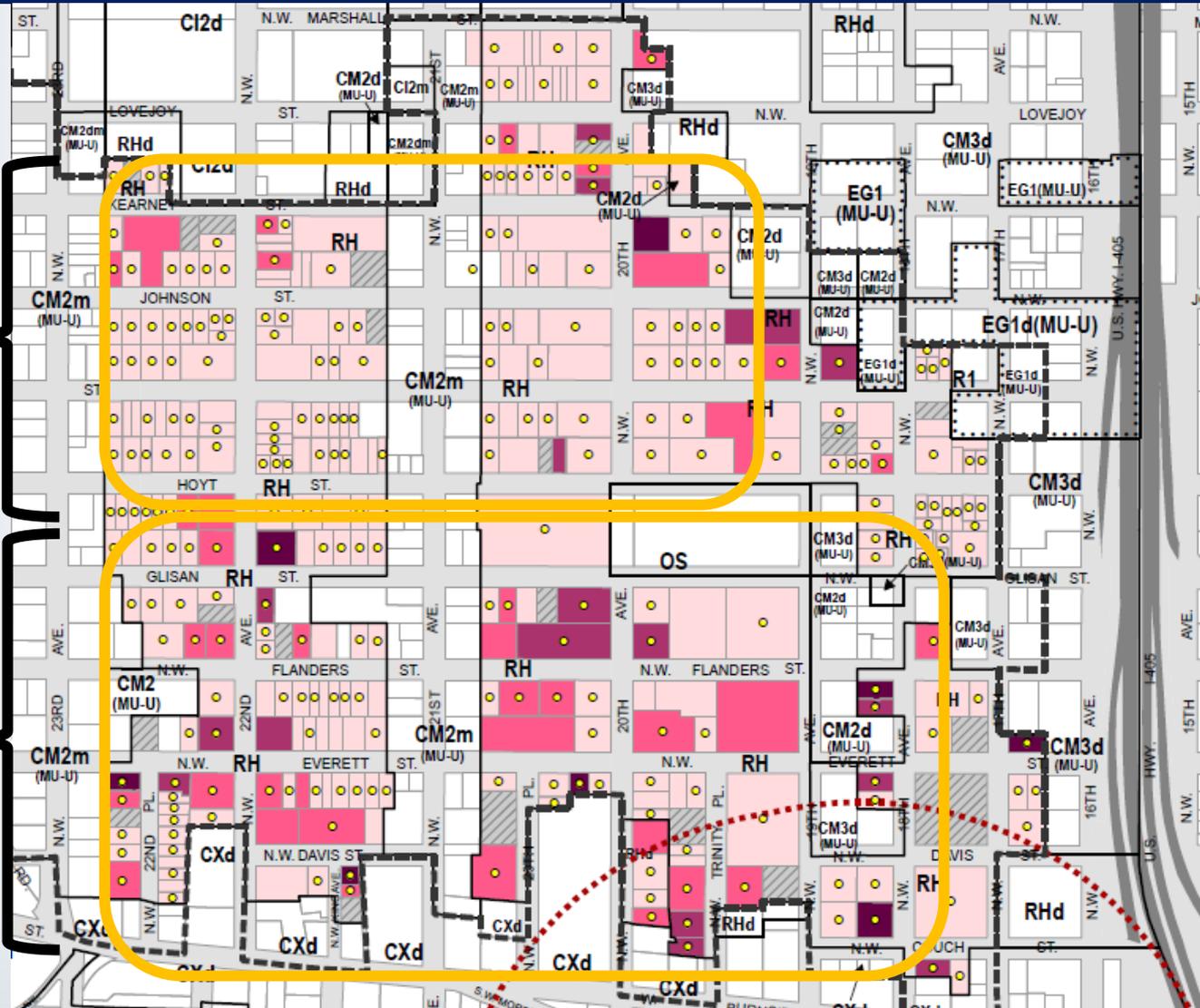


**Recommended Changes**  
*(based on historic patterns)*

# 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.

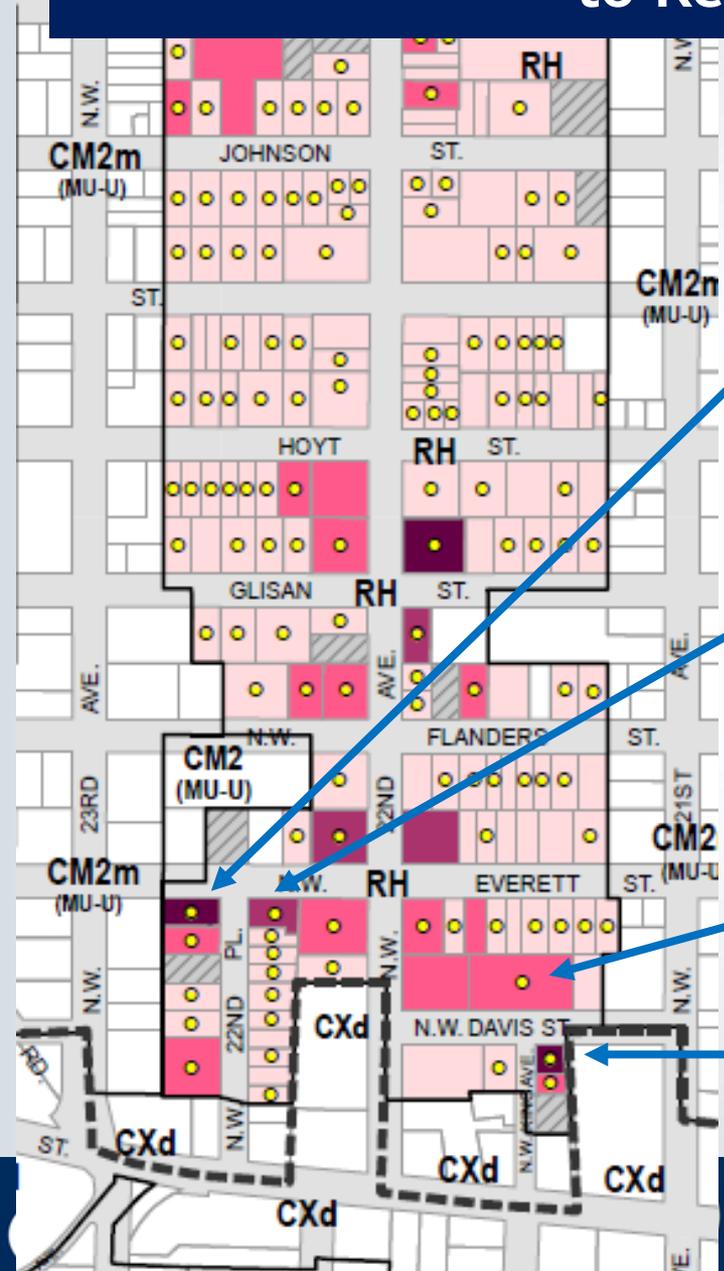
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## 2. In the Alphabet Historic District, Assign RM4 & RM3 Zoning to Reflect Historic Patterns



4.1 to 1 FAR



