



Mayor Harrell's

# ONE SEATTLE PLAN

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



**Seattle**  
Office of Planning &  
Community Development

*Mayor's Recommended Draft for City Council Review - April 2025*

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KIMYUNITY/Noio Pathways  
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Mayor's Council on African American Elders  
Human Rights Commission  
Seattle Arts Commission  
Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board  
Seattle Disability Commission  
Seattle Freight Advisory Board  
Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission  
Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging & Disability  
Seattle LGBTQ Commission  
Board of Parks and Recreation Commission  
Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board  
Seattle Planning Commission  
Seattle Renters' Commission  
Seattle School Traffic Safety Commission  
Seattle Transit Advisory Board  
Seattle Women's Commission  
Seattle Youth Commission  
Urban Forestry Commission

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To all the individuals and organizations who gave time and thought to participate in the

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HSD	Health and Human Services	SDCI	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection
LEG	City Council Central Legislative Staff	SDOT	Seattle Department of Transportation
Metro	King County Metro	SFD	Seattle Fire Department
NWSA	NW Seaport Alliance	SIT	Seattle Information and Technology
OAC	Office of Arts and Culture	SPL	Seattle Public Library
OED	Office of Economic Development	SPD	Seattle Police Department
OEM	Office of Emergency Management	SPR	Seattle Parks and Recreation
OH	Office of Housing	SPS	Seattle Public Schools
OPCD	Office of Planning and Community Development	SPU	Seattle Public Utilities
OSE	Office of Sustainability and Environment	ST	Sound Transit
Port	Port of Seattle	WSDOT	Washington Dept of Transportation

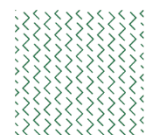
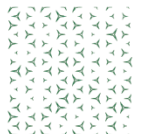
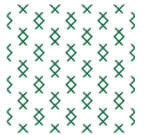
Mayor Harrell's

# ONE SEATTLE PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



# Citywide Policies



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# Introduction

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap for where and how our city will grow and invest in our communities over the next 20 years and beyond. Seattle last engaged in a citywide process to update its Comprehensive Plan nearly a decade ago. This major update, the One Seattle Plan, advances a vision for the future that aligns with our City's core values to make Seattle equitable, livable, sustainable, and resilient for today's residents and generations to come.

The One Seattle Plan (Plan) was created in dialogue with people throughout Seattle about the future they want to see for themselves, their families, their communities, and the city they call home. The Plan was developed through extensive public engagement with a focus on seeking diverse community input, and this dialogue will continue as we work to implement this Plan in the coming years.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses a wide range of topics, but a few themes comprise the heart of this Plan. These are the **four key moves** that respond to the issues and concerns emphasized by community members and stakeholders across the city and that will guide our planning for the next 20 years. The Plan also addresses important regional and statewide priorities and laws intended to facilitate construction of affordable and family housing, improve mobility, and allow for future population growth and climate resilience. Taken together, numerous goals and policies in the Plan further each of the following:

**Housing and Affordability: Expand housing opportunities across the city.** This Plan is designed to meet Seattle's pressing housing needs now and into the future. In a rapidly growing region, a housing shortage is one factor that makes homes too expensive for people to afford and is a root cause of homelessness. The impacts are greatest for people with low incomes and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities who may have less access to intergenerational wealth than white communities. Ultimately, many people across the city feel the strain of high housing costs in different ways. This Plan encourages more housing in more places to create a future where homes are plentiful, fewer households are burdened by unaffordable housing costs, and people achieve stable housing. This Plan also creates opportunities to employ our public resources, including the Seattle Housing Levy, to build the housing we need.

The shortage of quality, affordable family-sized homes is pushing too many families out of our city or straining their resources to stay in Seattle. We must align our housing plans to meet this specific need and ensure that homes that meet the needs of families—particularly low- and middle-income households—are built and maintained in every neighborhood. Housing near schools, childcare, transit lines, and other services can help stabilize neighborhoods, improve enrollment in our schools, and keep Seattle a city that protects and supports kids and families.

**Equity and Opportunity: Promote a more equitable Seattle as we grow.** Over generations, Seattle's growth has not provided equal benefits to all communities. Policy decisions, lack of investment, and discriminatory housing practices, including redlining and racially restrictive covenants, have led to the displacement of BIPOC communities and limited access to home ownership and generational wealth building for these residents. This Plan takes steps towards addressing these harms, and ushers in a new, more equitable strategy for how Seattle will grow in the future. New growth must welcome newcomers, help communities thrive in place, *and* provide opportunities for former residents who have been displaced to return.

**Community and Neighborhoods: Focus growth and investment in complete, walkable communities.** Our vision for One Seattle includes a network of complete, connected communities that welcome more neighbors of all ages, races, ethnicities, and incomes. This Plan supports economically vibrant neighborhoods across the city with focused growth near transit, including light rail and high-quality frequent bus service, so residents can meet their everyday needs nearby without needing a car. This Plan takes steps to foster more walkable neighborhoods that are welcoming and accessible, with safe public spaces for neighbors to gather and build community.

**Climate and Sustainability: Meet the challenges of climate change for a resilient future.** Seattle residents are feeling the impact of the climate crisis with more extreme weather events every year, disproportionately impacting lower income residents and communities of color. This Plan introduces a Climate and Environment element that redoubles our effort to reduce our carbon footprint and build resiliency in frontline communities most vulnerable to climate impacts. The new element includes strategies to reduce climate pollution from key sectors: transportation, development pattern, buildings, energy, and solid waste. It also promotes a wide range of measures to enhance the resilience of our communities and natural environment that are threatened by current and potential climate impacts.

## Trends and Challenges

Each major update to a city's comprehensive plan is an opportunity to take stock of what has changed since the last update and what issues and challenges are paramount for the city and its residents now. Significant trends and events that transpired in the last decade that shape this Plan are summarized below. The One Seattle Plan strives to address and respond to these and other recent and ongoing drivers of change.

### Continued Rapid Growth

In the years preceding this Plan, Seattle was one of the fastest growing major cities in the country. From 2010 to 2020, the city experienced a huge increase in employment, adding more than 175,000 jobs – a gain of 38%. While housing was produced at a historic pace with the addition of 60,000 net



new homes over the same time period, an increase of 19%, the scale of production was not enough to keep pace with employment and population growth. Much of the new job growth was in high-wage fields, as Seattle's per capita income notched up to nearly \$75,000, the second highest among U.S. large cities.

## **Effects of the Global Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major immediate and potential long-term changes to cities around the world. In Seattle, BIPOC communities experienced disproportionate health, economic, and social impacts. These disparities underscore the racial and social inequities that persist in our city, region, and country. The pandemic also accelerated shifts in how we work, which has changed daily activity and commuting patterns, impacted centers of office employment like Downtown, and elevated the value of neighborhoods, public space, and local access to amenities.

## **Lack of Affordability**

The cost of housing in Seattle continues to be a problem. The average annual Zillow Home Value Index for a detached home more than doubled from \$415,000 to \$945,000 from 2012 to 2022, far beyond what most Seattle-area households can afford. The median monthly cost of rent and basic utilities increased by 75% from \$1,024 in 2011 to \$1,787 in 2021. Lack of affordability is linked directly to an increase in people without a home, which reached an estimated 33,700 people in King County according to the state Department of Commerce's Snapshot of Homelessness for July 2022.

## **Displacement Pressure**

In the years preceding this Plan, displacement pressure continued to be a major concern for many Seattle residents and businesses. A recent Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) survey found that 27% of Seattle households who moved within the region from 2014 to 2019 did so due to rising housing costs or other displacement-related reasons. While the population of color in Seattle as a whole has increased, many neighborhoods in South Seattle have seen substantial decreases in certain communities of color as housing in these areas becomes less affordable. Neighborhoods in and around the Central Area have continued to see very large decreases in the numbers of Black residents. Other neighborhoods with large shifts include Beacon Hill and Seward Park, where the Asian population has continued to decrease. Furthermore, the number of Hispanic and Latino residents counted in South Park decreased between 2010 and 2020 in significant contrast to this population's growth in the neighborhood between 1990 and 2010.

## **Climate Change**

As the climate changes, Seattle residents are experiencing environmental, health, and economic effects. In recent years Seattle has seen numerous unprecedented or historically rare extreme weather events including but not limited to extreme heat events with temperatures over 105 degrees (2021), regular smoke events in late summer (2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023), and tidal flooding of neighborhoods in the Duwamish River floodplain (2022). These changes are harmful for

everyone, but frontline communities, those who experience the first and worst consequences of climate change, bear a disproportionate burden of harm. Globally, the 10 warmest years in the historical record have all occurred since 2010.

## **Expansion of Regional Transit**

Over the past several years, Sound Transit has taken major steps to expand light rail – the region’s primary high-capacity transit system. Since the last Comprehensive Plan update light rail service was extended with service from University of Washington to Northgate and stations north of Seattle, and new service across Lake Washington with a station at Judkins Park will open in 2025. In 2016 voters approved the nearly \$54 billion Sound Transit 3 measure, which will further expand light rail during the 20-year timeframe of the One Seattle Plan with a new line from Ballard to West Seattle and roughly a dozen new or expanded stations within the city.

## **Four Key Moves**

The following summarizes how this Plan helps advance the four key moves.

### **Housing and Affordability: Expand Housing Opportunities across the City**

The One Seattle Plan is designed to improve the supply, variety, and affordability of housing across the city. Our approach addresses past exclusionary policies and practices and the need to expand housing and neighborhood access. It sets a vision for the future of Seattle where housing options are diverse, affordable, and meet the needs of current and future households of all sizes, incomes, and cultures. Increasing our ability to build more housing in more places will help to ease market pressures that are driving up costs and contributing to displacement of BIPOC and low-income households and provide more affordable housing options for the working families of today and tomorrow.

#### **ENCOURAGE MIDDLE HOUSING IN NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

The Growth Strategy allows for a broad range of housing types throughout Seattle’s Neighborhood Residential (formerly Single Family) zones. The planned density and variety of housing is designed to meet new state requirements for “middle housing” (HB 1110) and includes opportunities to add new housing types, like duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, stacked flats, and cottage housing in Neighborhood Residential zones across the city. These changes will provide new opportunities for diverse households to find the housing they need with access to high-quality neighborhood amenities. New homeownership options will provide housing stability and wealth building opportunities.

#### **CREATE NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN EXISTING AND EXPANDED CENTERS, INCLUDING NEW NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS**

For nearly 30 years, Seattle’s growth strategy has concentrated growth in Urban Centers and Villages. The updated strategy creates new and expanded opportunities for housing and growth

near our major transit investments and established centers and villages. In addition, new Neighborhood Centers will allow additional moderate-density housing around commercial nodes, bus rapid transit stops, and neighborhood amenities. These additions to the City's current strategy for growth add to the supply of housing with wider opportunities for people to live within a short walk, bike, or transit ride to meet their daily needs.

### **EXPAND INVESTMENTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Even with the expansion of housing supply, market housing development is not expected to meet the needs of all segments of our community. The Housing element supports continued and increased investments in affordable housing. Under this Plan, resources from the Seattle Housing Levy, funds generated from development, current and potential new Federal and State resources, and incentives would expand the city's supply of income-restricted homes.

## **Equity and Opportunity: Promote a More Equitable Seattle as We Grow**

Every resident should have the opportunity to thrive and to be a part of Seattle's future and its growing economy, but the benefits and burdens of our city's growth have not been distributed equitably. Many people, based on their race, ethnicity, gender, ability, income, or sexual orientation, have been historically excluded from the same housing and job opportunities, security, and freedoms that other Seattle residents have. This Plan begins to address the harmful effects of racially restrictive zoning by expanding the types of housing allowed in neighborhoods across Seattle. It also prioritizes programs and investments to support low-income and BIPOC communities that have experienced historical underinvestment to thrive. In these ways, this Plan works toward repairing historical injustices and building a more inclusive city.

### **REDUCE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD EXCLUSION**

Policies in the Growth Strategy, Land Use, and Housing elements aim to lessen the patterns whereby BIPOC families and lower-income households have been excluded for generations from Seattle's neighborhoods and from homeownership opportunities. The Plan calls for more types of housing in many areas of the city and includes strategies to produce homes that are accessible, affordable, and designed to meet the needs of Seattle's diverse households. In doing so, we aim to redress the legacy of redlining and racially restrictive covenants that shape Seattle to this day. See the Housing Appendix for a detailed summary of racially disparate impacts and harms to BIPOC communities from racially restrictive policies and practices.

### **REDUCE RISK OF DISPLACEMENT**

The Plan embraces a vision of growth without displacement of households, businesses, and cultural communities that are currently at risk of being forced to leave Seattle. The Plan highlights anti-displacement strategies across many elements and builds on many anti-displacement programs the City has in place. The Growth Strategy is designed to reduce market pressure that has contributed to displacement of lower-income households and boost the supply and variety of housing across the city to slow increases in the cost of housing. Both the Plan and the actions the City will take to achieve this vision are informed by data and ongoing input from communities at high risk of displacement.

## **SUPPORT WEALTH BUILDING**

The Plan promotes a range of strategies to help BIPOC community members develop generational wealth. The Growth Strategy and Housing elements support new opportunities for homeownership. The Economic Development and Arts and Culture elements enhance support for local small businesses, cultural institutions, asset ownership, and job training. The Plan also includes policies supporting the ability of community members to benefit from employment and other opportunities created with City investments.

## **INVEST EQUITABLY TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS**

Policies in the Transportation Element, Parks & Open Space Element, Arts and Culture, and Capital Facilities elements call for centering racial equity when directing investments into new facilities, infrastructure, and programs. The Plan prioritizes the allocation of resources for safer streets, new parks, arts facilities, community centers, and resilience hubs, among others, into communities that have been underinvested in and underserved for decades.

## **Community and Neighborhoods: Focus Growth and Investment in Complete, Walkable Communities**

The One Seattle Plan aims to create more complete communities where Seattleites can gather with one another, meet their daily needs, and access what they love about their neighborhoods, all within an easy walk or bike, thus reducing reliance on automobiles. This Plan features new and expanded locations for growth, and focuses growth where residents can access transit, including light rail and high-quality frequent bus service, close to home. It supports economically vibrant neighborhoods, strong business districts, and new opportunities for convenient amenities like neighborhood corner stores. Several elements include goals and policies to build more complete neighborhoods and a more connected city.

## **CREATE COMPLETE COMMUNITIES**

The Growth Strategy in this Plan will enable the development of more complete and connected neighborhoods where residents can walk, bike, and roll to meet their everyday needs. This will be achieved by building on the investments in our current Urban Villages and Centers and adding new and expanded areas for growth, creating housing opportunities around existing neighborhood business districts with shops, services, open space, and gathering places, and allowing a wider mix of non-residential uses in all our neighborhoods. New Neighborhood Centers are expected to feature more services and become focal points for their local communities.

## **ENSURE SAFE STREETS FOR ALL**

This Plan was developed in coordination with the new Seattle Transportation Plan. In both plans, there is a strong focus on improving safety and reducing the degree to which streets are used for motor vehicles only. The Transportation element leads with physical safety, calling for protection of our most vulnerable road users. See the Promoting Safe Travel for All section of this element. The One Seattle Plan also promotes flexible use of our limited right of way and expanded safe and affordable transportation choices along with more options to use our right-of-way for people-centered activities and spaces that enliven streets and support communities.

## **ENHANCE AND EXPAND OPEN SPACES**

The Parks and Open Space element focuses on addressing inequities in access to high-quality public spaces. Since Seattle is largely built out, this will include adding new opportunities and programming at existing parks and thinking creatively about new ways to provide public spaces in partnership with other agencies and community stakeholders.

## **CENTER ARTS AND CULTURE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**

The Arts and Culture element emphasizes the importance of cultural spaces and a network of activities that support the vibrancy of the city as a whole and, in particular, among BIPOC communities and young people. Goals and policies support a wide range of cultural spaces, both in the public realm and at a wide range of venues in community, that will help define the social character and identity of neighborhoods. The Plan calls for investments in public art that highlight the cultures of our neighborhoods and diverse communities.

## **Climate and Sustainability: Meet the Challenges of Climate Change for a Resilient Future**

The One Seattle Plan introduces a new Climate and Environment element that redoubles our commitment to reduce the impacts of climate change. The element also focuses our efforts to make Seattle resilient in the face of these threats, especially for our most vulnerable populations and frontline communities. Our principles of stewardship and community resilience are shaped and strengthened by the values and practices of the Coast Salish peoples, informed by ongoing engagement with Tribes in the region and our urban Indigenous community members.

## **ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2050**

The City has committed to making Seattle carbon neutral by the year 2050 in order to reduce our collective impact on the global environment through climate pollution that contributes to climate change. This Plan guides broad-based actions to further a just transition away from reliance on fossil fuels. Government, businesses, and residents will need to work together to fulfill the long-term goals set forth in Seattle's Climate Action Plan. Plan elements, such as Transportation, Capital Facilities, and Utilities, reinforce our climate mitigation with more specific policy direction to reduce our emissions.

## **REDUCE AUTOMOBILE DEPENDENCE**

Goals and policies in numerous elements including Growth Strategy and Transportation promote development and investments that will make walking, biking, and public transit viable options for more people, thus reducing reliance on automobiles—a major source of climate pollution in this region.

## **BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

The impacts of climate change affect everyone, but disproportionately affect BIPOC communities, immigrants, refugees, people with limited English language proficiency, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. Climate impacts include heat, smoke, sea level rise, flooding, and impacts from other extreme weather events. With the need to adapt to the present and future impacts of



climate change, a new climate resilience sub-element includes policies that will shape how we invest equitably in communities across the city to become more complete, healthy, and resilient over time.

### **CONTRIBUTE TO A SUSTAINABLE REGION**

By taking on a more significant share of the region's growth, Seattle helps protect rural farms and forests from development. It is also a way for our City to contribute to reducing climate pollution on a regional scale by welcoming more affordable opportunities for people to live closer to regional centers of employment, education, and culture. The Growth Strategy element of this Plan adopts new approaches to accommodate more of the people coming to our region over the next 20 years.

## **State and Regional Policy Framework**

### **Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA)**

Enacted in 1990, Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties and cities to create and regularly update comprehensive plans that prepare us for projected growth in population, housing, and jobs.

The GMA's goals include protecting farms and forests from sprawl and directing growth to already urbanized areas, especially cities. Each county, in collaboration with its cities, has established an urban-growth boundary, and each city must demonstrate that it is prepared for the urban growth that is expected over the next 20 years. The GMA requires comprehensive plans to address a range of topics and in recent years the State legislature added significant new requirements related to how local governments plan for housing and climate change. The GMA also requires that each city's plan be consistent with other plans in the region, as described below.

### **VISION 2050 / Seattle in the Region**

With the most people and jobs of any city in Washington State, Seattle is the center of the fast-growing central Puget Sound region. Made up of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties, this growing and dynamic metropolitan region expects to reach a population of 5.8 million and include a total of 3.4 million jobs by the year 2050.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the regional growth management, transportation, and economic development planning organization. PSRC's VISION 2050 Plan envisions the region's growth occurring in centers and alongside our transit investments. VISION 2050 allocates especially large shares of growth to five "metropolitan cities"—Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, Tacoma, and Bremerton. The One Seattle Plan reflects Seattle's commitment to accommodate its share of growth as the metropolitan city at the heart of the region. Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) in VISION 2050 also provide guidance for local plans. PSRC reviews and certifies comprehensive plans for consistency with the MPPs.

The PSRC formally designates centers of regional importance within cities. The One Seattle Plan identifies seven Regional Centers, referred to as Urban Centers in Seattle 2035, (see figures 2 and 3)

and two Manufacturing and Industrial Centers in Seattle (see figure 10). Subarea Plans for each of these centers will be included as part of the Plan as they are updated over time.

## Countywide Planning Policies

In King County, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) is made up of elected officials representing the county and its cities. These jurisdictions worked together to develop the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), which provide guidance for local comprehensive plans. The CPPs contain housing and job growth targets for each jurisdiction along with estimates of future affordable housing needs.

The CPPs include a process for designation of Countywide Centers, which, like Regional Centers, are locations where the region intends to focus growth and investment of the next 20 years. The CPPs provide a similar range of policy guidance for the content of local comprehensive plans as do the MPPs in VISION 2050, but with more detail to address the needs and goals of cities in King County.

## Developing the One Seattle Plan

We developed the One Seattle Plan through a three-year process of research, analysis, and engagement with communities across the city. We analyzed data to better understand how the city had changed since the last time we updated the Comprehensive Plan and to explore the most pressing challenges facing the city, including, as described above, persistent racial inequities, climate change, and housing affordability.

We used the City's Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to inform our process in creating the One Seattle Plan. The RET was created by the City's Office for Civil Rights as a framework for understanding the potential impacts of new government actions on racial equity and daylight any unintended consequences for BIPOC community members. The RET and Race and Social Justice ordinance guide the City's community engagement toward centering the voices of BIPOC and other historically under-represented communities.

The City's approach to equitable community engagement, which occurred online, in person, and through community organization partnerships, guided the preparation of this Plan and is reflected in the goals, policies, and narrative of the Plan. Feedback from communities across Seattle has been a critical input in its drafting.

Heightened engagement with Indigenous stakeholders, including Tribes, organizations serving and representing the urban Indigenous community, and community members, informed and shaped the major themes of this Plan which foster a sustainable and equitable future, as well as specific policies across multiple elements that address key issues. Informed by this work, Indigenous peoples' perspectives, values, and ideas are incorporated in various parts of the Plan.

# Plan Implementation and Framework for Accountability

## Implementing the Plan

The City will implement the One Seattle Plan through regulations, such as zoning and development standards, and through investments detailed in the functional plans developed by City departments. The principal purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide policies that guide the development of the city in the context of coordinated regional planning and the City's core values. Community members and officials from all levels of government can look to these policies when planning for growth.

The Plan is made a reality through City-led coordination and actions by the private sector, non-profit and community-based organizations (CBOs), and other government agencies that also help shape Seattle's future in significant ways. For example, the private sector builds most new housing, King County provides bus service, Sound Transit builds and provides light rail, Seattle Public Schools provides public education, the Port of Seattle operates shipping terminals, and CBOs provide services like childcare and job training. The City partners with these agencies to ensure we collaboratively work toward common goals. Implementation of this Plan therefore relies on the City maintaining relationships with many organizations throughout the region.

Although the City itself will use the Plan to direct the development of regulations that govern land use and development, it will not use the Plan to review applications for specific development projects, except when an applicable development regulation expressly requires reference to this Comprehensive Plan.

## Components and Structure of the Comprehensive Plan

Each element of this Plan generally presents goals followed by policies related to those goals and may also include a discussion about the goals and policies. Some chapters also have appendices that contain important data and analysis that inform and provide context for our goals and policies.

**Goals** represent the results that the City hopes to realize over time, generally within the 20-year life of the Plan, except where interim time periods are stated. Whether expressed in terms of numbers or only as directions for future change, goals are aspirations, not guarantees or mandates.

**Policies** should be read as if preceded by the words "It is the City's general policy to...". A policy helps to guide the creation of or changes to specific rules or strategies (such as development regulations, budgets, or program plans). City officials will generally make decisions on specific City actions by following ordinances, resolutions, budgets, or program plans that reflect relevant Plan policies, rather than by referring directly to this Plan.

Implementation of most policies involves a range of actions over time, so one cannot simply ask whether a specific action or project would fulfill a particular Plan policy. For example, a policy that states that the City will give priority to a particular need indicates that the City will treat the need as important, not that it will take precedence in every City decision. Some policies use the words shall,

should, ensure, encourage, and so forth. In general, such words describe the emphasis that the policy places on the action but do not necessarily establish a specific legal duty to perform a particular act, to undertake a program or project, or to achieve a specific result.

## Monitoring and Accountability for Plan Implementation

A monitoring and accountability framework for the One Seattle Plan will include regular data collection and reporting by the City on:

- Actions taken to implement the Plan, including by individual departments and in coordination among departments
- Indicators that tell us whether we are on track to achieve the outcomes envisioned by the Plan, especially racial equity outcomes

Reporting and monitoring will span the Plan's elements, with a special focus on the Growth Strategy and Housing. This will include metrics and mapping to assess how well the Growth Strategy is working to accommodate new housing and jobs; guide growth to create more complete, connected, and inclusive neighborhoods; and help existing residents and community-serving institutions and businesses to thrive. Monitoring will also look at how well place types in the Growth Strategy are performing their roles.

The City's recent reporting on indicators of equitable development and housing needs informing this Plan show deep disparities in well-being, access to opportunity, and displacement risks. Monitoring will build on these analyses and continue to include data on outcomes by race, income, neighborhood, and other factors so that people- and place-based actions and investments to implement the Plan can be focused to tackle remaining disparities.

The City's approach to monitoring and accountability will include the following:

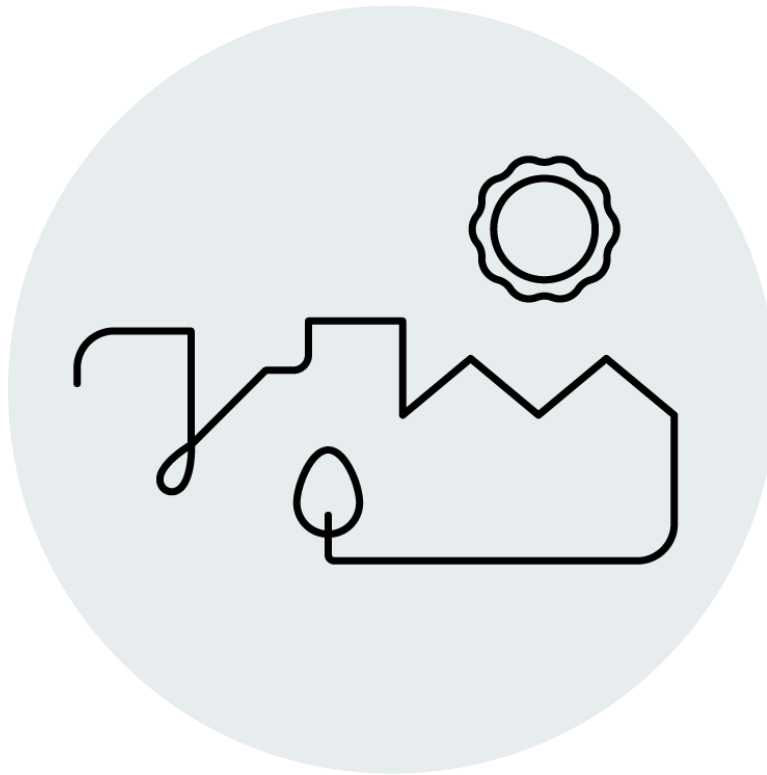
- Providing information that is accessible and useful for the public
- Enabling community stakeholders to engage in meaningful ways to shape monitoring, impact Plan implementation, and hold the City accountable when our actions or outcomes fall short of its goals
- Collaborating on an interdepartmental basis, leveraging the work that City departments are doing to monitor progress on functional plans and initiatives integral to implementing the One Seattle Plan
- Using monitoring to gauge progress, and to understand challenges that may require the City to intensify its efforts, consider different strategies, or amend the Comprehensive Plan

One important way the City will track progress is by working with the Affordable Housing Committee of the King County GMPC to monitor and report on our progress toward housing goals and policies consistent with new GMA requirements, including:

- Annual monitoring of housing trends and City implementation actions
- A 5-year implementation status report by 2029

The results of this and other similar accountability measures will shape future actions to implement this Plan to achieve our desired future for Seattle.





# Growth Strategy

## Introduction

Seattle is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years and beyond. Forecasts of future growth and the region's growth plans indicate that the city will reach one million people by the middle of this century. Growth represents both an opportunity and a challenge. Accommodating new people and jobs can add vibrancy to our city and address climate change by allowing more people to live a low carbon lifestyle. However, if we don't plan for and accommodate a growing population, housing costs will continue to rise, pushing many people out of Seattle, worsening our homelessness crisis, and making many neighborhoods accessible only to high-income households.

In 1994, Seattle adopted its first Comprehensive Plan under the state Growth Management Act (GMA) with a growth strategy that concentrated nearly all growth in designated areas called Urban Centers and Urban Villages. Minimal growth was planned for single-family-zoned areas, which account for most land across the city. For 30 years, this "Urban Village strategy" has been effective in

creating dense, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods served by high-quality transit in selected areas of the city. It has helped to shape major public and private investments, especially new and expanded transit service. The strategy also has helped the city accommodate an important share of the region's housing and employment as part of the region's collaborative approach to planning for growth. Between 2010 and 2020, 83% of new homes were built in Urban Centers or Villages.

Even with successes, however, the strategy has fallen short of meeting the needs of all Seattle residents for affordable and diverse housing choices, access to neighborhoods of opportunity, and community stability in the face of rising displacement pressures.

Many neighborhoods outside Urban Centers and Villages have few housing options beyond detached homes. As documented in detail in the Housing element and Housing Appendix, zoning that allows only low-density detached housing is rooted in a history of racial and class exclusion marked by policies and real estate practices such as redlining and racial covenants. With the prices of these homes rising dramatically, especially in the last 10 years, these neighborhoods are increasingly out of reach for most people, perpetuating patterns of racial and economic exclusion and contributing to market pressures that cause displacement and gentrification.

Meanwhile, many Seattle residents seek housing options and neighborhood choices that our growth strategy has not provided. Housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, small, stacked flats, cottage housing, courtyard apartments, and other low-scale residential types, all examples of what is frequently referred to as “middle housing,” have not been allowed in most areas. Middle housing can provide comparatively affordable family-sized housing, options for homeownership, and opportunities to reside in neighborhoods with key amenities, such as parks and schools.

The updated growth strategy includes expanded middle housing options in all neighborhoods. These changes are consistent with new state requirements which will expand housing choices in cities across the region and state.

This Plan also embraces a vision for “complete communities” where a rich mix of housing options are available within a short walk or bike trip to the goods, services, and amenities that residents need every day. Making this vision a reality in more neighborhoods will address the needs and desires expressed by community members across the city while also supporting the City's climate goals.

Urban Centers and Villages will continue to play an important role in a proposed new growth strategy for the next 20 years. At the same time, the One Seattle Plan adds new opportunities and locations for housing and job growth to create more complete, connected, and inclusive communities. Key goals for this growth strategy are to:

- Accommodate new housing and jobs over the next 20 years and beyond
- Increase the supply, diversity, and affordability of housing to reduce upward pressure on prices and expand choices for diverse households
- Redress harms from neighborhood exclusion and housing discrimination, meet the housing needs of BIPOC households, and support wealth building opportunities

- Prevent the displacement of residents due to direct impacts and market forces
- Create and support communities where more people can access transit, shops, and services by walking, biking, and rolling
- Encourage a diverse mix of businesses and jobs in neighborhoods across the city and help existing businesses remain in place

Advancing this vision are goals, policies, and implementation actions outlined in multiple elements. This Growth Strategy element describes where and how the City should accommodate expected housing and job growth to achieve a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient development and investment pattern than in the past. This element includes a description of the types of uses and buildings that are appropriate in different parts of Seattle. Other elements of this Plan describe tools the City will use to achieve the growth strategy as well as other investments and strategies necessary to meet our overall goals. For example, the Land Use element describes how zoning and development regulations will control the location and size of new buildings in ways that help carry out the growth strategy. The Housing element includes policies that will guide the types and characteristics of housing the City will aim for and the tools the City will use to make it possible for people of all backgrounds and households at all income levels to find housing that meets their needs. The Transportation element includes a policy framework for investments in multiple modes of travel that serve all areas of the city where growth will occur.

## Planning for Growth

### DISCUSSION

This section includes the goals and policies that apply to the growth strategy as a whole and inform the more detailed approaches discussed in later sections.

The goals and policies in this section respond to the needs of the City as well as the need to plan for and accommodate population, housing, and jobs as set forth in requirements in the state Growth Management Act (GMA). Our growth strategy implements the Regional Growth Strategy in VISION 2050 adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council as a long-range growth management plan for the four-county central Puget Sound region. The strategy also meets the City's obligation to accommodate a substantial share of the growth in King County as prescribed in the targets for housing and employment growth adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). Estimated GMPC growth targets for the 2024-2044 period are for the city to accommodate at least 80,000 housing units and 159,000 jobs.

### GOAL

GS G1      Seattle becomes a more equitable, vibrant, connected, and livable city with housing for a diverse and growing population; space for working, learning, and finding joy; and complete communities where people of all ages and abilities can walk, bike, and roll to meet their everyday needs.

## **POLICIES**

- GS 1.1 Plan for expected growth over the next 20 years to accommodate minimum targets in the Countywide Planning Policies while also providing additional housing capacity to enable the City to respond to existing unmet needs and potential demand from future population and employment growth.
- GS 1.2 Encourage and plan for a variety of housing types in all neighborhoods to provide opportunities for a diverse population to live throughout the city and to allow people to stay in their neighborhoods as their needs change.
- GS 1.3 Accommodate and plan for non-residential uses in neighborhoods across the city, including opportunities for major employers in areas with access to high-capacity transit and opportunities for local-serving businesses and services throughout Seattle.
- GS 1.4 Focus higher-density housing and commercial space in areas near transit, parks, shops, services, walking and biking infrastructure, and other amenities.
- GS 1.5 Limit rezones that would result in negative impacts to environmentally critical areas.
- GS 1.6 Avoid incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports.
- GS 1.7 Focus higher-density office and employment uses in areas with access to regional transit.
- GS 1.8 Focus industrial growth in designated Manufacturing and Industrial Centers while also allowing space in other areas throughout Seattle for light industrial businesses that support other businesses and residents.
- GS 1.9 Coordinate planning for transportation, utilities, parks and recreation, libraries, and other public services to meet the anticipated growth and increased density throughout Seattle.
- GS 1.10 Focus public investments to meet current and future needs, which includes supporting areas experiencing or planned for residential and employment growth, particularly in designated centers, and addressing current inequities and areas of historical under-investment.

## **Growth Strategy Overview**

### **DISCUSSION**

All areas in the city have a role in accommodating future housing growth, employment growth, or both. This section outlines the roles that different areas of Seattle should play and the type of residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings that are appropriate in each.

Specifically, this section describes different “place types” and maps where they might be designated on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

The FLUM is a requirement of the Growth Management Act and is intended to show the desired scale and use of buildings for different parts of Seattle. This map provides guidance that is used in developing and updating more detailed zoning maps and development standards which regulate the size, use, and design for new development. As such, the FLUM and policies in the Growth Strategy element complement and are integral to goals and policies in the Land Use element.

Figures 1 and 2 below show the FLUM and briefly describe the place types that comprise the Seattle growth strategy. As the City’s needs and priorities shift, the FLUM may be formally amended.

## **GOAL**

GS G2                Seattle’s development pattern, as shaped by the Future Land Use Map, results in a range of vibrant places that all play a role in accommodating housing and jobs.

## **POLICIES**

GS 2.1              Use the Future Land Use Map to guide land use regulation.

GS 2.2              Require FLUM amendments only when needed to achieve a significant change to the intended function of a large area.



**Figure 1**  
**Description of Place Types that appear on the FLUM**




<b>PLACE TYPES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Regional Center	Places with an important regional role with substantial housing, office, retail, institutional, and/or entertainment uses and access to regional transit. Designated as Regional Growth Centers by the Puget Sound Regional Council.
Urban Center	Places with an important citywide role with a wide range of housing, jobs, shops, and services and access to regional or local transit. Designated as Countywide Centers by the King County Growth Management Planning Council.
Neighborhood Center	Places with an important local role with a variety of housing located around a commercial core and/or access to frequent transit that provides an opportunity for people to access everyday needs within a short walk or bike ride from their homes.
Urban Neighborhood	Places outside centers that are characterized by primarily residential development with limited non-residential uses.
Manufacturing and Industrial Center	Areas of concentrated industrial activity with limited retail, office, and residential uses, that primarily serve industrial businesses and workers. Designated as regional Manufacturing and Industrial Centers by the Puget Sound Regional Council.
<b>OTHER AREAS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Major Institutions	Hospitals, colleges, and universities of regional importance with limited housing and other uses.
Industrial	Areas of industrial zoning outside Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.
Parks & Open Space	City-owned parks and natural areas.
Cemeteries	Cemeteries.

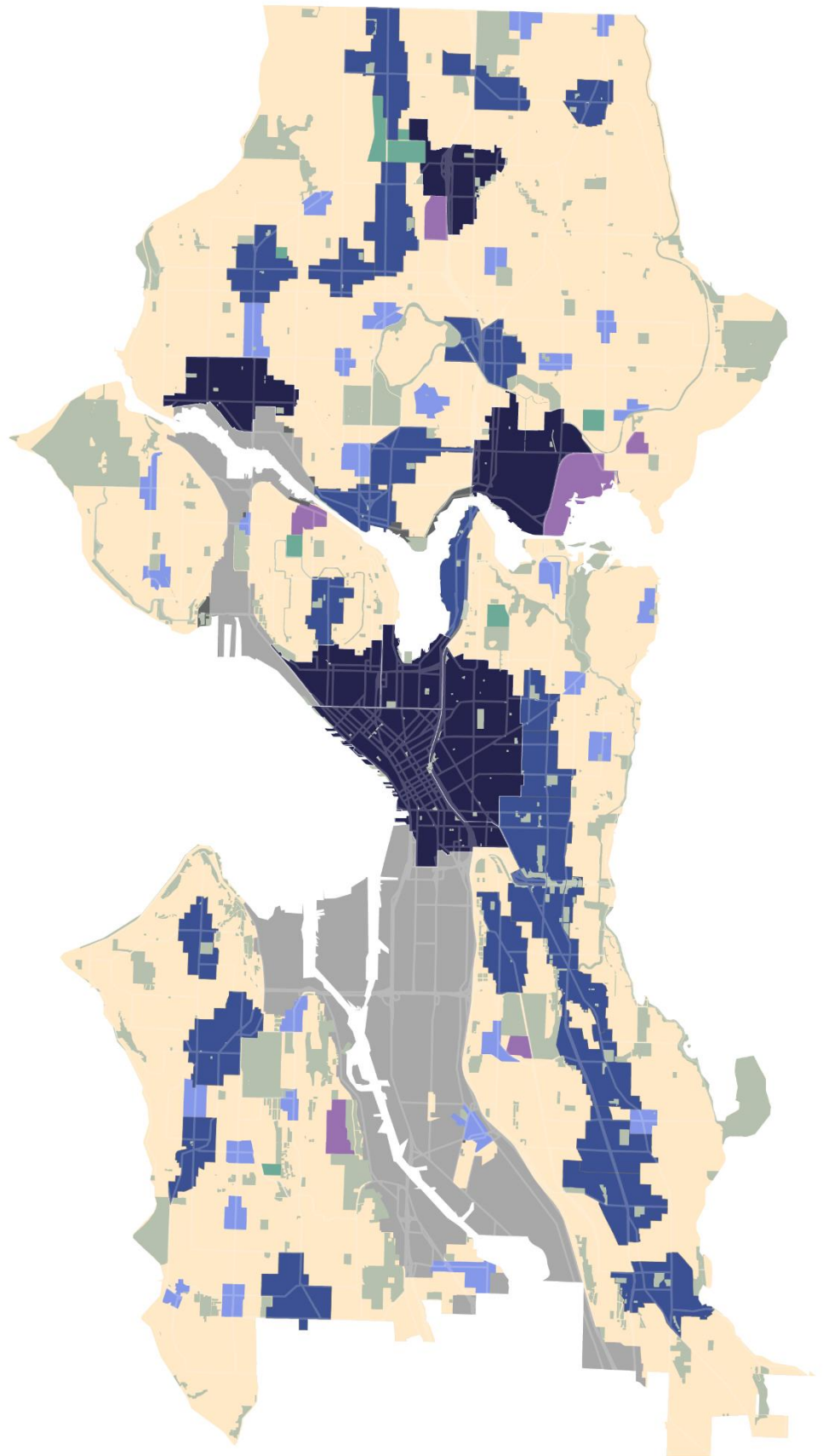
**Figure 2**  
**Future Land Use Map**

**Place types**

-  Regional Center
-  Urban Center
-  Neighborhood Center
-  Manufacturing & Industrial Center
-  Urban Neighborhood

**Other areas**

-  Industrial outside Manufacturing & Industrial Centers
-  Major Institution
-  Parks and open space
-  Cemetery



# Regional Centers

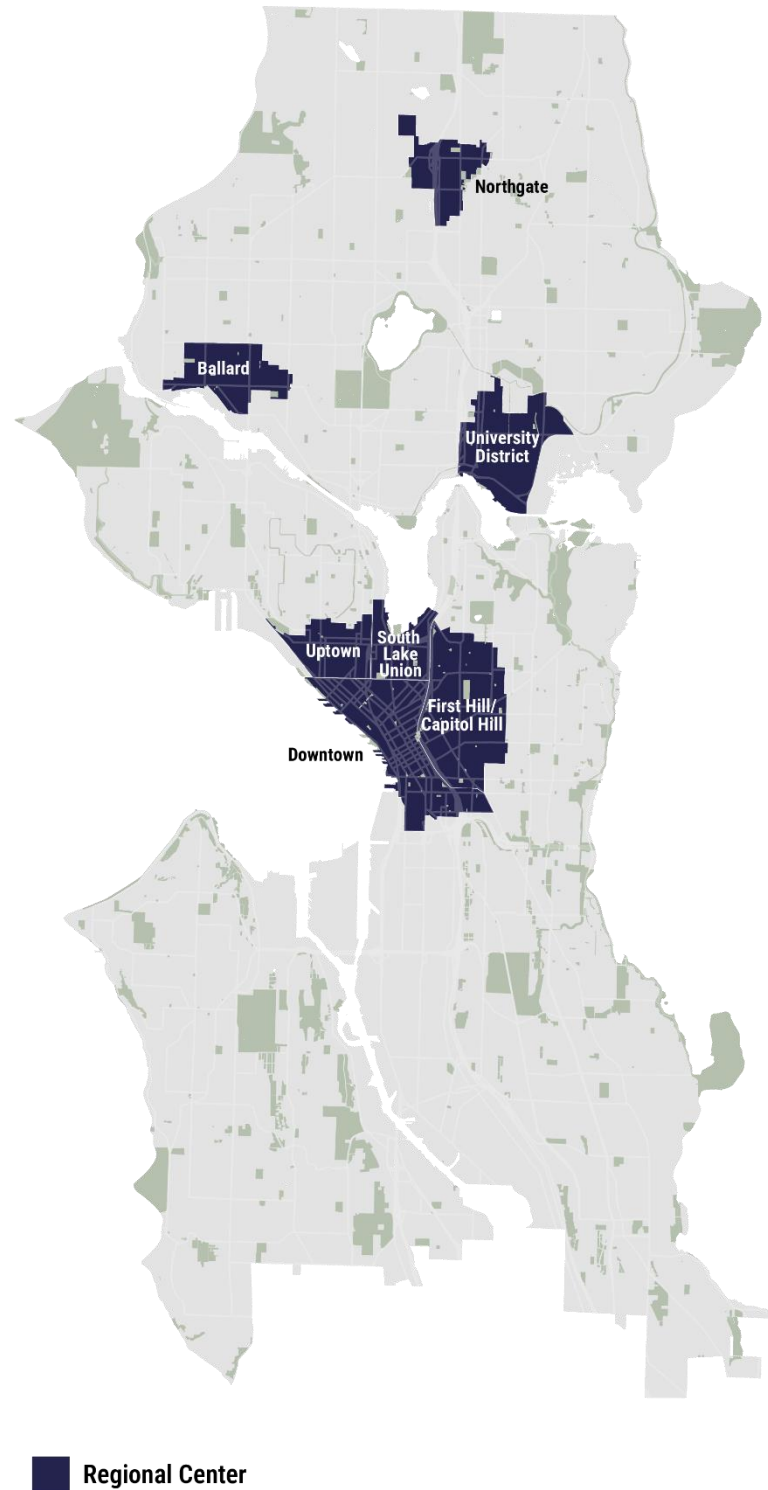
Regional Centers (previously referred to as Urban Centers in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan) are the densest Seattle neighborhoods. They are places of regional importance with substantial housing, office, retail, institutional, and/or cultural and entertainment uses along with access to regional transit. Regional Centers include Downtown, South Lake Union, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Uptown, the University District, Northgate, and Ballard. These places contain some of the region's largest centers for business, commerce, and tourism and are hubs in the regional transportation network, especially high-capacity transit. To support this role and allow our region to grow, Regional Centers are planned to accommodate a substantial share of the city's growth.

Regional Centers are planned to align with Regional Growth Centers designations by the Puget Sound Regional Council and the King County Growth Management Planning Council. As such, they meet regional criteria for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics. Subarea plans for each Regional Center are developed and updated over time and adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

**Figure 3**  
**Regional Center Map (right)**

## POLICIES

- GS 3.1 Designate as Regional Centers places of regional importance due to the presence of substantial housing, office, retail, and/or entertainment uses at higher densities and access to regional transit.
- GS 3.2 Recognize and plan for the unique role and character of different neighborhoods within large regional centers, particularly Downtown.
- GS 3.3 Allow a wide range of higher-density housing types in Regional Centers. High-rise tower construction may be appropriate in Regional Centers.
- GS 3.4 Allow a wide range of non-residential uses in Regional Centers including office, retail, institutional, and entertainment uses. Regional Centers should contain most of Seattle's office development.
- GS 3.5 Seek to ensure that Regional Centers meet Puget Sound Regional Council and Countywide Planning Policy requirements for Regional Growth Centers.
- GS 3.6 Adopt subarea plans for each Regional Center that are consistent with Puget Sound Regional Council requirements and responsive to the unique challenges, opportunities, and community needs within each center.
- GS 3.7 Plan to accommodate growth over twenty years in each Regional Center that includes at least the numbers of new housing units and new jobs shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4**  
**Estimated Regional Center Growth 2024–2044**

<i>Regional Centers</i>	<i>New Housing Units</i>	<i>New Jobs</i>
Downtown	13,500	60,000
First Hill/Capitol Hill	9,000	3,000
University District	4,000	3,500
Northgate	2,000	2,500
South Lake Union	4,500	25,500
Uptown	3,500	2,500
Ballard	5,000	4,000

# Urban Centers

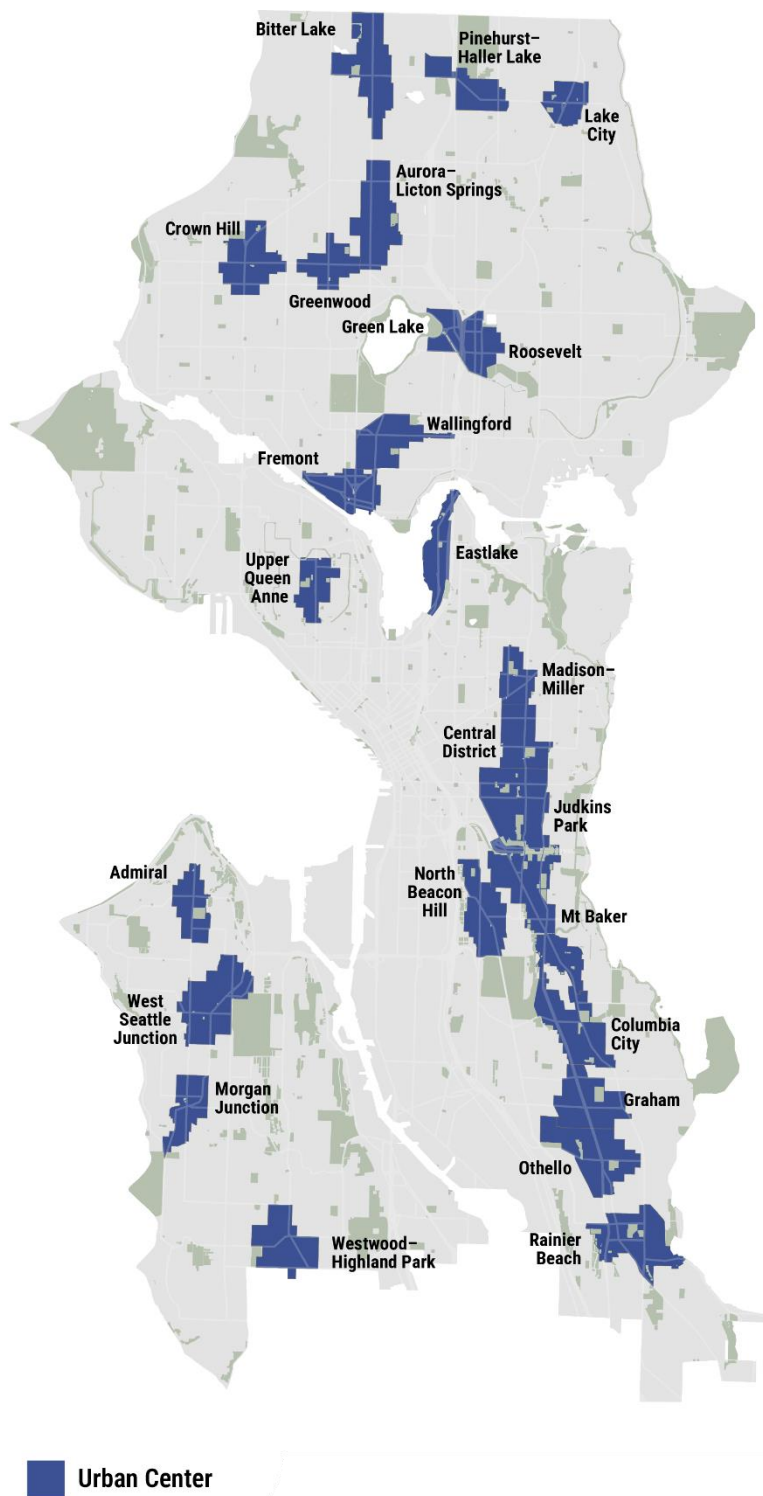
Urban Centers (previously referred to as Urban Villages in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan) are walkable mixed-use areas that play an important role serving surrounding neighborhoods or even the entire city. Urban Centers include a wide range of housing, jobs, shops and services, and access to regional or local transit. These areas are destinations for residents in different districts of Seattle due to the high concentration of shops, restaurants, and businesses. Urban Centers are generally served with high-quality transit and biking and walking infrastructure. Over time, these areas have added a significant share of the city's new housing supply, primarily mid-rise multifamily housing, and are expected to continue in this role into the future.

