

Neighborhoods for All

Conversation Guide

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Welcome!

Thank you for joining us! We've been looking forward to today's conversation on housing and neighborhood growth.

The purpose of this event is to share ideas and data about Seattle's neighborhoods and the ways the City has been controlling growth.



Examples of duplexes in Seattle

Who are the Planning Commissioners?

The Seattle Planning Commission is a group of Seattle residents appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Commissioners volunteer their time to review the City's plans and projects, and providing advice to City officials. For more information about the Commission, see the back of this workbook.

Before we dive in, lets review some suggested ground rules & norms for today's discussions:

1

One person speaks at a time. Listen actively, and respect others when they are talking.

2

Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing; use "I" statements.

3

Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks-- focus on ideas.

4

Step up, step back: be aware of how much you are speaking. If you feel that you are speaking a lot, let others speak, and if you're not talking, try to contribute some comments, ideas, or suggestions.

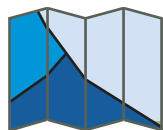
Urban Planning 101:

A cheat sheet

Below are descriptions of some common tools cities use to manage development. Additional terms can be found in the glossary at the end of this guide.

Zoning

“Which buildings can be built where”

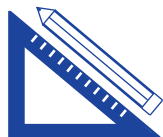


The basic purpose of zoning is to separate incompatible land uses. For example, keeping housing and childcare facilities away from manufacturing and industrial buildings. Zoning regulations make different parts of a city legal for some uses, and illegal for others.

Within a zoning category, there are rules that specify what buildings can be built there.

Development Standards

“Shape, & safety requirements”



Development standards establish construction specifications. For example, these are the standards that require a building to be set back some number of feet from the edge of a property line, or limit the building’s height. They can also define which materials are allowed, and prohibit materials that don’t meet health and safety standards.

Design Review

“Appearance, access, site considerations”

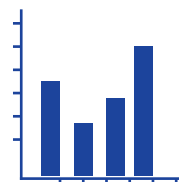


Seattle has a Design Review Program, that uses a set of guidelines to review most private development projects in Seattle. However, design review does not apply in Single Family neighborhoods. The Program reviews multiple aspects of a building and its site, including some of the following:

- The overall appearance of the new building
- How the new building will relate to adjacent sites and the street
- The quality of materials, open space, and landscaping

Environmental Impact Statements

“Study of a project’s impacts”



An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared when it is determined that a project or policy proposal is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts. The EIS process is a tool for identifying and analyzing:

- Probable adverse environmental impacts
- Reasonable alternatives to the project
- Possible ways to mitigate the project’s impacts

Residential Neighborhood History

1909 The first Building Ordinance in Seattle is published. The city is divided into “districts” to specify the construction type of new buildings, but not uses.

1920's Some residential areas begin establishing racially discriminatory covenants to **prevent people of color**, and other ethnic and religious groups **from buying houses**. The Supreme Court validates the use of restrictive covenants in 1926, making them even more common.

1923 Seattle's first zoning ordinance is passed, which establishes two residential districts: **one that allows detached, single-household structures, and another that allows apartments and other housing types.**

1934 The Federal Housing Authority establishes a system of “**redlining**” certain neighborhoods when determining whether to approve a mortgage. Generally, mortgages were **denied in neighborhoods where households of color** were predominant, undermining property values for African-Americans and Asian-American households. This practice worked to further segregate Seattle's residents along racial lines.

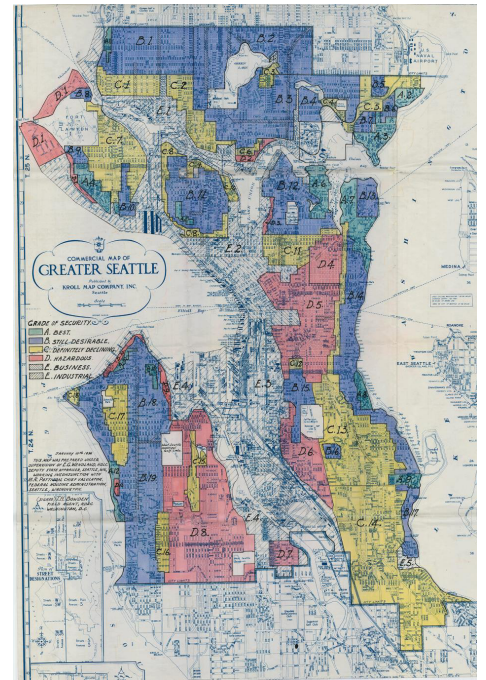
1957 Seattle adopts a new Zoning Ordinance, which includes **three categories of residential zones: single-family, duplex, and multifamily**. It sets out strict development standards for minimum lot sizes. Whereas historic neighborhoods were platted with lots smaller than 5,000 square feet, the new regulations set a 5,000 square foot minimum lot size. Many duplex areas were rezoned to single-family.

1960s & 1970s Successive changes to the land use code continue to **downzone areas from multifamily and duplex to single-family** as land use regulations in single-family areas become increasingly exclusionary.

1994 Seattle implements the **Urban Village Strategy**, which concentrates jobs, housing, and services into four categories of “urban villages.”

2009 Detached accessory dwelling units are legalized for lots over 4,000 square feet. Restrictions make construction of these units challenging and costly to homeowners.

2019 The proposed Mandatory Housing Affordability program will allow more density for selected lots in some zones and expand the boundaries of some urban villages in exchange for a required contribution to affordable housing when properties are developed.



Source: Mapping Inequality

A 1936 redlining map shows the red areas where loans were prohibited. The four designations were the result of calculations of the race, and income of residents, as well as the proximity to polluting industries.

Standards created in the 1950's prevent new development from creating the diverse, walkable, and livable urban neighborhoods that once prevailed in Seattle.

Historically, Seattle permitted a mix of buildings in areas currently zoned for stand-alone houses. Duplexes, triplexes, and small apartments built prior to 1957 remain in single-family zones, but building them is illegal today.

Seattle, like many US cities, has been shaped by a history of systematic racial segregation facilitated by land use and real estate practices that restricted people of color from buying homes in many areas of the city.

The disparities in access to opportunities across Seattle and within neighborhoods were outlined in the Growth & Equity Analysis conducted by the Office of Planning and Community Development for Seattle 2035. Reducing these disparities requires a dual strategy of investing in long overlooked areas while opening opportunities to live in other areas by building more kinds of housing in more places.

Please share your thoughts:

① How have historical development decisions influenced the city we see today?

② Some people benefited more than others. In what way have they benefited, and what impact does that have on generational wealth building?

Notes:

Residential Neighborhoods Today

Seattle has three times more land reserved only for single-family homes than for all types of multifamily combined.

This means that households with the economic resources to afford a detached house can choose to live in a much wider range of locations than those who cannot afford a single-family house, or prefer a different housing type.

This creates additional challenges, as Seattle's population continues to grow. Since 2010, Seattle has added more than 105,000 residents, surpassing 700,000 in 2017, making us one of the fastest growing U.S. cities.

Current zoning does not promote equitable access to public amenities and assets.

The impacts of this systematic and institutional racial discrimination persist today in the spatial segregation of communities of color.

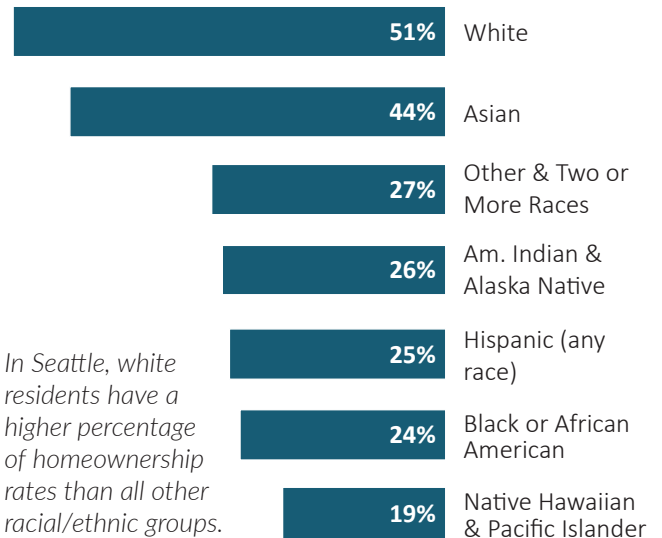
In addition, zoning restrictions constrain the number of households that can live within walking distance of services that are located in single-family zones, such as schools and parks. The high cost of buying in to a single-family zoned area restricts access to cultural and essential services on the basis of income.

Accommodating more people within existing houses uses resources more sustainably.

As we grow, our shared vision of Seattle as a sustainable, livable home for all kinds of people depends on allowing every resident to live within walking distance of essential services and transit.

Homeownership Rates by Race & Ethnicity

Source: 2016 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates



The Seattle Comprehensive Plan's vision is of vibrant communities that are economically diverse, and walkable, with affordable homes near parks, transit, jobs, and schools.

Please share your thoughts:

① Seattle is not growing equitably today. What are the contributing factors?

② How could we give more people access to neighborhoods that have many assets and services?

Notes:

Case Studies

Minneapolis, MN

Similar to Seattle, Minneapolis is required to update their Comprehensive Plan every few years. During their most recent update in 2018, the City changed their zoning to allow up to three units on every lot.

Minneapolis Council President Lisa Bender said of the changes: “In the conversation we had leading up to this, we very explicitly addressed our city’s history of racial exclusion, and we were honest about how government policies contributed to that history. When you take redlining maps and maps of racially restrictive covenants and compare them to our single-family zoning maps, they’re almost the same.”

Why is Minneapolis eliminating parking requirements?