3.7 to 1 FAR

5 to 1 FAR

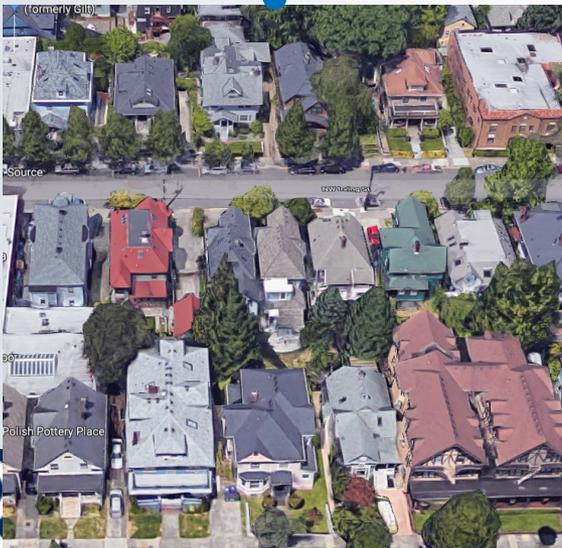


4.7 to 1 FAR



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

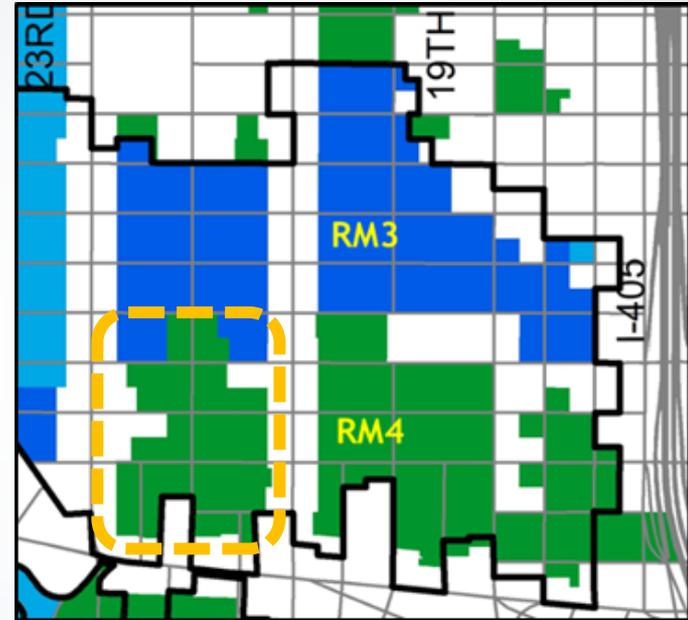
Smaller buildings clustered to north



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



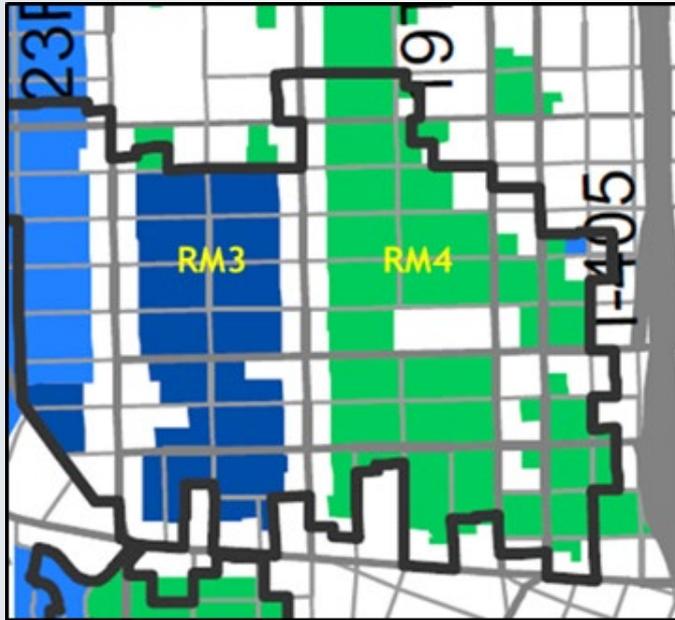
*Original Proposal*  
(based on existing zoning)