Urban Centers are planned to align with the Countywide Centers designation by the King County Growth Management Planning Council. As such, they meet criteria in the Countywide Planning Policies for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics.

**Figure 5**  
**Urban Center Map (right)**

## POLICIES

- GS 4.1      Designate as Urban Centers those areas that play an important citywide role with a wide range of housing, jobs, shops and services, and access to regional or local transit. Areas with light rail stations outside Regional Centers should generally be designated as Urban Centers unless major topographic constraints or industrial zoning would limit growth in these areas.
- GS 4.2      Seek to ensure that Urban Centers meet King County's criteria for Countywide Centers.



- GS 4.3 Allow a wide range of housing types in Urban Centers. Urban Centers should generally allow buildings of 3 to 8 stories. Buildings greater than 8 stories may be appropriate in Urban Centers near significant transit investments, especially light rail stations, or near existing concentrations of amenities and services.
- GS 4.4 Allow a wide range of non-residential uses including office, retail, institutional, and entertainment uses in Urban Centers. Major office developments are appropriate in Urban Centers but should be encouraged primarily near light rail stations.
- GS 4.5 Allow various sizes of Urban Centers based on local conditions, but generally include those areas within a 10-minute walk (half-mile) of a current or future light rail station or 8-minute walk (2,000 feet) of the central intersection if no light rail exists.

**Figure 6**  
**List of Urban Centers**

Admiral	Graham	Othello
Aurora–Licton Springs	Green Lake	Pinehurst–Haller Lake
Bitter Lake	Greenwood	Rainier Beach
Central District	Judkins Park	Roosevelt
Columbia City	Lake City	Upper Queen Anne
Crown Hill	Madison–Miller	Wallingford
Eastlake	Morgan Junction	West Seattle Junction
Fremont	North Beacon Hill	Westwood–Highland Park
	North Rainier	



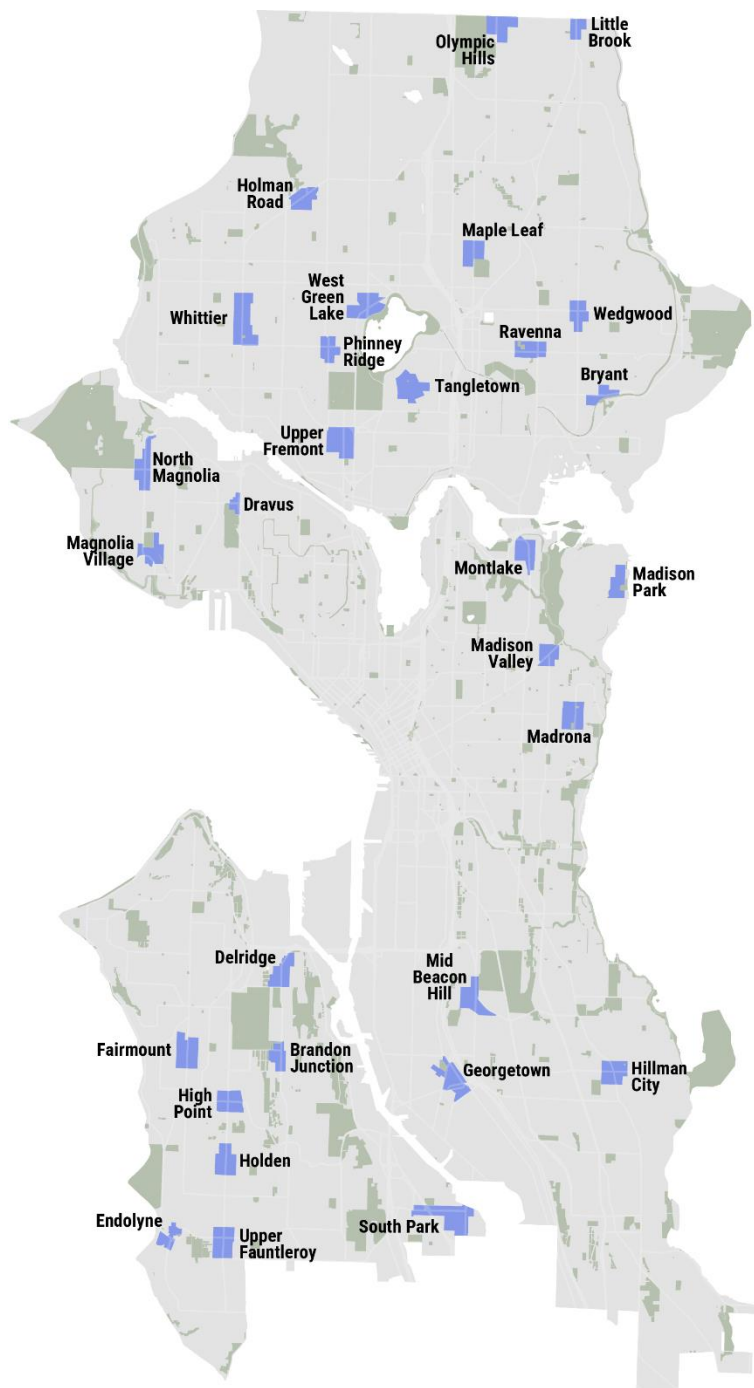
# Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers are places with a diversity of housing options located around a locally focused commercial core and/or access to frequent transit. Neighborhood Centers generally represent the core of a neighborhood providing shops, services, grocery stores, restaurants, and other businesses that residents need to access on a regular basis. These areas provide an opportunity for people to access everyday needs within a short walk or bike ride from their homes. Allowing more housing in these areas can increase opportunities to live in complete connected neighborhoods, strengthen local business districts, and help people reduce reliance on cars.

**Figure 7**  
**Neighborhood Center Map (right)**

## POLICIES

- GS 5.1 Designate as Neighborhood Centers areas with a locally focused commercial core and/or access to frequent transit where diverse housing options could allow more people to live within walking distance of shops, services, transit, and amenities.
- GS 5.2 Allow a diversity of housing, institutional, service, retail, and entertainment uses in Neighborhood Centers. Focus non-residential uses primarily in the core of the center. Generally, avoid allowing major office developments in these areas.
- GS 5.3 Zoning in Neighborhood Centers should generally allow buildings of 3 to 6 stories, especially 5- and 6-story residential buildings to encourage the development of apartments and condominiums.



GS 5.4 Determine the boundaries of Neighborhood Centers based on local conditions, but generally include areas within a 3-minute walk (800 feet) of the central intersection or bus rapid transit stop.

**Figure 8**  
**List of Neighborhood Centers**

Brandon Junction	Holman Road	Olympic Hills
Bryant	Little Brook	Phinney Ridge
Delridge	Madison Park	Ravenna
Dravus	Madison Valley	South Park
Endolyne	Madrona	Tangletown
Fairmount	Magnolia Village	Upper Fauntleroy
Georgetown	Maple Leaf	Upper Fremont
High Point	Mid Beacon Hill	Wedgwood
Hillman City	Montlake	West Green Lake
Holden	North Magnolia	Whittier

# Urban Neighborhoods

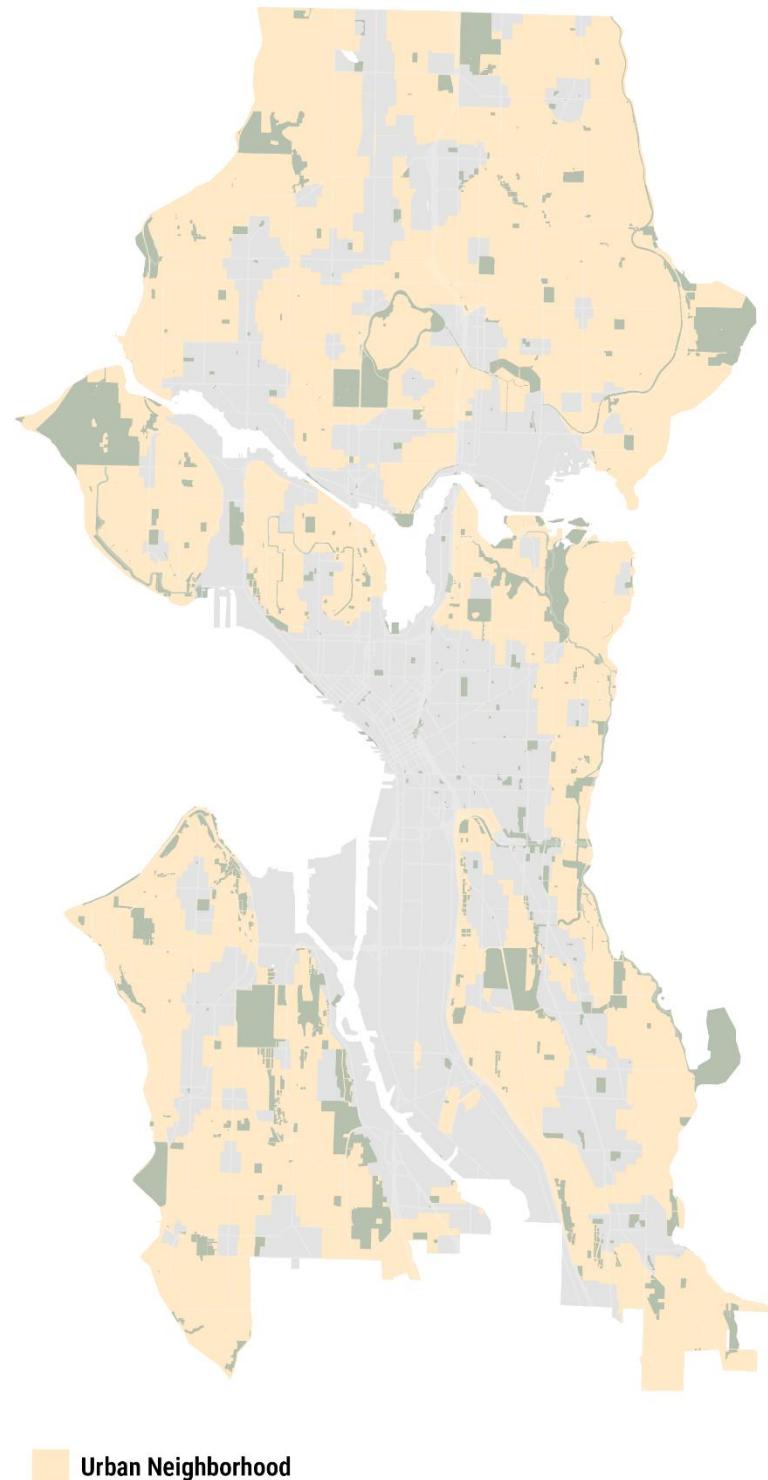
Urban Neighborhoods are places outside centers that are primarily comprised of residential development. While lacking the larger business districts located in centers, Urban Neighborhoods may provide opportunities for mixed-use and commercial development along major arterial streets with access to frequent transit. They may also include at-home businesses, corner stores, and other non-residential uses located throughout to support small business and institutions and provide opportunities for ready access to everyday needs.

Over the next 20 years and beyond, Urban Neighborhoods represent an opportunity to add more diverse housing options in all neighborhoods. By providing new options to add middle housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage housing, across the city and apartments near transit, Urban Neighborhoods will contribute to making Seattle a more affordable and racially inclusive city.

**Figure 9**  
**Urban Neighborhood Map**

## POLICIES

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| GS 6.1 | Designate as Urban Neighborhood those areas outside centers that are appropriate for primarily residential development with limited non-residential uses.   |
| GS 6.2 | Allow a mix of lower-scale housing types, generally up to 3 stories, such as detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, stacked flats, and cottage housing throughout Urban Neighborhoods. |
| GS 6.3 | Allow moderate-scale housing of 4 to 6 stories in areas currently zoned for such housing and along arterials where zoned densities may be increased to provide more housing options near frequent transit.  |



- GS 6.4 Allow a range of commercial and mixed-use development on major streets and smaller-scale non-residential uses such as small institutions, corner stores, and at-home businesses throughout Urban Neighborhood areas.

## Manufacturing and Industrial Centers

Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs) are areas of concentrated industrial activity with limited retail, office, and residential uses that primarily serve industrial business and workers. Seattle has two MICs: Greater Duwamish MIC and Ballard–Interbay–Northend MIC. Both MICs are places of regional importance due to the presence of industrial businesses in a range of sizes and major transportation facilities such as the container port, marinas, and rail infrastructure.

MICs are regionally designated by the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Growth Management Planning Council. This means they meet regional criteria for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics. Subarea plans for each MIC are developed and updated over time and adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

**Figure 10**  
**Manufacturing and Industrial Center Map**

### POLICIES

- GS 7.1 Designate as Manufacturing and Industrial Centers areas that meet criteria for designation as MICs adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Growth Management Planning Council and have the following characteristics:
- Relatively flat terrain that allows for efficient industrial processes



■ Manufacturing & Industrial Center

- Reasonable access to the regional highway, rail, air, and/or waterway systems for transportation of goods
  - Presence of significant manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses
  - Transitions between industrial and non-industrial areas that allow for a range of industrial activities at a scale compatible with non-industrial areas
  - Sufficient development capacity to accommodate a minimum of ten thousand jobs
- GS 7.2 Establish boundaries for MICs that generally include continuous areas of primarily industrial use and consider natural barriers like highways and waterways and transitions to neighboring uses.
- GS 7.3 Prioritize land that is proximate to irreplaceable industrial infrastructure such as deep-water ports, rail, and regional highways for continued industrial use.
- GS 7.4 Allow a wide variety of manufacturing and industrial uses in MICs to support the retention and expansion of existing industrial businesses and provide opportunities for the creation of new businesses consistent with the character of industrial areas.
- GS 7.5 Maintain manufacturing and industrial activity as the primary use in MICs.
- GS 7.6 Allow limited commercial uses that are compatible with the primarily industrial nature of MICs.
- GS 7.7 Plan to accommodate growth over twenty years in each MIC that attains at least the numbers of new jobs shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11**  
**Estimated Manufacturing and Industrial Center Growth 2024–2044**

MIC	Estimated New Jobs
Greater Duwamish	12,500 jobs
Ballard–Interbay–Northend	6,000 jobs

# Major Institutions

The Major Institution place type includes the campuses of regionally important hospitals, colleges, and universities that may also include limited housing and other uses. The geography of this place type is limited to areas outside centers where institutions have worked with the City to develop Major Institution Master Plans. These plans allow for the creation of area-specific regulations that balance the importance of accommodating major institutions with managing impacts on adjacent areas.

## POLICIES

- GS 8.1      Designate as Major Institutions the campuses of regionally important hospitals, colleges, and universities that develop Major Institution Master Plans.
- GS 8.2      Allow Major Institution Master Plans to guide development in these areas, rather than the underlying zoning.
- GS 8.3      Allow housing and limited commercial uses within the Major Institution place type, whether or not they are directly related to the Major Institution, to address the needs of workers and students as well as other people who want to work, learn, or live in the area.
- GS 8.4      Prioritize growth within existing Major Institutions boundaries over the expansion of established boundaries.

# Parks and Open Space

The Parks and Open Space place type includes City-owned developed parks and natural areas. This place type is different than other place types as it is primarily intended to describe existing conditions rather than desired future land use change outcomes.

## POLICIES

- GS 9.1      Designate as Parks and Open Space those City-owned areas currently being used as parks or open space.
- GS 9.2      Maintain park and open space uses as the primary use in the Parks and Open Space place type.
- GS 9.3      Allow housing in the Parks and Open Space place type only where it currently exists or is located within a development containing a park and open space use such as a community center or pool.
- GS 9.4      Allow limited commercial and institutional uses in the Parks and Open Space place type within existing buildings or where it could activate park and open space uses.

# Area Planning

## DISCUSSION

The Comprehensive Plan provides broad *citywide* direction for the future of Seattle as the city grows over the next several decades. To fulfill the vision of this Plan and implement the growth strategy, the City also undertakes more focused planning in our Regional Centers, Urban Centers, transit station areas, and other neighborhoods. Area plans are intended to provide more detailed and actionable direction on the full range of policy areas reflected in this Plan, such as land use, housing, transportation, public spaces, climate resilience, and more. A plan for a specific area within the city reflects its unique characteristics and needs while recognizing the role that each place will play in the overall growth strategy.

The City advances area planning through focused initiatives such as subarea planning for Regional Centers, including Downtown, Uptown, South Lake Union, First Hill/Capitol Hill, University District, Ballard, and Northgate, which are home to a significant share of Seattle’s residents and workers and locations that are intended to accommodate a significant share of Seattle’s future growth. Another key focus area is station area planning for equitable transit-oriented development, particularly around new Sound Transit stations.

Area planning reflects a commitment to equitable growth and development across the city. By centering a diversity of community voices in the area planning process, we can accommodate the needs of all stakeholders in a growing, diverse population.

## GOAL

GS G10            Regional Centers, Manufacturing and Industrial Centers, station areas, and other priority areas in the city will have updated area plans guiding City and community actions to create and sustain equitable and resilient communities.

## POLICIES

- GS 10.1            Develop and adopt subarea plans for Regional Centers and Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.
- GS 10.2            Develop station area plans for high-capacity transit station areas and surrounding communities.
- GS 10.3            Identify locations and prioritize resources for area planning with consideration of designated Regional and Urban Centers, areas with high risk of displacement and/or low access to opportunity, areas experiencing major investments in transit or other capital facilities, and areas impacted by significant climate or other environmental factors.
- GS 10.4            Apply an inclusive process in all area planning efforts that prioritizes equity-driven community engagement and centers the voices of marginalized and communities.
- GS 10.5            Adopt processes that increase transparency and accountability in the development and implementation of area plans.



- GS 10.6      Develop area plans that reflect the unique characteristics and local vision in each community to become more equitable, vibrant, and resilient in the future.
- GS 10.7      Develop and implement strategies, identified in partnership with affected communities, to achieve equitable transit-oriented development in areas at risk of displacement that have existing or planned high-capacity transit facilities.
- GS 10.8      Ensure area plans are consistent with and implement the vision in the Comprehensive Plan and are coordinated with and reflect other City plans and strategies.

## Annexation

### DISCUSSION

Several areas of unincorporated King County lie immediately south of the Seattle city limits. King County currently provides services to these areas. The state's Growth Management Act (GMA) anticipates that all areas within the county's urban growth boundary will eventually be annexed or incorporated and become part of a city. Generally, cities are considered better able to raise the revenue needed to meet local community needs and better positioned to plan for and invest in local communities. The annexation process, which is a collaboration of city, county, and community stakeholders, is informed by local input and analysis of service needs, costs, and resources.

The Countywide Planning Policies have designated three Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) that Seattle has indicated an intention to annex into the city sometime in the future. Figure 12 shows the locations Seattle has identified as PAAs, the largest of which is the North Highline PAA.

### GOAL

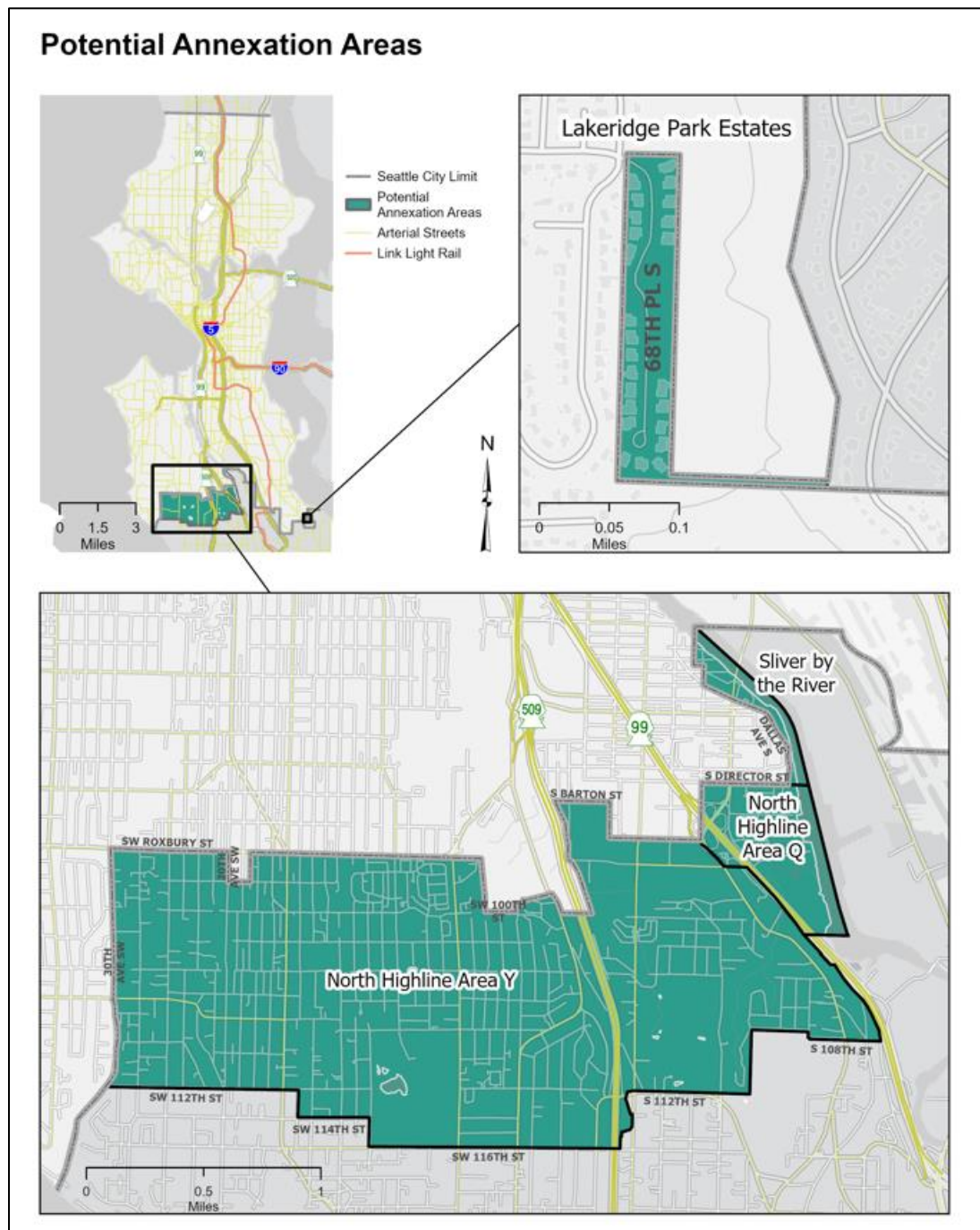
- GS G11      Seattle has established a process for annexation of all Potential Annexation Areas through a negotiated process that meets the needs of the City and affected residents.

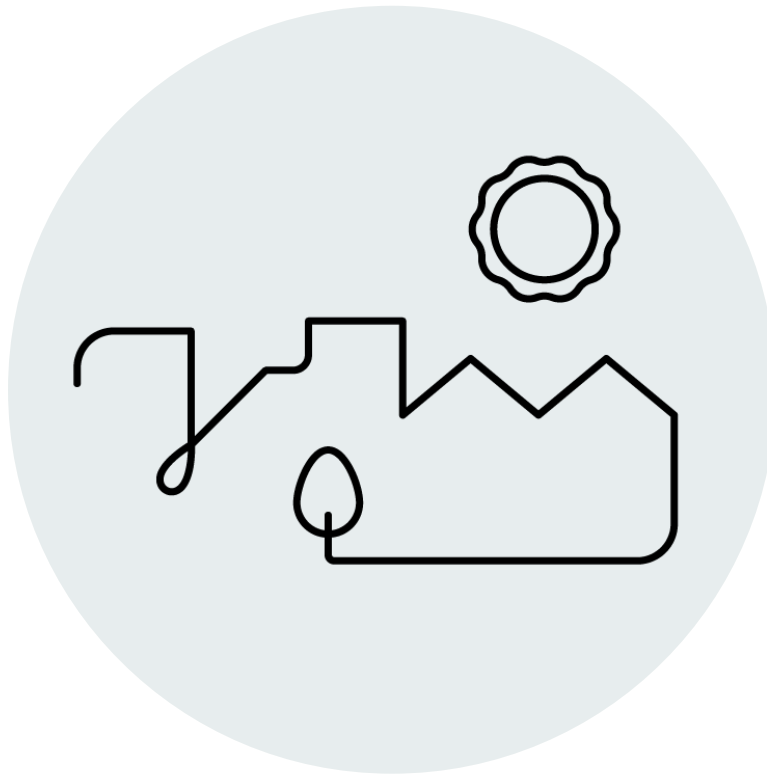
### POLICIES

- GS 11.1      Identify unincorporated areas for potential annexation that have access, or can easily be connected, to City services.
- GS 11.2      Cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions, as needed, in order to reach equitable and balanced resolutions about jurisdictional boundaries for the remaining unincorporated areas abutting city limits and ensure any boundary-change agreements will result in an equitable distribution of revenues and costs, including asset transfer and the development, maintenance, and operation of facilities.
- GS 11.3      Use tools and strategies to meet community needs in PAAs, such as transferring permitting authority, service and infrastructure financing, and identifying appropriate funding sources.

- GS 11.4 Work with King County to establish pre-annexation agreements that identify mutual interests and ensure coordinated planning and compatible development until annexation is feasible.
- GS 11.5 Collaborate with King County to develop a process for future annexation of Seattle's PAAs that can be achieved within the current 20-year planning period, including a timeframe for annexation of roadways and shared streets within or between cities, but still under King County jurisdiction.
- GS 11.6 Consider annexation requests by the residents of unincorporated areas and engage communities within and adjacent to PAAs in the annexation planning process to ensure that the desires and needs of the community, particularly marginalized communities, are centered in the process.

**Figure 12**  
**Potential Annexation Areas**





# Land Use

## Introduction

The Land Use element provides guidance on how the City’s zoning and development regulations should shape new development. The goals and policies in this element are designed to meet a range of City objectives, including and especially the implementation of the growth strategy as described in the Growth Strategy element and depicted in the Future Land Use Map.

Zoning and development regulations shape the design and limit the size and allowed uses of new buildings in Seattle. These regulations are critical to shaping Seattle’s growth but can also have unintended consequences if they significantly increase the cost of new housing, make it difficult for new businesses to grow, or result in designs that conflict with our City goals. This element outlines our goals for these regulations and provides guidance to maximize their benefits while minimizing unintended impacts.

# Overarching Goals and Policies

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to establish the goals and policies that inform all the following sections.

## GOAL

- LU G1            Zoning and development standards encourage and shape growth and development to:
- Implement the vision contained in this Plan.
  - Create housing that works for households of all types and income levels.
  - Create spaces for the diverse needs of businesses and institutions.
  - Encourage high-quality, well-designed, and sustainable buildings.
  - Protect and enhance the natural environment.
  - Mitigate the impacts of new construction.

## POLICIES

- LU 1.1           Support a wide variety of housing options in all non-industrial neighborhoods, including lower-cost market-rate and income-restricted homes.
- LU 1.2           Support a wide variety of businesses and institutions in neighborhoods throughout Seattle, especially those that meet the everyday needs of residents.
- LU 1.3           Apply development standards such that new uses and buildings protect public health and safety and minimize impacts on adjacent homes and businesses.
- LU 1.4           Encourage development that contributes to vibrant, equitable, complete, and walkable neighborhoods.
- LU 1.5           Seek to balance the benefits of regulating land use and development with the impacts to property owners and the cost of housing and non-residential space.
- LU 1.6           Seek to reduce the potential health impacts of air pollution on residential populations and other sensitive uses near corridors with high volumes of vehicle traffic, the King County Airport, major rail yards, truck routes, and point sources of pollution.
- LU 1.7           Review future legislative rezones to determine if they pose a risk of increasing the displacement of residents, especially marginalized communities, and the businesses and institutions that serve them.

# Urban Design

## DISCUSSION

As Seattle changes over time, thoughtful urban design can help to enhance the aspects of its physical environment that make Seattle so appealing to residents and visitors alike. These include well-defined and diverse mixed-use neighborhoods; compact, walkable scale; proximity to nature; and attractive parks, streets, and public spaces. In a growing city, urban design can help seamlessly integrate the new with the old, producing positive results with design approaches that put people first and reflect Seattle's diverse neighborhoods, populations, and natural features.

The policies included in this section outline the City's objectives for the design of buildings, sites, and public space. The policies are separated into three specific areas of focus: Natural Environment, Built Environment, and Public Spaces. More detailed direction for individual projects can be found in the Land Use Code's regulations and in the City's design guidelines.

The policies in this element are not intended to be used for reviewing individual projects. Rather, they can help inform the changes to zoning regulations and design review processes which more directly shape projects.

## GOAL

LU G2            Seattle's unique character and sense of place, including its natural setting, history, design quality, and community identity, is maintained and enhanced as the city grows and changes.

## POLICIES

### *Natural Environment*

- LU 2.1            Encourage the protection, restoration, and celebration of Seattle's natural features and landforms such as bluffs, beaches, streams, and forests.
- LU 2.2            Design public facilities to emphasize physical and visual connections to Seattle's natural surroundings with special attention to public vistas of shorelines, Mount Rainier, the Olympic Mountains, and the Cascade Range.
- LU 2.3            Encourage design that recognizes natural systems, integrates ecological functions such as stormwater filtration or retention, and reduces hazards to wildlife from the built environment.
- LU 2.4            Provide both physical and visual public access to streams, lakes, and Puget Sound.
- LU 2.5            Encourage landscaping and other urban design interventions for sites with a substantial number of impervious surfaces such as surface parking lots, rooftops, and freeway edges.

- LU 2.6 Promote, in consultation with Tribes, the use of native, edible, and culturally significant plants for landscaping to emphasize the region's natural identity and Indigenous culture and to foster environmental health.
- LU 2.7 Encourage the preservation and expansion of the tree canopy throughout the city for the aesthetic, health, and environmental benefits trees provide and focus public tree planting programs on residential and mixed-use areas with the least tree canopy in order to distribute the benefits equitably.
- LU 2.8 Recognize the role that waterways, forests, and other natural areas play in Indigenous practice, culture, and community and work with Indigenous communities and Tribes to improve access to and design of these spaces.

### ***Built Environment***

- LU 2.9 Encourage the preservation of characteristics and features that contribute to communities' multiple identities, including in areas of historic, architectural, cultural, or social significance.
- LU 2.10 Design public infrastructure and private development to contribute to the visual interest, walkability, cultural heritage, and accessibility of neighborhoods.
- LU 2.11 Design streets that reflect a particular street's function, right-of-way width, adjoining uses, and role within a citywide system.
- LU 2.12 Seek opportunities for new pedestrian and bike connections to knit together neighborhoods. Support efforts to use lids and other connections over highways that separate neighborhoods, especially when such lids provide opportunities to reconnect neighborhoods and provide amenities such as affordable housing, open spaces, or pedestrian and bike connections to transit stations.
- LU 2.13 Design neighborhoods to be walkable and accessible by enhancing pedestrian connections, public open spaces, walking and biking infrastructure, and wayfinding, and by encouraging buildings with retail and active uses that flank the sidewalk.
- LU 2.14 Consider the value of designing buildings and public spaces that maximize use of natural light and provide protection from inclement weather.
- LU 2.15 Encourage the use of land, rooftops, and other spaces for urban food production.
- LU 2.16 Consider promoting varied building forms to enhance attractive and walkable neighborhoods.
- LU 2.17 Consider taller building heights in key locations to define activity centers, such as near light rail stations in Regional and Urban Centers.



- LU 2.18 Consider the impacts of tall buildings on public views and on sunlight in public streets and parks when defining upper-level building standards such as lot coverage, tower spacing, or setbacks.

### ***Public Spaces***

- LU 2.19 Encourage street designs that prioritize pedestrians, provide public space, support business districts, and create space for community events.
- LU 2.20 Promote well-defined and accessible outdoor spaces that are designed for a range of potential users and that are well integrated with adjoining buildings and spaces.
- LU 2.21 Design public spaces that consider the nearby physical context and the needs of the community and specific user groups, particularly those communities that have been traditionally underrepresented in public space design.
- LU 2.22 Design public spaces so they feel safe and inviting to a wide variety of people.

## **Uses**

### **DISCUSSION**

The City regulates how land is used through zoning. Each zone has a specific set of rules defining what types of uses are allowed in that area. Regulations ensure we focus jobs, housing, and services in the places that match our vision, and allow us to address potential conflicts that can occur between different types of uses. As we strive to be a city where people can walk, bike, and roll to meet their everyday needs, use regulations can help to create neighborhoods with a variety of uses while minimizing the conflicts between them.

### **GOAL**

- LU G3 Use regulations are designed to:
- Allow a variety of housing types to accommodate housing choices for households of all types and income levels.
  - Support a wide range of employment-generating activities to provide jobs for a diverse population, as well as a variety of services for residents and businesses.
  - Accommodate the full range of public services, institutions, and amenities needed to support a racially and economically diverse, sustainable urban community.
  - Guide new development to locations consistent with the growth strategy.
  - Minimize conflicts between different uses.

### **POLICIES**

- LU 3.1 Allow or prohibit uses in each zone based on the zone's intended function and on the expected impacts of a use on other properties in the zone and the surrounding area. Generally, allow a broad mix of compatible uses in centers.

- LU 3.2 Include provisions to potentially allow as conditional uses those activities that may be beneficial to an area but that also require additional measures to avoid potential impacts on sensitive environments or on other permitted uses.
- LU 3.3 Allow residential use outright or as a conditional use in all zones except industrial zones and those shoreline areas where residential uses may conflict with the intended function of the shoreline environment.
- LU 3.4 Allow a wide range of shops and services in neighborhoods throughout Seattle to support a growing population and enable residents in all neighborhoods to walk, roll, or bike to their everyday needs.
- LU 3.5 Allow nonconforming uses to be maintained and enhanced, but generally not to be expanded, and encourage them to become more conforming over time.
- LU 3.6 Identify uses that support equitable development and take steps to remove regulatory barriers to and increase the feasibility of those uses in neighborhoods throughout Seattle.

## General Development Standards

### DISCUSSION

Development standards are the rules that define the size and design of buildings, structures, and other improvements. Standards often include limits on building height, setbacks from property lines, maximum lot coverage, and requirements for the external and internal design of the building. Development standards help shape the look and feel of Seattle's neighborhoods as they grow. They help ensure new buildings contribute to the overall neighborhood and advance city goals relating to public health and safety, utility service provision, open space, environmental stewardship, energy efficiency, and other topics.

### GOAL

- LU G4 Development standards effectively guide building design to serve each zone's function; produce the scale and building forms desired; protect public health, safety, and welfare; protect the environment; and address the need for new housing and commercial space.

### POLICIES

- LU 4.1 Allow for flexibility in development standards so existing structures can be maintained and improved and new development can respond to site-specific conditions.
- LU 4.2 Develop and apply development standards that provide predictability regarding the allowed intensity of development and expected development types for each zone.

- LU 4.3 Control the massing of structures to make them compatible with the area's planned scale, provide for open space on a site, and allow the building to receive adequate natural light.
- LU 4.4 Use maximum height limits to maintain the desired scale of development, address varied topographic conditions, and limit public view blockage. In certain Downtown zones and in industrial zones, heights for certain types of development may be unlimited.
- LU 4.5 Consider opportunities to create gradual transitions in allowed building height and scale within blocks, across alleys, and between areas of higher density and lower density when modifying maximum height limits.
- LU 4.6 Provide for residents' recreational needs on development sites by encouraging private or shared amenity areas such as rooftop decks, balconies, ground-level open spaces, or enclosed spaces.
- LU 4.7 Use setbacks in residential areas as needed to allow for adequate light, air, and ground-level open space and promote compatibility with the desired development pattern.
- LU 4.8 Use tree requirements to preserve and enhance the City's physical, aesthetic, and cultural character and to enhance the value of trees in addressing stormwater management, pollution reduction, and heat island mitigation.
- LU 4.9 Enhance the visual quality of an area through standards for screening and landscaping appropriate to each zone.
- LU 4.10 Establish standards for drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff to mitigate or cleanse discharges that could pollute our waters.
- LU 4.11 Regulate signage to encourage reasonable identification of businesses and to communicate information of community interest while limiting visual clutter, protecting the public interest, and enhancing the city's appearance and safety.
- LU 4.12 Establish maximum permitted noise levels that account for both the function of the noise producing area and the function of areas where the noise may be heard, in order to reduce the health hazards and nuisance factors associated with some uses.
- LU 4.13 Identify uses as major noise generators based on the noise associated with certain equipment operations or the nature of a particular activity and regulate these uses to reduce noise to acceptable levels.
- LU 4.14 Regulate activities that generate air emissions, such as dust, smoke, solvent fumes, or odors, to maintain and encourage successful commercial and industrial activities while protecting employees, clients, nearby residents, the general public, and the natural environment.

- LU 4.15      Protect public views through:
- Zoning that considers public views, with special emphasis on shoreline views
  - Development standards, such as setbacks that help to reduce impacts on public views
  - Environmental policies that protect specified public views, including views of mountains, major bodies of water, designated landmarks, and the Downtown skyline
- LU 4.16      Require higher-density development to offset its impacts through mechanisms such as incentives for landmark preservation, open space amenities, and below-market cost housing.
- LU 4.17      Implement policies and programs that result in the seismic retrofit of buildings to minimize damage, death, and displacement after an earthquake while also minimizing the impact of retrofits on the cost of housing.
- LU 4.18      Seek excellence in new development through a design review process that complements development regulations and allows for flexibility in the application of development standards to achieve quality design.

## Off-Street Parking

### DISCUSSION

Parking is found on both public and private property. Policies regarding on-street parking are covered in the Transportation element.

Off-street parking, which is shaped by land use regulations, can help to reduce the competition for on-street parking that occurs in certain areas due to the large number of trips made by car or truck. However, it can also encourage vehicle travel; negatively impact the design of buildings, on-site open spaces, and adjacent streets; and can significantly increase the cost of construction. Moreover, some people find it important to have their own off-street parking space while other people choose to live car-free and don't want to pay more for a building with parking.

Because of the potential positive and negative impacts of requiring off-street parking and the diverse needs of individual households, the City's approach to regulating parking varies in different areas and for different uses. For some areas and uses, the City requires a minimum amount of parking; while for other areas and uses, it limits the maximum amount of parking allowed.

Where parking is required, the amount of parking is generally set to avoid requiring parking that will be poorly utilized. Additionally, the City regulates the location of parking spaces and access to avoid impacts on the street and sidewalk.

### GOAL

- LU G5      Off-street parking regulations balance multiple goals including:

- Addressing parking demand.
- Reducing reliance on automobiles.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving public health and safety.
- Minimizing construction costs to reduce the cost of housing.
- Reducing impacts on the street and sidewalk.
- Creating attractive and walkable environments and public spaces.
- Promoting economic development throughout the city.

## **POLICIES**

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| LU 5.1 | Use minimum parking requirements where appropriate to balance the goals of allowing accessibility, reducing competition for on-street spaces, discouraging underused parking facilities, providing for electric vehicle charging, minimizing impacts to the cost of housing, and increasing the use of public transit, carpools, walking, and bicycles as alternatives to the use of single-occupant vehicles. |
| LU 5.2 | Set minimum parking requirements, where they are implemented, to discourage underused parking facilities, even if occasional spillover parking could result. Require fewer parking spaces per business when several businesses share customer parking, thereby enabling customers to park once and walk to numerous businesses.  |
| LU 5.3 | Avoid setting minimum parking requirements for housing in Regional and Urban centers and areas well-served by transit.   |
| LU 5.4 | Use maximum parking requirements where appropriate to discourage single-occupancy-vehicle travel where high levels of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility make many trips possible without a car.   |
| LU 5.5 | Allow shared off-site parking facilities for more efficient use of parking and to provide the flexibility to develop parking on a site separate from the development site.   |
| LU 5.6 | Limit the impacts of off-street parking on pedestrians and the surrounding areas by restricting the number and size of automobile curb cuts and by generally requiring alley access to parking when there is an accessible, surfaced alley.  |
| LU 5.7 | Prohibit most street-level parking between buildings and the street in residential zones and pedestrian-oriented commercial zones in order to maintain an attractive and safe street-level environment, facilitate the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, minimize adverse impacts on nearby areas and structures, and, where appropriate, maintain or create continuous street fronts.             |
| LU 5.8 | Locate off-street parking facilities to minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment, especially in areas designated for active pedestrian use.  |
| LU 5.9 | Prohibit principal-use parking in places where that parking would be incompatible with the area's intended function.   |

- LU 5.10 Discourage the development of major stand-alone park-and-ride facilities within Seattle. Additions to park-and-ride capacity could be considered:
- At the terminus of a major regional transit system.
  - Where opportunities exist for shared parking.
  - Where alternatives to automobile use are particularly inadequate or cannot be provided in a cost-effective manner.
- LU 5.11 Encourage bicycle parking in new residential construction to promote bicycle ownership and use.

## Public Facilities and Small Institutions

### DISCUSSION

Throughout Seattle, our communities are dotted with facilities that provide needed services to residents. These include schools, fire and police stations, and other buildings that serve special functions that require them to be different from other buildings in the same zone. For instance, fire stations may need extra room for trucks and schools need to be much larger than the homes around them. Similar issues sometimes arise with facilities and small institutions not operated by the public sector, such as churches, private schools, and nursing homes.

### GOAL

- LU G6 Public facilities and small institutions are designed and located so that they meet the goals of their mission and are generally compatible with the function and scale of the surrounding area, even if some deviation from certain regulations is necessary.

### POLICIES

- LU 6.1 Regulate public facilities and small institutions to promote compatibility with other development in the area.
- LU 6.2 Allow public facilities and small institutions to depart from development standards if necessary to meet their particular functional requirements, while maintaining general design compatibility with the surrounding area. Consider providing greater flexibility for schools in recognition of their important role in the community.
- LU 6.3 Allow standards to be modified for required off-street parking associated with public facilities and small institutions based on the expected use and characteristics of the facility and the likely impacts on surrounding parking and development conditions, and on existing and planned transportation facilities in the area.
- LU 6.4 Encourage land and buildings no longer used as schools to be put to other uses not otherwise permitted in the applicable zone.
- LU 6.5 Provide a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities, including facilities that are not already identified in state law. A public facility should be

considered essential if it provides or is necessary to provide a public service and is difficult to site. A public facility should be considered difficult to site if any of the following conditions exist:

- The public facility needs a specific type of site of such a size, location, or availability of public services, for which there are few choices.
- The public facility needs to be located near another public facility or is an expansion of an essential public facility at an existing location.
- The public facility has, or is generally perceived by the public to have, significant adverse impacts that make it difficult to site.
- Use of the normal development review process would effectively preclude the siting of an essential public facility.
- Development regulations require the proposed facility to use an essential public facility siting process.

- LU 6.6 Provide a process to allow the siting of essential public facilities in locations where they might not otherwise be allowed that considers the following:
- Interjurisdictional analysis
  - Financial analysis
  - Special purpose districts
  - Measures to facility siting
  - Analysis of alternatives to the facility
- LU 6.7 Provide a process to allow the waiver of regulations to allow the siting of an essential public facility.
- LU 6.8 The City may impose conditions or mitigation to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts as part of the permitting process as part of the siting of local, regional, state, or federal essential public facilities.
- LU 6.9 Work cooperatively with King County, the State, and/or other cities to site essential public facilities.

## Telecommunications Facilities

### DISCUSSION

Telecommunications facilities have become essential infrastructure to support access to key services and opportunities. Cell phone and mobile broadband service providers and broadcast radio and television stations require equipment that can transmit their signals. This equipment usually must be placed high enough that signals can effectively distribute to the service coverage area. Telecommunications facilities are primarily regulated by federal law. AM and FM radio and VHF and UHF television transmission towers are considered major communication utilities. Minor communication facilities are generally smaller and include such things as personal wireless service and cellular communication facilities.



## **GOAL**

- LU G7            The benefits of high capacity and reliable telecommunications services are available citywide. Radio and television broadcast utilities (major communications utilities) and cellular utilities (minor communications utilities) are designed and located to support continued and improved service to the public and to address potential impacts to visual aesthetics and public health.

## **POLICIES**

- LU 7.1           Allow major communications utilities only where impacts of their size and appearance can be offset, and in a way that does not lead to an overall increase in TV and radio towers.
- LU 7.2           Encourage replacing existing antennas with new antennas to achieve higher service capacity and lower levels of radio-frequency radiation at ground level.
- LU 7.3           Prohibit new major communication utilities, such as radio and television transmission towers, in residential zones and in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use zones and encourage existing major communication utilities to relocate to nonresidential areas.
- LU 7.4           Require major communication utilities to be developed in ways that limit impacts on nearby areas, including through development standards and design treatments that minimize visual impacts on neighboring properties and provide an overall appearance that is as compatible as possible with the uses permitted in the zone.
- LU 7.5           Limit the impact minor communication utilities could have on communities by encouraging collocation of facilities and by requiring mitigation of visual and noise impacts.

# **Downtown Zones**

## **DISCUSSION**

Downtown is the commercial and entertainment core of our region and contains some of the densest neighborhoods in Washington state. It also contains substantial diversity in the scale and character of existing development. Downtown zones recognize the unique circumstances of the various neighborhoods of this area.

## **GOAL**

- LU G8            Downtown zones promote Downtown Seattle's unique role in the region by encouraging a high density of development, a wide diversity of residential and non-residential uses, and a vital and attractive environment that is inviting to visitors.

