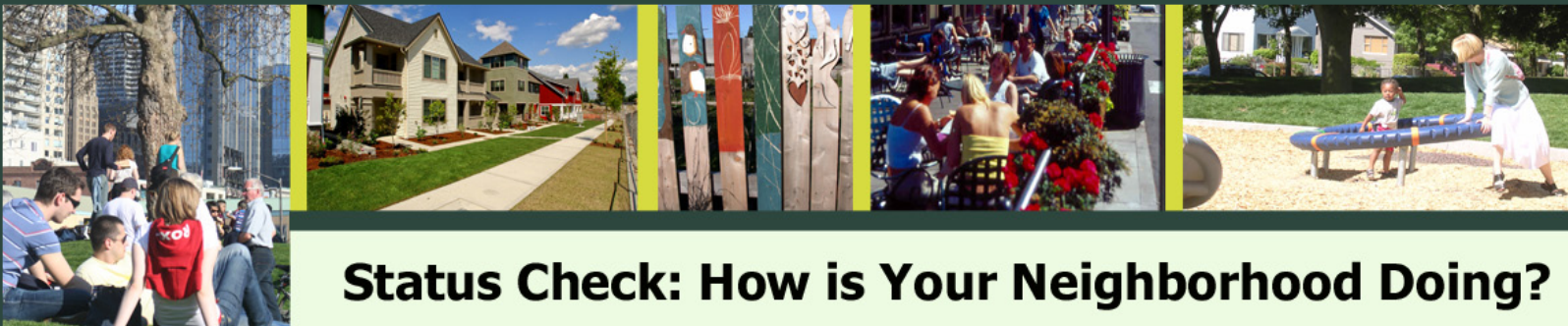


Status Check

Seattle Citizens Assess
Their Communities and
Neighborhood Plans

Introduction to Neighborhood Planning



Status Check: How is Your Neighborhood Doing?

Prepared by
Seattle Planning Commission
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Seattle Planning Commission

"Our vision of the future is one in which our city has thriving neighborhoods where residents and businesses work with the City to plan and produce projects that enhance the quality of life for those who live, work and play in Seattle."



Seattle Planning Commission 2009 – 2010

About the Commission

The Planning Commission, established by charter in 1946, is an independent and voluntary advisory body with 16 members appointed by the Mayor, City Council and the Commission itself. This diverse group is made up of people who bring a wide array of valuable expertise and perspectives to important planning decisions in Seattle. The role of the Commission is to advise the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of Seattle. It reviews land use, transportation and neighborhood planning efforts using the framework of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the long-range vision described in the Plan.

Seattle Planning Commission's Role in Neighborhood Planning

The Planning Commission has been actively involved in Neighborhood Planning since the mid-1960s when the federal government gave Seattle a grant to determine the needs of every neighborhood in the city. The Commission was given the task of identifying priority neighborhoods to receive immediate attention from the City and also to identify more general improvements for neighborhoods throughout the city.

In the 1970s, the Commission's neighborhood planning efforts focused on identifying goals and priorities for both land use and specific neighborhood improvements. Many of the projects were implemented by Community Development Block Grants with other local and federal funds.

In the late 1980s, at the request of elected officials, the Seattle Planning Commission analyzed the relationship between the City and its neighborhoods. The purpose was to improve communication between neighborhood organizations and the City. Its recommendations led to the establishment of the Department of Neighborhoods, a Neighborhood Matching Fund and the creation of a series of District Councils and a City Neighborhood Council. The Neighborhood Matching Fund generated many smaller, focused planning efforts and community development projects initiated by people in neighborhood-based organizations. While a few of these efforts focused on broad policies to guide new development, most resulted in physical improvements in neighborhoods across the city such as sidewalk art, improvements to playfields and traffic improvement projects.

In 1990, the State adopted the Growth Management Act, which required cities throughout Washington to adopt comprehensive plans for how to accommodate growth sustainably. A new round of neighborhood planning followed the adoption of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and built on the Urban Village Strategy that identifies areas best able to accommodate new residents and jobs. The Planning Commission has been a strong advocate for neighborhood planning for many years. The Commission was involved in every phase of the neighborhood planning program that was initiated in the 1990s. Since the 1990's the Commission has been the predominant steward of Comprehensive Plan, neighborhood planning and Seattle's neighborhood plans. The Commission has been actively engaged in the implementation and stewardship of the plans.

