



**Seattle**  
**Office of Planning &  
Community Development**

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**Date:** September 20, 2021

**To:** Councilmember Dan Strauss, Chair, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee

**From:** Rico Quirindongo, Interim Director, Office of Planning and Community Development

**Subject:** Community Engagement Plan for 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

**Background**

As a response to proviso OPCD-002-A-003, today's briefing describes "a work plan for Comprehensive Plan outreach and engagement, including a racial equity toolkit." As called for in the proviso, the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) developed this initial work plan in consultation with the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Joint consultations with both departments began during the work on a Racial Equity Analysis starting in 2020 and continuing into this year as we finalized that work and turned toward planning for community engagement for the update. Additional coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) draws from collaboration in advance of citywide transportation planning occurring in parallel to the Comprehensive Plan update. Finally, both the community engagement plan and an initial framework for a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) were also informed by the Racial Equity Analysis, which OPCD presented to the Land Use and Neighborhoods committee on July 14.

OPCD is currently preparing to launch a several year effort to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is a policy document that guides where and how the city grows and what investments are made to accommodate that growth and support communities over the next 20 years. The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to adopt a major update of their plans every 8 years. The statutory deadline for Seattle's update is June 2024. The new plan will address a planning period that extends to 2044 with new projections for housing and employment that anticipate a continuation of the rapid growth of the last decade.

The GMA also requires extensive public participation in local planning. Specifically, RCW 36.70A.140 states that when local governments are developing their comprehensive plans they must "establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation." The initial work plan described in today's briefing is designed to meet these requirements. A GMA public participation plan will be further developed through fall 2021, with input from early community and stakeholder engagement, and will be released in early 2022.

The last major update led to the adoption of the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan in 2016. That effort included a three-year public engagement process with support from DON, OCR, and other departments, with a major emphasis on engaging with traditionally underrepresented groups.

Outreach efforts included a web and social media presence, public surveys, dozens of open houses and community and stakeholder meetings, and an online community conversation that reached nearly 5,000 residents.

As we embark upon the next major Plan update, OPCD is committed to robust community engagement over a several year planning process. Community input helps the City to better understand the values, hopes, concerns, and perspectives of Seattle residents and stakeholders. As we begin this work, the City is facing multiple challenges – repairing a legacy and ongoing reality of racial injustice, mitigating and adapting to climate change, tackling housing affordability and homelessness, and recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The update will also include the most significant review and consideration of changes to the urban village growth strategy that has occurred since the first GMA comprehensive plan was adopted in 1994. For all these reasons, broad and deep engagement will be crucial to a successful completion of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update.

### **Goals and Principles for Community Engagement**

OPCD has identified initial goals for community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan update. These goals reflect input from the Racial Equity Analysis community input and recommendations from PolicyLink. They are informed by practices and principles that currently guide OPCD engagement for a range of planning and community development initiatives. They also reflect the goals and policies established in the Community Engagement Element of the current Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

<b>Goals for Community Engagement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage all residents and stakeholders at both the neighborhood and citywide levels in meaningful and relevant dialogue about the future of Seattle</li><li>• Center race and equity in the planning process by giving voice and power to communities that have been historically marginalized, especially BIPOC</li><li>• Build capacity to enable all communities to fully engage in the update of the Plan and its implementation</li><li>• Use plain talk, high-quality graphics, and new media to communicate information about the update</li><li>• Create opportunities for interaction and co-creation with community and stakeholders</li><li>• Provide transparency about how public input was considered and incorporated into the planning process</li><li>• Build upon existing relationships and coordinate outreach with key partners</li></ul>

The goals will help shape the objectives, questions, and activities for community engagement during each phase of the Plan update process.

Further, OPCD's approach to community engagement will evolve through the course of the project for maximum value to the City and to communities we are engaging with, as guided by three principles for managing a community engagement process that is community centered, nimble to address challenges and opportunities, and makes best use of limited resources.