## **POLICIES**

- LU 8.1            Use a range of land use zones that recognize the distinct areas of Downtown that are defined by their histories and by their land use functions.
- LU 8.2            Use a range of land use zones and height limits to support the existing and desired character of different areas within Downtown.
- LU 8.3            Implement development standards that support desired street-level and upper-story conditions.
- LU 8.4            In the core of Downtown, allow a broad range of uses and significant flexibility to switch uses in order to allow Downtown to adjust to changing conditions and to encourage a 24/7 environment.

## Seattle Mixed Zones

### **DISCUSSION**

Seattle Mixed is a zone designed to address the unique local conditions in high-density, mixed-use areas outside of Downtown. These include parts of South Lake Union, Dravus, North Rainier, University District, Uptown, Northgate, and an area next to the Rainier Beach light rail station.

### **GOAL**

- LU G9            Seattle Mixed zones support unique local conditions in high-density, mixed-use areas outside of Downtown.

### **POLICIES**

- LU 9.1            Use a range of Seattle Mixed zones and height limits to support the existing and desired character of different high-density, mixed-use areas outside of Downtown.
- LU 9.2            Implement development standards that support desired street-level and upper-story conditions.

## Multifamily Zones

### **DISCUSSION**

Multifamily zones allow primarily residential development ranging from townhouses to high-rise towers.

### **GOAL**

- LU G10           Multifamily zones create areas of primarily residential development at a variety of scales that:
- Include housing suitable for a broad array of households and income levels.

- Support neighborhoods where people can walk, bike, and roll to transit, shops, services, and amenities.

## **POLICIES**

- LU 10.1 Provide a range of multifamily zones that allow development at various heights, densities, and configurations and that are well suited to the variety of specific conditions and development goals in diverse areas of the city.
- LU 10.2 Establish multifamily residential use as the predominant use in multifamily areas but allow non-residential uses that help people access everyday needs within a short walk or bike from their home.
- LU 10.3 Allow a variety of attached and stacked housing types to accommodate a wide diversity of households in multifamily zones, including housing that meets the needs of residents with specific needs such as families with children, multi-generational households, and older adults.
- LU 10.4 Design multifamily zones to be appealing residential communities with high-quality housing and development standards that promote livability and a sense of community, including landscaping, street amenities, and, in appropriate locations, limited commercial uses that serve the neighborhood's residents.
- LU 10.5 Allow high-rise multifamily zoning designations only in Regional Centers and near high-capacity transit stations, where the mix of activities offers convenient access to regional transit, a range of services and amenities, and jobs.
- LU 10.6 Encourage child-friendly housing with unit sizes and layouts that work for larger households and public spaces and amenities that improve livability for families with children.

# Commercial Zones

## **DISCUSSION**

Commercial zones include both Commercial (C) and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones. These zones allow various commercial, institutional, and light industrial uses. Residential is allowed outright or as a conditional use depending on the zone. These zones tend to occur mostly in business districts or along busier streets.

## **GOAL**

- LU G11 Commercial zones create areas of commercial and mixed-use activity that:
- Provide a focus for the surrounding neighborhood.
  - Encourage new businesses and provide stability and expansion opportunities for existing businesses.
  - Accommodate residential development in livable environments.

## POLICIES

- LU 11.1 Provide a range of commercial zone classifications to allow different mixes and intensities of activity, varying scales of development, varying degrees of residential or commercial orientation, and varying degrees of pedestrian or auto orientation.
- LU 11.2 Apply limits on the size of specific uses in commercial zones when those limits would:
- Help ensure that the scale of uses is compatible with the function of the commercial area.
  - Discourage uses likely to attract significant vehicular traffic from locating in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas.
  - Promote compatible land use and transportation patterns.
  - Foster healthy commercial development.
  - Provide opportunities for small local businesses to locate, especially in culturally relevant business districts throughout the city.
- LU 11.3 Limit new drive-in businesses and accessory drive-in facilities by prohibiting them in certain areas and allowing them in other areas with development standards that address the potential for traffic impacts, pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, disruption of an area's business frontage, and the overall appearance of the commercial area.
- LU 11.4 Assign height limits to commercial zones independent of the commercial zone designations but consistent with the intended intensity of development in the zone. Allow different areas within a zone to be assigned different height limits based on the need to:
- Further the growth strategy.
  - Accommodate the desired functions and intensity of development.
  - Accommodate desired transitions with development in adjacent areas.
  - Allow more housing near transit, parks, shops, and services.
- LU 11.5 Use neighborhood commercial zones to achieve:
- A compatible blend of commercial and residential uses.
  - Strong, healthy business districts that reinforce a sense of place while providing essential goods, services, and livelihoods for Seattleites, especially residents who are within walking distance of these places.
  - Mixes of commercial activity that are compatible with development in adjacent areas.
  - Residential development that is both appealing to residents and compatible with the desired commercial function of the area.
  - An active, attractive, accessible, walkable pedestrian environment with continuous commercial street frontages.
- LU 11.6 Use general commercial zones to:

- Accommodate the broadest range of commercial activities, including retail uses of all sizes, small office buildings, warehouses, and light and general manufacturing facilities.
- Support auto-oriented commercial areas that serve a citywide or regional clientele where they can maintain compatible development conditions.

LU 11.7      Locate general commercial zones predominately in areas along arterials or that border industrial zones outside of regional, urban, and neighborhood centers.

## Neighborhood Residential Zones

### DISCUSSION

Neighborhood Residential zones generally allow lower-scale housing types, such as detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, and cottage housing. Housing types in these zones provide options for homeownership and larger units for families and other multi-person households.

### GOAL

LU G12      Neighborhood residential zones create areas of relatively low-scale, primarily residential development with housing options suitable for a diversity of household types and income levels.

### POLICIES

LU 12.1      Use neighborhood residential zones to encourage a range of housing types such as detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, and cottage housing.

LU 12.2      Encourage a range of housing types, sizes, and affordability levels in neighborhood residential areas, including smaller homes for individuals and homes appropriate for families with children.

LU 12.3      Allow limited nonresidential uses, such as small institutions, corner stores, and at-home businesses, in neighborhood residential areas to support small business development and enhance residents' access to everyday needs. Apply appropriate development standards for nonresidential uses in order to mitigate potential negative impacts.

LU 12.4      Use tools such as additional development capacity to promote creation of homes affordable to low-income households in neighborhood residential areas.

# Industrial Zones

## DISCUSSION

Seattle has a long history as the main shipping, manufacturing, and freight distribution center for the region. Those activities take place mostly in industrial zones located in the city's two Manufacturing and Industrial Centers. These industrial areas are large and generally flat. In these areas, City zoning allows industrial activity such as manufacturing, warehousing, and shipping of goods through waterways, railways, and highways. Industrial zones are an important source of living wage jobs and improve the diversity and resilience of the local and regional economy, making the local economic base more stable. Having industrial activity in the city makes Seattle less vulnerable to shifts in the economy. Due to the volume of truck traffic, the need some industrial businesses have for access to rail service, the large sites that many of those businesses need, and noise, odor, and other impacts generated by these businesses, it is important to provide separate areas for these activities.

## GOALS

- LU G13.1 Industrial zones provide sufficient land for industrial activity to thrive in Seattle and protect the preferred industrial function of these areas from activities that could disrupt or displace them.
- LU G13.2 In industrial zones, support employment-dense emerging industries that require greater flexibility in the range of on-site uses and activities.

## POLICIES

- LU 13.1 Designate industrial zones generally where:
- The primary functions are industrial activity and industrial-related commercial functions.
  - The basic infrastructure needed to support industrial uses already exists.
  - Areas are large enough to allow a full range of industrial activities to function successfully.
  - Sufficient separation or special conditions exist to reduce the possibility of conflicts with development in adjacent less intensive areas.
- LU 13.2 Preserve industrial land for industrial uses, especially where industrial land is near rail- or water-transportation facilities to allow marine- and rail-related industries that rely on that transportation infrastructure to continue to function in the city.
- LU 13.3 Ensure predictability and permanence for industrial activities in industrial areas by limiting changes in industrial land use designation. There should be no reclassification of industrial land to a non-industrial land use category except as part of a City-initiated comprehensive study and review of industrial land use policies or as part of a major update to the Comprehensive Plan.

- LU 13.4 Accommodate the expansion of current industrial businesses and promote opportunities for new industrial businesses and emerging industries within Seattle to strengthen the city's industrial economy.
- LU 13.5 Restrict to appropriate locations within industrial areas those activities that—by the nature of materials involved or processes employed—are potentially dangerous or very noxious.
- LU 13.6 Provide a range of industrial zones that address varying conditions and priorities in different industrial areas. Those priorities include maintaining industrial areas that have critical supporting infrastructure, leveraging investments in high-capacity transit service, providing transitions between industrial areas and less intensive areas, and promoting high-quality environments attractive to business expansion or to new industrial activities.
- LU 13.7 Use the following industrial land use designations:
- Maritime, manufacturing, and logistics: This designation supports the city's maritime, manufacturing, logistics and other industrial clusters. Areas that have significant industrial activity, accessibility to major industrial infrastructure investments, or locational needs (Port facilities, shipyards, freight rail, and shoreline access) may be considered for the maritime, manufacturing, and logistics designation.
  - Industry and innovation: This designation promotes emerging industries and leverage investments in high-capacity transit. These industrial transit-oriented districts may be characterized by emerging industries and high-density industrial employment that combine a greater mix of production, research and design, and office uses found in multi-story buildings. Areas in MICs that are generally within one quarter and one-half mile of high-capacity transit stations may be considered for the industry and innovation designation.
  - Urban industrial: This designation encourages a vibrant mix of uses and relatively affordable, small-scale industrial, makers and arts spaces. Areas located at transitions from industrial to commercial and residential areas traditionally zoned for buffer purposes may be considered for the urban industrial designation.
  - Industrial commercial: This designation is for industrial land located outside of Manufacturing and Industrial Centers and is intended to permit a range of activities such as light industrial uses, research and development uses, and offices.
- LU 13.8 Prohibit new residential development in industrial zones except for certain types of dwellings, such as caretaker units and, in urban industrial zones, dwellings for workers, that are related to the industrial area and that would not restrict or disrupt industrial activity.
- LU 13.9 Use the maritime, manufacturing, and logistics zones to promote a full range of industrial activities and related support uses.



- LU 13.10 Apply the maritime, manufacturing and industrial zone mostly within the designated Manufacturing and Industrial Centers, where impacts from industrial activity are less likely to affect residential or commercial uses. Outside of Manufacturing and Industrial Centers, the maritime, manufacturing, and logistics zone may be appropriate along waterways used for maritime uses.
- LU 13.11 Avoid placing industrial zones within regional, urban and neighborhood centers. However, in locations where a center borders a Manufacturing and Industrial Center, use the industrial commercial zone within the center where it abuts the Manufacturing and Industrial Center to provide an appropriate transition to help separate residential uses from heavier industrial activities.
- LU 13.12 Consider using the urban industrial zone in locations where a center or village borders a Manufacturing and Industrial Center and where it may provide an appropriate transition to help separate residential uses from heavier industrial activities.
- LU 13.13 Limit the density of development for nonindustrial uses in the Manufacturing and Industrial Centers to reduce competition from nonindustrial activities that are better suited to other locations in the city, particularly urban centers and urban villages, where this Plan encourages most new residential and commercial development. Permit a limited amount of stand-alone commercial uses in industrial areas as workforce amenities. Strictly limit the size of office and retail uses not associated with industrial uses in order to preserve these areas for industrial development.
- LU 13.14 Recognize the unique working character of industrial areas by allowing flexibility in application of landscaping and street standards for industrial activities in the maritime, manufacturing, and logistics zone.
- LU 13.15 Set parking and loading requirements in industrial zones to provide adequate parking and loading facilities to support business activity, promote air quality, encourage efficient use of the land in industrial areas, discourage underused parking facilities, and maintain adequate traffic safety and circulation. Allow some on-street loading and occasional spillover parking. Limit parking in the industry and innovation zone located in the vicinity of high-capacity transit stations.
- LU 13.16 Maintain standards for the size and location of vehicle curb cuts and driveways in industrial zones in order to balance the need to provide adequate maneuvering and loading areas with availability of on-street parking and safe pedestrian, bike, and transit access.
- LU 13.17 Permit noise levels in industrial areas, except buffer areas, that would not be allowed in other parts of the city, in recognition of the importance and special nature of industrial activities. When residential uses are permitted in industrial areas apply noise attenuation measures to the dwelling units to lessen impacts from noise on residents.

- LU 13.18      Classify certain industrial activities as conditional uses in industrial zones in order to accommodate these uses while making sure they are compatible with the zone's primary industrial function and to protect public safety and welfare on nearby sites. Require mitigation of impacts on industrial activity and on the immediate surroundings, especially near less intensive zones.
- LU 13.19      Prohibit uses that attract large numbers of people to the industrial area for nonindustrial purposes, in order to keep the focus on industrial activity and to minimize potential conflicts from the noise, nighttime activity, and truck movement that accompanies industrial activity. Consider allowing such uses in the urban industrial zone only.
- LU 13.20      In the industry and innovation zone, consider development regulations that are compatible with employment-dense transit-oriented development. Establish minimum density standards to ensure employment density at a level necessary to leverage transit investments. Use upper-level density limits to discourage higher value ancillary uses that are more appropriate in non-industrial areas.
- LU 13.21      In the industry and innovation zone, use development standards that promote development that meets the needs of industrial businesses including load-bearing floors, freight elevators, and adequate freight facilities.
- LU 13.22      Use the urban industrial zone to provide an appropriate transition between industrial areas and adjacent residential or pedestrian-oriented commercial zones.
- LU 13.23      In the urban industrial zone, allow a range of ancillary non-industrial uses. Recognize that industrial businesses in this zone have a greater need for a limited amount of space for such uses as tasting rooms and retail facilities that directly support the industrial activity of the business.
- LU 13.24      Develop transitions between industrial areas and adjacent neighborhoods that support healthy communities, reduce adverse environmental impacts, and minimize land use conflicts.
- LU 13.25      In the urban industrial zone, establish buffer standards to ease the transition from industrial areas to urban villages and other non-industrial parts of Seattle.
- LU 13.26      Recognize the unique development opportunities that the Washington National Guard Armory in the BINMIC and the WOSCA site in the Duwamish MIC represent. Work with the State of Washington or other future owners of these sites to develop a comprehensive industrial redevelopment plan that maximizes public benefits and reflects its location within a Manufacturing and Industrial Center. This Plan should include features such as green infrastructure, district energy and waste management programs, and workforce equity commitments.

- LU 13.27 Allow the widest possible range of manufacturing uses and related industrial and commercial activities within the industrial buffer zone, while ensuring compatibility with the activity and physical character of neighboring less intensive zones.
- LU 13.28 Include development standards or performance standards for the industrial buffer zone that protect the livability of neighboring areas, promote visual quality, and maintain a compatible scale of development along zone edges. Apply these standards only in places where existing conditions do not adequately separate industrial activity from less intensive zones.
- LU 13.29 Limit the height of structures on the borders of industrial buffer zones where streets along the zone edge do not provide sufficient separation for a reasonable transition in scale between industrial areas and less intensive neighboring zones, taking into consideration the permitted height in the abutting less intensive zone.
- LU 13.30 Allow a wide mix of employment activities in the industrial commercial zones, such as light manufacturing and research and development.
- LU 13.31 Support employment-dense emerging industries that require greater flexibility in the range of on-site uses and activities.
- LU 13.32 Limit development density in industrial commercial and maritime, manufacturing, and logistics zones in order to reflect transportation and other infrastructure constraints, while taking into account other features of an area.
- LU 13.33 Include development standards in the industrial commercial zone designed to create environments that are attractive to new technology businesses and that support a pedestrian-oriented environment, while controlling structure height and scale to limit impacts on nearby neighborhoods.
- LU 13.34 Provide a range of maximum building height limits in the industrial commercial zones in order to protect the distinctive features that attract new technology businesses to the area—such as views of water, shoreline access, and the neighborhood scale—to make sure that these features will continue to be enjoyed, both within the zone and from the surrounding area.
- LU 13.35 Assign height limits independently of the industrial zoning designation to provide flexibility in zoning-specific areas and to allow different areas within a zone to be assigned different height limits according to the rezone criteria.
- LU 13.36 Restrict or prohibit uses that may negatively affect the availability of land for industrial activity, or that conflict with the function of industrial areas.
- LU 13.37 Consider high value-added, living wage industrial activities to be a high priority.
- LU 13.38 Permit commercial uses in industrial areas to the extent that they reinforce the industrial character, and limit specified non-industrial uses, including office and retail development, in order to preserve these areas for industrial development.

# Location-Specific Regulations

## DISCUSSION

In certain places, different sets of rules “overlay” and modify the underlying zoning regulations. These overlays recognize a special use or characteristic of the area. The policies in this section guide how the City adjusts its regulations to specific areas including:

- Major institutions, environmentally critical areas, and historic districts, which are also discussed in the Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources section within this element.
- Shoreline areas, which are also discussed in the Shoreline element of this Plan.
- Other overlays like the station area overlay, Pike/Pine overlay, stadium district transition overlay and master planned communities zone.

## GOAL

LU G14            Location-specific regulations support the unique conditions that exist in certain areas of Seattle.

## POLICIES

- LU 14.1           Allow for zoning overlay districts, which modify the regulations of the underlying zoning, to address special circumstances and issues of significant public interest in subareas of the city.
- LU 14.2           Establish a master planned community zone and apply the zone as a way to address unique opportunities for large site redevelopments in the densest areas of the city. Use this designation to provide predictability to the City, the community, and potential developers, with the intent to encourage a mix of uses at appropriate urban densities that use a cohesive urban design and promote high levels of environmental sustainability, housing affordability, and publicly accessible open space. Designate a master planned community only for large multiblock sites inside a regional center that are subject to unified control.
- LU 14.3           Consider establishing a master planning process for large sites outside of Regional Centers in order to promote development that incorporates good urban design and appropriate public benefits.
- LU 14.4           Regulate development and promote design guidelines in the stadium area transition overlay to promote an environment that is attractive and safe for the large volumes of pedestrians attending events in the area.

# Major Institutions

## DISCUSSION

Hospitals, colleges, and universities deliver vital services to residents of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. They employ a significant number of Seattle workers and diversify the city's economy. However, they can also create localized traffic impacts and displace housing and businesses. The policies in this section help guide the City in supporting these institutions as they grow, while mitigating the impacts of that growth on the livability of surrounding neighborhoods.

## GOAL

LU G15 Major Institution Overlays (MIOs) support the functions and benefits that major institutions provide the city and the region, including health care, educational services, and significant employment opportunities, while mitigating the adverse impacts associated with their development and geographic expansion.

## POLICIES

- LU 15.1 Support the coordinated growth of major institutions through the creation of MIO districts and the development of conceptual master plans to guide development in these areas. Use a master plan process to identify development standards for the overlay district that are specifically tailored to the major institution and the surrounding area.
- LU 15.2 Allow MIOs to modify underlying zoning provisions and development standards, including use restrictions and parking requirements, in order to accommodate the changing needs of major institutions, provide development flexibility, and encourage a high-quality environment.
- LU 15.3 Balance the need for major institutions to grow and change with the need to maintain the livability and vitality of neighboring areas.
- LU 15.4 Prioritize growth within existing boundaries over the expansion of established boundaries.
- LU 15.5 Encourage community involvement in the development, monitoring, implementation, and amendment of major institution master plans, including the establishment of advisory committees that include community and major institution representatives.
- LU 15.6 Locate new major institutions in areas where their activities are compatible with the surrounding land uses and where the impacts associated with existing and future development can be appropriately mitigated.
- LU 15.7 Define as major institution uses those that are part of, or substantively related to, the major institution's central mission or that primarily and directly serve institution users, and allow these uses within the MIO district, in accordance with the

development standards of the underlying zoning classifications or adopted master plan.

- LU 15.8 Establish parking requirements in each MIO district to address the needs of the major institution, reduce parking demand in nearby areas, minimize unnecessary traffic in the surrounding areas, and limit the use of single-occupant vehicles.
- LU 15.9 Use a transportation-management program to reduce the number of vehicle trips to the major institution and to limit the adverse impacts of traffic and of institution-related parking on surrounding streets, especially residential streets. Strive to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles used for trips to and from major institutions especially at peak times. Allow short- or long-term parking space requirements to be modified as part of a transportation management program.
- LU 15.10 Encourage housing production and preservation within MIO districts and limit impacts on housing in surrounding areas. Discourage conversion or demolition of housing within a major institution's campus, allowing it only when the institution needs to expand or when the institution replaces the lost housing with new housing. Prohibit the demolition of noninstitutional housing for replacement by principal-use parking that is not necessary to meet the parking requirement. Prohibit development by a major institution outside the MIO district boundaries when it would result in the demolition or conversion of residential buildings into nonresidential uses, unless authorized by an adopted master plan.

## Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources

### DISCUSSION

Historic preservation recognizes and protects aspects of our shared cultural heritage—buildings, districts, designed landscapes, and areas long used by Indigenous communities—that link to Seattle's past. From the Coast Salish peoples who have inhabited these lands and waters since time immemorial, to all newcomers from around the world who have come this place to live and work. Over time, Seattle has acquired historic features that have become part of the city's civic identity. Through the preservation of buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites, and objects of historic, cultural, political, economic, architectural, engineering, or geographical significance, and areas of Indigenous settlement, the city can continue to celebrate its heritage and maintain its unique sense of place.

Seattle values its past and recognizes and protects its heritage through understanding the relationships of people with the places they inhabit and the stories these places tell. One way we do this is by calling out more than 450 buildings, objects, and sites of exceptional significance, and eight historic districts. These visible connections to the past strengthen our sense of place and help build community. The benefits of historic preservation are not merely aesthetic. Preservation is integral to our economic development, and it also enhances our city's identity as a center for tourism, itself an important source of local jobs. Preserving historic buildings can help incubate small locally owned

businesses, revitalize commercial districts, and generate local jobs. Historic preservation promotes sustainability through the reuse, repair, and upgrading of existing built resources. The City can also help to recognize and celebrate areas of historic Indigenous settlements, protect the archeological resources that remain, and support ongoing use of these area by local Tribes.

This section discusses how the City should work to identify and regulate historic places and structures and cultural resources.

## **GOAL**

- LU G16            Historic and cultural resources are preserved, maintained, and celebrated to:
- Enhance the city's diverse cultural identity and heritage.
  - Promote the economic opportunities and benefits of historic preservation.
  - Promote the environmental benefits of preserving and adaptively reusing historic buildings and other features of our built and natural environment.

## **POLICIES**

- LU 16.1            Maintain a comprehensive survey and inventory of Seattle's historic and cultural resources. Prioritize and center BIPOC and under-represented communities in survey and inventory work in order to benefit and enrich all communities.
- LU 16.2            Promote inclusive outcomes through representation of diverse narratives and equitable community engagement in historic preservation and a focus on the buildings and sites important to different cultural communities.
- LU 16.3            Support the designation of areas as historic, cultural, and special review districts, and the designation of structures, sites, and objects as City of Seattle landmarks in order to protect, enhance, and perpetuate their historical, cultural, or architectural identities.
- LU 16.4            Tailor development standards and design review processes specifically for a special review district to describe design-related features allowed, encouraged, limited, or excluded from the district. Allow adopted guidelines to modify, exempt, or supersede the underlying zone's standards.
- LU 16.5            Encourage the adaptive reuse of designated landmark structures by allowing uses in these structures that may not otherwise be allowed under the applicable zoning.
- LU 16.6            Use incentives, including the transfer of development rights, to encourage property owners and developers to restore or reuse designated landmark structures and specified structures in locally-designated historic and special review districts.
- LU 16.7            Seek to protect the scale and character of the established development pattern in locally-designated historic and special review districts, while encouraging compatible and context-sensitive infill development.



- LU 16.8 Expand outreach mechanisms to encourage inclusive outcomes through preservation in neighborhoods and communities that have not traditionally benefited from historic preservation efforts.
- LU 16.9 Identify historic resources that can be successfully used to meet the city's housing goals.
- LU 16.10 Support the preservation and perpetuation of living cultural traditions that form the relationships that people have with place.
- LU 16.11 Work with local Tribes and indigenous communities to support Indigenous cultural sites, places, and areas of significance.
- LU 16.12 Where possible, identify, preserve, and protect archaeological and cultural resources including Indigenous sites and artifacts.
- LU 16.13 Recognize the economic value of Seattle's historic resources in attracting tourism; encourage reinvestment of a share of the revenue derived from tourism to sustain and expand historic preservation.
- LU 16.14 Encourage rehabilitation opportunities and reinvestment in vacant or underutilized historic properties to spark economic revitalization and add housing.
- LU 16.15 Encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings to expand housing choices.
- LU 16.16 Explore and provide various financial and regulatory incentives, if possible, to allow for the productive, reasonable, and adaptive reuse of historic resources.
- LU 16.17 Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings to conserve resources, increase energy efficiency, reduce embodied carbon emissions, reduce waste, and demonstrate stewardship of the built environment. Encourage deconstruction and salvage of building materials in lieu of mechanical demolition when adaptive reuse options for a building are determined infeasible to divert materials from the landfill, improve air quality, and support a circular economy.
- LU 16.18 Promote seismic and energy efficiency retrofits of historic buildings to reduce carbon emissions, save money, and improve public safety.

## Environmentally Critical Areas

### DISCUSSION

Environmentally Critical Areas represent those areas of Seattle that require additional regulation due to their high environmental function or unique geologic conditions. Addressing the unique circumstances of these areas is important for environmental conservation and to prevent possible harm to people and structures from landslides, floods, and other events. These areas also play an important role in the cultural heritage of Seattle as areas of habitat and connection to the natural

world. For these reasons, the City has regulations that designate these areas and regulate development within them.

While this section discusses City regulations, the City also has an important role in restoring and stewarding natural areas to improve their value for wildlife and humans. Stewardship of our forests and waterways should be done in partnership with the Indigenous communities that have been stewarding these areas since time immemorial.

## **GOAL**

- LU G17      Environmentally critical areas regulations seek to:
- Protect the ecological functions and values of wetlands and fish and wildlife conservation areas.
  - Prevent erosion on steep slopes.
  - Protect public health, safety, and welfare in areas subject to landslides, liquefaction, floods, or peat settlement.
  - Inform the public by identifying seismic and volcanic hazard areas.
  - Minimize harm to people, property, public resources, or the environment.

## **POLICIES**

- LU 17.1      Use best available science when updating environmentally critical area policies and development standards.
- LU 17.2      Regulate the design and siting of structures and land-disturbing actions associated with development projects in environmentally critical areas and buffers to protect the ecological functions and values of environmentally critical areas and their buffers and to protect public health and safety on development sites and neighboring properties.
- LU 17.3      Limit disturbance of soil and vegetative cover within riparian corridors, wetland buffers, and steep slopes to:
- Control erosion.
  - Conserve soil and ground conditions that support native vegetation.
  - Prevent siltation and high-water temperatures in downstream habitats.
  - Reduce runoff and dampen fluctuations in surface-water flows, which are typically problematic in urbanized areas.
  - Maintain groundwater recharge flow to support stream flows during drier seasons.
  - Protect contiguous vegetation to maintain wildlife habitat and corridors.
  - Protect aquatic and wildlife habitats.
  - Reduce the risk of other environmental impacts to streams, lakes, Puget Sound, and the City's stormwater facilities.
- LU 17.4      Permit modification of development standards in environmentally critical areas and buffers to protect the ecological functions and values of the critical areas while allowing reasonable development.

- LU 17.5      Seek to reduce the economic and administrative burden for projects that undertake voluntary enhancement and restoration.
- LU 17.6      Provide opportunities for nonregulatory measures for protecting environmentally critical areas such as voluntary restoration efforts, environmental education, public recognition, grants for restoration of private property, and acquiring or retaining properties as natural areas.
- LU 17.7      Work in partnership with Indigenous communities to update and implement environmentally critical areas regulations.

### ***Geologic Hazards and Steep Slope Erosion Areas***

- LU 17.8      Regulate development on landslide-prone hillsides to protect against future damage due to instability that might be created or exacerbated by development, including potential damage to public facilities. Consider the relative risk to life or property when reviewing development proposals for landslide-prone areas.
- LU 17.9      Require new development in liquefaction-prone areas to be designed and built to limit property damage and to reduce risks of injury and loss of life during earthquakes.
- LU 17.10     Regulate development in peat settlement-prone areas to limit ground settlement caused by the removal of groundwater and by structural and earth-fill loads on those areas and nearby parcels.

### ***Flood-prone Areas***

- LU 17.11     Regulate development in flood-prone areas in order to protect public health and safety, and aquatic habitat and to prevent damage to private property caused by hazardous flooding conditions.

### ***Wetlands***

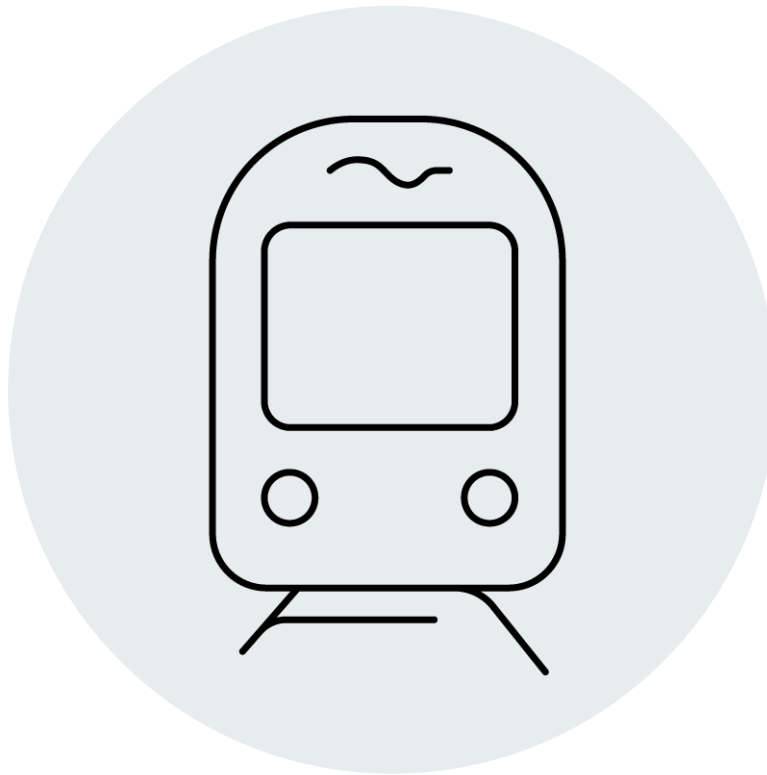
- LU 17.12     Seek a net gain in wetland function by enhancing and restoring wetland functions across the city in City projects.
- LU 17.13     Protect Seattle's unique remaining wetland resources and use mitigation sequencing to address construction and postconstruction impacts in wetlands and their buffers.
- LU 17.14     Seek to avoid a net loss in area of wetland acreage and require no net loss of wetland functions and values when development is allowed; functions and values include but are not limited to flood control, water quantity and quality, and fish and wildlife habitat.

### ***Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas***

- LU 17.15      Regulate development in and near designated fish- and wildlife-habitat conservation areas in order to protect native fish and wildlife, especially anadromous fish and other ESA listed species.
- LU 17.16      Promote daylighting of streams that are in pipes, especially streams that support or will likely be able to support anadromous fish in the future.
- LU 17.17      Limit development within the riparian corridor to protect the natural functions and values of these areas from the negative effects of urban development.

### ***Abandoned Landfills***

- LU 17.18      Regulate development on abandoned solid-waste landfill sites and areas within a thousand feet of those sites to reduce the risks of ground subsidence, earthquake induced ground shaking, and methane-gas accumulation.



# Transportation

## Introduction

The Transportation element guides transportation investments to serve the city's current residents and businesses and to accommodate Seattle's future growth. Hundreds of thousands of residents and businesses in Seattle and throughout the region depend on the city's transportation system to access jobs, services, and community facilities, and to deliver freight and goods. Thousands more people will depend on it in the next 20 years as the city and region continue to grow.

In Seattle's future, a robust transportation system should:

- Help to build a more equitable city where all people have access to a safe and affordable transportation system that meets their daily needs for mobility.
- Contribute to a safer city by working to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on city streets.
- Support safe and reliable freight and urban goods movement.
- Create an interconnected city where people have reliable, easy-to-use travel options.

- Support a more vibrant city with streets and sidewalks that generate economic and social activity, adding to the city's overall health, prosperity, and happiness.
- Contribute to a more affordable city with high-quality and affordable transportation options that allow people to spend their money on other things.
- Create a more sustainable and resilient city with greatly reduced greenhouse gas emissions from our transportation system.

Seattle's transportation system in 2044 will look very different than it does now. Light rail transit and frequent bus networks will be much more extensive, with light rail extending to West Seattle and Ballard and providing regional connections to Redmond, Tacoma, and Everett. New technological innovations in transportation such as smart parking and automated vehicles will change the way people move through Seattle. This Plan will guide the City's future actions to address these and other changes. The Plan will also shape a transportation future where all residents, especially in our most vulnerable and underinvested communities, benefit equitably.

Seattle already has a core network of streets serving a highly urbanized land use pattern. There is no room for major new streets, and it is neither feasible nor desirable to widen existing streets, which creates challenges but also opportunities as the City plans for growth. Therefore, we must use the streets and sidewalks we have in the most efficient way possible. This means prioritizing street space so that it can be used by the most people, at most times of the day, and in a variety of ways. While many people still rely on a personal car as their best or only transportation option, the City plans to make travel more efficient and predictable for all by offering high-quality travel alternatives. It also means reimagining how we use the right-of-way to include multiple public uses and amenities that make our neighborhoods and the city as a whole more livable.

The One Seattle Plan is coordinated with and provides policy guidance for implementation of the Seattle Transportation Plan, an integrated strategy to invest in multiple modes of travel to meet Seattle's future needs. The Seattle Transportation Plan provides more detailed direction for all of the transportation investments that Seattle will need over the next 20 years, including facilities that address non-automobile modes of travel—walking, biking, and transit—as well as freight movement and a continued important role for private automobile travel.

To support the goals and policies in this element, the Transportation Appendix contains inventories of transportation facilities and an analysis of the transportation needs over the next 20 years as we implement this Plan's growth strategy.

## Supporting the Seattle Growth Strategy

### DISCUSSION

The One Seattle Plan anticipates a future where Seattle continues to grow in the coming decades toward a population approaching one million residents. The level of growth, as well as how and where we grow, will have a big effect on future transportation needs. The development pattern described in the Growth Strategy and Land Use elements of this Plan will have a major influence on future transportation needs and shape how we plan for the City's transportation system.

In the City's new Growth Strategy, every area of Seattle has an important role in accommodating growth. This includes planning for compact walkable Regional, Urban, and Neighborhood Centers with a mix of uses. It includes more low-scale housing options in Urban Neighborhoods across the city. The strategy aims to make it easy to walk and bike to local shops and services. Planning for employment space will continue to focus on our Regional and Urban centers. Manufacturing and Industrial Centers will focus additional employment and economic activity near port, freight, and other key infrastructure.

Crucial to the success of the Growth Strategy is reliable transportation to, from, and within these places. This will require a transportation system that includes many methods of travel for all trips throughout the day, including during the evening and on weekends. Automobile and freight access to property will remain important for accommodating growth throughout the city. In addition, transportation facilities that connect to and support the city's industrial areas are important to the city's economy.

The Growth Strategy builds on the idea of complete communities where residents have access to their daily needs — shops, amenities, schools, parks, places of employment — via an easy and enjoyable walk, bike, roll, or transit trip. Many areas for future growth in the city already have a rich network of transportation options; others, including neighborhoods that are home to BIPOC and other communities that have experienced a history of under-investment, have gaps that must be filled over time. The One Seattle Plan aims to strike a balance between serving the areas that will see the most growth and equitably providing transportation services to all who need it.

## **GOAL**

TG 1                      Transportation decisions, strategies, and investments support the growth strategy for the City and the region and are coordinated with this Plan's land use goals.

## **POLICIES**

- T 1.1                      Provide safe and reliable multimodal transportation facilities and services to promote and accommodate the growth that this Plan anticipates citywide, including centers of various types and sizes and urban neighborhoods across the city.
- T 1.2                      Design transportation infrastructure in Regional, Urban, and Neighborhood centers to support compact, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods for all ages and abilities.
- T 1.3                      Design transportation facilities to be compatible with planned land uses, with consideration of the planned scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- T 1.4                      Plan for transportation improvements in Regional Centers that maintain and enhance a rich network of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities and access to light rail and other regional connections.
- T 1.5                      Plan for transportation improvements within and between Urban Centers that provide access to high-capacity or frequent transit and maintain and expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



- T 1.6 Plan for transportation investments within Neighborhood Centers and to surrounding Urban Neighborhood areas that prioritize walking and biking on safe, comfortable, and enjoyable routes to meet every day needs and that enhance connections to transit.
- T 1.7 Provide a variety of affordable travel options, including pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities, to better meet the needs of historically underserved communities.
- T 1.8 Identify the potential impacts of transportation investments on communities that are at risk of displacement and collaborate across City departments to mitigate those impacts through project design and construction and implementation of anti-displacement strategies that enable households, businesses, and cultural anchors to remain in place.
- T 1.9 Develop multimodal level-of-service measures and standards to assess the performance of the transportation system and indicate potential need for transportation investments and demand management strategies as the city grows over time, consistent with the growth strategy.
- T 1.10 Level of service shall be measured as follows:

	For City as whole	For each Regional, Urban, and Neighborhood Center
<b>Vehicles</b>	Single occupant vehicle trip share; and Vehicle miles traveled	SOV share (for each Regional Center and by subarea citywide)
<b>Transit</b>	Percentage of homes near a stop on a frequent transit route	Presence of frequent transit or light rail service
<b>Bicycling</b>	Percentage of homes near an all ages and abilities (AAA) bikeway	Access to an all ages and abilities (AAA) bikeway
<b>Walking</b>	Percentage of block faces that have a sidewalk	Percentage of block faces that have a sidewalk

- T 1.11 Assess the multimodal LOS measures and standards over time and adjust as needed, based on review of other City transportation measures and goals.

# Making the Best Use of the Streets We Have

## DISCUSSION

To serve our needs today and in the future, the public street space in Seattle needs to accommodate different travel functions, community uses, and street trees. Because it will be difficult to expand our available public street space in any significant way, it is important for the City to use the existing streets in ways that meet our shared priorities and enhance quality of life for all residents. This section of the Plan establishes the policy framework for making those decisions.

To meet the different needs and functions of the right of way, streets are typically divided into three right-of-way zones. The **pedestrian realm** typically includes the sidewalk area, street trees, and landscape strip between the property line and the curb. The **travel way** portion of the road is typically dedicated for mobility. Finally, the **flex zone** typically found along the curb is the portion of the road with more flexible uses, such as addressing critical building access and loading needs, bus stops, and bicycle parking. In order to meet multiple needs, there are opportunities to reallocate space currently dedicated to vehicles, particularly vehicle storage, to be available as places for people, including open streets, shared streets, parklets, play streets, street trees, and other activating or greening uses of the street. Providing spaces for all these functions efficiently and where they are needed helps make the most of a limited resource.

Not every function can fit in every street. The goals and policies in this section provide direction on integrating and, where necessary, prioritizing functions within the different parts of a street. These policies also recognize that collectively two or more streets can combine to serve as a “complete corridor,” since not every street can accommodate every need.

## GOAL

TG 2                      Seattle’s streets accommodate and promote safe, comfortable, efficient movement of people and goods and include inviting spaces for community within the right-of-way.

## POLICIES

- T 2.1                      Devote space in the right-of-way to accommodate multiple functions of mobility, access for commerce and people, activation, landscaping, and better management of vehicle parking.
- T 2.2                      Ensure that the street network accommodates multiple travel modes and users, including transit, freight movement, people walking, biking, or rolling, people with disabilities, general purpose traffic, and shared transportation options.
- T 2.3                      When prioritizing functions in the right-of-way, consider safety improvements, priority investment networks, and adjacent land uses.
- T 2.4                      Prioritize mobility needs in the street travel way first based on safety concerns and then on the recommended networks and facilities identified in the Seattle Transportation Plan.

- T 2.5 Include at least one general-purpose through travel lane per direction of travel on most arterials, where vehicular mobility will be maintained, as part of the project development process.
- T2.6 Modernize our streets toward achievement of our vehicle-mile traveled and mode-split goals, including through project analysis and evaluation processes that result in traffic volumes consistent with these goals.
- T 2.7 Align transportation investment priorities with the values, goals, and targets in the Seattle Transportation Plan related to safety, equity, environmental sustainability, mobility and economic vitality, livability, and maintenance and modernization.
- T 2.8 To resolve potential conflicts in the right-of-way, employ the following tactics:
- Implement transportation and parking-demand management strategies to encourage more efficient use of the existing right-of-way.
  - Allocate needed functions across a corridor composed of several streets or alleys if all functions cannot fit in a single street.
  - Share space between travel modes and uses where safe and where possible over the course of the day.
  - Encourage off-street accommodation for non-mobility uses, including parking, electric vehicle charging, and transit layover.
  - Meet critical access needs of establishments to ensure parcels, goods, services, passenger, and solid waste services can be done safely and efficiently.
  - Consider the unique needs of local communities within the decision-making process.
- T 2.9 Build new and upgrade existing sidewalks, where needed, including in areas planned for new growth and development, and consistent with the dimensional standards as specified in Streets Illustrated.
- T 2.10 For streets where priorities for modes of travel overlap and where rights-of-way are constrained, generally apply the following principles to guide corridor investments and management:
- Within regional, urban, and neighborhood centers and near light rail stations, prioritize the needs of people walking, rolling, and biking.
  - Within manufacturing and industrial centers (MICs), prioritize truck movement, especially at freight bottlenecks, with strategies that may include operational strategies, freight-and-bus (FAB) lanes, and truck-only lanes.
  - Outside of regional, urban, and neighborhood centers and MICs, prioritize transit travel time and reliability.

- On streets prioritized for transit and trucks, prioritize freight and transit travel time and reliability, with strategies that may include FAB lanes, transit-only lanes, and other right-of-way and operational strategies.
- On streets that accommodate both freight and bicycle travel, facilities for trucks and bicycles should be clearly separated and fully comply with width and materials standards, consistent with Streets Illustrated.

- T 2.11 Preserve and enhance the boulevard network to create a usable open space system that accommodates healthy and active transportation while meeting local access needs.
- T 2.12 Maintain, preserve, and enhance the City's alleys as a valuable network for access, loading and unloading for freight, and utility operations, and where appropriate opportunities for public space.
- T 2.13 Manage travel within limited street space, including reallocation of street space as needed, to enhance comfort, convenience, and directness for walking, biking, rolling, and transit.
- T 2.14 Implement curb space management strategies, such as on-street parking pricing and time limits, load zones and other critical access needs for buildings, and residential parking management to promote transportation choices, enhance the efficient delivery of goods and services, improve customer access, and enable public space activations in curb lanes.
- T 2.15 Address critical access needs for buildings when affected by transportation projects and private redevelopment by re-allocating load zones, encouraging shared parking amongst area businesses, and considering an area-wide curb management plan.
- T 2.16 If a building does not have off-street loading access, whether on-property or via an alley, it should have its critical access needs provided for at the curb, achieved by maintaining curb space for commerce, solid waste pick-up, building maintenance, and accessible pick up/drop off.
- T 2.17 Design and manage the transportation system, including the curb space, so that people with limited mobility have safe and convenient access to their destinations.
- T 2.18 In collaboration with the community, create and design vibrant public spaces within and near rights-of-way that:
- Foster social interaction and enhance the public realm
  - Prioritize community functions, public life, and greening
  - Promote access to sustainable transportation options
  - Deemphasize vehicular use in strategic locations
  - Reallocate street space from vehicle storage to people-oriented uses

- T 2.19 Prioritize freight on streets classified as Major Truck Streets; Complete Street improvements that support other modes may also be considered on these streets.
- T 2.20 Limit impacts to emergency response vehicles along high-volume response routes as other modal priorities are implemented.

## Expanding Transportation Options

### DISCUSSION

This Plan emphasizes strategies to increase travel options, moving away from reliance on single-occupant vehicle travel, and toward more options to get around the city.

Transit, bicycling, and walking reduce collisions, stress, noise, and air pollution, while increasing social contact, economic vitality, affordability, and overall health. They also make more efficient use of our rights-of-way by increasing person throughput vital to meeting the mobility needs of a growing city. Finally, with a large portion of our vehicle fleet still reliant on internal combustion engines, reducing car travel will help the city reduce greenhouse gas emissions sooner. The best way to get Seattleites to take advantage of these options is to make them easy and enjoyable choices for people of all ages and abilities and accessible to people at all income levels.

Strategies for increasing travel options include providing more housing options in centers that are well served by transit, along with completing the City's transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks. The City has incorporated its plans for individual travel modes into the Seattle Transportation Plan.

The Seattle Transportation Plan includes a series of Priority Investment Networks, which describe and prioritize investments in infrastructure that supports different modes of travel, along with accompanying maps. These include maps for transit service, transit capital investments, bikeways, pedestrian facilities, and truck routes. These maps are included in the Transportation appendix.

While not everyone can always walk, bike, use a car-share service, or ride transit, the City can reduce the number of drive-alone trips that residents, employees, and visitors take, and even reduce the need to own a personal vehicle. Improving transportation choices can protect the environment, enhance the local economy, and support healthy communities. If more people use different types of transportation during the busiest times of day, more people and goods can get to their destinations in a reasonable time. Reducing drive-alone trips during congested periods is consistent with the City's overall commute-trip reduction goals and overall expansion to manage travel demand for all trips.

To help residents make informed decisions, the City must consider all aspects of the transportation system. One effective approach is through transportation demand management, which aims to reduce travel impacts on the system, especially drive-alone trips during peak times of the day. This includes evaluating parking availability, cost, and proximity to destinations which influence the choice to drive or use other travel options. Efficient first-mile and last-mile travel is crucial for transit

users. The first and last mile can often be traveled by walking, biking, ride sharing, or local bus service. To ensure we are doing this equitably, we need to improve accessibility to frequent and reliable transit in neighborhoods with proportionally more people who have lower incomes or depend heavily on transit.

Plans that the City has developed for individual travel modes are addressed in an integrated approach described in the Seattle Transportation Plan (2024). For more information on the specific investments that the City anticipates and plans to make to support transit and bicycle use, refer to the maps in Appendix 1. For more information about the investments the City plans to make in infrastructure that supports walking, see the Seattle Transportation Plan.

## **GOAL**

TG 3                      People’s mobility needs are met by providing equitable access to and encouraging the use of multiple transportation options.

## **POLICIES**

- T 3.1                      Expand transportation options to and within Regional, Urban, and Neighborhood centers, where most of Seattle’s population and job growth will occur.
- T 3.2                      Invest equitably in initiatives, projects, and programs that aggressively encourage mode shift towards low-emissions transportation options for all trips.
- T 3.3                      Develop and maintain a high-quality network of connected bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.
- T 3.4                      Strengthen the coordination among land use, housing, transportation, and economic strategies to reduce overall household travel costs.
- T 3.5                      Plan for and develop transportation systems and facilities so that all residents, regardless of income, age, ability, and vehicle-ownership, have access to a wide range of affordable travel options.
- T 3.6                      Improve transit access to underserved neighborhoods and populations through expansion of existing transit services, programs that reduce transit fares, and partnerships with agencies and other providers.
- T 3.7                      Develop a citywide transit system that includes a variety of transit modes to meet passenger capacity needs with frequent, reliable, accessible, and safe service to a wide variety of destinations throughout the day and week, including commute and non-commute trips.
- T 3.8                      Improve access to transit by supporting first-/last-mile connections, including on-demand shared rides to trunk line stations and improved safety and walking infrastructure connecting to transit stops and stations.
- T 3.9                      Improve east-west mobility between neighborhoods and destinations, especially as additional light rail service begins, and bus service is redeployed.

