

CITY OF SEATTLE
ORDINANCE 126456
COUNCIL BILL 120155

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; amending the Comprehensive Plan to change the name of Single Family areas to Neighborhood Residential areas as part of the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

WHEREAS, before 1923, The City of Seattle allowed a mix of housing types and scattered businesses in Seattle’s neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, in 1923, The City of Seattle adopted its first land use code, which prohibited multifamily structures and boarding houses in areas where they had previously been permitted; and

WHEREAS, since 1923, The City of Seattle zoned some areas with existing multifamily buildings and commercial uses to single-family zoning; and

WHEREAS, as a result, Seattle’s Single Family zones frequently include a mix of land uses, a condition that is not reflected in the term Single Family; and

WHEREAS, 54 percent of Seattle parcel area is zoned Single Family; and

WHEREAS, a similar portion of the City is designated as “Single Family Areas” on the Future Land Use Map; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Seattle Planning Commission (SPC) published “Neighborhoods for All,” which recommended changing the name of Single Family zones to Neighborhood Residential because “[t]he label of ‘Single Family Zone’ is a misnomer, as individuals and roommates can live in a house together without being a family”; and

1 WHEREAS, the SPC found that “[c]hanging the name of the zone to Neighborhood Residential
2 would more accurately reflect the character of the zone, while not suggesting only
3 families can live there”; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2019, in Resolution 31870, the City Council first called for the name of “Single
5 Family” areas to be changed to “Neighborhood Residential”; and

6 WHEREAS, in 2019 and 2020, Resolutions 31896 and 31970, repeated the call to change the
7 name of single-family areas; and

8 WHEREAS, changing the name of Single Family areas in the Comprehensive Plan is a step
9 toward the City’s plans and regulations reflecting the array of housing types and land
10 uses found in Seattle’s single family areas;

11 WHEREAS, changing the name of Single Family areas in the Comprehensive Plan is intended to
12 better reflect the existing character and range of activities permitted in those areas, and is
13 not intended to have a substantive effect on the uses permitted in those areas; NOW,
14 THEREFORE,

15 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

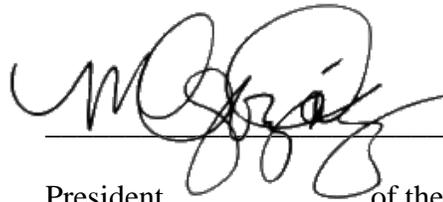
16 Section 1. The Seattle Comprehensive Plan, last amended by Ordinance 126186, is
17 amended as follows:

- 18 A. Amendments to the Land Use Element, as shown in Attachment 1 to this ordinance;
- 19 B. Amendments to the Housing Element, as shown in Attachment 2 to this ordinance;
- 20 C. Amendments to the Parks and Open Space Element, as shown in Attachment 3 to this
21 ordinance;
- 22 D. Amendments to Neighborhood Plans; as shown in Attachment 4 to this ordinance;
- 23 E. Amendments to the Housing Appendix, as shown in Attachment 5 to this ordinance;

1 F. Amendments to the Future Land Use Map, as shown in Attachment 6 to this ordinance.

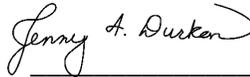
2 Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by
3 the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it
4 shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

5 Passed by the City Council the 4th day of October, 2021,
6 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 4th day of
7 October, 2021.

8 

9 President _____ of the City Council

10 Approved returned unsigned vetoed this 15th day of October, 2021.

11 

12 Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

13 Filed by me this 15th day of October, 2021.

14 

15 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

16 (Seal)

17

- 1 Attachments:
- 2 Attachment 1 – Amendments to the Land Use Element
- 3 Attachment 2 – Amendments to the Housing Element
- 4 Attachment 3 – Amendments to the Parks and Open Space Element
- 5 Attachment 4 – Amendments to Neighborhood Plans
- 6 Attachment 5 – Amendments to the Housing Appendix
- 7 Attachment 6 – Amendments to the Future Land Use Map

Land Use Element

Introduction

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You see these policies in action when you notice a difference in the location, type, and size of new buildings. Guided by the urban village strategy, the City’s Land Use Code (Seattle Municipal Code Title 23) includes a map showing the zones that define the types of buildings allowed. Detailed regulations tell developers what the buildings in each zone can look like. The zones themselves are grouped in the Land Use Code under general categories such as ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zones, which are composed mostly of houses, and commercial/mixed-use zones, which include businesses as well as housing. Multifamily zones include apartment buildings, town houses, and condos, while industrial zones create space for the port and manufacturing to thrive. Downtown has its own zone type for dense, highrise office and residential buildings.