1. *Reaching community during COVID-19 pandemic.* For the past year and a half, OPCD, DON, and many other departments have, by necessity, adopted tools and practices to engage with communities remotely, primarily through online communications, convenings, dialogue, and sharing of information. The public health conditions that necessitated these tools will continue to shape our work as we launch community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan update this year and into 2022. For this reason, we will adopt a flexible hybrid approach to conduct outreach and interactive engagement that can be implemented either in person or over the internet.
2. *Continuous learning and adaptation.* Community engagement will occur in several distinct stages over a 2+ year period leading up to adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan in mid-2024. During each phase we will continually seek feedback from community members and stakeholders on what works and doesn't work, especially tools intended to broaden and deepen our engagement with marginalized communities. At the end of each phase, OPCD will report on lessons learned and make adjustments to our engagement strategies going forward.
3. *Partnerships and coordination.* Forging partnerships and coordination both inside and outside of City government is both desirable and necessary given the reality of limited resources within OPCD for community engagement.
  - External organizations with which OPCD will seek partnerships include community and stakeholder groups, public agencies, and cultural and educational institutions. Specifically, we plan to seek assistance of community-based organizations that serve marginalized communities through compensated agreements.
  - City departments will play a key role. OPCD will seek to coordinate closely with other departments that are taking on other major policy updates that overlap with and complement the Comprehensive Plan update, with the aim of unifying and cross-leveraging our engagement work. This includes anticipated work by SDOT to develop a Seattle transportation plan for the city over the next several years, with many opportunities for joint outreach. In addition, OPCD will continue to consult with DON to tap expertise and relationships with community as well as their guidance in making the best use of the Community Liaison program.

- Finally, we will also work to connect our outreach efforts for the Plan update with community engagement for other key initiatives within OPCD, such as station area planning around ST3 investments, Industrial and Maritime Strategy, and relationships established with community groups through the Equitable Development Initiative.

**Who We Will Engage in the Planning Process**

The Comprehensive Plan update will be a citywide effort that endeavors to engage with a very broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and communities. Within that overall expectation, OPCD proposes to conduct community engagement in a way that centers race and equity and lifts up people and communities who historically have been marginalized from opportunities to influence policy decisions, frequently resulting in inequitable outcomes, disparate harms, and unequal access to benefits created by growth and investment.

<b>We will prioritize resources to engage with:</b>	
➤ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities	➤ LGBTQ community
➤ Limited-English populations	➤ People with disabilities
<b>We will also engage with:</b>	
• General public	• Community-based organizations
• Youth (under 18)	• Business associations
• Seniors (over 65)	• Small business owners
• Parents of young children	• Property owners
• Renters	• Builders and developers
• City boards and commissions	• Public agencies
• Cultural organizations	• Policy advocates

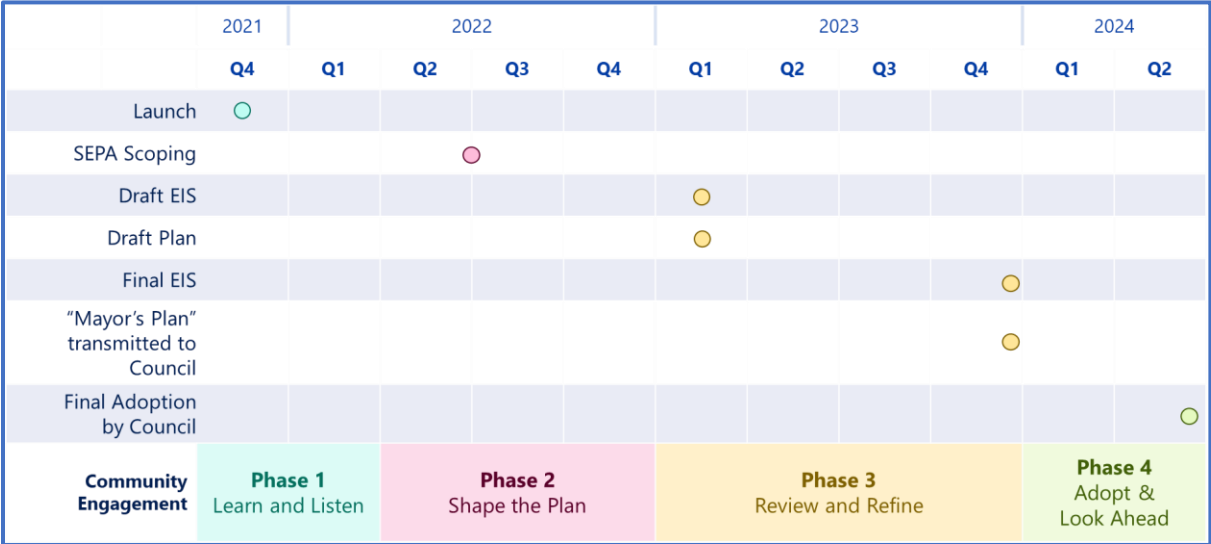
**Prioritizing Limited Resources**

The 2021 OPCD budget includes an initial \$100,000 for Comprehensive Plan community engagement, out of a total budget of \$150,000 for engagement over the 3-year planning period. OPCD will also draw upon staff with expertise in communications and long-range planning. Consistent with our goals for the project and our overall commitment to centering race and equity in our work, OPCD plans to focus new expenditures on strategies and tools that support equitable engagement, including, to the extent feasible, resourcing community partnerships. At the same time, other activities that support broader citywide outreach and public facing materials and logistics for outreach will be accommodated within our existing staff resources.

<b>\$150K prioritized for equitable engagement tools, including:</b>	<b>Community engagement needs supported by OPCD staff include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assistance from CBOs</li> <li>➤ Community Liaisons</li> <li>➤ Translation/interpretation</li> <li>➤ Additional supports for community involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials, graphics, online</li> <li>• Citywide outreach</li> <li>• Meetings and events</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Analysis, processing comments, reporting out</li> </ul>

**Project Schedule and Engagement Phases**

Community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan update will occur over four phases of the project, as summarized in the timeline graphic below.



Each phase will have distinct objectives and activities that are planned to engage community members and key stakeholders in identifying issues, developing policy concepts, and shaping the final recommended plan that will be considered by the City Council in early 2024.

Phase 1: Learn and Listen (Fall 2021 – Winter 2022)

During the first phase, OPCD will launch formal community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Objectives for Phase 1 include the following:

- Raise public awareness of the plan update and initiate citywide discussions about Seattle’s future. We will seek input on people’s hopes and concerns, opportunities and challenges facing communities, and issues that will help define the scope of the update.
- Establish a framework and partnerships for equitable engagement with capacity building. We will lay the foundation for meaningful engagement with marginalized communities throughout the update process.
- Refine the community engagement plan with community input. During fall 2021 we will seek feedback on who to engage and how best to engage them, with an emphasis on BIPOC and other marginalized communities.

Planned activities during Phase 1 include the following:

- OPCD staff will develop materials to support community engagement, including graphics and branding, presentation and meeting materials, project and issue briefs. We will establish an online presence for the update, including a website with interactive features and social media.
- OPCD will reach out to City boards and commissions as well as key internal and external stakeholders, to inform and seek input on project scope and engagement strategies.
- Contract with several community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve BIPOC or other marginalized communities to provide engagement support. Initiate contracts by end 2021 with work beginning in early 2022.
- Engage a cohort of Community Liaisons (CLs) dedicated specifically to the Comprehensive Plan update. Engagement work will include CL trainings and focus groups to advise on the project and contribute direct engagement activities starting in early 2022.
- Initiate a Racial Equity Toolkit process with guidance from the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) Advisory Board.

#### Phase 2: Shape the Plan (Spring 2022 – Fall 2022)

During the second phase, OPCD will deepen community engagement to inform and shape growth alternatives, environmental analysis, and new and revised Comprehensive Plan elements.

Objectives for Phase 2 include the following:

- Engage the public on growth strategy concepts to further explore in an anticipated environmental impact statement (EIS), with opportunities to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis. Informative and interactive engagement during Phase 2 will be crucial as, for the first time since the adoption of the Urban Village strategy in 1994, we explore new approaches to the City’s growth strategy to better achieve equity, affordability, and sustainability goals. Phase 2 will also seek input on new and revised policies in each of the Plan elements.
- Create opportunities for BIPOC communities to participate in developing equitable growth strategy concepts, including anti-displacement strategies, and policies to address equity

gaps in the current plan. Engagement will be grounded in a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) process.

Planned activities during Phase 2 include the following:

- Citywide online dissemination of project information, including draft growth strategy and SEPA scoping materials, with multiple options for community input
- Community dialogues (e.g., focus groups, community meetings)
- Citywide and community-based workshops or other events focused on key topics (e.g., growth strategy, housing, climate, transportation, inclusive/complete neighborhoods)
- Formal scoping meetings as part of the environmental review process, in anticipation of work on analysis of alternatives in the draft EIS commencing summer 2022
- Regular meetings with EDI Advisory Board, Community Liaisons, and community members on questions and issues addressed in the Racial Equity Toolkit

#### Phase 3: Review and Refine (Winter 2023 – Fall 2023)

Phase 3 of community engagement will begin with release of a draft EIS and draft Comprehensive Plan document and include multiple opportunities for the public to learn about the analysis and plan and to provide input as we move toward a preferred growth strategy alternative and release of a final “Mayor’s Plan” for transmittal to City Council at the start of 2024.

Objectives for Phase 3 include the following:

- Engage with the public broadly about the draft Comprehensive Plan and DEIS and provide ample meaningful opportunities to comment.
- Sustain capacity and continue targeted engagement with BIPOC and other marginalized communities throughout the review and comment periods.

Planned activities during Phase 3 include the following:

- Outreach to media and key citywide and community stakeholders
- Open houses (including online) and robust interactive web portal to explore and comment on plan and DEIS
- Continued partnership with EDI Advisory Board and community to finalize RET
- Formal comment periods for DEIS and draft Plan

#### Phase 4: Adopt and Look Ahead (Winter 2024 – Spring 2024)

Phase 4 begins with the transmittal of the “Mayor’s Plan” including a final preferred growth strategy to City Council. Council adoption is due by June 2024. Once adopted, OPCD will continue working with community on important implementation steps, such as any code changes that may be needed to implement land use or other related policies in the Plan.

Objectives for Phase 4 include the following:

- Provide a robust platform to share information publicly about the Plan as recommended to Council.
- As appropriate, continue to support sustained involvement of BIPOC and other marginalized communities through the Council adoption process.

Planned activities during Phase 4 include the following:

- Information and interactive portal for the general public and key stakeholders to explore the recommended final Comprehensive Plan
- Public hearings for Council adoption

### **Racial Equity Toolkit**

The vision of the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative is to eliminate racial inequity in the community. To do this requires ending individual racism, institutional racism, and structural racism. The Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity. The most effective RETs are done early in a process, to help gain insight as we develop a program or policy change.

OPCD is committed to conducting a thorough RET integrated throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process. This work will be grounded in engagement with BIPOC community stakeholders and community members. The recently completed Racial Equity Analysis (REA) of the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and Urban Village Strategy lays the groundwork for the RET in identifying areas where the existing Plan falls short of achieving racially equitable outcomes and includes policies that reflect a historical legacy of racially inequitable planning decisions. The REA includes consultant findings and recommendations from PolicyLink, and also a Community Engagement Summary report which identifies many issues and questions which will be explored further in the RET.

The framework for the RET includes six major elements which are summarized as follows:

- *Involve community.* BIPOC community engagement will be a key component of each substantive element of the RET. The Equitable Development Initiative Advisory Board, which includes representatives of various BIPOC communities and organizations that serve them, will serve in an advisory and working group capacity for the RET process. The RET elements will inform the materials and questions for community dialogues and workshops more broadly as part of the update, including work of CBOs and CLs.
- *Analyze data.* The RET will draw upon the historical and statistical analysis summarized in the REA, as well as the most recent data on community indicators, displacement risk, and neighborhood change produced by the Equitable Development Monitoring Program. The Background Report for the Plan update will include analysis of new Census and



other data. Where feasible, we will augment these traditional data sources with community stories and data points revealed through our engagement work. Finally, OPCD will update two important analyses from the 2016 update – mapping of access to opportunity and displacement risk.

- *Define outcomes.* Early in the project, we will work with community to define racially equitable outcomes for the Comprehensive Plan. The outcomes should be meaningful to community members and measurable to enable evaluation of policy alternatives and monitoring of progress over time. The outcomes will be designed to explicitly connect with the kinds of policies and potential impacts of the Comprehensive Plan itself.
- *Determine benefits and burdens.* The REA explored a series of questions about the current Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan to identify who has benefited and who has been burdened by growth and the policies that have shaped growth in Seattle over time. The RET will build upon that analysis with a focus on the new plan that will guide how the city grows over the next 20 years.
- *Advance opportunity, minimize harm.* The REA included recommendations for further work toward co-creation, with community, of a more racially equitable growth strategy in the Plan update and policies that advance racial equity across a broad spectrum of outcomes, including anti-displacement, access to neighborhoods of opportunity, housing affordability, and community investment needs. The RET will provide interactive opportunities for the EDI board and community members to shape the draft growth strategy alternatives and policies in the draft Plan.
- *Evaluate and be accountable.* Preceding steps in the RET will enable OPCD, in partnership with community stakeholders, to evaluate and recommend revisions to the draft plan toward achieving a final plan that is accountable to the RET process. The work will also inform how the City tracks outcomes once the Plan is adopted.

# Racial Equity Toolkit

## Key elements

### Involve Stakeholders

- EDI Advisory Board
- Community dialogues, workshops
- BIPOC focus in broader engagement for Comp Plan
- Support from Community Liaisons and CBOs

### Analyze data

- Builds on Racial Equity Analysis and EDMP
- Update displacement and opportunity mapping
- Background report
- Community-based research

### Define outcomes

- Address racial disparities across range of outcomes
- Meaningful, measurable
- Make connection to Comp Plan strategy and policies

### Determine benefits & burdens

- Builds on REA
- Informs growth strategy and scoping for EIS

### Advance opportunity, minimize harm

- Advance a racially equitable growth strategy
- Identify CP policies and implementing actions

### Evaluate and be accountable

- Final Plan accountable to RET process
- Monitor outcomes post adoption