





City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

Table of Contents

	History, Vision & Application	iii
	Urban Village Element	1.1
	Land Use Element	2.1
	Transportation Element	3.1
	Housing Element	4.1
	Capital Facilities Element	5.1
	Utilities Element	6.1
	Economic Development Element	7.1
	Neighborhood Planning Element	8.1
	Human Development Element	9.1
	Cultural Resource Element	10.1
	Environment Element	11.1
	Appendices: Urban Village, Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities & Economic Development	



Legislative History of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan was first adopted on July 25, 1994, by Ordinance 117221.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Adoption Date	Ordinance Number	Nature of Amendments
12/12/94	117436	1994 Capital Improvement Program
7/31/95	117735	1995 Comprehensive Plan amendments
11/27/95	117906	Adoption of a new Human Development Element
11/27/95	117915	1995 Six-Year CIP amendments
7/01/96	118197	Response to 4/2/96 Growth Management Hearings Board remand. Repealed policy L-127 of Ord. 117735
9/23/96	118408	Addition of Shoreline Master Program to Plan
11/18/96	118388	1996 CIP amendments
11/18/96	118389	1996 annual amendments
6/16/97	118622	Policies for the reuse of Sand Point Naval Station
9/8/97	118722	Response to 3/97 GMHB remand
11/13/97	118820	1997 Six-Year CIP amendments
11/13/97	118821	1997 annual amendments; addition of Cultural Resources element
6/22/98	119047	Adoption of the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing/Industrial Center neighborhood plan
8/17/98	119111	Adoption of the Crown Hill/Ballard neighborhood plan
10/26/98	119207	1998 annual amendments
11/02/98	119217	Adoption of the Wallingford neighborhood plan
11/02/98	119216	Adoption of the Central Area neighborhood plan
11/16/98	119231	Adoption of the Pioneer Square neighborhood plan
11/16/98	119230	Adoption of the University neighborhood plan
11/23/98	119264	1998 Six-Year CIP amendments
12/07/98	119322	Adoption of the Eastlake neighborhood plan
12/14/98	119298	Adoption of the MLK@Holly neighborhood plan
12/14/98	119297	Adoption of the Chinatown/International District neighborhood plan
1/25/99	119356	Adoption of the South Park neighborhood plan
2/08/99	119365	Adoption of the Denny Triangle neighborhood plan
3/15/99	119401	Adoption of the South Lake Union neighborhood plan
3/15/99	119403	Adoption of the Queen Anne neighborhood plan
3/22/99	119413	Adoption of the Pike/Pine neighborhood plan
3/22/99	119412	Adoption of the First Hill neighborhood plan
5/10/99	119464	Adoption of the Belltown neighborhood plan
5/24/99	119475	Adoption of the Commercial Core neighborhood plan
6/07/99	119498	Adoption of the Capitol Hill neighborhood plan
7/06/99	119524	Adoption of the Green Lake neighborhood plan
7/06/99	119525	Adoption of the Roosevelt neighborhood plan
7/09/99	119538	Adoption of the Aurora Licton neighborhood plan
7/21/99	119506	Adoption of the West Seattle Junction neighborhood plan
8/23/99	119615	Adoption of the Westwood/Highland Park neighborhood plan



Adoption Date	Ordinance Number	Nature of Amendments
8/23/99	119614	Adoption of the Rainier Beach neighborhood plan
9/07/99	119633	Adoption of the North Neighborhoods neighborhood plan
9/07/99	119634	Adoption of the Morgan Junction neighborhood plan
9/27/99	119671	Adoption of the North Rainier neighborhood plan
10/04/99	119685	Adoption of the Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake neighborhood plan
10/04/99	119687	Adoption of the Fremont neighborhood plan
10/11/99	119694	Adoption of the Columbia City neighborhood plan
10/25/99	119713	Adoption of the North Beacon Hill neighborhood plan
10/25/99	119714	Adoption of the Admiral neighborhood plan
11/15/99	119743	Adoption of the Greenwood/Phinney Ridge neighborhood plan
11/15/99	119744	1999 annual amendments
11/22/99	119760	1999 Six-Year CIP amendments
12/06/99	119789	Adoption of the Delridge neighborhood plan
2/07/00	119852	Adoption of the Georgetown neighborhood plan
6/12/00	119973	Adoption of the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center neighborhood plan
11/13/00	120158	Response to Growth Management Hearings Board remand; Greenwood/Phinney Ridge neighborhood plan
12/11/00	120201	2000 five-year Comprehensive Plan review amendments
10/15/01	120563	2001 annual amendments
12/09/02	121020	2002 annual amendments
12/13/04	121701	2004 10-year Update to Comprehensive Plan
10/10/05	121955	2005 Annual Amendments
12/11/06	122313	2006 Annual Amendments
12/17/07	122610	2007 Annual Amendments
10/27/08	122832	2008 Annual Amendments
3/29/10	123267	2010 Annual Amendments
4/11/11	123575	2011 Annual Amendments
4/10/12	123854	2012 Annual Amendments
5/20/13	124177	2013 Annual Amendments
5/2/14	124458	2014 Annual Amendments