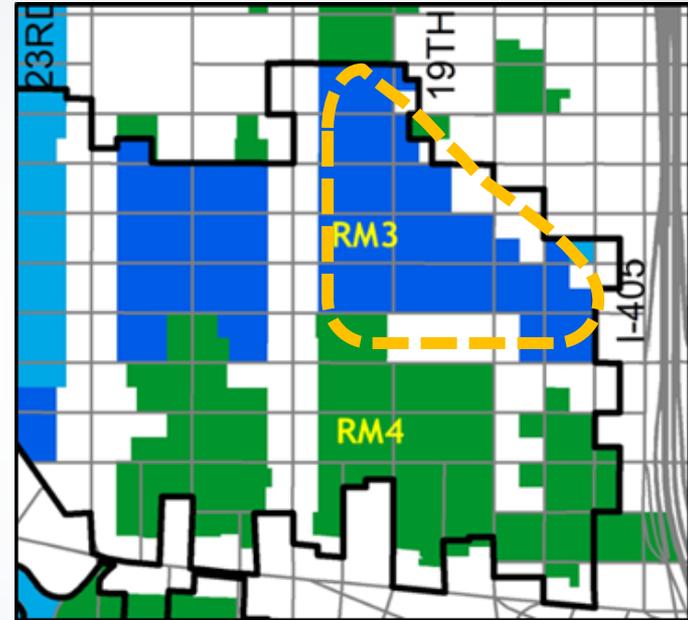
*Recommended Changes*  
(based on historic patterns)

- (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



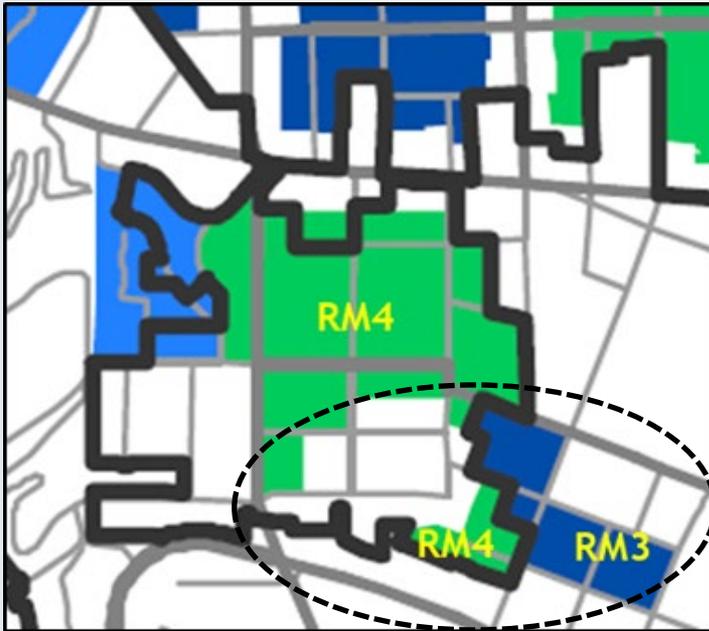
*Original Proposal*  
(based on existing zoning)



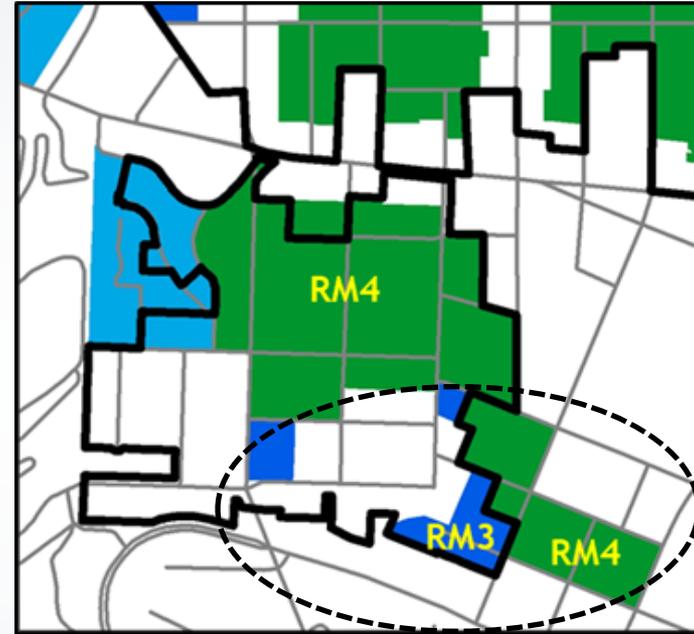
*Recommended Changes*  
(based on historic patterns)

