

2021 Seattle City Council Budget Action

Council Budget Action: Agenda

Tab	Action	Option	Version
OPCD	001	A	001

Budget Action Title: Proviso \$30,000 in OPCD for the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Ongoing: No Has Budget Proviso: Yes

Has CIP Amendment: No Has Attachment: No

Primary Sponsor: Teresa Mosqueda

Council Members: Dan Strauss, Lorena González

Staff Analyst: Lish Whitson

Council Bill or Resolution:

Date		Total	LH	TM	KS	AP	DJ	DS	AL	TM	LG
	Yes	0									
	No	0									
	Abstain	0									
	Absent	0									

Budget Action Description:

This Council Budget Action would place a proviso on \$30,000 in the Office of Planning and Community Development's (OPCD's) budget to ensure that certain issues are studied in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if an EIS is required for the next major Comprehensive Plan update. Any EIS would study a range of alternatives. OPCD expects to use these funds to contract with a consultant to prepare the EIS. The proviso requires that the contract with an EIS consultant provides for:

(1) Analysis of a growth alternative addressing additional housing capacity and diversity - including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and row houses - in areas of the city currently zoned primarily for single-family houses;

(2) Development of strategies to minimize displacement of low-income residents and communities of color; and

(3) Analysis of an alternative name for single-family areas and single-family zones, such as Neighborhood Residential, if an alternative name has not already been adopted.

The proviso would read:

"Of the appropriation in the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), \$30,000 is appropriated to be used for solely for the purpose of retaining a consultant or consultants to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if it is determined by OPCD that an EIS is warranted based on the probable impacts of the next major Comprehensive Plan update. If required, OPCD shall contract for consultant assistance to prepare an EIS in 2021. The appropriation may not be used for any other purpose. If OPCD determines that an EIS is necessary for the next major update, the EIS must include, but is not

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limited to:

1. At least one growth alternative that provides additional housing capacity and housing type diversity in single-family areas.
2. At least one growth alternative that uses other strategies to minimize displacement of low-income residents and communities of color.
3. At least one growth alternative that studies an alternative name for single-family zones, such as Neighborhood Residential, if an alternative name has not already been adopted.

The areas of study 1-3 identified above may be combined into one alternative or studied separately. In developing the EIS scope, the Office should consider other actions to increase residential building capacity, such as those listed in RCW 36.70A.600."

Background:

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision and roadmap for Seattle's future growth. A major update is undertaken every eight years. The City's next Comprehensive Plan update is currently scheduled to be adopted by June 2024. OPCD began conducting pre-planning in 2020 and will formally launch the Comprehensive Plan update process in 2021.

The Comprehensive Plan's "Urban Village Strategy" for growth, adopted in 1994, concentrates jobs, housing, and services into four categories of urban villages. It has been the guiding strategy for Comprehensive Plans in Seattle ever since. Of all the areas that allow residential uses in Seattle, 25 percent allows for multifamily residential development, while 75 percent is zoned primarily for single-family detached houses.

Seattle has seen unprecedented growth over the last decade, adding more than 120,000 residents since 2010 - and this trend is expected to continue. Since 2006, over 80 percent of Seattle's growth has occurred in urban centers and villages. Only 5 percent of new housing units in Seattle from 2010 to 2017 were built in areas zoned Single-family. Even as the population of Seattle has increased significantly, the population density in some single-family areas has decreased.

Statement of Legislative Intent 29-4-B-1-2019 requested that "OPCD, DON, and OCR prepare a racial equity analysis of Seattle's strategy for accommodating growth" as part of "pre-planning work in anticipation of the next major update to the Comprehensive Plan." The racial equity toolkit is expected to provide policy options to increase the equity of Seattle's growth strategy and address the legacy of discrimination and exclusion in Seattle's public policies and investments, in particular the inequity inherent in the City's Single-family zoning. In 2019, Washington State House Bill 1923 amended the Revised Code of Washington to encourage cities to adopt additional methods to accommodate residential growth.

Environmental review would likely be required for any policy options to promote greater economic and racial diversity across Seattle's communities by allowing greater housing flexibility in Seattle's current single-family zones. This proviso would require that these topics be studied, if an EIS is prepared for the next major Comprehensive Plan update.