This Land Use element is divided into three sections. The first section has policies that affect the city as a whole. These policies speak to how Seattle should change and grow in the years to come. The Future Land Use Map shows us the shape of this next-generation Seattle. The second section talks about each kind of land use area: ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential, multifamily, commercial/mixed-use, industrial, and Downtown. The policies in this section explain what makes each of these land use areas different. The third section contains policies for places that play special roles—for example, historic districts.

The Land Use Appendix provides information about the amount of land being used for different purposes across the city. It also displays the density of housing, population, and jobs throughout the city.

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The Future Land Use Map and Locations of Zones

Discussion

The Future Land Use Map shows distinct land use designations or types that are located around the city. The City has decided the right uses for each area and how much use each area should receive. Five of these area types—(~~single-family~~) neighborhood residential areas, multifamily residential areas, commercial/mixed-use areas, Downtown areas, and industrial areas—are meant to suggest specific uses. One area might be good for building more homes or right for building shops and restaurants. Within each land use area, there may be different levels of zoning that provide more detail about what can be built. This ensures that the right types and density of buildings will be built in each place. In certain places, special zoning can be created through a separate process. Some of these special zones are created around large hospitals or universities or housing developments where the needs of many people need to be coordinated. These include major institution overlay districts and master planned communities. Four other types of areas on the Future Land Use Map show the urban village strategy in use. Urban centers, hub urban villages, residential urban villages, and manufacturing/industrial centers work together with the land use area designations. They show us the best spots to place new housing and jobs and the right places for manufacturing, warehousing, and port activity.

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Special Uses: Telecommunications Facilities

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LU 4.3 Prohibit new major communication utilities, such as radio and television transmission towers, in (~~single-family~~) neighborhood and multifamily residential zones and in pedestrian-

oriented commercial/mixed-use zones and encourage existing major communication utilities to relocate to nonresidential areas.

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General Development Standards

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LU 5.7 Employ development standards in residential zones that address the use of the ground level of new development sites to fit with existing patterns of landscaping, especially front yards in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas, and to encourage permeable surfaces and vegetation.

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Land Use Areas

Discussion

Historically, zones were created so that different types of uses could be developed only in distinct areas of the city. One reason for this was to keep the uses in one area from affecting the uses in another in a negative way. For example, industrial activities like manufacturing were separated from residential areas to protect residents from harm. Over time, the city evolved in a pattern similar to that basic idea. There are still areas in the city that have distinct uses, but over time commercial uses and residential uses began to blend more to give people better access to shops and services. These changing patterns helped give Seattle its unique neighborhoods. For instance, areas with commercial zoning that allows shops and small offices have become the heart of many neighborhoods.

Areas that already had business cores and multifamily housing and that are zoned for more housing and businesses have become the cores of the urban villages. ~~((Some single-family~~

~~areas~~) Areas in the city were developed at different times, giving them distinct characteristics that show their history. For instance, houses might have a similar architectural style or have a similar relationship to their surroundings.

Each of the land use areas plays a unique role in the city. Used in combination, they help Seattle grow in ways that meet the city's needs. They allow us to place new housing in the areas where the most jobs and services are or will be in the future. They also allow us to encourage housing in places that already have frequent and reliable transit service or that will have better access as improvements and investments are made in rail or bus service.

~~((Single-family))~~ **Neighborhood Residential Areas**

~~((Single-family))~~ Neighborhood Residential ~~((zones))~~ areas cover much of the city, including single-family zones. While they are thought of as residential neighborhoods, they include a variety of uses beyond housing. For instance, most of the public parkland is found in these zones, as are many of the public schools, cemeteries, and fire stations. In most of these areas, houses are usually not very tall and typically have yards and open space around them. That open space provides recreation opportunities for residents and land for much of the city's tree canopy. Much of the land in these areas has been built to the densities the current zoning rules allow. However, some different housing types, such as accessory dwelling units or backyard cottages, could increase the opportunity for adding new housing units in these areas. Over time, some ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas could be incorporated into nearby urban villages, and there could be a new definition of what is allowable in these zones when they are inside urban villages.