- (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

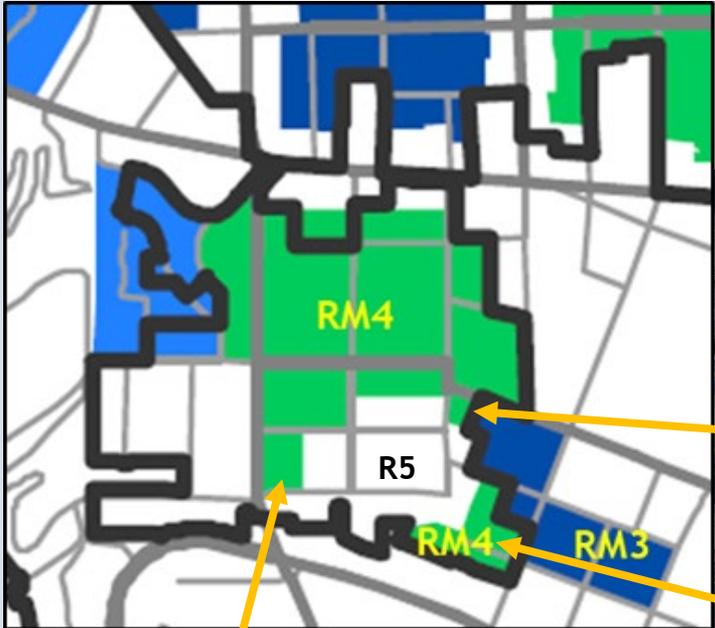


*Original Proposal  
(based on existing zoning)*

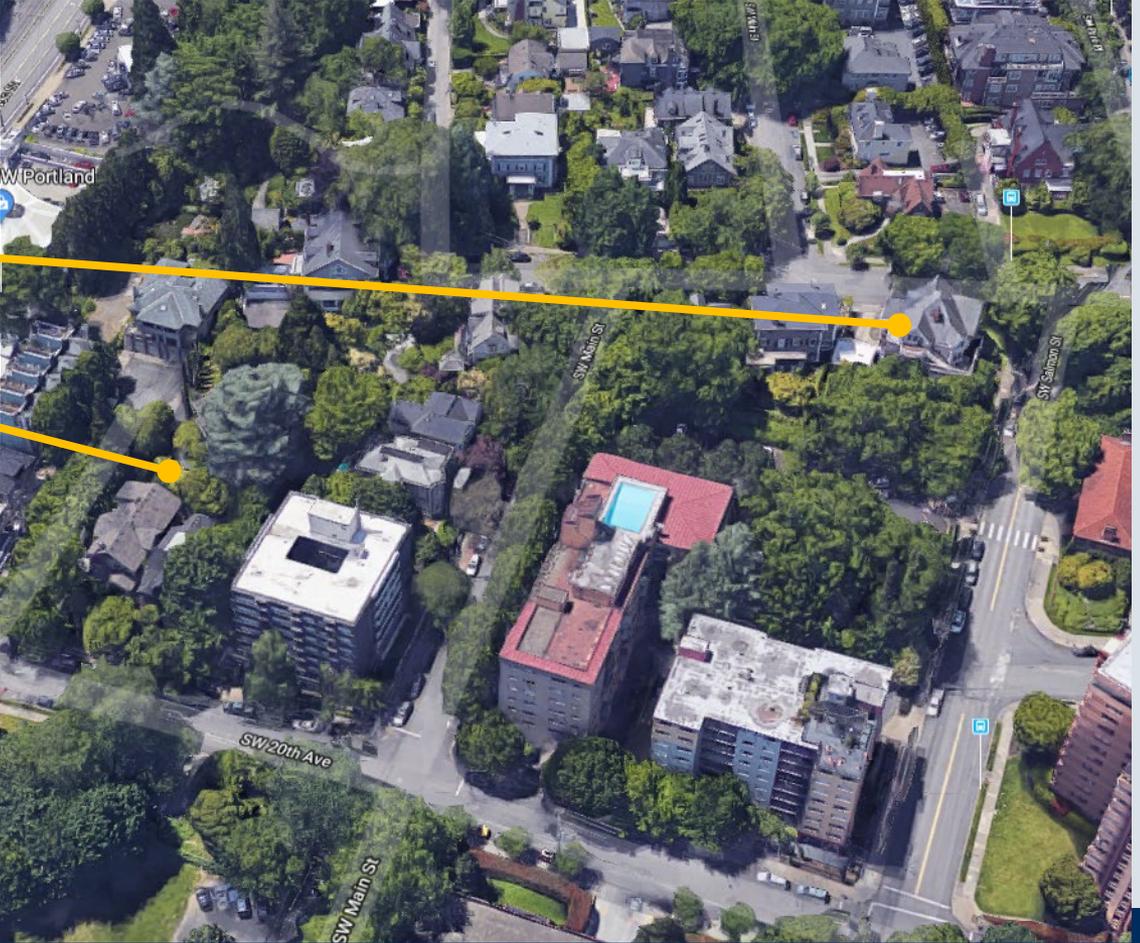


*Recommended Changes  
(based on existing patterns)*