- T 3.10 Make transit services affordable to low-income residents through programs that reduce household transportation costs.
- T 3.11 Optimize bus, train, and streetcar operations by adjusting signals and providing transit-only, freight and bus-only, or transit-priority lanes to promote competitive travel times for transit relative to automobile travel.
- T 3.12 Partner with Sound Transit, King County Metro, and other transit providers to continuously improve the overall transit experience, including improvements to system capacity, accessibility, and system facilities and amenities.
- T 3.13 Create welcoming community and mobility hubs that combine transportation options, traveler amenities, community spaces, and travel information into a seamless experience.
- T 3.14 Partner with private mobility providers, such as car share, bike share, taxis, and on-demand micro-transit, to expand access to their services throughout the city and reduce pricing terms for lower-income individuals.
- T 3.15 Develop and maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including public stairways, that enhance the predictability and safety of all users of the street and that connect to a wide range of key destinations throughout the city.
- T 3.16 Look for opportunities to reestablish or improve connections across highways and railroads by enhancing existing crossings and creating new ones and by constructing lids, especially where these can also enhance opportunities for development, open space, income-restricted homes, and neighborhood cohesion.
- T 3.17 Accelerate and scale sidewalk construction and refurbishment by ensuring coordinated development of sidewalks and pedestrian safety infrastructure in line with anticipated higher-density development envisioned in the Growth Strategy.
- T 3.18 Design new and improve existing pedestrian crossings on arterials to meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities standards.
- T 3.19 Develop facilities and programs to support bike sharing, e-scooter sharing, and other similar micromobility options that encourage short trips to be made by walking, biking, or other zero-emission mobility devices.
- T 3.20 Implement improvements, such as curb ramps, accessible pedestrian signals, accessible parking, and accessible transit stops, to make traveling in Seattle more accessible for people of all abilities.
- T 3.21 When determining if and where a new or emerging form of mobility belongs within the right-of-way, consider vehicle size, speed, and other safety-related factors.
- T 3.22 Support and plan for innovation in privately provided transportation options such as shared mobility, including car sharing, bike sharing, micromobility, taxis, and



transportation network companies, which can increase travel options and enhance mobility.

- T 3.23 Anticipate, manage, and leverage innovative transportation technologies to meet community values and minimize their potential negative impacts related to safety, equity, affordability, and environmental sustainability.
- T 3.24 Adapt streets for new and evolving forms of mobility devices, such as commercial or private cargo bikes, e-scooters, personal delivery devices, and low-speed electric vehicles (LSEVs), to create more travel options beyond traditionally sized vehicles.
- T 3.25 Develop and implement strategies to manage the evolution toward connected and autonomous vehicles, recognizing that government and industry must partner to deliver their anticipated benefits safely, including the discouragement and limiting of zero-occupancy automated passenger vehicles.

## Creating an Equitable Transportation System

### DISCUSSION

The Seattle Department of Transportation’s work—delivering an equitable transportation system—is guided by a Transportation Equity Framework (TEF), which was developed in partnership with community. It aims to amplify community voices through inclusive decision-making, co-creation, and prioritizing investments in underserved areas to improve safety, accessibility, and affordability, while also considering the needs of people with mobility challenges.

Our transportation system today does not serve everyone equally. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes face higher costs—whether monetary, time-related, or impacting their health and welfare. These challenges are worsened by displacement due to high living costs and limited access to affordable housing and high-quality transit. Climate change disproportionately affects communities least responsible for it, often those historically underserved. Through climate justice, we can focus investments on those most impacted by climate change, while assigning responsibilities to groups better able to address it.

### GOAL

- TG 4 Transportation-related inequities are eliminated through community-driven solutions and restorative practices.

### POLICIES

- T 4.1 Include the perspectives, priorities, and needs of communities of color and underrepresented groups in transportation planning and decision-making.
- T 4.2 Address inequities in the transportation system by prioritizing investments in historically underserved communities, improving accessibility for people with

mobility challenges, and supporting local residents and businesses, especially those at high risk of displacement.

- T 4.3 Remove cost as a barrier so everyone can take the trips they need to make.
- T 4.4 Provide equitable transportation access through direct subsidies and tailored mobility services for disadvantaged populations, including for people with mobility impairment or low income.
- T 4.5 Support shifts towards non-punitive transportation enforcement approaches that reduce harm and enhance public safety on city streets.

## Building a Green Transportation System

### DISCUSSION

Encouraging the use of non-automobile travel options supports not only the City's growth strategy but also its environmental goals, including those related to climate change. Cars, buses, trucks, and other motorized transportation make up Seattle's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the City's Climate Action Plan sets high standards for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Using more fuel-efficient transportation options to move larger numbers of people on well-designed and well-maintained streets is a crucial step to creating a healthy urban environment, especially in neighborhoods and communities, including communities of color, that have been disproportionately impacted by pollution. By reducing the need for personal car use, the City can also reduce congestion and provide more opportunities to reallocate public right-of-way for street trees and landscaping. Providing and promoting a wider variety of transportation options is also integral to achieving these environmental goals.

### GOAL

- TG 5 Seattle's transportation system promotes healthy communities, protects and improves our environmental quality, and contributes to a future free of climate pollution.

### POLICIES

- T 5.1 Accelerate and scale strategies to reduce transportation related greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the long-term goal of net-zero citywide emissions by 2050.
- T 5.2 Accelerate and scale reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to achieve 37% reduction by 2044.
- T 5.3 Implement projects, policies, programs, and street designs, including right-sizing the amount of space dedicated to general-purpose travel and long-term vehicle storage, to reduce drive-alone vehicle trips and vehicle-miles traveled.
- T 5.4 Pursue a mix of capital and programmatic investment along with management strategies to establish low-carbon/low-pollution neighborhoods (LPNs), designated

areas or streets where the City can deploy a variety of pilot, policy, program, and physical improvements to improve air and water quality, mobility, and community health.

- T 5.5 Manage the transportation system, including movement of both people and goods, to support a shift to electrification, clean fuels, and smaller vehicles, such as cargo bikes, e-scooters, and other emerging mobility options, and phase out over time the use of fossil fuel-powered vehicles.
- T 5.6 Encourage the use of electric freight, transit, motor vehicles, and e-cargo bicycles and the expansion of electric vehicle charging stations for personal vehicles, private fleets, and transit.
- T 5.7 Accommodate publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the right-of-way when nearby off-street options are limited to promote equitable access and just transition to electric vehicles. Consideration should be given to right of way locations that do not preclude construction of priority transportation network investments nor use of the curb to provide for critical building access needs such as loading or solid waste cart staging.
- T 5.8 Improve freight mobility and access to pick up and delivery points to reduce truck idling, improve air quality, and minimize the impacts of truck parking and movement in residential areas.
- T 5.9 Design and manage streets to promote green infrastructure, new technologies, and active transportation modes while addressing safety, accessibility, and aesthetics.
- T 5.10 Enhance and expand tree canopy and landscaping in the street right-of-way.
- T 5.11 Retrofit transportation facilities to improve fish passage.
- T 5.12 Design and implement new and retrofitted transportation facilities with water quality and quantity stormwater system improvements to reduce roadway runoff pollution into natural drainage systems and the waters of the Puget Sound.

## Supporting a Vibrant Economy

### DISCUSSION

The movement of goods and services is critical to economic development in Seattle and the region. Seattle's businesses and residents rely on truck routes for safe and timely transportation of goods. Freight carriers depend on a well-functioning network of rail, water, air, and truck transportation. The Seattle Transportation Plan identifies the city's overall freight network and prioritizes investments for freight mobility projects. This includes addressing the exponential growth in delivery trips to dispersed locations across the city and preparing for the changing needs of goods movement and delivery due to evolving consumer demand and overall population growth.

In addition to goods movement, a well-designed transportation network supports a thriving economy by enhancing access to jobs, businesses, schools, and recreation. This kind of easy access contributes to the success of our neighborhood business districts and small businesses and makes it easier for people to access their daily needs for goods and services. Enhancing freight mobility and access also enhances Seattle's role as the hub for regional goods movement and as a gateway to national and international suppliers and markets.

## **GOAL**

TG 6            The transportation system improves mobility and access for goods and services to support and promote economic opportunity throughout the city.

## **POLICIES**

- T 6.1            Sustain and enhance the freight network that connects Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs) to the city and region, enhances freight mobility and operational efficiencies, and promotes the city's economic health.
- T 6.2            Enhance goods and services movement to, within, and between Seattle's MICs and Regional, Urban, and Neighborhoods centers.
- T 6.3            Design, maintain, and operate freight corridors to provide for efficient movement of truck traffic to and from regional connectors.
- T 6.4            Expand neighborhood delivery hubs, central drop-off / pick-up locations for goods, to more locations to improve overall urban goods delivery throughout the city.
- T 6.5            Use intelligent transportation system technology to alert motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to the presence and anticipated length of closures due to train crossings and bridge openings for water vessels.
- T 6.6            Improve safety and operational conditions at at-grade rail crossings of city streets, including consideration of grade separation.
- T 6.7            Work with freight stakeholders and the Port of Seattle to maintain and improve intermodal freight connections involving Port container terminals, rail yards, industrial areas, airports, and regional highways.
- T 6.8            Where appropriate, support efficient and safe movement of goods by rail and promote efficient operation of freight rail lines and intermodal yards.
- T 6.9            Increase efficient and affordable transportation access to jobs, education, and workforce training.
- T 6.10           Promote freight demand management technologies and strategies that can consolidate urban goods delivery trips and encourage vehicles that are sized appropriately for an urban environment.

- T 6.11 Encourage and create great streetscapes and activate public spaces in the right-of-way to promote economic activity.

## Promoting Safe Travel for All

### DISCUSSION

Safety guides every decision that the City makes for transportation system operation and design. People expect to feel safe as they use streets, transit facilities, sidewalks, and trails. Collisions involving pedestrians or people riding bicycles represent a high percentage of the serious injuries and fatalities in the city. When we invest in protecting our most vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, we help build strong communities where residents and visitors are more likely to walk or bike, especially for short trips. Safer streets are also more efficient streets; they have fewer and less severe collisions, allowing people and goods to move safely and efficiently. In addition to making safety improvements, the City works to build a culture of mutual awareness between travelers. The City respects the right of all to travel safely and also feel safe regardless of how they choose to get around.

The policies in this section reflect and build on the culture of Vision Zero, an approach to designing and managing our streets to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries. Vision Zero focuses on the most effective ways to reduce harm while creating a culture of care and dignity for all travelers. To achieve Vision Zero, we need to evolve our streets for slower speeds; limit conflict points between travelers; and focus on the safety and sense of safety of people walking, biking, and rolling. The Seattle Transportation Plan provides guidance to accelerate progress toward Vision Zero through a “Safe System” framework.

### GOAL

- TG 7 Seattle's transportation system is safe for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable travelers.

### POLICIES

- T 7.1 Work toward Seattle's Vision Zero goal to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030 by focusing on the most effective and equitable ways to reduce harm.
- T 7.2 Adopt speed limits that enhance safety and use strategies, including enforcement and other measures, to reduce vehicle speeding.
- T 7.3 Develop and implement programs to educate all users of the street on rules of the road, rights, and responsibilities.
- T 7.4 Enhance safety at locations with heightened risks of conflict in the right-of-way, including at-grade railroad crossings and free-flowing ramps on and off city streets.
- T 7.5 Improve safety for all modes of transportation on streets heavily used by trucks.

- T 7.6 Guided by the federally recognized Safe System approach and Seattle's Transportation Equity Framework, make transportation safety and mobility investments in the most effective and equitable way, emphasizing design over punitive practices and individual level behavior change.
- T 7.7 Make safety a top priority, especially for people traveling outside the protection of a vehicle, and incorporate Vision Zero and Safe System approaches into every project and program.
- T 7.8 Use complete street principles, traffic-calming, and neighborhood traffic control strategies to promote safe neighborhood streets and discourage cut-through traffic.
- T 7.9 Improve pedestrian lighting, especially along transit routes and where connections between different travel options are made.
- T 7.10 Support public safety through maintenance of critical access routes, including but not limited to emergency vehicle routes and priority snow-clearance routes.

## Connecting to the Region

### DISCUSSION

Seattle is the largest employment and cultural center in the central Puget Sound region. As such, the city is a destination for people from all over the metropolitan area for work, shopping, entertainment, events, and recreation. The city is served by a number of state and regional transportation facilities, including two interstate highways; several state highways; a regional light rail, commuter rail, and bus system; a ferry network; waterways; and railroads. While the bulk of the Transportation element addresses transportation within the city limits, this section provides guidance for larger regional projects and facilities that serve Seattle. It also provides guidance for Seattle's participation in regional transportation planning and funding efforts.

### GOAL

- TG 8 Regional projects and programs affecting Seattle are consistent with City plans, policies, and priorities and help to connect the city with the surrounding region.

### POLICIES

- T 8.1 Coordinate with regional, state, and federal agencies, other local governments, and transit providers when planning and operating transportation facilities and services, especially those that reach beyond the city's borders.
- T 8.2 Support completion of the freeway high-occupancy-vehicle lane system throughout the central Puget Sound region and continued use of that system for promoting more efficient travel.

- T 8.3 Limit freeway capacity expansions intended primarily to accommodate drive-alone users to allow only spot improvements that enhance safety or remove operational constraints in specific locations.
- T 8.4 Support a strong regional ferry system that maximizes the movement of people, freight, and goods.
- T 8.5 Support improvements to ferry terminals that encourage walk, bicycle, rolling, and transit access to and from the terminals, improvements that enhance transfer and waiting environments, and, along with management strategies, improvements that minimize vehicle queueing on city streets.
- T 8.6 Plan for the City's freight network to connect to the state and regional freight network and to continue providing good connections to regional industrial and warehouse uses.
- T 8.7 Work with transit agency partners to expand and optimize cross-jurisdictional regional light rail and bus transit service investments that function as a single, coordinated system to encourage more trips to, from, and within Seattle on transit.
- T 8.8 Work with regional transit agencies to plan for and provide service that is consistent with this Plan's growth strategy.
- T 8.9 Support federal, state, and regional agencies to build out and expand intercity rail service including commuter rail, Amtrak, and high-speed rail.
- T 8.10 Work with private shuttle, intercity bus, and charter service operators to support their operations and manage their routes, stop locations, and curbside access.
- T 8.11 Support the state and region in advancing transportation mobility management strategies.
- T 8.12 Work with neighboring jurisdictions and King County to integrate the City's bicycle network with regional bicycle facilities, the regional multi-use trail network, and the Great American Rail-Trail.
- T 8.13 Collaborate with local, county, and regional agencies to promote transportation demand management, including to reduce cross-jurisdiction drive-alone trips.
- T 8.14 Collaborate with county, regional, and state transportation partners, as well as employers, to adopt strategies to meet the transportation needs of people displaced from Seattle to continue to access community and cultural amenities and employment within the city.

# Operating and Maintaining the Transportation System

## DISCUSSION

Thoughtful operation and maintenance of the transportation system promotes safety, efficiency, infrastructure preservation, and a high-quality environment. Caring for the condition of the transportation system brings many co-benefits. Street pavement that serves cars and trucks is the same surface that supports smooth transit operations, reliable deliveries, safe biking, and even surfaces for stable street crossings by walking or rolling. Well-maintained streets, sidewalks, bridges, and other infrastructure make conditions safer for all travelers, especially those with limited mobility due to age and/or disability.

Spending money on maintaining and preserving the system today can prevent spending more dollars on replacing parts of the system later. This is particularly true for the more expensive and vital transportation assets, such as pavement, sidewalks, parking pay stations, intelligent transportation system devices, traffic-signal infrastructure, and bridges. When we prevent infrastructure from falling into disrepair, we can even influence travel choices and encourage people to spend time in public spaces, meet neighbors, and shop at local businesses.

Since the City makes and maintains its transportation improvements with taxpayer money, it must spend every dollar wisely and in a way that is consistent with the City's overall vision. The City keeps a comprehensive inventory of transportation assets that includes information about the condition of its most valuable assets. The City uses performance measures to decide whether and when to repair or replace infrastructure. In addition to planning for future maintenance, the City must address the significant backlog of unmet maintenance needs that currently exists. Investments in operations and maintenance are also key opportunities to modernize our transportation system and to address the needs of BIPOC and other communities that have experienced historical underinvestment.

As we take care of the transportation system we have today, we must also look to the future. The technologies and systems we use to safely and efficiently operate our streets—such as signals, cameras, and sensors—are constantly evolving. Updating them can help us operate the system more effectively, and sensors can help us monitor the structural health of infrastructure in real-time to aid in asset management.

To ensure our streets work today and in the future, we need to maintain our streets, sidewalks, and bridges. And incorporate planned safety and priority network improvements with maintenance work. In doing so, we can reduce the disparities in the quality of infrastructure among neighborhoods. At the same time, we can prepare our streets and be ready to adapt for new travel options and emerging technologies.

## GOAL

TG 9                      Transportation assets are maintained and modernized, ensuring the long-term viability of investments, reduced costs, and safe conditions.



## **POLICIES**

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| T 9.1 | Operate the transportation system to prioritize safety while also promoting efficient mobility consistent with identified priority modes, priority investment networks, and land use context.  |
| T 9.2 | Develop multiple modal levels-of-service measures aligned with our priority modes to guide project development decision making and encourage more efficient use of the existing right-of-way.  |
| T 9.3 | Employ state-of-the-art intelligent transportation systems to increase efficiency of movement and reduce travel delays.  |
| T 9.4 | Use asset maintenance and replacement opportunities to not only improve the condition of transportation infrastructure and equipment, but to also enhance safety, reduce dependence on driving, promote sustainable travel options, and support economic vitality. |
| T 9.5 | Explore innovative means of reducing maintenance costs such as converting right-of-way into other uses when appropriate.   |
| T 9.6 | Mitigate construction impacts from City and private projects on the use of the street right-of-way and on the operation of the transportation system, especially for vulnerable populations.   |
| T 9.7 | Work to eliminate disparities in the condition of transportation infrastructure in historically underserved neighborhoods.   |
| T 9.8 | Create training, youth employment, and living wage opportunities in the construction and major maintenance of transportation facilities for members of BIPOC and other communities with a history of underinvestment.  |

## **Funding**

### **DISCUSSION**

The City's transportation network is vital to preserving the quality of life, prosperity, and health of all Seattleites. Only with adequate funding can Seattle continue to operate, maintain, and improve its transportation network to meet current and future needs. Transportation funding comes from a variety of dedicated and flexible sources. The City currently uses various known sources and may explore additional or new options to supplement available funding. Significant current city funding sources for transportation include:

- Property tax levies
- Sales tax revenues
- Commercial parking tax revenues

- Automated traffic enforcement camera revenues
- Transportation network company tax revenues
- Federal and State grants
- Partnerships with key stakeholders like Sound Transit, King County, and the Port of Seattle
- City General Fund
- Real estate excise taxes
- Motor vehicle excise taxes
- Vehicle license fees
- Street use and occupation, permit review, and other developer fees

The 2024 Transportation Levy provides \$1.55 B over 8 years (through 2033). The levy funds will be used to enhance the city's transportation infrastructure including building sidewalks and crosswalks, paving streets, repairing bridges, planting trees, making connections to light rail stations and transit, and creating more walking, rolling, and biking routes to places where people live, work, and play. Over the next 20 years, the City may also consider pursuing additional funding options in partnership with the State, such as tolls and road user charges based on vehicle miles traveled. These new sources, however, will require time to develop and implement.

Delivering priority transportation projects and programs in Seattle depends on various funding sources, each with different usage restrictions. These restrictions often reflect legislative or voter intent, such as the voter-approved 0.15 percent sales tax for transit support. Some funds are flexible, while others are highly restricted or tied to specific projects or locations. The transportation department carefully manages this diverse funding landscape to align investments with community values. The department will continue to navigate funding opportunities, constraints, and partnerships to successfully implement strategies to achieve our transportation goals.

Given funding restrictions and availability, the City is developing an adaptable, multi-faceted transportation funding plan. The availability of funding will determine the pace of delivering the STP's vision through projects and programs over its 20-year lifespan. Additional information on transportation financing is included in the Transportation appendix, including estimated revenues and projected expenditures.

## **GOAL**

TG 10            Transportation funding is sufficient to operate, maintain, and modernize the transportation system that supports the City's transportation, land use, economic, environmental, equity, and other goals.

## **POLICIES**

T 10.1            Develop a holistic multi-resource long-range funding plan to guide decisions about levies, ballot measures, the commercial parking tax, and other funding sources.

- T 10.2 Work with regional and state partners to encourage a shift to greater reliance on user-based taxes and fees, and on revenues related to impacts on the transportation system and the environment.
- T 10.3 In partnership with WSDOT and PSRC, build on a long history of stakeholder and community discussions to deliver equitable mobility management strategies that provide multiple benefits including:
- managing travel demand;
  - reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions;
  - generating revenue to supplement or replace declining gas tax revenue; and
  - using revenue to pay for equitable transportation investments and outcomes.
- T 10.4 Leverage local funding resources by securing grants from regional, state, and federal sources, and through contributions from those who benefit from improvements.
- T 10.5 Partner with other City departments, as well as regional transportation and public works agencies, to coordinate investments, maximize project integration, reduce improvement costs, and limit neighborhood and environmental justice impacts from construction of transportation facilities.
- T 10.6 Make strategic investment decisions consistent with the Seattle Transportation Plan and the city's growth strategy.
- T 10.7 Prioritize investments by considering how they advance the Seattle Transportation Plan goals for Safety, Equity, Sustainability, Mobility & Economic Vitality, Livability, and Maintenance & Modernization.
- T 10.8 Consider use of transportation impact fees to help fund transportation system improvements needed to serve growth.
- T 10.9 Plan to meet future transportation needs by preparing a six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that identifies anticipated projects, programs, and funding strategies, along with longer term transportation facilities plans and analyses that identify anticipate additional future transportation needs, costs, and potential revenue sources.
- T 10.10 Identify and evaluate possible additional funding resources and/or alternative land use and transportation scenarios if the level of transportation funding anticipated falls short of the estimated amount.



# Housing

## Introduction

### **A Vision of Housing Abundance**

The One Seattle Plan envisions a future where everyone in Seattle has a home that meets their needs. When housing is safe, affordable, and abundant, we can fulfill many of our goals for the future. Households achieve the stability necessary to build roots in their community. Families have plentiful options to grow, shrink, and meet their changing needs. People have the mobility to access jobs and educational opportunities, local businesses have a customer base that sustains them, and employers can attract and retain workers. Achieving housing abundance is fundamental to addressing our homelessness crisis, redressing historical patterns of segregation and exclusion, and creating opportunities for displaced residents to return to their communities.

Achieving this vision will require us to address the root causes of Seattle's longstanding housing crisis. Despite substantial construction in recent years, housing supply has not kept up with population and employment growth, causing an overall shortage of homes that drives up rents and

sales prices. Most new housing production has been small rental apartment units in areas long designated as Urban Centers and Villages in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. Despite growing our investments in affordable housing, we are far from meeting the housing needs of low-income people who currently live, work, or wish to live in Seattle but cannot afford market prices. As prices rise, households must devote more and more of their income toward housing costs, leaving less for other basic needs, and straining their ability to save towards homeownership.

This crisis forces many to leave their communities, with ripple effects throughout our city and region. Families who relocate to find a suitable and affordable home must endure longer commutes from suburban locations with consequent environmental and health impacts. Low-income households are displaced, with the greatest impacts on people of color, immigrants, and refugees who have less income and wealth, and who have withstood generations of institutionalized racism and face ongoing discrimination in housing. Ultimately this causes more people to lose their housing entirely, as a \$100 increase in median rent is associated with a nine percent increase in homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

## A Legacy of Racial Exclusion and Inequity

Today's housing crisis has its origins in a long history of racial discrimination, beginning with the arrival of white European settlers to the Pacific Northwest in the 1840s. At that time Washington was part of the Oregon Territory and subject to the Black exclusion laws that forbade Black people from settling or owning property in the region. Early laws in Seattle barred Indigenous people from residing within city limits.

In the 20th century, land use and housing became tools of racial segregation. Seattle's first zoning ordinance, adopted in 1923, was crafted by a planner who touted zoning's power to "preserve the more desirable residential neighborhoods" and prevent movement into "finer residential districts... by colored people."<sup>2</sup> It established for the first time areas reserved for detached housing, which the City's zoning commission promoted as a way to prevent "lowering... the standard of racial strength and virility," that expanded over time through periodic downzoning.<sup>3</sup>

Racially restrictive covenants reinforced this pattern. Written into private property deeds, racial covenants limited the sale and use of property based on race, ethnicity, and religion, making many Seattle neighborhoods inaccessible to people of color. In the limited areas where people of color were allowed to live, the practice of redlining typically rendered them ineligible for government-backed home loans. To determine areas safe for mortgage lending, the Federal government explicitly referenced neighborhoods' racial composition, citing the presence of racial restrictions in

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<sup>1</sup> GAO-20-433

<sup>2</sup> In *The Color of Law*, Rothstein reveals the racial motivations of many regulators who devised zoning schemes to circumvent the 1917 Buchanan decision. See also <https://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson>.

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from "A Zoning Program for Seattle." Record Series 1651-02 Box 1, Folder 1. Seattle Municipal Archives.

neighborhoods deemed creditworthy while demarcating in red to signify “hazardous” those places with greater shares of people of color.

The legacy of these practices, which the Housing Appendix details further, persists today, visible in the lasting segregation across Seattle, racial wealth and homeownership gaps, and the restricted housing choices and market pressures at the root of our displacement crisis.

## Addressing These Challenges

How do we redress this history and address ongoing disparity, high housing costs, and displacement? This Housing element advances three key strategies:

### INCREASE HOUSING PRODUCTION

First, the Housing element complements this Plan’s Growth Strategy by promoting more housing production overall, of diverse types and throughout all neighborhoods. This is necessary to meet the needs of a diversifying population, keep pace with demand as the region continues to grow, and address past underproduction. This Plan also identifies the need for a streamlined and predictable permitting process for housing.

### INVEST IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Second, this Plan supports resources, investment, and a variety of tools to address housing needs unmet by the market. Despite historic levels of investment in affordable housing for low-income households, we continue to fall far short of the need. The Housing element identifies the critical need for significant public investment to produce and preserve rental units and to create homeownership opportunities for people with incomes too low to afford housing in Seattle. This Plan also supports land use rules that boost our ability to add income-restricted homes in all neighborhoods.

### IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT

Third, this Plan supports a broad array of anti-displacement strategies to keep vulnerable households in place and cultural communities intact. Affordable housing itself is a primary anti-displacement measure. Measures to protect low-income tenants from rent increases and eviction and preserve housing affordable to them are critical. Additional tools focus on stabilizing communities, increasing community ownership, and redressing past discrimination and exclusion, particularly for Black and Indigenous communities.<sup>4</sup>

## What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable housing can be created through public subsidy or other action to meet the needs of people who cannot afford market housing. In Seattle, the City’s Office of Housing (OH) invests public

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<sup>4</sup> Africatown Community Land Trust and E’lip Tilikum Land Conservancy are two examples of these efforts.

resources in the creation and preservation of affordable housing and administers programs that support and stabilize low-income residents. Other public-sector and non-profit organizations, including the Seattle Housing Authority and independent public development authorities (PDAs), also provide affordable housing. Seattle currently has more than 17,000 City-funded affordable units and is a national leader in municipal investment in affordable housing.

Most lower-income households, however, live in market-rate housing. Some market housing may be comparatively lower cost due to its location, size, quality or condition, or other characteristics. Low-cost market-rate housing is both a critical way low-income people find housing in our community — and a distinctly less reliable one since its residents can be vulnerable to sudden rent increases or outright housing loss due to demolition. Low-income households typically pay a large share of their income on housing costs or make other sacrifices like sharing living space with other housemates, delaying having children, or foregoing homeownership.

The term **area median income (AMI)** refers to annual median family income for the Seattle area, which includes King and Snohomish counties, as published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, with adjustments for household size. This statistic is used as a benchmark to determine the maximum income of eligible households and the housing cost affordable to households at that income level. Housing regulated by local, state, or federal agencies is for households with incomes at or below a particular AMI level. The maximum rent or sales price for housing varies by unit size, configuration, and amenities. The maximum household income varies by size of household.

The following table approximates the income equivalents for select AMI levels, as adjusted for household size. In this Housing element, policies for City regulated affordable housing refer to households within specific income ranges (generally at or below 60% of AMI for rental or at or below 80% of AMI for ownership) and other policies refer more broadly to households in all categories of need (at or below 120% of AMI).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In Seattle, median income is closer to 77% of AMI for renters and 175% of AMI for owners. While AMI levels are the standard for establishing housing cost limits on income-restricted housing, using a singular AMI for all households in the region fails to capture the substantial disparity in income between renters and homeowners in Seattle.

**Figure 13**  
**Area Median Income Levels**

Annual Household Incomes by Area Median Income (AMI) Level <sup>6</sup>				
AMI level	1-person household income	2-person household income	3-person household income	4-person household income
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$30,750	\$35,150	\$39,550	\$43,950
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$51,300	\$58,600	\$65,950	\$73,250
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$82,050	\$93,750	\$105,500	\$117,200
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$102,550	\$117,200	\$131,850	\$146,500
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$123,050	\$140,650	\$158,200	\$175,800

Washington state's Growth Management Act requires that jurisdictions "plan for and accommodate" housing affordable to all economic segments of the population. This includes:

- **Permanent housing units** for households with incomes 0-30%, 30-50%, 50-80%, 80-100%, and 100-120% of AMI, accounting for both projected future household growth and existing unmet housing needs at each income level.
- **Permanent supportive housing (PSH)**, which is publicly funded low-income housing paired with on- or off-site voluntary human services to support people living with behavioral or physical health conditions and currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- **Emergency housing** that provides temporary indoor accommodations for individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless in forms such as short-term apartments, hotel rooms, traditional shelter arrangements, shelters for victims of domestic violence, and tiny home villages.

Based on county-level growth projections allocated to cities by the King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC), Seattle is responsible for accommodating certain minimum housing needs, totaling 112,000 units for a 25-year period from 2019 to 2044. The greatest need is among extremely low-income households, with more than 43,600 units needed for households with incomes at or below 30% of AMI, which will require substantial subsidy. Subsidy will likely also be

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<sup>6</sup> Estimated household incomes for each AMI level in Table X are calculated based on the HUD-published Median Family Income (MFI) for fiscal year 2023 (\$146,500 for a family of four), as adjusted for household size. This table is provided for general reference. Income limits for regulated affordable housing vary according to specific housing covenants. [Income limits](#) for City-regulated affordable housing are available on the Office of Housing's website.



needed for 19,000 additional units affordable to households with incomes of 30-50% of AMI. The estimated need also includes roughly 8,000 units for households with incomes of 50-80% of AMI, 5,400 units for households with incomes of 80-100% of AMI, and 6,100 units for households with incomes of 100-120% of AMI.

The goals and policies in this Housing element are informed by extensive data and analysis in the Housing Appendix, covering a range of topics that includes housing production, household characteristics, demographic trends, development capacity, and growth targets and future need projections adopted by the GMPC.

## Overarching Vision

### DISCUSSION

The policies in this section broadly support our vision for housing in 2044, where diverse housing choices, affordable to people of all income levels and suitable to all types of households, exist in every Seattle neighborhood. People who work in Seattle, who relocate from elsewhere in search of opportunity or safety, and who are struggling with housing insecurity or homelessness can all find a stable and suitable place to live. Families can grow and shrink over time and fulfill their changing household needs. Through affordable homeownership, particularly permanently affordable homeownership opportunities, households achieve stability. Affordable rental housing provides flexibility for people at various stages of life and helps make it possible for people to achieve other goals, like saving to buy a home, sending children to college, or starting a business. In this vision, after more than a century of racist and exclusionary housing and land use practices, racial disparities in housing outcomes are closing.

### GOAL

H G1                    Housing in Seattle provides stability, expands access to opportunity, and closes racial and class disparities for all who seek to live in Seattle.

### POLICIES

- H 1.1                    Implement strategies and programs that preserve, improve, and increase Seattle's housing supply to accommodate current and projected future housing needs, including units affordable to households in all categories of need.
- H 1.2                    Implement strategies and programs to ensure a range of rental and ownership housing opportunities affordable for Seattle's workforce.
- H 1.3                    Evaluate housing disparities based on race, ability, income, other protected classes, and geography to identify zoning, programmatic, and investment actions designed to close identified racial disparities and redress past discriminatory housing and land use practices.
- H 1.4                    Develop housing strategies that reflect the values and meet the specific needs of communities most impacted by housing discrimination and injustice.

# Meeting Seattle's Housing Needs

## DISCUSSION

Seattle was one of the fastest-growing large cities in the country over the last decade. From 2010 to 2020, the number of jobs in Seattle rose 38 percent, but our housing supply grew by only 19 percent.<sup>7</sup> Simply put, despite recent construction, we have not built enough housing overall to keep pace with employment growth. This shortage has many factors, including barriers in our zoning that limit the type and location of housing built, increases in construction costs, and the complex and lengthy regulatory process homebuilders must navigate. The net result of housing scarcity is greater competition that drives housing prices upward.

Boosting the supply of housing plays a major role in making Seattle and the region more affordable. When housing is scarce, regional growth pushes prices further out of reach. While market housing can cause instability for low-income households vulnerable to sudden rent increases, increasing its supply nonetheless relieves pressure on the finite public resources we can invest in affordable housing. Accordingly, this Plan embraces a dual strategy of expanding the supply of both market and, discussed further below, below-market housing to address our current and future needs. This section promotes expanding production of all housing types.

## GOAL

H G2                      Seattle's housing supply expands sufficiently to meet current and projected future needs for housing suitable and affordable for all economic and demographic groups.

## POLICIES

- H 2.1                      Expand capacity for housing development broadly to encourage market production that meets short- and long-term housing needs, reduces upward pressure on costs caused by scarcity, accommodates current and projected future growth, and accounts for past underproduction of housing.
- H 2.2                      Monitor regularly the supply, diversity, tenure, and affordability of housing in Seattle, the impact of development regulations on housing production, and demographic information about Seattle households, and use this information to support and evaluate strategies and policies to meet housing needs and advance racial and social equity.
- H 2.3                      Promote the production of housing with lower market price points, including by removing regulatory barriers, to meet Seattle's projected 20-year affordable housing needs.

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<sup>7</sup> PSRC Covered Employment dataset and 2010 and 2020 decennial Census counts from the U.S. Census Bureau.

- H 2.4 Recognize the role of rental housing owners in growing and operating Seattle’s housing supply, particularly small-scale apartment buildings, and pursue strategies that help them successfully operate rental housing, maintain health and safety, preserve affordability, and comply with tenant protections.

## **DISCUSSION**

In November 2023, residents voted to renew the Seattle Housing Levy at a record level of \$970 million. Even with recent commitments from the City and other public and private funders, the region falls short of being able to meet the full need for rental and ownership housing affordable to people with low incomes over the next 20 years.

The Housing Appendix provides a comprehensive overview of the range of housing assistance programs funded by the City along with an analysis of the gap between existing funds, including City capital funds, and projected housing needs. The City alone cannot fill this gap and there are critical roles for other local governments in the region, state and federal funders, and the private sector.

The policies below guide Seattle towards greater affordability by meeting the needs of households with lower incomes who cannot afford rising rents and sales prices and struggle to withstand the volatility of our housing market. They address both public investment and regulations to achieve this goal and complement the critical role of increasing housing supply to reduce pressure on the finite public resources available for affordable housing. The policies support maintaining and expanding public and private funding to meet the capital and operating, maintenance, and services (OMS) costs of producing and preserving sufficient affordable housing.

## **GOAL**

- H G3 People whose housing needs are unmet by the market can live affordably in Seattle.

## **POLICIES**

- H 3.1 Pursue public and private funding sources, and advocate for robust federal and state funding, for preservation and production of income-restricted homes, including housing for people with special needs, people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, and others struggling or unable to afford housing in Seattle.
- H 3.2 Expand housing preservation and production programs that ensure long-term affordability for income-eligible households and continue to prioritize efforts that address the needs of Seattle households with incomes 30% of AMI or less.
- H 3.3 Create a more diverse and inclusive city by building and preserving income-restricted homes in all Seattle neighborhoods.
- H 3.4 Invest in income-restricted homes near frequent transit with the goals of lowering the combined housing and transportation costs of residents, enabling lower-wage workers to live nearer their jobs, and reducing GHG emissions.

- H 3.5 Reduce the burden of housing-related costs, including utilities, among households in all categories of need.
- H 3.6 Renew investment in existing income-restricted homes to ensure ongoing affordability, health, and safety for residents.
- H 3.7 Fund acquisition and rehabilitation of multifamily housing to achieve long-term affordability and housing stability for lower-income households.
- H 3.8 Promote and pursue funding for redevelopment of suitable publicly owned sites for income-restricted rental and ownership housing.
- H 3.9 Waive or modify development standards and requirements for construction of income-restricted affordable housing to reduce costs, delays, and uncertainty in the development process.
- H 3.10 Encourage and advocate for new federal, state, and county laws, regulations, programs, and incentives that would increase the production and preservation of income-restricted homes.
- H 3.11 Use a range of tools to create income-restricted homes with new market development, including development regulations, inclusionary zoning, incentives, and permit fee reductions, where the public benefits provided are commensurate with the benefit to the development, are racially equitable, and prioritize housing for households most in need.
- H 3.12 Consider using property tax exemption programs, such as multifamily tax exemption (MFTE), to encourage the production of more housing, including affordable, workforce, and market rate homes.
- H 3.13 Consider strategies that incentivize owners to upgrade older lower-cost residential properties in exchange for income and rent restrictions on a share of the units.
- H 3.14 Consider using substantive authority available through the State Environmental Policy Act to require that new development mitigate adverse impacts on housing affordable for lower-income households.
- H 3.15 Consider requiring affordable housing with new development when rezones or changes to development standards significantly increase development capacity.
- H 3.16 Create opportunities for households with incomes up to 80% AMI, including families with children, to purchase a permanently affordable home in Seattle.
- H 3.17 Support programs that promote homeowner stability, health, and safety, and reduce energy bills and the costs of home repair and weatherization.

H 3.18 Consider requiring production and preservation of income-restricted homes as part of major institution master plans and development agreements to mitigate impacts of housing demolition or employment growth.

H 3.19 Encourage employers to fund housing affordable to their workforces.

## Equitable Access to Housing

### DISCUSSION

Housing is a basic human necessity that everyone deserves to be able to access, free from discrimination and regardless of their ability to afford prices set by the market. Under the federal Fair Housing Act, landlords cannot discriminate against or in favor of any individual or group based on race, religious, national origin, sex, color, disability, or family status (meaning pregnancy or the presence of children under 18). These are considered protected classes under the law. The State of Washington and City of Seattle have each expanded these protections to additional classes, including marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, use of Section 8 voucher, political ideology, and veteran or military status. These protections increase housing choices for people of all incomes and backgrounds and are fundamental to our vision of an equitable and inclusive city.

Equitable access also includes addressing barriers like zoning that limit the types and location of new housing. In most of Seattle, relatively lower-cost housing forms, like rental apartments, are prohibited. This limits who can afford to live in places with good access to parks, safe streets, and schools and makes it very difficult for the City to invest in affordable homes for low-income households in these neighborhoods. Where past policies and practices explicitly excluded people from these areas on the basis of race, today the high cost of scarce housing perpetuates economic exclusion.

This section supports a variety of actions to remove these barriers by encouraging more diverse, affordable, and accessible housing in all neighborhoods. It includes strategies to ensure the City's investments in affordable homes and other housing resources, like rental assistance, are shared proactively with the households most in need by addressing language barriers, disparities in access to technology, and discriminatory practices.

### GOAL

H G4 All people seeking housing in Seattle have fair and equitable access to housing.

### POLICIES

H 4.1 Help create a culture where everyone knows, understands, and respects the fair housing rights protected by federal, state, and local laws.

H 4.2 Promote fair housing choices and foster racially inclusive communities free from discrimination through actions like fair housing education and enforcement.

- H 4.3 Use tools like affirmative marketing, pre-screening, in-language support, and centralized resources to help housing operators achieve fair housing goals and help households otherwise unlikely to apply for affordable housing become aware of vacancies, feel welcome to apply, and face fewer barriers to accessing housing.
- H 4.4 Remove barriers that prevent households from using rental assistance in all Seattle neighborhoods, including by providing information in culturally and language appropriate formats.
- H 4.5 Remove zoning and building code barriers that prevent the development of comparatively lower-cost forms of housing, particularly in residential neighborhoods with a history of racial exclusion.
- H 4.6 Use development standards and incentives to increase the feasibility of income-restricted homes in all Seattle neighborhoods, particularly to further fair housing in neighborhood residential areas where such housing is scarce today.
- H 4.7 Support programs and investments that seek to address racial disparities in homeownership and lending practices, including homebuyer education, capacity building, estate planning, and financial assistance, especially those led by culturally relevant community-based organizations.
- H 4.8 Identify and remove barriers to stable housing for individuals and families, like unlawful housing screening practices that restrict access to housing on the basis of criminal history.
- H 4.9 Ensure that engagement with the neighbors of proposed publicly funded affordable housing is inclusive and culturally sensitive and furthers fair housing.
- H 4.10 Seek to ensure that renter and buyer households in all categories of need benefit and avoid harm from clean energy and other green new deal policies related to housing.

## Housing Security and Stable Communities

### DISCUSSION

Throughout Seattle's history, growth has not unfolded equitably, leading low-income households and communities of color to experience insecurity and displacement. In the past, this occurred through treaties and laws that forcibly removed Native people from their land and racist practices that restricted access to homeownership, neighborhoods, and opportunity. Today, displacement occurs in a context of rapid population and economic growth, where scarcity and market demand drive unregulated housing and land prices upward, leaving people with less income and wealth and who face barriers to accessing housing most vulnerable to displacement.

In practice, displacement can unfold in several ways:

- **Physical displacement** can occur through eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of housing; when covenants expire on rent-restricted housing; and due to other factors, such as climate impacts.
- **Economic displacement** happens as housing becomes less affordable and residents can no longer weather rising rents or the costs of homeownership, like property taxes.
- **Commercial displacement**, though not directly related to housing, is when these pressures affect small businesses, many of which rent their space and are subject to market prices.
- **Cultural displacement** occurs as residents relocate because their cultural community is leaving, and culturally relevant businesses and institutions lose their customer base or membership.
- **Exclusionary neighborhoods** also fuel displacement by pushing households to lower-cost neighborhoods, increasing pressures on the housing supply there.

While renter households face particular vulnerability due to their exposure to rent increases, homeowners with lower incomes and fewer resources also experience displacement pressure from the burden of property taxes and via predatory behaviors and speculation by investors and developers.

In recent years, the City has built up a range of anti-displacement tools, including robust protections for renters, regulations and funding sources for affordable housing, and investments through the [Equitable Development Initiative](#) (EDI) in community-driven and -led projects. The One Seattle Plan envisions a future where growth in Seattle welcomes newcomers, helps community members remain and thrive in place, and creates pathways so former residents who have been displaced can return to their communities. This section establishes a policy basis for the anti-displacement strategies the City will carry out with its partners and community.

## GOAL

H G5 As Seattle grows and develops, residents and communities can remain in place and thrive, particularly those facing displacement pressure and who have experienced exclusion and housing discrimination.

## POLICIES

H 5.1 Regularly evaluate present and potential future physical, economic, and cultural displacement, particularly among BIPOC communities, immigrants and refugees, low-income people, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations, as well as the effectiveness of City efforts to mitigate displacement.

H 5.2 Identify tools and resources to address financial, educational, and regulatory barriers facing homeowners with incomes 120% of AMI or less who seek to retain, redevelop, or add housing on their property, particularly barriers that disproportionately affect homeowners of color and within communities with a documented history of housing discrimination.

- H 5.3 Require advance notice to all tenants and payment of relocation assistance to income-eligible tenant households before issuing permits for housing demolition, change of use, or substantial rehabilitation; before removing use restrictions from income-restricted homes; and before a substantial increase in housing costs takes effect.
- H 5.4 Analyze and seek to minimize the potential loss of low-cost housing units due to demolition, rehabilitation, or rent increases ahead of zoning and other land use policy changes.
- H 5.5 Take steps ahead of zoning changes to protect homeowners against predatory behaviors, such as by reaching out to residents in communities at risk of displacement, disseminating culturally relevant educational resources, and discouraging speculative practices.
- H 5.6 Establish requirements and pursue funding for a housing acquisition strategy that creates opportunities for qualified nonprofits to purchase market-rate housing to preserve long-term affordability and maintain or increase housing quality.
- H 5.7 Explore tenure conversion strategies that create opportunities for tenants to purchase their housing and support community-based organizations working to help those tenants.
- H 5.8 Support the efforts of religious, arts and culture, and heritage organizations, particularly those addressing displacement in BIPOC communities, to develop needed rental and ownership affordable housing.
- H 5.9 Provide financial, regulatory, and technical support for community-based developers working to help BIPOC homeowners and prospective homebuyers avoid displacement, achieve or retain homeownership, or return to their cultural communities.
- H 5.10 Pursue and support strategies like land banking and housing acquisition in areas with a high risk of displacement and in current and future station areas to increase income-restricted housing choices.
- H 5.11 Support the efforts of Native-led and -serving nonprofits and community organizations to acquire and conserve land for affordable housing, cultural space, gathering space, and other programming that honors and meets the needs of urban Native and Indigenous people.
- H 5.12 Establish and provide funding to implement a right to legal counsel for tenant households facing eviction who cannot afford an attorney.
- H 5.13 Support and strengthen property tax relief for low- and fixed-income homeowners, through deferrals, exemptions, and incentives, including those that may require changes in local, county, or state law.



# Diversity of Housing Types

## DISCUSSION

Seattle's overall housing supply has increased in recent years, but certain housing types remain in short supply. From 2016 to 2022, 68% of new units were in multifamily buildings with 50 units or more. Townhouses comprised only 15% of new housing units, in part because of limited land area where zoning allows them. Just 6% were new detached homes despite 72% of land zoned for housing reserved for that type. Accessory dwelling unit (ADU) production increased fourfold between 2019 and 2022, demonstrating the demand that exists for smaller, lower-cost homes in high-opportunity neighborhoods, if we allow them to be built.

The multifamily flats that account for most recent housing development are critical for housing our growing population and are affordable to a wider range of households. Zoning for this scale of housing is also vital for income-restricted rental housing, which generally requires capacity for midrise development. In market-rate buildings, most homes are studio and one-bedroom units that provide comparatively lower-cost options, in buildings of four to seven stories at densities that make frequent transit viable.

Still, this narrow range of housing types doesn't work well for all households. The One Seattle Plan sets a course where, by 2044, housing in Seattle meets a broader range of needs, including:

- Creating affordable options suited to families with children and larger households.
- Serving people with accessibility or mobility needs through universal design features and homes without stairs.
- Planning for older adults to age in place with services nearby.
- Increasing condominiums, co-ops, and smaller homes that lower the bar to homeownership.

## GOAL

H G6            Seattle offers a full range of housing types that provide opportunity and choice in all neighborhoods for people of various ages, races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and abilities and for all household sizes, types, and incomes.

## POLICIES

H 6.1            Allow and encourage a wide range of housing types that meet the needs of current and future households in Seattle.

H 6.2            Explore and implement, where appropriate, strategies to promote innovative and nontraditional housing designs to accommodate residential growth and provide choices with comparatively lower prices, including through incentives, alternative development standards, and pilot programs to test new housing types.

H 6.3            Increase housing opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities by promoting universal design features in new and renovated housing and housing that allows for independent living, various degrees of assisted living, and/or skilled nursing care, particularly near health care and other services and amenities.