GOAL

LU G7 Provide opportunities for detached single-family residential structures and other compatible housing options that have low height, bulk, and scale in order to serve a broad array of households and incomes and to maintain an intensity of development that is appropriate for areas with limited access to services, infrastructure constraints, fragile environmental conditions, or that are otherwise not conducive to more intensive development.

POLICIES

LU 7.1 Designate as ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas those portions of the city that are predominantly developed with single-family detached houses and that are large enough to maintain a consistent residential character of low height, bulk, and scale over several blocks.

LU 7.2 Use a range of ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zones to

- maintain the current low-height and low-bulk character of designated ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas;
- limit development in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas or that have environmental or infrastructure constraints;
- allow different densities that reflect historical development patterns; and
- respond to neighborhood plans calling for redevelopment or infill development that maintains the ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential character of the area but also allows for a greater range of housing types.

LU 7.3 Consider allowing redevelopment or infill development of ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas inside urban centers and villages, where new development would maintain the low height and bulk that characterize the single-family area, while allowing a wider

range of housing types such as detached accessory units, cottage developments or small duplexes or triplexes.

LU 7.4 Allow detached single-family dwellings as the principal use permitted outright in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

LU 7.5 Encourage accessory dwelling units, family-sized units, and other housing types that are attractive and affordable, and that are compatible with the development pattern and building scale in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas in order to make the opportunity in single-family areas more accessible to a broad range of households and incomes, including lower-income households.

LU 7.6 Limit the number and types of nonresidential uses allowed in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas and apply appropriate development standards in order to protect those areas from the negative impacts of incompatible uses.

LU 7.7 Prohibit parking lots or other activities that are part of permitted uses in neighboring higher-intensity zones from locating or expanding in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

LU 7.8 Use minimum lot size requirements to maintain the character of ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas and to reflect the differences in environmental and development conditions and densities found in various single-family areas throughout the city.

LU 7.9 Allow exceptions to minimum lot size requirements to recognize building sites created under earlier regulations and historical platting patterns, to allow the consolidation of very small lots into larger lots, to adjust lot lines to permit more orderly development patterns, and to provide more housing opportunities by creating additional buildable sites that integrate well with surrounding lots and do not result in the demolition of existing housing.

LU 7.10 Reflect the character of existing low-density development through the regulation of scale, siting, structure orientation, and setbacks.

LU 7.11 Permit, through Council or administrative conditional use approval, variations from established standards for planned large developments in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas, to promote high-quality design that

- is compatible with the character of the area,
- enhances and preserves natural features and functions,
- encourages the construction of affordable housing,
- allows for development and design flexibility, and
- protects environmentally critical areas.

Such developments should not be considered as sole evidence of changed circumstances to justify future rezones of the site or adjacent properties.

LU 7.12 Emphasize measures that can increase housing choices for low-income individuals and families when considering changes to development standards in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

Multifamily Residential Areas

Discussion

The city's multifamily areas contain a variety of housing types. You might find duplexes or town houses, walk-up apartments or highrise towers. These structures may include units that are owned by the residents or may provide rental housing. Overall, these areas offer more choices for people with different living styles and a wider range of incomes than ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zones.

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LU 8.10 Designate lowrise multifamily zones in places where low-scale buildings can provide a gradual transition between ((~~single family~~)) neighborhood residential zones and more intensive multifamily or commercial areas.

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Housing

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Diversity of Housing

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H 3.4 Promote use of customizable modular designs and other flexible housing concepts to allow for households' changing needs, including in neighborhood residential areas (~~zoned for single-family use~~).

H 3.5 Allow additional housing types in neighborhood residential areas (~~that are currently zoned for single family development~~) inside urban villages; respect general height and bulk development limits currently allowed while giving households access to transit hubs and the diversity of goods and services that those areas provide.

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Parks and Open Space

Introduction

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In addition to the areas enjoyed by the public, there are many private open spaces in the city.