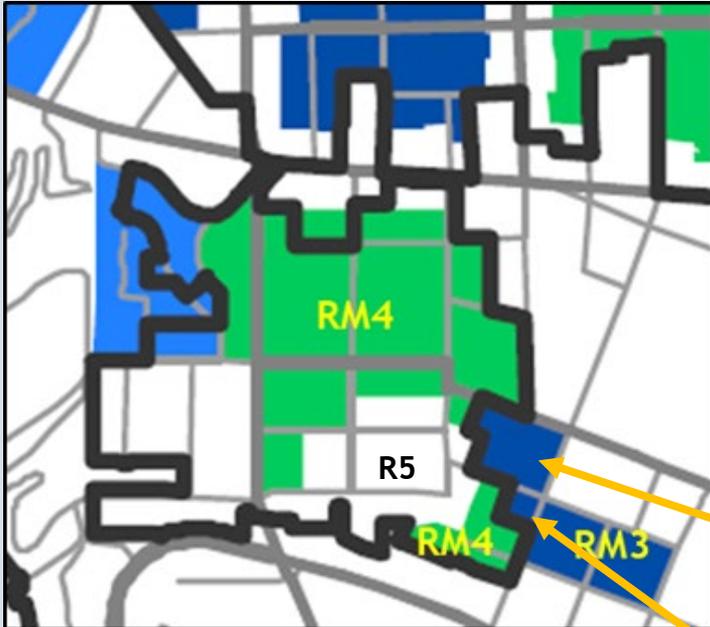
# 3. For the King's Hill Historic District, Reassign RM4 & RM3 Zoning at its Southern Edges to Reflect Development Patterns



*Original Proposal  
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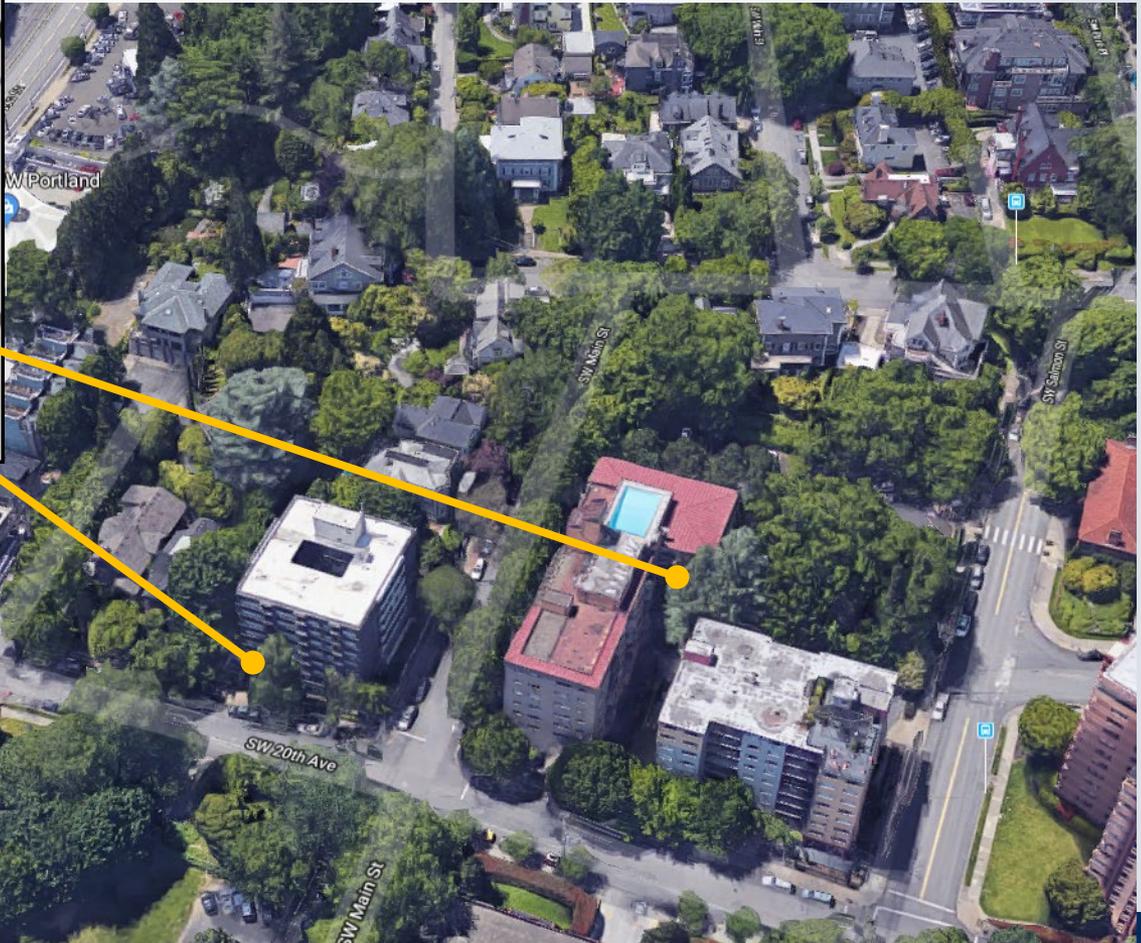