Resolutions Related to Vision for City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

Passage Date	Resolution	Nature of Legislation
7/25/94	28962	1994 Vision for the Comprehensive Plan
11/27/95	29215	Updated 1994 Vision to reflect addition of Human Development element in Comprehensive Plan (Ord. 117906)
12/11/00	30252	Updated Vision to reflect Cultural Resources and Environment elements and adoption of neighborhood plans
12/13/04	30727	Updated Vision in conjunction with the 2004 10-year Update to the Comprehensive Plan



Vision for the Comprehensive Plan

A Introducing Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

The City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, is a 20-year policy plan (1994-2014) designed to articulate a vision of how Seattle will grow in ways that sustain its citizens' values. The Comprehensive Plan makes basic policy choices and provides a flexible framework for adapting to real conditions over time. The initial building blocks of the Comprehensive Plan are the "elements" required by the state's Growth Management Act: land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities and utilities. King County's Countywide Planning Policies require the addition of an economic development element, and the Seattle Framework Policies (Resolution 28535) inspired the inclusion of a neighborhood planning element when the Plan was first adopted in 1994. The Framework Policies also inspired the later additions of a Human Development element and an Environmental element to the Plan. The ideas in the plan were developed over five years through discussion and debate and the creative thinking of thousands of Seattle citizens working with City staff and elected officials.

B The Vision

core values

Both the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and this 2004 revision have been informed and guided by basic community values. From the many discussions and debates that contributed to the original development of the Comprehensive Plan, a set of four core values emerged:

- **Community**
- **Environmental Stewardship**
- **Economic Opportunity and Security**
- **Social Equity**

These core values are the fundamental principles that guide the Comprehensive Plan and the ultimate measure of the plan's success or failure.

Community

Seattleites understand that the health of the City and of the whole region depends on the strength of community within and between neighborhoods and across city and county boundaries. Seattleites share pride in the community fabric of Seattle's neighborhoods and the diversity of its people. At the neighborhood level, residents and business people experience a great sense of belonging to a community. People may also derive a sense of community from cultural or religious associations.

The City will facilitate and support a strong sense of community within neighborhoods. The City will strive to support people of all ages, and ethnic, economic or social groups in finding a sense of belonging and ownership, accessing needed services, and connecting with other people. At the same time, through its actions the City will strive to strengthen a sense of community among people throughout the city and will be a leader in efforts to build broad support for economic, environmental and social community in the region.



Environmental Stewardship

The beauty and diversity of the natural environment in and around our city is one of the characteristics that most distinguishes Seattle from other major cities around the country and the world. The long-term health and wealth of the community depend, in part, on environmental quality. The Comprehensive Plan calls for Seattle to continue to be a national leader in environmental stewardship. The City will strive to:

- Protect and improve the quality of the local and global environments;
- Maintain and enhance conditions necessary for a healthy natural environment;
- Design, build, and manage the City's built environment in ways that protect and strive to restore over time natural resources and natural systems;
- Act as a role model for individuals, households, businesses, and other institutions in environmentally sustainable practices;
- Help all citizens to become environmental stewards; and
- Improve the overall quality of life in Seattle.

Environmental stewardship is linked to the other core values. For example, the Plan's urban village strategy promotes compact, more pedestrian-oriented development and non-auto transportation choices, such as transit. This type of development fosters local business growth, public health, and community connections while reducing air and water pollution, loss of green space, and pervious surfaces.

All Seattleites have the right to a healthy and safe environment. While this is a shared responsibility among government, residents, and businesses, the City is committed to doing its part. The City will assess alternatives to implement this Plan's growth management objectives using the best information available and will strive to incorporate measures that prevent harm to human and environmental health.