In 2008 the City acknowledged that some neighborhood plans may need to be updated and set out to provide a status update for several of the plans as well as check in with communities. The City passed an ordinance ([#122799](#)) that called for status reports for 24 Neighborhood Plans. Through this ordinance the Commission was again called upon by the City to assist and provide its independent and objective advice.

What are Neighborhood Plans?

Neighborhood Plans are a key element of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan; specific goals and policies from the plans were adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan describes how Seattle will grow in ways that improve neighborhoods while meeting the City's commitments under the State's Growth Management Act. Neighborhood Plans identify actions that the City, the neighborhood and other agencies could take to ensure that each neighborhood will continue to thrive and improve as Seattle grows.

Background of neighborhood planning in Seattle

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA). Among other goals, the GMA set forth a statewide framework for focusing and managing population growth and density within Washington's urban areas. Each city and county in fast-growing areas of the state was required to create a comprehensive plan to articulate its strategy for managing growth for the following twenty years. Local jurisdictional plans were required to coordinate with each other across counties and multi-county regions.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan stated that "The goal that unifies all the elements of the Comprehensive Plan is to preserve the best quality of Seattle's distinct neighborhoods while responding positively and creatively to the pressures of change and growth." To accomplish this, the Comprehensive Plan's growth management policy was organized around the Urban Village Strategy. It designated specific areas as Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages, Urban Center Villages and Manufacturing/ Industrial Centers. The Urban Villages described increasing levels of residential and/or employment growth targeted to areas that had zoning and infrastructure capacity to accommodate growth. Residents and businesses in these areas would then plan for their growth targets through development of individual neighborhood plans. Many community members voiced concern and opposition to the "urban village" strategy, believing it would lead to unfettered growth and erosion of the city's predominantly single family character. In response to these concerns, the City Council made a commitment that urban village neighborhoods would define, through neighborhood plans, how the growth management goals and targets would be met in their area.

Neighborhood Status Check - Why is the City preparing Status Reports?

Seattle's neighborhood plans were developed more than a decade ago to nurture a feeling of belonging and stewardship — to encourage community members to contribute their ideas for guiding growth in our urban centers and villages. The Planning Commission values this legacy of community involvement and is committed to continuing this partnership — to pursuing a collective vision. Seattle values and celebrates its neighborhoods. No matter where you go in Seattle, people are proud of their neighborhood and claim that it is the best in the city. Seattleites put down roots, organize, and commit to their community's well being and future.

Many neighborhoods have grown, some significantly, since their plans were adopted. Also public investments in parks, libraries, transportation and other facilities have implemented major goals in some neighborhoods. The City is preparing Status Reports because community members suggested that the status of neighborhoods should be evaluated before considering updates to plans. The status report provides us with check up on many important aspects of the city overall and the neighborhood plans. The reports look at population, development, housing affordability, transportation, parks and neighborhood plan implementation and provide a check in on current neighborhood conditions including emerging priorities. This useful overview of the city will contribute to policy decisions including decisions about whether or how to update neighborhood plans.

Public Engagement for the Neighborhood Status Check

In September 2008 the Mayor and City Council set in motion a one-year review and assessment looking at the status of neighborhood plans in Seattle. The intent of the review is to provide an opportunity for the City and neighbors to discuss the current status of their neighborhood plans and changes in neighborhoods since the plans were adopted. In the ordinance 122799 the Planning Commission was specifically mandated with a role of assisting in outreach and public engagement. The Planning Commission has created a series of reports that helps to document community feedback from 24 of Seattle's neighborhoods that was gathered from June through August 2009 as part of the City's process to 'check-in' on the perceived usefulness and status of the individual Neighborhood Plans. Feedback was gathered in response to two ways: (1) at a series of open house meetings that included neighborhood discussions for each neighborhood and (2) a virtual meetings that included an online questionnaire. An [executive summary](#) was prepared that highlights and compares the feedback from both.

Neighborhood Discussions

The Planning Commission and the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC) co-hosted five public meetings that included 24 neighborhood specific discussions. In all, approximately 350 people participated in the five meetings. The Planning Commission was asked to provide a summary for each of the 24 neighborhood discussions. Detailed documentation of these meetings can be found in the [Summary of the Neighborhood Discussions report](#).

Virtual Meeting

In an attempt to broaden participation, the Planning Commission also created and hosted a virtual meeting from June through August. The virtual meeting included an online questionnaire that asked the same four questions that participants at the neighborhood discussions were asked. The online questionnaire had a total of 4,576 participants. The Commission has provided a [Transcript of Questionnaire Responses](#) from the 24 targeted neighborhoods.

