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Thursday, May 12, 2011

Geoffrey Wendlandt
City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development
700 Fifth Avenue
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

RE: DPD's Roosevelt Rezone Proposal

Dear Mr. Wendlandt:

Futurewise would like to comment on the SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) issued by Department of Planning and Development (DPD) regarding DPD's rezone proposal in the Roosevelt neighborhood. Futurewise is a statewide public interest group working to promote healthy communities and cities while protecting farmland, forests and shorelines today and for future generations. Futurewise advocates for dense, vibrant development in urban areas to support, and benefit from, public transit investments. These communities tend to be active with walking and biking, making them desirable for residents and businesses alike. In order to meet the public's goals and vision for our communities, it is crucial that smart land use decisions match our transit investments.

Not only will transit-oriented communities be better for people to live in, dense urban environments are key to solving global warming. In Washington State, 45 percent of our global warming pollution comes from transportation, and the percentage increases significantly if land use is included. Building dense, vibrant communities is necessary to meet our city's proportional share of state-required reductions.

In a time of constrained public budgets, it's imperative that we maximize every dollar spent for our common goals and vision. For our region, the goals that rise to the top include solving global warming, saving local farms and forests from sprawl, protecting clean water, expanding more transportation choices, providing more housing opportunities, and building vibrant, walkable neighborhoods for small business to flourish. If we do the planning correctly now, the Roosevelt neighborhood can easily be part of that vision.

With the support of region's voters and taxpayers in 2008, Sound Transit will invest \$1.4 billion over the next ten years to extend the Link Light Rail from the University of Washington through the Roosevelt neighborhood to the Northgate Transit Center. This investment is meant to spur new housing, economic opportunities, and livable communities along the north-end alignment. We cannot let the public's tremendous taxpayer support for this rail project go to waste and leave their vision and goals unfulfilled.

Transit investments are most effective when combined with opportunities for more people to live, shop, and work within close proximity to stations. To a large degree because of the public's investment in the Link Light Rail, the Planning Commission's recent *Transit Communities Report* identified many of the

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communities along the north-end alignment as ideal for more housing and infrastructure. Given this backdrop, it is critical that Seattle planners and elected officials thoughtfully evaluate all land use decisions in future station areas in order to maximize taxpayers' investment in their regional vision.

Futurewise encourages DPD to reconsider the issuance of the DNS. DPD has not fully considered the long-term land use impacts related to this rezone.

Constraining the developable capacity of the lots one block from the Link Light Rail to single-family zoning will result in big wasted opportunity to provide needed housing, stores, and jobs and to help solve our region's biggest environmental problems such as global warming, toxic runoff, public health, and lost farmland to sprawl.

Futurewise asks DPD to undertake a comprehensive station-area planning effort to ensure our communities continue to grow into thriving, high value neighborhoods that benefit the immediate community, Seattle, and the region. Futurewise urges the City to consider the excellent work done by the Planning Commission in their recent *Transit Communities Report*, which highlights the relationships between effective transit, housing, and other essential components of livable neighborhoods. This planning should be a high priority.

As light rail is built, station areas, such as the Roosevelt neighborhood, will witness tremendous opportunities to achieve the region's goals and vision. Seattle must not limit our capacity to achieve the region's desire for more people to enjoy a higher quality of life with more home, business, job, and transit choices. Please conduct a more comprehensive study.

Thank you for your consideration of Futurewise's comment.

Brock Howell
King County Program Director
Futurewise

Cc:

Michael McGinn, Mayor
Richard Conlin, President, Seattle City Council
Sally Bagshaw, Seattle City Council
Tim Burgess, Seattle City Council
Sally Clark, Seattle City Council
Jean Godden, Seattle City Council
Bruce Harrell, Seattle City Council
Nick Licata, Seattle City Council
Mike O'Brien, Seattle City Council
Tom Rasmussen, Seattle City Council
Diane Sugimura, Director, Department of Planning and Development
Marshall Foster, Department of Planning and Development
Tom Hauger, Department of Planning and Development