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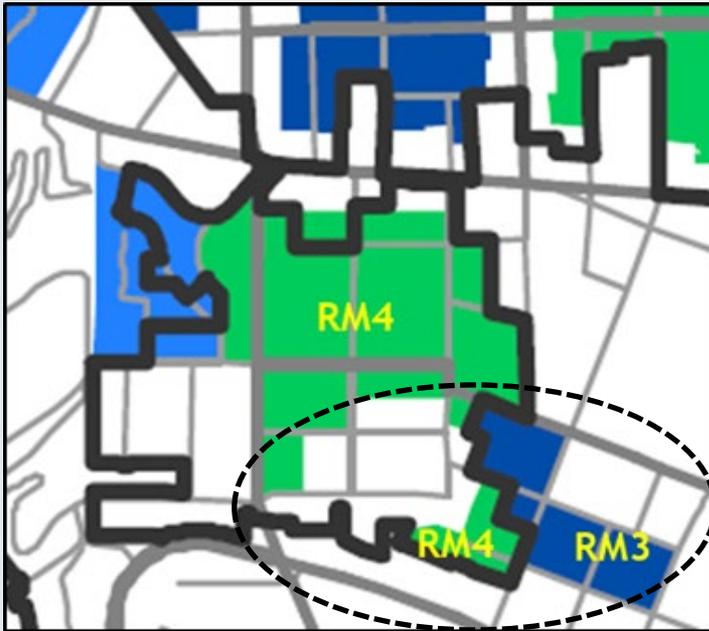


## Three-block area east of historic district:

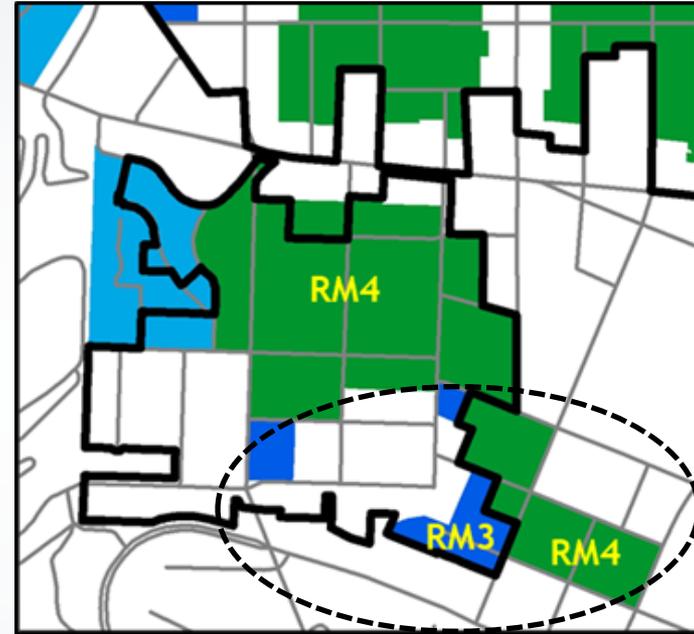
- Currently RH zoning
- Central City Plan District 4:1 FAR
- Two eastern-most blocks currently allow 100' height



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



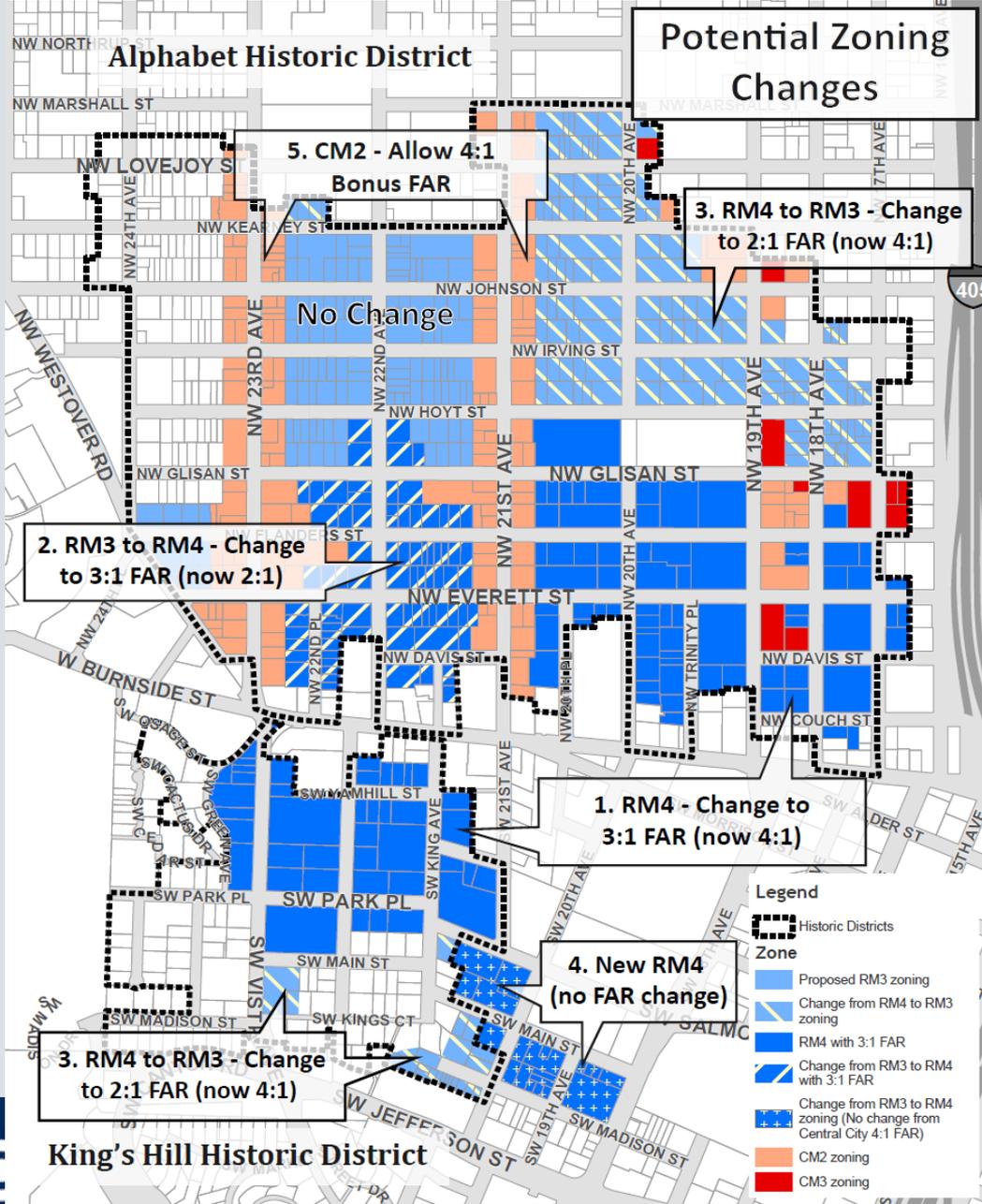
*Original Proposal  
(based on existing zoning)*