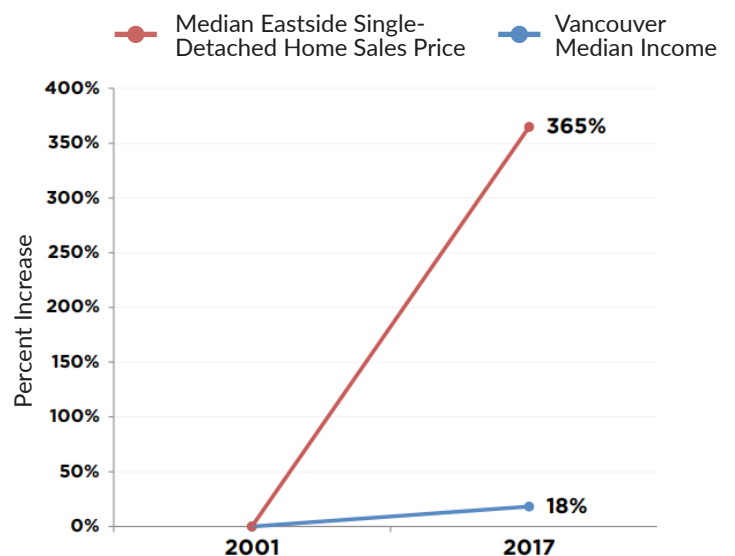
In an article discussing Minneapolis, Streetsblog noted that “Housing prices and parking are inexorably linked – and must be addressed together if cities want to be more walkable, more integrated and more affordable. Some studies have shown that mandatory parking spaces can add as much as 20 percent to the cost of an apartment.”

Vancouver, B.C.

According to the Vancouver Housing Strategy report from November, 2018, nearly 35% of renters in Vancouver spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. These circumstances are disproportionately harder for Vancouver’s indigenous residents, whose average incomes are “31 percent lower than the average non-Indigenous income in Vancouver” (City of Vancouver).

The City’s move to allow duplexes throughout the City will “enable modest densification that is reflective of the scale of other housing types currently permitted in these neighbourhoods” (City of Vancouver).

Figure 1. Income and Home Price increase in Vancouver
Source: City of Vancouver, 2018



Vancouver’s home prices have rapidly outpaced income.

Portland, OR

Portland's Residential Infill Project states: "Portland is changing and growing. By 2035, the number of households will increase by approximately 123,000."

"The Residential Infill Project is exploring ways to allow additional units that complement the scale of single dwelling neighborhoods. By applying better controls on house size and improving how houses

relate to each other, additional units in the form of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes and triplexes can be carefully introduced into single-dwelling neighborhoods while maintaining their distinct character."

Please share your thoughts:

1

What do you like about each city's strategies?

2

Would any of these strategies help Seattle grow equitably? Why or why not?

Notes:

Glossary

Access to opportunity: Living within walking distance or with transit access to services, employment opportunities, amenities, and other key determinants of social, economic, and physical well-being.

Accessory dwelling unit: A housing unit that is in addition to the primary residence on a site. An accessory unit may be attached to or detached from the primary residence.

Affordable housing: Informally, the term affordable housing is used to describe a home where a house-hold can afford rent or mortgage costs and still have sufficient remaining income for basic needs like transportation, food, and healthcare. Formally, affordable housing is defined in the Land Use Code as “a housing unit for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of household income for gross housing costs, including an allowance for utility costs paid by the occupant.”

AMI: The area median income (AMI) is the household income for the median – or middle – household in a region. Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates the median income for every metropolitan region in the country for purposes of determining the eligibility of applicants for certain federal housing programs.

Backyard cottage: A detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU).

Covenant (legal): An agreement commonly attached to the deed of a home or other form of property. Although racial covenants are no longer legally enforceable, they were common during the in the 1920's and 1930's. Covenants included language promoting segregation, forbidding certain people from living in a neighborhood. This primarily targeted people of color, and Jewish people, but at times included Catholics, and certain European immigrant groups.

Comprehensive plan: Comprehensive plans must show that each city has enough land with the right zoning to absorb the growth that is expected to occur over the next twenty years. Cities must also plan for the housing, transportation, water, sewer, and other facilities that will be needed. The Growth Management Act requires that plans be consistent with other plans in the region. In this region, other plans include Vision 2040 and the King County County-wide Planning Policies.

Design standards: The Seattle Residential Code (SRC) provides minimum requirements for design and construction of single-family houses, duplexes, and townhouses with no more than three stories and with separate entrances. Seattle has adopted the 2015 International Residential Code, with amendments specific to our jurisdiction.

Development standards: Also known as building codes, development standards are the specifications that the municipality refers to when reviewing applications for construction permits. All development that takes place in Seattle must meet development standards. This insures that buildings are safe, and not a risk to health or safety. When someone says a building was “up to code” they are talking about these standards.

Displacement: The involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses from their current residence. This is a different phenomenon than when property owners voluntarily sell their interests to capture an increase in value. This analysis addresses both physical (direct) and economic (indirect) displacement. Physical displacement is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing. Economic displacement occurs when residents and businesses can no longer afford escalating rents or property taxes. Cultural displacement occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses have left the area.

Displacement Risk: The 2016 *Seattle Growth and Equity Analysis* evaluated the risk of displacement that marginalized populations face. The Displacement Risk Index combines data about demographic factors, like the share of an area's population who are people of color or have low incomes, with physical factors that can precipitate or contribute to displacement pressure, like proximity to frequent transit, services, and job opportunities (Seattle 2016).

Equitable: A solution or outcome where resources are allocated according to each community or community member's level of need, which eliminates disparities. An equitable city would be one where race, gender or other forms of identity couldn't predict your life outcomes.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The gross floor area of a building divided by the total area of the site. For example, a twenty-thousand-square-foot building on a site with an area of ten thousand square feet has a floor area ratio of 2.0. This applies regardless of the building's height, so the building could have five stories of four thousand square feet each or two stories of ten thousand square feet each.

Neighborhood character: The unique look and feel of a particular area within the city. This is a subjective concept— one that varies not only by neighborhood but also by each person's view of that neighborhood.

Redlining: The term "redlining" refers to the practice of using a red line on a map to delineate the area where financial institutions would not invest. Redlining is the practice of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition without regarding the residents' qualifications or creditworthiness.

Single-family housing: Stand-alone structures on a parcel of land containing only one primary living unit.

Social equity: Everyone has fair and unbiased access to the resources necessary to meet their fundamental needs and fully participate in the life of their community.

Sustainable: Conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources.

Transit node: A point in a network or diagram at which lines or pathways intersect or branch.

Transit-friendly: Development which is oriented towards and integrated with adjacent transit. The development incorporates accessibility and connectivity and is a multi-use mix of dense development that generates significant levels of transit riders.

Urban village: Areas designated in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan for future growth. These are generally areas that include long-standing neighborhood business districts along with zoning that can accommodate further development. The three types of urban villages in Seattle are urban centers, hub urban villages, and residential urban villages.

Zoning: Regulations defining where buildings can be built, and what kinds of buildings. For example, this is the mechanism that prevents loud industrial land uses from being located next to housing or restaurants. Zoning also controls the size of buildings being built in a given zone.

About the Planning Commission

The Seattle Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle into the 21st Century, and by a commitment to engaging citizens in the work of planning for and working to reach these goals.

The Seattle Planning Commission is an independent, 16-member advisory body appointed by the Mayor, City Council, and the Commission itself. The members of the Commission are residents of Seattle who volunteer their time, and bring a wide array of expertise and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Visit our website to learn more
about the Seattle Planning Commission
www.seattle.gov/planningcommission