These areas—such as yards in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential and multifamily zones—also provide light, air, and breathing room that benefit everyone in the city.

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Admiral

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A-P2 Maintain the character and integrity of the existing ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zoned areas by maintaining current ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zoning outside the urban village on properties meeting the locational criteria for ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zones.

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Aurora-Licton

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DESIGNATION OF THE AURORA-LICTON RESIDENTIAL URBAN VILLAGE POLICIES

AL-P1 Maintain the current balance of residential and commercial areas within the urban village boundaries. Consider future zoning changes that would reduce conflicts between adjacent areas; promote the development of a neighborhood-serving and pedestrian-oriented commercial core and promote transitions between ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential areas and commercial areas.

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Bitter Lake Village

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BL-P23 Use the permitting and environmental review process to minimize or mitigate the impacts of commercial and higher density residential uses on nearby ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

BL-P24 Encourage design and site planning of single-family and multifamily housing that fits with the surrounding neighborhoods.

BL-P25 Develop and use neighborhood design guidelines to help establish an urban design vision for Linden Avenue, to guide multifamily and commercial development that enhances the pedestrian environment, and to ensure appropriate transitions between ~~((single-family neighborhoods))~~ neighborhood residential areas and denser commercial areas.

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Central Area

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CA-P68 Consider rezoning ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zoned parcels to neighborhood commercial to support continuation and expansion of services provided by local institutions as the Cherry Hill Baptist Church.

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CA-P69 Encourage increased housing density at 23rd and Madison. As one tool for implementing this policy, consider the Residential Small Lot zone to be appropriate for ((~~single-family~~)) areas south of East Madison Street within the Madison-Miller Residential Urban Village.

- A. The portion of East Madison Street within the Madison-Miller Residential Urban Village is designated a principal commercial street.

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Columbia City

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CC-G7 A community with healthy and attractive (~~single-family~~) neighborhood residential areas.

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Crown Hill/Ballard

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CH/B-P6 Maintain the physical character of the ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential-zoned areas in the Crown Hill/Ballard plan area.

CH/B-P6.5 In the Crown Hill Residential Urban Village, ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential-zoned portions of split-zoned lots having an existing multifamily use may be rezoned to an abutting multifamily-zoning designation. This policy is intended to guide future rezone decisions and to lead to amendment of the Land Use Code by changing limits on the zones to which ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas may be rezoned within the Crown Hill Residential Urban Village~~((, as prescribed by SMC 23.34.010.B.2))~~.

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Greenwood/Phinney Ridge

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G/PR-G7 A neighborhood where the scale and character of historical or existing (~~single-family~~) neighborhood residential areas have been maintained.

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Morgan Junction

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MJ-G5 A community with strong ~~((single-family neighborhoods))~~ neighborhood residential areas and compatible multifamily buildings offering a wide range of housing types for all people.

HOUSING AND LAND USE POLICIES

MJ-P13 Maintain the physical character and scale of historically single-family ~~((housing))~~ zoned areas within the urban village by encouraging housing choices such as cottages, townhouses, and low-rise apartments, in these areas.

MJ-P14 Encourage a mix of housing stock to promote generational wealth creation through the retention or creation of affordable, entry-level, family-sized housing units that provide homeownership opportunities in the historically single-family ~~((housing))~~ zoned areas of the urban village.

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North Beacon Hill

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NBH-P9 Allow alternative housing types, such as cottage housing, in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zones to support affordable choices while preserving the ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential character.

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NBH-G7 A Town Center urban form that transitions from denser development at the Town Center core to less dense and neighborhood ~~((single-family))~~ residential neighborhoods in a manner that is responsive to the context and character of the North Beacon Hill neighborhood.

North Neighborhoods (Lake City)

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NN-P36 Encourage development of non-single-family parcels adjacent to (~~single-family zoning~~) neighborhood residential zones to provide transitions or buffers adequate to protect the (~~single-family~~) neighborhood residential area from adverse impacts.

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North Rainier

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NR-G2 Housing in the neighborhood meets community needs for a range of household incomes and unit sizes, and makes a compatible transition from higher-intensity mixed-use and multifamily residential to ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

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NR-P10 Include a portion of ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential area located between 24th Avenue South and 25th Avenue South, north of S. McClellan Street, within the urban village and within the Station Area Overlay District, and support a multifamily zoning designation for the area that would allow more compact residential development.