Why these 24 neighborhoods?

In the summer of 2008, City Council passed an ordinance ([#122799](#)) that called for status reports for 24 Neighborhood Plans that were created in the late 1990's. The Neighborhood Planning Process was established in response to the State Growth Management Act of 1990 that required cities and counties throughout Washington to plan for expected growth rather than allow unmitigated sprawl. Seattle's plan, the Comprehensive Plan, identified Urban Villages, or areas where more growth was expected to occur. The map illustrates both the urban village and neighborhood plan boundaries. For more information about neighborhood planning, please see the Department of Neighborhood's website: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods>

The City is currently working to update three neighborhood plans in three southeast Seattle, all of which contain light rail stations that opened in July 2009. These neighborhoods are: MLK @ Holly Street (which includes the Othello station), North Beacon Hill (which includes the Beacon Hill Station) and North Rainier (which includes the Mt. Baker station). It was widely thought that of the stations scheduled to open in 2009; these three provide the greatest opportunity to maximize the positive impact of the new light rail line.

Simultaneously with this effort the City began a review of 24 additional neighborhood plans and is preparing status reports - primarily a collection of data describing a point in time - for these neighborhoods. The review will result in a "State of the Neighborhoods" report, as well as a specific report for each neighborhood plan area. The 24 neighborhoods receiving status reports are based on the City's Neighborhood Planning effort established a decade ago in response to the State Growth Management Act and Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, which designated Urban Centers and Urban Villages in these areas.

Neighborhood Plans were prepared for these areas that outline how these neighborhoods would accommodate the anticipated growth in households and jobs. Most of the city's single family residential areas do not lie within the Urban Centers and Villages and thus are not targeted to accommodate significant residential or employment growth. The Planning Commission recently completed (along with the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee) a series of community workshops to check in with these 24 neighborhoods about their plans.

So far, 38 Neighborhood Plans have been adopted. As mentioned previously, three of these neighborhoods are involved in an update process related to light rail stations. The other 11 neighborhoods have been the subject of recent extensive planning initiatives and will not be included in this review or update process. These neighborhoods include:

- Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center and Ballard Interbay Manufacturing and Industrial Center, due to the ongoing Industrial Jobs Initiative work program;
- Denny Triangle, Downtown Urban Center Planning Group and Commercial Core, due to 2006 Downtown zoning work;
- Pioneer Square and Chinatown-International District, due to current South Downtown planning efforts;
- South Lake Union, due to ongoing planning efforts;
- Roosevelt due to neighborhood's recent revisions to its neighborhood plan;
- Northgate, due to ongoing planning efforts; and
- South Park, due to recent development of the Neighborhood Action Agenda.

Document Links

Please use the links below to access the Executive Summary, neighborhood discussion summaries and questionnaire transcripts for each neighborhood.

	Executive Summary	Summary of the Neighborhood Discussion	Transcript of Questionnaire Responses
entire report (<i>NOTE: files are very large</i>)	executive summary	all discussions	entire transcript citywide summary
Admiral	summary	discussion	transcript
Aurora/Licton Springs	summary	discussion	transcript
Belltown	summary	discussion	transcript
Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake	summary	discussion	transcript
Capitol Hill	summary	discussion	transcript
Central Area	summary	discussion	transcript
Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee	summary	discussion	transcript
Crown Hill/Ballard	summary	discussion	transcript
Delridge	summary	discussion	transcript
Eastlake	summary	discussion	transcript
First Hill	summary	discussion	transcript
Fremont	summary	discussion	transcript
Georgetown	summary	discussion	transcript
Green Lake	summary	discussion	transcript
Greenwood/Phinney Ridge	summary	discussion	transcript
Lake City	summary	discussion	transcript
Morgan Junction	summary	discussion	transcript
Pike/Pine*	summary	N/A	transcript
Queen Anne	summary	discussion	transcript
Rainier Beach	summary	discussion	transcript
University Community	summary	discussion	transcript
Wallingford	summary	discussion	transcript
West Seattle Junction	summary	discussion	transcript
Westwood/Highland Park	summary	discussion	transcript

*No one attended the Pike/Pine neighborhood discussion

Acknowledgements

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Seattle Planning Commission

Josh Brower, Chair	Mark S. Johnson
Leslie Miller, Vice-Chair	Martin H. Kaplan
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David Cutler	Kevin McDonald
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Chris Fiori	Matt Roewe
Colie Hough-Beck	Michelle Zeidman

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