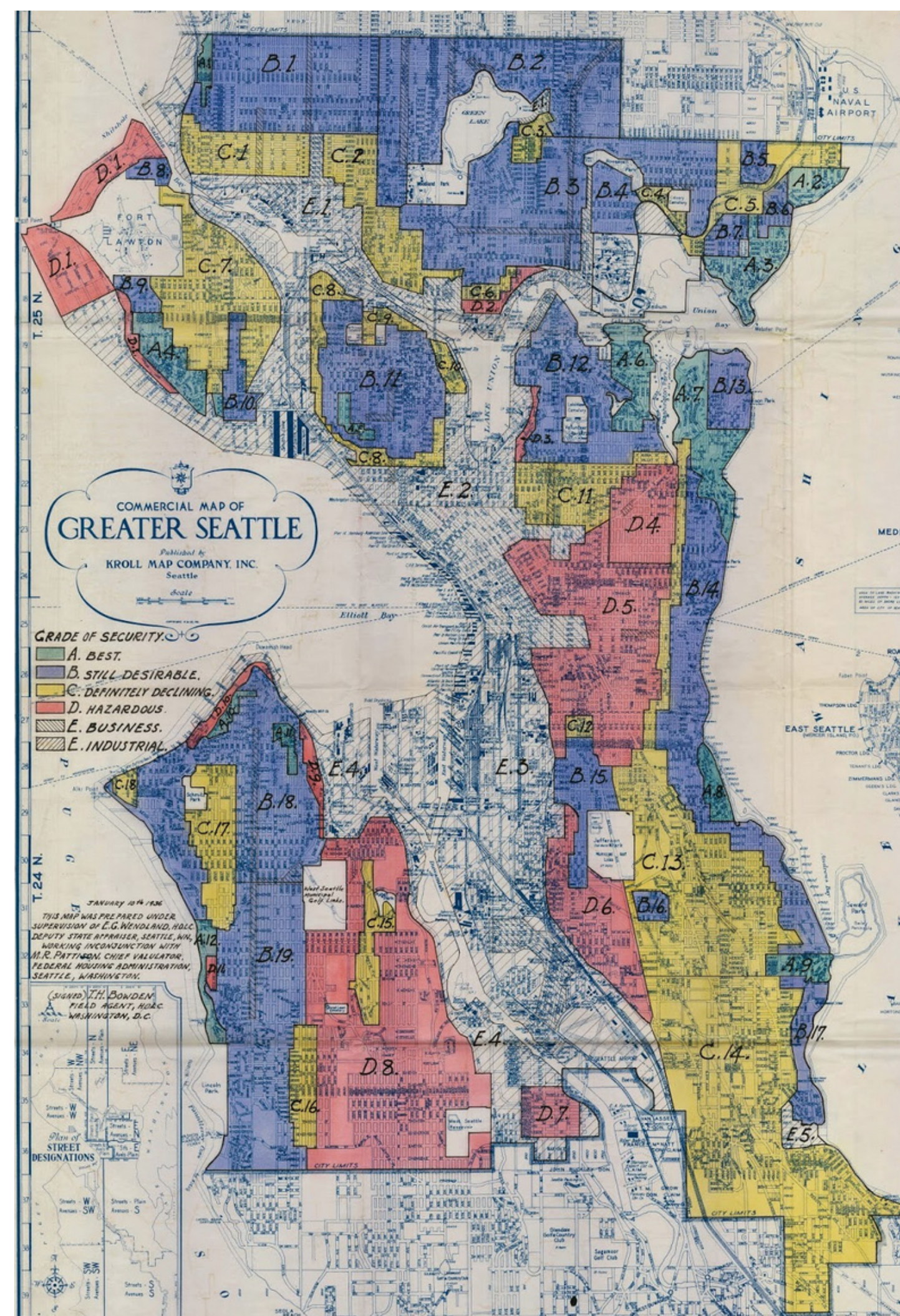
Residential Neighborhood History

2. Lasting Policy Impacts

Redlining Map of Seattle, 1936

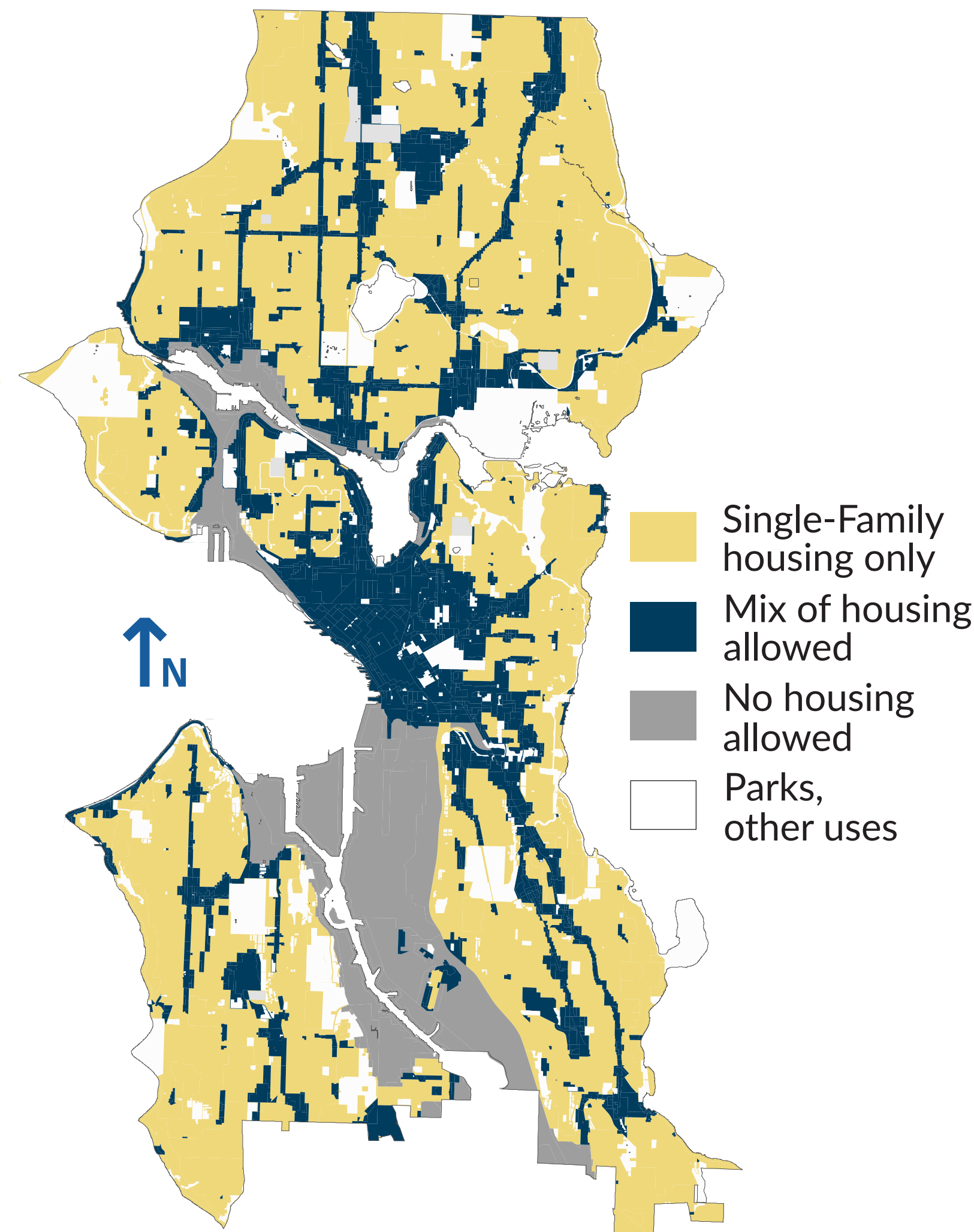
- "Best"
- "Still Desirable"
- "Definitely Declining"
- "Hazardous"

Redlining was a practice of denying mortgages in neighborhoods that had residents of color. Redlining reduced property values, and further segregated Seattle's residents



Seattle Zoning Today

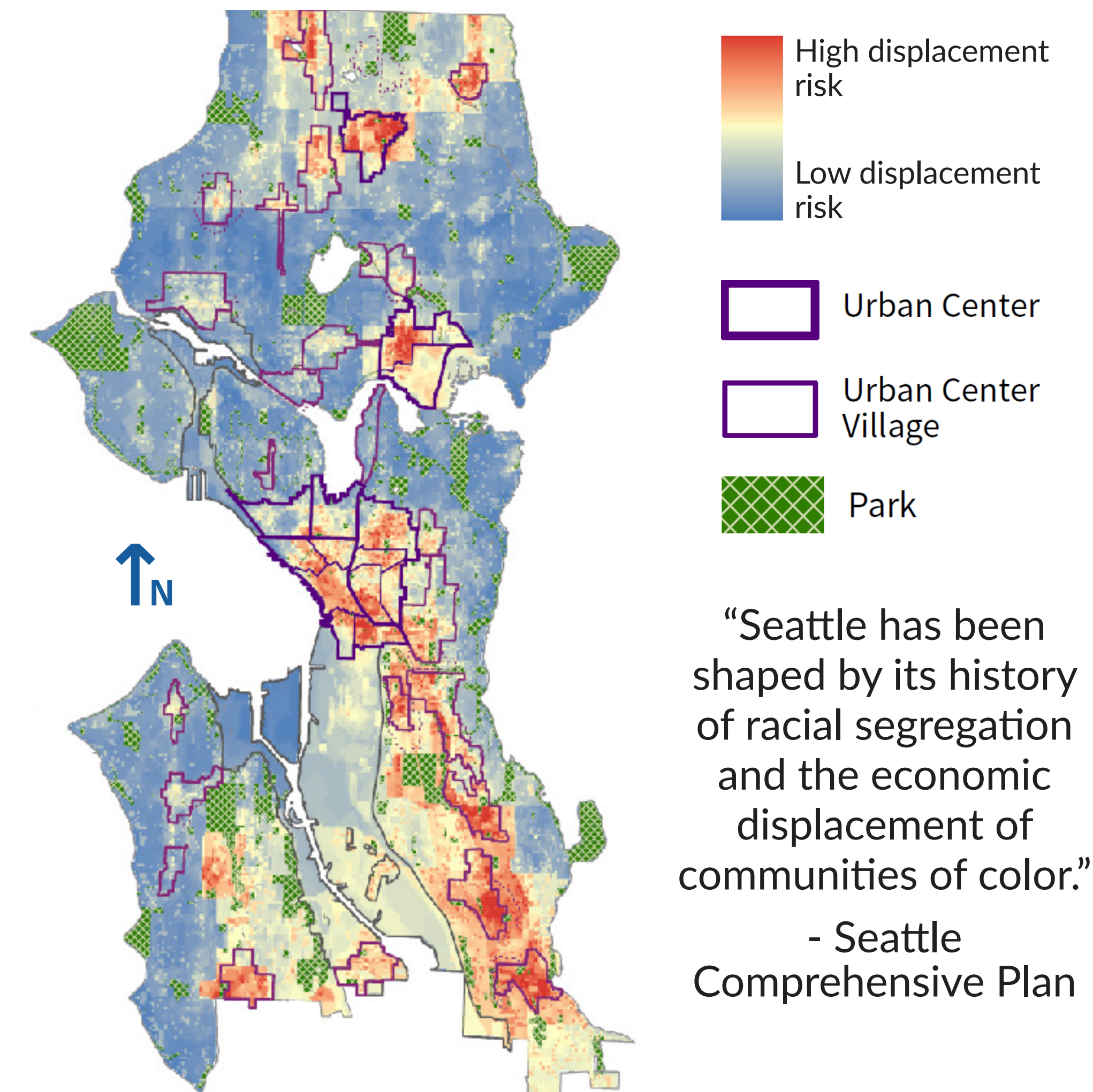
Data: City of Seattle



The yellow areas of this map show where there is limited access for those who can't afford, or choose not to live in a single-family home

Map of Displacement Risk

Data: City of Seattle



"Seattle has been shaped by its history of racial segregation and the economic displacement of communities of color."