*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

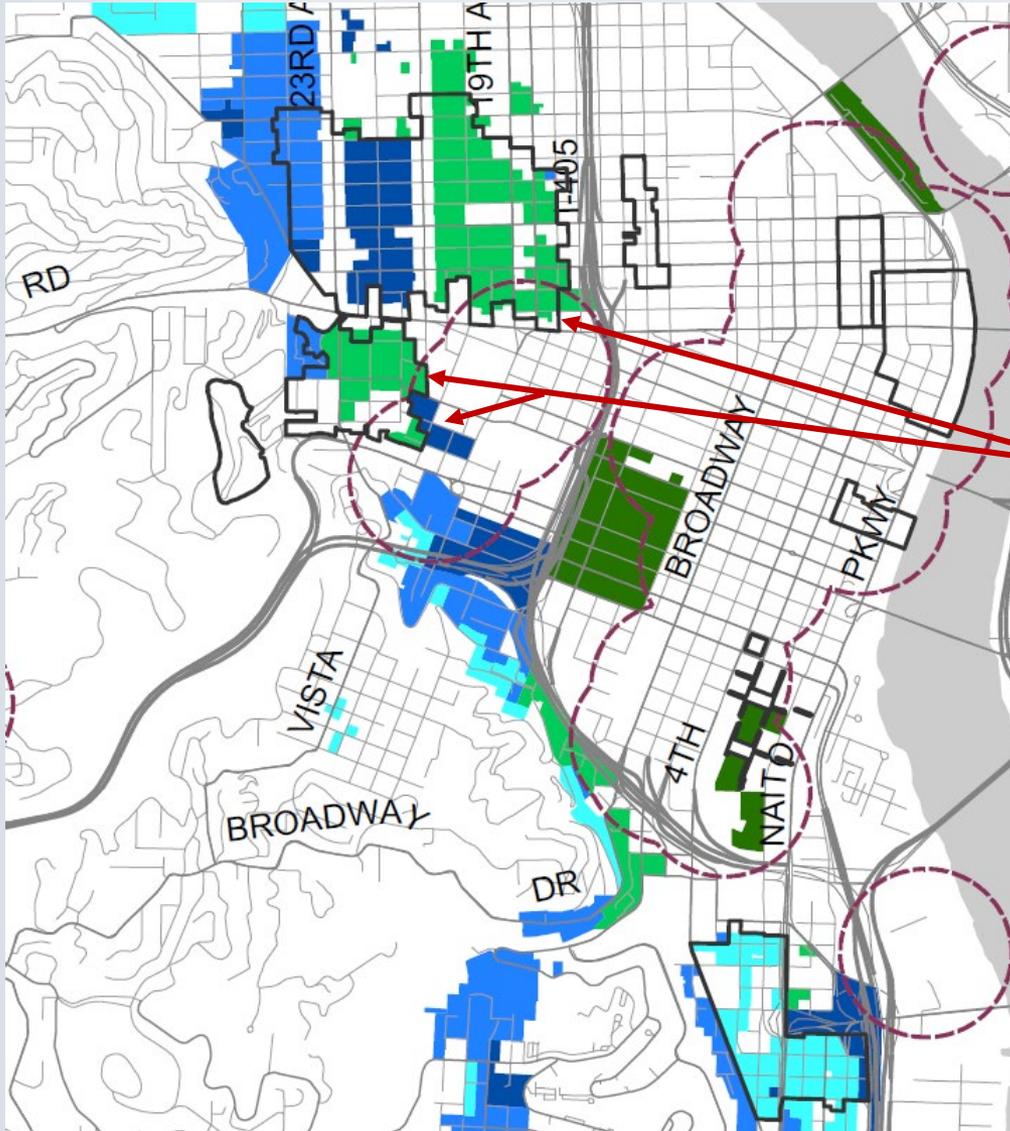


## Combined Proposals

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.