- H 6.4 Encourage in all neighborhoods the development of housing suitable for families with children, larger households, and multigenerational living that is affordable for households with a broad range of incomes.
- H 6.5 Allow and encourage greater production and variety of housing types in Neighborhood Residential zones, including options that lower the bar for entry to homeownership and address the needs of renters, people with disabilities, older adults, and small households.
- H 6.6 Promote the construction of small-scale attached and stacked housing, such as by addressing the impacts of code requirements and permitting process on development cost and feasibility.
- H 6.7 Advocate for state legislation to encourage production of condominiums and co-operatives, including by mitigating risks associated with warranty liability.
- H 6.8 Allow small housing units that, by virtue of their size, might have market rents affordable to people with minimum wage jobs.

## Housing Construction, Quality, and Design

### DISCUSSION

In addition to meeting the affordability needs of current and future residents, Seattle's housing must also achieve several other critical goals related to safety, health, energy efficiency, and livability. Our homes are where we spend much of our time, especially with the rise of remote work. The indoor environment where we live therefore has a major effect on our physical and mental health, and life safety depends on the quality and durability of the structures we reside in.

The City enforces regulations intended to protect health and safety, like the Residential Code, the Building Code, and the Housing and Building Maintenance Code. Most Seattle households live in rental housing, and the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO) helps ensure that it is safe and meets basic housing maintenance requirements through regular inspections.

When it comes to climate goals, buildings account for more than one-third of Seattle's GHG emissions, and housing comprises a large portion of new construction in Seattle. Reducing energy usage and promoting resiliency strategies in new and existing housing is an important way we can prepare for the effects of climate change and reduce impacts on our most vulnerable residents in the future.

This section promotes a range of strategies to ensure that the city's housing supply achieves these objectives, and it does so in a way that makes benefits available for all, regardless of income, race and ethnicity, disability, national origin or citizenship, or household type, and mitigates impacts on lower-income households, including potential risk of displacement or retaliation as a result of code enforcement.

## **GOAL**

- H G7 Seattle's housing supply is healthy, safe, and carbon-neutral, reflects and embraces culturally relevant design principles, and can adapt to changing demographic conditions.

## **POLICIES**

- H 7.1 Provide programs, regulations, and enforcement to help ensure that all housing is healthy and safe and meets basic housing-maintenance requirements.
- H 7.2 Adopt zoning, development, and permitting standards that accommodate or incentivize new construction methods and materials, including mass timber, cross-laminated timber (CLT), and similar wood-based building products that promote circular and bio-economic benefits, and encourage further innovation in residential design, construction, and technology to reduce carbon footprints, accelerate building assembly, and provide seismic durability.
- H 7.3 Implement regulations and incentives for housing construction and operations to conserve water, energy, and materials; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; limit water runoff; create habitable and healthy indoor environments; and reduce other environmental and health impacts.
- H 7.4 Support property owners to electrify their buildings and make other climate resiliency and energy efficiency retrofits, such as cooling, prioritizing assistance that benefits lower-income households.
- H 7.5 Promote opportunities to combine housing and historic preservation efforts by rehabilitating structures of historic value for residential use.
- H 7.6 Explore strategies for converting nonresidential uses to housing, particularly those that produce units for households unable to afford market housing costs.
- H 7.7 Adopt development regulations that encourage new construction or modification of housing that accommodates the needs of older adults, including accessible units, intergenerational care facilities, and community space suited to elders.
- H 7.8 Promote and remove barriers to construction of new construction or modification of housing that incorporates accessibility and universal design features to meet the needs of people of all abilities.
- H 7.9 Promote unit, building, and site designs and layouts that accommodate and incorporate open space, communal areas, and gathering spaces to support cultural placemaking, community cohesion, shared living, and belonging.
- H 7.10 Promote, reflect, and accommodate Native art, language, traditional knowledge, and design principles in Seattle's housing, based on the guidance of Indigenous artists, architects, and designers.

# Homelessness

## DISCUSSION

Homelessness remains one of the biggest challenges confronting Seattle. In 2015, the City first declared a [State of Emergency for homelessness](#). Despite intentional efforts and substantial spending, the emergency has worsened since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. While support for shelter, outreach, services, and other resources is critical, the only way to ensure lasting progress on the homelessness crisis is to address the housing affordability crisis.

Homelessness is fundamentally a housing issue with multiple root causes and contributing factors, including:

- **Affordability.** Homelessness starts with an inability to afford a safe place to reside indoors. In Seattle, challenges like rising home prices, scarce affordable housing choices, and income inequality are particularly acute. When residents lack a strong safety net and stable housing is unaffordable, the loss of a job, medical expenses, or other economic hardships can precipitate homelessness. Youth who age out of foster care at age 18 often struggle to access assistance, with more than one-third becoming homeless within one year.<sup>8</sup>
- **Equity.** Homelessness disproportionately impacts people of color, especially Black and American Indian/Alaska Native communities who have been impacted by a long history of race-based discrimination in housing, land use, and finance. These communities comprise only 7% of the total County population, but together comprise about 35% of the households receiving homelessness services in King County.
- **Health.** Homelessness can both produce and result from physical and mental health challenges, including addiction. The longer people remain unsheltered, the more likely they are to need help. Breaking this cycle requires urgent action to bring people indoors and provide health services.

To meet this enormous challenge, the region's approach centers on rapidly reducing the number of people currently forced to live outside by substantially expanding both temporary shelter and permanent housing options. As of 2023, Seattle has approximately 4,335 of the 25,734 temporary shelter spaces and 5,230 of the 20,255 permanently supportive housing units estimated to be needed by the end of 2044.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/community-human-services/housing-homelessness-community-development/documents/one-table/one-table\\_all.ashx?la=en#:~:text=CHILD%20WELFARE%20SYSTEM%20One%2Dthird,to%20obtain%20housing%20and%20employment.](https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/community-human-services/housing-homelessness-community-development/documents/one-table/one-table_all.ashx?la=en#:~:text=CHILD%20WELFARE%20SYSTEM%20One%2Dthird,to%20obtain%20housing%20and%20employment.)

The homelessness services system currently comprises the following the types of housing interventions:

### ***Emergency Shelter***

Homeless shelters provide a place for people and families experiencing homelessness to find safety, protection from exposure to weather, and an opportunity to connect with services on their path to permanent housing. Various types of emergency shelter differ based on certain key characteristics, including:

- Overnight versus 24/7 hours of operation
- Ability to “drop-in” to access to shelter
- Congregate versus non-congregate
- Hot meals or options for kitchens
- Ability to bring pets or partners
- Ability to store belongings for extended periods
- Permitted length of stay
- Populations served (single adults, families, youth and young adults, culturally specific, etc.)
- Availability seasonally or during severe weather events

“Congregate” refers to communal sleeping arrangements in emergency shelter settings; “non-congregate” describes a setting with single-room occupancy and/or separate rooms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefits of non-congregate shelters, including micro-modular shelters, tiny house villages, and hotel/motel shelters, became apparent, with several studies demonstrating its correlation with improved short-term health outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Having a space separate from other people and safe for belongings provides privacy and stability and improves overall wellness and service connections. For that reason, non-congregate shelters of all kinds constitute a substantial area for further temporary housing expansions.

### ***Transitional Housing***

Transitional housing is a specific program, defined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), that provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully

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<sup>9</sup> Fleming MD, Evans JL, Graham-Squire D, et al. Association of Shelter-in-Place Hotels with Health Services Use among People Experiencing Homelessness During the COVID-19 Pandemic. JAMA Network Open. 2022;5(7): e2223891. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.23891; The Promise of Service-Enriched, Hotel-Based Housing as an Alternative to Congregate Shelters for High-Need Persons Experiencing Homelessness | Emergency Medicine | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network

move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing can provide housing and accompanying supportive services at no cost for program participants for up to 24 months.

### ***Rapid Rehousing***

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) is a low-barrier, time-limited intervention connecting households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance, including short-term rental assistance and supportive services, without any pre-conditions or requirements (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety). RRH includes three core components: 1) housing identification, 2) move-in and rental assistance, and 3) housing-focused case management services and supports. Housing-focused case management is provided, with an emphasis on immediate efforts to secure housing, using the minimum assistance necessary to resolve each household's immediate housing crisis.

### ***Prevention and Diversion***

Prevention and diversion activities help individuals and families minimize time spent homeless or averting it altogether. Program participants can receive short- and medium-term tenant- or project-based rental assistance as well as assistance with rental arrears, rental application fees, security deposits, last month's rent payments, utility deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair.

### **GOAL**

H G8 Homelessness is rare and brief, people experiencing homelessness secure housing and supportive services, and shelter is available as an interim, emergency step toward permanent and stable housing.

### **POLICIES**

- H 8.1 Implement strategies and programs that preserve, improve, and expand Seattle's supply of permanent supportive housing, emergency housing, and shelter to meet all current and projected future needs.
- H 8.2 Support strategies and actions that ensure sufficient overall housing supply, including and especially permanently supportive housing and housing affordable to households with incomes at or below 50% AMI, to aid in the City's ability to reduce and respond to homelessness.
- H 8.3 Identify and implement a robust range of anti-displacement strategies and interventions that address the needs of people and households at high risk of becoming homeless.
- H 8.4 Collaborate with King County and other jurisdictions in efforts to prevent and end homelessness and focus those efforts on providing permanent housing with supportive services, expanding safe temporary shelter, and securing the resources to do so.

- H 8.5 Support efforts to respond to homelessness among the Native American population, particularly strategies identified, and services provided by Native-led organizations.
- H 8.6 Support and remove regulatory barriers to siting a small home for an individual or household experiencing homelessness on the property of homeowners throughout Seattle.



# Capital Facilities

## Introduction

Capital facilities are major assets that have a long useful life. Maintaining, improving, and expanding capital facilities is critical for sustaining a high-quality of life as the city grows and making our facilities more efficient, carbon neutral, and equitable. The City cannot fully deliver on our City service or policy priorities without investments in the places where our City workforce performs their work and where community members meet their needs, especially in areas planned for future growth and development.

The Capital Facilities element addresses facilities owned by the City and managed by various City departments: police and fire, parks and recreation, libraries, neighborhood service centers, City office space, arts and cultural space, the Seattle Center, the Central Waterfront, animal shelter, training facilities, and various shops, yards, and warehouses. The facilities and infrastructure of City-operated utilities are also capital facilities but are funded mostly by rate revenues (and are covered in the Utilities element of this Plan). Capital facilities owned and managed by other public entities



that serve Seattle residents include schools, hospitals, and transit. The City also funds community-led capital projects, including projects that are designed to counter displacement or address past discrimination and community underinvestment. Examples of recent community-led capital projects include cultural spaces, affordable housing, open space, and early learning facilities.

Each year the City funds capital facility projects including new facilities, improvements to existing facilities, and rehabilitation or restoration of existing facilities. Projects may address an existing deficiency, a community need related to growth, or community needs not related to growth but that enhance the quality of life. Overall, the City's network of capital facilities, serving an area that is already highly urbanized, is generally sufficient to accommodate forecasted housing and job growth through 2044. While some facilities may require replacement, most capital investments are dedicated to improving existing facilities to extend their useful life: seismic retrofits, decarbonization, climate adaptation, and other natural hazard retrofits. See the Capital Facilities appendix for inventories of current capital facilities and a discussion of future needs.

The Capital Facilities element provides guidance for all City-owned capital facilities as well as guidance for coordination with other public entities that serve Seattle. Policies in this element apply to all City-owned capital facilities including transportation, utility, and park facilities with additional policy guidance provided in other elements. The Capital Facilities appendix includes an inventory and analysis of future need for City-owned facilities, as well as information about capital facilities owned by other public entities. Policy direction, inventories, and forecast of future need for some capital facilities are addressed in other elements and appendices (see Figure 14). The Capital Facilities element includes a six-year plan for financing capital facilities. This information is contained in Seattle's [Capital Improvement Program](#) which is updated as part of the City's annual budget process and is included in this Comprehensive Plan by reference.

**Figure 14**  
**Capital Facilities Providers and Information Sources**

PUBLIC ENTITY	CAPITAL FACILITIES IN SEATTLE	ELEMENTS W/ POLICY GUIDANCE	APPENDIX
<b>Seattle Department of Transportation</b>	Local rights of way including roadways, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, shoreline street ends, public open spaces within the ROW	Capital Facilities Transportation Parks and Open Space	Transportation
<b>Sound Transit</b>	Light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit stations and facilities	Transportation	Transportation
<b>King County Metro</b>	Bus and water taxi facilities	Transportation	Transportation
<b>Amtrak</b>	Passenger rail facilities	Transportation	Transportation

<b>PUBLIC ENTITY</b>	<b>CAPITAL FACILITIES IN SEATTLE</b>	<b>ELEMENTS W/ POLICY GUIDANCE</b>	<b>APPENDIX</b>
<b>Washington State Dept. of Transportation</b>	State and interstate highways, ferries, and ferry terminals	Transportation	Transportation
<b>Port of Seattle</b>	Marine, rail, and air intermodal facilities, public open space	Transportation	Transportation
<b>Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation</b>	Parks, greenbelts, athletic fields, sports courts, golf courses, viewpoints, trails, recreation facilities, boating facilities, community centers, environmental centers, art facilities, crew quarters, equipment storage	Capital Facilities Parks and Open Space	Capital Facilities
<b>Seattle City Light</b>	Electrical distribution systems, streetlights, EV charging stations	Capital Facilities Utilities	Utilities
<b>Seattle Public Utilities</b>	Sewer and drainage systems, solid waste transfer stations, green infrastructure,	Capital Facilities Utilities	Utilities
<b>Seattle Department of Finance and Administration</b>	SFD facilities, SPD facilities, offices (owned and leased), various shops and yards, warehouses, communications, animal shelter, social service facilities, senior and community centers, service centers	Capital Facilities	Capital Facilities
<b>Seattle Public Library</b>	Central Library, branch libraries	Capital Facilities	Capital Facilities
<b>Seattle Center</b>	Buildings and public open space at Seattle Center campus and the Central Waterfront	Capital Facilities	Capital Facilities
<b>Seattle Information Technology</b>	Data, telephone, and radio networks; data centers, servers, storage, and backup; video production facility	Capital Facilities Utilities	Capital Facilities
<b>Seattle Public Schools</b>	Schools, administrative offices, athletic facilities, support buildings	Capital Facilities	Capital Facilities

# Strategic Planning and Investment

## DISCUSSION

The City leverages funding from federal, state, and regional governments to augment City funds and utility revenues to maintain and improve our capital facilities to meet the city's needs as we grow.

The investment decisions we make will have long-term implications for our ability to serve a changing population. Establishing strategic priorities for our investments will help the City implement needed improvements efficiently and with limited resources.

Priorities for investment reflect our shared values such as equity, sustainability, life/safety, as well as regulatory requirements in developing and prioritizing capital facility projects. Additional prioritization criteria may be introduced by certain funding sources, state and federal laws, and City resolutions, ordinances, and Executive Orders.

## GOAL

CF G1            The City sets clear priorities among potential capital projects to meet the needs of a growing city and to maximize long-term environmental, economic, equity, health, and other benefits.

## POLICIES

CF 1.1           Identify new or improved capital facilities needed to support the location and intensity of housing and employment growth anticipated in the growth strategy.

CF 1.2           Implement processes for regularly evaluating capital facility needs, updating planned projects and funding to meet these needs, and, where probable funding for capital improvements falls short of projected needs, identify additional funding sources and/or land use strategies, as appropriate.

CF 1.3           Identify and periodically review criteria to help set priorities among potential capital facility investments, including consideration of equity and displacement risk.

CF 1.4           Identify opportunities to co-locate capital facilities that include multiple uses, mixed-use development, joint-use, reuse, and repurposing of existing City-owned land and buildings.

CF 1.5           Initiate inter-departmental and inter-agency coordination in early planning for new facilities or repurposing of existing public lands and buildings, especially for affordable housing or other priority uses.

CF 1.6           Protect, enhance, and adaptively reuse City-owned historic facilities.

# Sustainable Design and Construction

## DISCUSSION

The City of Seattle owns and maintains over 650 buildings totaling approximately 10 million square feet. Each year existing facilities are improved, and some new facilities are built. In addition, the City manages more than 110,000 acres of public land, including land outside the city boundary. To reduce its environmental impact, the City has adopted policies and programs to address the sustainability of new building construction and major renovations, as well as day-to-day operations. These policies are more urgent as we increase efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts. Reducing the environmental impacts related to capital facilities can also address environmental justice goals.

The City adopted its first Sustainable Building Policy in 2000, and a more ambitious policy in 2011, to improve the environmental performance and resiliency of City-owned buildings, sites, and natural environments. The policy drew from national, regional and local sustainability rating systems including 2030 Challenge, Capital Green, Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard, Ideal Green Parks, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Living Building Challenge, and Sustainable Sites Initiative. These policies not only achieve substantial cost savings but also demonstrate leadership by raising public awareness of the benefits of climate pollution reductions, promoting clean energy, energy and water efficiency, nature-based solutions, natural environment restoration and inspiring others to adopt similar practices.

Since 2011, the design and construction industry has continued to innovate and introduce new approaches and standards that the City may include in future Sustainable Building Policy updates.

## GOAL

CF G2 Capital facility projects are designed to achieve resiliency, sustainability, high levels of environmental performance, zero climate pollution, and minimal environmental impacts consistent with principles of environmental justice.

## POLICIES

CF 2.1 Periodically review and amend Seattle's Sustainable Building Policy to reflect best practices, innovations, and other City priorities, such as reductions in embedded carbon, improved indoor air quality, and impacts on the natural environment., .

CF 2.2 Meet the minimum requirements of the adopted green building standard and pursue opportunities to achieve a higher level of environmental sustainability and resilience through capital facility pilot projects.

CF 2.3 Establish minimum standards for construction practices, building and landscape features not yet included in the Sustainable Building Policy or required by the Land Use Code.

- CF 2.4      Achieve high levels of energy and water efficiency in capital facilities.CF 2.5      Employ landscape best management practices that achieve multiple environmental, economic, and social health benefits in capital facilities.
- CF 2.6      Site and design new capital facilities, or adapt existing capital facilities, to be resilient to climate impacts and other natural hazards, such as earthquake and liquefaction-prone areas, to ensure capital facilities function as intended over their planned life cycle.
- CF 2.7      Adapt existing capital facilities to be resilient to the impacts of climate change, natural hazards, and human-made disasters.
- CF 2.8      Promote physical activity in the design of capital facilities through features such as the placement and design of stairs, elevators, and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- CF 2.9      Incorporate and integrate art into facility design, such as by including artists on the design team and integrating commissioned art into the building and site design.
- CF 2.10      Site capital facilities in locations that support efficient delivery of services, are accessible to the general public, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users, maximize value to local community, especially communities that have experienced historical underinvestment, avoid the impacts of climate change, and minimize impacts to the natural environment.
- CF 2.11      Support the City of Seattle’s tree canopy cover goals by maximizing tree canopy cover potential of capital project sites where compatible with proposed uses.
- CF 2.12      Design capital facilities so they feel safe and welcoming to a wide variety of people,
- CF 2.13      When designing or renovating capital facilities, consider Including building features that can help shelter displaced residents during emergencies.
- CF 2.14      Where applicable, design new capital facilities to incorporate reused and recycled content building materials and to better enable deconstruction at the building’s end of life.
- CF 2.15      Prioritize adaptive reuse or deconstruction for aging or surplus capital facilities.
- CF 2.16      Where feasible, include public restrooms in capital facilities to increase public access to toilets, handwashing, drinking water and baby changing tables.

## Equitable Capital Facilities and Services

### DISCUSSION

In the past, the planning of capital facilities did not fully consider impacts on marginalized and communities and vulnerable populations. This has resulted in a distribution of public amenities and

necessary facilities with inequitable benefits and impacts for adjacent communities. We recognize the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, making it harder for them to avoid and recover from climate impacts. The City's commitment to race and social justice has changed the capital planning process to ensure equity is considered in the earliest stages of planning.

The City has increased funding to support community-initiated capital projects. Communities play a role in initiating capital projects implemented by City departments and in directly developing capital projects that involve land, buildings, and other physical structures. This model is especially important in communities that have experienced past disinvestment and harm. This community-driven model for capital projects has proven successful for various capital facilities and builds the capacity of community organizations.

The City is leveraging its capital investments to expand opportunities for underrepresented communities, as well as women- and minority-owned contractors. For example, the City's Priority Hire Community Workforce Agreement and its Public Works Women Minority Business Enterprise Inclusion Plan are designed to benefit women and minorities who have been excluded from City contracting in the past.

## **GOAL**

CF G3            Capital facilities improve the living conditions for underserved communities, address historical community under-investment, and distribute services and amenities equitably to all residents.

## **POLICIES**

- CF 3.1            Make capital facilities accessible in physical design, language, and affordability, and relevant to people of all abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and cultures.
- CF 3.2            Locate new capital facilities where they would support a more equitable distribution of services and address the needs of underserved communities.
- CF 3.3            Apply consistent and equitable standards for the provision of community and customer amenities when they are needed to offset the impact of construction projects, ongoing operations, and facility maintenance practices.
- CF 3.4            Seek to mitigate environmental and displacement impacts from the construction or operation of capital facilities on adjacent communities, especially lower-income residents, small locally owned businesses, and communities that already bear a disproportionate amount of such impacts.
- CF 3.5            Adapt existing capital facilities to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.
- CF 3.6            Improve City-owned, community-serving facilities, such as libraries and community centers, to support emergency response associated with natural disasters and extreme weather events, especially facilities located in frontline communities.

Improvements could include seismic retrofits, air conditioning, air filtration, and backup energy sources.

- CF 3.7 Create training opportunities and living wage jobs, particularly for underrepresented groups and residents, through capital facility investments.
- CF 3.8 Expand the capacity of community-based organizations in underserved communities to plan and implement community-led capital projects to better meet community needs.
- CF 3.9 Consider alternate service delivery models that may be more resource efficient or that could better reach underserved communities.
- CF 3.10 Structure user fees and scholarships to mitigate disproportionate cost burdens on low-income households.
- CF 3.11 Prioritize investment in Seattle Public Library programs and resources so that they remain free and open to all.

## Facility Operations and Maintenance

### DISCUSSION

The operation and maintenance of existing capital facilities affects the efficient use of resources, resiliency, and climate pollution. Maintaining capital facilities ensures these investments achieve long and productive service, avoid the need for the construction of new facilities, and reduce climate pollution. The policies below apply to daily operations and monitoring of these facilities, as well as minor improvements to them.

### GOAL

- CF G4 The City's capital facilities optimize efficient and effective operations and maintenance to prolong their service lives.

### POLICIES

- CF 4.1 Employ energy benchmarking and building tune-ups for capital facilities.
- CF 4.2 Develop and implement maintenance plans for capital facilities to make efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.
- CF 4.3 Manage existing facilities with a resource-conservation approach to reduce energy use, water use, stormwater impacts, and utility costs.
- CF 4.4 Plan for and provide resources for all municipal buildings to operate without fossil fuel systems and appliances by no later than 2035.
- CF 4.5 Manage existing capital facilities to maintain healthy and safe conditions for occupants, users, neighboring businesses, and residents.

# Non-City Service Providers

## DISCUSSION

In addition to directly providing services through its own capital facilities, the City works with other entities that serve Seattleites. These include Seattle Public Schools (see next section), Public Health—Seattle & King County, Washington State, and King County, as well as other jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations. This can include joint planning, funding other service providers, and allowing other entities to use City-owned property. Working together, we can better provide services to Seattle’s residents as the city grows.

## GOAL

CF G5            Facilities and services provided by non-City agencies and organizations will equitably and efficiently meet the needs of Seattle’s communities.

## POLICIES

- CF 5.1            Collaborate with other public and nonprofit organizations to construct or expand community-based facilities or public amenities.
- CF 5.2            Work with other public or nonprofit agencies to identify and pursue co-location, joint-use, and temporary use opportunities in public facilities for community programs, services, performances, exhibits, and meetings.
- CF 5.3            Join with other jurisdictions in King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties to explore regional funding strategies for capital facilities, especially those that serve or benefit residents regionwide.
- CF 5.4            Use nontraditional strategies for service delivery, such as the leasing of City-owned buildings or funding of non-City facilities, where they would provide greater benefit to communities.

# Public School Facilities

## DISCUSSION

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) builds and operates public schools and pre-schools within the City of Seattle. As of the 2022-23 school year, SPS operates 105 schools serving about 50,000 students. The average age of SPS buildings is 64 years. Seventy-eight buildings are more than 50 years old, including 19 more than 100 years old as of 2021. The district also has 34 buildings that are designated City of Seattle Landmarks with nine others with the potential for landmark designation.

SPS prepares a ten-year Facilities Master Plan to project future capital building/facility needs. At the time of the 2021 update to the Facilities Master Plan, enrollment shifts during the COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainty about how those changes might affect future enrollment and capacity. Even before the pandemic, SPS experienced a leveling off of growth rates, perhaps due to falling birth rates, the high cost of housing in Seattle, or other factors.



SPS uses a variety of information to assess the need for capital investment in its school campuses, including building condition, learning environment assessment, student enrollment trends, and building capacity and equity tier designation. Over the next decade, shifts in enrollment may require consolidations and/or closures. Also, SPS has committed to transitioning facilities off fossil fuels for all its operations no later than 2040.

The City and SPS collaborate in planning for educational facilities. They have a joint use agreement to share recreation facilities. SPS is a major partner in hosting the Seattle Preschool Program. The City shares data about population and housing growth to inform enrollment projections and SPS facility master planning. The City works closely with SPS to permit new schools that may require zoning variances and to support transportation improvements to make it safer to walk, bike, and roll to schools.

## **GOAL**

CF G6            Seattle has a system of zero-carbon emission school campuses that support high-quality instruction and learning experiences and meet the educational needs of a growing city.

## **POLICIES**

CF 6.1            Coordinate with SPS to plan for expected amount and distribution of growth in student population.

CF 6.2            Explore opportunities to reduce the costs of developing new schools, such as identifying surplus properties that could be available for school sites.

CF 6.3            Facilitate zoning and permitting processes that support the development of new or renovated schools, and where providing non-educational community benefits, the adaptive reuse of any surplus schools.

CF 6.4            Collaborate with SPS and the community to explore if underutilized or surplus school buildings and properties can be redeveloped for other purposes, such as affordable housing, childcare, workforce development opportunities or enhancements for public safety.

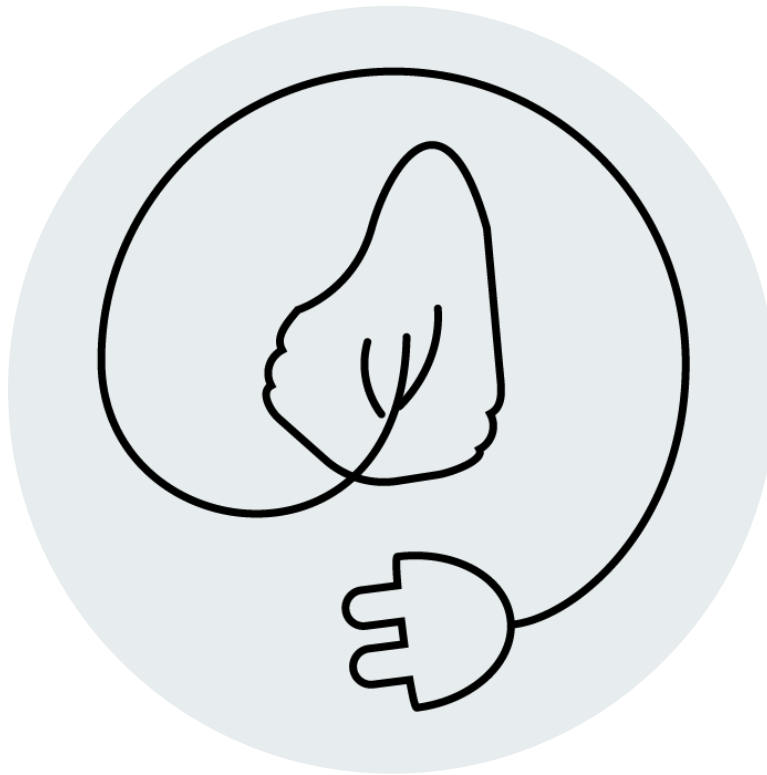
CF 6.5            Expand opportunities for joint use by the City and SPS of buildings, playing fields, and other facilities.

CF 6.6            Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to make it easy and safe for students and families to walk, bike, and roll to school.

CF 6.7            Encourage more walking, biking, and transit ridership for students, teachers, and staff.

CF 6.8            Support efforts to transition SPS buildings, operations, and transportation from fossil fuels toward 100% zero-carbon electricity.

CF 6.9            Encourage SPS to preserve and improve open space when redeveloping school sites, where balanced with SPS educational program needs.



# Utilities

## Introduction

Utilities are basic services that keep the city working. As a highly urbanized area, Seattle has a fully developed and comprehensive utility infrastructure system. This system provides energy, drinking water, water for fire suppression, drainage, sewers, solid waste management, and communication services throughout the city. These services are managed by different public and private providers that often share space, above and below ground, within City-owned rights-of-way. Utility providers include:

- Seattle City Light, a City-owned utility, provides electricity throughout the city and beyond the city boundaries.
- Seattle Public Utilities, a City-owned utility, provides drinking water, drainage and sewer systems, and solid waste services within the city limits. In addition, it provides water service directly or indirectly to much of King County.

- The Seattle Information Technology Department maintains an extensive data and fiber optic network. It shares conduit installation and maintenance with multiple partners, leases excess fiber capacity to private providers, and regulates cable TV service within the city.
- King County provides combined drainage and sewer services in portions of Seattle and is responsible for treating all wastewater generated in the city.
- Puget Sound Energy, a privately owned utility, provides natural gas in Seattle.
- CenTrio, a privately owned district energy company, provides thermal energy including steam, hot water, and chilled water to buildings in downtown Seattle.

Additionally, multiple companies provide broadband high speed internet services, mobile and landline phone services, and associated infrastructure. As the regulator of the public right-of-way, the City has limited control over private utilities. However, its agreements with various service providers help ensure technical quality, protect customer rights, and support public services.

As Seattle continues to grow over the coming years, the utilities are preparing to serve additional customers and invest in infrastructure as needed. With proper maintenance, smart strategic planning, and adequate financial resources the existing infrastructure can be adapted or replaced to support the City's broader goals of sustainability, carbon neutrality, economic efficiency, and equitable service access for all Seattleites. To thrive over the next 20 years, utilities will need to address aging buildings, facilities, and systems, and respond to changing needs, technologies, climate change impacts, decarbonization, and other factors.

The Utilities element outlines goals and policies that will guide City decisions about providing and improving utility services and addressing emerging issues. Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities periodically prepare various plans and studies that guide the work of the utilities to support the adopted Growth Strategy in this Plan.

An inventory of existing utilities, along with analyses of potential future needs, is in the Utility Appendix. More detailed information about utility infrastructure can be found in specific plans and studies by Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities.

Information on planned and funded projects for City-owned utilities is contained in Seattle's [Capital Improvement Program](#) which is updated as part of the City's annual budget process and is part of this comprehensive plan by reference.

## Utility Services to Support Future Growth

### DISCUSSION

While adequate capacity currently exists to provide electricity, drinking water, drainage conveyance, and waste disposal to serve growth over the next twenty years, it is important that the City and utility providers continue to monitor and make investments as needed to ensure our continued ability to fully serve both existing and future residents, businesses, and other users. Just as important, proper stewardship of these resources is vitally important for meeting the other key

goals, including reducing impacts on the environment, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for climate change.

#### **GOAL**

U G1            Utility infrastructure and services support existing and new development consistent with the Growth Strategy.

#### **POLICIES**

U 1.1           Establish and maintain performance metrics that can be used to monitor and evaluate capacity of City-owned utilities to meet the need for utility services as the city grows.

U 1.2           Regularly consult with non-City owned utilities to ensure utility needs are met as the city grows.

U 1.3           Ensure that new private development provides adequate connections to the existing utility infrastructure and is water and energy efficiency.

## **Equitable Utility Services and Community Partnerships**

#### **DISCUSSION**

Seattle's utility providers are committed to making racial equity central to the development and delivery of services, fees, programs, education, employment, contracting, and outreach. Systems planning includes targeted outreach to ensure that the burdens and benefits of high-quality utilities infrastructure are distributed equitably throughout the city. Future infrastructure investments will help rectify existing environmental and service disparities while supporting the health and economic opportunity of underinvested communities. Utility programs and partnerships with private providers help make services affordable for low-income households. Priority hiring and workforce development programs create more opportunities for those excluded by past discrimination.

#### **GOAL**

U G2            Safe and reliable utility services are accessible and affordable to community members regardless of economic, racial, or housing status, or ability to pay.

#### **POLICIES**

U 2.1           Set equitable performance standards that account for existing community conditions, how decisions will impact varied geographic and socioeconomic groups, and service equity as a criterion in decision-making.

U 2.2           When and where feasible, make utility services as affordable as possible through equitable delivery of utility discount programs, incentives, and customer assistance.

U 2.3           Implement community-driven processes that promote shared decision-making in utility investments.

- U 2.4 Maximize co-benefits and community benefits of utility investments.
- U 2.5 Broaden the public health outcomes of utility investments to include social and environmental health.
- U 2.6 Create and expand opportunities for low-income households to participate in utility conservation and efficiency programs provided by City-owned utilities and private utilities and vendors.
- U 2.7 Create training and living wage job opportunities, particularly for underrepresented populations, through investments and agreements with private utilities and vendors.
- U 2.8 Cultivate a utility workforce with the skills and knowledge to align with evolving technologies, business needs and advance social justice.
- U 2.9 Support community entrepreneurship and wealth building programs that focus on environmental stewardship and utility infrastructure management.
- U 2.10 When feasible and consistent with City rate policies, explore options to lower upfront and operating utilities costs to enable affordable housing providers to build cost-effective, resilient, energy- and water-efficient, all-electric projects.

## Coordinated Utility Projects

### DISCUSSION

Above, below, and on the ground, Seattle's roads, paths, and other right-of-way spaces contain a vast array of utility infrastructure. Pipes, conduits, wires, poles, service vaults, storage tanks, pollution-control structures, streetlights, gutters, swales, and infiltration facilities are carefully integrated into the city's overall landscape. Increasingly this space also includes non-City utility infrastructure such as fiber, cable, natural gas lines, district steam, and small cell wireless. Due to limited space, placement and maintenance of this infrastructure must be carefully managed. The City must work to minimize conflicts between the utilities and other uses of the right-of-way, and ensure that infrastructure investments are well maintained.

At the same time, new investments in these facilities—particularly projects that result in opening the pavement—also provide opportunities to improve a variety of existing facilities and meet multiple objectives. Consequently, the City should look for opportunities to share costs, undertake joint projects, or otherwise consider the goals of other departments when undertaking projects in the right-of-way.

The City works with non-City utilities, such as natural gas, district energy, and communications providers. The City reviews street use permits, coordinates projects, creates development and leasing policies, and executes franchise agreements or programmatic term permits. These relationships offer opportunities to improve service provision for customers, reduce the impacts of

construction, and encourage non-City utilities to work toward City goals. Specific policies about the location of communications facilities are included in the Land Use element.

## **GOAL**

- U G3            Utility projects are coordinated to meet utility needs, maximize community benefits, increase safety, minimize costs and disruptions to the community, and align with the City's climate goals.

## **POLICY**

- U 3.1            Coordinate planning for utility projects among City-owned utilities, City departments, and non-City utilities, particularly projects located in the right-of-way, to lower costs, improve outcomes, provide co-benefits, limit construction and operational impacts and increase climate and seismic preparedness.
- U 3.2            Align utility investments with mobility, open space, extreme heat mitigation, and other improvements.
- U 3.3            Build partnerships among City departments, non-City-utilities, public agencies, Tribal governments, and community organizations to increase capacity for collaboration in utility planning and projects.
- U 3.4            Provide affected non-City utilities with timely and effective notices of planned road and right-of-way trenching, maintenance, and upgrade activities.
- U 3.5            Give data and telecommunication service providers equitable access to the right-of-way to support competition and to better serve their customers.

# **Water System**

## **DISCUSSION**

Water is our most precious resource and essential to everything we do. One Water is an approach adopted by Seattle to carefully manage all water systems in an integrated, inclusive, and sustainable manner. The City designs and implements its drinking water, drainage, and wastewater systems projects and programs with a focus on achieving multiple benefits—economic, environmental, and social. Investment in communities disproportionately affected by water issues is prioritized to ensure everyone has equal access to clean drinking water, drainage, and wastewater services.

There is much uncertainty about the impacts of climate change on these systems, making resiliency a priority in coming years. The City will continue to make significant investments in the water system to protect public health, comply with federal and state regulations, replace aging infrastructure, improve system performance in the event of an earthquake, aid salmon recovery, and address impacts of climate change. These investments are carried out in ways that keep utility rates affordable.

## **GOAL**

- U G4 Water is treated as an essential resource and managed in a sustainable and integrated way to support healthy natural environment and communities.

## **POLICIES**

- U 4.1 Provide reliable, affordable, high quality drinking water.
- U 4.2 Promote water efficiency strategies to reduce per capita water use by customers.
- U 4.3 Reduce the impacts of flooding and sewer backups from the public drainage and wastewater system into private property and the public right of way, and prioritize neighborhoods that have experienced historical disinvestment.
- U 4.4 Protect water quality, improve aquatic health, and reduce combined sewer overflows to benefit all life that relies on our local waterbodies.
- U 4.5 Treat stormwater runoff, especially runoff from roadways and other high pollutant generating surfaces, using green stormwater infrastructure and other best management practices.
- U 4.6 Periodically update climate vulnerability assessments of the water supply system and the drainage and wastewater system.
- U 4.7 Invest in water infrastructure that can adapt to future challenges and build system resiliency, especially in areas most vulnerable to environmental hazards.
- U 4.8 Increase the resiliency of water supply watersheds and transmission and distribution infrastructure that may be impacted by climate change, earthquakes, wildfires, and other hazards.

# Moving Upstream to Zero Waste

## **DISCUSSION**

The City of Seattle has built a reputation as an international leader in solid waste management. Among many achievements, Seattle has reduced City waste generation and disposal to landfills, and increased recycling and composting despite tremendous population growth. Seattle has also pursued opportunities in the Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste realm to ban recyclable materials from disposal and require that salvage be considered prior to demolition. To further advance a zero-waste goal, Seattle is focused on eliminating or minimizing waste from the start, not just maximizing the recycling rate. The City is working to identify opportunities for preventing waste as early or as far upstream in that life cycle as possible to reduce environmental and health impacts. Zero waste means producing and using less, not just recycling more. All resources have value, and we strive to waste nothing.



## GOAL

- U G5 Seattle's solid waste system generates zero waste by creating a circular economy and by reducing waste and climate pollution.

## POLICIES

- U 5.1 Identify and promote opportunities, including contracting and grant funding, for circular material processing models at the local level that keep products and materials in use.
- U 5.2 Implement and enforce policies and programs to reduce the amount of food waste generated to align with statewide goals.
- U 5.3 Advance waste prevention through research and data, outreach, food waste prevention, reusable alternatives to single use items, community-led programs, green purchasing policies, expanded opportunities for reused material and repair services, and textile waste prevention.
- U 5.4 Improve the quality of recycled material through advocacy, reduced contamination, product stewardship programs, and industry-led take-back recycling programs.
- U 5.5 Increase and/or improve the quality of composting through standards for compostable food packaging, market development of compost products, and assessment of options for diaper and pet waste recovery.
- U 5.6 Expand education campaigns to increase awareness of the City's solid waste and waste prevention programs and services, including targeted outreach to underserved communities.
- U 5.7 Prevent and divert construction and demolition debris through industry outreach, improved compliance enforcement, and incentives.
- U 5.8 Expand reuse and recycling opportunities at City transfer stations and private solid waste facilities.
- U 5.9 Continue to monitor markets for traditional recyclable materials (glass, plastic, etc.) and construction and demolition materials, take measures to ensure responsible recycling of collected materials, and identify opportunities to support emerging markets such as City purchases of recycled content products.

# Clean Energy

## DISCUSSION

Seattle's energy future is based on carbon-free renewable resources. The Washington Clean Energy Transformation Act adopted in 2019 requires Washington utilities to transition to a carbon-free electricity supply by 2045 and to ensure all customers benefit from the transition to clean energy. In

2020, 97% of Seattle’s electricity came from non-emitting resources (3% unspecified), with 86% from hydropower. Seattle City Light, the city’s municipal electric utility, has been net carbon neutral since 2005, purchasing off-sets for any GHG emitting resources. In order to meet our growing load due to building and transportation electrification in the future, Seattle City Light’s 2022 Integrated Resource Plan calls for the utility to acquire additional resources between 2022 and 2031, including utility scale wind & solar, customer-side solar, energy efficiency, and demand response.

Seattle’s long-range energy demand is changing. Energy efficiency technologies continue to drive down per capita use. But more energy will be needed to decarbonize and electrify transportation, buildings, and industry. More frequent periods of extreme temperatures due to climate change will alter peak demand. Electric vehicle adoption relies on sufficient clean energy and a dense network of fast charging stations. Distributed energy resources such as solar photovoltaics and energy storage, as well as energy efficiency, and demand response will help manage rising demand.

Moving away from fossil fuels toward a clean energy future requires significant commitments and partnerships, new infrastructure, and a modernized grid to make the delivery of electricity resilient, secure, flexible, carbon-free, and affordable. The transition to clean energy must be an equitable one. People who have been unable to access clean energy services or job opportunities associated with clean energy due to economic or social barriers must benefit from this energy transition.

## **GOAL**

U G6                      Future energy needs are met with safe, affordable, reliable, and environmentally responsible power.

## **POLICIES**

- U 6.1                      Grow demand for clean energy through electrification of all utilities sectors in a responsible manner.
- U 6.2                      Invest in access to low-cost carbon-free renewable power by enhancing and updating the electricity grid to support customers as more buildings and transportation modes become electric and as climate change impacts grid capacity.
- U 6.3                      Prepare for the increased integration of distributed energy resources and more customer options.
- U 6.4                      Deploy new strategies to encourage customers to use energy efficiently. Use targeted outreach to low-income households to ensure they benefit from new strategies.
- U 6.5                      Deploy new technology and infrastructure to better manage increased electrical loads from building and transportation decarbonization.
- U 6.6                      Improve demand side management and energy efficiency options to serve customers while meeting our sustainability goals.
- U 6.7                      Implement an integrated distribution, transmission, and generation resource planning framework.

- U 6.8 Participate in emerging regional and multi-state organizations to develop coordinated planning and a western energy market.
- U 6.9 Require new district energy utilities to generate carbon neutral energy consistent with City and State carbon reduction goals.

## Internet for All

### DISCUSSION

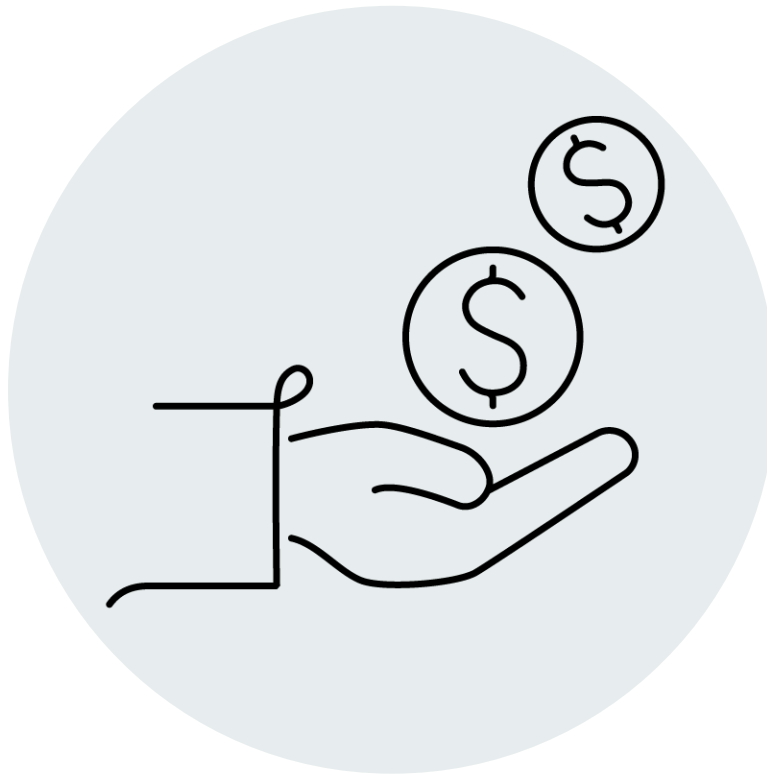
The internet has changed how people get jobs, learn, receive health information, and participate in society. Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet is now as essential as clean water and electricity. For decades Seattle has been at the forefront of advancing digital equity, yet digital inequities persist in key demographic groups lacking high-speed internet and devices needed for school and work. The City is committed to working with public entities and telecommunications providers to achieve equitable internet access for all residents of Seattle.

### GOAL

- U G7 All Seattle residents have access to high-speed internet service that is reliable and affordable.

### POLICIES

- U 7.1 Increase awareness and adoption of low-cost internet programs and devices.
- U 7.2 Advocate for and partner with telecommunications carriers to expand free or low-cost internet in targeted areas of the city, including free Wi-Fi in community centers, libraries, and other City-owned facilities.
- U 7.3 Partner with organizations to deliver culturally relevant digital equity programs.
- U 7.4 Coordinate with other public entities and telecommunications providers to improve and expand telecommunications infrastructure throughout the city.
- U 7.5 Advocate to ensure Internet Service Provider offerings meet residents' current and future needs.
- U 7.6 Examine new technologies to ensure best-in-class internet infrastructure and consumer choices.



# Economic Development

## Introduction

The City anticipates adding 159,000 net new jobs over the next 20 years. The Growth Strategy identifies the geographic areas best suited for job growth. Some businesses and jobs are best suited to mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods and business districts within our Regional Centers, Urban Center, and Neighborhood Centers. Others require unique features, services, and targeted land uses that fit best in our Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs). Guided by the policies in this Plan, Seattle will manage our local economy to sustain existing businesses while anticipating the needs of emerging businesses and industries.

Seattle is an attractive place to live, giving it a competitive economic advantage. Seattle's beautiful physical setting, thriving cultural scene, walkable neighborhoods, diverse restaurants, unique shopping, access to nature, and historic locations generate direct economic benefits to residents. These attributes also contribute to the high-quality of life that draws businesses, people, and tourists to the city. Seattle also benefits from the way leaders from public and private sectors work together to encourage innovation and to support business formation, retention, and expansion.

Throughout its history, however, economic expansion has not benefited Seattle’s residents equitably. Marginalized communities have not had the same access to opportunities in growing industries that many Seattleites have benefited from.

The purpose of the Economic Development element of this Plan is to provide direction about how to maintain and grow Seattle’s vibrant, diverse, and increasingly global economy to benefit individuals equitably across income levels, as well as business, industry, and the city’s racially and culturally diverse communities. As Seattle grows, the City will strive to reduce income inequities and to identify and address policies that contribute to or create inequity.

## Neighborhood Business Districts

### DISCUSSION

Seattle enjoys an attractive, flourishing Downtown core that contains about 40 percent of all jobs within the city. Outside of Downtown, and throughout Seattle, are many long-standing, distinctive, walkable central places within neighborhoods. This is where many small businesses thrive, communities come together, and many local jobs are created. About 12 percent of Seattle’s jobs are located in these areas. Neighborhood business districts are often a central anchor for BIPOC and immigrant communities providing opportunities for goods and services, cultural activities, and community gathering spaces.

### GOAL

ED G1                Seattle consists of vibrant and diverse business districts and commercial areas that serve local communities in neighborhoods across the city.