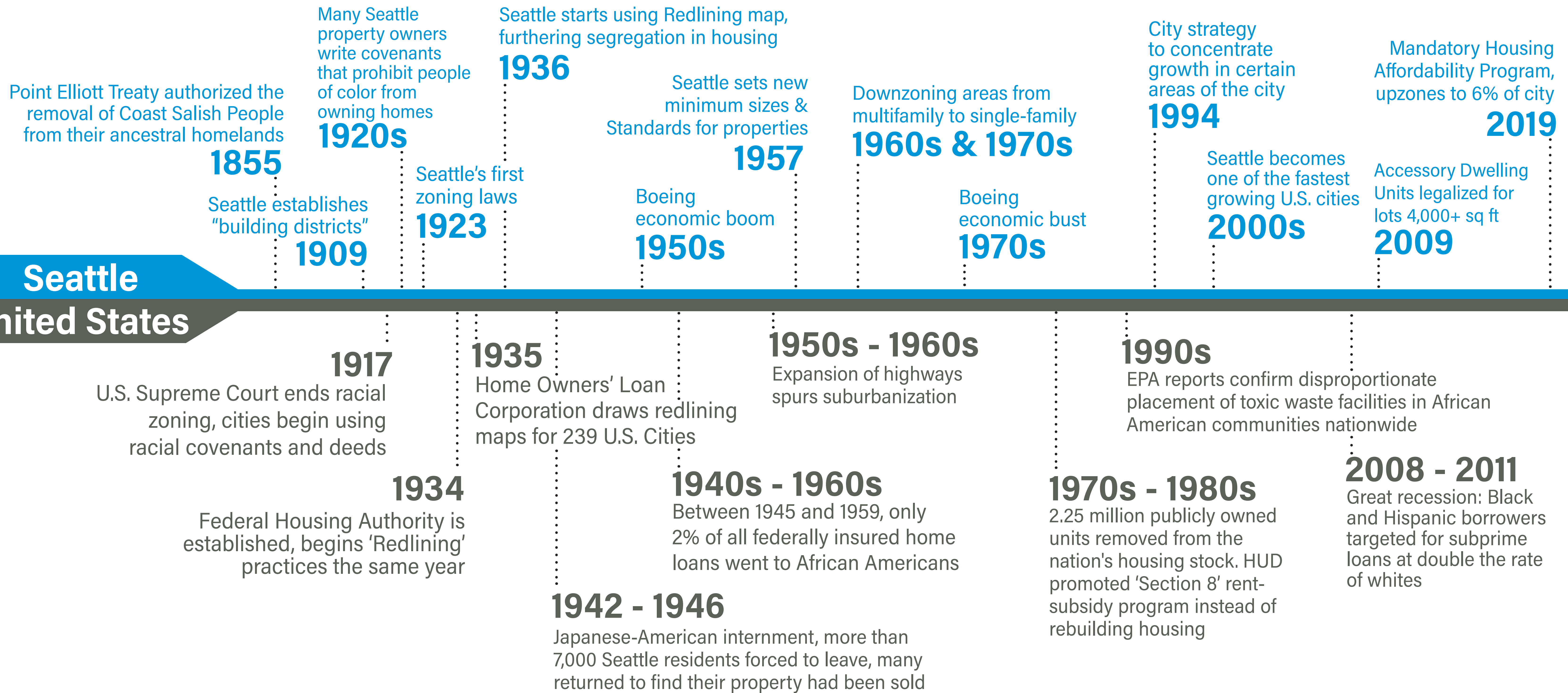
- Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The impacts of redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and disinvestment remain today and perpetuate racial segregation in Seattle

Residential Neighborhood History

1. Timeline: Housing Equity

Seattle United States



Residential Neighborhood History

3. Neighborhood Buildings

Historically, Seattle permitted a rich mix of buildings in areas currently zoned for stand-alone houses



Example of a duplex & triplex adjacent to each other in a what is now a single-family zone in the West Woodland neighborhood



The 702 Trolley, in operation through the early 20th century, reflected a compact, active neighborhood character.

Seattle's older Neighborhoods tend to be those that are revered for their walkability and have a mix of unit types including duplexes, triplexes, and small apartments.



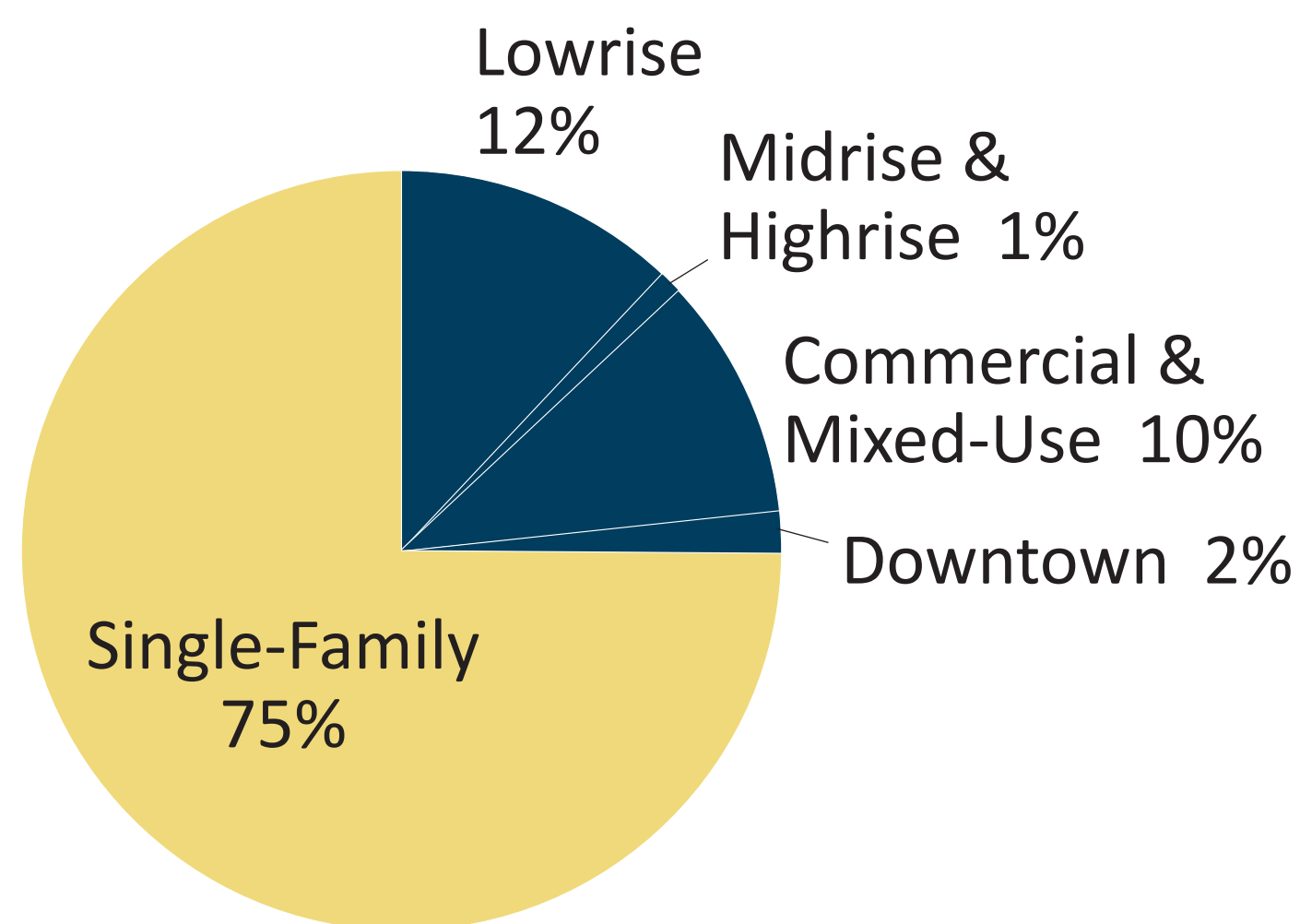
Example of a modern triplex. Source: Sightline

