Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

As you deliberate about HALA and other changes connected to our growth management plans and changes in design review, please keep in mind these comments, especially regarding up-zones in **my neighborhood of** **East Fremont/ West Wallingford (EF/WW), the tiny pocket of homes between Aurora Ave N. and Stone Way N.**

The most drastic changes proposed by City planners for the Wallingford Urban Village will hit EF/WW, by completely converting our neighborhood to multifamily housing. This would force our Single Family (SF) zoned streets to up-zone to Lowrise 1, 2 and even 3 (LR1, LR2 and LR3). LR1, LR2 and LR3 are also being re-defined to take more height and bulk. The result will be buildings with heights of up to 50-60 feet that overshadow the smaller homes that make these streets livable now. These changes would turn EF/WW into a high-density area, despite its designation as a “low density residential urban village.” Yet EF/WW lies furthest from the center of the urban village near QFC & Wallingford Center on N. 45th. We maintain we offer appropriate density already, with a robust mix of multi-family and single family zoning, and ample capacity under current zoning to meet growth targets.

**Unless the concerns below are fully addressed, I would like to see the proposed up-zones between Winslow N. and Stone Way N. eliminated, and Single Family zoned areas of EF/WW removed from the Wallingford Urban Village.**

I offer these comments:

1.       **I and my neighbors agree that HALA and MHA-driven up-zones have a laudable purpose**: to add badly needed low-income housing in Seattle. However, no data has shown that the up-zones will produce any significant stream of revenue or actual housing, while existing data shows that displacement will be MORE than the amount of new housing.

2.       **Our EF/WW neighborhood meetings, discussions and survey revealed broad agreement on our real desire for affordability and diversity here,** and deep concern that we would see improvement on neither of these metrics. I agree, and believe, with them, that we would lose dramatically on livability. Going forward, we must preserve affordability and encourage diversity right here. The proposed rezoning is accelerating the loss of affordable housing already, driving down diversity and affordability for homeowners and renters with low or fixed incomes.

3.       I suggest several measures to bring affordability and accommodate growth:

a.     **The City must catalogue and protect currently affordable rentals.**

*b.*       **Limit up-zones in Single Family zones.** Maintain lower heights by keeping SF as is, or Residential Small Lot (RSL), with the caveat that RSL must require more space for yards and setbacks.  These family homes provide a greenbelt buffer from our main transit and commercial corridors, offering tranquility, relief from concrete, greenery, yards for families, sunlight, and homes for birds and wildlife. Preserving what Single Family zoning we have here will help, as many people even now share their homes by renting out rooms, ADUs and DADUs, and more will find these investments help them meet higher living costs going forward.

c.        **Cancel “Hidden Up-zones,” Keep Lowrise 1 and Lowrise 2 zones at currently defined limits and heights**. Redefining these zones to add 10+ feet in height without changing their name is the same as creating “hidden up-zones” that are unnecessary and undesirable in our neighborhood. Eliminate the proposal to change LR1 in a way that incentivitizes builders to maximize the number of units per building so that fewer family-friendly units are built. Redefining LR1 as currently proposed will mean each unit is tiny -- the opposite of family-friendly. Areas already designated as multi-family LR1 and LR2 should not be forced to accept higher heights, bigger footprints and smaller setbacks through the City’s proposed redefinition of zoning terms. Hidden up-zoning here compromises livability unnecessarily and is not needed to achieve growth targets.

d.       **Adjust the commercial zoning on Aurora Ave between 39th Street and 46th Street** and i**ncentivize** **density on Aurora and appropriate arterials**--Stone Way N, 45th Street east of Stone Way N, Bridge Way--to allow for taller apartment buildings. In particular, re-zoning Aurora (to NC 75’) will add significant density in East Fremont in its most transit-friendly location where there is ample housing capacity, great views, and easy connection to Fremont and Wallingford. This is prime territory for additional housing density and it’s currently being wasted. It will further improve the Aurora streetscape which has been getting better for a number of years. Development should go on underutilized arterials before sprawling into adjacent parts of the neighborhoods. Consider a stepped process that prioritizes up-zoning first along the main transit and commercial corridors and only later on adjacent blocks if needed to meet actual growth.

4.       **The “L” in HALA – Livability – is missing from the proposal for East Fremont.** The proposed up-zones here sacrifice livability by bringing significant increases in the bulk and height of buildings in every part of our neighborhood. Livability requires a gentle mixing of housing options which preserves the front-porch character of our neighborhood and provides tree canopy, greenery, family-friendly yards, and access to sunlight.

a.       **It is crucial that neighborhood plans and design review procedures be in place to guide development inside urban villages** to ensure HALA principles of urban design quality, and assure quality construction and harmonious transitions between existing and new buildings. Wallingford has detailed urban design priorities in its current Neighborhood Plan and that should be honored, including its priority to preserve SF zones, including in EF/WW. The City must slow down and take the time necessary for meaningful neighborhood planning.

b.       **Require transit improvements, preservation of tree canopy and green space, park improvements and other infrastructure support in advance** where up-zones happen. Added density must have commensurate investment; tie plans for housing growth together with plans for needed infrastructure improvement. City assurances that these improvements will come along later are insufficient, as shown earlier when our neighborhood was swept into the Wallingford Urban Village.

c. **Require off-street parking as part of new multi-family and commercial development** to support the added cars and drivers development brings, especially since Wallingford will not be on either planned light rail line. It’s unrealistic to fail to plan for cars.

d. **Encourage commercial spaces to be designed built and leased to support, rather than displace, small and locally-owned businesses**. Keep what makes our business district attractive and unique. Currently many new retail spaces stand empty for years, with the costs absorbed by renters above.

5.       **Impose impact Fees to ensure necessary concurrent improvements** including improvements in parks and open space, schools, libraries, transit, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and public safety that are associated with new development.

6. **Be transparent with the data and citizen dialogue.** Provide a concrete, realistic target for how much housing Wallingford must add; measure affordable housing gain/loss in Wallingford; notify people in a professional way that you will be changing their property; be honest about the public feedback you’ve been hearing.

Finally, I would like to note that the up-zone of the Wallingford Urban Village, as it is currently proposed, violates five of the “Principles of MHA Implementation” that were set forth in City-convened focus groups in 2016, in that they do not:

* Encourage a range of housing options, specifically including family-friendly options (Principle 1);
* Encourage green space and landscaping (Principle 2);
* Ensure appropriate transitions from higher-scale to lower-scale zones (Principle 3);
* Locate new housing near the assets and infrastructure (parks, schools, transit, shops etc.) of the Urban Village (Principle 5); or
* Consider local urban design priorities when up-zoning (Principle 8).

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. While this is a very difficult and contentious issue for all of us in this city, I want to express my appreciation to everyone working hard—including the Council, the Mayor, and all the staff to achieve affordability, equity and livability in Seattle while we welcome newcomers and nurture those here already who made Seattle what it has been and is.

Sincerely,

*Your Name & Address*