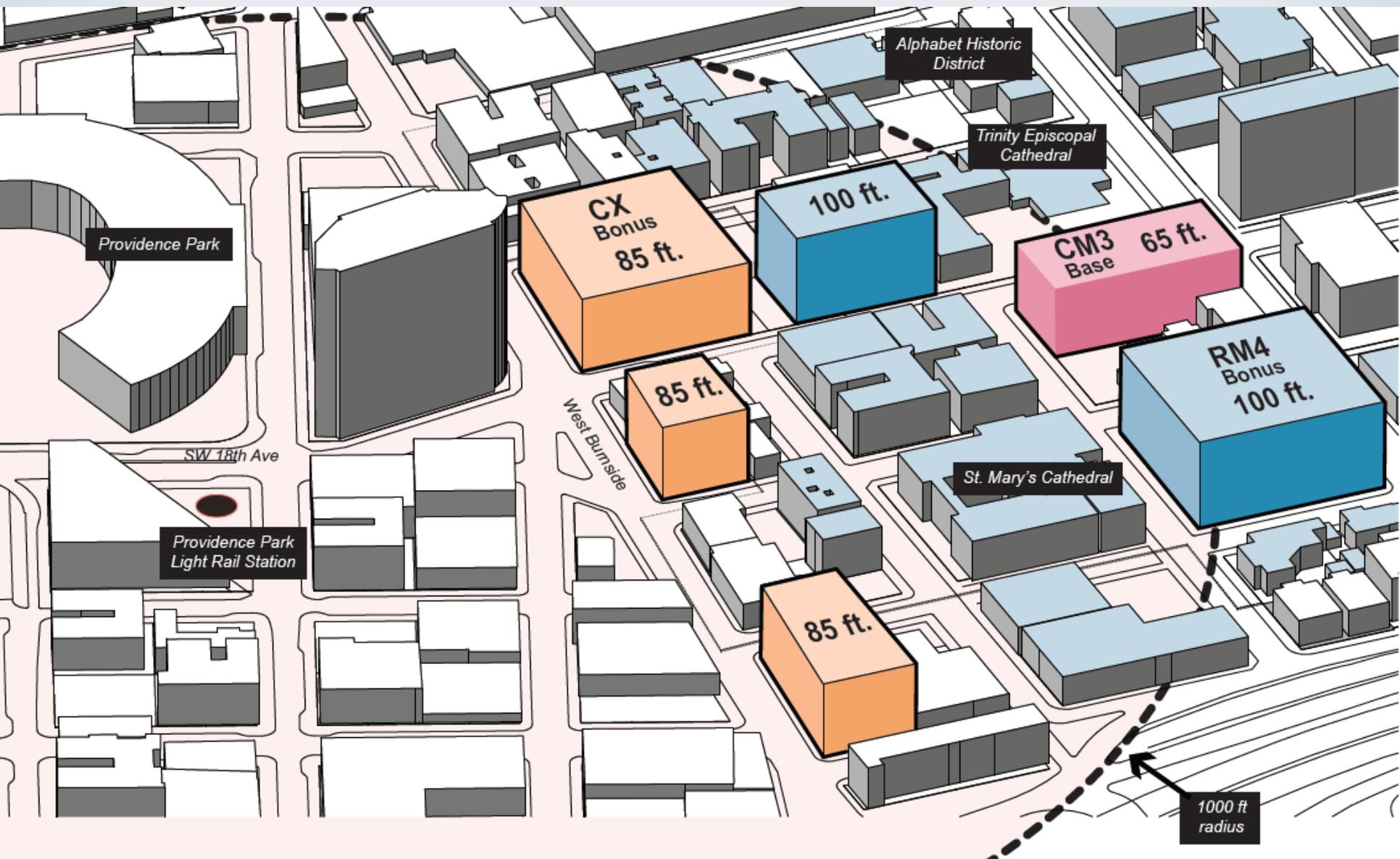


# RM4 Zone 100' Height



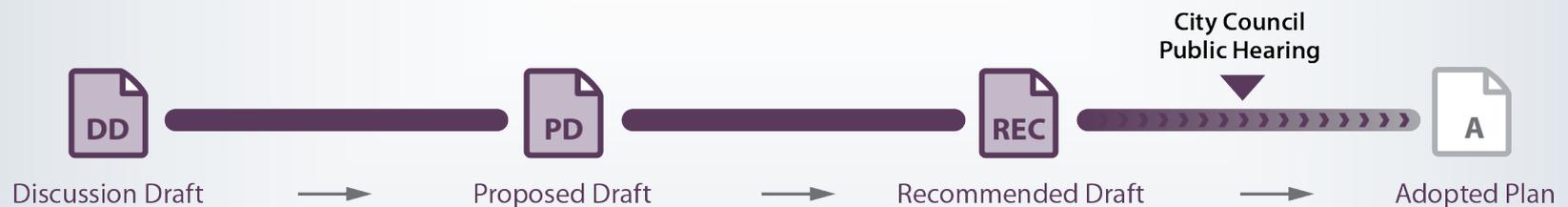
Areas where current RH zoning allows 100' height in historic districts. Proposed to be continued in RM4 zone. (10 acres)

# RM4 Zone 100' Height



# Schedule

- **Publish Recommended Draft:** **August 2019**
- **City Council Public Hearing:** **October 2, 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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