Residential Neighborhoods Today

1. Housing & Development

Distribution Residential Zoning Types

Data: City of Seattle

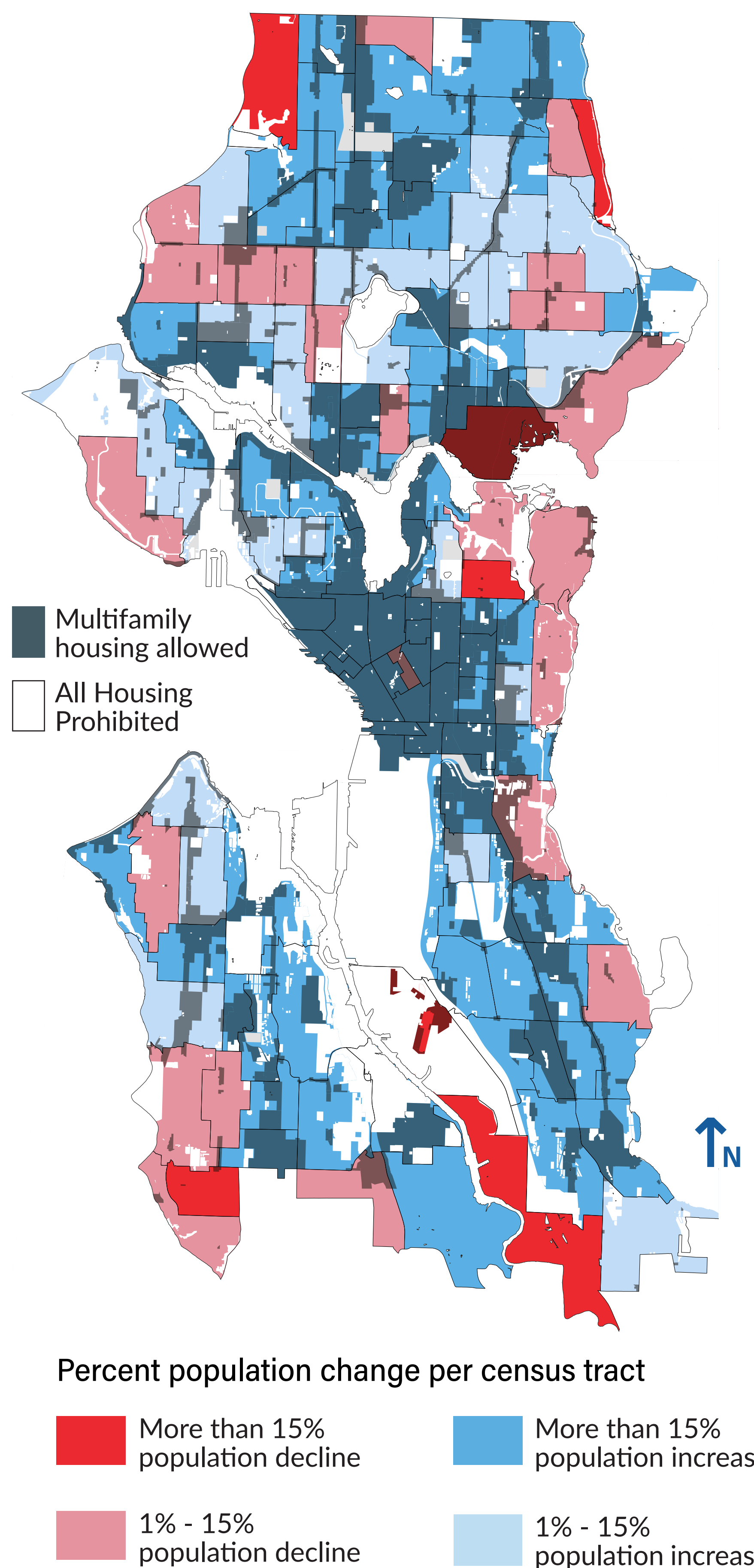
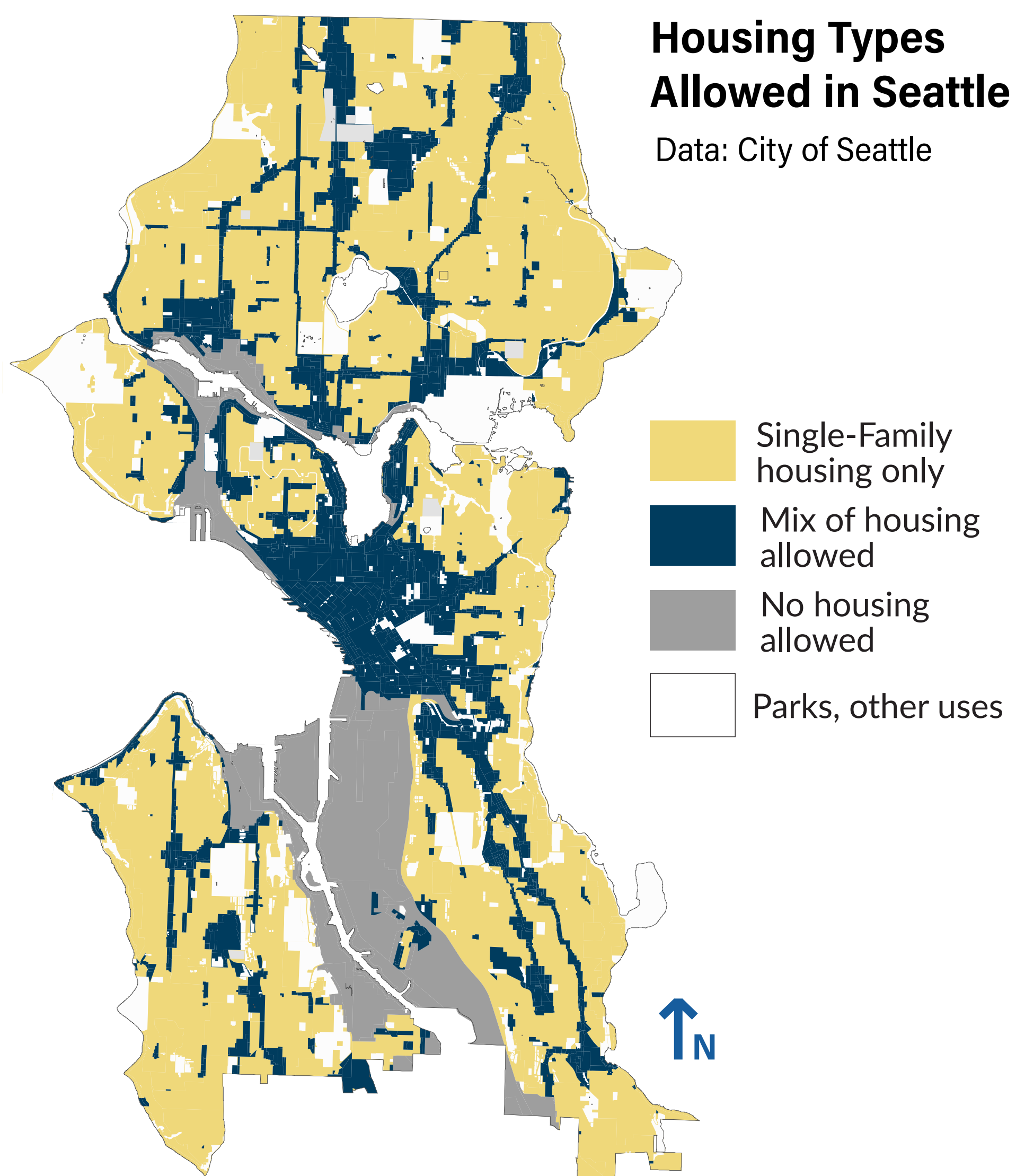


There is three times more land reserved only for single-family homes than for all types of multifamily combined.

Despite Seattle's growth, some areas of the city are losing population.

Seattle Population Change 1970 - 2016

Source: 2016 American Community Survey, City of Seattle

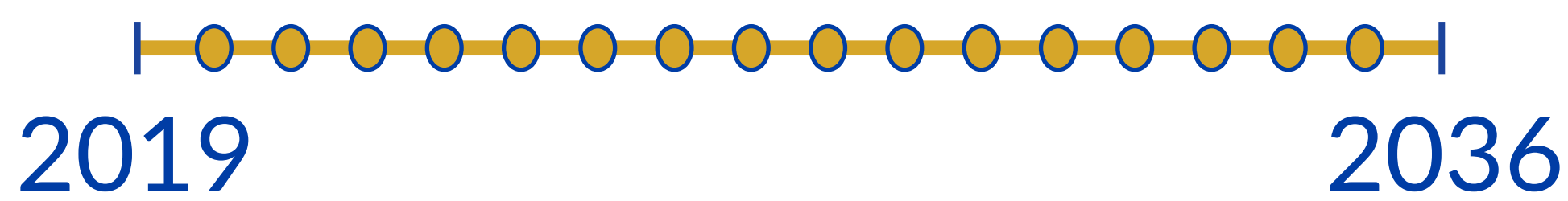


Residential Neighborhoods Today

2. Access & Cost

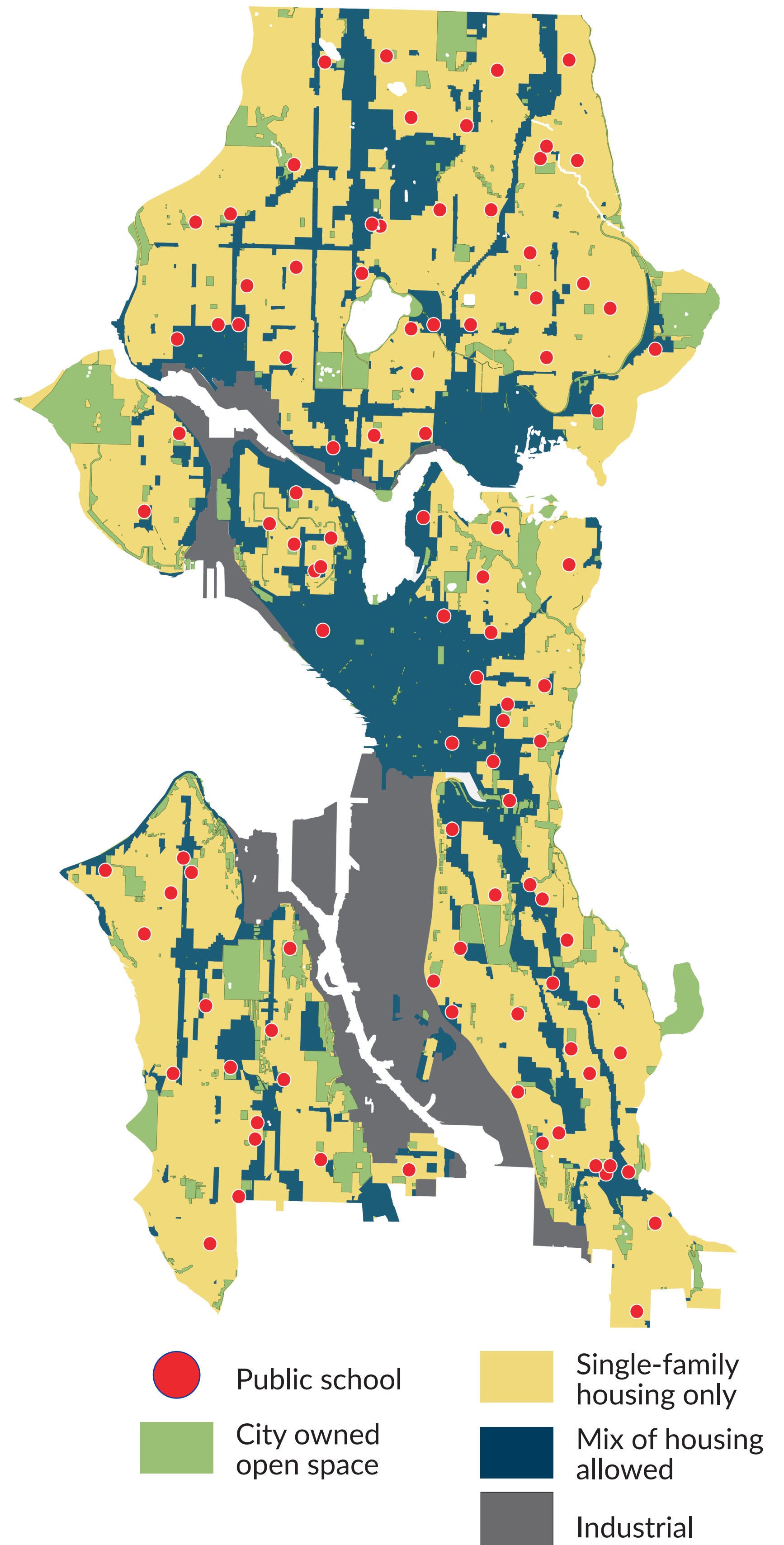
Current land use does not promote equitable access to public investments.

**Down payment:
18.25 Years**



Using March 2019 average house prices, and Seattle's median household income (2014 - 2017 ACS), saving for a down payment of 20% would take 18.25 years. Assuming house prices and incomes stay the same.