Economic Opportunity and Security

Citizens of Seattle want themselves, their children and others living in the city to enjoy the benefit of a healthy economy. They wish to ensure the continuation of economic opportunity and security of livelihood in a manner that balances these benefits with full realization of other values. A strong economy is fundamental to maintaining a quality of life in Seattle in which individuals may meet their basic needs for food and shelter, health care and education. A strong economy is also essential for government to generate the resources necessary to support public investment and amenities and to help people who need assistance.

The City will look for ways to enhance the region's economic prosperity and will accommodate a reasonable share of the region's economic growth. This is intended to increase opportunity for the city's distressed communities, raise personal incomes, and increase tax revenues. The City will actively promote: Seattle's involvement in the global economy by creating a positive environment for international trade; an employment environment that provides livable wage jobs; and the education and skill-building opportunities to help ensure employability for all community members.

Social Equity

Seattleites recognize that resources and opportunities are not limitless and must be shared among all members of the community. Seattle citizens seek greater equity in the opportunity to benefit from, participate in and contribute to the life of the community.

In order to promote equality, justice and understanding, the City will not tolerate discrimination in employment or housing on the basis of race, color, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability. The City will aim for a society that gives its residents equal opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, economic growth.



Seattle's future depends on the skills, strength and vitality of all of its people. City building involves people's increased involvement in and connection to the community; more supportive families and healthier children; increased access to health care and services; a more skilled and capable workforce; and increased safety in homes, neighborhoods and streets. The City will encourage Seattleites to better understand one another and to create urban environments that work for people. The community must work together toward reducing poverty and creating opportunities for all people, and assisting those in the population who are most vulnerable.

Residents of distressed communities, where incomes, educational levels, skill levels and labor force participation rates are lower than average, may require special attention to ensure their ability to participate equitably in the city's opportunities. These same communities may need special attention to ensure that the infrastructure and services provided there support economic viability and a high quality of living.

toward a sustainable Seattle

Sustainability is the common-sense notion that the health of our environment, our economy, our bodies, and our community as a whole, are not only closely linked, but dependent on one another.

The four core values described above -- economic opportunity and security, environmental stewardship, social equity and community -- are the pillars of sustainability. The overarching goal of this Comprehensive Plan is to promote sustainable development -- that is, development that reflects, protects, and advances these core values, through a smart and well-integrated approach to where and how we grow.

Where We Grow

Seattle is projected to grow by approximately 47,000 households and 84,000 jobs by 2024. Where this growth occurs has enormous impacts on local and regional environmental quality, neighborhood quality-of-life, economic opportunity, and the overall costs of development. For example, recent studies show that urban sprawl increases the use of motor vehicles, which further degrades air quality, and leads to growing public health concerns such as obesity and asthma. A fundamental goal of this Plan is to steer the majority of estimated growth in housing units and jobs toward urban centers and urban villages, for the following reasons:

- help preserve green spaces, forests, and farmlands outside of the urban growth area;
- preserve the character of Seattle's predominantly single-family neighborhoods;
- reduce dependence on private motor vehicles (the emissions from which are the number one source of air pollution and climate-altering greenhouse gases in the Puget Sound region, as well as a major source of water pollution);
- use natural resources such as land, water, and energy efficiently;
- improve public health by promoting walking and bicycling; and
- reduce the costs of building and maintaining public infrastructure and services, such as roads, water and energy supply, and waste management systems



How We Grow

Perhaps equally important is how growth and development occur in Seattle. Urban centers and urban villages must be safe, healthy, green, accessible and affordable. They must be more people-oriented and less car-oriented. In short, they must be places where people want to live, work, play, and raise families. This puts a very high premium on people- and environment-friendly urban design and development practices, including "low-impact development" approaches such as green building and natural systems drainage. This Plan reflects the City's commitment to these types of practices, in everything from managing land use and transportation, building capital facilities such as parks, and providing services such as affordable housing, drinking water, and electricity.

C Getting There from Here

The Plan is intended to manage growth and change in Seattle for the next 20 years. The future described in the Plan cannot be achieved all at once.

Over the life of the Plan, growth likely will occur more slowly at times, more rapidly at others, and in somewhat different patterns and sequences than is currently foreseen. The best a plan can be is a well-educated guess about how to accommodate people and conditions that cannot be known in advance. An effective plan must be flexible enough to succeed within a range of likely conditions and be adjusted as those conditions are monitored and evaluated, while maintaining a steady aim at its ultimate goals.

Through the urban village strategy, the Plan intends to achieve goals that are shaped by the core values. The Plan's flexibility comes from the mechanisms that permit its adaptation to needs as they arise from the real experience of the next 20 years. The following mechanisms will help translate the Plan's policies into City actions.