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Northgate

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NG-G2 A thriving, vital, mixed-use center of concentrated development surrounded by healthy ~~((single-family neighborhoods))~~ neighborhood residential areas transformed from an underutilized, auto-oriented office/retail area.

LAND USE & HOUSING GOALS

NG-G3 The surrounding ~~((single-family neighborhoods))~~ neighborhood residential areas are buffered from intense development in the core, but have ready access to the goods, services, and employment located in the core via a range of transportation alternatives including walking, bicycling, transit, and automobile (the core area is shown on the Northgate map).

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NG-P6 Promote additional multifamily housing opportunities for households of all income levels to the extent that a compatible scale and intensity of development can be maintained with adjacent ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

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Queen Anne (Uptown)

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QA-G2 Queen Anne has many ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential, multifamily, and mixed-use neighborhoods that preserve cultural and historic resources and which include affordable, subsidized, and special-needs housing.

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QA-P2 Preserve the character of Queen Anne's ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

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QA-P11 Provide for an attractive and harmonious transition between different land uses, including commercial areas and ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

QA-P12 Legal non-conforming uses exist in Queen Anne's ~~((single-family neighborhoods))~~ neighborhood residential areas, and these shall be allowed to remain at their current intensity, as provided in the Land Use Code, to provide a compatible mix and balance of use types and housing densities.

QA-P13 Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in ~~((single-family zones))~~ neighborhood residential areas, in the Queen Anne planning area, should continue to be limited to the principal residential structure, and consider requiring that they be subordinate in size and character in order to discourage the development of duplexes and other multifamily structures in these zones.

Rainier Beach

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RB-P4 Seek to preserve the character of Rainier Beach's ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zoned areas. Encourage residential small-lot opportunities within ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential-areas within the designated residential urban village. In the area within the residential urban village west of Martin Luther King Way South, permit consideration of rezones of ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zoned land to mixed-use designations.

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Roosevelt

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R-LUP3 Promote the development of new multifamily dwellings, in properly zoned areas, that will buffer ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential areas from the commercial core, freeway, and commercial corridors.

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R-HP1 Promote the preservation and maintenance of existing single-family homes in ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zones and control impacts to homes on the edge of the ((~~single-family~~)) neighborhood residential zones.

West Seattle Junction

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WSJ-G1 A small-town community with its own distinct identity comprised of a strong (~~single-family~~) neighborhood residential community and a vibrant mixed-use business district serving the surrounding residential core.

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WSJ-P13 Maintain a character and scale in historically single-family zoned areas similar to the existing single-family housing.

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Westwood/Highland Park

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL

W/HP-G1 A diverse community with two distinct areas, Westwood and Highland Park, composed of a mix of ~~((single))~~ neighborhood residential and multifamily residential areas, significant public facilities, regional and local commercial businesses, and natural resource opportunities that together offer a variety of choices for its residents.

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HOUSING GOAL

W/HP-G5 A community with both ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood and multifamily residential areas and the amenities to support the diverse population.

HOUSING POLICIES

W/HP-P18 Seek to maintain a character and scale in historically single-family areas similar to existing ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential areas.

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Housing Appendix

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Residential Capacity

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The remaining 25 percent of Seattle’s residential development capacity is in zones that allow only residential uses—meaning these zones do not allow a mix of residential and commercial uses. Of this 25 percent, 20 percent is in zones allowing multifamily structures. The remaining 5 percent is in ~~((single-family))~~ neighborhood residential zones.