Distribution of Public Parks & Schools by Zone
Data: City of Seattle, King County Assessor



Median Household Income by Housing Type

Source: 2016 American Community Survey

Single-family	\$98,000
1 Attached Unit	\$55,000
2 - 4 Units	\$49,000
5 - 9 Units	\$42,780
10 - 19 Units	\$47,000
20 - 49 Units	\$42,000
50+ units	\$48,000

1 in 5 single-family houses are renter occupied

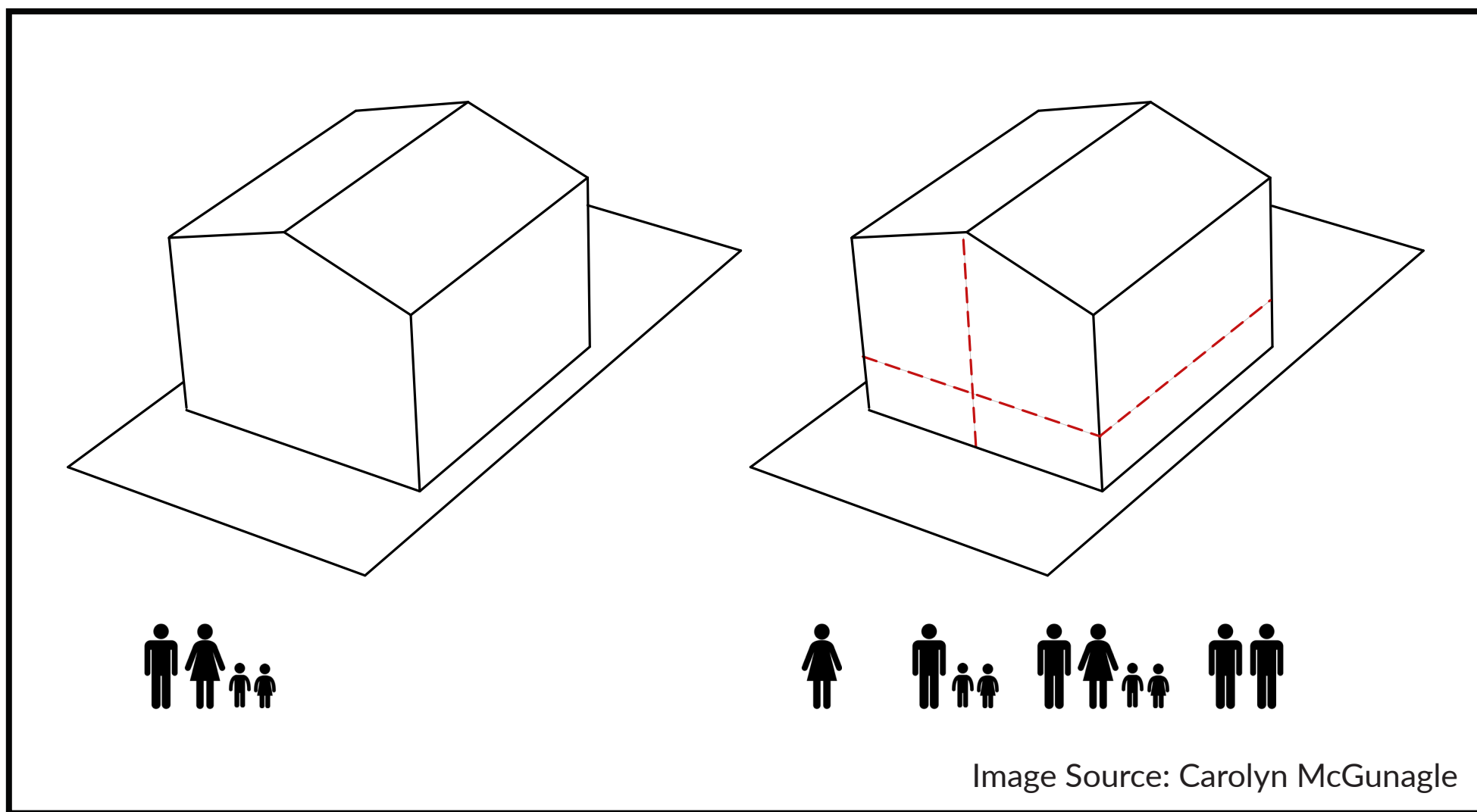
Source: 2016 American Community Survey



Only 20% of single-family units are renter occupied, and renters tend to have lower incomes than owners.

Residential Neighborhoods Today

3. Growth & Sustainability



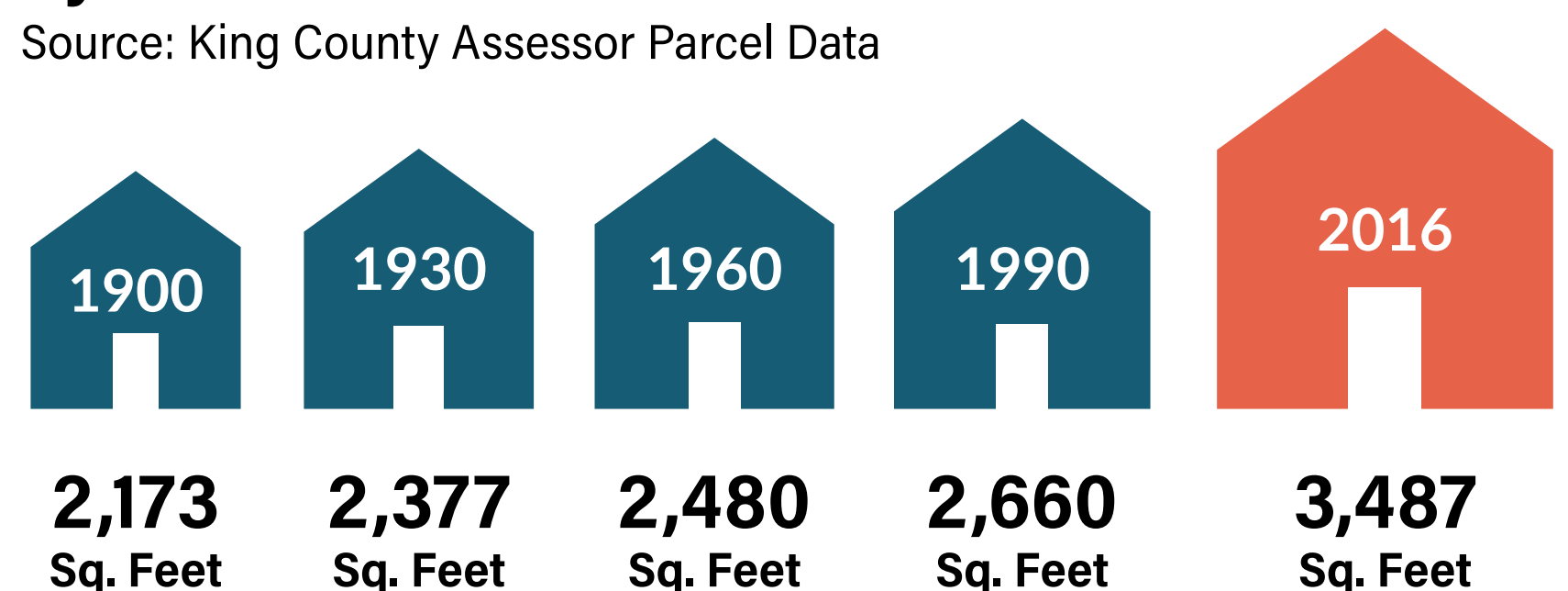
The same size building that accommodates a household of four could accommodate four households of varying sizes, greatly increasing energy and resource efficiency.

Accommodating more people within existing houses uses resources more sustainably.

The size and shape of many new homes is similar to that of a duplex or triplex.

Average Size of New Houses by Year Built in Seattle

Source: King County Assessor Parcel Data



“Missing Middle” refers to a range of multifamily housing types such as duplexes and courtyard apartments that are compatible in scale with single-family houses.



Image Source: Opticos Design

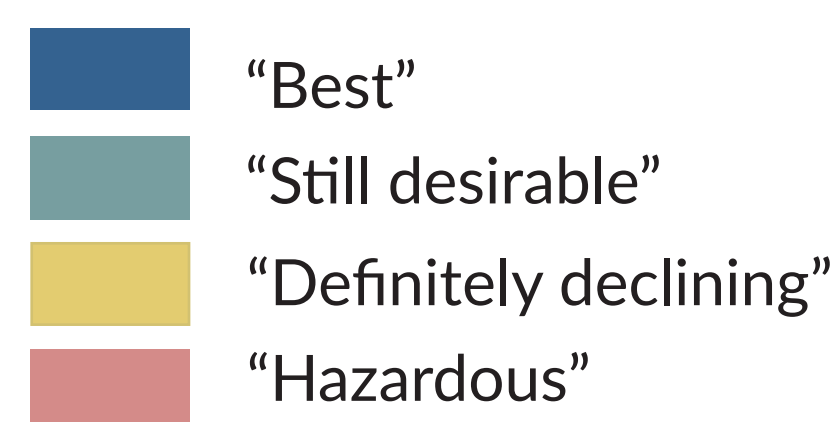
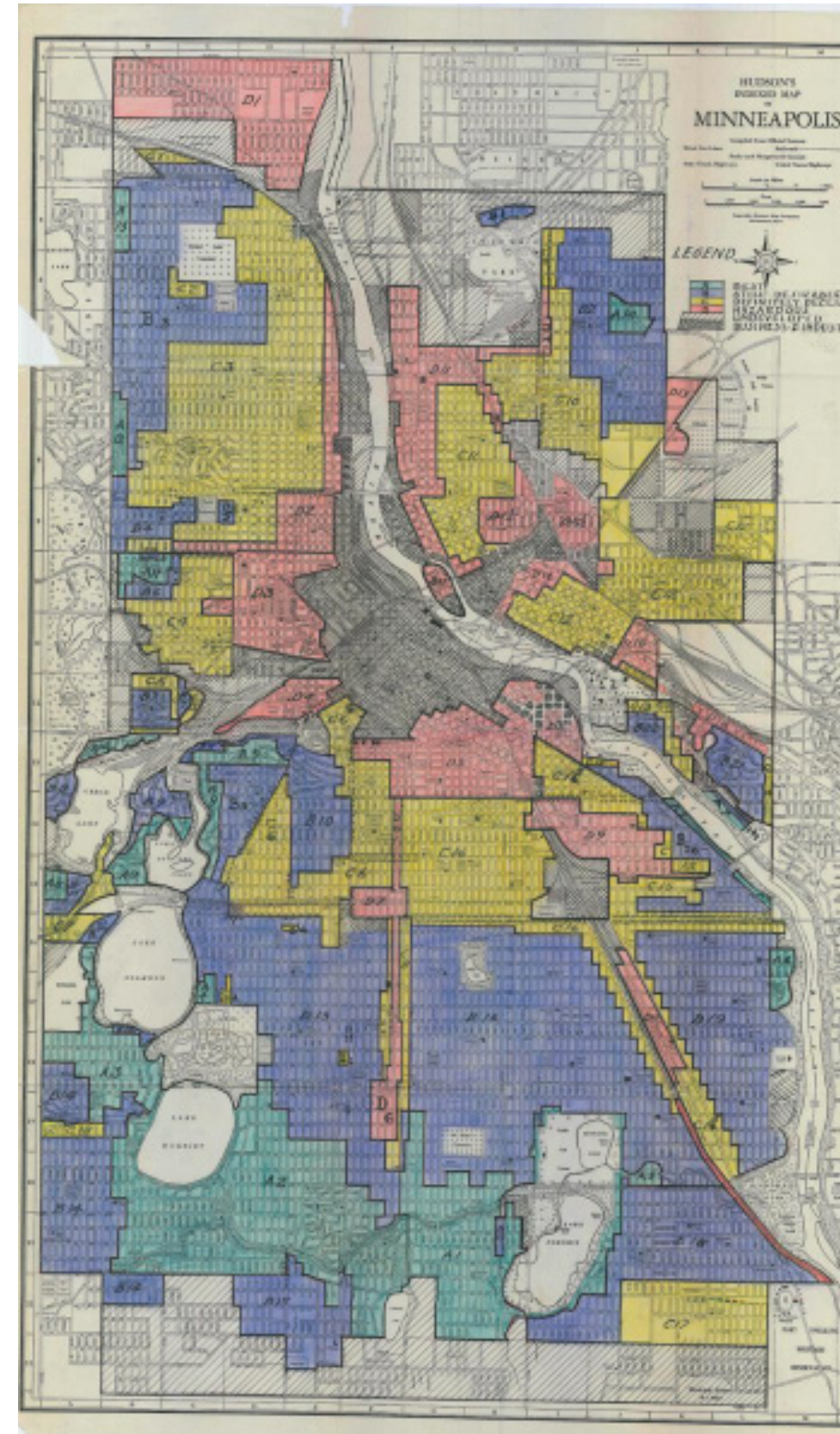
Case Studies