Neighborhood Planning that followed the adoption of this plan produced amendments that tailor the plan's citywide perspective to individual urban and manufacturing centers, villages and neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans are expected to continue to aid in adjusting and fine-tuning the plan over time.

Coordination with Other Jurisdictions is occurring through regional planning processes. Seattle representatives have participated with King County, suburban cities and Puget Sound Regional Council representatives. Many regional issues have been addressed sketchily. Many others have been identified for future discussion. Undoubtedly, continued regional planning forums will be needed to meet the Growth Management Act's challenge for regional action toward creating, implementing and funding a shared vision.



Regulations have been and will be adopted when necessary to conform to the policies in this Plan.

A Strategic Investment Strategy will describe a framework for making resource allocation decisions in an environment where wants and needs always exceed the finite resources available. Tradeoffs among many possible investment choices will be made to achieve the Plan's goals. The framework will add dimension to the Plan's goals by enabling them to be addressed over time.

Monitoring and Evaluation will be done periodically to assess progress toward achieving Comprehensive Plan goals as well as to measure conditions and changes occurring in the city. Monitoring and evaluation will help ensure consistency within and among the Plan elements as well as with the Growth Management Act and county and regional growth plans. Monitoring and evaluation will lead to both Plan amendments and improved ability to project future conditions. The Seattle Planning Commission will assist the Mayor and the City Council in monitoring and evaluation of the Plan and will advise them as to any needed amendments to the Plan.

Citizen Participation in City processes will build upon the dialogue between government and citizens that began with the development and adoption of the Plan. The City will strive to find improved means to communicate with and involve citizens in planning and decision-making. The City will strive to provide information that can be easily understood and to provide access for public involvement. This will include processes for amending and implementing the Plan.



Application of the Comprehensive Plan

application

The principal purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide policies that guide the development of the City in the context of regional growth management. These policies can be looked to by citizens and by all levels of government in planning for growth. Specifically, the Plan will be used by the City of Seattle to help make decisions about proposed ordinances, policies and programs. Although the Plan will be used to direct the development of regulations which govern land use and development, the Plan will not be used to review applications for specific development projects except when reference to this Comprehensive Plan is expressly required by an applicable development regulation.

The Plan format generally presents a Plan “goal,” followed by “policies” related to the goal, and may include a “discussion” about the goals and policies. Each of these components is defined as follows:

Goals represent the results that the City hopes to realize over time, perhaps 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 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 or change of specific rules or strategies (such as development regulations, budgets or program area plans). City officials will generally make decisions on specific City actions by following ordinances, resolutions, budgets or program area plans that themselves reflect relevant Plan policies, rather than by referring directly to this Plan. Implementation of most policies involves a range of City 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 the City will “give priority to” a particular need indicates that need will be treated as important, not that it will take precedence in every City decision.

Some policies use the words “shall” or “should,” “ensure” or “encourage,” and so forth. In general, such words should be read to describe the relative degree of emphasis that the policy imparts, but not necessarily to establish a specific legal duty to perform a particular act, to undertake a program or project, or to achieve a specific result. Whether such a result is intended must be determined by reading the policy as a whole and by examining the context of other related policies in the Plan.

Some policies may appear to conflict, particularly in the context of a specific fact situation or viewed from the different perspectives of persons whose interests may conflict on a given issue. A classic example is the oft-referenced “conflict” between policies calling for “preservation of the environment” and policies that “promote economic development.” Because Plan policies do not exist in isolation, and must be viewed in the context of all potentially relevant policies, it is largely in the application of those policies that the interests which they embody are reconciled and balanced by the legislative and executive branches of City government.

Before this Plan was adopted, the City of Seattle had many policies in place which were approved over the course of many years, and which affect the full range of programs and services provided by the City. To the extent a conflict may arise between such a policy and this Plan, the Plan will generally prevail, except that policies that are used in the application of existing development regulations shall continue to be used until those regulations are made consistent with the Plan pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040.

Discussion is provided to explain the context in which decisions on goals and policies have been made, the reasons for those decisions, and how the goals and policies are related. The discussion portions of the Plan do not establish or modify policies, but they may help to interpret policies.



Appendices to the Plan contain certain required maps, inventories and other information required by the GMA, and in some cases further data and discussion or analysis. The appendices are not to be read as establishing or modifying policies or requirements unless specified for such purposes in the Plan policies. For example, descriptions of current programs in an appendix do not require that the same program be continued, and detailed estimates of how the City may expect to achieve certain goals do not establish additional goals or requirements.



application

January | 2005