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Housing Appendix Figure A-1

Seattle Residential Development Capacity (Model Estimates)

	Residential Development Capacity (Housing Units)	Share of Total Residential Development Capacity
TOTAL:	223,713	100%
By Future Land Use Designation		
((Single-family)) <u>Neighborhood Residential</u>	10,959	5%
Multifamily	46,803	21%
Commercial/Mixed-Use	132,439	59%
Downtown	33,512	15%
Major Institution	N/A	N/A
City-Owned Open Space	0	0%
By Urban Centers/Villages:		
Inside Urban Centers	96,862	43%
Downtown	33,512	15%

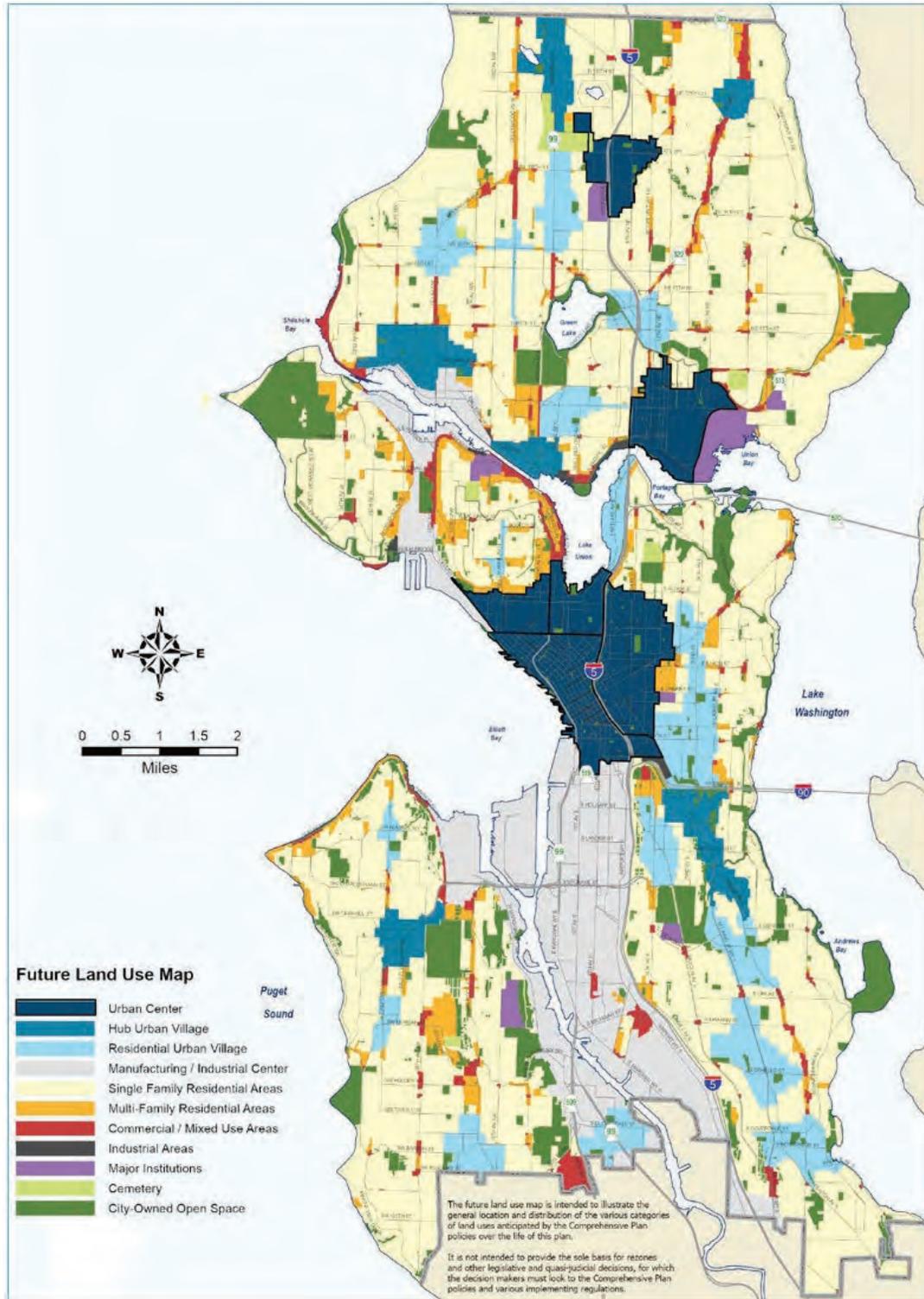
	Residential Development Capacity (Housing Units)	Share of Total Residential Development Capacity
First Hill/Capitol Hill	19,009	8%
Northgate	10,966	5%
South Lake Union	20,277	9%
Uptown	4,165	2%
University District	8,933	4%
Inside Hub Urban Villages	36,227	16%
Inside Residential Urban Villages	39,386	18%
Outside Centers and Villages	51,207	23%