1. Minneapolis, MN

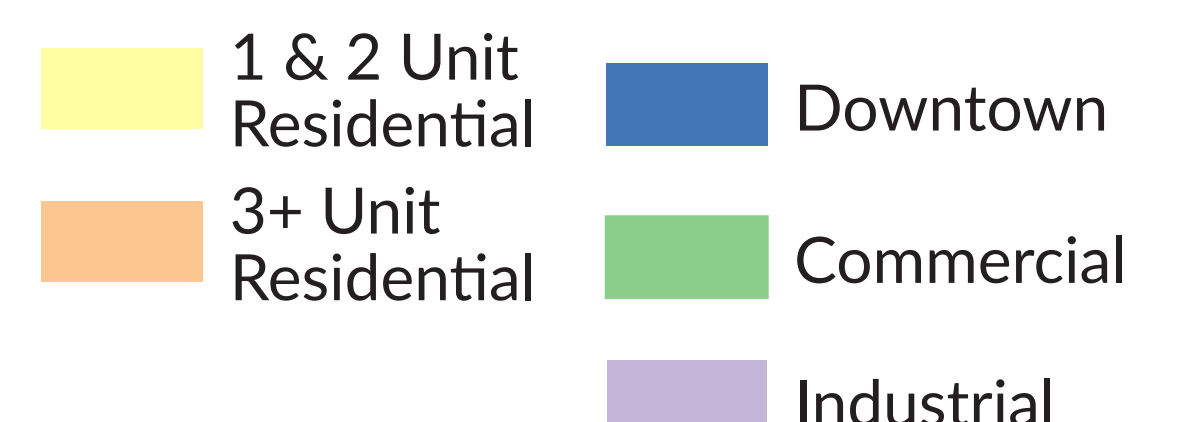
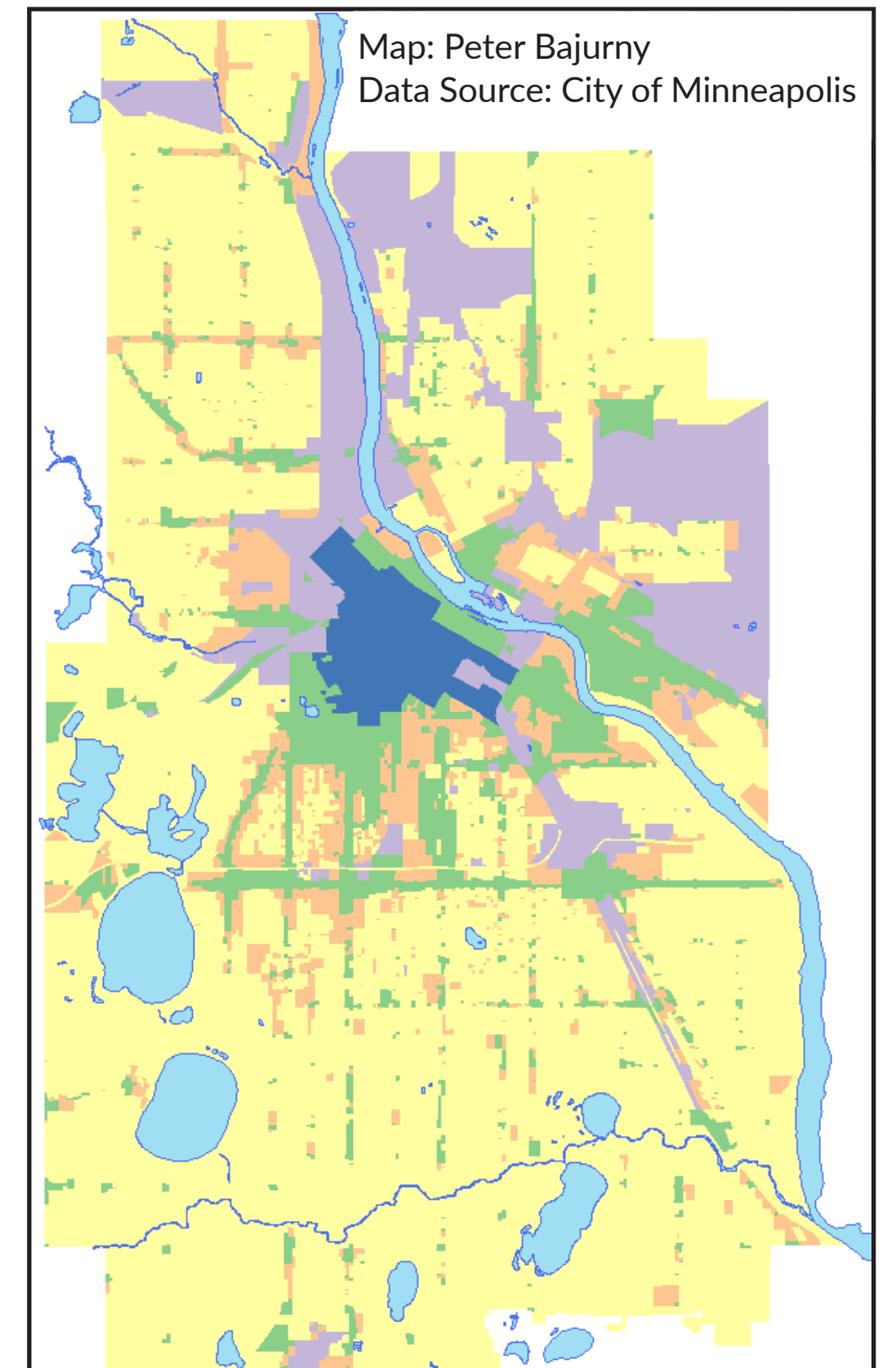
Housing Challenges

- 60% of the land area reserved for 1 & 2 Unit housing
- “...nearly 60 percent of white households in Minneapolis own their home, while less than 25 percent of African-American, Native American and Hispanic households do.” (NY Times, 2018)

Minneapolis Redlining Map
1933



Minneapolis Zoning Map
2016



Strategies

2019 Comprehensive Plan will:

- Achieve greater housing supply and diversity by allowing small-scale residential structures with up to three dwelling units on an individual lot across the entire city
- Eliminate the requirement for off-street parking minimums throughout the city