### POLICIES

- ED 1.1                Invest in and promote stability, growth, and accessibility in the downtown core, as the economic and cultural center of the city and the region.
- ED 1.2                Make investments for a safe, walkable, and accessible downtown core to attract businesses, residents, workers, and visitors.
- ED 1.3                Build on downtown’s cultural, historic, nightlife, and other assets to enhance living, working, shopping, recreation, tourism, and entertainment.
- ED 1.4                Develop proactive and collaborative approaches toward achieving mutual compatibility of activities, including nightlife and entertainment and both businesses and residents.
- ED 1.5                Invest in and promote neighborhood business districts as the economic and cultural centers of their communities and as unique places within the city and region.
- ED 1.6                Strengthen local organizations that support businesses, conduct marketing and events, maintain a clean, safe, accessible, and attractive environment, and advocate for community needs.

- ED 1.7 Support business districts serving historically underserved communities, including Native American communities, that have benefited from fewer economic opportunities.
- ED 1.8 Enrich the vibrancy of neighborhood business districts through the integration of design, public art, public space, historic preservation, small locally owned businesses, and cultural spaces and programming.
- ED 1.9 Support the vibrancy of locally owned small businesses and their ability to remain in neighborhood and commercial districts where they exemplify and promote their community's identity, cultural richness, and character.
- ED 1.10 Promote the development of affordable commercial spaces that meet the economic and cultural needs of BIPOC and other historically underserved communities, with a focus on serving the needs of businesses that are at risk of displacement.
- ED 1.11 Support formation of Business Improvement Areas (BIA) and other business partnerships and alliances, to help provide clean and safe services, marketing and promotion, business and economic development planning, community appearance and pedestrian environment, urban design, advocacy, and organizational development/administration in commercial districts and key industries.

## Growing Business and Industry

### DISCUSSION

Seattle's best prospects for future economic growth are in its key "industry clusters"—concentrated networks of interdependent firms in a defined geographic area that share common markets, technologies, and a need for skilled workers. Examples of Seattle's industry clusters include manufacturing, maritime, construction, biotech and life sciences, the creative economy, global health and health care, clean technology, information technology, tourism, and film and music.

These clusters help the associated businesses, which benefit from the rapid exchange of information, leading to innovative and efficient operations. The clusters are also an asset to the overall economy. Generally, businesses in industry clusters pay higher than average wages, bring new capital into the economy, are environmentally minded, and add variety to the economic base. By identifying key sectors of the economy in which Seattle has a competitive advantage, the City is better able to nurture industry clusters that contribute to a vibrant, balanced, diversified, and equitable economy that benefits individuals across all income levels. At the same time, we must work to reverse historically inequitable results from changing economic structures of the city that lead to uneven access to employment opportunities, increases in housing costs, and displacement of marginalized communities.

## **GOAL**

- ED G2      Seattle’s innovative industry clusters in growing and essential high-wage industries continue to grow and develop, enhancing our competitive advantage as a city and region.

## **POLICIES**

- ED 2.1      Seek investments in workforce development and infrastructure to support maritime and manufacturing clusters.
- ED 2.2      Support regional partnerships targeting maritime and manufacturing, to sustain and grow middle- and high-income jobs locally and support the regional and state economy.
- ED 2.3      Promote, support, and improve linkages between industry clusters and research institutions, hospitals, educational institutions, and other technology-based businesses.
- ED 2.4      Catalyze collaboration among businesses within and across industry clusters in the areas of marketing, research, capital and talent acquisition, job training, and career pathway development.
- ED 2.5      Improve the ability of industry clusters to transfer technology.
- ED 2.6      Work with strategic industry clusters to diversify key occupations, ensuring that the employed workforce is representative of Seattle’s racial and socioeconomic groups.
- ED 2.7      Promote and lead coordination of economic development and community development among City departments, as well as with all levels of government, the business community, and nonprofits, to strengthen industry clusters.
- ED 2.8      Identify and support innovative, small locally owned businesses that have the potential to form new industry clusters.
- ED 2.9      Promote employer retention through robust engagement with existing businesses to understand their needs and help them thrive in Seattle.

# **Business and Industry Retention and Growth**

## **DISCUSSION**

A city’s business climate is determined by how well it attracts and sustains businesses. The external factors that shape this climate include quality of the workforce, taxes, regulations, incentives, and other government policies and investments, as well as overall quality of life in the city. Seattle is renowned for its mild climate, extraordinary access to recreation and natural resources, and diverse cultural offerings. Seattle’s collaborative culture is another economic advantage. However, some aspects of Seattle’s business climate pose challenges for business, such as complex development

regulations, earthquake risk, challenges in funding transportation and education systems, and past under-investment in many of the city's cultural communities and neighborhoods.

## **GOAL**

ED G3            Seattle's business climate encourages new investment and business retention to achieve high quality job creation, economic resilience, and opportunities to ensure cultural identity, diversity, and inclusion.

## **POLICIES**

ED 3.1            Promote the expansion of interstate commerce and international trade within Seattle and throughout the region.

ED 3.2            Support a stable and more competitive business climate through policies and planning that are implemented with transparent, predictable, and efficient regulations and approval processes.

ED 3.3            Foster partnerships with the state, counties, other cities, schools, community colleges, port districts, businesses, and organizations engaged in diversifying and expanding the economic base for people who live, work, and own businesses in Seattle.

ED 3.4            Improve coordination of information and services between City, county, regional, state, and federal agencies to develop and implement economic-development policies and programs.

ED 3.5            Prepare for post-disaster economic recovery by planning for long-term systemic needs and short-term mitigation strategies.

ED 3.6            Monitor and advocate for fiscal and other policies through data driven analysis that consider benefits and costs to business growth and retention, particularly those driving wealth creation within marginalized communities.

ED 3.7            Plan for and invest in transportation for movement of freight and people, infrastructure, and utilities to support strategic industries.

ED 3.8            Use Seattle's competitive advantages to attract and expand business, a highly skilled workforce, and good paying jobs to advance community and environmental sustainability.

ED 3.9            Implement zoning and other tools to encourage business growth and development that uses and promotes sustainable technologies.

ED 3.10           Identify opportunities to leverage Major public facilities and capital investments to drive for economic development and business retention.

ED 3.11           Assist businesses in identifying locations that suit their needs by tracking appropriate and available sites for business attraction or expansion.



# Investing in Talent and Developing our Workforce

## DISCUSSION

The success of industry clusters depends on a skilled and competitive workforce. However, employers often face challenges finding qualified job applicants for some positions in Seattle. This includes a variety of industries that have been unable to find enough local college graduates to fill jobs in certain engineering, computer, and life science fields, as well as traditional industries looking to replace an aging highly skilled workforce. As a result, many employers look to attract talent from elsewhere. Better education and training of local workers can connect displaced workers, disadvantaged youth, and recent immigrants to highly skilled job opportunities. Workforce development is one of the ways that the City can provide equitable access to career opportunities to BIPOC and immigrant communities.

## GOAL

ED G4            Seattle has a highly trained and well-educated local workforce that effectively secures stable, meaningful, and productive employment, earns a living-wage, meets the needs of business, and increases opportunities for social mobility.

## POLICIES

- ED 4.1            Promote racial and social inclusion in the workforce by creating and growing workforce development programs specifically focused on diversifying talent pipelines for living wage jobs.
- ED 4.2            Support and encourage businesses to pay a living wage, provide necessary employee benefits, and train and hire local residents so that the existing and future workforce can share in the city's prosperity.
- ED 4.3            Explore opportunities to coordinate community development activities with workforce development in communities with high unemployment or barriers to employment.
- ED 4.4            Expand internships, apprenticeships, and other "earn and learn" models for early career workers in high demand occupations supporting key industries.
- ED 4.5            Create and grow re-training programs to help dislocated workers, including older workers, transition to new high-quality jobs in high-demand occupations.
- ED 4.6            In collaboration with community-based organizations, expand programs designed to fully engage marginalized communities in the labor force, putting members of those communities on a path to economic self-sufficiency.
- ED 4.7            Reduce barriers to education, training, and employment by developing program linkages, including digital access, to worker and student financial assistance, wrap-around supports, and childcare.

- ED 4.8 Expand investments in youth of color and their parents and guardians to raise awareness and provide additional access to regional education and training pathways that lead to high demand careers and good quality jobs.
- ED 4.9 Expand investments to promote stable employment and retain people working in arts, culture, technology, and other parts of the creative economy.
- ED 4.10 Promote the development and expansion of high demand career pathways in occupations that result in good quality jobs in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) fields and related key industries.

## Women, Minority-owned, and Small Business Supports and Entrepreneurship

### DISCUSSION

Achieving a thriving and equitable community means we need to support entrepreneurial activity, particularly for women and minority-owned small businesses. As technological advances continue to lower the cost of starting some types of new businesses, the number of new entrepreneurs may rise. In addition to attracting new types of businesses, we must redouble our efforts to retain the small, culturally diverse businesses that support equally diverse communities.

Our city is home to major national companies such as Trident Seafoods, Filson, Cascade Designs, Starbucks, Amazon, and Nordstrom, to name a few. However, most Seattle businesses are much smaller and have fewer than 10 employees. Sectors with an especially high proportion of small businesses include construction, wholesale trade, manufacturing, retail and related services, and, increasingly, start-ups in technology and other creative industries. In addition, small food growers, processors, and distributors are a quickly expanding presence within the local economy.

### GOAL

- ED G5 Seattle's economy promotes and supports entrepreneurship and the growth and long-term viability of women and minority-owned small businesses.

### POLICIES

- ED 5.1 Strengthen small business start-ups by connecting women- and minority-based enterprises (WMBE) and other small businesses to capital.
- ED 5.2 Support the expansion of higher education programs that promote commercialization of research innovations and incubate and accelerate the growth of new start-ups.
- ED 5.3 Support and grow arts and culture activities to attract creative economy workers, living wage employers, and tourists to Seattle, as well as to enrich our overall culture of innovation.

- ED 5.4      Develop strategies to lower the cost of business infrastructure for small businesses, including building relationships, finding resources, and providing shared infrastructure.
- ED 5.5      Establish incentives for building owners to offer affordable spaces for start-ups and small businesses and partner with community-based organizations to own and operate their own affordable commercial real estate.
- ED 5.6      Reduce barriers to business start-up and entrepreneurship, especially barriers that confront BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities, including by providing access to and support.
- ED 5.7      Review City regulations and processes to identify and address barriers for small and WMBE businesses.

## Asset Ownership

### DISCUSSION

Asset ownership is an effective strategy to provide economic opportunity, create generational wealth, expand access to markets, and provide jobs. This strategy is particularly important for women and minority owned businesses and it promotes economic stability through a flourishing small business sector.

### GOAL

- ED G.6      Seattle’s economy fosters growth in business and asset ownership among small businesses and expand access to markets, particularly women, minority-owned and BIPOC businesses.

### POLICIES

- ED 6.1      Support owner-occupied commercial real estate financing strategies, with a focus on women, minority-owned and BIPOC business owners, enabling businesses that are leasing commercial spaces to get the capital needed to buy them.
- ED 6.2      Support community-based programs to enable women, minority, BIPOC and low-income residents to acquire residential and commercial real estate through mechanisms such as community land trusts or community investment trusts.
- ED 6.3      Support individual financial empowerment programs, including financial literacy training, bank access, and access to savings products like college savings accounts.

# Build and Invest in the Green Economy

## DISCUSSION

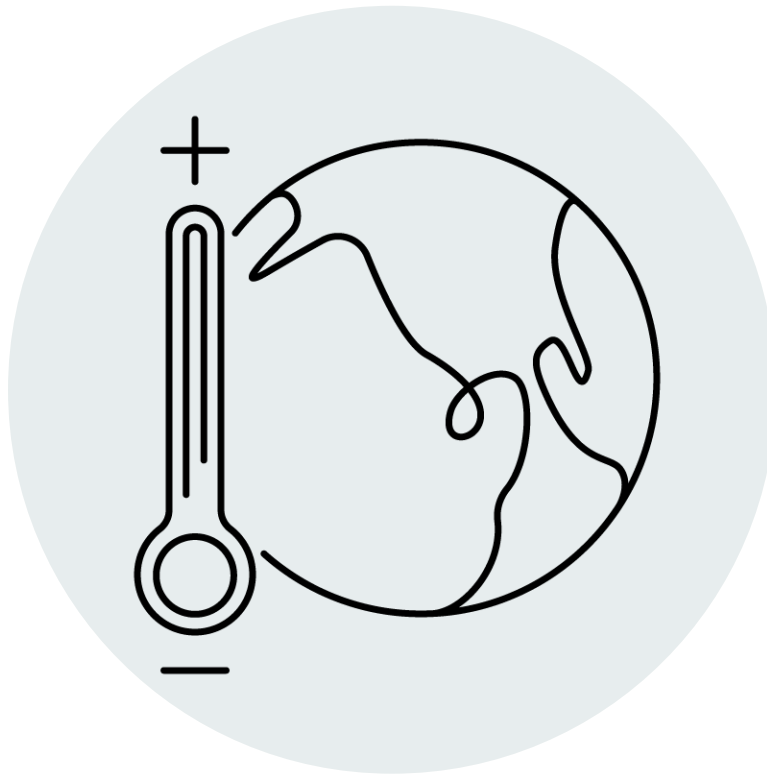
Building a green economy provides opportunities for new industries, wealth building careers, and complements current industrial clusters seeking to advance climate friendly modernization.

## GOAL

ED G7            Seattle's economy includes vital green industry sectors to provide employment opportunities while promoting an environmentally sustainable future.

## POLICIES

- ED 7.1            Establish partnerships to build workforce capacity to advance continuation of city-wide decarbonization and climate adaptation efforts, as consistent with state law, including through electrification, construction, conservation, and other new green technology programs.
- ED 7.2            Promote and support access within BIPOC communities to wealth building, careers, asset ownership, and youth opportunity in strategic industries which are transitioning to a green economy.
- ED 7.3            Support business partnerships and models which are centered on climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and/or a shift toward sustainable operational models within established industries, including incubator and accelerator funding of new sustainable businesses.
- ED 7.4            Invest in resources and staff to increase and sustain STEAM education in K-12 systems with a focus on closing gender and race gaps in STEAM career fields.
- ED 7.5            Use Seattle's sustainability policies and investments as a business recruitment tool.



# Climate and Environment

## Introduction

Seattle is a place of unparalleled natural beauty. Indigenous peoples, stewards of these lands and waters from time immemorial, continue to remind us of our connections to nature to sustain and inspire us. Newcomers are drawn by access to nature both within the city as well as to the mountains, rivers, and beaches beyond. Our natural environment, including trees, forests, and water resources, are central to Seattle’s quality of life and identity, and essential to the survival of imperiled native species, such as salmon and orca. Strong values of environmental protection and sustainability have shaped our Comprehensive Plan from the start.

But Seattle is facing a growing and evolving challenge: climate change. The burning of fossil fuels and land use changes have increased the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere and in our oceans. As seawater absorbs carbon from the atmosphere it becomes more acidic, making it difficult for oysters, clams, corals and other organisms to build and maintain their calcium carbonate structures. Warmer average temperatures, more frequent extreme heat events, prolonged wildfire smoke episodes, extreme precipitation, and sea level rise are projected to worsen under a variety of

future climate scenarios. The severity of climate scenarios depends on the ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve adaptation for the City's systems and communities.

The natural environment plays an important role in the battle against climate change by helping the city adapt to impacts and mitigate climate pollution. Trees and vegetation buffer the impacts of extreme heat and poor air quality. Wetlands and floodplains absorb excess rain and reduce flooding. Trees, shrubs, and soil absorb and store carbon, preventing its release into the atmosphere. Climate change also affects the health and sustainability of these resources. Preservation and restoration are necessary for a healthier and more resilient city. The City of Seattle is redoubling efforts to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global climate change. Just as important, the City is working on multiple fronts to strengthen the resilience of our communities and natural environment to current and future climate impacts and other hazards that climate change can exacerbate such as earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, biological hazards, fires and power outages. Seattle is leading this work with climate justice to ensure those most harmed by past racial, economic, and environmental injustice are not further harmed by the impacts of climate change or the transition away from fossil fuels. As the City takes action to adapt and decarbonize, environmental benefits must be equitably distributed, and burdens must be minimized and equitably shared.

In 2023 the Washington State legislature passed House Bill 1181 updating the State's planning framework to improve the state's response to climate change. This bill requires Seattle to adopt a new climate change and resiliency element including sub-elements addressing greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resiliency. This Climate and Environment element is organized to include two required sub-elements (see below). Because of the broad reaching impacts of climate change, additional policies addressing climate change are included in every element of this Plan.

- **Carbon Pollution Reduction** includes goals and policies that reduce carbon pollution.
- **Healthy Resilient Communities and Environment** includes goals and policies that foster climate resiliency to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards and sustain healthy tree canopy, water resources, and local food system.

### *Climate and Environment Sub-element:*

## **Carbon Pollution Reduction**

Global and local climate change is a direct result of an excessive amount of carbon pollution trapping too much heat in our atmosphere. It is imperative that the sources of carbon pollution be reduced and ultimately eliminated. Seattle has been a world leader in reducing carbon pollution. Seattle was the first city in the nation to adopt a green building goal for all new municipal facilities. Seattle City Light was the nation's first large electric utility to become carbon neutral. Mayor Nickels launched the Mayor's Climate Protection Initiative and challenged U.S. mayors to reduce carbon pollution 7% below 1990 levels by 2012. Seattle was one of the first cities in the nation to adopt a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2006 to achieve that goal.

Though much progress has been made, it has not been enough. Carbon pollution levels continue to warm our planet, and the impacts of climate change are ever more apparent. Ultimately, Seattle aims to reach zero carbon—no greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

## Setting Goals and Measuring Progress

### DISCUSSION

Carbon pollution, also called greenhouse gas or GHG, is a gas in the atmosphere that traps and holds heat. When we use the phrase carbon pollution, we are talking about the gases released into the atmosphere primarily as a result of human activities. The more carbon pollution we release, the more our climate is impacted.

Every two years, Seattle releases a geographic-based GHG inventory that tracks emissions that occur within the city's borders in three key core sectors: transportation, buildings, and waste. The *2022 Community GHG Emissions Inventory* finds that from 2020 to 2022, Seattle's core GHG emissions rose 4% while the City's economy grew 22%.

- Transportation (58% of core emissions): 4% increase in GHG emissions. While vehicle efficiency improved, the primary driver for the emissions, vehicle miles traveled, increased nearly 9%. Likely contributors include increased business and employee activity, travel, and tourism. Transit ridership has also been gradually increasing since the low-point of the pandemic.
- Buildings (40% of core emissions): 6% increase in GHG emissions. Emissions from residential and commercial gas and electricity both rose by a few percentage points, with nearly all emissions in buildings coming from burning fossil gas. Extreme weather and pandemic-induced consumption changes likely had an important role. There were 15% more cooling degree days and 13% more heating degree days in 2022 versus 2020.
- Waste (2% of core emissions): 7% increase in GHG emissions. 2022 saw a significant increase in emissions associated with waste brought by customers directly to the city's transfer stations (approximately 40%). This was caused by increased disposal of materials that should have been recycled or composted and by more waste coming from outside Seattle to the city's transfer stations.

Seattle and King County have also collaborated on an inventory of consumption-based GHG emissions sources to measure the GHG emissions associated with the food we eat, the things we buy, how we travel, and the homes we live in. This analysis, based on 2019 data, shows that Seattle's consumption-based emissions are estimated to be two to four times larger than our typical geographic-based emissions. Seattle is committed to measuring and managing the complete scope and scale of our climate pollution and identifying where the opportunities are for our greatest impact.

To further reduce emissions, the City is focused on decarbonizing buildings and shifting to zero emission vehicles, travel modes, and trips. The City is fortunate to have Seattle City Light's majority clean, affordable, and reliable electricity to power our transportation and buildings. They are

planning for the future by identifying additional clean power sources to meet increased demand and readying the power grid to be more flexible, reliable, and resilient enough to withstand an increased load demand from the electrification of buildings and transportation, and changing heating and cooling needs. The City is also addressing consumption-based emissions by supporting policies and practices that prevent waste such as food waste prevention and food rescue, building deconstruction and building materials salvage, and the promotion of reuse and repair. The City also supports a range of policies and practices that prevent emission-producing waste.

## **GOAL**

CE G1            Seattle’s core GHG emissions are reduced by 58 % from 2008 levels by 2030 and attain carbon neutrality by 2050.

## **POLICIES**

- CE 1.1            Work collaboratively across City departments to periodically inventory, evaluate, and update geographic-based GHG emissions reduction targets to reflect the latest international climate science targets and analysis methods and to align with state and regional goals.
- CE 1.2            Incorporate additional and better data into the inventory, evaluation, and targets for expanded emissions and community consumption emissions.
- CE 1.3            Develop and implement policies, programs, and projects to equitably reduce GHG emissions to meet our adopted targets in partnership with the Green New Deal Oversight Board and the Environmental Justice Committee.
- CE 1.4            Partner with regional agencies, local jurisdictions, frontline communities, the state, academic institutions, community leaders, industry, Tribes, and public, private, and not-for-profit groups to promote programs and policies that achieve GHG emission reduction targets and increase the awareness and transparency of GHG emissions inventories.

# Transportation

*See also Transportation Element*

## **DISCUSSION**

Transportation accounts for the majority of Seattle’s core GHG emissions. The City is focused on cutting transportation emissions by reducing personal vehicle use by making walking, biking, and transit options more attractive. Another key strategy is to support and accelerate transportation electrification by ensuring the electricity system (supply and distribution) can meet increased demand, providing more public electric vehicle charging facilities, and supporting all-electric buses across our region. But Seattle is not yet on track to meet our 2030 emissions reduction goals. More aggressive change is needed across the transportation sector to transition from fossil fuels to zero-emissions energy sources.



## **GOAL**

CE G2 GHG emissions are reduced by reducing vehicle trips and transitioning to zero-emissions trips.

## **POLICIES**

CE 2.1 Make short trips safe, affordable, and zero emissions by expanding facilities for walking and biking and support the use of shared bikes and scooters.

CE 2.2 Create opportunities for zero emission trips that are affordable for lower-income households.

CE 2.3 Focus and tailor efforts within neighborhoods to reduce vehicle traffic and encourage walking and biking, such as by designating low-pollution neighborhoods.

CE 2.4 Establish neighborhood delivery hubs to reduce trips from delivery vehicles and to facilitate more zero emission delivery trips via electric vehicles and bikes.

CE 2.5 Expand first- and last-mile public transportation options for people to access regional and frequent transit services.

CE 2.6 Explore policies to price the use of vehicles, including expanded parking pricing, user fees, tolls, and low-pollution neighborhoods and including provisions to achieve equitable distribution of burdens.

CE 2.7 Develop regulations and incentives to shift personal trips to zero-emission travel modes (transit, biking, and walking) to achieve 90% zero emission trips by 2030.

## **GOAL**

CE G3 GHG emissions are reduced by expanding and expediting the transition to electric vehicles.

## **POLICIES**

CE 3.1 Partner with transportation service providers and private companies to electrify public transit, taxis, transportation network and carshare vehicles to achieve a goal that 100% of shared mobility is zero emissions by 2030.

CE 3.2 Ensure that infrastructure required for transportation electrification is installed and operational in a proactive and timely manner.

CE 3.3 Streamline permitting and installation for electric vehicle charging and grid modernization infrastructure to support the adoption of electric vehicles.

CE 3.4 Work with utility providers, developers, electric vehicle companies, and other partners to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the city including at City buildings, multifamily homes, apartment buildings, major employer buildings, and parking garages.

- CE 3.5 Support the electrification of freight vehicles through strong partnerships with the State of Washington and the NW Seaport Alliance to reduce GHG emissions, improve air quality and health outcomes in communities with high freight traffic, and to support the goal of 30% of goods delivery being zero-emission by 2030.
- CE 3.6 Develop and regularly update a plan outlining policies, regulations, capital facilities and programs needed to support and expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- CE 3.7 Support state-level policies and actions that incentivize and create requirements for clean fuels and electrification of private and commercial fleet vehicles.
- CE 3.8 Encourage residents and workers to choose electric vehicles through education, promotions, incentives and other strategies.

## Development Pattern

*See also Growth Strategy and Land Use Elements*

### DISCUSSION

Living in an urban area like Seattle can substantially reduce a person's GHG emissions by allowing them to travel shorter distances to shops, services, and amenities and to use transit, walking, and biking to accomplish more trips. Urban residents tend to live and work in compact buildings that use less energy. Growth in urban areas also reduces development on the urban fringe, which contributes to sprawl, vehicle miles traveled, and the conversion of farms and forests. Consequently, accommodating more jobs and housing in Seattle is one of the best things we can do to support our climate goals. Additionally, as we grow, we have an opportunity to focus our growth in ways that let more people access jobs, shops, services, and amenities by transit, walking, and biking.

### GOAL

- CE G4 The location of new jobs and housing reduces carbon pollution and discourages fossil fuel use.

### POLICIES

- CE 4.1 Plan for the location of jobs and housing within Seattle to reduce regional emissions due to transportation, sprawl, and greenfield development.
- CE 4.2 Promote the development of complete, connected communities where people can walk, bike, and roll to everyday needs.
- CE 4.3 Focus new housing and jobs in areas near transit and activity centers, where people can walk, bike, and roll to shops, services, and amenities.

- CE 4.4 Consider limits on new or expanded bulk fossil fuel facilities in order to ensure public health and safety, promote resiliency, and support achievement of the City's climate goals.

## Buildings and Energy

*See also Land Use, Capital Facilities, and Utilities Elements*

### DISCUSSION

In Seattle, buildings are one of the largest and fastest growing sources of climate pollution, responsible for more than a third of our city's GHG emissions. More than 90% of these emissions result from burning fossil fuels for heat, hot water, and appliances. For our health and resilience in the face of a changing climate, Seattle is committed to a goal of eliminating climate pollution and transitioning to 100% clean energy in all buildings by 2050.

### GOAL

- CE G5 Buildings are zero emission and use 100% clean energy.

### POLICIES

- CE 5.1 Use building, energy, and zoning codes to require or encourage meeting established energy targets, reducing embodied carbon of materials, increasing mass timber and other engineered wood products, reducing fossil fuel use, improving climate adaptation, and supporting a transition to electric vehicles and clean energy.
- CE 5.2 Incentivize green building certification for new development from third party organizations that align with the City's climate goals.
- CE 5.3 Implement building performance standards with other major building improvements that improve resiliency such as seismic retrofits.
- CE 5.4 Plan for all municipal buildings to maximize energy efficiency and operate without fossil fuel systems and appliances no later than 2035.
- CE 5.5 Educate and assist building owners to access resources, including federal and state incentives and rebates for switching from fossil fuels to electric appliances.
- CE 5.6 Lessen the impacts of transitioning to clean energy on low-income renters and homeowners, such as by providing more time for affordable housing to meet building performance standards.
- CE 5.7 Provide information, technical assistance, and financial support to low-income homeowners and landlords of affordable housing to implement weatherization, electric heat pump conversion, and other electrification and energy efficiency home retrofits.

- CE 5.8 Encourage the use of clean energy sources, such as renewables or waste heat, in both existing and new buildings.
- CE 5.9 Consider new regulations and incentives for existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and transition to clean energy sources.
- CE 5.10 Support and expand building energy efficiency retrofit programs that maximize the utilization of local, state and federal funds to reduce building energy use and improve energy resilience, especially in affordable housing.
- CE 5.11 Decarbonize the maritime industry and increase the resiliency and reliability of the Seattle waterfront microgrids.

## Solid Waste

*See also Utilities Element*

### DISCUSSION

As waste sent to landfills decays, it produces GHG emissions. The [2020 Community GHG Emissions Inventory](#), a geographic-based inventory, calculated that the waste sector accounts for 2% of Seattle's core GHG emissions. In 2023 the City completed its first [Seattle Communitywide Consumption-based GHG Emissions Inventory](#) which estimated the production and consumption of goods and food accounts for 38 percent of Seattle's consumption-based emissions. The inventory confirmed that waste prevention remains an important climate change mitigation strategy. Seattle uses incentives, policies, and recycling and composting programs to prevent waste and divert waste from landfills. In 2021, recycling rates reached 53%.

Moving forward, there will be more emphasis on waste prevention, which targets product consumption and consumer behavior to address the root cause of waste and toxins to reduce their impact. This requires a shift from a traditional extractive economy (take, make, dispose) to a circular economy that keeps resources in use for as long as possible by designing out waste and regenerating natural systems. In a circular economy, end waste products become inputs for new production.

### GOAL

- CE G6 Seattle's solid waste system has zero carbon pollution by 2050 and supports a circular economy.

### POLICIES

- CE 6.1 Reduce the amount of waste generated by the residents, businesses, and other public and private organizations in the city
- CE 6.2 Increase the amount of recoverable waste that is diverted from garbage to recycling and composting.

- CE 6.3 Encourage the use of durable, local products and recycled-content or reused materials, reused building materials, low carbon materials, along with recycling at the end of products' lives.
- CE 6.4 Support a food system that encourages consumption of local foods and healthy foods with a low carbon footprint, reduces food waste, and fosters composting.
- CE 6.5 Implement community outreach and education programs around proper waste reduction, recycling, and composting with a focus on food waste.
- CE 6.6 Update solid waste contracts to further reduce carbon pollution.
- CE 6.7 Encourage the building industry and consumers to choose reused and low-carbon building materials to prevent and divert construction and demolition debris.

### *Climate and Environment Sub-element:*

## **Healthy, Resilient Communities and Environment**

All residents deserve access to clean air, fresh water, and a healthy community and environment. Building healthy resilient communities encompasses many things, including keeping neighbors safe and connected during climate events, managing and preserving tree canopy and urban forests to reduce climate impacts, and accessing healthy, locally grown, and culturally relevant foods.

In 2023, the Seattle Climate Vulnerability Assessment documented the potential impacts of climate change on the city. This study found that climate change impacts and hazards will have multiple transformative impacts on Seattle, including affecting the local economy, exacerbating public health disparities, stressing infrastructure systems, affecting community well-being and resiliency, and transforming local ecosystems and habitats. The burden of these impacts will be unevenly experienced across Seattle. Areas with fewer community services—such as grocery stores, parks, libraries, and transit—often coincide with neighborhoods that were historically redlined and have a higher population of residents of color, non-English speaking residents, and older adults. These areas, also called frontline communities, will also be more vulnerable to climate-related extreme events.

Aging infrastructure systems will be more vulnerable to climate-related hazards and extreme events. Many systems are connected so impacts to one system will often have cascading impacts to other systems, services, and assets. While Seattle's systems and assets are relatively resilient to the impacts of climate change, consequences and damages are still highly likely during and after extreme events.

Extreme events—such as the 2021 heat dome event or the 2022 King Tide flood event—are likely to continue to occur, leading to cascading and compounding impacts for residents, businesses, and systems. For example, the 2021 heat dome event led to peaks in heat-related emergency calls and injuries, impacts to highways and public transit systems, and temporary business closures. These

extreme events may have long-term mental and community health impacts, such as anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder.

## Planning for Resilience

### DISCUSSION

Even with aggressive reduction of carbon pollution, climate change is inevitable, and Seattle is already experiencing impacts. While the City has already made strides to improve resiliency, the vulnerability to climate change must be considered in all City plans and strategies. The City must adapt to climate change in ways that increase resilience to other natural hazards, notably earthquakes. Resilient people and communities are better-prepared and able to withstand the catastrophic shocks of a sudden disaster as well as the slower-moving stressors of climate change.

Improved resilience can avoid additional impacts on Tribal communities, ancestral lands and resources. The City can also benefit from peer networks focused on climate change, such as C40 Cities, King County Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C), SeaAdapt, Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative to solve problems across municipal boundaries, share resources, and learn about best practices and innovative strategies.

### GOAL

CE G7            Seattle is well prepared for the direct and indirect impacts of climate change and other natural hazards.

### POLICIES

- CE 7.1            Regularly update citywide all hazard and climate vulnerability assessments that address physical, social, and economic vulnerabilities and consider cascading or compounding effects across multiple systems.
- CE 7.2            Develop and implement emergency response, recovery, and mitigation plans for specific hazards that integrate race and social equity along with overall climate planning.
- CE 7.3            As new climate change impact data become available, review and, as needed, update development regulations to encourage adaptation and reduce vulnerability to extreme weather and natural hazards exacerbated by climate change including flooding, coastal erosion, landslide, liquefaction, sea-level rise, extreme heat, drought, and wildfire smoke.
- CE 7.4            Consider climate impacts and embed climate adaptation into City plans such as land use plans, strategic business plans, system plans, infrastructure plans, capital facility plans, and asset management processes.
- CE 7.5            Update Seattle's hazard mitigation plan and emergency management plans to reflect hazards caused by climate impacts like sea-level rise and associated flooding.

- CE 7.6 Improve climate resilience and advance climate adaptation through coordination, collaboration and partnerships among City departments, other public agencies, knowledge sharing networks, funders, Tribes, and affected communities, especially the impact of sea-level rise for multijurisdictional shorelines
- CE 7.7 Establish performance metrics and periodic reporting to track progress on climate resilience and adaptation.

## Community-Based Climate Resilience

### DISCUSSION

The impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on frontline communities and vulnerable populations. A history of redlining and housing exclusion has forced low-income and BIPOC communities to live in areas that have greater risk of climate impacts such as flooding and sea level rise, and greater exposure to pollution from vehicles. The 2022 floods in South Park illustrated the devastation wrought by climate impacts as people fled their homes and weeks of cleanup followed.

Climate change is not the only crisis our city faces. Climate action is interwoven with other community priorities and challenges, including public health, economic opportunity, anti-displacement, and pandemic recovery.

Community-based climate resilience builds the capacity of disproportionately impacted communities to adapt to and recover from climate impacts. Community-based organizations design and deliver community-centered programs before, during, and after climate-related and other natural hazard events to keep neighbors safe and foster greater community cohesion.

City initiatives, such as the One Seattle Climate Justice Agenda, Green New Deal, Transportation Equity Framework & Implementation Plan, and Shape Our Water, are centered on partnering with community to ensure those most impacted by systemic racism benefit from City investments and are resourced to thrive in a changing climate and evolving mobility landscape.

### GOAL

- CE G8 Communities have the capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of climate change and other natural hazards.

### POLICES

- CE 8.1 Prioritize partnerships, policies, programs, and actions that reduce the disproportionate climate impacts on vulnerable populations, and frontline communities.
- CE 8.2 Mitigate climate impacts by prioritizing green infrastructure and nature-based solutions that provide co-benefits to community, such as providing living wage jobs and enhancing social connectedness.

- CE 8.3 Invest in community capacity to co-develop and co-lead equitable and inclusive community education and technical assistance about climate resilience, adaptation, and emergency response for individuals, businesses, and organizations.
- CE 8.4 Work towards achieving racial and social equity in health outcomes so that members of all communities live long healthy lives.
- CE 8.5 Mitigate the economic impacts of transitioning to zero carbon and resilience strategies on low-income residents.

## Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke

*See also Land Use Element*

### DISCUSSION

Seattle, one of the least air-conditioned cities in the U.S, is experiencing more frequent extreme heat events. The trend toward hotter and drier summers due to climate change impacts infrastructure, power supply, air quality, food and water supplies, and health and safety. Extreme heat affects people, pets, shellfish, birds, and other wildlife and disrupts the local food system and economy.

Extreme and extended wildfire smoke events are happening more frequently. Smoke from wildfires in Washington as well as British Columbia, Oregon, and California drift into Seattle and degrade local air quality. Smoke-filled air exacerbates the already poor air quality that many over-burdened communities, workers, and families experience from more localized sources.

Potential health impacts include dehydration, heat illness, severe respiratory distress, hypo/hyperthermia, heart attacks, strokes, internal organ failure, and even death. These events pose life-safety threats for vulnerable populations due to loss of electricity, increased drowning and recreational accidents, increased injury due to burns or smoke inhalation, and secondary illness onset or damaged infrastructure, such as delayed medical care access or impacts on hygiene and sanitation needs and access. Wildfire smoke events pose health risks to workers responding during the event and others who continue to work outdoors.

### GOAL

- CE G9 Seattle has planned for and adapted to the impacts of extreme heat and wildfire smoke events.

### POLICIES

- CE 9.1 Develop response and recovery plans specifically for extreme heat and smoke events.
- CE 9.2 Design new and retrofit existing City capital facilities and infrastructure to adapt to increased temperatures, extreme heat events, and wildfire smoke.



- CE 9.3 Expand tree canopy and greenspace, especially in communities that experience disproportionate impacts of extreme heat and smoke events.
- CE 9.4 Encourage building design to incorporate passive cooling approaches to limit overheating and improve energy efficiency.
- CE 9.5 Develop and implement strategies to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat and smoke events on the urban forest, aquatic resources, and other components of the natural environment.
- CE 9.6 Coordinate with Seattle King County Public Health and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to protect residents and outdoor workers during extreme heat and smoke events.
- CE 9.7 Provide information and technical assistance to employers, building owners, and renters to make homes and workplaces safer during extreme heat and smoke events.

## Sea-Level Rise and Flooding

*See also the Land Use, Capital Facilities, Utilities and Shoreline Elements*

### DISCUSSION

Seattle experiences three types of flooding: riverine, coastal, and urban. All flooding types are expected to become more intense and more frequent due to climate drivers such as sea level rise and extreme precipitation events. Areas that have historically flooded will flood more often and new areas may experience infrequent flooding events in the future. Sea levels are projected to rise across Seattle's marine and estuarial shorelines in the coming decades, though sea-level rise will vary due to local geological conditions.

Sea levels in Puget Sound have risen nine inches since 1900 and are expected to rise another two to five feet by 2100. This means more coastal flooding, storm surge and high tide inundation, shoreline erosion, rising groundwater levels, and flood risks for infrastructure and facilities on Seattle's coasts and shorelines. Saltwater intrusion and increasing acidification and warming of Puget Sound waters will adversely affect marine organisms and habitat.

### GOAL

- CE G10 Seattle has planned for and adapted to impacts of sea level rise in coastal, riverine, and inland areas.

### POLICIES

- CE 10.1 Update City plans and projects as needed to reflect the science-based estimates of the magnitude and timing of coastal flooding related to climate change impacts.
- CE 10.2 Develop a citywide sea level rise adaptation plan to guide City infrastructure investments and development to protect residents and the broader economy.

- CE 10.3 Raise public awareness of how climate change affects coastal flooding and flood risk.
- CE 10.4 Where feasible, use open space, green infrastructure, and other nature-based solutions to buffer communities from flooding impacts.
- CE 10.5 Restore coastal environments to foster resilient ecosystems and species and consider sea level rise in restoration projects.

## More Frequent Intense Storms and Longer Dry Periods

*See also the Land Use and Utilities Elements.*

### DISCUSSION

Precipitation patterns are shifting across Seattle and the Puget Sound region. While annual precipitation will continue to remain variable, there will be seasonal shifts. Winter and fall precipitation are expected to increase and precipitation will increasingly fall as rain rather than snow. Additionally, winter precipitation may be concentrated in extreme rain events, which can exacerbate flooding risks. Summer precipitation is projected to decrease, contributing to regional heat stress, drought conditions, and water supply impacts.

Changing precipitation patterns could affect areas prone to geologic hazards, such as landslides and liquefaction. Heavy precipitation, particularly over prolonged periods, can contribute to slope instability and failure. Events like these will likely increase in frequency and intensity into the future, contributing to increased risks of landslides that cause damage and blockage to transportation routes, buildings, other infrastructure, and natural areas across the city. As sea level rises along the Seattle shoreline, water tables will also rise, increasing soil saturation and the likelihood and severity of liquefaction in the event of an earthquake, especially during the winter.

Seattle can experience water shortages during the summers that follow winters with low snowpack. The main shortage impacts are reduced stream flows for salmon, usage restrictions, and economic hardship for businesses that require large amounts of water. Less electricity is generated by hydroelectric dams, causing SCL to buy more expensive power from outside the region.

### GOAL

- CE G11 Seattle has planned for and adapted to the impacts of more frequent and more intense precipitation, storm events, longer dry periods, and potential water shortages.

### POLICIES

- CE 11.1 Improve drainage system resiliency through the use of green stormwater infrastructure.
- CE 11.2 Coordinate efforts among City departments and with other public agencies to resource holistic flood hazard management and sea level rise adaptation efforts and

implement innovative approaches such as integrating publicly-owned open space into a green stormwater infrastructure system.

- CE 11.3 Invest in adaptive and flexible drainage and wastewater system improvements and reduce impervious surfaces, particularly in low lying areas, high impervious surface coverage areas, and historically redlined areas.
- CE 11.4 Protect the function and integrity of flood prone areas, wetlands, and fish habitat conservation areas to reduce the city's exposure to geological and flood hazards and ensure the health of sensitive habitats.
- CE 11.5 Include impacts of water shortages in emergency management plans and power generation plans.

## Urban Forest and Tree Canopy

*See also the Parks and Open Space Element.*

### DISCUSSION

Seattle's urban forest is fundamental to our quality of life, especially as Seattle continues to grow and experiences the impacts of climate change. The urban forest consists of trees and associated understory plants, and provides crucial ecosystem services, such as stormwater reduction, air pollution removal, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and reducing the heat island impacts of our warming climate. The urban forest extends across public property, private property, and the right-of-way and includes parks and natural areas, as well as the trees along streets and in yards.

Since European settlement much of the native urban forest has been logged and leveled for development. Yet the urban forest continues to hold cultural significance for Tribal communities.

The [Urban Forest Management Plan](#) guides the City's decisions to help maintain, preserve, enhance and restore its urban forest. Every five years the City undertakes a canopy cover assessment to understand how the urban forest has changed. The most recent study is the [2021 Canopy Cover Study](#).

### GOAL

- CE G12 Seattle has a healthy urban forest with a tree canopy which maximizes the environmental, economic, social, and climate-related benefits of trees.

### POLICIES

- CE 12.1 Aim to achieve an overall tree canopy coverage of 30% by 2037.
- CE 12.2 Preserve, restore, maintain, and enhance the urban forest across the city.
- CE 12.3 Consider the needs of frontline communities in all urban forestry actions.

- CE 12.4 Manage the urban forest to increase its resilience to potential impacts, especially from climate change.
- CE 12.5 Regularly update the tree canopy analysis to monitor changes and trends in the amount, distribution, and condition of the urban forest and use this information to shape urban forestry management plans, decisions and actions.
- CE 12.6 Coordinate among City departments and collaborate with other agencies, stakeholders, and community members to increase tree canopy.
- CE 12.7 Reach out to, educate, and partner with the community to identify tree planting locations, as well as care for, preserve and celebrate Seattle’s urban forest.
- CE 12.8 Provide support to the community, via incentives, education, and regulations, for retaining, caring for, removing, replacing, and planting trees. Consider targeted support to advance tree canopy equity.
- CE 12.9 Encourage the protection, maintenance, and expansion of tree canopy throughout the community, prioritizing residential and mixed-use areas with the least current tree canopy to equitably distribute benefits.
- CE 12.10 Manage parks and greenbelts to decrease climate risks, protect residents, and improve ecosystem health and habitat.
- CE 12.11 Promote adequate care for newly planted trees to enable their long-term health and viability.

## Water

*See also Utilities Element, Water System*

### DISCUSSION

Seattle is a city of water. Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union, the Lake Washington Ship Canal, the Duwamish River, Green Lake, urban creeks, and small lakes all enhance the quality of life for the people and wildlife that live here. Four species of salmon—including the threatened Chinook salmon—call this area home, as do resident trout, blue herons, bald eagles, and various other water-dependent species. Seattle’s major waterways bustle with business and recreational opportunities and support one of the premier industrial seaports on the West Coast. Moreover, Seattle’s aquatic areas give residents the chance to enjoy and experience nature close to home.

Tribal communities have a special relationship to water resources and salmon. Salmon fishing holds deep cultural significance for native peoples, and the decline of wild salmon threatens this vital resource. As the original watershed stewards, living in harmony with nature and stewarding the waters and habitats of our region is central to tribal culture and life. The struggle to assert tribal water and fishing rights has strengthened and deepened this connection. Tribes play a leading role in the Puget Sound region’s watershed restoration and salmon recovery efforts.

Despite their integral place in the local culture, landscape, and economy, Seattle's aquatic resources have been significantly degraded as a result of urban growth. A six-mile stretch of the Duwamish River is now a federal Superfund site. More than 90 percent of Seattle's 146 miles of shoreline have been modified and now lack natural connections to the water. The city's creeks have seen stormwater flows equivalent to some rivers. Fish in local waters contain high amounts of mercury and PCBs, and some of our coho salmon are dying before they can reach Seattle streams to spawn.

Climate change is a growing threat to the Puget Sound and other waterbodies. The impacts include ocean acidification, increasingly frequent and extreme storms, warming air and water temperatures, and sea-level rise.

Yet even these resources, polluted as they may be, have amazing vitality and resilience. If stewarded well by the residents of the city and region, they have the potential to become even greater assets to Seattleites in the future.

## **GOAL**

CE G13 All water is treated as an essential resource and managed in a sustainable and integrated way.

## **POLICIES**

- CE 13.1 Control and reduce water pollution sources, as far upstream as possible.
- CE 13.2 Use and encourage sustainable land management practices that preserve native vegetation, limit and mitigate impervious surface, minimize pesticides, enhance water absorption, and build soil.
- CE 13.3 Support sustainable land use and development that improves urban water management.
- CE 13.4 Encourage the capture and reuse of water at both the site and district scale.
- CE 13.5 Restore, protect, and manage fish and wildlife habitat using comprehensive approaches, such as reconnecting floodplains, daylighting creeks, restoring native vegetation, and removing fish barriers, to accelerate ecosystem recovery of salmon, orca, and other endangered species.
- CE 13.6 Increase community connections to our waterbodies and natural systems.
- CE 13.7 Mitigate the impacts of climate change on Puget Sound and other Seattle waterbodies.
- CE 13.8 Work to clean up existing contaminated water body sediments.
- CE 13.9 Encourage action to reduce and/or slow ocean acidification in Puget Sound, including reducing GHG emissions, and reducing polluted runoff.

# Air Quality

*See also Transportation Element and other sections of this element for policies to reduce, and mitigate climate pollution.*

## DISCUSSION

Clean, healthy air is essential to daily well-being and long-term health, and the health of our environment. The Federal Clean Air Act focuses on reducing air pollution that poses the greatest health risks to our region. Air quality is monitored, and air quality regulations are enforced through the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. In our region, particle pollution, smog, and air toxics pose the greatest risk to our well-being. Outdoor air pollution can cause heart attacks, asthma, strokes, cancer, and premature death.

Because we are concerned about our climate we also focus on the reduction of GHG emissions, which are the leading cause of climate change. In our region, climate change will likely lead to warmer, drier summers which increase levels of smog pollution, posing health risks to those with lung and heart diseases. Climate change is also increasing the frequency of wildfire smoke events in Seattle.

Unfortunately, the level to which Seattle residents experience our environmental benefits varies widely by race. Due to our historical land use patterns, the majority of residents who live closest to our city's heavily trafficked roadways are people of color and people with low incomes and thus, experience poorer air quality compared to the rest of Seattle.

## GOAL

CE G14 Seattleites have equitable access to clean and healthy air.

## POLICIES

- CE 14.1 Work with federal, state, and regional clean air agencies to monitor air quality, enforce regulations, and meet established standards.
- CF 14.2 Provide resources, education, and information to Seattle residents about causes and impacts of unhealthy air, and strategies to reduce harm.
- CE 14.3 Reduce the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles travelled to improve air quality, especially during periods of poor air quality.
- CE 14.4 Use approaches, such as designating low-pollution neighborhoods, where the City can test and implement actions to improve air quality.
- CE 14.5 Support the shift from fossil fuel to clean energy, including in vehicles, heating systems, equipment, and appliances.

