

To: All Seattle City Council Members & Mayor

From: Livable U District Coalition

Subject: **The Council is not bound by the Grand Bargain, and should reject it**

Date: August 1, 2016

Last summer the Mayor bragged that a Grand Bargain had been achieved with regard to Housing Affordability and Livability in Seattle. The legislation to implement the city's side of the "bargain", establishing a Mandatory Housing Affordability Framework for residential development (MHA-R Framework, CB 118736) is now under consideration by the PLUZ Committee. This legislation is unfair and unsound and it should not move forward. Please vote to reject or table it for the following reasons.

- 1) The signers of last year's "Grand Bargain" have no power to bind this year's Council Members to it. Indeed, this group of signers would never have the power to bind any council to such a bargain. Do not be intimidated by or hide behind a false pretense that you must adhere to its terms.
- 2) To adopt the MHA-R framework in isolation is irresponsible when full implications are as yet unknown. HALA MHA-R and code changes tied to it through the Seattle 2035 process, targeted upzones, and loosening of development standards (via "backyard cottage" regulations, for example) can all affect the livability of Seattle's neighborhoods. These pieces of legislation should not be adopted without fully understanding overlapping impacts. This is especially true for the MHA-R framework, because MHA environmental impact studies are just beginning, and HALA focus group analyses of MHA and other techniques will not be completed before 2017.
- 3) Grassroots legal challenges to aspects of the "Grand Bargain", HALA MHA-R, Seattle 2035, and related legislation are underway, and the Council should await the outcome of this litigation before proceeding with code changes.
- 4) It is doubtful that the policy direction outlined in the MHA-R will preserve existing affordable housing, or inclusively, equitably and substantially increase Seattle's affordable housing supply.

If you do choose to move forward on MHA-R at this time, the amendments proposed by Council Member Herbold should be adopted. They attempt to quantify, and in some measure reduce the adverse impacts of this sweeping policy change. For instance, in lieu fees should be plowed back into the neighborhood where the development occurs.

Shirley Nixon and Nancy Bocek, for Livable U District

Livable U District (LUD) is a true grass roots ad hoc coalition of University District renters, homeowners, small businesses, organizations and their supporters committed to preserving both the livability and affordability of Seattle's University District. Dozens of individuals and organizations have thus far endorsed LUD's position statement found at livableudistrict.com.