Examples of the triplexes now legal throughout Minneapolis

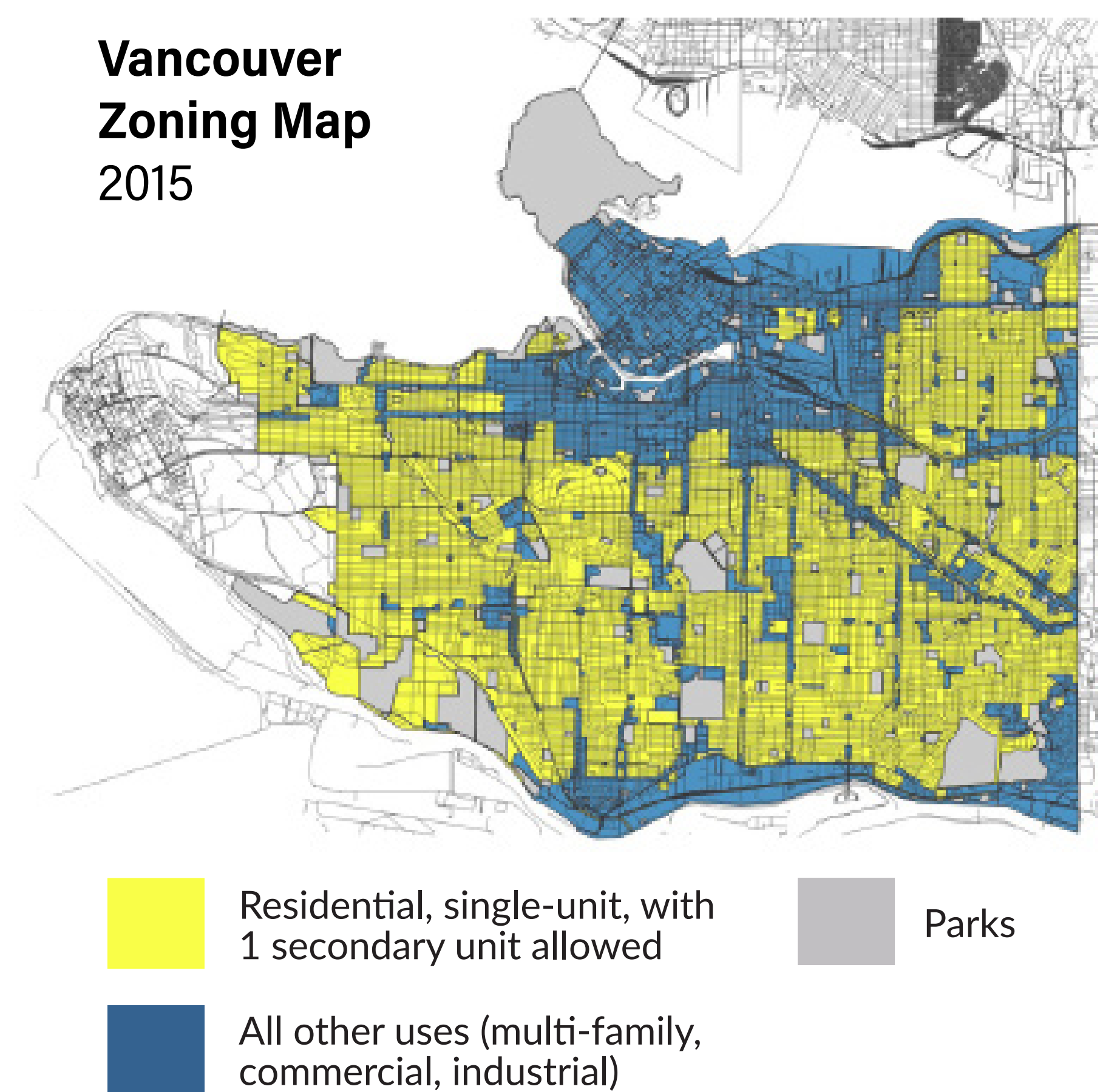


Case Studies

2. Vancouver, B.C.

Housing Challenges

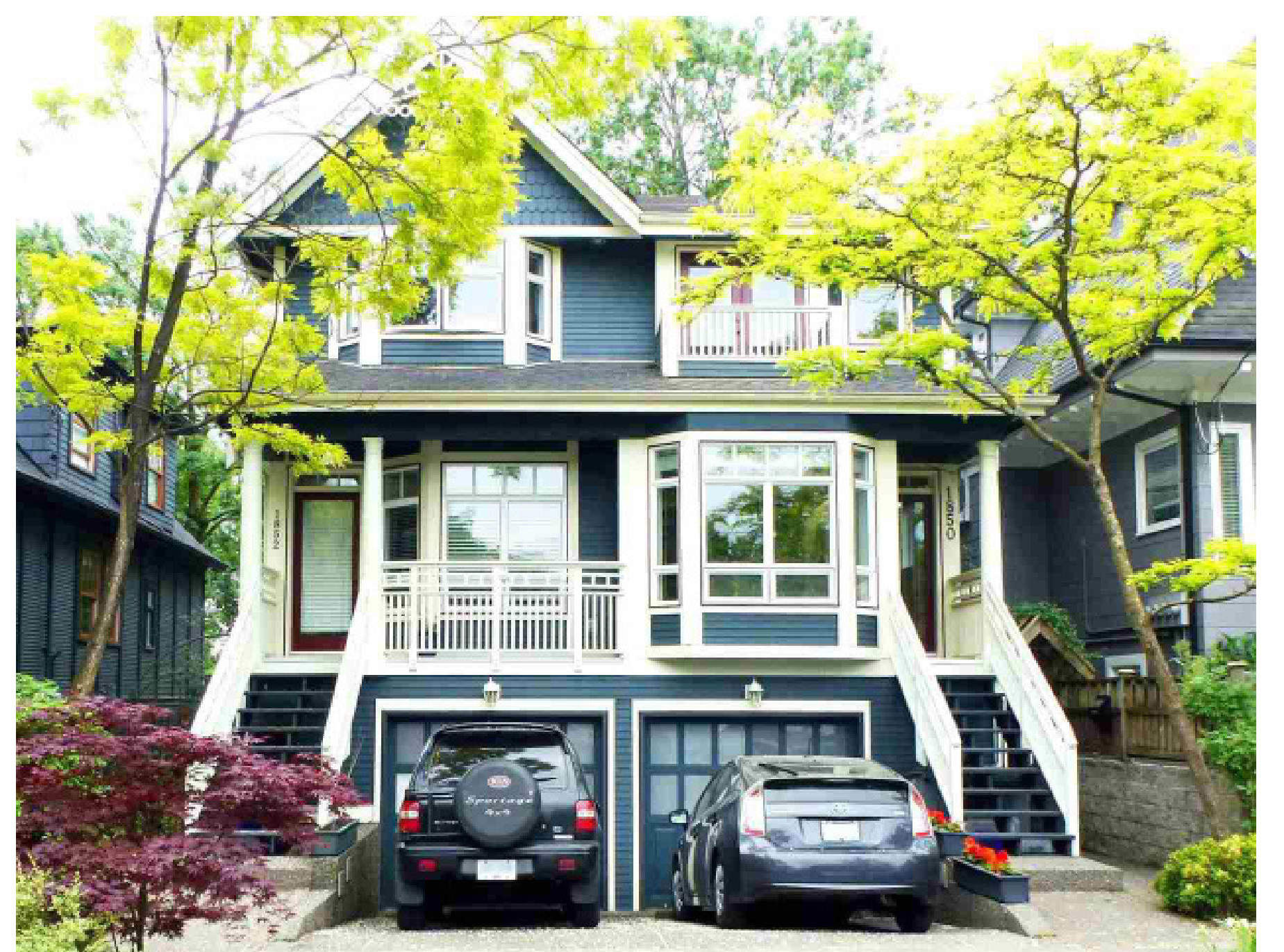
- As of December 2018, the average house price was just over \$1M
- Until late 2018, 57% of the city's land was single-family only (which also allowed backyard cottages)



Strategies

In late 2018, the Vancouver City Council approved new zoning for 99% of their single-family land

The City now allows duplexes, along with the previously allowed backyard cottages

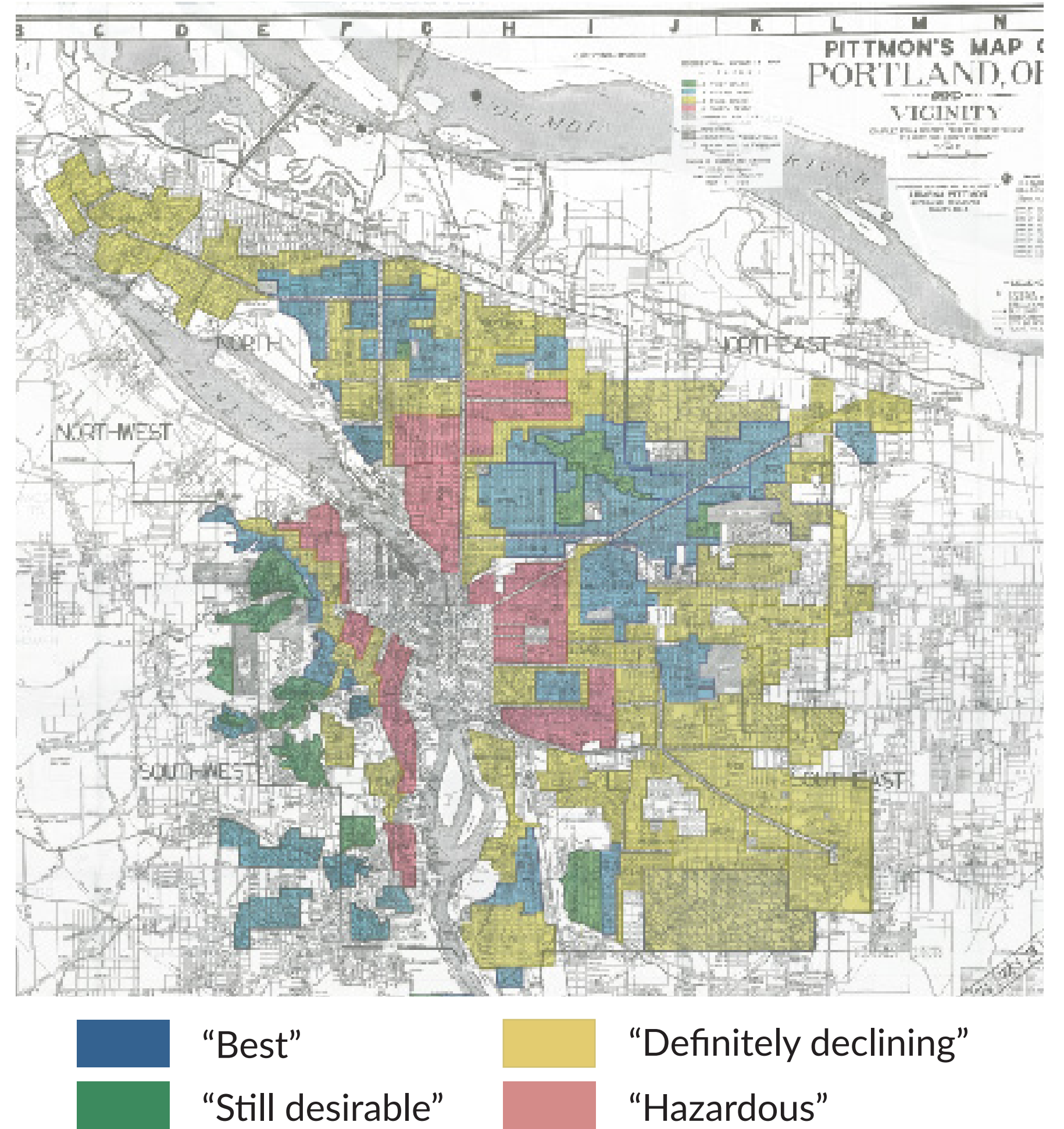


A Vancouver Duplex

Housing Challenges

- Single-dwelling units make up 42% of Portland’s residential land
- “The historic use of racially restrictive covenants and redlining. . .contributed to today’s racial disparities in homeownership rates and wealth attainment.”
- City of Portland

Portland Redlining Map
1938



Strategies

- Allow more housing types in select areas and limit their scale
- Increase flexibility for cottage clusters on large lots citywide
- Limit the size of houses while maintaining flexibility. Lower the roofline of houses. Improve setbacks to better match adjacent houses and promote tree retention

Housing Flexibility Examples

