

Neighborhood Planning



Introduction

Creating and implementing individual neighborhood plans can help residents apply this Comprehensive Plan at a local level. These neighborhood plans can reflect the history, character, and vision of the local community. They can also provide more neighborhood-specific guidance than the citywide policies do for areas where growth and change are occurring or desired. In some cases, neighborhood plans address topics not covered elsewhere in the Plan; in other cases, they give local examples for how a citywide policy would be best implemented in that neighborhood.

Seattle has a long history of planning within its neighborhoods. After the original adoption of this Comprehensive Plan in 1994, the City offered funds to certain neighborhoods to allow them to prepare individual plans. These neighborhoods included those that either contained an urban center or urban village or were identified as economically distressed. Thirty-seven neighborhoods took advantage of that offer, and those neighborhoods all

produced plans between 1995 and 2000. Those new plans replaced plans prepared in the 1970s and 1980s, and they form the basis for most of the plans contained in this element. The City Council adopted goals and policies resulting from those efforts into the Comprehensive Plan, and the adopted neighborhood plans can be found in **Neighborhood Plans**. Nearly half of these plans have been updated since their initial adoption or are currently being updated. The plans in this element are the most recent versions of the adopted neighborhood plans.

The process for neighborhood planning has varied over time and according to each neighborhood's circumstances and concerns. In the late 1990s the planning processes were led by neighborhood groups. They received logistical support from City staff and technical support from consultants hired with funds provided by the City. In addition to providing goals and policies for each neighborhood, these plans identified actions each neighborhood could take and programs each could develop.

A few years ago, the Seattle Planning Commission reviewed all the neighborhood plans and found that “the plans still provide relevant guidance for future planning and implementation efforts.” And updates to many of these plans have brought more focus to detailed planning and implementation work. As City departments develop functional plans or carry out programs in neighborhoods throughout Seattle, they can draw guidance from the neighborhood plans.

In recent years City staff have worked with a number of neighborhoods to update their plans, including several of the neighborhoods now served by light rail. In these cases, neighborhoods reconsider the original vision of their plans. They identify specific actions to help implement the revised visions and sometimes suggest changes to zoning to affect the physical layout and development potential of the neighborhood. These processes engage broad cross sections of a neighborhood's residents and businesses. They are joined in this work by relevant City departments and other public agencies to create an integrated and equitable plan for the community.

One of Seattle's great assets is the richness of its community—Seattle includes renters and property owners, foreign-born and native-born residents, youth and seniors, and diverse communities of color. The City's neighborhood-planning process embraces this richness. Through both the planning process and the implementation of the plans, the City fosters meaningful engagement with communities. Residents, businesses, City departments, and partner agencies work together to help achieve the shared vision.

As the City works with neighborhoods on individual neighborhood plans in the future, they may refine the visions in the existing plans, update the goals and policies, and identify the necessary steps to achieve them. Collaboration between the neighborhoods and City staff will remain key to this process. Naturally, many neighborhood plans contain policies that seem redundant with policies in other elements of this Plan. Future neighborhood-planning

processes should consider ways to limit such redundancy and provide more focus on the unique circumstances and aims for the individual neighborhoods.

GOAL

NP G1 Help fulfill the Comprehensive Plan's values, vision, and goals by maintaining plans for neighborhoods where growth is expected to occur and by including strategies that address the specific growth and equity issues that are appropriate to each neighborhood.

POLICIES

NP 1.1 Prioritize neighborhood planning in areas expecting or experiencing significant change, primarily urban centers and urban villages, especially those that have not equitably benefited from the city's growth.

NP 1.2 Engage a wide range of people from the neighborhood in each neighborhood-planning process, including homeowners, renters, business owners, and employees, with special emphasis on groups that have historically been underrepresented.

NP 1.3 Develop neighborhood plans to be consistent with this Plan's vision, and use neighborhood plans to focus on improvements that will help each neighborhood fulfill this Plan's vision for a growing and equitable city.

NP 1.4 Use an integrated planning approach that involves relevant City departments to create strong, effective strategies for developing and implementing neighborhood plans.

NP 1.5 Consider neighborhood-plan recommendations when prioritizing City capital investments and service allocations.

NP 1.6 Support neighborhood-plan implementation to encourage healthy urban environments and to promote continued collaboration between the City and neighborhood groups.