# Healthy Food System

## DISCUSSION

The food system affects our everyday life in many ways. It provides the food we eat, is a major employer, is a large household expense, impacts the built and natural environment, and significantly impacts our health and the climate. The food system comprises all the ways in which food moves from farm or sea (producer) to table (consumer). That includes the farms on which it grows, the places where food is foraged, the waters and beaches where fish and shellfish are harvested, the manufacturers who process and produce foods, the venues in which the foods are delivered to the public, the way the consumer receives and consumes food, and the food waste that is generated and handled.

Healthy food is integral to the health and well-being of our communities. Healthy food is defined as food that is fresh and nutritious and grown without harming its producers or our air, water, or soil. In a healthy food system, healthy food is available and accessible for all community members. There is a strong network of successful businesses that produce, process, cook, transport, and sell that food; there are opportunities to gather, forage, and produce food locally. Food waste is prevented.

Supporting a healthy food system is important for health, the environment, economy, and community. Rising obesity and diet-related diseases increase health care costs and decrease life expectancy. One in five children in King County does not always have enough to eat, and growing economic inequality makes healthy food even harder for many to afford. Chemically intensive agriculture degrades the quality of our land, our air, and our water. Food sales, restaurants, food products, and food service are a growing sector of the local economy. Food inequities disproportionately affect low-income residents, children, seniors, and communities of color. Growing, eating, and sharing food brings local communities together.

The recent pandemic demonstrated how access to food can be quickly disrupted. Longer and dryer summers from our changing climate will also affect the food system in coming years. A resilient food system is increasingly important.

## GOAL

CE G15            Seattle has an accessible, resilient, equitable, and zero-waste food system that provides easy access to fresh, affordable, nutritious and culturally relevant food.

## POLICIES

CE 15.1           Expand access to culturally relevant and empowering food and nutrition education for youth, adults, and older adults.

CE 15.2           Support traditional foods and regenerative practices, locally grown and harvested foods, and community food projects, focusing on communities historically excluded from land and water access and honoring Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights.

CE 15.3           Build community food security through culturally relevant, equitable, nutritious food access.

- CE 15.4 Create an equitable, fair, and healthy local food economy for workers, businesses, and residents.
- CE 15.5 Foster equitable, environmentally sustainable, and strengthened local food supply chains.
- CE 15.6 Strive to prevent food waste, rescue and redistribute surplus food for people who need it, and locally compost the rest.
- CE 15.7 Reduce climate pollution associated with Seattle’s food system and support regenerative food production practices that improve the environment.





# Parks and Open Space

## Introduction

Parks and open spaces help make Seattle a great place to live, play, and raise families. These places contribute not only to the city's environmental health but also to the physical and mental health of its residents. Access to open space can benefit individuals by giving them places to exercise their bodies and refresh their minds. Open spaces support an amazing diversity of life. Thousands of plant and animal species can be found in Seattle's natural areas. This urban biodiversity provides ecosystem services such as cleaning air and water, and providing valuable wildlife and vegetation habitat that might otherwise be scarce in the city. Parks and open space help make cities livable.

Public space includes any outdoor, publicly accessible area dedicated primarily to human or environmental use (exclusive of transportation use). Seattle has more than 1,000 public spaces owned and managed by several different agencies and private entities, comprising about 20 percent of the total city land area. Public spaces include gardens, plazas, trails, schoolyards, parks, natural areas, and more. From the magnificent views from the bluffs of Discovery Park to the tree-lined boulevard system and intimate pocket parks, these areas provide opportunities for residents and

visitors to relax, play, exercise, or meet with friends and neighbors. The public right-of-way, comprising about 30 percent of the City's land area, is public land primarily used for transportation, but is sometimes used as public space either temporarily or permanently such as along Cheasty and Ravenna Boulevards or in Bell Street Park.

Off-road bike trails, including the Burke-Gilman Trail and Alki Beach Park, offer other types of active recreation. An extensive system of P-Patches and other community gardens throughout the city offer gardening spaces for residents to grow their own fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Seattle Center and the Central Waterfront are also City-owned and managed public spaces offering unique urban amenities of open space and a wide variety of programs and cultural activities.

Seattle's park system includes extensive areas of forest, meadow, shorelines and marine reserves. Natural areas within parks are established for the protection and stewardship of wildlife, habitat and other natural systems support functions such as stormwater management, carbon sequestration, heat island mitigation, air and water quality, erosion control and protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Many different public spaces in Seattle are owned and maintained by entities other than the City. These include fields and playgrounds at public and private schools, areas such as the federal Chittenden Locks, several waterfront access points provided by the Port of Seattle, and the open spaces on several college and university campuses. Numerous private developments have made plazas and other open areas available to the public, such as Waterfall Garden Park in Pioneer Square.

Puget Sound and the city's lakes provide another form of open space. These wide stretches of water are open to the sky and offer visual relief from the urban environment, as well as visual connections to other areas of the city and region.

Public spaces are also important places for supporting artistic and cultural performances, festivals, events, and public gatherings.

City-owned park and recreation lands are protected by a 1996 voter-initiated and approved legislation, Initiative 42. It sets out a process for considering the transfer or change in use of any lands held for park and recreation purposes, and requirements for replacing park and recreation lands lost.

In 2014 voters in Seattle approved the formation of the Seattle Park District. This district implements a new taxing authority and funding source for the maintenance and improvement of City parks, as well as for programs aimed at serving historically underserved residents and communities. Some of the ways the City obtains new parkland are by using state funds, acquiring surplus federal land, establishing requirements for new development projects, providing incentives for developers, and creatively using public rights-of-way.

The Capital Facilities Appendix includes a high-level inventory of City-owned parks. The [2024 Parks and Open Space Plan](#), updated by Seattle Parks and Recreation every six years, provides additional information about where park development, improvements and maintenance projects should occur and where open space should be prioritized for acquisition.

# Access to Public Space

*See also the Capital Facilities Element.*

## DISCUSSION

While Seattle has one of the best public space networks in the country overall, some neighborhoods are better served than others, with more public space being concentrated in affluent and majority white neighborhoods. There are also disparities in vulnerability to climate impacts that disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color. Public spaces can reduce these climate impacts on residents. But major public space investments can also have negative impacts on neighborhood affordability.

The City of Seattle is continuously working to improve equity and fairness in our public space system. As the City works to improve and add open space to decrease these disparities, it is important to prioritize preserving community stability and affordability while making such investments. In addition to improving access to public space for communities of color, it is also important to improve the responsiveness of those spaces to the needs, interests, and cultures of the people they serve.

At the same time, the City continues to look for ways to improve this system. Seattle is already very developed, so there aren't many opportunities to find new land for parks and open spaces. Creating the system that we desire—one that will address existing inequities and serve our growing population—will require new strategies, including strategies to increase capacity and add new opportunities within existing parks. The City also strives to make parks and recreation facilities more accessible to those with limited mobility and other physical challenges. The City continues the necessary work to remove documented barriers as well as incorporate accessibility improvements in all capital projects.

This section addresses the design and distribution of our citywide public space system, including how new parks and open space are acquired and developed and existing public spaces improved.

## GOAL

P G1 Public spaces are expanded and enhanced as the city grows, and current inequities are addressed, so that everyone has access to the full range of recreational, social, cultural, and health benefits that public spaces provide.

## POLICIES

P 1.1 Create new and enhanced public spaces in areas that lack them, especially where population growth is anticipated in the Growth Strategy, including the greater downtown area.

P 1.2 Provide a variety of public spaces to serve the city's current and future population consistent with the priorities identified in the City's Parks and Open Space Plan.

- P 1.3 Identify opportunities to develop new public spaces or enhance existing public spaces to accommodate a wide variety of uses and public benefits, including: community gathering and social connection; cultural expression and celebration; civic action and democratic expression; respite and connection to nature; physical activity, health, and well-being; and food security and local economic vibrancy.
- P 1.4 Enhance and activate public spaces that are currently underused due to lack of investment.
- P 1.5 Equitably expand access to existing public spaces, including by providing safe, multi-modal connections to surrounding communities.
- P 1.6 Plan for all ages and abilities access by transit, bicycle, and foot when siting and designing new park facilities or improving existing ones.
- P 1.7 Design healthy public spaces considering the needs of varying age groups including young children and their caretakers, school-aged children, teenagers, and older adults.
- P 1.8 Continue to develop a network of all ages and abilities trails that connect to public spaces and shorelines.
- P 1.9 Explore how existing rights-of-way can be repurposed to create more public space for temporary uses, such as community events, street fairs, farmers' markets, arts and cultural events and neighborhood celebrations.
- P 1.10 Identify opportunities to convert rights-of-way to permanent public space uses, such as gardens, play areas, urban plazas, and wildlife corridors.
- P 1.11 Consider temporarily or permanently restricting general purpose vehicle usage on rights-of-way within or directly adjacent to public space and shorelines to improve usability, non-motorized access, and the recreational value of these public spaces.
- P 1.12 Provide areas to preserve or restore important natural or ecological features and allow people access to these spaces by building or expanding trail systems through greenbelts and other natural areas while protecting habitat and wildlife.
- P 1.13 Create connections between natural areas and open spaces for both people and wildlife using habitat corridors, green streets, pollinator pathways, and other green connections.
- P 1.14 Provide sustainable public access to shorelines by improving shoreline street ends, applying shoreline regulations, acquiring waterfront land, removing shoreline armoring, and restoring coastal habitat.
- P 1.15 Encourage private development to incorporate on-site open space that is welcoming and accessible to all populations.

- P 1.16 Consider the use of open space impact fees to support public space system expansion and enhancement that will serve expected population growth.
- P 1.17 Maintain, expand, or initiate cooperative agreements with Seattle Public Schools, universities, and other public or private agencies to provide or expand access to open spaces they control and increase the tree canopy and green space they provide.
- P 1.18 Prioritize investments in recreation programs and facilities that reduce disparities in health outcomes and neighborhood environmental quality.
- P 1.19 Mitigate the noise and air pollution impacts on public space from adjacent busy roadways, especially in neighborhoods with poor health outcomes, using strategies such as noise walls, vegetated buffers, and roadway design and management, repurposing, or removal.
- P 1.20 Design open spaces that protect the natural environment and provide light, air, and visual relief within the built environment.
- P 1.21 Design public spaces to provide multiple benefits, such as providing a variety of recreational uses and environmental functions, such as stormwater capture and urban heat relief.
- P 1.22 Engage with community members to design and develop parks and recreation facilities based on the specific needs and cultures of the communities the park is intended to serve.
- P 1.23 Prioritize cleaning up contaminated sites in historically underserved neighborhoods, particularly on sites dedicated or planned for community-serving or environmental uses.
- P 1.24 Create opportunities to use existing public land and buildings for public space and recreation, such as reallocation of the right-of-way, integration with green and climate and hazard-resilient infrastructure, removal, widening, or redesign of highways and streets to create public space or multimodal trails, addition of green or accessible roofs on public buildings, and redesign of single-purpose or fee-based public spaces, especially near high-capacity transit.
- P 1.25 Incorporate weather protection for outdoor equipment such as playgrounds, weather-mitigating elements, and appropriate programming for all seasons and times of day.
- P 1.26 Consider joint-use or mixed-use development opportunities, such as a community center with housing or office above, where appropriate.
- P 1.27 Consider a range of alternative financing strategies, including, where feasible, value capture tools, to build, improve, or maintain public spaces.

- P 1.28 Increase access to culturally relevant healthy foods, particularly in locations with poor access to grocery stores, by increasing community gardening opportunities on public green space.
- P 1.29 Incorporate Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge in open space design, plant selection, and interpretive elements.

## Recreation, Activation, and Programming

### DISCUSSION

Recreational opportunities, activation, and programming of our public spaces help to ensure that all residents can enjoy the benefits of healthy activities, social interaction, and experiences that promote overall well-being.

Recreational opportunities should address the diverse needs, abilities, and interests of individuals, offering opportunities for physical activity, leisure, and play.

Activation refers to the design and utilization of public spaces to create vibrant and engaging environments. Through thoughtful activation strategies, public spaces can become lively gathering spots that stimulate community interaction, cultural exchange, and economic vitality. This involves organizing events, festivals, performances, and markets that celebrate diversity and local talents, attracting people from different backgrounds and fostering a sense of belonging. By activating public spaces in an equitable manner, cities can combat social isolation, break down barriers, and create spaces that are truly welcoming for everyone.

Programming in public spaces refers to the planning and coordination of activities and services that cater to the diverse needs and interests of the community. It involves offering a range of programs, such as educational workshops, art installations, fitness classes, and community events that are accessible, inclusive, and representative of the community's demographics. By incorporating programming that addresses the specific needs and interests of marginalized communities, public spaces can become platforms for empowerment, learning, and cultural expression.

### GOAL

- P G2 People of all ages, abilities, and incomes have access to a rich variety of culturally relevant, affordable recreational and social activities and events.

### POLICIES

- P 2.1 Develop activities at parks and community centers based on the specific needs of each community they serve.
- P 2.2 Promote the use of open spaces and park facilities for events that celebrate our history and the many cultures of our communities.
- P 2.3 Provide welcoming, culturally informed, accessible, and affordable recreation and social programs, equipment, and facilities for people of all ages and abilities and all

cultural and linguistic backgrounds, while prioritizing opportunities for young children and their caretakers, older adults, and marginalized communities.

- P 2.4 Develop programs that foster awareness and appreciation of nature, wildlife, and biodiversity from the neighborhood scale to the regional scale and provide activities for residents to help protect or restore the environment.
- P 2.5 Integrate opportunities for nature play and social interaction into public spaces and along trails or walkways.
- P 2.6 Consider removing barriers for the sale of food and alcoholic and other beverages within public spaces to increase activation and usage.
- P 2.7 Support free and affordable arts and cultural activities and performances in public spaces, particularly those led by BIPOC organizations and individuals. Support artists to design permanent and temporary improvements and installations in public space.
- P 2.8 Encourage safe and welcoming evening experiences in nightlife areas and encourage a greater diversity of activities in the adjoining public spaces.

## Operations and Maintenance

*See also the Capital Facilities Element.*

### DISCUSSION

The upkeep and effective management of public spaces helps them to remain accessible, safe, and inclusive for all individuals in the community. Equitable maintenance practices prioritize the needs of BIPOC, low-income, and other underserved populations, ensuring that public spaces in their neighborhoods receive the same level of attention and care as those in more affluent areas. The maintenance of public spaces can contribute to creating healthier and more sustainable communities. This includes implementing sustainable landscaping practices, water conservation measures, and environmentally friendly maintenance techniques that minimize negative impacts on the surrounding ecosystem.

### GOAL

- P G3 Public space operations and maintenance practices contribute to healthy urban ecological systems, protect historical and cultural resources, reduce unjust environmental burdens, and ensure access to high-quality public spaces for all.

### POLICIES

- P 3.1 Work to limit water and energy use, eliminate pesticide use, and maximize environmental sustainability in parks and open space construction and maintenance activities.

- P 3.2 Protect habitat and wildlife areas through education, interpretation, and wildlife-management programs.
- P 3.3 Preserve and reclaim park property for public use and benefit and ensure continued access to parkland for the growing population.
- P 3.4 Leverage public space capital and program investments and agreements with private vendors to provide training, apprenticeships, youth employment, and living wage job opportunities for members of marginalized communities.
- P 3.5 Improve environmental quality by reducing pollution and emissions in public space maintenance, irrigation, and land management practices.
- P 3.6 Site maintenance and operation facilities that provide local environmental and economic benefits in communities with greater environmental burdens.
- P 3.7 Adjust maintenance standards for public space and recreational facilities to reflect increasing and changing use by a growing and diversifying population.

## Partnering with Communities

### DISCUSSION

Partnering with communities in the design, activation, and stewardship of public spaces is key to creating inclusive and responsive environments. Resourcing community members with funding and capacity-building opportunities enables them to actively engage in these processes and have a meaningful impact. By removing current barriers such as bureaucratic hurdles and resource disparities, communities can fully participate in shaping their public spaces. Empowering community members with decision-making authority and providing them with the tools and support needed to lead these efforts ensures that public spaces genuinely address the needs, interests, and cultures of the community. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and collective responsibility, resulting in public spaces that are not only reflective of the community but also contribute to their overall well-being, social cohesion, and sense of belonging.

### GOAL

- P G4 Community members are empowered and resourced to activate, improve, and steer the design of public spaces in their neighborhoods.

### POLICIES

- P 4.1 Support community members and organizations to steer the design and development of parks and recreation facilities based on their experience of public spaces, preferred uses, perception of safety in public space, and the specific needs and cultures of the communities the park is intended to serve.
- P 4.2 Establish partnerships with public and private organizations to supplement programming that supports residents' needs and interests-



- P 4.3 Remove barriers and provide technical and financial support, where possible, for community-based organizations or non-profits seeking to acquire, activate, steward, or improve public spaces, particularly in underserved neighborhoods.
- P 4.4 Provide green career pathways for people experiencing homelessness, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color youth, and people with limited economic opportunity by expanding job training, youth employment, conservation corps, apprenticeship, and professional development programs.
- P 4.5 Partner with and support Indigenous communities and individuals to incorporate Indigenous cultures, histories, values, protection of cultural and historical resources, and land management and stewardship practices in public spaces. Explore opportunities to co-manage public lands or return public land to Indigenous ownership.
- P 4.6 Seek opportunities to create or repurpose public spaces specifically designed for Indigenous communities' use and cultural expression. Identify opportunities to integrate Coast Salish languages in public spaces, including naming spaces.
- P 4.7 Implement community-informed equitable development strategies to prevent displacement when making major investments in trails and public spaces in high displacement risk neighborhoods.

## Climate Resilient Open Space

*See also the Capital Facilities and Climate and Environment Elements.*

### DISCUSSION

Climate change affects almost all of the City's park and recreation assets- land, buildings, recreation facilities, and other amenities. It affects not just park visitors, but workers who staff and maintain these assets. Climate resilience actions must expand to ensure Seattle's parks system is resilient to the impacts of sea level rise, heavier rains, extreme weather events, wildfire smoke, and air inversions. By incorporating climate-resilient elements into public space design, such as floodable open spaces and green stormwater infrastructure, cities can protect against climate-related threats and address the disproportionate impacts of climate change. These features provide opportunities to manage stormwater, reducing the risk of flooding, and protecting vulnerable neighborhoods. Additionally, nature-based resilience infrastructure, including bioswales, rain gardens, and green roofs, not only improve stormwater management but also enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem services. Moreover, trees and green spaces play a critical role in mitigating extreme heat by providing shade, cooling effects, and reducing the urban heat island effect. By prioritizing climate-resilience in the public space system, cities can advance climate justice, safeguard communities, and contribute to a just transition towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

## **GOAL**

- P G5 Public spaces are healthy and resilient, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

## **POLICIES**

- P 5.1 Protect, restore, and expand urban forests within public spaces, particularly parks and other City-owned land and in frontline communities.
- P 5.2 Develop interdepartmental partnerships to integrate green infrastructure designed to capture, clean, or re-use flood and storm water into new and existing public spaces.
- P 5.3 Enhance the use of public outdoor space and community centers to provide protection from heat, smoke, and other hazard events, particularly in vulnerable communities, through tree planting, water features, shade structures, and building design.
- P 5.4 Assess park infrastructure to determine what should be replaced, relocated, modified, or maintained more frequently to adapt to climate change.
- P 5.5 Identify opportunities to modify parklands and facilities to provide relief from extreme heat and smoke events with features such as air conditioning, air filtration, tree groves, misting stations, spray parks and other cooling features.
- P 5.6 Stabilize and enhance park saltwater shorelines with nature-based solutions to address climate impacts. Consider removing existing shoreline armoring over time.



# Arts and Culture

## Foreword by Owen Oliver (Quinault/Isleta Pueblo)

In 2018, I applied to a position at the City of Seattle to become the first Indigenous intern in the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD). OPCD, which was a bureaucratic mystery to me, soon gave me insight into the important structures that make a city succeed or fail. I took on the position as an undergraduate student at the University of Washington to move out of my comfort zone and attempt to understand how and if Coast Salish values could be implemented into the planning process of the city. For my entire life, I only saw our knowledge systems presented as artwork around the city. Rarely did I witness the authentic expression of place that combines our traditions with our history, language, and ceremony. Sceptically, I began researching Indigenous city planning texts, videos, and case studies. I even studied abroad to the University of British Columbia and took one of the few Indigenous Urban Planning classes in the world. This interest became clearer when I was introduced to members of the Papa Pounamu, Māori, and Pacific People who advise the New Zealand Planning Institute on the integration of their cultural perspectives in urban

Aotearoa (New Zealand). I asked them *what does success look like for the Papa Pounamu*? Quickly and almost as if it were prepared beforehand, a member said:

*You could reach back in time, grab a chief and walk him down King Street.  
There would be enough stuff to let him know he'd be home.*

Since then, I have thought about this statement, using this framing in the work I do today. And while I often felt jealous of how other cities were fast-tracking this inclusion, those other places weren't my home. The answer from Papa Pounamu relates to what is unique about the land and culture we still have in Seattle. It prompts reflecting and building on our own frameworks that help us implement arts and culture in Seattle. The response to creating success is an active relationship with the ancestors in the area. The chief isn't dropped off by himself, but you are actively walking beside him, with him. Together you both are observers on an ordinary street or even one that so strongly juxtaposes a chief on a street named after the Western conceptualization of a chief... a King. And if you've succeeded in letting the chief know that he's in his homelands, you've accomplished retaining his sense of place in a constantly changing urban environment. In a broader sense, it's not about the Papa Pounamu, but about the individual who is imagining how they would bring any person of importance, father, mother, aunt, uncle, matriarch, language keeper, fisherman, elder, or youth into the vision.

A strong sense of place has always been the lifeblood of the Seattle community. Unmistakable views of Tahoma (Mt. Rainier). The deep emerald greens of the Cascades and the Olympics. Foggy mornings and liquid sunshine afternoons. We are neighbors to the glacially carved Salish Sea, home to ravens, orcas, and sand-burrowing geoducks.

With this shared appreciation of the landscape, we can continue to build the policies and implement them in the One Seattle Plan. We can get closer to being able to bring not only an ancestor of these lands to understanding that they are home but extending it to all the distinct cultural communities in Seattle. Not just the people of the past but everyone who's contributed to making Seattle extraordinary. Those communities' ancestors should be walked through a place that was built and cherished by their descendants. Seattle is already special in this situation, we've been indebted to The Gang of Four (Gossett, Maestas, Santos, Whitebear), nourished from P-Patches, and spoiled by grunge. Our communities and cultural spaces are an extension of the environment. They always have been. We can be one of the first metropolitan areas on the West Coast to lead with how we situate arts and culture through a lens of making all of our ancestors proud and our descendants thankful. It's us in the present that need to be proactive.

Art also needs to be channeled from anger, fear, and pain. It can allow for unheard communities to be known and amplified. It lets us know where we've failed in the past and how we can be accountable in the future. It lets us know how we can appreciate the things that the older generation didn't have. It lets us wonder, would a chief, whose name was given to our city, feel at home near King Street Station? Where much of his life he knew it as *d̥ɪd̥ɔləl'ič* (little crossing over place).

# Introduction

Arts and culture are part of Seattle's rich history and play an important role in Seattle's future as a vibrant city where diverse communities will thrive. From the Coast Salish people, original stewards of this place, through colonization and waves of newcomers from around the world, the arts and culture of the people of this region enrich our lives and inspire our collective and individual creativity and innovation.

Arts and culture extend to all aspects of civic life for people of all ages. The city's arts and cultural scene creates jobs and attracts visitors, customers, and highly skilled workers to the area. At the same time, arts and culture play an important social role by nurturing a welcoming and diverse urban community. Arts and culture can expand perspectives and encourage empathy toward people with different experiences. They help cultivate a greater appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures across Seattle.

The Arts and Culture element of this Plan outlines goals and policies related to the arts, cultural institutions, cultural preservation and place-keeping, the creative economy, and arts-education. Together these aspects of the city encompass a broad range of people, activities, spaces, and levels of involvement. The City is committed to supporting the arts and to offering a greater experience for arts consumers and creators of art across Seattle. Making arts and culture accessible to all requires programs that represent Seattle's diverse communities.

Experiencing arts and culture should be fun and challenging. It should also be accessible so that it can be enjoyed regularly by all. There are many ways to experience art. It can be created or observed or made in collaboration. From tangible, physical objects, books, and digital works to experiences, gatherings, performances, and oral histories, the Seattle arts scene has many different points of entry. Cultural spaces are varied and can range from traditional theaters, galleries, and studios to schools, parks, libraries, and coffee shops.

## Cultural Spaces, Place-making, and Place-keeping

### DISCUSSION

Every successful neighborhood includes cultural spaces, which not only house a range of cultural activity but also help define the very social character and identity of neighborhoods. This includes a wide variety of community gathering spaces where people engage with a myriad of artforms and can support artists, watch performances, listen to authors and storytellers, and learn dance and other artforms. Creative place-making and place-keeping uses arts and culture to increase the vibrancy of neighborhoods, cities, and regions.

Cultural spaces help define the social character and identity of our city and neighborhoods. As such, cultural spaces should reflect Seattle's diverse cultural communities. Cultural spaces are often the first lost when communities experience gentrification. Seattle has a rich ecosystem of organizations working to establish, support, and preserve arts and cultural life and prevent displacement in

communities at risk, including Seattle’s Indigenous community, BIPOC residents of the Central Area and other historically redlined neighborhoods, and the Chinatown International District.

By 2044, Seattle’s neighborhoods will have cultural spaces including theaters, galleries, art-house cinemas, museums, music venues, and artist studios that reflect the rich cultural diversity of our communities, uplifting both those whose ancestors have been here for countless generations and those whose families have moved here more recently. Communities will uplift each other through culturally relevant programming, celebration, and gathering.

## **GOAL**

AC G1 All neighborhoods in Seattle include affordable cultural spaces that enhance urban design; promote cultural awareness, understanding, and pride; and are accessible to of people of all ages and abilities and reflect Seattle’s culturally diverse communities.

## **POLICIES**

AC 1.1 Maintain an inventory of both public and private cultural spaces that includes information about the cultural communities reflected in these spaces.

AC 1.2 Create incentives to preserve or expand space for artists, arts organizations, cultural workers, musicians, music organizations, and other cultural uses.

AC 1.3 Explore opportunities to make surplus City-owned property available to artists, musicians, and arts and cultural organizations.

AC 1.4 Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic community structures, such as meeting halls, schools, and religious buildings, for uses that continue their role as neighborhood anchors.

AC 1.5 Support public-private partnerships that provide affordable space to artists and arts organizations, musicians, and cultural organizations.

AC 1.6 Encourage partnerships to make public and institutional spaces, such as parks, community centers, libraries, hospitals, schools, universities, and City-owned places, available for arts, musicians, and culture.

AC 1.7 Partner with communities to designate cultural districts that reflect existing and hoped-for clusters of cultural spaces and activations.

AC 1.8 Encourage partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to engage in creative place-making/or place-keeping projects, particularly as part of subarea and local area planning.

AC 1.9 Provide grants and other resources, through coordination among City departments and other non-City partners, that support communities in making their own art, music, and culture.

- AC 1.10 Encourage private developers to work with local artists to incorporate culturally relevant art in new development.
- AC 1.11 Invest in cultural spaces that reflect and uplift the cultures of communities who historically thrived in Seattle’s neighborhoods, especially BIPOC communities that have been impacted by displacement.
- AC 1.12 Encourage preservation of community murals and other artworks.
- AC 1.13 Incorporate Lushootseed and other Indigenous languages in public spaces, natural, and built environments.

## Public Art

### DISCUSSION

Seattle strives to be a center of innovation and creativity. When the City’s 1% for Art program was initially adopted in 1973, we were one of the first cities in the country to require that funds for eligible City capital improvement projects be used to commission, purchase, and install artwork in a variety of settings. More recently, City departments are finding more creative ways to collaborate with local artists earlier in the planning phases of capital projects and in the creation of plans that will incorporate public art in more of our public places.

In 2044, more art will be integrated throughout Seattle’s neighborhoods and reflect the cultural heritage of the diverse communities who live here. Visitors and locals alike encounter art in parks, libraries, and community centers—as well as on roadways, bridges, and other public spaces—which enriches people’s daily lives and gives voice and visibility to artists of all backgrounds and cultures. The City’s public art collection will continue to grow through the City’s 1% for Art program, which requires that one percent of the funds from eligible capital improvement projects be set aside for the commission, purchase, and installation of artworks in a variety of settings.

### GOAL

- AC G2 Seattle’s neighborhoods reflect creative expression and original artwork where diverse communities see their cultural identities and feel welcomed.

### POLICIES

- AC 2.1 Prioritize BIPOC, LGBTQIA, and artists with disabilities for new public art as part of capital improvement projects.
- AC 2.2 Include artists, especially artists whose cultural communities are at risk of displacement, early in the planning and design of capital improvements.
- AC 2.3 Prioritize locations for new public art where it is desired by the community, enhances the built environment, can be accommodated safely, and will be enjoyed by Seattle’s diverse communities.

- AC 2.4 Strengthen the diversity of expression in public art to embrace a variety of artists, sites, disciplines, and media to fully reflect the cultural diversity of the city.
- AC 2.5 Create meaningful opportunities for public participation, particularly by members of surrounding communities, in the process of planning, selecting, and implementing of public art projects.
- AC 2.6 Promote and support art experiences that reflect and shape the identity of a place. Design civic space to include public art that highlights the diverse cultural communities that reside in each neighborhood and enable and encourage opportunities for engagement by the community.
- AC 2.7 When commissioning culturally relevant artwork, hire artists who are part of that cultural community and include, when relevant, consultation with Tribes and other Indigenous community stakeholders.

## Creative Economy

### DISCUSSION

Seattle's creative economy is integral to the character of our city and is a powerful sector of our local economy. From innovative musicians and visual artists to locally supported media outlets with a global impact, to the Indigenous communities that stewarded these lands for countless generations, Seattle has a rich cultural heritage.

Encompassing a wide variety of arts and cultural businesses, ranging from nonprofit museums, symphonies, and theaters, to for-profit film, architecture, and advertising companies, the creative economy also includes thousands of independent artists working in Seattle who were particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many local artists, especially BIPOC artists, are finding it increasingly difficult to live and create their art in Seattle. We are planning for a future in 2044 when Seattle's artists will thrive and no longer be at risk of displacement. Arts will be woven throughout our lives and accessible to residents, students, workers, and visitors of all ages.

When supported, arts and culture can help drive and enrich the City's future economic growth. Arts companies and their employees stimulate innovation, playing an important role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy in Seattle. They employ a creative workforce, spend money locally, generate government revenue, and are a cornerstone of tourism. The arts are also an economic-development tool, creating neighborhoods where businesses want to operate, and employees want to live. The creative economy also contributes to Seattle's high-quality of life, helping our city and region attract talent from across the globe. Encouraging creative economy activities in communities of color can provide pathways to new skills, jobs, and prosperity. In other words, the impact of the arts reaches far beyond aesthetics and entertainment and helps set the foundation of community well-being.



## **GOAL**

- AC G3 Artists, creative professionals, cultural workers, and arts and cultural organizations are vital to Seattle's economic prosperity and have equitable opportunities to thrive in Seattle.

## **POLICIES**

- AC 3.1 Support arts and culture as part of an economic development strategy that leverages and expands the economic impact of the creative sector, especially in communities at higher risk of displacement.
- AC 3.2 Regularly assess the economic impact of Seattle's creative sector, including arts, culture, music, film, media, and nightlife.
- AC 3.3 Encourage collective action towards greater racial equity through collaboration across the spectrum of traditional arts, culture, and creative economy businesses, especially businesses that rely on innovation, design, and inclusiveness.
- AC 3.4 Encourage access to affordable housing, live-work spaces, and studio space for creative projects and arts, heritage, and cultural organizations.
- AC 3.5 Provide technical and financial assistance and offer community building activities that connect with and serve artists, musicians, arts organizations, cultural and live music venues of various sizes and at various stages of growth and that represent a broad range of cultures.
- AC 3.6 Implement strategies that enhance access to technical and financial assistance for all artists and cultural organizations, particularly from historically underserved communities and those who are at higher risk of displacement.
- AC 3.7 Work with public, not-for-profit, and private for-profit organizations to support artists, arts organizations, and cultural organizations to help them thrive.
- AC 3.8 Integrate and invest in the creative expertise of a diversity of artists, creatives, cultural workers, and arts, culture, and heritage organizations.
- AC 3.9 Pursue cultural investment strategies, funding programs, and community partnerships through an anti-racist and intersectional lens that centers shared decision-making and collective partnership with communities.
- AC 3.10 Enhance access to a variety of arts, music, and cultural institutions and programs for youth, especially at-risk youth, non-English-speaking residents, seniors, the visually and hearing impaired, and people with other disabilities.
- AC 3.11 Recognize the importance of live music and entertainment venues to the vibrancy of the city's culture and economy. Support the viability of these small businesses and nonprofits in areas at higher risk of displacement through policies that proactively engage and balance the interests of music venues and new residents.

# Youth Development and the Arts

## DISCUSSION

All young people should be given the chance to learn through the arts. The arts develop skills such as creative and critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and perseverance—skills directly linked to success in school, career, and life.

Partnerships, both inside and outside of City government, are needed to ensure equitable access to arts education for all young people. Through arts education programs, experienced teaching artists, community groups, and cultural organizations can introduce children to all types of art, including visual arts, theater, dance, and film. Providing resources for arts education programs for low-income students is especially important because without support they would not be able to participate.

## GOAL

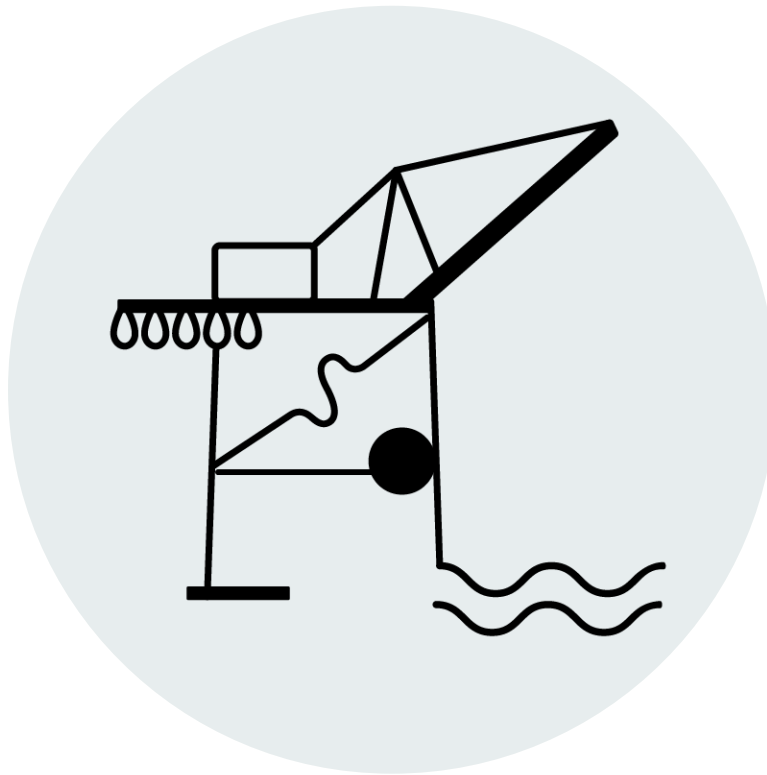
AC G4            Young people have access to arts, cultural, and music educational opportunities that foster the creative skills they need to succeed in life and thrive in our communities.

## POLICIES

AC 4.1           Partner with schools, community centers, libraries, and community organizations to offer culturally responsive arts curricula for young people and to provide professional development in arts education for teachers and community arts partners.

AC 4.2           Prioritize support for arts and music education that provide opportunities for youth furthest from educational and economic justice and for youth with limited or no access to art programs.

AC 4.3           Incorporate opportunities for youth engagement, participation, and leadership in the planning and design of programs and capital projects, especially in areas at higher risk of displacement.



# Container Port

## Introduction

One of the factors behind Seattle's strong economy is the city's role in importing and exporting goods. The Port of Seattle operates one of the largest container-shipping facilities on the West Coast. Not only do the workers who move cargo in and out of the shipping terminals make good wages, but exporting goods made in the Seattle area brings additional money into the regional economy. The Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development elements of this Plan contain related policies about the importance of these areas and how the City regulates uses and provides critical transportation services to them.

### GOAL

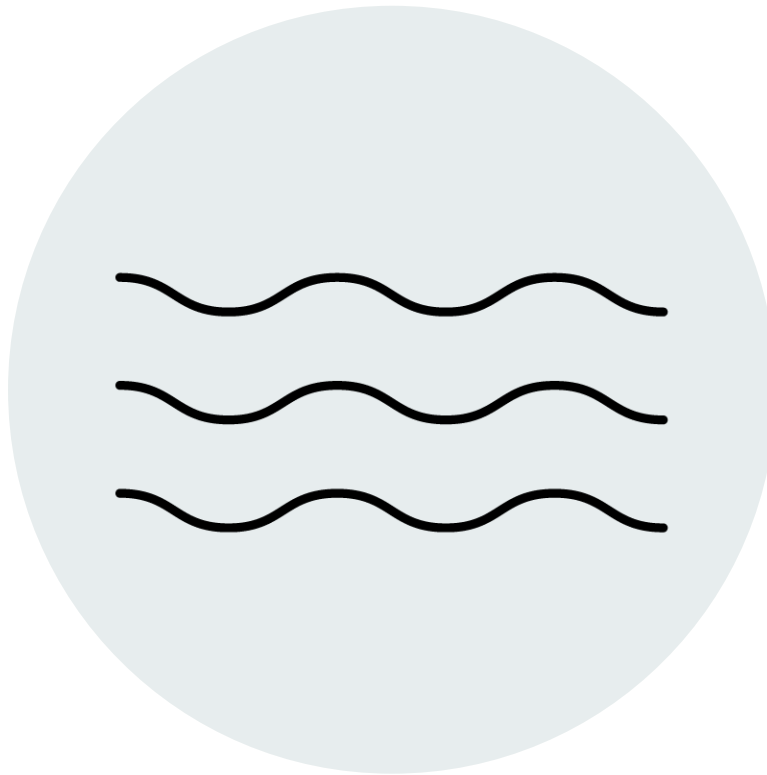
CP G1            Maintain viable and thriving import and export activities in the city as a vital component of the city's and the region's economic base.

## POLICIES

- CP 1.1 Help preserve cargo-container activities by retaining industrial designations on land that supports marine- and rail-related industries, including industrial land adjacent to rail- or water-dependent transportation facilities.
- CP 1.2 Continue to monitor the land area needs, including those related to expansion of cargo container–related activities, and take action to prevent the loss of land needed to serve these activities.
- CP 1.3 Discourage nonindustrial land uses, such as retail and residential, in industrially zoned areas to minimize conflicts between uses and to prevent conversion of industrial land in the vicinity of cargo-container terminals or their support facilities.
- CP 1.4 Consider how zoning designations may affect the definition of highest and best use, with the goals of maintaining the jobs and revenue that cargo-container activities generate and protecting scarce industrial land supply for cargo-container industries, such as marine- and rail-related industries.
- CP 1.5 Consider the value of transition areas—which allow a wider range of uses while not creating conflicts with preferred cargo-container activities and uses—at the edges of general industrial zones. In this context, zoning provisions such as locational criteria and development standards are among the tools for defining such edge areas.
- CP 1.6 Monitor, maintain, and improve key freight corridors, networks, and intermodal connections that provide access to cargo-container facilities and the industrial areas around them to address bottlenecks and other access constraints.
- CP 1.7 Provide safe, reliable, efficient, and direct access between Port marine facilities and the state highway or interstate system, and between Port terminals and railroad intermodal facilities, recognizing that Port operations must address other transportation needs, such as pedestrian safety.
- CP 1.8 Make operational, design, access, and capital investments to accommodate trucks and railroad operations and preserve mobility of goods and services. Improvements may include improvement of pavement conditions, commute trip reduction strategies, roadway rechannelization to minimize modal conflicts, use of intelligent transportation systems, construction of critical facility links, and grade separation of modes, especially at heavily used railroad crossings.
- CP 1.9 Maintain a City classification for freight routes to indicate routes where freight will be the major priority. Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes may be considered in these streets.
- CP 1.10 Identify emerging cargo-container freight transportation issues by working with affected stakeholder groups, including the Seattle Freight Advisory Board. Provide

regular opportunities for communication between the City, the freight community, other affected communities, and other agencies and stakeholders.

- CP 1.11 Continue joint City and Port efforts to implement relevant Port recommendations, such as recommendations contained in the Container Terminal Access Study.
- CP 1.12 Given the importance of cargo container–terminal operations to the state and regional economies, develop partnerships within the City, the Port, the region, and the State to advocate for project prioritization and timely funding to improve and maintain freight infrastructure, and explore funding partnerships.
- CP 1.13 Maintain consistency between local, regional, and State freight-related policies.
- CP 1.14 Encourage the siting of new businesses that support the goals for cargo-container activities in the City’s manufacturing/industrial centers.
- CP 1.15 Work cooperatively with other agencies to address the effects of major land use and transportation projects to avoid or mitigate construction and operational effects on the cargo container–industry sector.
- CP 1.16 Facilitate the creation of coalitions of industrial businesses, vocational training and other educational institutions, and public agencies to help develop training programs to move trained workers into cargo container–related jobs.
- CP 1.17 Identify opportunities to achieve economic, community, and environmental benefits from the development and operations of cargo container–related activities, including access to employment for historically excluded populations.
- CP 1.18 Form partnerships with nonprofit, community-based, private, and public stakeholders to establish environmental improvement goals, including carbon dioxide emission reductions, stormwater management, redevelopment and cleanup of existing marine industrial properties, sustainable design, and fish- and wildlife-habitat improvements. Develop strategies to achieve these goals that include developing funding mechanisms and legislative support.
- CP 1.19 Work with nonprofit, community-based, private, and public stakeholders to formulate plans for public open space, shoreline access, and fish- and wildlife-habitat improvements that incorporate community needs and area-wide habitat priorities with the need to maintain sufficient existing marine industrial lands for present and anticipated cargo-container needs.



# Shoreline Areas

## Introduction

Land near the City's major water bodies—Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union, the Lake Washington Ship Canal, and the Duwamish River—has special importance to the city, its residents, and its businesses. These areas are covered by the State Shoreline Management Act. The City has adopted the Seattle Shoreline Master Program to describe the rules that govern the functions allowed in shoreline areas. Some businesses—like cargo terminals and boat repair—need to be right on the water. Shoreline areas also provide space for recreation, public access and viewing, and natural areas. This element of the Plan guides how the City will set rules for the development that goes in the city's shoreline areas. Together with the Shoreline Master Program regulations in the City's Land Use Code, maps of the locations of shoreline environments, and the Shoreline Restoration and Enhancement Plan, these policies constitute the Seattle Shoreline Master Program.

Because these policies were originally adopted through a separate process, they use a slightly different numbering system than the rest of the Plan.

Note: This element was not updated as part of the One Seattle Plan process (2020-2025).

## Shoreline Use

### GOALS

- SA G1 Encourage shoreline uses that result in long-term over short-term benefit.
- SA G2 Define appropriate uses for specific segments of the shoreline.
- SA G3 Locate uses that are not water dependent or water related on upland lots to optimize shoreline use and access.
- SA G4 Protect ecological function of those areas of shoreline that are biologically significant or that are geologically fragile.
- SA G5 Restore and enhance ecological function through nonregulatory programs and policies.

### POLICIES

- SA P1 Allow only those uses, developments, and shoreline modifications that retain options for future generations, unless identified benefits clearly outweigh the physical, social, environmental, and economic loss over a twenty-year planning horizon. Use preference will be given in the following order:
  - 1. On waterfront lots:
    - a. Uses that protect or restore and enhance natural areas and ecological processes and functions, particularly those areas or systems identified as containing or having unique geological, ecological, or biological significance.
    - b. Water-dependent uses—uses that cannot exist outside a waterfront location and are dependent on the water by reason of the intrinsic nature of operations.
    - c. Water-related uses—uses or portions of uses not intrinsically dependent on a waterfront location but whose economic viability is dependent upon a location in the shoreline district because
      - i. the use has a functional requirement for a waterfront location, such as the arrival or shipment of materials by water (a substantial portion of up to 50 percent of its product or materials arrive by vessel), or the need for large quantities of water in the use;
      - ii. material is stored that is transported by a vessel and is either loaded or off-loaded in the shoreline district; or
      - iii. the use provides a necessary service supportive of water- dependent uses, and the proximity of the use to its customers makes its services less expensive and/or more convenient.
    - d. Water-enjoyment uses—those uses that facilitate public access to the shoreline as a primary characteristic of the use; or uses that provide for recreational use or

aesthetic enjoyment of the shoreline for a substantial number of people as a general characteristic of the uses and which, through location, design, and operation, ensure the public's ability to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline. In order to qualify as a water-enjoyment use, the use must be open to the general public, and the shoreline-oriented space within the project must be devoted to the specific aspects of the use that foster shoreline enjoyment.

- e. Floating home uses existing as of January 2011, which are considered conforming preferred uses because of their historic role and legal recognition by the City. The intent of this policy is to recognize the existing floating home community in Lake Union and Portage Bay, while protecting natural areas, preserving public access to the shoreline, and preventing the displacement of water-dependent commercial and manufacturing uses by new floating homes. Applicable development and Shoreline Master Program regulations may impose only reasonable conditions and mitigation that will not effectively preclude maintenance, repair, replacement, and remodeling of existing floating homes and floating home moorages by rendering these actions impracticable.
  - f. Single-family residential uses—these are preferred uses when they are appropriately located and can be developed without significant impact to ecological functions or displacement of water-dependent uses.
  - g. Uses that are not water dependent with regulated public access or with ecological restoration and enhancement.
  - h. Uses that are not water-dependent, water-related, or water-enjoyment uses as defined above, without regulated public access or ecological restoration and enhancement.
- 2. On upland lots: preferred uses are those that complement uses on adjacent waterfront lots.
  - 3. The preference for protection of the ecological conditions of the shoreline shall be accomplished by prohibiting uses that would negatively impact natural areas, by providing mitigation for negative impacts caused by the use and by providing restoration and enhancement of natural areas where they are degraded.
  - 4. Preferred uses will vary according to the purpose of the shoreline environment.
    - a. Where the purpose of the environment is to encourage water-dependent and water-related uses, these uses shall be preferred by prohibiting and/ or restricting the number of uses that are not water dependent or water related allowed on waterfront lots.
    - b. Where the purpose of the environment is to provide public access, these uses shall be preferred by allowing uses that provide public access.
    - c. Where the purpose of the environment is to protect ecological processes and functions, uses that achieve this purpose shall be preferred.

SA P2 In the Land Use Code, identify appropriate shoreline uses and related standards, and provide site-development standards and other appropriate criteria indicating minimal acceptable standards to be achieved.

SA P3 Allow people to live aboard vessels in moorage areas, and provide standards that mitigate the impacts of live-aboard uses on the shoreline environment.



- SA P4 Allow a wider range of uses on upland lots than on waterfront lots in order to support water-dependent and water-related uses on waterfront lots, while avoiding potential incompatibility with those uses.

## Shoreline Access

### GOALS

- SA G6 Maximize public access—both physical and visual—to Seattle’s shorelines.
- SA G7 Preserve and enhance views of the shoreline and water from upland areas, where appropriate.