Source: Development Capacity Report, DPD, September 2014

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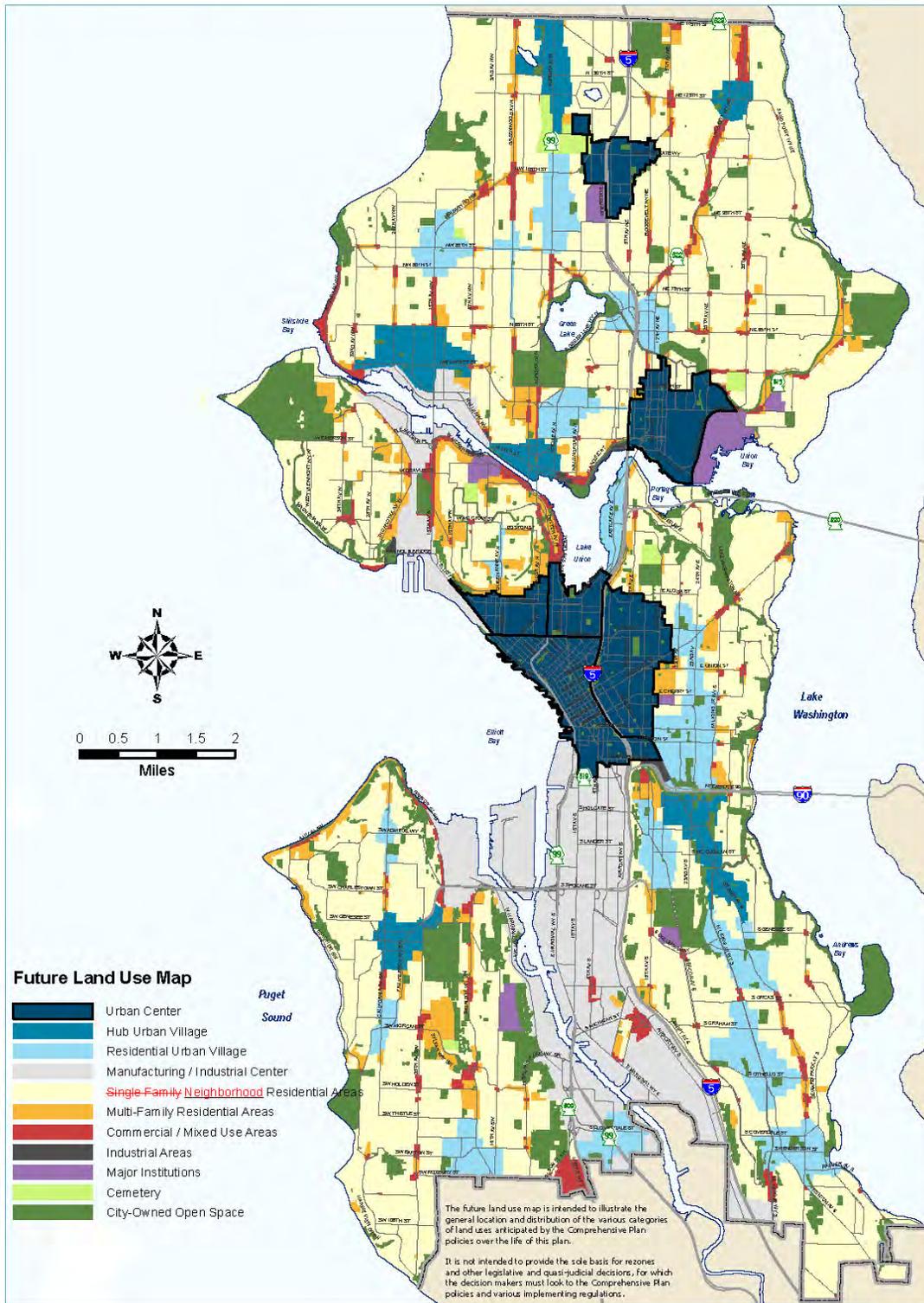
Map A: Future Land Use Map Before Change

Future Land Use Map



Map B: Change to the Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Map



Map C: Future Land Use Map after Change

Future Land Use Map