### POLICIES

- SA P5 Enable opportunities for substantial numbers of people to enjoy the shorelines by requiring access to public property located on the water and by allowing uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots when those uses provide additional public access to the shoreline and are located in waterfront areas less suited for water-dependent uses.
- SA P6 Promote public enjoyment of the shorelines through public-access standards that require improvements to be safe, be well-designed, and have adequate access to the water.
- SA P7 Encourage adopt-a-beach and other programs that promote voluntary maintenance of public-access areas in the shoreline district.
- SA P8 Maintain standards and criteria for providing public access, except for lots developed for single-family residences, to achieve the following:
1. Linkages between shoreline public facilities via trails, paths, etc. that connect boating and other recreational facilities
  2. Visible signage at all publicly owned or controlled shorelines and all required public access on private property
  3. Development of bonuses or incentives for the establishment of public access on private property, if appropriate
  4. Provision of public-access opportunities by public agencies such as the City, Port of Seattle, King County, and the State at new shoreline facilities (encourage these agencies to provide similar opportunities in existing facilities)
  5. View and visual access from upland and waterfront lots
  6. Prioritization of the operating requirements of water-dependent uses over preservation of views
  7. Protection and enhancement of views by limiting view blockage caused by off-premises signs and other signs
- SA P9 Waterways, which are public highways for watercraft providing access from land to water and from water to land platted by the Washington State Harbor Line

Commission for the convenience of commerce and navigation, in Lake Union and Portage Bay, are for public navigation access and commerce, and in general, the City shall not request that the designation be removed from waterways. The City may request that waterways be vacated only when the City reclaims the area as street right-of-way or for public park purposes. The City may request that the dry land portion of a waterway be redesignated for the additional purpose of providing permanent public-access improvements.

- SA P10 Shoreline street ends are a valuable resource for public use, access, and shoreline restoration. Design public or private use or development of street ends to enhance, rather than reduce, public access and to restore the ecological conditions of the shoreline.

## Transportation in the Shoreline

### GOALS

- SA G8 Provide a transportation network that supports and enhances use of and access to the shorelines.
- SA G9 Relocate or demolish transportation facilities that are functionally or aesthetically disruptive to the shoreline, such as the aerial portion of the Alaskan Way Viaduct on the Central Waterfront between King Street and Union Street.

### POLICIES

- SA P11 Encourage the transport of materials and cargo in the shoreline district via modes having the least environmental impact.
- SA P12 Encourage large vessels (cruise ships and cargo-container ships) to connect to dockside electrical facilities or use other energy alternatives while in port in order to reduce engine idling and exhaust emissions.
- SA P13 Discourage, and reduce over time, vehicle parking on waterfront lots in the shoreline district.
- SA P14 Encourage the maintenance and future development of intermodal commuter ferry services to complement other public transportation systems, from both intracity locations and elsewhere in the region.
- SA P15 Provide public transportation convenient to the shoreline.
- SA P16
1. Locate streets, highways, freeways, and railroads away from the shoreline in order to maximize the area of waterfront lots. Discourage streets, highways, freeways, and railroads not needed for access to shoreline lots in the shoreline district. A replacement for the State Route 99 Viaduct with a tunnel and/or a surface roadway may be located in the shoreline

district because it represents a critical link in the transportation network.

2. To facilitate expeditious construction in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner, standards for major state and regional transportation projects should be considered that will allow flexibility in construction staging, utility relocation, and construction-related mitigation and uses, provided that the projects result in no net loss of ecological function.
3. Prohibit aerial transportation structures over thirty-five feet high, such as bridges and viaducts, on the Central Waterfront in the shoreline environments between King Street and Union Street, except for aerial pedestrian walkways associated with Colman Dock, in order to facilitate the revitalization of Downtown's waterfront, provide opportunities for public access to the Central Waterfront shoreline, and preserve views of Elliott Bay and the land forms beyond.

- SA P17      The primary purpose of waterways in Lake Union and Portage Bay is to facilitate navigation and commerce by providing waterborne access to adjacent properties, access to the land for the loading and unloading of watercraft, and temporary moorage. Waterways are also important for providing public access from dry land to the water.
- SA P18      Public access shall be the preferred use for vacated rights-of-way. Public rights-of-way may be used or developed for uses other than public access, provided that such uses are determined by the City to be in the public interest, and that public access of substantial quality and at least comparable to that available in the right-of-way is provided.

## Shoreline Protection and Restoration

### GOALS

- SA G10      Require that no net loss of ecological functions occurs as a result of uses, development, shoreline modifications, maintenance activities, or expansion of existing uses.
- SA G11      Identify those areas of shorelines that are geologically or biologically unstable, fragile, or significant, and regulate development to prevent damage to property, the general public, aquatic and terrestrial species, and shoreline ecological functions.
- SA G12      Preserve, protect, and restore areas necessary for the support of terrestrial and aquatic life or those identified as having geological or biological significance.
- SA G13      Use scientific information to guide shoreline protection, enhancement, and restoration activities.
- SA G14      Address and minimize the impacts of sea-level rise on the shoreline environment with strategies that also protect shoreline ecological functions, allow water-dependent uses, and provide public access.

- SA G15 Encourage the establishment of marine protected areas, where appropriate.
- SA G16 Restore lower Duwamish watershed habitat and marine ecology while sustaining a healthy and diverse working waterfront in this urban industrial environment.
- SA G17 Strengthen the vitality of a functioning ecosystem within Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA) 8 and 9 by integrating development projects into their surrounding environments, by supporting a diversity of habitats, and by strengthening connections between habitats throughout each watershed.

## **POLICIES**

- SA P19 Use mitigation sequencing to meet no net loss of ecological functions. Mitigation sequencing refers to taking steps in this order: avoid, rectify, minimize, and/or compensate for the loss to ecological functions.
- SA P20 Protect the natural environment of the shoreline through development regulations that include a requirement to use best management practices to control impacts from construction and development activities.
- SA P21 Regulate development on those areas of shorelines that are biologically significant or geologically fragile to prevent harm to property, organisms, or the general public.
- SA P22 Develop methods to measure both the impacts of development in the shoreline district and the effects of mitigation so that no net loss of ecological function occurs through development projects.
- SA P23 Monitor the benefits of mitigation techniques to determine which are best suited to meet the goal of no net loss of ecological function.
- SA P24 Conserve existing shoreline vegetation and encourage new shoreline plantings with native plants to protect habitat and other ecological functions, reduce the need for shoreline stabilization structures, and improve visual and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline.
- SA P25 Avoid development in areas identified as special wildlife or priority saltwater or freshwater habitat unless no feasible alternative locations exist except for a water-dependent use or water-related use that has a functional requirement for a location over water and is located in saltwater habitat that is priority habitat solely due to its use by anadromous fish for migration, if the development mitigates impacts to achieve no net loss of ecological function.
- SA P26 Protect environmentally critical areas as set out in the policies for environmentally critical areas and modified to reflect the special circumstances of such areas in the shoreline district.
- SA P27 Require that all commercial, industrial, or other high-intensity uses provide means for treating natural or artificial urban runoff to acceptable standards. Developments with industrial or commercial uses that use or process substances potentially

harmful to public health and/or aquatic life shall provide means to prevent point and nonpoint discharge of those substances.

- SA P28 Consider the Lower Duwamish Watershed Habitat Restoration Plan (Weiner, K. S., and Clark, J. A., 1996); the Port of Seattle Lower Duwamish River Habitat Restoration Plan, the Final Lower Duwamish River NRDA Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan and implementation documents, and the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan and implementation documents when conducting planning, permitting, mitigation, and restoration activities within the Duwamish/Green River and Cedar River watersheds.
- SA P29 Allow dredging in the minimum amount necessary for water-dependent uses, environmental mitigation or enhancement, cleanup of contaminated materials, and installation of utilities and bridges.
- SA P30 Allow fill on submerged land that does not create dry land only where necessary and in a manner that minimizes short- and long-term environmental damage, for the operation of a water-dependent or water-related use, transportation projects of statewide significance, installation of a bridge or utility line, disposal of dredged material in accordance with the Dredged Material Management Program, beach nourishment, or environmental mitigation or restoration and enhancement. Design projects to ensure no net loss of ecological function through mitigation sequencing.
- SA P31 Permit landfill that creates dry land only where necessary for transportation projects of statewide significance, repair of pocket erosion for water-dependent and water-related uses, beach nourishment, or environmental mitigation or restoration and enhancement. Construct fill projects in a manner that minimizes short- and long-term environmental damage, and design projects to ensure no net loss of ecological function through mitigation sequencing.
- SA P32 Work with other government agencies and shoreline users to reduce the input of pollutants, to restore contaminated areas, to control disposal of dredge spoils, and to determine the appropriate mitigation for project impacts.
- SA P33 Use a restoration plan to identify areas that have potential for shoreline habitat restoration. Identify restoration opportunities that will best achieve ecological improvement, describe the appropriate restoration activities for the conditions in those areas, and provide incentives for achieving restoration of the shorelines.
- SA P34 Support programs that inform the public about shoreline conservation practices, and identify methods by which public and private shoreline owners or community groups may encourage aquatic and terrestrial life, require such methods when appropriate, and provide incentives for such projects.
- SA P35 Support the scientific study of the shoreline ecosystems that will provide information to help update baseline condition information; to monitor the impact of any action;

and to guide protection, restoration, and enhancement activities to meet the no net loss requirements and implement the restoration plan.

- SA P36      Where applicable, new or expanded development and maintenance shall include environmental cleanup and restoration of the shoreline to comply with any relevant state and federal law.

## Shoreline Economic Development

### GOAL

- SA G18      Encourage economic activity and development by supporting the retention and expansion of existing water-dependent and water-related businesses on waterfront lots.

### POLICIES

- SA P37      Support the retention and expansion of existing conforming water-dependent and water-related businesses, and anticipate the creation of new water-dependent and water-related development in areas now dedicated to such use.
- SA P38      Identify and designate appropriate land adjacent to deep water for industrial and commercial uses that require such condition.
- SA P39      Provide regulatory and nonregulatory incentives for property owners to include public amenities and ecological enhancements on private property.
- SA P40      Identify and designate appropriate land for water-dependent business and industrial uses as follows:
1. Cargo-handling facilities:
    - a. Reserve space in deep-water areas with adequate vessel-maneuvering areas to permit the Port of Seattle and other marine industries to remain competitive with other ports.
    - b. Work with the Port of Seattle to develop a long-range port plan in order to provide predictability for property owners and private industry along the Duwamish River and Elliott Bay.
  2. Tug and barge facilities: Retain Seattle's role as the gateway to Alaska, and ensure ample area is designated for uses that serve Puget Sound and Pacific trade.
  3. Shipbuilding, boatbuilding, and repairs: Maintain a critical mass of facilities in Seattle in order to meet the needs of the diverse fleets that visit or have a home port in Seattle, including fishing, transport, recreation, and military vessels.
  4. Moorage: Meet the long-term and transient needs of ships and boats including fishing, transport, recreation, and military vessels. Support long-term moorage in sheltered areas close to services, and short-term moorage in more open areas. Support the efficient use of Fishermen's Terminal, Shilshole Bay Marina, and other public moorage facilities. Protect commercial and recreational moorage from displacement by encouraging the full use of submerged lands for recreational moorage in areas less suited for commercial moorage and

less sensitive to environmental degradation. Require large recreational marinas to provide some commercial transient moorage as part of their facilities.

5. Recreational boating: Maintain diverse opportunities for recreational boaters to access the water. Allow a variety of boating facilities, from launching ramps for small “car top” or “hand-carried” boats to major marinas. Encourage recreational moorage by providing both long-term and short-term moorage at marinas and short-term moorage at cultural and recreational sites.
6. Passenger terminals: Maintain and expand the opportunity for convenient travel by ship to local and distant ports for residents and visitors. Encourage passenger-only ferries on the Central Waterfront.
7. Fishing industry: Maintain a critical mass of support services, including boatbuilding and boat repair, moorage, fish processors, and supply houses to allow Seattle fishermen to continue to service and have a home port for their vessels in Seattle waters. Recognize the importance of the local fishing industry in supplying local markets and restaurants. Recognize the economic contribution of distant-water fisheries to Seattle’s maritime and general economy.

SA P41 Allow multiuse developments including uses that are not water dependent or water related where the demand for water-dependent and water-related uses is less than the land available or if the use that is not water dependent is limited in size, provides a benefit to existing water-dependent and water-related uses in the area, or is necessary for the viability of the water-dependent uses. Such multiuse development shall provide shoreline ecological restoration, which is preferred, and/or additional public access to the shoreline to achieve other Shoreline Master Program goals.

## Shoreline Recreation

### GOALS

- SA G19 Manage and optimize publicly owned shorelines that are suitable for public recreation.
- SA G20 Increase shorelines dedicated to public recreation and open space.
- SA G21 Identify, protect, and reserve for public use and enjoyment areas in the shoreline district that provide a variety of public-access activities and that connect to other public-access sites so that public access is available throughout the city.
- SA G22 Allow increased opportunities for the public to enjoy water-dependent recreation, including boating, fishing, swimming, diving, and enjoyment of views.

### POLICIES

- SA P42 Designate for water-dependent recreation, areas where there are natural beaches, large amounts of submerged land or sheltered water, and minimal heavy ship traffic or land suitable for heavy industrial activity, while protecting ecological functions.

- SA P43 Provide for recreational boating facilities, including moorage and service facilities, on publicly owned land, and encourage the provision of such facilities on private property in appropriate areas that minimize environmental impacts.
- SA P44 Increase publicly owned shorelines, giving priority to those areas of the City that lack recreational facilities.
- SA P45 Explore alternatives to acquisition for providing public recreation at the shoreline and on the water.
- SA P46 Identify submerged lands that could be used for underwater parks.

## Shoreline Archaeological and Historic Resources

### GOALS

- SA G23 Encourage the restoration, preservation, and maintenance of areas of the shoreline having significant archaeological and historical importance.
- SA G24 Encourage the restoration of archaeological and historic features of the shoreline where consistent with economic and environmental goals.

### POLICIES

- SA P47 Designate, protect, preserve, and support restoration of sites and areas of the shoreline district having historic or cultural significance, including through landmark designation where appropriate.
- SA P48 Avoid impacts to areas identified as archaeologically and historically significant, unless no reasonable alternative locations exist and impacts to the resource are mitigated.

## Shoreline Environments

### DISCUSSION

State law requires that the Shoreline Master Program address a wide range of physical conditions and development settings along the shoreline. The Shoreline Master Program spells out different measures for the environmental protection, allowed uses, and development standards for each area of the shoreline. Each distinct section of the shoreline is classified as a particular environment. The environment designations provide the framework for implementing shoreline policies and regulatory measures. The shoreline environments within Seattle's shoreline district are divided into two broad categories—conservancy and urban—and then subdivided further within these two categories.



The conservancy shoreline environments are less developed and provide for areas of navigation, recreation, and habitat protection. The urban shoreline environments are areas that are more developed and provide for single-family houses and water-dependent and water-related uses. The conservancy and urban shoreline environments are described in the following goals and policies.

### ***Conservancy Shoreline Environments***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G25      The conservancy shoreline environments are intended to provide for navigation; public access; recreation; and protection, restoration, and enhancement of ecological functions in the shoreline district, while allowing some development if designed to protect ecological functions.

### ***Conservancy Management (CM) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G26      The purpose of the Conservancy Management Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing opportunities for shoreline recreation.

#### **POLICIES**

- SA P49      Encourage restoration of ecological functions in areas where such function has been degraded.
- SA P50      Accommodate water-oriented public infrastructure projects or such projects that require a waterfront location and that are compatible with the ecological functions of the area.

### ***Conservancy Navigation (CN) Environment***

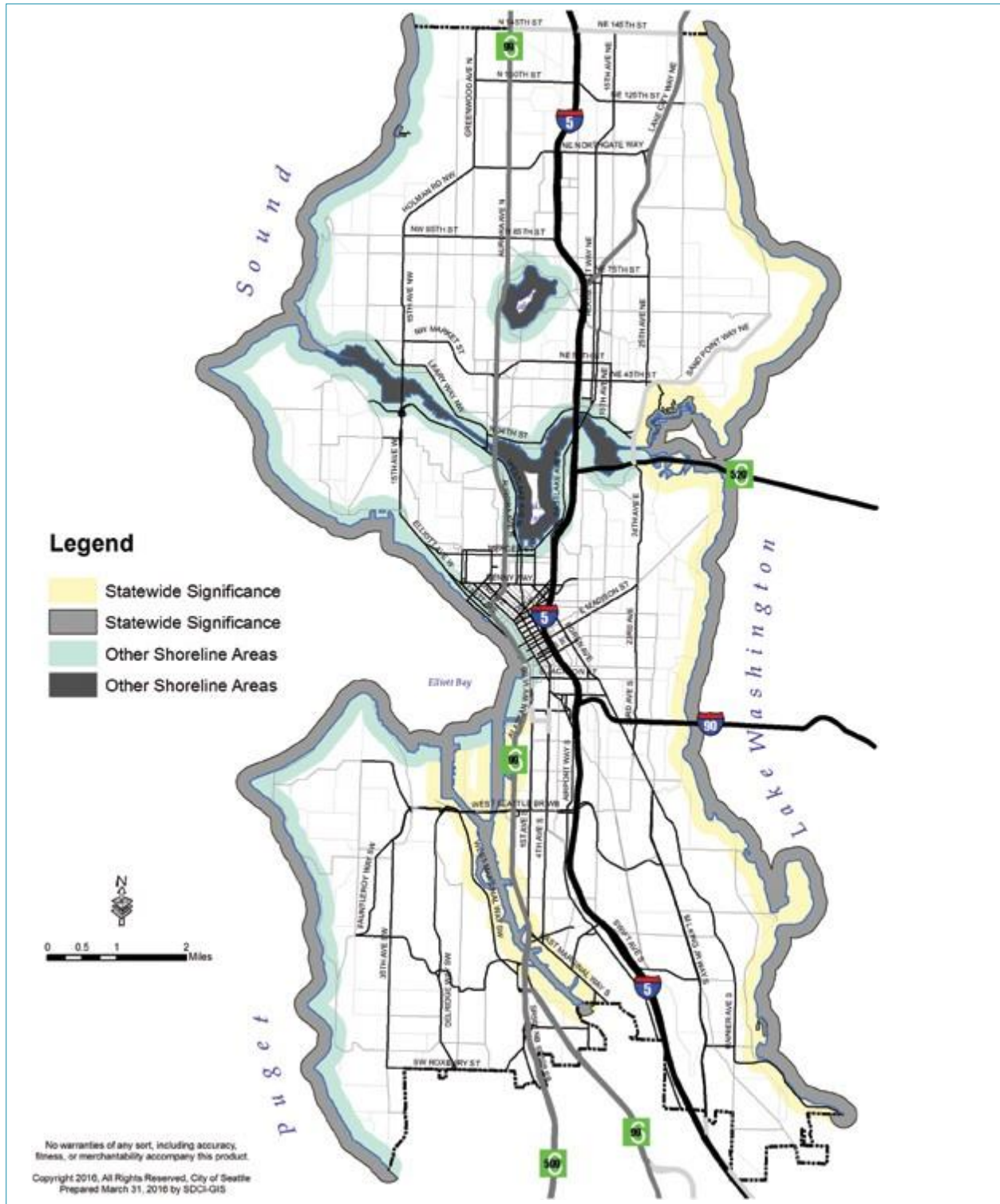
#### **GOAL**

- SA G27      The purpose of the Conservancy Navigation Environment is to preserve the shoreline environment while providing navigational use of the water.

#### **POLICIES**

- SA P51      Allow in-water and overwater structures that are primarily for navigational purposes.
- SA P52      Enhance and restore ecological function, where feasible, in areas where such function has been previously degraded.

**Figure 15**  
**Seattle Shorelines**



### ***Conservancy Preservation (CP) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

SA G28 The purpose of the Conservancy Preservation Environment is to preserve, enhance, and restore the ecological functions in the shoreline district.

#### **POLICIES**

SA P53 Prohibit uses that substantially degrade the ecological functions or natural character of the shoreline.

SA P54 Prohibit commercial and industrial uses and non-water-oriented recreation.

SA P55 Prohibit parking that can be located outside the CP area.

SA P56 Limit access and utilities to those necessary to sustain permitted uses and activities.

### ***Conservancy Recreation (CR) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

SA G29 The purpose of the Conservancy Recreation Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing opportunities for shoreline recreation.

#### **POLICIES**

SA P57 Prioritize public access, water-dependent recreation, and other water-oriented uses compatible with ecological protection.

SA P58 Locate public access and public recreation only where the impacts on ecological functions can be effectively mitigated.

### ***Conservancy Waterway (CW) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

SA G30 The purpose of the Conservancy Waterway Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing access to the shoreline and water by watercraft.

#### **POLICIES**

SA P59 Provide navigational access to adjacent properties, and access to and from land for the loading and unloading of watercraft and temporary moorage.

SA P60 Allow in- and overwater structures only where needed for navigational purposes, temporary moorage, minor vessel repair, pedestrian bridges, and/or ecological restoration.

SA P61 Minimize impacts on navigation, public views, and ecological functions.

### ***Urban Shoreline Environments***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G31            The urban shoreline environments are intended to provide for increased development of the shoreline for residential, commercial, and industrial uses while protecting ecological functions.

### ***Urban Commercial (UC) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G32            The purpose of the Urban Commercial Environment is to provide for water-oriented uses of the shoreline and for uses that are not water oriented when shoreline restoration and enhancement or public access is provided.

#### **POLICIES**

- SA P62            Allow uses that are not water oriented only when in combination with water-dependent uses or in limited situations where they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-dependent uses or on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.
- SA P63            Require visual access to the water through view corridors or other means for commercial and larger multifamily residential projects.
- SA P64            Provide for public access to the shoreline and require shoreline environmental restoration and enhancement for uses that are not water dependent.

### ***Urban General (UG) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G33            The purpose of the Urban General Environment is to provide for commercial and industrial uses in the shoreline district where water access is limited.

#### **POLICIES**

- SA P65            Allow commercial and industrial uses that are not water dependent or water related.
- SA P66            Require visual public access where feasible.

### ***Urban Harborfront (UH) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

- SA G34            The purpose of the Urban Harborfront Environment is to provide for water-oriented uses (uses that are water-dependent, water-related, or water-enjoyment, or a combination of such uses) of the shoreline and for a mix of uses that are water

oriented and not water oriented on lots where shoreline restoration and enhancement or public access is provided.

## **POLICIES**

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| SA P67 | Allow a mix of uses in recognition of this environment's roles in tourism and transportation, while ensuring a high degree of public access and recognizing the historic, environmental, and anthropogenic nature of this area.  |
| SA P68 | Allow uses that are not water oriented as part of mixed-use developments or in circumstances where they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-oriented uses.   |
| SA P69 | Allow uses that are not water oriented on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.  |
| SA P70 | Allow uses that reflect the diversity of development in the area and support adjacent retail and the tourism industry. On waterfront lots, provide public access and opportunities for large numbers of people to access and enjoy the water in the form of restaurants and water-dependent recreational activities. Allow a broader range of uses on upland lots to support the tourism industry and retail core. |
| SA P71 | Maintain and enhance views of the water and the landforms beyond the water to augment the harborfront's pedestrian environment and status as an important waterfront destination. Encourage connections to east-west corridors and waterfront trails.  |
| SA P72 | Encourage and provide for physical public access to the water, where appropriate and feasible.   |
| SA P73 | Development should support or enhance the existing historic character of the urban harborfront while balancing the need for ecological enhancement.  |

## ***Urban Industrial (UI) Environment***

### **GOAL**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| SA G35 | The purpose of the Urban Industrial Environment is to provide for water-dependent and water-related industrial uses on larger lots. |
|--------|---|

### **POLICIES**

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| SA P74 | Allow uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots in limited circumstances and in a limited square footage on a site as part of development that includes water-dependent or water-related uses, where it is demonstrated that the allowed uses will benefit water-dependent uses and where the use will not preclude future use by water-dependent uses. |
|--------|--|

SA P75 Allow uses that are not water dependent or water related where there is no direct access to the shoreline.

### ***Urban Maritime (UM) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

SA G36 The purpose of the Urban Maritime Environment is to provide for water-dependent and water-related industrial and commercial uses on smaller lots.

#### **POLICIES**

SA P76 Design public access to minimize interference with water-dependent, water-related, and industrial uses, and encourage that public access be located on street ends, parks, and other public lands.

SA P77 Allow uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots in limited circumstances and in a limited square footage on a site as part of development that includes water-dependent or water-related uses, where it is demonstrated that the allowed uses will benefit water-dependent uses and where the use will not preclude future use by water-dependent uses.

SA P78 Allow uses that are not water dependent or water related on lots where there is no direct access to the shoreline.

### ***Urban Residential (UR) Environment***

#### **GOAL**

SA G37 The purpose of the Urban Residential Environment is to provide for residential use in the shoreline district when it can be developed in a manner that protects shoreline ecological functions.

#### **POLICIES**

SA P79 Provide for single-family residential use of the shoreline in areas that are not suited for industrial and commercial use, habitat protection, or public access.

SA P80 Provide development standards that allow residential development and protect ecological functions, such as shoreline armoring standards and structure setback regulations.

SA P81 Multifamily development is not a preferred use in the shoreline district and should be limited to locations where allowed as of January 2011.

SA P82 Require public access as part of multifamily development of greater than four units.

SA P83 Provide for access, utilities, and public services to adequately serve existing and planned development.

# Shorelines of Statewide Significance

## DISCUSSION

In addition to the goals and policies of each shoreline environment, the following policies apply to all shorelines of statewide significance under the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Master Program, which include: Puget Sound, the Duwamish River (shorelines from the south city limits north to South Massachusetts Street on the east side and Southwest Bronson Street on the west side, and including Harbor Island and the East and West Duwamish Waterways), Lake Washington, and Union Bay to the Montlake Bridge, as illustrated in Shoreline Figure 15.

## POLICIES

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| SA P84 | Protect the ecology of natural beaches and fish migration routes, including the natural processes associated with feeder bluffs. |
| SA P85 | Encourage and enhance shoreline recreational activities, particularly in developed parks.  |
| SA P86 | Provide for quality public access to the shoreline.  |
| SA P87 | Preserve views of Puget Sound and the landforms beyond, as well as views of Lake Washington and Union Bay.                       |
| SA P88 | Preserve and enhance the resources of natural areas and fish migration routes, feeding areas, and spawning areas.                |

# Height in the Shoreline District

## POLICIES

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| SA P89 | The thirty-five-foot height limit provided in the Shoreline Management Act shall be the standard for maximum height in the Seattle shoreline district. Exceptions in the development standards of a shoreline environment may be made consistent with the Act and with underlying zoning and special districts where <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. a greater height will decrease the impact of the development on the ecological condition,</li><li>2. a greater height will not obstruct views from public trails and viewpoints,</li><li>3. a greater height will not obstruct shoreline views from a substantial number of residences on areas adjoining the “shorelines of the state” as defined in RCW 90.58.030(1)(g) that are in Seattle and will serve a beneficial public interest, or</li><li>4. greater height is necessary for bridges, or equipment of water-dependent or water-related uses or manufacturing uses.</li></ol> |
| SA P90 | Heights lower than thirty-five feet <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. shall be the standard for structures overwater, and</li><li>2. where a reduced height is warranted because of the underlying residential zone, or</li><li>3. where a reduced height is warranted because public views or the views of a substantial</li></ol>   |

number of residences on areas adjoining the “shorelines of the state” as defined in RCW 90.58.030(1)(g) that are in Seattle could be blocked.

## Shoreline Master Program Process

### GOAL

SA G38            Continue shoreline planning by periodically updating the inventory, goals, policies, and regulations to respond to changing priorities and conditions in Seattle’s shorelines.

### POLICY

SA P91            Conduct periodic assessments of the performance of and the need for change in the Shoreline Master Program.





# Community Involvement

## Introduction

The City of Seattle uses community involvement to create plans, design programs, and guide city investments and policy decisions. The early and ongoing involvement of community stakeholders is an essential part of an effective, inclusive, and accessible decision-making process. It enables the City to make decisions informed by the inputs and lived experiences of residents in order to best address their needs. It provides community members with the ability to voice concerns, prioritize issues, share knowledge, and to communicate how a City action might impact or benefit their lives and community. Effective community involvement includes sharing clear information with the public and accessible forums for residents throughout the city to come together, discuss issues of importance to their communities, and connect with City staff. It also means providing meaningful opportunities to give feedback and to see how their input has shaped decisions made by the City. As

we do this work, we are committed to equitable community involvement in decision-making processes that affect community members.

## Engaging all Seattle Residents Equitably

### DISCUSSION

Effective community involvement is designed and carried out to reach all of Seattle's many neighborhoods, a full spectrum of all residents and cultural communities in the city, businesses large and small, and organizations that have a stake in the policies adopted to shape our future and the action taken by the City to make those policies a reality.

Many people, however, face barriers to participation in the engagement process. These barriers have prevented many communities—overwhelmingly, BIPOC and low-income communities — from accessing engagement opportunities and information that would allow them to understand, participate in, and shape the City's decision-making. Historically, the majority of the feedback received came from those with the time, resources, and familiarity with navigating the City's engagement process. Facing many barriers—lack of time due to work or family demands, language access, technological literacy, poorly explained City processes, and lack of trust between community and the City—other communities are rendered largely silent in comparison and are thus under-represented and disempowered. Equitable engagement seeks to break down these barriers.

### GOAL

CI G1 City decisions shaping plans and policies, citywide and community investments, and other programs and initiatives include and reflect equitable and inclusive engagement with communities and stakeholders across the city.

### POLICIES

CI 1.1 Use well-designed, responsive, and culturally relevant community involvement plans and strategies that provide opportunities for community members, organizations, businesses (including small locally owned businesses), and other key stakeholders to learn about and shape City plans and decisions.

CI 1.2 Use approaches to community involvement that reflect the needs of under-represented people and communities, including: populations at risk for displacement, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), youth, elders, low-income households, people with limited-English proficiency (LEP), immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+, people who are unhoused, people with disabilities, and other groups who have been under-represented in City decision-making processes.

CI 1.3 Increase representation, input, and involvement by members of under-represented communities, community leaders, and stakeholders in public outreach and engagement across the full range of City projects.

- CI 1.4 Design decision-making processes in ways that are reflective of and accessible to affected communities.
- CI 1.5 Provide clear and timely information to community about how their input can or has shaped City policies and decisions.
- CI 1.6 Provide a wide range of opportunities for obtaining information and involvement in decision-making processes.
- CI 1.7 Seek opportunities to do engagement in community-based settings, culturally significant and accessible spaces, and locally organized meetings.
- CI 1.8 Seek to reflect the diversity of the city in the membership of city-appointed boards and commissions.

## Engagement Partnerships

### DISCUSSION

Community involvement can be more effective and more equitable when the City partners with organizations rooted in communities themselves. Through engagement partnerships, the City can support and empower communities to drive the engagement process from within. By tapping the ability of community leaders to effectively reach their own community members, the City will support an engagement process whose inputs will more accurately communicate the needs and priorities of its diverse communities. These partnerships also lay the groundwork for more durable and trusting relationships with historically underrepresented communities.

### GOAL

- CI G2 Community engagement reflects and benefits from the coordinated efforts of City, organizational, and community-based partners.

### POLICIES

- CI 2.1 Partner with community-based organizations, other public agencies, schools, institutions, labor and trade unions, and other organizations in designing and carrying out the community engagement process.
- CI 2.2 Build relationships with community members and community-based organizations that are established through a long-term commitment to building mutual respect, trust, and community well-being.
- CI 2.3 Establish partnerships with community-based organizations to engage and empower BIPOC and other underrepresented communities that historically have experienced barriers to participating in City decision making processes.

- CI 2.4 Partner with impacted communities to identify and design strategies that advance a more equitable and inclusive future, reduce and repair past harms, and reduce current and future risk of displacement.
- CI 2.5 Identify and partner with youth-based organizations to uplift the perspectives and inputs of this population, which will inherit the legacy of current City decision making processes.

## Building Community Capacity

### DISCUSSION

Equitable engagement can be more successful with investments in the capacity of communities to participate effectively in the engagement process. Capacity strengthens community members' ability to share input that is based on their collective expertise, knowledge, and lived experience as they relate to the benefits and impacts of City policies and actions. Prioritizing capacity building in historically underrepresented communities will help ensure that both the process and results of City decisions are more equitable.

### GOAL

- CI G3 Seattle has an equitable community engagement process that enfranchises all residents in City decision-making processes and builds the long-term capacity of communities to organize to improve their lives and neighborhoods.

### POLICIES

- CI 3.1 Actively support the ability of community members, particularly those of historically underrepresented communities, to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively participate in City decision-making processes.
- CI 3.2 Identify opportunities to elevate community expertise, lived experience, and leadership to guide and inform engagement and planning processes.
- CI 3.3 Prioritize available resources to plan for and implement equitable community involvement, including, where appropriate and feasible, compensation for time, experience, and expertise shared through the engagement process.
- CI 3.4 Promote opportunities for community-based participatory research and data collection to inform and shape City plans, policies, and investments.

## Indigenous Engagement

### DISCUSSION

The City is committed to investing in and growing its engagement with both Tribal Nations and its Urban Indigenous population. This includes engaging and collaborating with Indigenous peoples

early and frequently when developing and implementing programs and policies. The City is also committed to working in collaboration with Indigenous people to increase Indigenous visibility and voice by prioritizing and supporting cultural practices, stewardship, and ways of knowing.

## **GOAL**

CI G4            City of Seattle has established relationships, practices, and processes of engagement with Tribes and urban Native communities that reflect the ongoing importance of Indigenous communities to the City and its future in the region.

## **POLICIES**

CI 4.1            Identify and incorporate Indigenous engagement methodologies and practices that will make engagement more accessible to the Indigenous community.

CI 4.2            Honor and uphold government to government relationships with federally recognized Tribes through early and frequent Tribal consultation.

CI 4.3            Ensure that Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights are recognized and respected throughout the planning process.

CI 4.4            Seek opportunities for City staff to learn directly, and with reciprocity, from Tribal and urban Native leaders about trust and treaty rights, Tribal sovereignty, Tribal governance, Native history, culture, protocols, and appropriate ways to engage with Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations.

CI 4.5            Partner with Native artists and community members to co-develop creative approaches for Indigenous representation and visibility.

CI 4.6            Support early and ongoing consultation with urban Native communities and with Tribal governments, working with these communities to learn more about the needs, strengths, and challenges of Indigenous communities with regards to City processes and plans.

CI 4.7            Utilize data, reports, and educational information generated by Indigenous communities to inform City plans, projects, and processes.

CI 4.8            Strengthen inter-departmental coordination and consistency in engagement with Tribes and urban Indigenous communities toward a more structural, systemic, citywide approach that better serves Tribal and urban Native partners.

CI 4.9            Support opportunities for Native leaders to convene with City representatives and with each other to share and celebrate their work with one another, troubleshoot solutions to common challenges, break down silos, and increase collaboration.

# Glossary

## TERM

Accessory dwelling unit (ADU)

## DEFINITION

A housing unit that is in addition to the primary residence on a site. An accessory unit may be attached to or detached from the primary residence.

Active transportation

Forms of mobility that include walking or running; the use of a mobility assistive device such as a wheelchair; bicycling, and cycling, irrespective of the number of wheels; and the use of small personal devices such as foot scooters and skateboards. Active transportation includes both traditional and electric assist bicycles and other devices. Planning for active transportation must consider and address accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the distinct needs of each form of active transportation.

Activation

Activation refers to the design and utilization of public spaces to create vibrant and engaging environments. Through thoughtful activation strategies, public spaces can become lively gathering spots that stimulate community interaction, cultural exchange, and economic vitality. This involves organizing events, festivals, performances, and markets that celebrate diversity and local talents, attracting people from different backgrounds and fostering a sense of belonging.

Area Median Income (AMI)

The annual median family income for the Seattle area, which includes King and Snohomish counties, as published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, with adjustments for household size.

Building performance standards

Energy or emissions targets that existing buildings must meet over time, reducing climate impacts.

Built environment

Man-made or modified structures, landscapes, and infrastructure that provide living, working, and recreational space.

Capital facilities

Capital facilities are major assets that have a long useful life such as roads, developed parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	The portion of the City’s budget that describes revenue sources and expenditures for funding capital facilities over a six-year period.
Carbon neutral	Making no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Not net increase in carbon pollution and additional carbon reduction through offsets.
Carbon pollution	Greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and certain synthetic chemicals, trap some of the Earth's outgoing energy, thus retaining heat in the atmosphere. Also called carbon emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, GHG emissions and climate pollution.
Circular economy	A circular economy keeps materials, products, and services in circulation for as long possible. A circular economy reduces material use, redesigns materials, products, and services to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.
Clean energy	Refers to energy that is generated with zero carbon emissions. It includes renewables (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and hydro) and non-renewables (nuclear, fusion, and biogas)..
Climate adaptation	Refers to actions taken to adapt to unavoidable impacts as a result of climate change.
Climate change	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late twentieth century onward and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
Climate resilience	The ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities.
Climate Pollution	See carbon pollution.
Co-benefits	The ancillary or additional benefits of policies that are implemented with a primary goal. For example, policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also have other, often at least equally important, benefits (e.g., energy savings, economic benefits, air quality benefits, public health benefits). Also referred to as "multiple benefits."

Communities of color	Communities comprised of people of color with a shared racial identity. May also have a geographic component referring to where people of color with a racial identity in common reside.
Conditional use	A use that may be located within a zone only upon taking measures to address issues that may make the use detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare, or issues that may impair the integrity and character of the zoned district.
Consumption-based emissions	Greenhouse gas emissions generated by the activity of all residents of a geographic area. It accounts for the emissions associated with all the goods and services consumed within the community, no matter where they are produced.
Countywide Planning Policies	The Growth Management Act requires that counties prepare countywide planning policies (CPPs) to provide a common framework for city and county comprehensive plans. The CPPs contain housing and job growth targets for each jurisdiction along with estimates of future affordable housing needs.
Creative economy	Includes people, organizations, and businesses who do creative and cultural labor, both paid and unpaid, including artists, designers, authors, professionals, and creative entrepreneurs who freelance or “gig.”
Critical access needs	A building’s curbside loading needs that must be met for the building to perform its core operating functions safely and successfully. Critical access needs are delineated as curb signage that facilitates access for vehicles and services to buildings (residential, commercial) that provide for the following: mail and package delivery; commercial and urban goods; building maintenance; solid waste servicing; passenger pickup/drop off; and on-demand delivery.
Cultural resources	Cultural resources encompass all the physical evidence of past human activity. They are non-renewable resources that are important to our nation’s history as they tell the story of our human past and interaction with the natural environment. This could include a site, object, building, structure, landscape, etc.



Cultural spaces	All spaces whose primary purpose is to present or support artists and culture-makers, and their art and culture. It includes spaces for art presentation, art creation, supply for the means of creative production, arts training and education, live/work, art support organizations, and cultural heritage organizations.
Curb space	The area within public rights-of-way that are between the sidewalk and travel lanes, or where parking and loading are generally allowed.
Decarbonization	Transitioning away from fossil fuels to low-carbon or carbon-neutral alternatives. It encompasses renewable energy deployment, energy efficiency improvements, and carbon capture and storage technologies.
Deconstruction	The systematic disassembly of buildings to maximize reuse and minimize demolition waste.
Demand management	The strategy of reducing demand for services such as energy, water, or vehicle trips, rather than increasing production to ensure adequate supply.
Density	A measurement of the concentration of development on the land, often expressed in the number of people, housing units, or employees per acre.
Development regulations	Rules and regulations for new development, such as the Land Use Code, Building Code, Energy Code, Stormwater Code, etc., the City uses to control the development of land and buildings.
Development standards	Regulations in the Land Use Code that limit the size, bulk, or siting conditions of particular types of buildings or uses located within any designated zoning district. See also zoning.
Displacement	The involuntary relocation of residents, businesses, or organizations from an area. Physical displacement, or direct displacement, is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent/income-restricted housing. Economic displacement occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford escalating costs. Cultural displacement occurs when residents, businesses, or organizations are compelled to move because the people and institutions that make up their cultural community have left or are leaving the area.

Distributed energy	Systems where the supply of water, energy, or other resources come from many sources, such as small solar energy generators or the capture of waste heat, rather than from a central source, such as a power plant. Also referred to as distributed energy resources, and distributed resources.
District energy	A highly efficient heating and cooling system using a network of underground pipes to pump steam, hot water, and/or chilled water to multiple buildings in an area such as a downtown district, college or hospital campus, airport, or military base. Providing heating and cooling from a central plant requires less fuel and displaces the need to install separate space heating and cooling and hot water systems in each building.
Electrification	Replacing technologies or processes that use fossil fuels, like internal combustion engines and gas boilers, with electrically powered equivalents, such as electric vehicles or heat pumps. These replacements are typically more efficient, reducing energy demand, and can reduce carbon emissions as electricity generation is decarbonized.
Embodied carbon	Greenhouse gas emissions arising from the manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of building materials.
Energy benchmarking	Measures of energy performance of a single building over time, relative to other similar buildings, or modeled simulations of a reference building built to a specific standard (such as an energy code).
Environmentally Critical Area (ECA)	“Environmentally Critical Areas represent those areas of Seattle that require additional regulation due to their high environmental function or unique geologic conditions such as steep slopes, landslide-prone areas, and liquefaction areas..
Environmental justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
Equitable development	Investments, programs, and policies that reduce disparities, prevent displacement, and meet the needs of people of color and low-income persons.

Essential public facilities	Public facilities that are typically difficult to site such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, regional transit authority facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, opioid treatment programs including both mobile and fixed-site medication units, recovery residences, harm reduction programs excluding safe injection sites, and inpatient facilities including substance use disorder treatment facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, community facilities, and secure community transition facilities.
Federally recognized Tribes	A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Federally recognized tribes are recognized as possessing certain inherent rights of self-government and are entitled to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States.
Food security	The ability to consistently access and afford healthy food.
Frequent transit	Frequent transit service is defined in Seattle Municipal Code 23.84A.038. It generally includes transit stops where buses come every 15 minutes during the weekday and 30 minutes during the weekend.
Frontline communities	Frontline community members are people who experience the first and worst consequences of climate change. Such residents' health and livelihoods are often highly vulnerable to climate-exacerbated hazards and economic disruptions, and their communities often lack basic support infrastructure and suffer disproportionately from the compounding impacts of pollution, discrimination, racism, and poverty.
Greenbelt	Greenbelts and Natural Areas are park sites established for the protection and stewardship of wildlife, habitat and other natural systems support functions. Some natural areas are accessible for low-impact use. Larger natural areas may have small sections developed to serve a community park function. Some Large Natural Area/Greenbelts may be divided into subareas based on vegetation, habitat, restoration status, wildlife area designation, recreation use area, etc. to better differentiate resource needs and use priorities.
Green infrastructure	Green infrastructure refers to the range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other

	<p>permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters. Green infrastructure filters and absorbs stormwater where it falls. Also referred to as green stormwater infrastructure and natural drainage system.</p>
Growth Management Act (GMA)	<p>The Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) is a series of state statutes, first adopted in 1990, that require fast-growing cities and counties to develop a comprehensive plan to manage their population growth. State law (RCW 36.70A) that requires local governments to prepare comprehensive plans (including land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities and utilities) to accommodate 20 years of expected growth.</p>
High-capacity transit	<p>In Seattle, high-capacity transit consists of both rail and rubber-tired transit modes that can operate in exclusive rights-of-way or in mixed traffic. It can include technologies such as light rail or bus rapid transit.</p>
Impact fees	<p>One-time charges assessed by a local government against a new development project to help pay for new or expanded public capital facilities that will directly address the increased demand for services created by that development.</p>
Impervious surface	<p>A surface that cannot absorb water, such as asphalt or concrete.</p>
Industrial land use	<p>Activities that include production, distribution, and repair of goods; includes uses such as factories, container terminals, rail yards, warehouses, and repair of heavy equipment.</p>
Land Use Code	<p>The portion of the Seattle Municipal Code that contains regulations governing development activities. The Land Use Code describes the processes and standards that apply for each zone in the city.</p>
Landmark	<p>A property that has been designated by the City as an important resource to the community, city, state, or nation. Designated landmark properties in Seattle include individual buildings and structures, vessels, landscapes and parks, and objects such as street clocks and sculptures. The Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board is responsible for determining which properties meet the standards for landmark designation.</p>

Liquefaction	The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often as a result of ground shaking during an earthquake.
Living wage job	A job that provides approximate income needed to meet a family's basic needs.
Livability	Livability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life, including built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreational possibilities.
Marginalized communities	Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.
Master plan	A document that describes the long-term expectations for growth on a large property controlled by a single entity, such as the campus of a college or hospital.
Micromobility	Small, low-speed transportation devices. They are convenient for travelling short distances or the beginning or end of trips. They include bikes and scooters.
Mixed-use	Development that contains residential use plus some other, usually commercial use, such as office or retail.
Neighborhood delivery hub	Defined as a central drop-off / pick-up location for goods, creating closer proximity to the final and smaller service delivery areas. By distributing operations close to the end customer in city centers and offering additional services onsite, these hubs can alleviate congestion, reduce emissions, consolidate freight vehicle trips, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and enable transfers to low- or zero-emissions fleet for final mile deliveries.
Nonconforming use	A use or structure that was valid when brought into existence but that does not meet subsequent regulations. Typically,

	nonconforming uses are permitted to continue, subject to certain restrictions.
Open space	Any public or private parcel or area of land that is essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, or outdoor recreation.
People of Color	Persons whose race and ethnicity is other than white alone, non-Hispanic. Also referred to as Black Indigenous People of color (BIPOC).
Place-keeping	Place-keeping is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces. Place-keeping (or as some call it, place-making) capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.
Place-making	A people-centered approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces such as parks, plazas, and streets that helps give activity and identity to those spaces.
Right-of-Way	A strip of land used for certain transportation and/or public use facilities, like roads, railroads, and utility lines. This term is primarily used to describe public rights-of-way, which include our streets, sidewalks, and planting strips and often abbreviated as ROW.
Riparian corridor	Creeks and everything located within 100 feet of a creek.
Safe System Approach	The Safe System Approach (SSA) has been embraced by the transportation community as an effective way to address and mitigate the risks inherent in our enormous and complex transportation system. It works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening in the first place and minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur. It is a holistic and comprehensive approach that provides a guiding framework to make places safer for people. This is a shift from a conventional safety approach because it focuses on both human mistakes AND human vulnerability and designs a system with many redundancies in place to protect everyone. (USDOT)
Setback	The minimum distance required by zoning regulations to be maintained between a structure and a property line.

Shared parking	Parking spaces that may be used by more than one user, such as a parking lot that is used by a church on weekends and by commuters during the week.
Shoreline street end	Shoreline street ends are City Council designated areas for public access and occur where streets meet a shore. Our program collaborates with community partners on maintaining and improving shoreline street ends for public use.
Single-occupant vehicle	A privately operated vehicle whose only occupant is the driver.
Smart parking	A system that uses electronic signs to direct incoming drivers to available parking. Smart parking is a technology solution that uses sensors and/or cameras in combination with software to direct users to vacant parking spaces. A broad term to refer to a variety of technologies and policies that improve efficiency of curb management, typically with heavy data use, with performance pricing, to achieve certain policy outcomes.
Social equity	Fair access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs.
Stormwater	Water that falls as rain and flows across the ground. In an urban area, most stormwater is directed to drains that collect the water and eventually direct it to streams, lakes, or other large water bodies.
Transportation demand management	Programs and projects that reduce single occupancy trips and improve traffic congestion by encouraging people to choose other options such as transit, ridesharing, walking, biking and telework.
Tree canopy	The layer of leaves, branches, and stems that provide tree coverage of the ground when viewed from above. See also urban forest.
Urban forest	The urban forest consists of the trees and associated understory plants existing in the city. The urban forest extends across public property, private property, and the right of way including parks and natural areas, as well as the trees along streets and in yards. See also tree canopy.

Underserved communities	Racial, cultural, and other marginalized communities and the neighborhoods where they reside that have been historically underserved by City services and capital investments. (See definition for marginalized communities.)
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita	Total annual miles of vehicle travel divided by the total population.
Vulnerable Populations	Vulnerable populations are groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms or climate change, due to: adverse socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and, sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization. Vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to: racial and ethnic minorities; low-income populations; and, populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms or climate change.
Zoning, Zones	Designations adopted by City ordinance and applied to areas of land to specify allowable uses for property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas.