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## Citywide Planning

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# Citywide Planning



# Introduction



*Seattle is a growing city. We use this Comprehensive Plan to manage growth in a way that benefits all of the city's residents and preserves the surrounding natural environment.*

Seattle's recent building boom is a reminder of how desirable Seattle is as a place to live and work. Since the Plan was first adopted in 1994, the City has worked to accommodate new people and businesses, while at the same time looking for ways the city can continue to be livable for future generations. Further growth will present challenges and opportunities similar to the ones we have faced in the recent past. The City has created this Plan as a guide to help it make decisions about managing growth equitably over the next twenty years.

## The City in the Region

With the most people and jobs of any city in Washington State, Seattle is the center of the fast-growing Central Puget Sound region. Made up of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties, this dynamic metropolitan region expects its population to exceed five million by 2040. Seattle hosts many of the region’s largest employers, including the University of Washington and major medical facilities. It also contains cultural attractions such as the Seattle Symphony, the Northwest Folklife Festival, and professional sports teams, and serves as the focal point of the region’s multiple transit systems.

Over the past decade, the city has grown rapidly, adding an average of about four thousand housing units and seven thousand people each year. In the years to come, Seattle expects to accommodate a significant share of the region’s growth. This Plan contains **goals** and **policies** designed to guide growth in a manner that reflects the City’s core values and that enhances the quality of life for all.

## What Drives This Plan

### Seattle’s Core Values

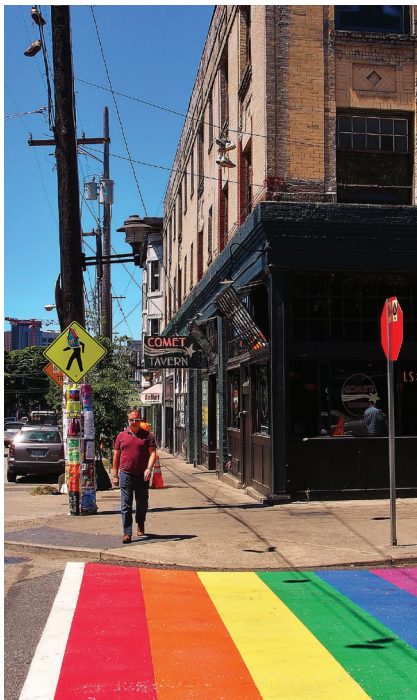
Before Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan was first drafted in the early 1990s, City staff and the Planning Commission held numerous community meetings, with the intention of inviting more people into the conversation and hearing from groups who hadn’t always been at the table. The goal of City staff and the Commission was to identify the values that people cared most about. The principles that emerged from these conversations came to be known as the core values for the Comprehensive Plan, and they are still valid. This version of the Plan honors the efforts of those past participants and holds the same values at its center.

**Race and Social Equity.** Seattle believes that every resident should have the opportunity to thrive and to be a part of the city’s growing economy. In 2015 the mayor and the City Council adopted a resolution that changed the title of this value from “**social equity**” to “**race and social equity**,” to emphasize the need to address disparities experienced by people of color. In 2016, at Council’s request, the Office of Planning and Community Development developed the Growth and Equity Analysis. The results of the Growth and Equity Analysis inform elected officials and the public about potential future displacement impacts of the recommended Growth Strategy on marginalized populations; and strategies for mitigating identified impacts and increasing access to opportunity for marginalized populations.

Historically in the city of Seattle and throughout the nation, people have been denied **equal** access to education, jobs, homes, and neighborhoods because of their race, class, disabilities, or other real or perceived differences. While such practices are now illegal, some groups still do not enjoy access to the same job opportunities, security, and freedoms that other Seattle residents have. The benefits and burdens of growth are not distributed equitably.

Seattle has not yet achieved social equity for all who live and work in our city, and statistics have shown that this is particularly true for people of color.

These inequities have become more significant as the makeup of Seattle's population has changed. The city has gone from being 25 percent people of color in 1990 to 34 percent in 2010, and this trend is expected to continue. More immigrants will arrive, and minority populations will continue to grow through natural increase. The map on the following page shows locations in the city where there are concentrations of people of color.

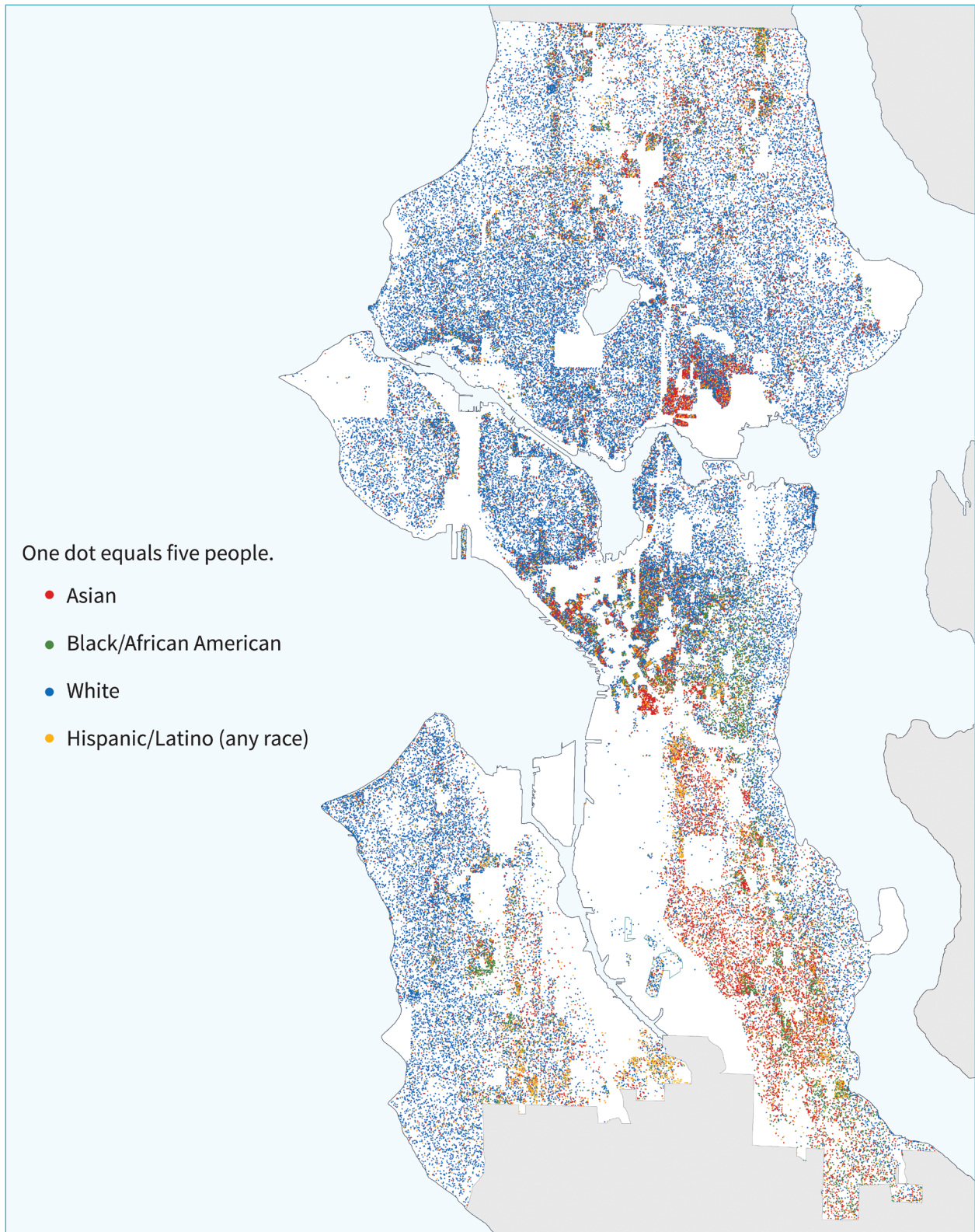


**L** Photo © John Skelton **R** Photo © Briana N, Youth in Focus student

With more people moving into the city, property values could increase or existing buildings and homes could be replaced with new and more expensive ones. Changes like these will affect some communities more than others and could make it more difficult for residents or businesses to remain in their current neighborhoods, especially in low-income areas. In some cases these outcomes are unavoidable, but the City must try to help existing residents and businesses remain part of our growing and changing **community**.

## 2010 Population

by major racial category and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity



Since the early 2000s, the City has worked to implement a race and social justice initiative, a citywide effort to make racial equity a reality. This version of the Comprehensive Plan marks a renewed and strengthened commitment to that goal.

The main goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the physical development of the city. However, in shaping how we create new spaces for people to live, work, and play, this Plan also aims to give all Seattle residents better access to jobs, education, **affordable housing**, parks, community centers, and healthy food.

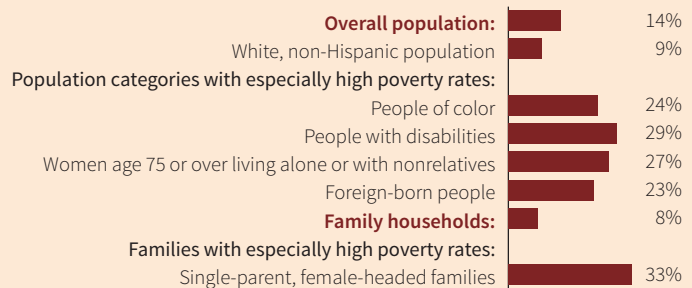
In 2016, the City published a report titled Growth and Equity. That report compiles data about several economic and demographic factors that help identify places in the city where residents, especially people of color and low-income residents, could be at risk of displacement or where there is less access to employment and other opportunities. The City used information from this report to shape this Plan’s preferred pattern of growth, as described in the Growth Strategy Element. The City will continue to monitor the conditions contained in the report.

The goals and policies in this Plan can also influence the actions of other government agencies and private businesses to promote social justice and racial equity. Working toward equity will help produce stronger and more resilient economic growth—growth that benefits everyone.

Seattle is a city where much of the population enjoys comfortable to very high incomes, yet roughly one out of seven Seattleites has an income below the poverty line. In Seattle, the poverty rate for people of color is more than two and a half times that for whites. High rates of poverty among single-parent families, people with disabilities, and other demographic groups reveal additional disparities in the well-being of Seattle residents.

### Poverty in Seattle

Percentage with incomes below poverty level



Source: 2011–2013 ACS, US Census Bureau.

Notes: Some people (for example, people living in college dormitories and people who are institutionalized) are not included in poverty rate calculations.

The discussions that introduce sections of this Plan highlight other facts about some conditions or services as they relate to the income or racial characteristics of people in Seattle.

**Environmental Stewardship.** Even as the city becomes increasingly urban, Seattle is dedicated to protecting and restoring the green spaces and water that make our city special. Between the time the Plan was first adopted and 2015, Seattle has accommodated more

than its expected share of countywide residential growth—adding more than sixty-seven thousand new housing units, compared to the original Plan’s estimate of fifty thousand to sixty thousand. This has helped reduce the proportion of countywide housing growth in rural areas from about 15 percent in the 1980s to less than 2 percent in recent years. By taking on a significant share of the region’s growth, Seattle has helped protect rural farms and forests from development. And by concentrating growth in **urban villages**, we help preserve the existing green areas in the city, including the areas that now contain low-density development.

The City has committed to make Seattle **carbon neutral** by the year 2050 in order to reduce the threat of **climate change**. To reach this ambitious and important goal, local government, businesses, and residents will need to work together. Seattle’s Climate Action Plan provides long-term planning direction and guidance for climate protection and adaptation efforts through 2030. This Plan contains consistent goals and policies to help guide this effort. For instance, the Growth Strategy and Transportation elements promote development that will make walking, biking, and public transit viable options for more people so that they can be less reliant on automobiles—a major source of carbon emissions in this region. Seattle charged the 2012 Green Ribbon Commission to help create a climate action plan that increases the circle of economic prosperity, affordable housing, public health, and social equity while protecting our planet for future generations. Seattle’s Climate Action Plan provides long-term planning direction and guidance for climate protection and adaptation efforts through 2030.

**Community.** Seattle is made up of many small **communities**, where people bond because of shared interests or backgrounds. Each of the small communities is a crucial part of the whole, and all the communities working together is what makes the larger Seattle community thrive.

To prepare this Plan and previous versions of it, hundreds of people participated in meetings, filled out comment forms, and wrote e-mails and letters to the City. Among the diverse groups of people who call Seattle home, there were many different—and often competing—interests and perspectives. Yet there was one goal in common: to make Seattle the best city for living, working, and raising families. This Plan encourages continued broad public participation in decisions that affect all aspects of the city.

**Economic Opportunity and Security.** Seattle recovered from the great recession and grew beyond 2008’s high employment levels, and by 2014 the city contained 514,700 jobs. Boeing and Amazon have been major contributors to that employment growth, but other, smaller businesses have also provided new jobs.

For businesses to thrive, they need skilled employees and space to grow. For specific examples of how this Plan addresses economic opportunity, look in the Growth Strategy and Land Use elements. These elements include policies that identify locations for employment



growth and give ideas for how to direct growth there. The Economic Development element encourages businesses to put down roots and expand, while the Community Well-Being element talks about helping people get the kind of education and skills they will need to fill the newly created jobs.

Sometimes, just having a job isn't enough. Even when employed, many people may not be able to afford to live in the city. Through this Plan, the City demonstrates its commitment to promoting livable wages and giving people equal opportunities. The City has also developed programs to help address continuing racial disparities in education and employment.



Photo © John Skelton

## Sustainability

The Plan has been guided by the principle of sustainability. One definition of *sustainable development* is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This Plan presents ways to sustain the natural environment by directing more urban growth into Seattle in order to preserve forests and farmlands outside the city. The concept of sustainability also applies to the urban environment, where the City uses its funds efficiently by limiting the number of places

where it encourages significant growth. This principle is still an important guide to how the Plan is written and how it will be implemented.

## Washington's Growth Management Act

The state **Growth Management Act** (GMA), enacted in 1990, requires counties and larger cities to create comprehensive plans and update those plans regularly. The GMA's goals include reducing sprawl and directing growth to areas that already have water, sewer, transportation, and other urban services. The GMA calls on each county to draw what is called an urban-growth boundary. Urban-style development is not allowed outside that boundary. 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 GMA requires that plans be consistent with other plans in the region. In this region, other plans include Vision 2040 and the King County **Countywide Planning Policies**.

## Vision 2040

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the regional growth management, transportation, and economic development organization covering King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties. It is governed by elected officials from across the region. Together these officials have created a regional growth strategy called **Vision 2040**, which recommends that new jobs and residents should be directed to designated centers connected with **high-capacity transit**. Seattle's Plan identifies six regional growth centers and two **manufacturing/industrial centers** that are recognized in the regional plan. Consistent with the regional growth strategy, the Plan contains housing- and job-growth targets for each of those centers. Vision 2040 also assumes a distribution of growth across the Puget Sound region, with especially large shares of growth going to the five metropolitan cities—Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, Tacoma, and Bremerton. This Plan reflects Seattle's commitment to accommodate its share of growth as the metropolitan city at the heart of the region.

The PSRC often describes Vision 2040 as enhancing people, the planet, and prosperity. This Plan addresses those same aspects of growth through policies that renew the emphasis on race and social equity, draw growth to areas of the city where public facilities exist, set rules for protecting **environmentally critical areas**, promote nonautomobile travel, attract diverse job growth, focus on education and job training to help people participate in the region's economy, and provide affordable housing through a number of local tools.

The PSRC brought together representatives from local governments and the private sector to develop guidelines for how to plan for areas around light rail stations. The result was the Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact, a regional agreement that proposed ways to make sure that everyone, including lower-income people and communities of color, would benefit from the new transit system and other improvements that occur around it.

## King County Countywide Planning Policies

In King County, the Growth Management Planning Council is made up of elected officials representing all the jurisdictions. They have worked together to develop the **Countywide Planning Policies** (CPPs), which provide guidance for the comprehensive plans that the cities in King County must adopt. The CPPs contain twenty-year housing- and job-growth targets for each jurisdiction. Those targets are what this Plan is designed to address. The CPPs also address the need for affordable housing in the county, for local action to address climate change, and for growing in ways that will create **healthy communities**.

## Seattle's Urban Village Strategy

The foundation of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is the urban village strategy. It is the City's unique approach to meeting the state GMA requirement, and it is similar to Vision 2040's growth centers approach. This strategy encourages most future job and housing growth to occur in specific areas in the city that are best able to absorb and capitalize on that growth. These are also the best places for efficiently providing essential public services and making amenities available to residents. These areas include designated **urban centers**, such as Downtown and the five others (First Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, Uptown, University District, and Northgate) recognized in the regional plan. In addition, this Plan designates twenty-four urban villages throughout the city. Both urban centers and urban villages are places that already have active business districts and concentrations of housing. The urban village strategy

- *accommodates Seattle's expected growth in an orderly and predictable way;*
- *strengthens existing business districts;*
- *promotes the most efficient use of public investments, now and in the future;*
- *encourages more walking, bicycling, and transit use; and*
- *retains the character of less dense residential neighborhoods outside of urban villages.*

By encouraging both business and housing growth in the urban centers and urban villages, the Plan makes it possible for more people to live near job opportunities and near services that can meet their everyday needs. In this way, more people are able to walk or bike to some of their daily activities, leading to more activity on the sidewalks and fewer vehicles on the streets, and making these communities more vibrant. The urban village strategy also puts more people near transit service so that they can more easily use buses or light rail to get to other job centers, shopping, or entertainment. This access is useful for all residents, but particularly those with limited incomes or physical limitations that make them reliant on public transit.



**L** Photo © Mackenzie M, Youth in Focus student. **R** Photo © John Skelton

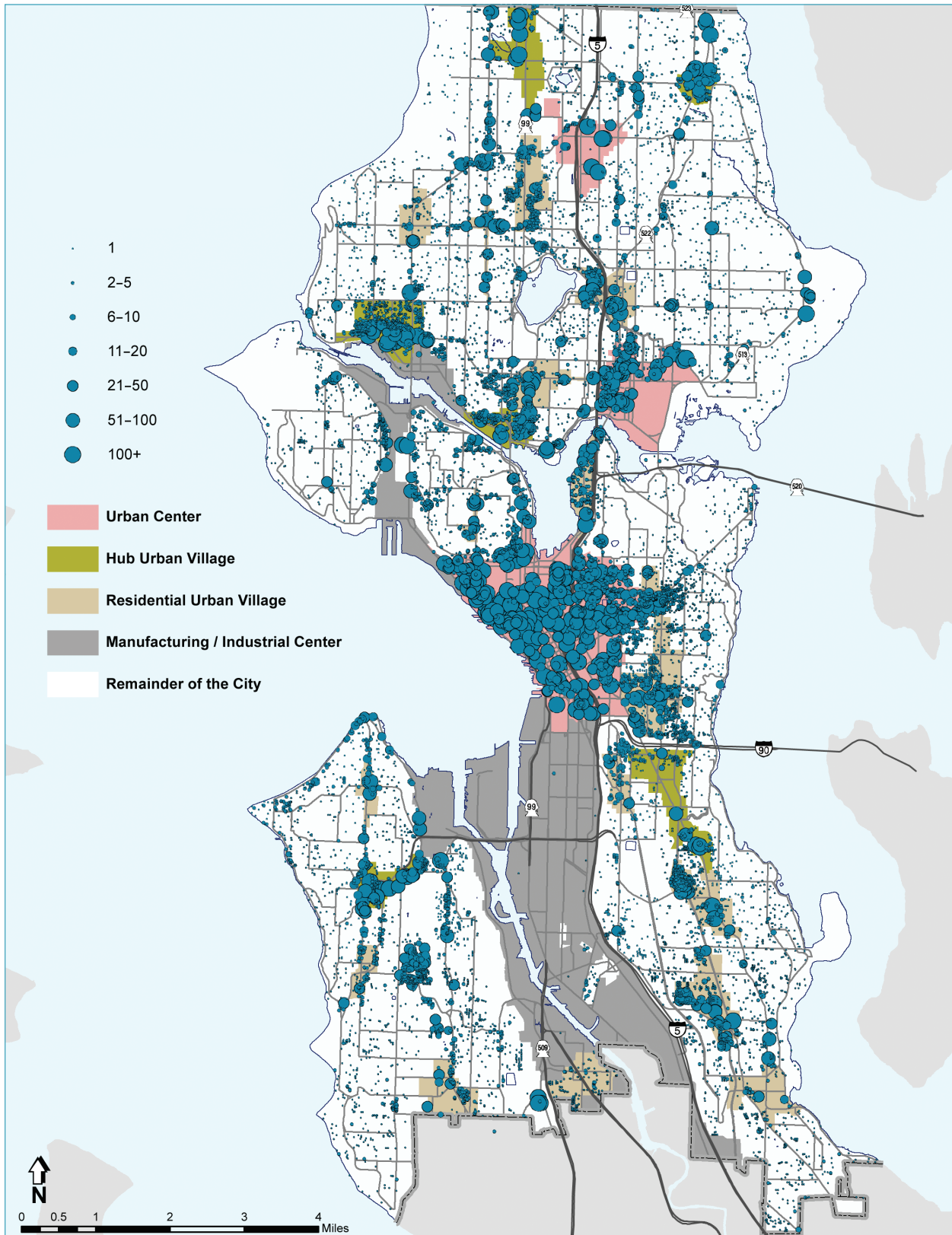
The urban village strategy puts into practice the regional growth center concept called for in regional plans, but at a more local scale. In addition to the regionally recognized urban centers, the Plan identifies two categories of urban villages, each intended to combine housing with employment opportunities, shops, and services, all in compact environments that encourage walking. The Plan identifies six **hub urban villages** where a fair amount of housing and employment growth should occur, though at lower densities than in the centers. It also identifies eighteen **residential urban villages** scattered around the city where modest housing growth should occur near retailers and services that mainly serve the nearby population.

All of the urban centers and villages identified in the Plan function the way the regional plans anticipate: as compact, pedestrian-friendly areas that offer different mixes of office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses, but at scales that respect Seattle's character and **development pattern**.

The urban village strategy has been successful in achieving its purposes over the twenty-some years it has been in place. During that time, over 75 percent of the city's new housing and new jobs were located inside the urban centers and villages that together make up only about 17 percent of the city's total land area. **(See the map on the following page.)** More than half of the housing growth occurred in the six urban centers.

More of the urban villages are thriving now than in 1994, when the strategy was first adopted. Columbia City, Ballard, and Madison/Miller are just a few of the neighborhoods where

## Housing Units Built 1995–2014



added residents and new businesses have meant more people out on the sidewalks, enjoying their communities and raising the overall vitality of each area. The villages continue to provide new services and goods for residents in nearby areas, and this means that community members have less distance to travel to get what they need and want. However, the long-sought prosperity in these communities has sometimes come at the cost of changing the character of the neighborhoods and forcing some former residents and businesses to leave. Those who left were often lower-income households, whose housing was replaced by more expensive new buildings or who could not afford the rising rents brought on by the neighborhood changes. In defining the future success of the urban village strategy, the City will try to plan ways for the urban villages to include opportunities for **marginalized populations** to remain in the city and to access education and affordable housing.

In many of the urban villages, ridership on King County Metro buses has outpaced the population growth, and several of these villages have benefited from the light rail service that first opened in 2009, providing another option for traveling without a car.

Of course, urban villages are more than just the fulfillment of the regional growth strategy; they are neighborhoods where Seattle residents live, work, learn, shop, play, and socialize. After initial adoption of the Plan, the City engaged in a citywide neighborhood-planning effort that produced a **neighborhood plan** for each area of the city containing an urban center or urban village. Those neighborhood plans found some common themes for improvement among the different communities and also highlighted some needs that were unique to each of those neighborhoods. To address the common themes, voters approved funding for libraries, **open spaces**, community centers, and transit. Since the neighborhood plans were first adopted, the City has worked with communities to refine more than half of those plans and help take action to accomplish the goals that each community prioritized.

## Seattle 2035

Forecasts suggest that over the next twenty years, Seattle will need to accommodate 70,000 additional housing units, 120,000 more residents, and 115,000 additional jobs. This updated version of the Plan builds on the success of the urban village strategy to encourage that growth to occur in a manner that works for all of the city's people. Most urban centers and villages have continued to grow rapidly during the recent building boom, and current zoning allows them to handle even more growth. The City expects that between now and 2035, most housing and employment growth will occur in those urban centers and villages.

In addition, light rail service in Seattle now provides certain areas of the city with more frequent and reliable transit connections to a greater number of locations. Light rail already connects the University of Washington, Capitol Hill, Downtown, Southeast Seattle neighborhoods, and the airport. By 2021 it will reach Roosevelt and Northgate, and by 2023, it will

stretch to Lynnwood and the Eastside. By 2035, there could be even more light rail lines in the city.

In 2014, voters in Seattle approved a levy that funds additional Metro bus service in the city. This increased transit service represents major investments and commitment to many Seattle neighborhoods, and is an opportunity that Seattle should not waste. To leverage this investment to the fullest extent, the Plan calls for focusing more growth in areas within a ten-minute walk of light rail stations and in locations with very good bus service.

As mentioned above, the City has committed to be carbon neutral by the year 2050. This Plan spans a critical time for the City in meeting that goal, and it provides some of the direction necessary to assist the City in achieving it.

## **Who We Are Planning For**

This Plan is for the people who live in, work in, and visit Seattle today. It is also for those who will make up the community of Seattle in the future—not only our children but also the newcomers who will arrive for education or job opportunities and who will value the urban and natural features of Seattle as much as we do.

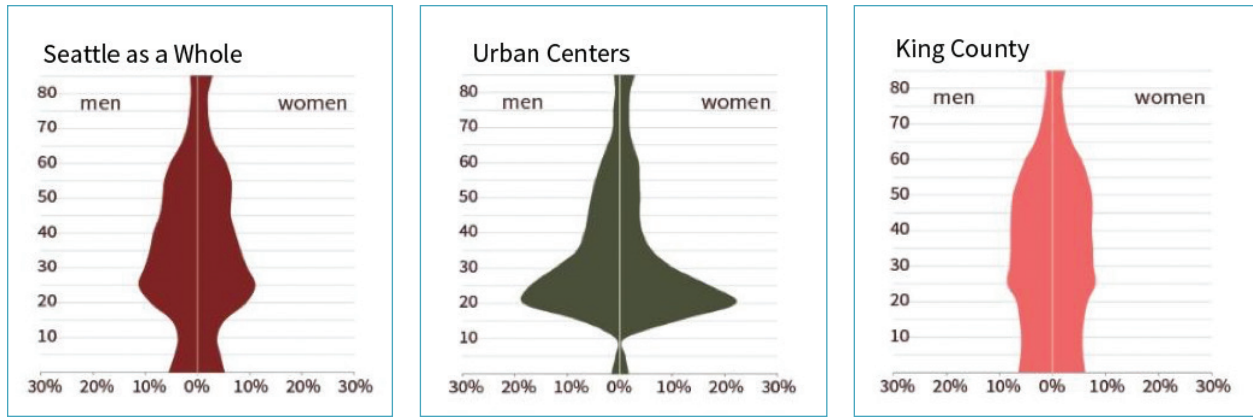
While we have an idea of how many new housing units and jobs the City should expect over the next twenty years, it is harder to know more specific information about the ages, incomes, and family structures of those future residents and workers, and to get a real picture of who our new neighbors might be.

The US Census and other sources give us a good description of the city's current population and information about recent trends that help offer a general picture of the future population.

Seattle's population in 2016 is estimated to be 686,800, and growth over the next twenty years will add about 120,000 people to that total. Seattle's population is younger than the population in the surrounding region, with a higher percentage of twenty-somethings in the city than in King County as a whole. However, Seattle has a much lower percentage of people below the age of eighteen than does the rest of King County. In fact, Seattle's percentage of households containing children is one of the lowest among large cities in the United States. The age differences in Seattle households are even more dramatic in urban centers.

The average number of people living in a household in Seattle (2.06) is also lower than in King County (2.39). Seattle's household size has been decreasing since the 1960s, but the rate of that decrease has slowed in the past twenty years. Household size could continue to decline slowly in the future.

Just as Seattle's current population is younger than that of the surrounding areas, Seattle's older population is growing at a slower rate than that of other parts of King County. Still, in the future, we can expect that there will be more seniors living in the city than there are today, as the baby boom generation ages.



2010 percentages of population by age and gender

Seattle is becoming more racially and culturally diverse. 2014 estimates from the American Community Survey indicate that almost a fifth of Seattle residents were born in another country and that close to a quarter of residents speak a language other than English at home. The Seattle school district reports that among all of its students, 120 languages are spoken. The growing diversity in the city's population poses new challenges for City departments and other institutions as they strive to meet the needs of all residents. It also provides an opportunity to benefit from the cultures and skills of the people who make up these groups.

This Plan provides policy direction for locating new housing units and encourages a variety of housing types that can help meet the needs of diverse households who may be looking for studios, larger apartments, town houses, highrise apartments, or detached houses. By planning for more transportation choices, including bicycles and transit, the Plan will shape a city attractive to many potential future residents. This can include today's twenty-somethings who choose to remain in the city as they begin to have families, aging residents hoping to grow old in the place they've called home, and those who rely on transit for getting around. At the same time, the Plan's policies can make the city attractive to those critical businesses that provide jobs and services for Seattle residents.

## Defining and Measuring Success

This Plan specifically covers the next twenty years of growth in Seattle, but the city is expected to continue growing beyond that time period. There will always be ways the city can improve to meet changing needs and to address ongoing concerns. Because of the changing nature of our region and our city, the success of this Plan is not measured by an ideal



end state. Instead, success is measured by whether we are moving in the directions the Plan lays out.

The Plan covers many topics in several chapters, and monitoring progress on every one of those topics would be a time-consuming and demanding task. To simplify the monitoring process, the City has identified several indicators that will provide insights about progress on key issues addressed by the Plan. The City will collect baseline data and track these indicators over time. Indicators will be tracked for the city as a whole and for each urban village as feasible to help assess progress in implementing the Growth Strategy. The City will report regularly on changes in these indicators to help the public and elected officials judge the effectiveness of the Plan and the City's actions to implement it. These indicators include:

- *the number of new housing units;*
- *the number of demolished housing units;*
- *the number of jobs;*
- *the number of income- and rent-restricted affordable housing units;*
- *access to frequent transit service;*
- *presence of sidewalks;*
- *the number of households with access to open space;*
- *City infrastructure investment; and*
- *housing costs.*

In addition to monitoring the items listed above, the City will use other indicators to help gauge how well it is doing in making the city a more **equitable** place. This set of indicators will help show where in the city marginalized populations are at higher risk of being displaced by development; it will also include measures of housing affordability and other long term equitable development outcomes.

Demographics, including age, race and ethnicity, and household composition will be reported as part of these monitoring efforts, and information on household income levels will be included along with the equitable development indicators.

## **Developing and Updating This Plan**

Seattle first adopted this Comprehensive Plan in 1994 after a multiyear effort during which residents throughout the city considered ways to shape the future of the city and to accommodate expected growth. Advisory committees, as well as public meetings and events, helped validate the urban village strategy.

The process that produced this current version of the Plan also involved much consultation with the public through a variety of meetings, events, and online conversations.

The GMA limits the City to amending the Plan only once each year, with exceptions for certain types of amendments that can be considered at any time, such as adoption of a new neighborhood plan or incorporation of the Shoreline Master Program. Since the Plan was first adopted, the City has amended it every year through a regular process that is defined in a City Council resolution. State law requires that the City review and update the Plan every eight years.

## Application and Implementation of the Plan

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. Community members and officials from all levels of government can look to these policies when planning for growth. The City will use the Plan to help make decisions about proposed ordinances, capital budgets, policies, and programs. Although the City will use the Plan to direct the development of regulations that govern land use and development, it will not use the Plan to review applications for specific development projects, except when an applicable development regulation expressly requires reference to this Comprehensive Plan.

Each element of this Plan generally presents goals followed by policies related to those goals and may also include a discussion about the **goals** and **policies**. Some chapters also have appendices. Each of these components is defined as follows.

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

Some policies use the words *shall*, *should*, *ensure*, *encourage*, and so forth. In general, such words describe the emphasis that the policy places on the action but do not necessarily establish a specific legal duty to perform a particular act, to undertake a program or project, or to achieve a specific result.

Some policies may appear to conflict with each other, particularly in the context of a specific situation or when viewed from the perspectives of people whose interests may conflict with a given policy. A classic example is the often-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 applying these policies that the interests are reconciled and balanced by the legislative and executive branches of City government.

In the event that a conflict arises between another City policy and this Plan, the Plan will generally prevail.

**Discussions** are 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; rather, they are intended to help explain or interpret policies.

**Appendices** to the Plan contain certain maps, inventories, and other information required by the GMA, and, in some cases, provide 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 these programs be continued, and detailed estimates of how the City may expect to achieve certain goals do not establish additional goals or requirements.

## Implementing the Plan

The City carries the Plan forward through development regulations, functional plans, and investments. For instance, the City’s **Land Use Code** is a compilation of development regulations that guide how land in the city can be used. The Land Use element of this Plan provides the general direction for regulations that appear in the Land Use Code. Similarly, the Transportation element of this Plan provides direction for the Bicycle Master Plan and Transit Master Plan, which help implement the Plan’s transportation policies. The illustration on the next page shows the relationship among various City plans, this Plan, and regional plans.

While the City adopts regulations and plans for the various functions it performs, the private sector and other government agencies also help shape the city in significant ways. For example, the private sector builds most of the new housing and commercial space in the city, King County provides bus service, Sound Transit builds and provides light rail service, the school district builds and operates schools, the Port of Seattle operates shipping terminals that bring international trade to the city and the region, and the Washington State Department of Transportation builds and maintains state highways in the city. The City partners with these agencies to help them make decisions that best serve the City’s goals.

Implementation of this Plan is therefore a broadly shared effort that relies on the continued involvement of many individuals and institutions in the city and the region.

**Growth Management Act**  
 Statewide Goals/Policies  
 Guidance for Citywide Comprehensive Plans



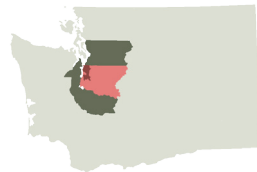
**PSRC Vision 2040**  
 Regional Growth Goals  
 Regional Framework for Local Decisions  
 Multi-County Planning Policies



**King County Planning Policies**  
 Countywide Goals/Policies  
 Countywide Growth Management



**Seattle Comprehensive Plan**  
 Citywide Goals/Policies  
 Neighborhood Goals/Policies  
 Six-Year Capital Investment Plan



**Implementation Tools**

**Examples of Implementing Plans**

- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Transit Master Plan
- Freight Master Plan
- Move Seattle Action Plan
- Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development
- Parks Legacy Plan
- SPU Stormwater Management Plan
- SPU Solid Waste Plan
- City Light Strategic Plan
- My Library Strategic Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Disaster Recovery Framework

**Examples of Codes & Rules in Seattle Municipal Code**

- Land Use Code
- Stormwater Code
- Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code
- Historic Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Street and Sidewalk Use
- Parks and Recreation

**Examples of Programs & Initiatives**

- Move Seattle Levy
- Housing Levy
- Seattle Park District
- Seattle Homeowner Stabilization Program
- Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Credit Program
- Neighborhood Matching Fund
- City Light Appliance Rebate Program
- Public Art Program
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Program
- Fire and Emergency Response Levy
- Food Action Plan

# Growth Strategy



## Introduction

Seattle's strategy for accommodating future growth and creating a sustainable and **equitable** city builds on the foundation of its many diverse **neighborhoods** and aims to create a better city by providing

- *a variety of housing options,*
- *locations for employment growth,*
- *walkable communities with good transit access,*
- *services and the infrastructure needed to support growth,*
- *respect for the natural environment and enhancements to the city's cultural resources,*  
*and*
- *growth that enables all residents to participate fully in the city's economy and civic life.*

This Plan envisions a city where growth builds stronger communities, heightens our **stewardship** of the environment, leads to enhanced economic opportunity and security for all residents, and is accompanied by greater race and **social equity** across Seattle’s communities.

This element of the Plan describes how the City goes about planning for growth and how it involves others in that planning. It also describes the City’s urban village strategy—the idea that most of Seattle’s growth should occur in the **urban centers, urban villages, and manufacturing/industrial centers**. This element also presents policies about urban design that describe how decisions about the location of growth should interact with the natural and built environments.

Other elements of this Plan describe mechanisms the City will use to achieve the growth vision. For example, the **Land Use element** describes how zoning and **development regulations** will control the location and sizes of new buildings in ways that help carry out the urban village strategy, the **Transportation element** describes the systems the City will provide to enable people and goods to move around the city, and the **Housing element** includes policies that will guide the types of housing the City will aim for and the tools the City will use to make it possible for people who work in the city to live here as well.

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of people of color grew more quickly than the total population in Seattle as a whole and within most urban villages. However, in some urban villages the pattern has been different. For example, the historically African-American and Asian-American communities at 23rd and Union/Jackson, North Beacon Hill, and Columbia City saw substantial decreases in their populations of color.

Changes in Population 2000 to 2010

	Change in Total Pop.	Change in Pop. of Color	% Change in Total Pop.	% Change in Pop. of Color
<b>Seattle total</b>	<b>45,286</b>	<b>24,240</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>
Inside urban villages	30,544	15,883	17.1%	22.9%
Outside urban villages	14,742	8,357	3.8%	7.5%

## Urban Village Strategy

### Discussion

The urban village strategy is Seattle’s growth strategy. This strategy concentrates most of the city’s expected future growth in urban centers and urban villages. Most of these areas have been the commercial centers serving their local communities or even the larger city and region for decades. They are the places best equipped to absorb more housing and businesses and to provide the services that new residents and employees will need.

Urban centers and villages are almost like small cities within Seattle. They are complete and compact neighborhoods. Increasing residential and employment opportunities in urban centers and villages makes transit and other public services convenient for more people. It also makes providing these key services more efficient. This can be a benefit to transit-dependent populations and to those who rely on other community services. At the same time, locating more residents, jobs, stores, and services near each other will reduce people's reliance on cars, limit traffic congestion, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

The urban village strategy takes the unique character of the city's neighborhoods into account when planning for future growth. The places selected for absorbing the most growth come in various shapes and sizes, and they will serve somewhat different purposes. The following descriptions define the roles that four different types of areas will play in the city's future:

**Urban centers** are the densest Seattle neighborhoods. They act as both regional centers and local neighborhoods that offer a diverse mix of uses, housing, and employment opportunities.

**Hub urban villages** are communities that offer a balance of housing and employment but are generally less dense than urban centers. These areas provide a mix of goods, services, and employment for their residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Residential urban villages** are areas of residential development, generally at lower densities than urban centers or **hub urban villages**. While they are also sources of goods and services for residents and surrounding communities, for the most part they do not offer many employment opportunities.

**Manufacturing/industrial centers** are home to the city's thriving industrial businesses. Like urban centers, they are important regional resources for retaining and attracting jobs and for maintaining a diversified economy.

The City intends for each of these areas to see more growth and change over time than other commercial locations or primarily residential areas, and together they will accommodate the majority of the city's expansion during this Plan's life span. The City will continue to work with its residents, businesses, and institutions citywide to promote conditions that will help each of its communities thrive, but it will pay special attention to the urban centers and villages where the majority of the new housing and jobs is expected. The policies in this Plan provide direction for that change and growth.

Because the City expects to concentrate public facilities, services, and transit in urban centers and urban villages, it must ensure that there are opportunities for all households to find housing and employment in those places, regardless of income level, family size, or race.



In addition to designating urban centers and villages and defining the desired conditions in these locations, the Plan addresses conditions in other areas, including large areas of **single-family** development, smaller areas of **multifamily** and **commercial** uses, and a few small industrial areas. These areas will also experience some growth, although generally in less dense patterns than the urban villages because these areas tend to lack some of the **infrastructure** needed for more dense development and some of these areas are not within easy walking distance of services.

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## GOAL

- GS G1** Keep Seattle as a city of unique, vibrant, and livable urban neighborhoods, with concentrations of development where all residents can have access to employment, transit, and retail services that can meet their daily needs.

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## POLICIES

- GS 1.1** Designate places as urban centers, urban villages, or manufacturing/industrial centers based on the functions they can perform and the densities they can support.
- GS 1.2** Encourage investments and activities in urban centers and urban villages that will enable those areas to flourish as compact **mixed-use** neighborhoods designed to accommodate the majority of the city's new jobs and housing.
- GS 1.3** Establish boundaries for urban centers, urban villages, and manufacturing/industrial centers that reflect existing **development patterns**; potential access to services, including transit; intended **community** characteristics; and recognized neighborhood areas.
- GS 1.4** Coordinate planning for transportation, utilities, parks and recreation, libraries, and other public services to meet the anticipated growth and increased **density** in urban centers and villages.
- GS 1.5** Encourage **infill development** in underused sites, particularly in urban centers and villages.
- GS 1.6** Plan for development in urban centers and urban villages in ways that will provide all Seattle households, particularly marginalized populations, with better access to services, transit, and educational and employment opportunities.
- GS 1.7** Promote levels of density, mixed-uses, and transit improvements in urban centers and villages that will support walking, biking, and use of public transportation.
- GS 1.8** Use zoning and other planning tools to shape the amount and pace of growth in ways that will limit displacement of marginalized populations, and that will accommodate and preserve community services, and culturally relevant institutions and businesses.
- GS 1.9** Distribute public investments to address current inequities, recognizing the need to also serve growing communities.

**GS 1.10** Establish urban centers and urban villages using the guidelines described in Growth Strategy Figure 1.

**Growth Strategy Figure 1**  
Urban Center and Urban Village Guidelines

Characteristic	Urban Centers*	Hub Urban Villages	Residential Urban Villages
Land Area	Up to 1.5 square miles (960 acres)	At least 20 contiguous acres of land currently zoned to accommodate commercial or mixed-use activities	At least 10 acres of commercial zoning within a radius of 2,000 feet
Access	<p>Within 0.5 miles of the existing or planned <b>high-capacity transit</b> station</p> <p>Existing or planned connections to surrounding neighborhoods by bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks</p>	<p>Transit service with a frequency of 15 minutes or less during peak hours and 30 minutes or less during off-peak hours, with direct access to at least one urban center</p> <p>Connected to neighboring areas and nearby public amenities by existing or planned bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks</p>	<p>Transit service with a frequency of 15 minutes or less during peak hours and 30 minutes or less during off-peak hours, with direct access to at least one urban center</p> <p>Connected to neighboring areas and nearby public amenities by existing or planned bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks</p>
Zoning and Use	Zoning that allows for a diverse mix of commercial and residential activities	Zoning that allows a range of uses, including a variety of housing types as well as commercial and retail services serving a local, citywide, or regional market, generally at a lower scale than in urban centers	Zoning that emphasizes residential uses while allowing for commercial and retail services for the village and surrounding area, generally at a lower scale than in hub urban villages
Growth Accommodation	<p>Zoning that permits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a minimum of 15,000 jobs within 0.5 miles of a high-capacity transit station</li> <li>an overall employment density of 50 jobs per acre, and</li> <li>an overall residential density of 15 households per acre</li> </ul>	<p>Zoning that permits at least</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 dwelling units per gross acre</li> <li>25 jobs per gross acre</li> <li>2,500 total jobs, and</li> <li>3,500 dwelling units</li> </ul>	Zoning that permits at least 12 dwelling units per gross acre

\*The urban center description was taken from King County Countywide Planning Policies.

- GS 1.11** Permit various sizes of urban villages based on local conditions, but limit sizes so that most places in the village are within walking distance from employment and service areas in the village.
- GS 1.12** Include the area that is generally within a ten-minute walk of light rail stations or very good bus service in urban village boundaries, except in manufacturing/ industrial centers.
- GS 1.13** Provide opportunities for marginalized populations to live and work in urban centers and urban villages throughout the city by allowing a variety of housing types and affordable rent levels in these places.
- GS 1.14** Support convenient access to healthful and culturally relevant food for all areas where people live by encouraging grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and community food gardens.
- GS 1.15** Designate areas as manufacturing/industrial centers consistent with the following characteristics and with the **Countywide Planning Policies**:
- Existing zoning that promotes manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses
  - Zoning that discourages uses that pose short- or long-term conflicts with industrial uses, or that threaten to convert significant amounts of industrial land to nonindustrial uses
  - Zoning that strictly limits residential uses and discourages land uses that are not compatible with industrial uses
  - Buffers that protect neighboring, less intensive land uses from the impacts associated with industrial activity (provided by generally maintaining existing buffers, including existing industrial buffer zones)
  - Sufficient zoning capacity to accommodate a minimum of ten thousand jobs
  - Relatively flat terrain allowing for efficient industrial processes
  - Reasonable access to the regional highway, rail, air, and/or waterway systems for transportation of goods
- GS 1.16** Use zoning and other tools to maintain and expand existing industrial activities within the manufacturing/industrial centers.
- GS 1.17** Limit City-owned land in the manufacturing/industrial centers to uses that are compatible with other industrial uses and that are inappropriate in other **zones**, and discourage other public entities from siting nonindustrial uses in manufacturing/ industrial centers.
- GS 1.18** Promote the use of industrial land for industrial purposes.
- GS 1.19** Encourage economic activity and development in Seattle’s industrial areas by supporting the retention and expansion of existing industrial businesses and by providing opportunities for the creation of new businesses consistent with the character of industrial areas.

- GS 1.20** Strive to retain and expand existing manufacturing and industrial activity.
- GS 1.21** Maintain land that is uniquely accessible to water, rail, and regional highways for continued industrial use.

### **Areas Outside Centers and Villages**

- GS 1.22** Support healthy neighborhoods throughout the city so that all residents have access to a range of housing choices, as well as access to parks, **open space**, and services.
- GS 1.23** Allow limited multifamily, commercial, and industrial uses outside of urban villages to support the surrounding area or to maintain the existing character.
- GS 1.24** Plan for uses and densities on hospital and college campuses that are located outside urban centers and villages in ways that recognize the important contributions of these institutions and the generally low-scale development of their surroundings.

## **Distribution of Growth**

### **Discussion**

The City does not completely control where growth will take place. The City adopts zoning that allows certain types of development in particular locations, and the City can make certain places attractive to development by making investments or offering incentives in those places. However, most new development is the result of decisions made by private landowners or developers who choose where they want to build.

Guided by the urban village strategy, the City has adopted zoning that will lead the bulk of Seattle's future growth to take place in areas designated as urban centers and urban villages. The City's vision is that job growth will be concentrated in urban centers—areas that already function as high-density, concentrated employment cores with the most access to the regional transit network. The City will especially focus growth in urban centers and those urban villages that are within easy walking distance of frequent and reliable transit service.

Currently, jobs and households are unevenly distributed across Seattle. For instance, the four adjoining urban centers (Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown) contain almost a fifth of the City's households and nearly half of the city's jobs—on less than 5 percent of the city's land. Downtown alone has about ten times more jobs than housing units. Future growth estimates show that these urban centers will likely continue to be major job centers.

Industrial job growth will continue to take place mostly within the City's two existing and well-established manufacturing/industrial centers. There will also be overall job growth in hub urban villages distributed throughout the city, which will put jobs and services closer to the surrounding residential population.

Urban villages that contain very good transit service are expected to grow more than those without that service. Very good transit means either a light rail station or a RapidRide stop plus at least one other frequent bus route. In May 2015, the City published a Growth and Equity Analysis to analyze impacts on displacement and opportunity related to Seattle's growth strategy. That analysis found that some urban villages that have light rail stations also are at high risk of too much development displacing existing households or small businesses. The City wants these areas to benefit from growth and investment, but we also need to pay attention to how growth can increase the risk of displacing marginalized populations and small businesses. To mitigate the risk, the Plan assigns a growth rate to these urban villages that is the same as for the residential villages that do not meet the definition for very good transit service. As the City monitors urban village growth in the future, the smaller growth rates for these two urban villages will help us examine the potential for displacement. Growth Strategy Figure 4 shows the different categories of urban villages, along with their level of transit service.

More modest growth will occur in various places outside centers and villages, including along arterials where current zoning allows multifamily and commercial uses.

This Plan anticipates that over the next twenty years, Seattle will add 70,000 housing units and 115,000 jobs. These estimates represent the city's share of King County's projected twenty-year growth. Seattle's comprehensive planning to accommodate this expected growth works from the assumption that the estimates for growth citywide, in urban villages and in urban centers are the minimums we should plan for. The city will monitor various aspects of growth over time and respond with adjusted approaches if growth significantly exceeds the estimates.

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## **GOAL**

**GS G2** Accommodate a majority of the city's expected household growth in urban centers and urban villages and a majority of employment growth in urban centers. (Figure 2 shows the estimated amount of growth for each urban center, and Figure 3 shows the estimated growth rate for different categories of urban villages.)

## Growth Strategy Figure 2

Estimated Urban Center Growth 2015–2035

	Housing Units	Jobs
<b>Urban Centers</b>		
Downtown	12,000	35,000
First Hill/Capitol Hill	6,000	3,000
University District	3,500	5,000
Northgate	3,000	6,000
South Lake Union	7,500	15,000
Uptown	3,000	2,500
<b>Manufacturing/Industrial Centers</b>		
Duwamish	0	6,000
Ballard/Interbay	0	3,000

## Growth Strategy Figure 3

Estimated Urban Village Growth Rates

	Expected Housing Growth Rate*	Expected Job Growth Rate*
<b>Hub Urban Villages</b>		
With very good transit service**	60%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ballard</li> <li>West Seattle Junction</li> </ul>		
With high displacement risk, regardless of the level of transit service	40%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bitter Lake Village</li> <li>Mt. Baker (North Rainier)</li> </ul>		
<b>Other Hub Urban Villages</b>	40%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fremont</li> <li>Lake City</li> </ul>		

	Expected Housing Growth Rate*	Expected Job Growth Rate*
<b>Residential Urban Villages</b>		
With very good transit service**	50%	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown Hill</li> <li>• Roosevelt</li> </ul>		
With high displacement risk, regardless of the level of transit service	30%	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23rd &amp; Union-Jackson</li> <li>• Columbia City</li> <li>• North Beacon Hill</li> <li>• Othello</li> <li>• Rainier Beach</li> <li>• South Park</li> <li>• Westwood-Highland Park</li> </ul>		
<b>Other Residential Urban Villages</b>	30%	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admiral</li> <li>• Aurora/Licton Springs</li> <li>• Eastlake</li> <li>• Green Lake</li> <li>• Greenwood-Phinney Ridge</li> <li>• Madison-Miller</li> <li>• Morgan Junction</li> <li>• Upper Queen Anne</li> <li>• Wallingford</li> </ul>		

\*Percentage growth above the actual number of housing units or jobs in 2015, except in urban villages where actual zoning capacity constrains percentage growth to less than shown in the table. No job growth rate is assigned to residential villages.

\*\*Very good transit service means either a light rail station or a RapidRide bus service plus at least one other frequent bus route.

## POLICIES

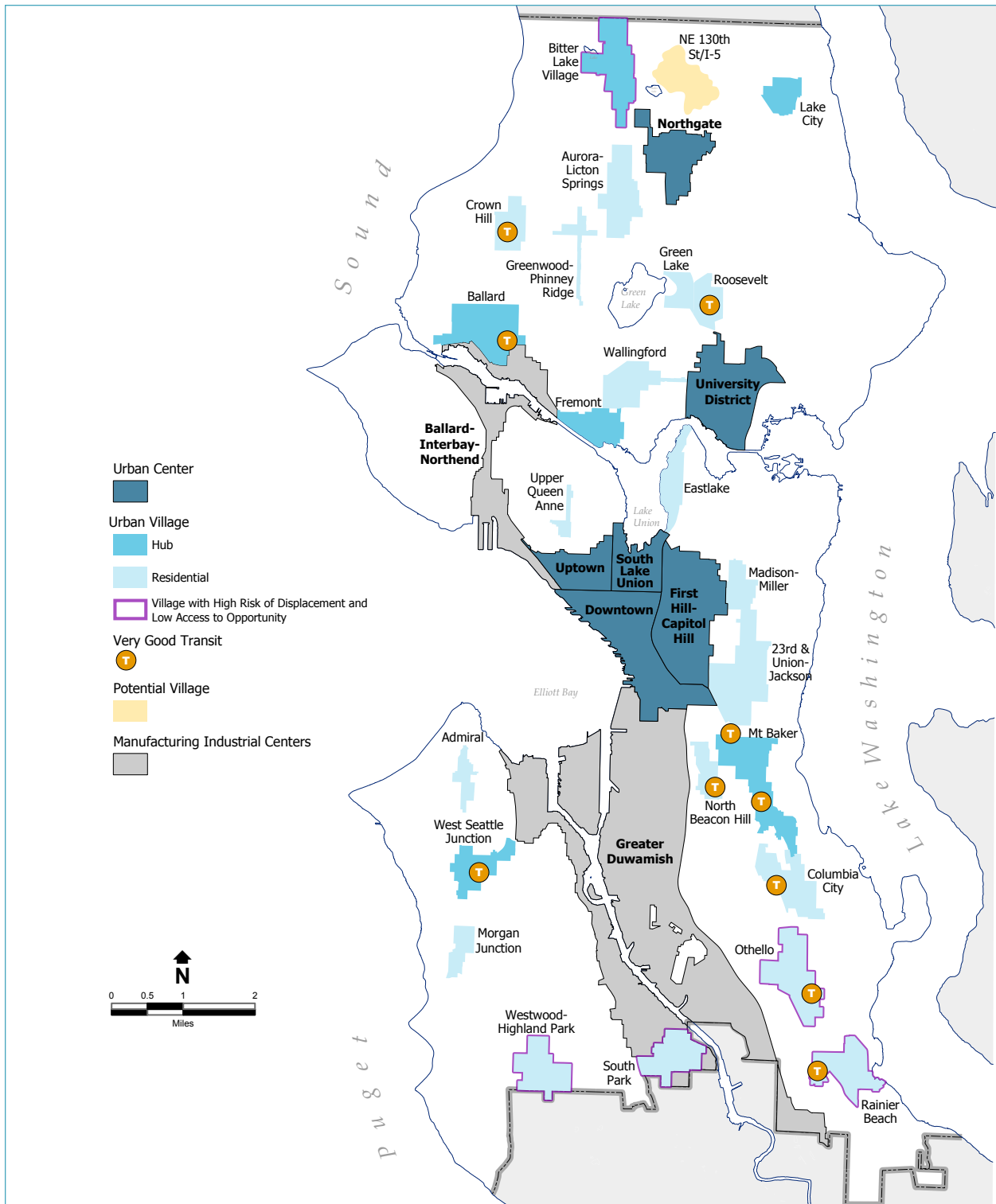
**GS 2.1** Plan for a variety of uses and the highest densities of both housing and employment in Seattle’s urban centers, consistent with their role in the regional growth strategy.

**GS 2.2** Base twenty-year growth estimates for each urban center and manufacturing/ industrial center on the following criteria:

- Citywide targets for housing and job growth adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies
- The role of the center in regional growth management planning
- The most recently adopted subarea plan for the center

## Growth Strategy Figure 4

Urban Centers, Urban Villages, Manufacturing/Industrial Centers





- Level of transit service
- Existing zoning capacity for additional commercial and residential development
- Existing densities
- Current development conditions, recent development trends, and plans for private or public development, such as by **major institutions**
- Plans for infrastructure, public amenities, and services that could attract or support additional growth
- Access to employment for, and potential displacement of, marginalized populations

**GS 2.3** Accommodate a substantial portion of the city’s growth in hub and **residential urban villages**.

**GS 2.4** Work toward a distribution of growth that eliminates racial and social disparities by growing great neighborhoods throughout the city, with equitable access for all and with community stability that reduces the potential for displacement.

**GS 2.5** Adjust urban center growth estimates periodically to reflect the most current **policy** guidance in regional and countywide growth management plans, or reexamine estimates as plans for the city’s urban centers are substantially amended.

**GS 2.6** Work with communities where growth is slower than anticipated to identify barriers to growth and strategies to overcome those barriers.

## Urban Design

### Discussion

As Seattle evolves, thoughtful urban design can help both conserve and enhance the aspects of its physical environment that make it so appealing to residents and visitors alike. These aspects include well-defined and diverse mixed-use neighborhoods; compact, walkable scale; proximity to nature; and attractive parks, streets, and public spaces. In a flourishing city, urban design can help seamlessly integrate the new with the old, producing positive results while limiting the negative impacts of change. The policies in this element concern broad choices the City might make about where and how to develop.

For example, several Seattle neighborhoods are designated as **historic districts** in an effort to preserve their distinctive characters. The way the City builds and maintains major infrastructure, including parks and roads, will continue to define key public spaces and the connections between them.

The urban design policies described here outline the City’s approaches to regulating, building, and maintaining the city, while reflecting its diverse neighborhoods, populations, and natural features. The policies here are separated into three specific areas of focus: Natural Environment, Built Environment, and Public Spaces. More detailed direction for individual projects can be found in the **Land Use Code’s** regulations and in the City’s design guidelines.

The policies in this element are not intended to be used for reviewing individual projects. Rather, the City helps shape projects through zoning regulations and the design review program.

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## GOAL

- GS G3** Maintain and enhance Seattle’s unique character and sense of place, including its natural setting, history, **human-scaled development**, and community identity, as the city grows and changes.

## Natural Environment

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### POLICIES

- GS 3.1** Encourage the preservation, protection, and restoration of Seattle’s distinctive natural features and landforms such as bluffs, beaches, streams, and remaining evergreen forests.
- GS 3.2** Design public facilities to emphasize physical and visual connections to Seattle’s natural surroundings, with special attention to public vistas of shorelines, the Olympic Mountains, and the Cascade Range.
- GS 3.3** Encourage design that recognizes natural systems and integrates ecological functions such as **stormwater** filtration or retention with other infrastructure and development projects.
- GS 3.4** Respect topography, water, and natural systems when siting tall buildings.
- GS 3.5** Provide both physical and visual public access to streams, lakes, and Puget Sound.
- GS 3.6** Extend sustainable landscaping and an urban design approach to typically underdesigned sites such as surface parking lots, rooftops, and freeway edges.
- GS 3.7** Promote the use of native plants for landscaping to emphasize the region’s natural identity and foster environmental health.

## Built Environment

- GS 3.8** Encourage the preservation and expansion of the tree canopy throughout the city for the aesthetic, health and environmental benefits trees provide, considering first the residential and mixed-use areas with the least tree canopy in order to more equitably distribute the benefits to residents.
- GS 3.9** Preserve characteristics that contribute to communities' general identity, such as block and lot patterns and areas of historic, architectural, or social significance.
- GS 3.10** Design public infrastructure and private building developments to help visitors understand the existing block and street patterns and to reinforce the walkability of neighborhoods.
- GS 3.11** Use zoning tools and natural features to ease the transitions from the building intensities of urban villages and commercial arterials to lower-density developments of surrounding areas.
- GS 3.12** Design streets with distinctive identities that are compatible with a citywide system that defines differences between types of streets and that allows for different design treatments to reflect a particular street's function, **right-of-way** width, and adjoining uses.
- GS 3.13** Preserve, strengthen, and, as opportunities permit, reconnect Seattle's street grid as a means to knit together neighborhoods and to connect areas of the city.
- GS 3.14** Design urban villages to be walkable, using approaches such as clear street grids, pedestrian connections between major activity centers, incorporation of public open spaces, and commercial buildings with retail and active uses that flank the sidewalk.
- GS 3.15** Design multifamily zones to be appealing residential communities with high-quality housing and development standards that promote privacy and **livability**, such as appropriately scaled landscaping, street amenities, and, in appropriate locations, limited commercial uses targeted for the local population.
- GS 3.16** Encourage designs for buildings and public spaces that maximize use of natural light and provide protection from inclement weather.
- GS 3.17** Encourage the use of land, rooftops, and other spaces to contribute to urban food production.
- GS 3.18** Use varied building forms and heights to enhance attractive and walkable neighborhoods.
- GS 3.19** Use groupings of tall buildings, instead of lone towers, to enhance overall topography or to define districts.
- GS 3.20** Consider taller building heights in key locations to provide visual focus and define activity centers, such as near light rail stations in urban centers and urban villages.

- GS 3.21** Limit the negative impacts of tall buildings on public views and on sunlight in public streets and parks by defining upper-level building **setbacks** and lot coverage or by using other techniques.
- GS 3.22** Locate tall buildings to respect natural surroundings and key natural features and to minimize obstructing views of these features, such as by having lower building heights near lakes or Puget Sound.
- GS 3.23** Encourage street widths and building heights that are in proportion with each other by reducing setbacks from the street and keeping reasonable sidewalk widths for lower buildings.

## Public Spaces

- GS 3.24** Encourage innovative street design that expands the role of streets as public spaces and that could include use for markets, festivals, or street parks.
- GS 3.25** Promote well-defined outdoor spaces that can easily accommodate potential users and that are well integrated with adjoining buildings and spaces.
- GS 3.26** Design public spaces that consider the nearby physical context and the needs of the community.
- GS 3.27** Use the principles of crime prevention through environmental design for public spaces, where appropriate.

# Annexation

## Discussion

Small areas of unincorporated land lie immediately south of the Seattle city limits. The King County government currently administers services to these areas. However, the state's **Growth Management Act (GMA)** anticipates that all areas within the county's **urban growth boundary** will eventually be part of a city. Figure 5 shows the locations Seattle has identified as potential annexation areas.

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### GOAL

- GS G4** Eliminate pockets of unincorporated land abutting Seattle.

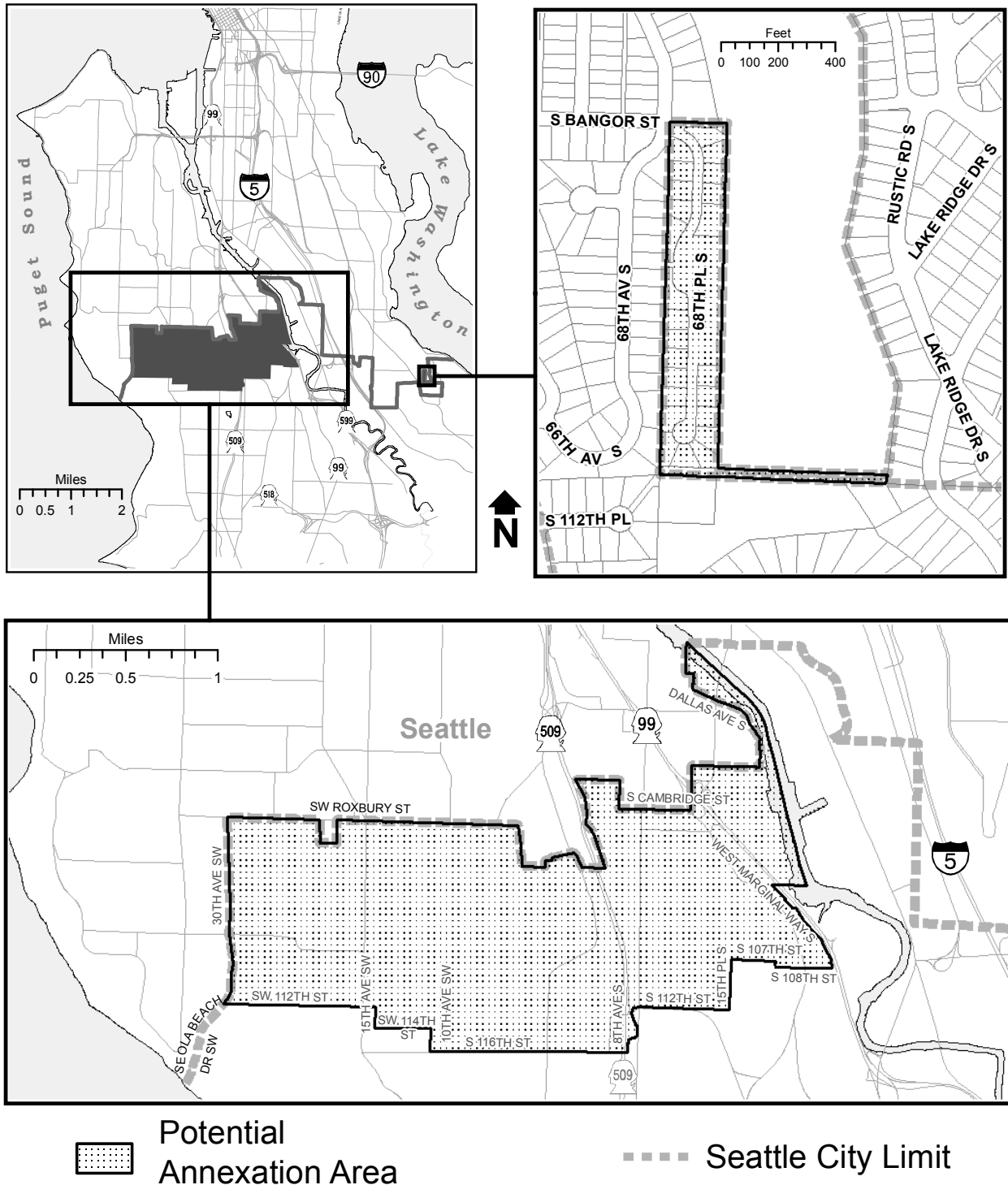
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## **POLICIES**

- GS 4.1** Cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions in order to reach equitable and balanced resolutions about jurisdictional boundaries for the remaining unincorporated areas abutting city limits.
- GS 4.2** Designate unincorporated land for potential annexation where the area has access, or can easily be connected, to City services, and the boundary-change agreements will result in an equitable distribution of revenues and costs, including asset transfer and the development, maintenance, and operation of facilities.
- GS 4.3** Consider annexation requests by the residents of unincorporated areas as a way for the City to meet regional growth management goals.
- GS 4.4** Support annexations of unincorporated areas to surrounding jurisdictions by taking part in public engagement efforts to determine local sentiment and in developing interlocal agreements related to annexations.

# Growth Strategy Figure 5

## Potential Annexation Areas



# Land Use



## Introduction

Land use choices affect how Seattle looks and feels to visitors and how it functions for those who call it home. This Plan's land use policies follow the urban village strategy. They help guide new housing and businesses to the **urban centers** and villages and help design the actual buildings and public spaces. The land use policies also recognize the character of the city's different **neighborhoods**, part of what makes Seattle such an attractive place to live.

Seattle is a “**built city**.” That means we don't have a lot of vacant land where we can put new buildings. It also means that the land use goals and policies need to fit more jobs and housing into our existing communities. To help everyone to share in the benefits of growth, the land use policies steer most new development toward the urban centers and **urban villages** that are accessible by public transit and that have the goods, services, and amenities that people want. And while growth and change bring good things to the city, we don't

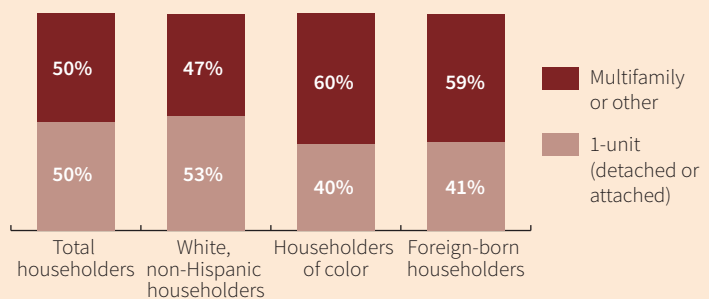
want the Seattle of the future to leave anyone behind. As we grow, we need to provide more housing and other services for the most vulnerable among us.

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 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.

In Seattle, as in other cities, household incomes and the housing options that people can afford tend to vary by race and ethnicity. Roughly half of Seattle's households live in single-unit housing. Household of color are more likely to reside in multifamily housing even though they have more people per household on average. The same is true for households with a foreign-born householder.

### Type of Housing

By Characteristics of Seattle Household



Source: 2011–2013 American Community Survey (ACS), US Census Bureau

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, 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.



## Citywide Land Use Policies

Citywide land use policies guide the content and interpretation of the City's Land Use Code, which contains detailed regulations about where and how activities on the land may be changed. These regulations are applied geographically by zone. Unless a difference is noted, policies in this section apply across all zones.

## The Future Land Use Map and Locations of Zones

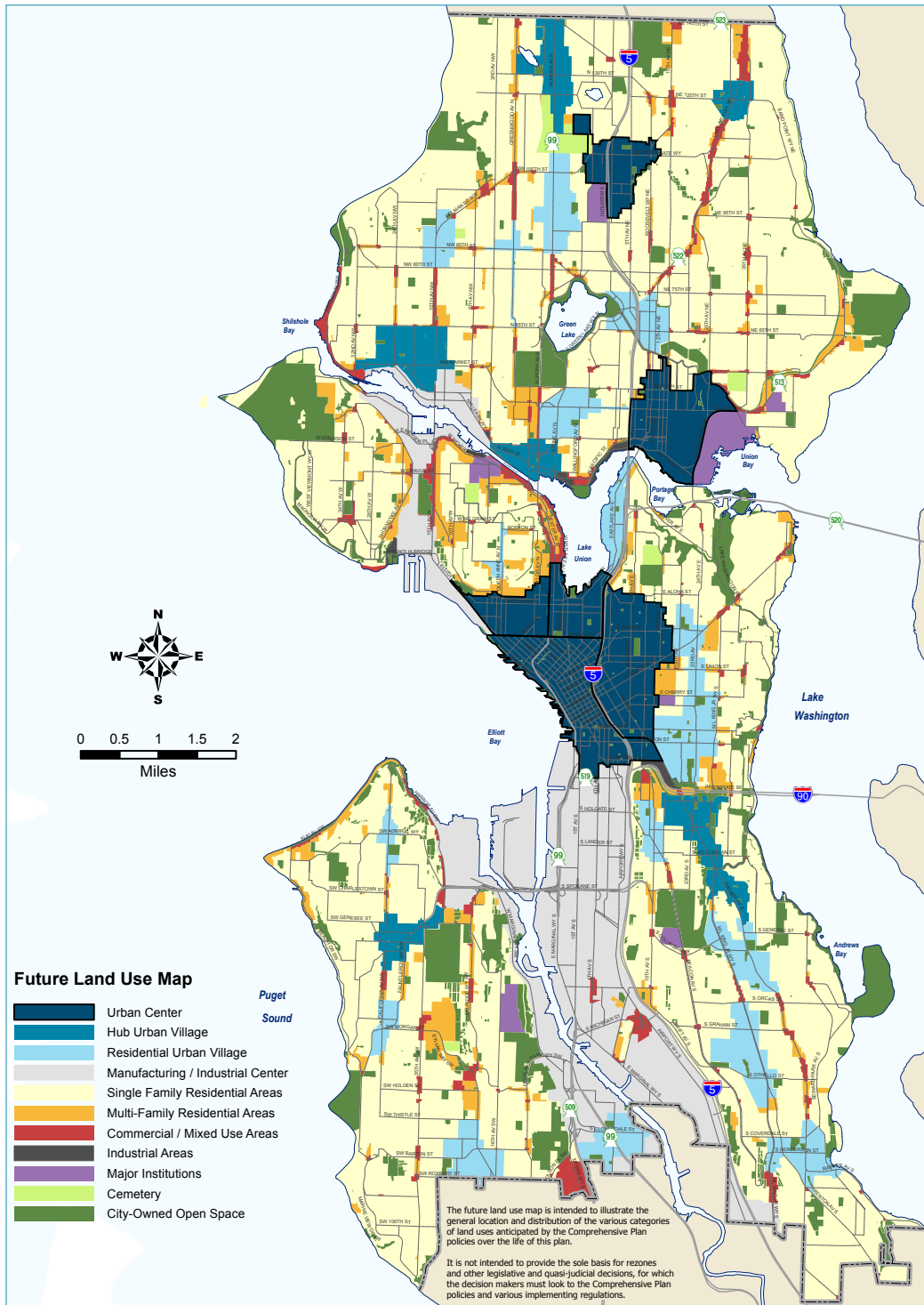
### Discussion

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 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.

As the city's needs and priorities shift, the Future Land Use Map may be changed or formally amended. Some changes, such as adjusting boundaries or moving around specific zones within the same general land use area or urban village, can be made without a formal amendment or change to the map.

Actual zones that are used to regulate new buildings are identified on the City's **Official Land Use Map**. This map is part of the Plan's regulatory structure and can be found in the Land Use Code. Sometimes landowners want to change the type or size of the buildings they can build on their land. Changing the zoning of a particular area or site is a formal process that requires City Council approval. When a landowner applies for a rezone, the City looks to see if the change matches up with the Future Land Use Map, follows the Land Use Code, and fits with the surrounding area and the neighborhood.

# Future Land Use Map



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## GOAL

- LU G1** Achieve a **development pattern** consistent with the urban village strategy, concentrating most new housing and employment in urban centers and villages, while also allowing some **infill development** compatible with the established context in areas outside centers and villages.

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## POLICIES

- LU 1.1** Use the Future Land Use Map to identify where different types of development may occur in support of the urban village strategy.
- LU 1.2** Promote this plan's overall desired land use pattern through appropriate zoning that regulates the mix of uses as well as the size and density of development to focus new residential and commercial development in urban centers and urban villages, and integrate new projects outside of centers and villages into the established development context.
- LU 1.3** Provide for a wide range in the scale and density permitted for multifamily residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects to generally achieve the following overall density and scale characteristics, consistent, at a minimum, with the guidelines in Growth Strategy Figure 1:
- In urban centers, a moderate to high-density and scale of development
  - In hub urban villages, a moderate density and scale of development
  - In residential urban villages, a low to moderate density and scale of development
  - Consider higher densities and scales of development in areas near light rail stations
- LU 1.4** Provide a gradual transition in building height and scale inside urban centers and urban villages where they border lower-scale residential areas.
- LU 1.5** Require Future Land Use Map amendments only when needed to achieve a significant change to the intended function of a large area.
- LU 1.6** Consider and seek to reduce the potential health impacts of air pollution on residential populations and other sensitive uses near corridors with high volumes of vehicle traffic, the King County Airport, major rail yards, freight routes, and point sources of pollution.

# Uses

## Discussion

The City regulates or controls how Seattle land is used through zoning. Each zone comes with a specific set of rules defining what types of uses are allowed in that area. Regulating how we use land in Seattle is important for many reasons. It allows us to plan for new people and businesses that come into the city and to look into the future. It allows goods and services to be located where they are needed most and helps us put jobs and housing in the places that match our vision. Regulations can also help smooth transitions between zones. Zoning helps Seattle remain a city of diverse neighborhoods, each with its own character and special features. Regulating how we use our land also helps us meet the common needs of all Seattleites for jobs, housing, services, and access to amenities and **cultural resources**.

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### GOAL

- LU G2** Provide zoning and accompanying land use regulations that
- allow a variety of housing types to accommodate housing choices for households of all types and **income levels**;
  - support a wide diversity of employment-generating activities to provide jobs for a diverse residential population, as well as a variety of services for residents and businesses; and
  - accommodate the full range of public services, institutions, and amenities needed to support a racially and economically diverse, sustainable urban **community**.

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### POLICIES

- LU 2.1** Allow or prohibit uses in each zone based on the zone's intended function as described in this Land Use element and on the expected impacts of a use on other properties in the zone and the surrounding area. Generally allow a broad mix of compatible uses in the urban centers and urban villages.
- LU 2.2** Include provisions to potentially allow as **conditional uses** those activities that may be beneficial to an area but that also require additional measures to avoid potential impacts those activities could have on sensitive environments or on other permitted uses.
- LU 2.3** Allow residential use outright or as a conditional use in all zones except industrial zones and those shoreline areas where residential uses may conflict with the intended function of the shoreline environment.

- LU 2.4** Limit nonresidential uses in residential zones to those necessary or highly compatible with the function of residential neighborhoods.
- LU 2.5** Allow **nonconforming uses** to be maintained and enhanced, but generally not to be expanded or extended, and encourage them to become more conforming over time.
- LU 2.6** Avoid introducing incompatible land uses adjacent to or within the Airport Influence Area of commercial service airports.
- LU 2.7** Review future legislative rezones to determine if they pose a risk of increasing the **displacement** of residents, especially **marginalized populations**, and the businesses and institutions that serve them.
- LU 2.8** Evaluate new land use regulations to determine if there are potential adverse outcomes that may affect marginalized populations or other groups or individuals unfairly, and seek to avoid or mitigate such potential outcomes.

## Special Uses: Public Facilities and Small Institutions

### Discussion

Throughout Seattle our communities are dotted with facilities that provide needed services to local residents. These include schools, fire and police stations, and other buildings that serve special functions that require them to be different from other buildings in the same zone. For instance, fire stations may need extra room for trucks, and schools need to be much larger than the single-family houses around them. Similar issues sometimes arise with facilities and small institutions not operated by the public sector, such as churches, private schools, and nursing homes.

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#### GOAL

- LU G3** Allow public facilities and small institutions to locate where they are generally compatible with the function, character, and scale of an area, even if some deviation from certain regulations is necessary.

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#### POLICIES

- LU 3.1** Regulate public facilities and small institutions to promote compatibility with other developments in the area.
- LU 3.2** Allow public facilities and small institutions to depart from development standards, if necessary to meet their particular functional requirements, while maintaining general design compatibility with the surrounding area's scale and character. Require public facilities and small institutions to adhere to zoned height limits,

except for spires on religious institutions. Consider providing greater flexibility for schools in recognition of their important role in the community.

- LU 3.3** Allow standards to be modified for required off-street parking associated with public facilities and small institutions based on the expected use and characteristics of the facility and the likely impacts on surrounding parking and development conditions, and on existing and planned transportation facilities in the area.
- LU 3.4** Avoid clusters of public facilities and small institutions in residential areas if such concentrations would create or further aggravate parking shortages, traffic congestion, and noise in the area.
- LU 3.5** Allow nonconforming public facilities and small institutions to expand or make structural changes, provided these alterations comply with the zone's development standards and do not increase the structure's nonconformity.
- LU 3.6** Allow buildings no longer used as schools to be put to other uses not otherwise permitted in the applicable zone. Base decisions about these uses on criteria that are established for each vacant school as the need arises, through a process that includes Seattle Public Schools, the City, and the surrounding neighborhood.

## Special Uses: Telecommunication Facilities

### Discussion

Cell phone service providers and broadcast radio and television stations require equipment that can transmit their signals. This equipment usually must be up high enough that signals can get through. They are also regulated by federal law. AM and FM radio and VHF and UHF television transmission towers are considered major communication utilities. Minor communication facilities are generally smaller and include such things as personal wireless service and cellular communication facilities.

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#### GOAL

- LU G4** Provide opportunities for locating radio and television broadcast utilities (major communications utilities) to support continued and improved service to the public and to address potential impacts to public health.

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#### POLICIES

- LU 4.1** Allow major communications utilities only where impacts of their size and appearance can be offset, and in a way that does not lead to an overall increase in TV and radio towers.
- LU 4.2** Encourage replacing existing antennas with new antennas to achieve lower levels of radio-frequency radiation at ground level.

- LU 4.3** Prohibit new major communication utilities, such as radio and television transmission towers, in single-family and multifamily residential zones and in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use zones, and encourage existing major communication utilities to relocate to nonresidential areas.
- LU 4.4** Require major communication utilities to be developed in ways that limit impacts on nearby areas, including through development standards and design treatments that minimize visual impacts on neighboring properties and provide an overall appearance that is as compatible as possible with the uses permitted in the zone and the desired character of the area.
- LU 4.5** Limit the intrusiveness minor communication utilities could impose on communities by encouraging collocation of facilities and by requiring mitigation of visual and noise impacts.

## General Development Standards

### Discussion

Development standards are the rules that define what type of structure can be built on a property. Standards often include limits on building height, **setbacks** from the sidewalk, how much of the lot can be covered by structures, or the characteristics of the front facade of the building. Development standards help shape the look and feel of Seattle's neighborhoods as they grow. They help new buildings fit in with the character of a neighborhood or may reflect the future vision for a certain area. The standards also help builders care for the environment and take into account the physical limits of certain areas.

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### GOAL

- LU G5** Establish development standards that guide building design to serve each zone's function and produce the scale and character desired, while addressing public health, safety, and welfare.

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### POLICIES

- LU 5.1** Allow for flexibility in development standards so existing structures can be maintained and improved, and new development can better respond to site-specific conditions.
- LU 5.2** Develop and apply appropriate development standards that provide predictability regarding the allowed intensity of development and expected development types for each zone.

- LU 5.3** Control the massing of structures to make them compatible with the area’s planned scale, provide a reasonable ratio of open to occupied space on a site, and allow the building to receive adequate natural light.
- LU 5.4** Use maximum height limits to maintain the desired scale relationship between new structures, existing development, and the street environment; address varied topographic conditions; and limit public view blockage. In certain Downtown zones and in industrial zones, heights for certain types of development uniquely suited to those zones may be unlimited.
- LU 5.5** Provide for residents’ recreational needs on development sites by establishing standards for private or shared amenity areas such as rooftop decks, balconies, ground-level **open spaces**, or enclosed spaces.
- LU 5.6** Establish setbacks in residential areas as needed to allow for adequate light, air, and ground-level open space; help provide privacy; promote compatibility with the existing development pattern; and separate residential uses from more intensive uses.
- 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 residential areas, and to encourage permeable surfaces and vegetation.
- LU 5.8** Establish tree and landscaping requirements that preserve and enhance the City’s physical and aesthetic character and recognize the value of trees and landscaping in addressing **stormwater** management, pollution reduction, heat island mitigation, and other issues.
- LU 5.9** Enhance the visual quality of an area through standards for **screening** and landscaping appropriate to each zone in order to limit the visual impact of new development on the surrounding neighborhood, the streetscape, and development in areas with less intensive zoning.
- LU 5.10** Regulate signage to encourage reasonable identification of businesses and to communicate information of community interest while limiting visual clutter, protecting the public interest, and enhancing the city’s appearance and safety.
- LU 5.11** Establish maximum permitted noise levels that account for both the function of the noise-producing area and the function of areas where the noise may be heard in order to reduce the health hazards and nuisance factors associated with some uses.
- LU 5.12** Identify uses as major noise generators based on the noise associated with certain equipment operations or the nature of a particular activity, and regulate these uses to reduce noise to acceptable levels.
- LU 5.13** Regulate activities that generate air emissions such as dust, smoke, solvent fumes, or odors, in order to maintain and encourage successful commercial and industrial activities while protecting employees, clients, nearby residents, the general public, and the natural environment from the potential impacts.
- LU 5.14** Establish controls on the placement, direction, and maximum height of lighting and on the glare from reflective materials used on the exterior of structures in order to



limit impacts on surrounding uses, enhance the character of the city, and encourage energy conservation.

**LU 5.15** Address view protection through

- zoning that considers views, with special emphasis on shoreline views;
- development standards that help to reduce impacts on views, including height, bulk, scale, and view corridor provisions, as well as design review guidelines; and
- environmental policies that protect specified public views, including views of mountains, major bodies of water, designated landmarks, and the Downtown skyline.

**LU 5.16** Require higher-density development to offset its impacts through mechanisms such as incentives for landmark preservation, open space amenities, **affordable housing** and affordable commercial space.

**LU 5.17** Help preserve active farms in the region through strategies such as offering incentives to developers who transfer development rights from regional farmland to sites in the city.

**LU 5.18** Seek excellence in new development through a design review process that encourages multiple perspectives on design issues and that complements **development regulations**, allowing for flexibility in the application of development standards to achieve quality design that

- enhances the character of the city;
- respects the surrounding neighborhood context, including historic resources;
- enhances and protects the natural environment;
- allows for variety and creativity in building design and site planning;
- furthers community design and development objectives;
- achieves desired intensities of development; and
- responds to the increasingly diverse social and cultural character of the city.

## Off-Street Parking

### Discussion

Parking is found on both public and private property. Since on-street parking can limit the cars, transit, and bicycles using the same space for travel, street parking policies are covered in the **Transportation element**. The Land Use Code regulates off-street parking, spaces often provided as part of private developments. Because the City encourages walking, biking, and transit for moving around town, consistent with the urban village strategy, the City's zoning rules do not require parking in certain areas. In urban centers and those urban villages with reliable transit access, the City instead allows the developers to decide how much parking they need to serve their tenants. In other areas, like Downtown Seattle, the

City may set a limit on private parking to lessen traffic and encourage people to walk, bus, or bike to the area. Where parking is required, we know that the number of spaces, their design, and their location on the property make a big difference. Parking facilities change the size of new developments, what they look like, and what they cost to build. The policies in this section are meant to encourage communities where people can walk to what they need, especially in the urban centers and villages. They also support moving away from car-focused transportation.

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## GOAL

**LU G6** Regulate off-street parking to address parking demand in ways that reduce reliance on automobiles, improve public health and safety, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower construction costs to reduce the cost of housing and increase affordable housing, create attractive and walkable environments, and promote economic development throughout the city.

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## POLICIES

- LU 6.1** Establish parking requirements where appropriate for both **single-occupant vehicles** and their alternatives at levels that further this Plan’s goal to increase the use of public transit, car pools, walking, and bicycles as alternatives to the use of single-occupant vehicles.
- LU 6.2** Modify residential parking regulations, where parking is required, to recognize differences in the likely auto use and ownership of intended occupants of new developments, such as projects provided for low-income, elderly, or residents with disabilities.
- LU 6.3** Rely on market forces to determine the amount of parking provided in areas of the city that are well-served by transit, such as urban centers and urban villages.
- LU 6.4** Consider setting parking maximums in urban centers and urban villages, where high levels of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility make many trips possible without a car.
- LU 6.5** Establish bicycle parking requirements to encourage bicycle ownership and use.
- LU 6.6** Limit the off-street impacts on pedestrians and surrounding areas by restricting the number and size of automobile curb cuts, and by generally requiring alley access to parking when there is an accessible, surfaced alley.
- LU 6.7** Prohibit most street-level parking between buildings and the street in multifamily zones and pedestrian-oriented commercial zones in order to maintain an attractive and safe street-level environment, facilitate the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, minimize adverse impacts on nearby areas and structures, and, where appropriate, maintain or create continuous street fronts.
- LU 6.8** Allow shared off-site parking facilities for more efficient use of parking and to provide the flexibility to develop parking on a site separate from the development site. Ensure that such parking is compatible with the existing or desired character of the area.

- LU 6.9** Require parking in areas with limited transit access and set the requirements to discourage underused parking facilities, even if occasional spillover parking could result.
- LU 6.10** Allow transportation management programs in commercial and multifamily residential areas with access to frequent transit to include measures such as cooperative parking, **shared parking**, shared vehicles, restricted access, car pools, van pools, or transit pass subsidies.
- LU 6.11** Achieve greater parking efficiency by allowing fewer parking spaces per business when several businesses share customer parking, thereby enabling customers to park once and walk to numerous businesses.
- LU 6.12** Locate off-street parking facilities to minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment, especially in areas designated for active pedestrian use.
- LU 6.13** Limit parking in City parks to discourage the use of park land for parking; where there is a demonstrated need for parking, design parking facilities in ways that preserve open space, green space, and trees and other mature vegetation.
- LU 6.14** Prohibit principal-use parking in places where that parking would be incompatible with the area's intended function.
- LU 6.15** Discourage the development of major stand-alone park-and-ride facilities within Seattle. Additions to park-and-ride capacity could be considered
- at the terminus of a major regional transit system,
  - where opportunities exist for shared parking, or
  - where alternatives to automobile use are particularly inadequate or cannot be provided in a cost-effective manner.

## 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 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 Residential Areas

Single-family zones cover much of the city. 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 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.

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### GOAL

- LU G7** Provide opportunities for detached single-family 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.

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### POLICIES

- LU 7.1** Designate as single-family residential areas those portions of the city that are predominantly developed with single-family 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 zones to
- maintain the current low-height and low-bulk character of designated single-family areas;
  - limit development in single-family 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 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 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 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 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 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 residential areas.
- LU 7.8** Use minimum lot size requirements to maintain the character of single-family 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 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 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 zones.

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#### GOAL

- LU G8** Allow a variety of housing types and densities that is suitable for a broad array of households and income levels, and that promotes walking and transit use near employment concentrations, residential services, and amenities.

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#### POLICIES

- LU 8.1** Designate as multifamily residential areas those places that either are predominantly occupied by multifamily development or are within urban centers or urban villages.
- LU 8.2** Maintain a variety of multifamily zoning classifications that allow development at different densities, scales, and configurations and that are well suited to the variety of specific conditions and development goals in diverse areas of the city.
- LU 8.3** Provide housing for Seattleites at all income levels in development that is compatible with the desired **neighborhood character** and that contributes to high-quality, livable urban neighborhoods.
- LU 8.4** Establish evaluation criteria for rezoning land to multifamily designations that support the urban village strategy, create desirable multifamily residential neighborhoods, maintain compatible scale, respect views, enhance the streetscape

and pedestrian environment, and achieve an efficient use of the land without major impact on the natural environment.

- LU 8.5** Allow multifamily areas to be reclassified to compatible pedestrian-friendly commercial/mixed-use areas, when such action is consistent with the urban village strategy or approved in an adopted neighborhood plan.
- LU 8.6** Establish multifamily residential use as the predominant use in multifamily areas and limit the number and type of nonresidential uses to preserve the residential character of these areas, protect these areas from negative impacts of incompatible uses, and maintain development opportunities for residential use.
- LU 8.7** Encourage multifamily developments with units that have direct access to residential amenities, such as ground-level open space, to increase their appeal for families with children.
- LU 8.8** Allow a variety of attached housing types to accommodate a wide diversity of households in multifamily zones.
- LU 8.9** Establish lowrise multifamily zones to accommodate various housing choices in the low- to moderate-density range suitable for a broad array of households and incomes, including walk-up apartments, town houses, row houses, duplexes, triplexes, and cottage housing.
- LU 8.10** Designate lowrise multifamily zones in places where low-scale buildings can provide a gradual transition between single-family zones and more intensive multifamily or commercial areas.
- LU 8.11** Use midrise multifamily zones to provide greater concentrations of housing in urban villages and urban centers.
- LU 8.12** Emphasize residential character in the development standards for midrise multifamily zones and allow for scale and building types that differ from those in less intensive residential areas to accommodate a greater density of development to support nearby businesses.
- LU 8.13** Use highrise multifamily zoning designations only in urban centers, where the mix of activities offers convenient access to regional transit and to a full range of residential services and amenities, as well as to jobs.
- LU 8.14** Ensure that midrise and highrise development balances the desire to accommodate larger-scale, high-density development with the need to maintain **livability** through controls on such impacts as shadows, bulk, open space, and traffic.
- LU 8.15** Permit street-level commercial uses in midrise and highrise neighborhoods to allow residents greater access to services and to promote an active street environment without detracting from the overall residential character desired for high-density neighborhoods.

# Commercial/Mixed-Use Areas

## Discussion

Commercial/mixed-use zones are places meant to provide jobs and services. Most of these zones also allow housing. Since 2005, almost two-thirds of new housing units in the city have been built in these zones. Housing might be built as a stand-alone structure or along with commercial space. Mixed-use areas or projects contain residential and commercial uses. Mixed-use projects often have offices or stores on the ground floor with housing above.

The Land Use Code identifies several different types of commercial zones. These zones provide flexibility to developers and are meant to create communities with a variety of activities. Structures in these zones can be built to different heights depending on where they are located. The general commercial zones tend to be found on major arterials and are more auto-oriented. Neighborhood Commercial and Seattle Mixed zones use development standards that produce more walkable environments and are better for housing development.

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### GOAL

**LU G9** Create and maintain successful commercial/mixed-use areas that provide a focus for the surrounding neighborhood and that encourage new businesses, provide stability and expansion opportunities for existing businesses, and promote neighborhood vitality, while also accommodating residential development in livable environments.

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### POLICIES

- LU 9.1** Prioritize the preservation, improvement, and expansion of existing commercial/mixed-use areas over the creation of new business districts in order to strengthen the existing areas.
- LU 9.2** Encourage the development of compact, concentrated commercial/mixed-use areas, in urban centers and urban villages, where pedestrians can easily access transit and a variety of businesses.
- LU 9.3** Provide a range of commercial-zone classifications to allow different mixes and intensities of activity, varying scales of development, varying degrees of residential or commercial orientation, and varying degrees of pedestrian or auto orientation.
- LU 9.4** Apply development standards that distinguish between pedestrian-oriented commercial zones, which are compatible with and easily accessible from their surrounding neighborhoods, and general commercial zones, which accommodate uses that are more dependent on automobile access.



- LU 9.5** Support a wide range of uses in commercial areas, taking into account the intended pedestrian, automobile, or residential orientation of the area, the area's role in the urban village strategy, and the impacts that the uses could have on surrounding areas.
- LU 9.6** Encourage housing in mixed-use developments in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use areas to provide additional opportunities for residents to live in neighborhoods where they can walk to transit, services, and employment.
- LU 9.7** Apply limits on the size of specific uses in commercial areas when those limits would
- help ensure that the scale of uses is compatible with the character and function of the commercial area;
  - discourage uses likely to attract significant vehicular traffic from locating in **pedestrian-oriented commercial areas**;
  - promote compatible land use and transportation patterns;
  - foster healthy commercial development; or
  - provide opportunities for small local businesses to locate, especially in culturally relevant business districts throughout the city.
- LU 9.8** Limit the creation or expansion of uses that generate high volumes of vehicle traffic by reviewing proposals for such uses in order to control the associated traffic impacts and ensure that the uses are compatible with the character of the commercial area and its surroundings.
- LU 9.9** Limit new drive-in businesses and accessory drive-in facilities in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use areas and in other locations by using development standards that address the potential for traffic impacts, pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, and disruption of an area's business frontage, as well as the overall appearance of the commercial area.
- LU 9.10** Prohibit or limit the location and size of outdoor uses and activities in certain commercial areas, according to the area's function and its proximity to residentially zoned lots, in order to maintain and improve the continuity of the commercial street front, reduce the visual and noise impacts associated with such outdoor activities, and remain compatible with adjacent residential areas.
- LU 9.11** Preserve active streetscapes in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use areas by limiting residential uses along the street frontage of the ground floor and by keeping those spaces available primarily for commercial uses and other uses that help activate the street, in order to strengthen business districts.
- LU 9.12** Allow street-level residential uses outside pedestrian-oriented areas and apply standards that give ground-floor tenants privacy and to create visual interest along the street front.
- LU 9.13** Provide amenity areas for use by residents of housing in commercial/mixed-use areas.

**LU 9.14** Assign height limits to commercial/mixed-use areas independent of the commercial zone designations but consistent with the intended intensity of development in the zone. Allow different areas within a zone to be assigned different height limits based on the need to

- further the urban village strategy's goals of focusing growth in urban villages,
- accommodate the desired functions and intensity of development,
- provide a compatible scale relationship with existing zoning in the vicinity,
- accommodate desired transitions with development in adjacent areas, and
- consider potential view blockage.

**LU 9.15** Allow limited exceptions to the height limit in order to accommodate ground-floor commercial uses or special rooftop features, encourage development of mixed-use structures, enable structures to function appropriately, accommodate special features consistent with the special character or function of an area, or support innovative design that furthers the goals of this Plan.

**LU 9.16** Apply appropriate development standards to promote compatible conditions along the edges of commercial zones abutting residential zones.

**LU 9.17** Use a development pattern, mix of uses, and intensity of activity generally oriented to pedestrian and transit use in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use zones to achieve

- a compatible blend of commercial and residential uses;
- strong, healthy business districts that reinforce a sense of place while providing essential goods, services, and livelihoods for Seattleites, especially residents who are within walking distance of these places;
- mixes of commercial activity that are compatible with development in adjacent areas;
- residential development that is both appealing to residents and compatible with the desired commercial function of the area; and
- an active, attractive, accessible, walkable pedestrian environment with continuous commercial street frontages.

**LU 9.18** Apply pedestrian-oriented commercial zones in places where residential uses are in close proximity and where the allowed development intensity conforms in size and scale to the community it serves.

**LU 9.19** Locate and provide access to accessory parking facilities in pedestrian-oriented commercial zones in ways that avoid conflicts with pedestrian routes and interruptions to the continuity of the street facade, such as by locating unenclosed parking to the side of or behind the building, or by enclosing parking below the building or within the building and screening it from the street, preferably by other uses.

**LU 9.20** Use general commercial zones to support existing auto-oriented commercial areas that serve a citywide or regional clientele and have easy access to principal arterials,

or in areas that border industrial zones, where they can help to maintain compatible development conditions.

- LU 9.21** Encourage the conversion of general commercial areas within urban villages to pedestrian-oriented commercial zones, in keeping with this Plan's goals for pedestrian-oriented environments within the urban villages.
- LU 9.22** Accommodate the broadest range of commercial activities in general commercial areas, including retail uses of all sizes, small office buildings, warehouses, and light and general manufacturing facilities.
- LU 9.23** Use zoning and other planning tools in urban centers and urban villages to address displacement of small locally-owned businesses that reinforce local neighborhood and cultural identity and provide culturally relevant goods and services to Seattle's diverse population.
- LU 9.24** Explore tools to encourage the creation of small commercial spaces in new development that can accommodate small, local, and culturally relevant businesses, particularly those businesses threatened with displacement.

## Industrial Areas

### Discussion

Seattle has a long history as the main shipping, manufacturing, and freight-distribution center for the region. These days, those activities take place mostly in industrial zones located in the city's two manufacturing/industrial centers. These industrial areas are large and generally flat. In these areas, City zoning rules allow industrial activity such as manufacturing, warehousing, and shipping of goods through waterways, railways, and highways.

Industrial zones are an important source of living wage jobs and make the local economic base more stable. Having industrial activity in the city makes Seattle less vulnerable to shifts in the economy. Due to the volume of truck traffic, the need some industrial businesses have for access to rail service, and the large sites that many of those businesses need, it is important to provide large, separate areas for these activities.

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### GOAL

- LU G10** Provide sufficient land with the necessary characteristics to allow industrial activity to thrive in Seattle and protect the preferred industrial function of these areas from activities that could disrupt or displace them.

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### POLICIES

- LU 10.1** Designate industrial zones generally where

- the primary functions are industrial activity and industrial-related commercial functions,
- the basic infrastructure needed to support industrial uses already exists,
- areas are large enough to allow a full range of industrial activities to function successfully, and
- sufficient separation or special conditions exist to reduce the possibility of conflicts with development in adjacent less intensive areas.

**LU 10.2** Preserve industrial land for industrial uses, especially where industrial land is near rail- or water-transportation facilities, in order to allow marine- and rail-related industries that rely on that transportation infrastructure to continue to function in the city.

**LU 10.3** Accommodate the expansion of current industrial businesses and promote opportunities for new industrial businesses within Seattle to strengthen the city's existing industrial economy.

**LU 10.4** Restrict to appropriate locations within industrial areas those activities that—by the nature of materials involved or processes employed—are potentially dangerous or very noxious.

**LU 10.5** Provide a range of industrial zones that address varying conditions and priorities in different industrial areas. Those priorities include maintaining industrial areas that have critical supporting infrastructure, providing transitions between industrial areas and less intensive areas, and promoting high-quality environments attractive to business expansion or to new industrial activities.

**LU 10.6** Prohibit new residential development in industrial zones, except for certain types of dwellings, such as caretaker units, that are related to the industrial area and that would not restrict or disrupt industrial activity.

**LU 10.7** Use the general industrial zones to promote a full range of industrial activities and related support uses.

**LU 10.8** Apply the general industrial zones mostly within the designated manufacturing/ industrial centers, where impacts from industrial activity are less likely to affect residential or commercial uses. Outside of manufacturing/industrial centers, general industrial zones may be appropriate along waterways used for maritime uses.

**LU 10.9** Avoid placing industrial zones within urban centers or urban villages. However, in locations where a center or village borders a manufacturing/industrial center, use of the industrial commercial zone within the center or village where it abuts the manufacturing/industrial center may provide an appropriate transition to help separate residential uses from heavier industrial activities.

**LU 10.10** Limit the density of development for nonindustrial uses in the manufacturing/ industrial centers to reduce competition from nonindustrial activities that are better suited to other locations in the city, particularly urban centers and urban villages, where this Plan encourages most new residential and commercial development. Permit commercial uses in industrial areas only if they reinforce the industrial

character, and strictly limit the size of office and retail uses not associated with industrial uses, in order to preserve these areas for industrial development.

- LU 10.11** Recognize the unique working character of industrial areas by keeping landscaping and street standards to a minimum to allow flexibility for industrial activities, except along selected arterials where installing street trees and providing screening and landscaping can offset impacts of new industrial development in highly visible locations.
- LU 10.12** Set parking and loading requirements in industrial zones to provide adequate parking and loading facilities to support business activity, promote air quality, encourage efficient use of the land in industrial areas, discourage underused parking facilities, and maintain adequate traffic safety and circulation. Allow some on-street loading and occasional spillover parking.
- LU 10.13** Maintain standards for the size and location of vehicle curb cuts and driveways in industrial zones in order to balance the need to provide adequate maneuvering and loading areas with availability of on-street parking and safe pedestrian access.
- LU 10.14** Permit noise levels in industrial areas, except **buffer areas**, that would not be allowed in other parts of the city, in recognition of the importance and special nature of industrial activities.
- LU 10.15** Classify certain industrial activities as conditional uses in industrial zones in order to accommodate these uses while making sure they are compatible with the zone's primary industrial function and to protect public safety and welfare on nearby sites. Require mitigation of impacts on industrial activity and on the immediate surroundings, especially nearby less intensive zones.
- LU 10.16** Prohibit uses that attract large numbers of people to the industrial area for nonindustrial purposes, in order to keep the focus on industrial activity and to minimize potential conflicts from the noise, nighttime activity, and truck movement that accompanies industrial activity.
- LU 10.17** Establish the industrial buffer zone to provide an appropriate transition between industrial areas and adjacent residential or pedestrian-oriented commercial zones.
- LU 10.18** Allow the widest possible range of manufacturing uses and related industrial and commercial activities within the industrial buffer zone, while ensuring compatibility with the activity and physical character of neighboring less intensive zones.
- LU 10.19** Include development standards or performance standards for the industrial buffer zone that protect the livability of neighboring areas, promote visual quality, and maintain a compatible scale of development along zone edges. Apply these standards only in places where existing conditions do not adequately separate industrial activity from less intensive zones.
- LU 10.20** Limit the height of structures on the borders of industrial buffer zones where streets along the zone edge do not provide sufficient separation for a reasonable transition in scale between industrial areas and less intensive neighboring zones, taking into consideration the permitted height in the abutting less intensive zone.

- LU 10.21** Allow a wide mix of employment activities in the industrial commercial zones, such as light manufacturing and research and development.
- LU 10.22** Limit development density in industrial commercial zones in order to reflect transportation and other infrastructure constraints, while taking into account other features of an area.
- LU 10.23** Include development standards in the industrial commercial zone designed to create environments that are attractive to new technology businesses and that support a pedestrian-oriented environment, while controlling structure height and scale to limit impacts on nearby neighborhoods.
- LU 10.24** Provide a range of maximum building height limits in the industrial commercial zones in order to protect the distinctive features that attract new technology businesses to the area—such as views of water, shoreline access, and the neighborhood scale and character—to make sure that these features will continue to be enjoyed, both within the zone and from the surrounding area.
- LU 10.25** Assign height limits independently of the industrial zoning designation to provide flexibility in zoning-specific areas and to allow different areas within a zone to be assigned different height limits according to the **rezone criteria**.
- LU 10.26** Restrict or prohibit uses that may negatively affect the availability of land for industrial activity, or that conflict with the character and function of industrial areas.
- LU 10.27** Consider high value-added, living wage industrial activities to be a high priority.
- LU 10.28** Permit commercial uses in industrial areas to the extent that they reinforce the industrial character, and limit specified non-industrial uses, including office and retail development, in order to preserve these areas for industrial development.

## Downtown Areas

### Discussion

Downtown is the most densely developed area in the Pacific Northwest. It includes five distinct neighborhoods: Belltown, Denny Triangle, the Commercial Core, Pioneer Square, and Chinatown/International District. Because each of these neighborhoods has a unique character, the City has a different plan for how each is expected to grow. This makes regulations for development in Downtown very detailed and complex. For this reason, the guidance for Downtown regulations is not found in this element. Instead, it can be found as part of the Downtown Urban Center Neighborhood Plan, located in the **Neighborhood Plans volume** of this Plan.

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## GOAL

- LU G11** Promote Downtown Seattle as an urban center with the densest mix of residential and commercial development in the region, with a vital and attractive environment that supports employment and residential activities and is inviting to visitors.

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## POLICIES

- LU 11.1** Recognize the distinct areas of Downtown that are defined by their histories and by their primary land use function, such as office, retail, or mixed-use with either a commercial or a residential emphasis.
- LU 11.2** Use a range of land use zones and height limits to support the existing and desired character of different areas within Downtown.

# Location-Specific Regulations

## Discussion

In certain places in the city, different sets of rules “overlay” the zoning regulations. These overlays take into account a special use or characteristic of the area. For example, historic districts each have a separate set of regulations that preserve the area’s unique historic features. The policies in this section guide how the City adjusts its regulations to the special functions and needs of **major institutions**, historic districts and landmarks, and environmentally critical areas. These policies generally describe overlays that could be applied in several places within the city. In addition to the areas covered in this section, the Land Use Code contains regulations governing specific **overlay districts** that apply only in certain locations, such as major institution overlays or the Pike/Pine corridor. There is also an overlay that applies to the shorelines along major water bodies in the city. Policies for that overlay can be found in the Shoreline Areas element of this Plan.

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## GOAL

- LU G12** Provide flexibility in standard zone provisions or supplement those provisions to achieve special public purposes in areas where unique conditions exist, such as shorelines, historic and **special review districts**, and major institutions.

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## POLICIES

- LU 12.1** Allow for zoning overlay districts, which modify the regulations of the underlying zoning, to address special circumstances and issues of significant public interest in subareas of the city.

- LU 12.2** Establish a master planned community zone and apply the zone as a way to address unique opportunities for large site redevelopments in the densest areas of the city. Use this designation to provide predictability to the City, the community, and potential developers, with the intent to encourage a mix of uses at appropriate urban densities that use a cohesive urban design and promote high levels of environmental sustainability, housing affordability, and publicly accessible open space. Designate a master planned community only for large multiblock sites inside an urban center that are subject to unified control.
- LU 12.3** Consider establishing a master planning process for large sites outside of urban centers in order to allow development that incorporates good urban design and appropriate public benefits.
- LU 12.4** Regulate development and promote design guidelines in the stadium area transition overlay to promote an environment that is attractive and safe for the large volumes of pedestrians attending events in the area.

## Major Institutions

### Discussion

Hospitals, colleges, and universities deliver vital services to residents of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. They employ one in eight Seattle workers and make the city's economy more diverse. However, they can also increase traffic and displace housing and businesses. The policies in this section help guide the City in allowing these institutions to grow, while mitigating the impacts of that growth on the livability of surrounding neighborhoods.

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#### GOAL

- LU G13** Encourage the benefits that major institutions offer the city and the region, including health care, educational services, and significant employment opportunities, while mitigating the adverse impacts associated with their development and geographic expansion.

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#### POLICIES

- LU 13.1** Designate the campuses of large hospitals, colleges, and universities as major institutions, making clear that they are defined under a separate public process in terms of their appropriate uses and development standards.
- LU 13.2** Support the coordinated growth of major institutions through conceptual master plans and the creation of major institution overlay districts. Use a **master plan** process to identify development standards for the overlay district that are specifically tailored to the major institution and the surrounding area.



- LU 13.3** Balance the need for major institutions to grow and change with the need to maintain the livability and vitality of neighboring areas.
- LU 13.4** Establish major institution overlays (MIO) as a designation on the Official Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Map to show areas where development is regulated by the contents of a master plan, rather than by the underlying zoning. Where appropriate, establish MIO boundaries for better integration between major institution areas and less intensive zones.
- LU 13.5** Encourage **community involvement** in the development, monitoring, implementation, and amendment of major institution master plans, including the establishment of citizens' advisory committees that include community and major institution representatives.
- LU 13.6** Allow the MIO to modify underlying zoning provisions and development standards, including use restrictions and parking requirements, in order to accommodate the changing needs of major institutions, provide development flexibility, and encourage a high-quality environment.
- LU 13.7** Discourage the expansion of established major institution boundaries.
- LU 13.8** Require either that a master plan be prepared or that the existing master plan be revised when a proposed major development that is part of a major institution does not conform to the underlying zoning and is not included in an existing master plan.
- LU 13.9** Locate new major institutions in areas where their activities are compatible with the surrounding land uses and where the impacts associated with existing and future development can be appropriately mitigated, and provide procedures for considering the establishment of new major institutions.
- LU 13.10** Define as major institution uses those that are part of, or substantively related to, the major institution's central mission or that primarily and directly serve institution users, and allow these uses within the MIO district, in accordance with the development standards of the underlying zoning classifications or adopted master plan.
- LU 13.11** Apply the development standards of the underlying zoning classification to all major institution development, except for specific standards altered by a master plan.
- LU 13.12** Determine appropriate measures to address the need for adequate transition between the major institution and surrounding uses.
- LU 13.13** Establish minimum parking requirements in each MIO district to address the needs of the major institution and reduce parking demand in nearby areas. Include maximum parking limits to avoid unnecessary traffic in the surrounding areas and to limit the use of single-occupant vehicles. Allow an increase in the number of permitted spaces only when such an increase is needed to reduce parking demand on surrounding streets and when it will help to minimize traffic congestion in the area.
- LU 13.14** Use a transportation-management program to reduce the number of vehicle trips to the major institution and to limit the adverse impacts of traffic and of institution-related parking on surrounding streets, especially residential streets. Strive to

reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles used for trips to and from major institutions at peak times. Allow short-term or long-term parking space requirements to be modified as part of a transportation-management program.

**LU 13.15** Encourage housing preservation within major institution overlay districts and limit impacts on housing in surrounding areas. Discourage conversion or demolition of housing within a major institution's campus, allowing it only when the institution needs to expand or when the institution replaces the lost housing with new housing. Prohibit the demolition of noninstitutional housing for replacement by principal-use parking that is not necessary to meet the parking requirement. Prohibit development by a major institution outside of the MIO district boundaries when it would result in the demolition or conversion of residential buildings into nonresidential uses, unless authorized by an adopted master plan.

**LU 13.16** Require a master plan whenever a major institution proposes development that could affect the livability of adjacent neighborhoods or that has the potential for significant adverse impacts on the surrounding areas. Use the master plan to

- guide a comprehensive review of potential benefits and impacts of the major institution's proposed development,
- establish or modify geographic boundaries for the major institution and establish clear guidelines and development standards on which the major institutions and community can rely for long-term planning and development,
- provide the neighborhood with advance notice of the institution's development plans,
- allow the City to anticipate and plan for public capital or programmatic actions that will be needed to accommodate development,
- provide the basis for determining appropriate mitigating actions to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from major institution growth,
- establish a transportation-management program, and
- define the major institution's development program for a specified time period.

**LU 13.17** Require City Council review and adoption of the master plan after the major institution, the surrounding community, and the City develop the master plan.

**LU 13.18** Achieve a better relationship between residential, commercial, or industrial uses and the major institution's activities when considering rezones, while also trying to reduce or eliminate major land use conflicts.

# Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources

## Discussion

Historic preservation recognizes and protects aspects of our shared cultural heritage—buildings, districts, and designed landscapes that link to Seattle’s past. From the Native Americans who first established trading centers along the Duwamish River to the latest waves of newcomers from around the world, all have left their mark. Over time, Seattle has acquired historic features that have become part of the city’s civic identity. Through the preservation of icons and historic locations such as the Space Needle, the Olmsted network of parks and boulevards, and Pioneer Square, the city can continue to celebrate its heritage and maintain its unique sense of place.

Seattle values its past and recognizes and protects its heritage. One way we do this is by calling out more than 450 buildings, objects, and sites of exceptional significance, and eight historic districts. These visible connections to the past strengthen our sense of place and help build community. Finding new uses for existing structures also helps achieve the City’s goals for sustainable development, because reusing historic buildings is more sustainable than demolishing and replacing them. Preserving and restoring historic buildings can encourage other revitalization in the neighborhood and attract new businesses.

The benefits of historic preservation are not merely aesthetic. Preservation is integral to our economic-development, and it also enhances our city’s identity as a center for tourism, itself an important source of local jobs. Preserving historic buildings can help incubate small locally-owned businesses, revitalize commercial districts, and generate local jobs. Historic preservation promotes sustainability through the reuse, repair, and upgrading of existing built resources.

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### GOAL

**LU G14** Maintain the city’s cultural identity and heritage.

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### POLICIES

**LU 14.1** Maintain a comprehensive survey and inventory of Seattle’s historic and cultural resources. Update the survey and inventory when developing a new community plan or updating an existing plan, as appropriate.

**LU 14.2** Support the designation of areas as historic and special review districts, and the designation of structures, sites, and objects as City of Seattle landmarks in order to protect, enhance, and perpetuate their historical or architectural identities.

- LU 14.3** Tailor development standards and design review processes specifically for a special review district to describe design-related features allowed, encouraged, limited, or excluded from the district. Allow adopted guidelines to modify, exempt, or supersede the underlying zone's standards.
- LU 14.4** Encourage the adaptive reuse of designated landmark structures by allowing uses in these structures that may not otherwise be allowed under the applicable zoning, provided such action is approved by the Landmarks Preservation Board.
- LU 14.5** Use incentives, including the transfer of development rights, to encourage property owners and developers to restore or reuse designated landmark structures and specified structures in designated districts.
- LU 14.6** Consider the use of conservation districts to recognize and sustain the character of unique residential or commercial districts.
- LU 14.7** Protect the scale and character of the established development pattern, while encouraging compatible and context-sensitive infill development.
- LU 14.8** Expand outreach mechanisms to encourage historic preservation projects in neighborhoods and communities that have not traditionally benefited from historic preservation efforts, with particular focus on areas with high concentrations of under-served and/or under-represented people.
- LU 14.9** Identify historic resources that can be successfully used to meet the city's housing goals.
- LU 14.10** Identify, preserve, and protect archaeological resources.

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## **GOAL**

- LU G15** Promote the economic opportunities and benefits of historic preservation.

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## **POLICIES**

- LU 15.1** Recognize the economic value of Seattle's historic resources in attracting tourism; encourage reinvestment of a share of the revenue derived from tourism to sustain and expand historic preservation.
- LU 15.2** Encourage rehabilitation opportunities and reinvesting in vacant or underutilized historic properties to spark economic revitalization.
- LU 15.3** Encourage rehabilitation of existing housing units and other building types that expands affordable housing choices and contributes to market-rate and workforce housing.
- LU 15.4** Explore and provide various financial and regulatory incentives, if possible, to allow for the productive, reasonable, and adaptive reuse of historic resources.

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## GOAL

**LU G16** Promote the environmental benefits of preserving and adaptively reusing historic buildings.

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## POLICIES

**LU 16.1** Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings to conserve resources, reduce waste, and demonstrate stewardship of the built environment.

**LU 16.2** Promote seismic and energy efficiency retrofits of historic buildings to reduce carbon emissions, save money, and improve public safety.

**LU 16.3** Encourage the creation of ecodistricts to achieve sustainability and resource efficiency at a district scale.

# Environmentally Critical Areas

## Discussion

While Seattle is essentially a **built city**, there remain many natural areas that deserve special attention and care. Taking care of these areas is important for conservation but also to prevent possible harm to other parts of the city. For example, landslides, floods, or poor water quality would affect more than just these vulnerable areas. For these reasons, the City has regulations that help protect these areas from the wrong types of use or, in some cases, from use altogether.

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## GOAL

**LU G17** Maintain a regulatory system that aims to

- protect the ecological functions and values of wetlands and fish and wildlife conservation areas;
- prevent erosion on steep slopes;
- protect public health, safety, and welfare in areas subject to landslides, **liquefaction**, floods, or peat settlement, while permitting reasonable development;
- protect the public by identifying seismic and volcanic hazard areas; and
- avoid development that causes physical harm to people, property, public resources, or the environment.

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## POLICIES

- LU 17.1** Use best available science to identify and protect environmentally critical areas.
- LU 17.2** Promote both public and private opportunities to improve water quality and enhance aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial habitats in the city's environmentally critical areas so that these habitats are healthy for native wildlife and people.
- LU 17.3** Regulate the design and siting of structures and land-disturbing actions associated with development projects in environmentally critical areas and buffers to protect the ecological functions and values of environmentally critical areas and their buffers and to protect public health and safety on development sites and neighboring properties.
- LU 17.4** Permit modification of development standards in environmentally critical areas and buffers to protect the ecological functions and values of the critical areas while allowing reasonable development.
- LU 17.5** Review rezones in or adjacent to an environmentally critical area or a hazard-prone area by considering the effects on the ecological functions and values of the critical area and on public health, safety, and welfare, and recognize that lower-intensity zones and uses are generally more appropriate than higher-intensity zones in these areas. Review subdivisions and lot-boundary adjustments in or adjacent to wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, steep slope-erosion areas, and other environmentally critical areas by considering the effects on the ecological functions and values of those critical areas.
- LU 17.6** Adopt regulations that encourage landowners and developers to voluntarily enhance the ecological functions and values of environmentally critical areas.
- LU 17.7** Provide opportunities for environmental education associated with environmentally critical areas.
- LU 17.8** Regulate development on landslide-prone hillsides to protect against future damage due to instability that might be created or exacerbated by development, including potential damage to public facilities. Consider the relative risk to life or property when reviewing development proposals for landslide-prone areas.
- LU 17.9** Require engineering solutions for development in landslide-prone areas to provide complete stabilization of the developed area.
- LU 17.10** Limit disturbance and maintain and enhance vegetative cover on steep slopes to control erosion and water runoff in order to reduce the risk of siltation and other environmental impacts to streams, lakes, Puget Sound, and the City's stormwater facilities.
- LU 17.11** Require new development in liquefaction-prone areas to be designed and built to limit property damage and to reduce risks of injury and loss of life during earthquakes.
- LU 17.12** Regulate development on abandoned solid-waste landfill sites and areas within a thousand feet of those sites to reduce the risks of ground subsidence, earthquake-induced ground shaking, and methane-gas accumulation.

- LU 17.13** Regulate development in peat settlement-prone areas to limit ground settlement caused by the removal of groundwater and by structural and earth-fill loads on those areas and nearby parcels.
- LU 17.14** Seek a net gain in wetland function by enhancing and restoring wetland functions across the city in City projects.
- LU 17.15** Support efforts to restore wetlands to their original state and natural function.
- LU 17.16** Protect Seattle’s unique remaining wetland resources and use mitigation sequencing to address construction and postconstruction impacts in wetlands and their buffers by strictly regulating development.
- LU 17.17** Seek to avoid a net loss in area of wetland acreage, and require no net loss of wetland functions and values when development is allowed; functions and values include but are not limited to flood control, water quantity and quality, and fish and wildlife habitat.
- LU 17.18** Protect existing vegetation in wetlands and their buffers, unless augmenting or replanting can be shown to better protect the wetland’s functions and values.
- LU 17.19** Regulate development in and near designated fish- and wildlife-habitat conservation areas in order to protect the remaining native wildlife species and significant fish populations, especially salmonids.
- LU 17.20** Regulate development in environmentally critical areas that contain vegetative cover and physical space for habitat, and seek to
- protect contiguous wildlife-habitat areas;
  - maintain wildlife corridors that connect functions;
  - conserve soil and ground conditions that support native vegetation;
  - prevent siltation and high water temperatures in downstream habitats;
  - dampen fluctuations in surface-water flows, which are typically problematic in urbanized areas; and
  - maintain groundwater recharge flow to support stream flows during drier seasons.
- LU 17.21** Establish riparian corridors that include the water course or water body and riparian management area.
- LU 17.22** Limit development within the riparian corridor to protect the natural functions and values of these areas from the potential negative effects of urban development. Retain vegetation in its natural condition. If the vegetation within the riparian corridor is degraded, allow new native plantings that enhance the functions and values of the riparian corridor.
- LU 17.23** Establish development standards to protect existing water quality, prevent erosion and siltation, and protect fish and wildlife habitats.

- LU 17.24** Establish an area bordering adjacent bodies of water on every development site, strictly limit development within such areas, and leave vegetation in its natural condition unless new plantings will enhance the functions of the buffer.
- LU 17.25** Regulate development in flood-prone areas in order to protect public health and safety, and aquatic habitat, and to prevent damage to private property caused by hazardous flooding conditions.
- LU 17.26** Consider retaining City-owned properties that are in environmentally critical areas as natural areas.



# Transportation



## Introduction

The Transportation element guides transportation investments to equitably serve the city's current residents and businesses and to accommodate Seattle's future growth. Hundreds of thousands of city and regional residents and businesses depend on the city's transportation system to access jobs, services, and community facilities, and to deliver freight and goods. Thousands more people will depend on it in the next twenty years as the city and region continue to grow. In Seattle's future, a robust transportation system should

- *contribute to a safer city by working to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on city streets;*
- *create an interconnected city where people have reliable, easy-to-use travel options;*
- *develop a more vibrant city by creating streets and sidewalks that generate economic and social activity, adding to the city's overall health, prosperity, and happiness; and*

- *contribute to a more affordable city by providing high-quality and affordable transportation options that allow people to spend money on other things.*

Seattle's transportation system in 2035 will look very different than it does now. For example, the Alaskan Way Viaduct will be gone, and State Route 99 will go through a tunnel in central Seattle. Light rail transit, streetcar routes, and frequent bus networks will be much more extensive, with light rail extending through more of the city and providing connections to Bellevue, Redmond, Shoreline, and Lynnwood. New technological innovations in transportation such as **smart parking**, shared transportation options (such as bike share and car share services, whose customers do not own the vehicles they use), and driverless vehicles will change the way people move through Seattle. This Plan will guide the City's future actions to address these and other changes.

As a mature, fully **built city**, Seattle already has a core network of streets. There is no room for major new streets, which creates challenges but also opportunities as the City plans for growth. Making arterial streets wider is unfeasible and undesirable from a cost and environmental standpoint. It would also run counter to the City's goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, we must use the streets and sidewalks we have in the most efficient way possible. This means prioritizing street space so that it can be used by the most people, at most times of the day, and in a variety of ways. While many people still rely on a personal car as their best or only transportation option, the City plans to make travel more efficient and predictable for all by offering high-quality travel options. Improved mobility in the future will also require looking for opportunities to remove or reduce choke points such as railroad crossings and to use new traffic-signal timing and other technologies to help move people and goods.

The **Transportation Appendix** contains inventories of transportation facilities and an analysis of the transportation effects of this Plan's growth strategy.

## Integrating Land Use and Transportation

### Discussion

The **development pattern** described in the Growth Strategy and Land Use elements of this Plan has a major influence on the City's transportation system. The City's growth strategy focuses growth in **urban centers**, **urban villages**, and **manufacturing/industrial centers**. Crucial to the success of these areas is reliable transportation to, from, and within these areas. This will require a transportation system that includes several methods of travel for all trips throughout the day, including during the evening and on weekends. Automobile and freight access to property will remain important for accommodating growth throughout the city.

The City can make improvements to better connect people to **urban centers** and urban villages by many travel options, especially by transit and bicycle. In addition, transportation facilities that connect to and support the city’s two manufacturing/industrial centers are very important to the city’s economy. Seattle must find the right balance between serving the areas that will see the most growth and providing transportation services to all who need it, including those in parts of Seattle that have historically seen less investment in transportation.

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**GOAL**

**TG 1** Ensure that transportation decisions, strategies, and investments support the City’s overall growth strategy and are coordinated with this Plan’s land use goals.

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**POLICIES**

**T 1.1** Provide safe and reliable transportation facilities and services to promote and accommodate the growth this Plan anticipates in urban centers, urban villages, and manufacturing/industrial centers.

**T 1.2** Improve transportation connections to urban centers and villages from all Seattle neighborhoods, particularly by providing a variety of affordable travel options (pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities) and by being attentive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities.

**T 1.3** Design transportation **infrastructure** in urban centers and villages to support compact, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods for all ages and abilities.

**T 1.4** Design transportation facilities to be compatible with planned land uses and consider the planned scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

**T 1.5** Invest in transportation projects and programs that further progress toward meeting Seattle’s mode-share goals, in Transportation Figures 1 and 2, and reduce dependence on personal automobiles, particularly in urban centers.

**Transportation Figure 1**

**Mode-Share Targets for All Work Trips\* to Seattle and Its Urban Centers**

Percentage of work trips made by travel modes other than driving alone

Area	2014	2035 Target
Downtown	77%	85%
First Hill/Capitol Hill	58%	70%
Uptown	48%	60%
South Lake Union	67%	80%

Area	2014	2035 Target
University District	73%	85%
Northgate	30%	50%
<b>Seattle</b>	57%	65%

*\*work trips terminating in the city or urban center*

## Transportation Figure 2

### Mode-Share Targets for Residents of Seattle and Its Urban Centers

Percentage of non-work\* trips made using travel modes other than driving alone

Area	2014	2035 Target
Downtown	88%	90%
First Hill/Capitol Hill	80%	85%
Uptown	82%	85%
South Lake Union	76%	85%
University District	79%	90%
Northgate	46%	55%
<b>Seattle</b>	67%	75%

*\*non-work trips that have both their origin and destination within the city or urban center*

- T 1.6** Enhance goods movement to, within, and between Seattle’s manufacturing/ industrial centers and urban villages and business districts.
- T 1.7** Recognize the connection between transportation choices and climate change and work to reduce vehicular emissions.

## Make the Best Use of the Streets We Have

### Discussion

The public street space in Seattle needs to accommodate several different functions to serve existing and future activity. Because it will be difficult to expand this available public street space in any significant way, it is important for the City to use the existing streets

efficiently and wisely. This section of the Plan establishes the **policy** framework for making those decisions.

The City has adopted master plans to address nonautomobile modes of travel—**pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and freight movement**—drawing on extensive community input. In planning for how to use streets, it is useful to look at the need to provide space for pedestrian activities, travelways for various types of vehicles, and a **flex area** along the curb for making transitions. Pedestrian activities include walking as well as utilizing bus shelters, bike racks, and sidewalk cafés. The flex area provides parking, bus stops, and passenger and freight loading, and the area that is used for parking may be used for mobility during peak times. In addition, space should be available for **parklets**, play streets, and other activating uses of the street. Providing space for all these functions efficiently and where they are needed helps make the most of a limited resource.

Not every function can fit in every street. The goals and policies in this section provide direction on integrating and, where necessary, prioritizing functions within the different parts of a street. These policies also recognize that collectively two or more streets can combine to serve as a “**complete corridor**,” since not every street can accommodate every need.

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## GOAL

- TG 2** Allocate space on Seattle’s streets to safely and efficiently connect and move people and goods to their destinations while creating inviting spaces within the rights-of-way.

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## POLICIES

- T 2.1** Devote space in the street **right-of-way** to accommodate multiple functions of mobility, access for commerce and people, activation, landscaping, and storage of vehicles.
- T 2.2** Ensure that the street network accommodates multiple travel modes, including transit, freight movement, pedestrians, people with disabilities, bicycles, general purpose traffic, and shared transportation options.
- T 2.3** Consider safety concerns, modal master plans, and adjacent land uses when prioritizing functions in the pedestrian, travelway, and flex zones of the right-of-way.
- T 2.4** Use pedestrian design guidance in the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual and policy guidance from the modal master plans to determine adequacy of the pedestrian realm, before allocating space to the flex zone or travelway. Within the pedestrian realm, prioritize space to address safety concerns, network connectivity, and activation.
- T 2.5** Prioritize mobility needs in the street travelway based on safety concerns and then on the recommended networks and facilities identified in the respective modal plans.

**T 2.6** Allocate space in the flex zone to accommodate access, activation, and **greening** functions, except when use of the flex zone for mobility is critical to address safety or to meet connectivity needs identified in modal master plans. When mobility is needed only part of the day, design the space to accommodate other functions at other times.

**T 2.7** Assign space in the flex zone to support nearby land uses, provide support for modal plan priorities, and accommodate multiple functions.

### Transportation Figure 3

Priorities for Right-of-Way “Flex Zone” by Predominant Use of Area

Commercial/Mixed-Use Areas	Industrial Areas	Residential Areas
Modal plan priorities	Modal plan priorities	Modal plan priorities
Access for commerce	Access for commerce	Access for people
Access for people	Access for people	Access for commerce
Activation	Storage	Greening
Greening	Activation	Storage
Storage	Greening	Activation

**T 2.8** Employ the following tactics to resolve potential conflicts for space in the right-of-way:

- Implement transportation and parking-**demand management** strategies to encourage more efficient use of the existing right of way
- Allocate needed functions across a corridor composed of several streets or alleys, if all functions cannot fit in a single street
- Share space between travel modes and uses where safe and where possible over the course of the day
- Prioritize assignment of space to shared and shorter-duration uses
- Encourage off-street accommodation for nonmobility uses, including parking and transit layover

**T 2.9** Develop a decision-making framework to direct the planning, design, and optimization of street right-of-way.

**T 2.10** Identify street types in the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual, and have those street types correspond to the land uses designated in this Plan.

- T 2.11** Design sidewalks in urban centers, urban villages, and areas designated as pedestrian zones in the **Land Use Code** to meet the dimensional standards as specified in the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual to foster **vibrant pedestrian environments** in these areas.
- T 2.12** Designate the following classifications of arterials:
- **Principal arterials:** roadways that are intended to serve as the primary routes for moving traffic through the city and for connecting urban centers and urban villages to one another or to the regional transportation network
  - **Minor arterials:** roadways that distribute traffic from principal arterials to collector arterials and access streets
  - **Collector arterials:** roadways that collect and distribute traffic from principal and minor arterials to **local access streets** or provide direct access to destinations
- T 2.13** Preserve and enhance the **boulevard network** both for travel and as a usable open-space system for active transportation modes.
- T 2.14** Maintain, preserve, and enhance the City's alleys as a valuable network for public spaces and access, loading and unloading for freight, and utility operations.
- T 2.15** Create vibrant public spaces in and near the right-of-way that foster social interaction, promote access to walking, bicycling, and transit options, and enhance the public realm.

## Transportation Options

### Discussion

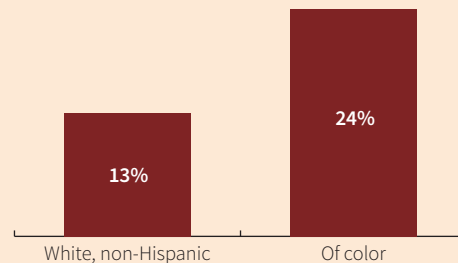
Transit, bicycling, walking, and shared transportation services reduce collisions, stress, noise, and air pollution, while increasing social contact, economic vitality, affordability, and overall health. They also help use right-of-way space more efficiently and at lower costs. The best way to get Seattleites to take advantage of these options is to make them easy choices for people of all ages and abilities.

The plans that the City has developed for individual travel modes (pedestrian, bicycle, and transit) include strategies and projects that will improve transportation choices in the city. These include the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, and the Transit Master Plan. In prioritizing investments, these plans balance development levels with **equity**, ensuring that people who are dependent on transit or vehicle use because of age, disability, or financial considerations are well served. For more information on the specific investments that the City plans to make to support transit, bicycle use, and walking, refer to the maps in Transportation Figures 4–7.

Some people in the city have fewer options for travel. For instance, we know from the American Community Survey that roughly a quarter of all households of color in Seattle, including a third of black households, do not have a motor vehicle at home. Research by King County found that people in households with incomes under \$35,000 are much more likely than others to rely on transit for *all* their transportation needs. Providing more transit options for these communities is one way the City can use its transportation planning to improve race and social equity in the city.

### Share of Seattle Households without Access to a Vehicle

By Race/Ethnicity of Householder



Source: 2011–2013 ACS, US Census Bureau

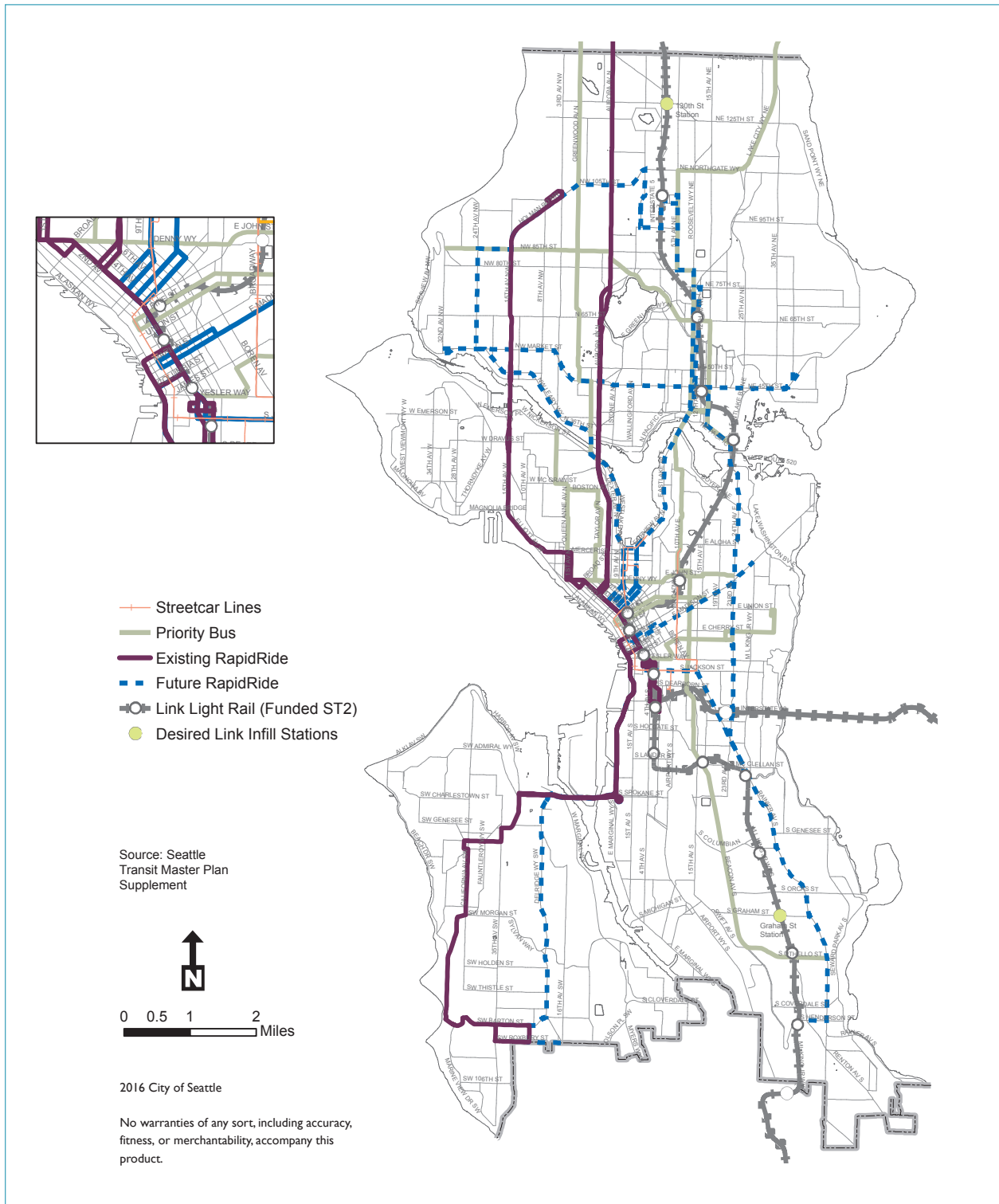
While not everyone can always walk, bike, use a car-share service, or ride transit, the City can reduce the number of drive-alone trips that residents, employees, and visitors take, and even the need to own a personal vehicle. If the City offers people safe, affordable, and comfortable travel choices, they will be more likely to use them. Improving transportation choices can protect the environment, enhance the local economy, and support healthy and **sustainable communities**. If more people use different types of transportation during the busiest times of day (generally the late-afternoon peak commute time), more people and goods can get to their destinations in a reasonable time. Reducing drive-alone trips at this time of day is consistent with the City’s overall commute-trip reduction goals.

To make these options work, the City needs to help residents understand the options that are available so they can choose the ones that will work best for them. Having information about travel choices can influence where people choose to live and how they move about the city.

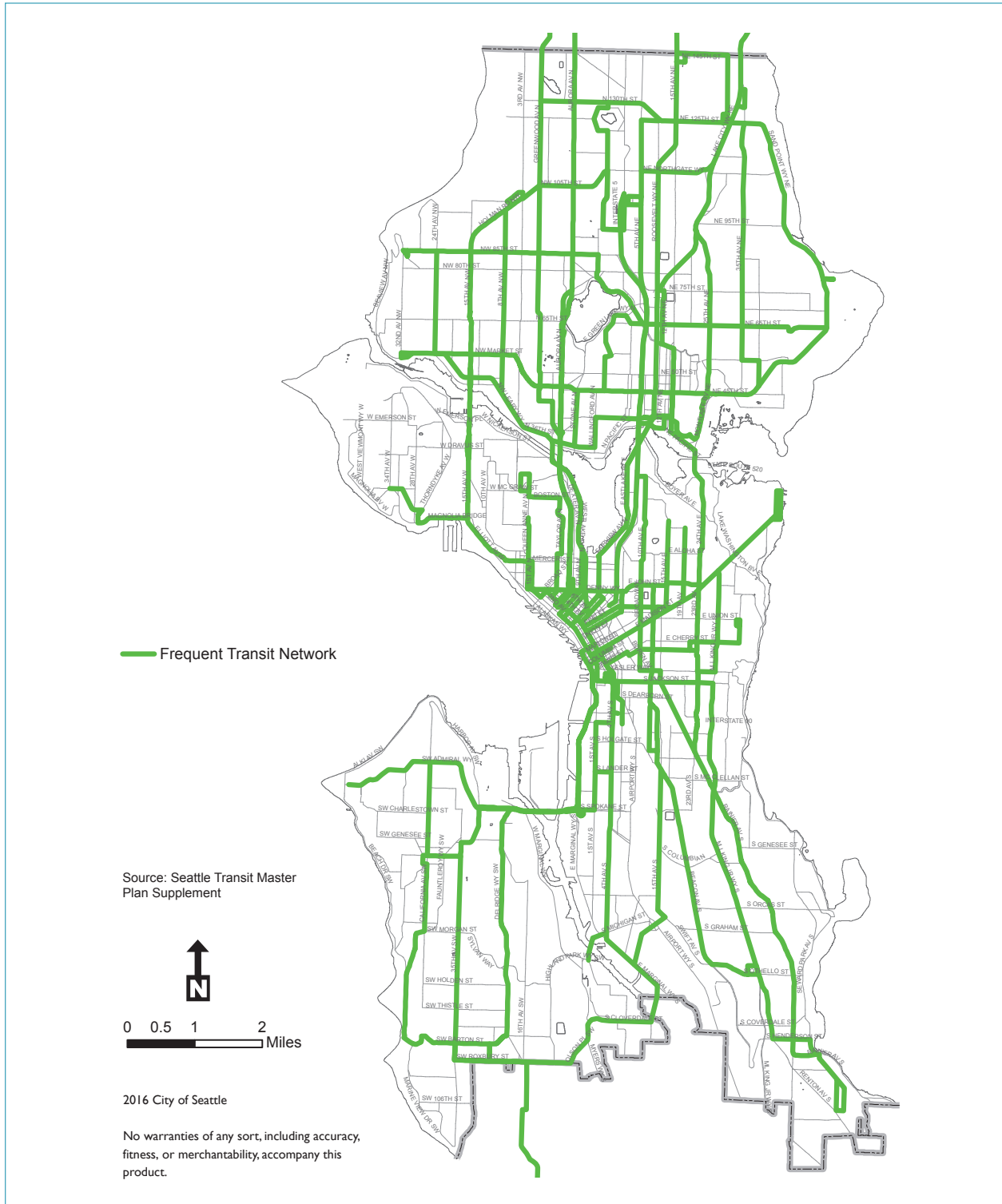
In helping residents make these decisions, the City must consider all aspects of the transportation system. One way the City can affect many aspects of the system is through transportation-demand management, a technique that aims to reduce travel impacts on the system, particularly drive-alone trips at congested times of the day. Transportation-demand management includes looking at the role of parking, since its availability, cost, and proximity to destinations are important considerations for many as they choose whether to drive or take advantage of other travel options. Especially for people using transit options to travel across the city or the region, there is a need to provide efficient ways to get to and from the transit. This is often called first-mile and last-mile travel because it can involve getting from home to a transit station on one end of a trip and from a transit station to a job on the other end. The first and last mile can often be traveled by walking, biking, ride sharing, or local bus service.



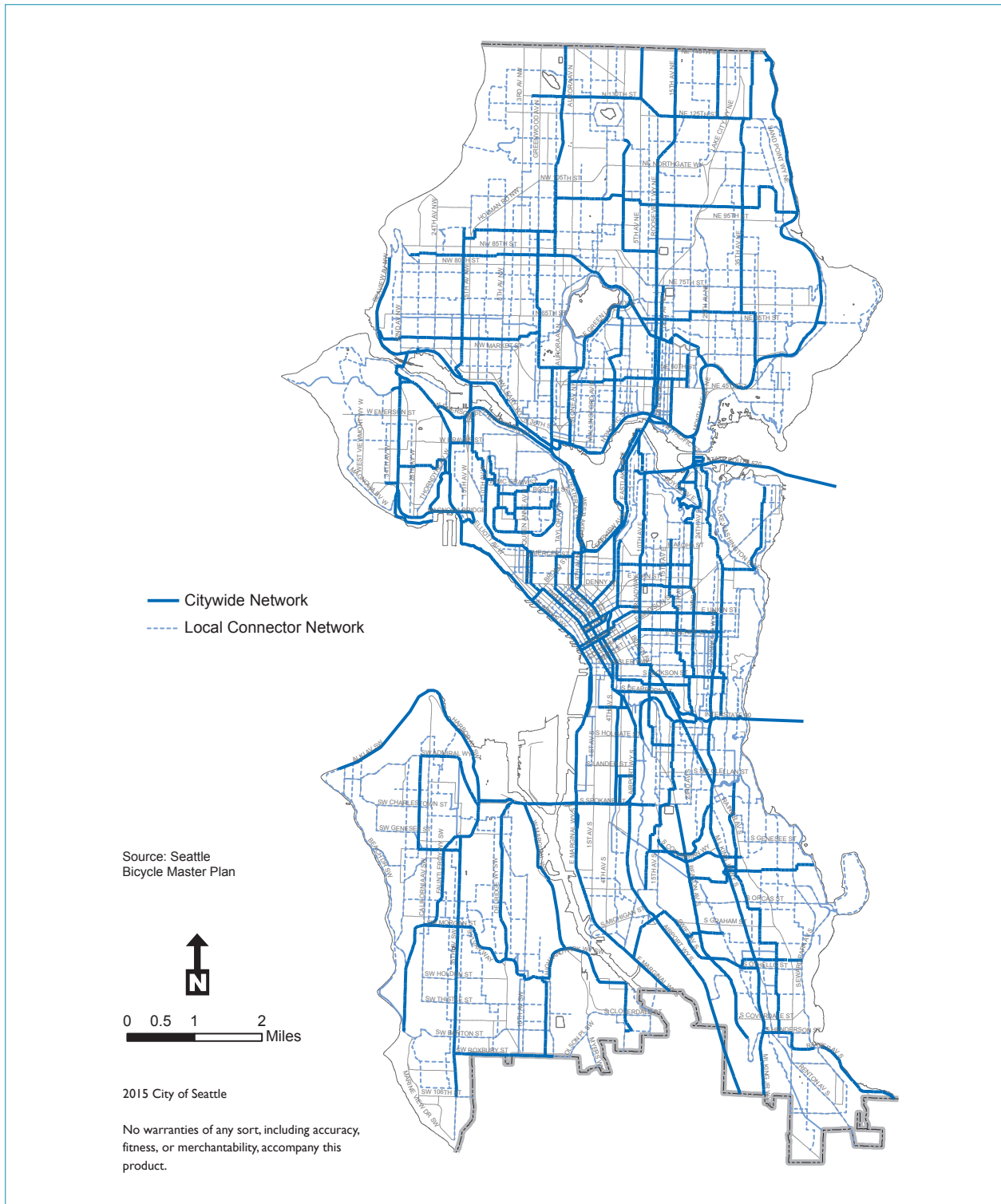
Transportation Figure 4  
Priority Corridors for Transit Investments



# Transportation Figure 5 Planned Frequent Transit Service Network

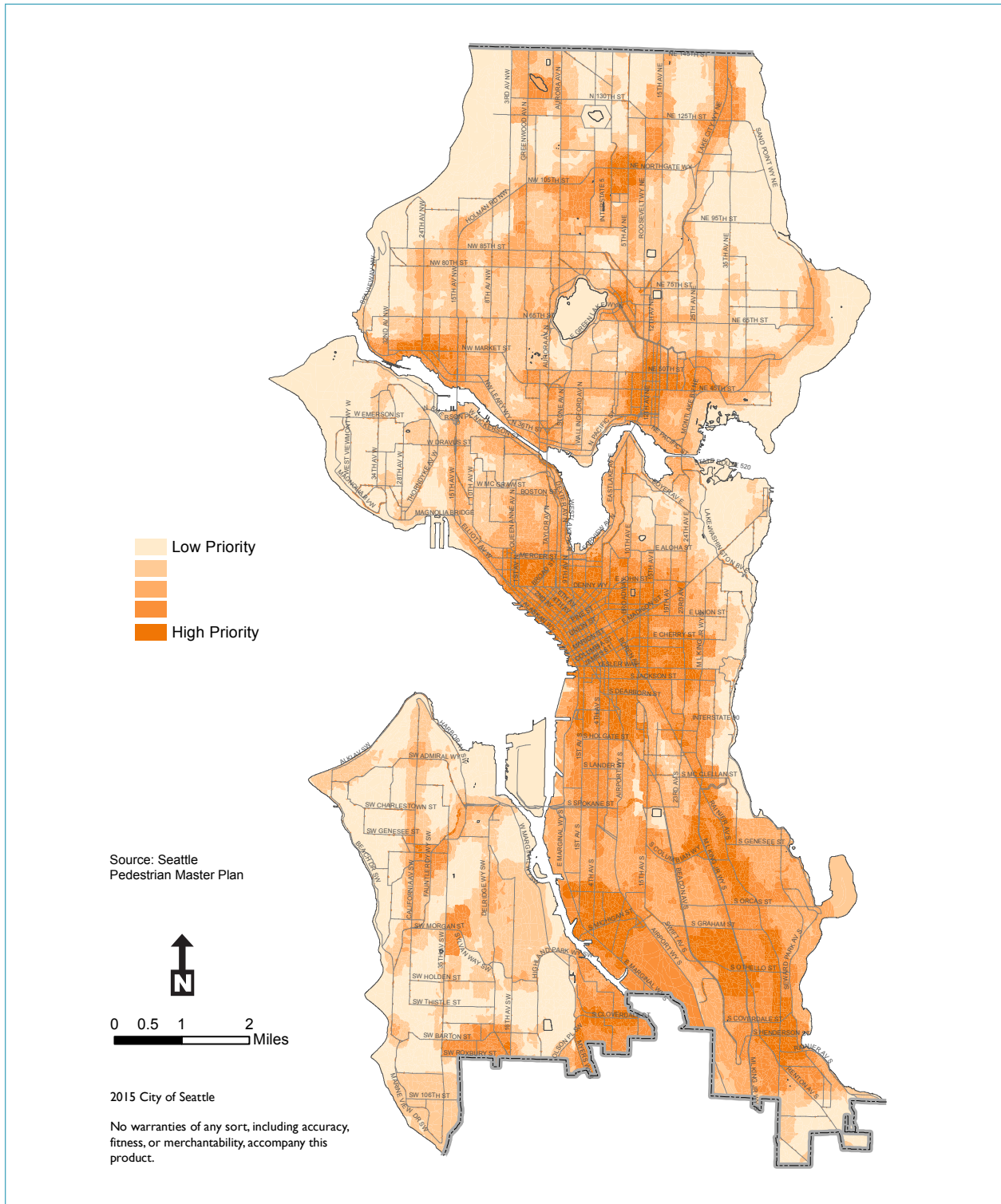


Transportation Figure 6  
Recommended Bicycle Network



# Transportation Figure 7

## Pedestrian Priority Investment Areas



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## GOAL

- TG 3** Meet people’s mobility needs by providing **equitable** access to, and encouraging use of, multiple transportation options.

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## POLICIES

- T 3.1** Develop and maintain high-quality, affordable, and connected bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.
- T 3.2** Improve transportation options to and within the urban centers and urban villages, where most of Seattle’s job and population growth will occur.
- T 3.3** Consider the income, age, ability, and vehicle-ownership patterns of populations throughout the city in developing transportation systems and facilities so that all residents, especially those most in need, have access to a wide range of affordable travel options.
- T 3.4** Develop a citywide transit system that includes a variety of transit modes to meet passenger capacity needs with frequent, reliable, accessible, and safe service to a wide variety of destinations throughout the day and week.
- T 3.5** Prioritize transit investments on the basis of ridership demand, service to populations heavily reliant on transit, and opportunities to leverage funding.
- T 3.6** Make transit services affordable to low-income residents through programs that reduce household transportation costs.
- T 3.7** Optimize operations of bus rapid transit, RapidRide, and streetcar corridors by adjusting signals and providing exclusive transit lanes to promote faster travel times for transit than for automobile travel.
- T 3.8** Work with transportation providers, such as car share, bike share and taxi providers, to provide access to their services throughout the city and to maintain the affordability of their services.
- T 3.9** Expand light rail capacity and bus reliability in corridors where travel capacity is constrained, such as crossing the Lake Washington Ship Canal or the Duwamish River, or through the **Center City**.
- T 3.10** Provide high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit access to **high-capacity transit** stations, in order to support transit ridership and reduce **single-occupant vehicle** trips.
- T 3.11** Develop and maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including public stairways, that enhance the predictability and safety of all users of the street and that connect to a wide range of key destinations throughout the city.
- T 3.12** Look for opportunities to reestablish or improve connections across I-5 by creating new crossings, enhancing streets where I-5 crosses overhead, or constructing lids, especially where these can also enhance opportunities for development or **open space**.

- T 3.13** Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian investments on the basis of increasing use, safety, connectivity, equity, health, **livability**, and opportunities to leverage funding.
- T 3.14** Develop facilities and programs, such as bike sharing, that encourage short trips to be made by walking or biking.
- T 3.15** Develop and implement programs to educate all users of the street on rules of the road, rights, and responsibilities.
- T 3.16** Support and plan for innovation in transportation options and shared mobility, including car sharing, bike sharing, and transportation network companies, that can increase travel options, enhance mobility, and provide first- and last-mile connections for people.
- T 3.17** Implement new technologies that will enhance access to transportation and parking options.
- T 3.18** Implement curb-space management strategies such as parking time limits, **on-street parking pricing**, loading zones, and residential parking programs to promote transportation choices, encourage parking turnover, improve customer access, and provide for efficient allocation of parking among diverse users.
- T 3.19** Consider **roadway pricing strategies** on city arterials to manage demand during peak travel times, particularly in the Center City.
- T 3.20** Consider replacing short-term parking that is displaced by construction or new transportation projects only when the project results in a concentrated and substantial amount of on-street parking loss.
- T 3.21** Design and manage the transportation system, including on-street parking, so that people with disabilities have safe and convenient access to their destinations, while discouraging use of disabled parking permits for commuter use in areas of high short-term parking demand.
- T 3.22** Assess the affordability and accessibility of existing and potential transportation options in order to better inform decisions affecting the equitable provision of transportation services.

## Transportation Effects on the Environment

### Discussion

Transportation policies that encourage use of nonautomobile travel options support not only the City's growth strategy but also its environmental goals, including those related to **climate change**. Cars, buses, trucks, and other motorized transportation make up Seattle's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the City's Climate Action Plan sets high standards for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Using more fuel-efficient transportation options to move larger numbers of people on well-designed and well-maintained streets is

a crucial step to creating a healthy urban environment. By reducing the need for personal car use, the City can also reduce congestion and provide more opportunities to reallocate public right-of-way for trees and landscaping. Providing and promoting a wider variety of transportation options is also integral to achieving these environmental goals.

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## GOAL

**TG 4** Promote **healthy communities** by providing a transportation system that protects and improves Seattle’s environmental quality.

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## POLICIES

**T 4.1** Design and operate streets to promote **green infrastructure**, new technologies, and active transportation modes while addressing safety, accessibility, and aesthetics.

**T 4.2** Enhance the public street tree canopy and landscaping in the street right-of-way.

**T 4.3** Reduce drive-alone vehicle trips, vehicle dependence, and vehicle-miles traveled in order to help meet the City’s greenhouse gas reduction targets and reduce and mitigate air, water, and noise pollution.

**T 4.4** Manage the transportation system to support modes that reduce the use of fossil fuels and promote the use of alternative fuels.

**T 4.5** Encourage the use of electric-powered vehicles and the provision and expansion of electric-vehicle charging stations.

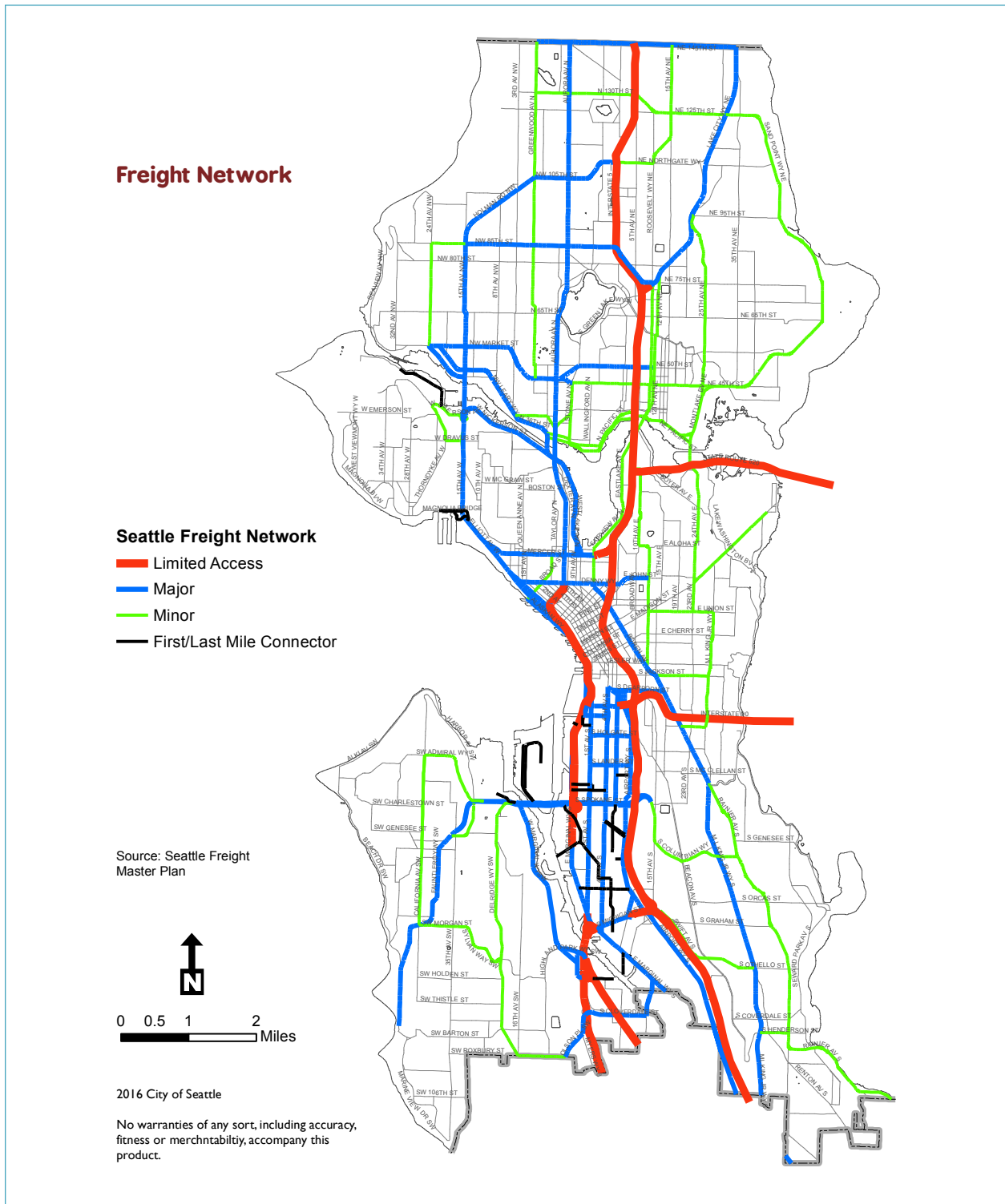
**T 4.6** Improve mobility and access for freight in order to reduce truck idling, improve air quality, and minimize the impacts of truck parking and movement in residential areas.

# Support a Vibrant Economy

## Discussion

The movement of goods and services is critical to economic development in Seattle and the region. Seattle’s businesses and residents rely on freight routes for safe and timely transportation of goods. Freight carriers depend on a well-functioning network of rail, water, air, and truck transportation. The City’s Freight Master Plan identifies the city’s overall truck freight network and prioritizes investments for freight mobility projects. Transportation Figure 8 shows the major truck streets identified by the City. In addition to goods movement, a well-designed transportation network supports a thriving economy by enhancing access to jobs, businesses, schools, and recreation. This kind of easy access adds to the vibrancy of the city’s urban centers and urban villages.

Transportation Figure 8  
Freight Network





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## GOAL

- TG 5** Improve mobility and access for the movement of goods and services to enhance and promote economic opportunity throughout the city.

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## POLICIES

- T 5.1** Enhance Seattle's role as the hub for regional goods movement and as a gateway to national and international suppliers and markets.
- T 5.2** Develop a truck freight network in the Freight Master Plan that connects the city's manufacturing/industrial centers, enhances freight mobility and operational efficiencies, and promotes the city's economic health.
- T 5.3** Ensure that freight corridors are designed, maintained, and operated to provide efficient movement of truck traffic.
- T 5.4** Use intelligent transportation system technology to alert motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to the presence and anticipated length of closures due to train crossings and bridge openings for water vessels.
- T 5.5** Evaluate the feasibility of grade separation in locations where train-induced street closings result in significant delays and safety issues for other traffic, and improve the safety and operational conditions at rail crossings of city streets.
- T 5.6** Work with freight stakeholders and the Port of Seattle to maintain and improve intermodal freight connections involving Port container terminals, rail yards, industrial areas, airports, and regional highways.
- T 5.7** Support efficient and safe movement of goods by rail where appropriate, and promote efficient operation of freight rail lines and intermodal yards.
- T 5.8** Increase efficient and affordable access to jobs, education, and workforce training in order to promote economic opportunity.
- T 5.9** Improve access to urban villages and other neighborhood business districts for customers and delivery of goods.
- T 5.10** Build great streetscapes and activate public spaces in the right-of-way to promote economic vitality.
- T 5.11** Explore freight demand management strategies that could consolidate freight delivery trips and encourage vehicles are sized appropriately for an urban environment.

# Safety

## Discussion

Safety guides every decision that the Seattle Department of Transportation makes for transportation system operation and design. People expect to feel safe as they use streets, transit

facilities, sidewalks, and trails. Collisions involving pedestrians or people riding bicycles are a relatively small percentage of overall collisions in the city but represent a much higher percentage of the serious injuries and fatalities in the city. When we invest in protecting our most vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, we help build strong communities where residents and visitors are more likely to walk or bike, especially for short trips. Safer streets are also more efficient streets; they have fewer and less severe collisions, allowing people and goods to move safely and efficiently. In addition to making safety improvements, Seattle works to build a culture of mutual awareness between travelers. The City respects the right of all to travel safely regardless of how they choose to get around.

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## GOAL

**TG 6** Provide and maintain a safe transportation system that protects all travelers, particularly the most vulnerable users.

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## POLICIES

- T 6.1** Reduce collisions for all modes of transportation and work toward a transportation system that produces zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 to attain the City's **Vision Zero** objectives.
- T 6.2** Enhance community safety and livability through measures such as reduced speed limits, lane rechannelization, and crossing improvements.
- T 6.3** Consider lowering speed limits on residential streets and arterials as a way to reduce collision rates and improve safety.
- T 6.4** Minimize right-of-way conflicts to safely accommodate all travelers.
- T 6.5** Improve safety for all modes of transportation on streets heavily used by trucks.
- T 6.6** Invest in education measures that increase mutual awareness among motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- T 6.7** Implement innovative and effective measures to improve safety that combine engineering, education, evaluation, and enforcement.
- T 6.8** Make safety a priority in all transportation plans and projects, including project prioritization criteria.
- T 6.9** Use complete street principles, traffic-calming, and neighborhood traffic control strategies to promote safe neighborhood streets by discouraging cut-through traffic.

# Connecting to the Region

## Discussion

Seattle is the largest employment and cultural center in the Puget Sound region. It is also a destination for people from all over the area for work, shopping, and recreation. The city is served by a number of state and regional transportation facilities, including two interstate highways; several state highways; a regional light rail, commuter rail, and bus system; a ferry network; waterways; and railroads. While the bulk of the Transportation element addresses transportation within the city limits, this section provides guidance for larger regional projects that affect Seattle. It also provides guidance for Seattle's participation in regional transportation planning and funding efforts.

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### GOAL

- TG 7** Engage with other agencies to ensure that regional projects and programs affecting Seattle are consistent with City plans, policies, and priorities.

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### POLICIES

- T 7.1** Coordinate with regional, state, and federal agencies; other local governments; and transit providers when planning and operating transportation facilities and services that reach beyond the city's borders.
- T 7.2** Support completion of the freeway high-occupancy-vehicle lane system throughout the Central Puget Sound region and continued use of that system for promoting more efficient travel.
- T 7.3** Limit freeway capacity expansions intended primarily to accommodate drive-alone users to allow only spot improvements that enhance safety or remove operational constraints in specific locations.
- T 7.4** Support a strong regional ferry system that maximizes the movement of people, freight, and goods.
- T 7.5** Plan for the city's truck freight network, developed as part of the Freight Master Plan, to connect to the state and regional freight network, and to continue providing good connections to regional industrial and warehouse uses.
- T 7.6** Work with regional transit agency partners to expand and optimize cross-jurisdictional regional light rail and bus transit service investments that function as a single, coordinated system to encourage more trips to, from, and within Seattle on transit.
- T 7.7** Work with regional transit agencies to encourage them to provide service that is consistent with this Plan's growth goals and strategy.

- T 7.8** Support **regional transportation pricing** and tolling strategies that help manage regionwide transportation demand.
- T 7.9** Work with neighboring jurisdictions and King County to integrate the city's bicycle network, developed as part of the Bicycle Master Plan, with regional bicycle facilities.

## Operating and Maintaining the Transportation System

### Discussion

Thoughtful operation and maintenance of the transportation system promotes safety, efficiency, infrastructure preservation, and a high-quality environment. Spending money on maintaining and preserving the system today can prevent spending more dollars on replacing parts of the system later. This is particularly true for the more expensive and vital transportation assets, such as pavement, sidewalks, parking pay stations, intelligent transportation system devices, traffic-signal infrastructure, and bridges.

Since the City makes and maintains its transportation improvements with taxpayer money, it must spend every dollar wisely and in a way that is consistent with the City's overall vision. The City keeps a comprehensive inventory of transportation assets that includes information about the condition of its most valuable assets. The City uses performance measures to decide whether and when to repair or replace infrastructure. In addition to planning for future maintenance, the City must address the significant backlog of unmet maintenance needs that currently exists.

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### GOAL

- TG 8** Maintain and renew existing transportation assets to ensure the long-term viability of investments, reduce ongoing costs, and promote safe conditions.

---

### POLICIES

- T 8.1** Maintain the transportation system to keep it operating and to maximize its useful life.
- T 8.2** Operate the transportation system in a way that balances the following priorities: safety, mobility, accessibility, **social equity**, **placemaking**, infrastructure preservation, and resident satisfaction.
- T 8.3** Employ state-of-the-art **intelligent transportation systems** to increase efficiency of movement and reduce travel delays for all modes.

- T 8.4** Repair transportation facilities before replacement is necessary; replace failed facilities when replacement is more cost-effective than continuing to repair.
- T 8.5** Optimize traffic-signal corridors, taking the needs of all types of transportation into account.
- T 8.6** Designate a heavy haul network for truck freight to provide efficient freight operations to key port terminals and intermodal freight facilities.
- T 8.7** Mitigate construction impacts from City and private projects on the use of the street right-of-way and on the operation of the transportation system, especially for vulnerable populations.
- T 8.8** Look for innovative ways to create training, youth employment, and living wage opportunities for **marginalized populations** in the construction and major maintenance of transportation facilities.

## Measuring Level of Service

### Discussion

To accommodate the growth anticipated in this Plan and the increased demands on the transportation system that come with that growth, the Plan emphasizes strategies to increase travel options. Those travel options are particularly important for connecting urban centers and urban villages during the most congested times of day. Strategies for increasing travel options include concentrating development in urban villages well served by transit, completing the City's modal plan networks, and reducing drive-alone vehicle use during the most congested times of day. As discussed earlier in this Transportation element, using the current street right-of-way as efficiently as possible means encouraging forms of travel other than driving alone.

In order to help advance this Plan's vision, the City will measure the **level of service** (LOS) on its transportation facilities based on the share of all trips that are made by people driving alone. That measure focuses on travel that is occurring via the least space-efficient mode. By shifting travel from drive-alone trips to more efficient modes, Seattle will allow more people and goods to travel in the same amount of right-of-way. Because buses are the primary form of transit ridership in the city and buses operate on the arterial system, the percentage of trips made that are not drive-alone also helps measure how well transit can move around the city. A more detailed description of the City's transportation LOS system can be found in the **Transportation Appendix**.

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## GOAL

- TG 9** Use LOS standards as a gauge to assess the performance of the transportation system.

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## POLICIES

- T 9.1** Define arterial and transit LOS to be the share of drive-alone trips made during the late-afternoon peak period (3:00 to 6:00 p.m.).
- T 9.2** Provide a menu of transportation-demand management tools for future development to meet non-drive-alone **mode share** targets, provision of transit passes, carpool benefits, and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- T 9.3** Pursue strategies to reduce drive-alone trips in order to increase the ability of the city's transportation network to carry people and goods.
- T 9.4** Assess the mode share LOS standards over time and adjust as needed, based on review of other City transportation measures.

# Funding

## Discussion

The city's transportation network is vital to preserving the quality of life, prosperity, and health of all Seattleites. Only with adequate funding can Seattle continue to operate, maintain, and improve its transportation network.

In November 2015 Seattle voters approved the Levy to Move Seattle, which replaced the Bridging the Gap levy that expired at the end of 2015. The Levy to Move Seattle will provide \$930 million for transportation investments between 2016 and 2024 in three main categories: safety, congestion relief, and maintenance and preservation. This funding will help advance many of the policies in this Plan.

The City also has a commercial parking tax, which supports large capital improvement and preservation projects. In 2010 the City created the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD), which has authority to generate revenues from additional sources not otherwise available to the City. The STBD imposed a twenty-dollar vehicle license fee, which provides an additional dedicated financial resource for addressing transportation needs. In addition, Seattle voters approved increased funding for bus transit service in 2014, which adds bus service to many of the highest-ridership routes in the city.

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## GOAL

- TG 10** Ensure that transportation funding is sufficient to operate, maintain, and improve the transportation system that supports the City's transportation, land use, economic, environmental, equity, and other goals.

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## POLICIES

- T 10.1** Maintain and increase dedicated local transportation funding by renewing or replacing the transportation levy and by maintaining or replacing the existing commercial parking tax and Seattle Transportation Benefit District.
- T 10.2** Work with regional and state partners to encourage a shift to more reliance on user-based taxes and fees, and on revenues related to impacts on the transportation system and the environment.
- T 10.3** Leverage local funding resources by securing grants from regional, state, and federal sources, and through contributions from those who benefit from improvements.
- T 10.4** Partner with other City departments, as well as regional transportation and public works agencies, to coordinate investments, maximize project integration, reduce improvement costs, and limit construction impacts on neighborhoods.
- T 10.5** Make strategic investment decisions consistent with City plans and policies.
- T 10.6** Prioritize investment by considering life-cycle costs, safety, environmental benefits, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and public health benefits. Race and social equity should be a key factor in selecting transportation investments.
- T 10.7** Consider use of transportation-impact fees to help fund transportation system improvements needed to serve growth.
- T 10.8** Prepare a six-year **Capital Improvement Program** (CIP) with projects and programs that are fully or partially funded.
- T 10.9** Develop prioritized lists of projects, consistent with City policies, and actively pursue funds to implement those projects.
- T 10.10** Identify and evaluate possible additional funding resources and/or alternative land use and transportation scenarios if the level of transportation funding anticipated in the six-year financial analysis (shown in Transportation Figures 9 and 10) falls short of the estimated amount.
- T 10.11** Explore innovative means of reducing maintenance costs such as converting right-of-way into other uses when appropriate.

## Transportation Figure 9

Estimated Future Transportation Revenue

Source	Estimated Revenue in Millions (2016–2021)	
	Low	High
Seattle Transportation Benefit District Funding (vehicle license fee and sales tax)	\$300	\$357
Seattle Dedicated Transportation Funding	\$833	\$858
Grants and Partnerships	\$163	\$640
General Fund and Cumulative Reserve Fund	\$305	\$400
Seawall Levy and Waterfront Partnership	\$420	\$475
Long-Term Financing	\$100	\$145
Total	\$2,120	\$2,875

## Transportation Figure 10

Estimated Future Transportation Expenditures

Category	Estimated Expenditures in Millions (2016–2021)	
	Low	High
Operations and Maintenance	\$406	\$430
Major Maintenance and Safety	\$750	\$844
Mobility and Enhancements	\$964	\$1,601
Total	\$2,120	\$2,875



# Housing



## Introduction

In the City's vision for the future, all people have access to housing that is safe, clean, and affordable. As Seattle grows, its housing supply grows and adapts to meet the needs of all households, regardless of color or income, including families with children, seniors, and people who have a disability. Our growing city does not force people from their homes; they are able to stay in their **neighborhoods**, with their established **community** resources and cultural institutions. Throughout the city, quality housing options exist for people of all backgrounds.

In the wake of the Great Recession, Seattle has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of housing units due to booming demand. The city added nearly twenty-one thousand housing units between 2013 and 2015, the highest number in a three-year period since at least 1980. Rents have increased sharply, particularly impacting lower-income

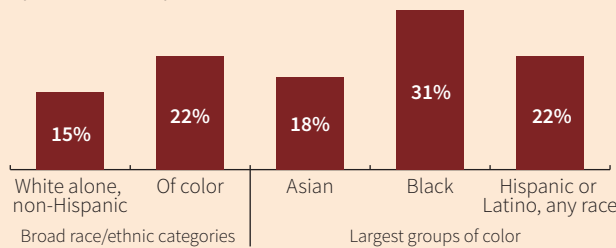
households. Stabilizing housing prices is a key step to stemming growing income inequality, a threat to the long-term strength of our region’s economy.

Rising housing costs affect **marginalized populations** the most. Seattle has been shaped by its history of racial segregation and the economic **displacement** of communities of color. Over time, homeowners can gain significant wealth that they can pass down to their descendants, while renters face the risk of growing housing-cost burden. The result is significant economic disparity along racial lines. Addressing injustices and protecting marginalized populations is a primary focus of the Housing element of this Plan.

Households that spend more than half of their monthly income on housing costs are considered severely housing-cost burdened. About 22 percent of households of color and close to a third of African American households are severely housing-cost burdened.

### Share of Seattle Households Who Are Severely Housing-Cost Burdened

by Race/Ethnicity of Person who Owns or Rents a Home



Source: 2006–2010 ACS CHAS special tabulation, US Census Bureau

One way the City works to address racial and **social equity** is by creating and preserving **affordable housing**, particularly for lower-income households. Public investments in affordable housing enable people to continue living in their neighborhoods. Creating affordable housing is also a way to expand housing options in historically unaffordable neighborhoods that have access to jobs, schools, and transit. As the City develops, evaluates, and implements land use and housing policies and programs, it engages historically **underrepresented** communities in the process. By collaborating with the larger community on these projects, the City aims to help reverse known trends of social and racial inequity.

This Housing element establishes goals and policies to address the housing needs of all Seattleites. Together, these goals and policies will contribute to building vibrant, resilient, and cohesive communities throughout our city. These goals and policies are grouped within the following five topic areas: Equal Access to Housing, Supply of Housing, Diversity of Housing, Housing Construction and Design, and Housing Affordability. The policies of the Housing element are interdependent with other elements of this Plan, especially the Growth Strategy element calling for most growth in urban centers and villages, and the Land Use element guiding the available places in Seattle for residential uses.

Various policies in this element refer to “**rent/income-restricted housing**.” This means housing with conditions that legally restrict the income of the tenants who live there and the rents

they may be charged. When this Plan refers to “affordable housing,” it generally means housing that lower-income households can afford without sacrificing essential needs like food and health care. Affordable housing includes rent/income-restricted housing, as well as housing that is low cost without any subsidy or incentive.

The **Housing Appendix** contains demographic information for the city and an analysis of housing need, as called for in the King County **Countywide Planning Policies**.

## Equal Access to Housing

### Discussion

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits landlords from discriminating against or in favor of any individual or group based on race, religion, national origin, sex, color, disability, or familial status (that is, pregnancy or the presence of children under eighteen). These characteristics are referred to as “protected classes” under the law. The State of Washington and the City of Seattle have extended protection to additional classes, including marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, use of Section 8 voucher, political ideology, and veteran or military status. Educating Seattleites about these federal, state, and local fair housing laws—and enforcing them—is critical to making our city welcoming and inclusive. These laws increase housing choices for people of all incomes and backgrounds.

The City also supports removing other barriers that prevent families and individuals from securing housing. For example, the City’s approach to homelessness is to move homeless people into housing quickly and then provide them services as needed. By focusing on helping individuals and families quickly move into permanent housing, the City helps the homeless avoid a costly and lengthy series of steps from emergency shelter to transitional housing to permanent housing. Social service agencies nationwide have found that without stable housing, it is extremely difficult for someone to tackle problems, including those related to physical or mental health or addiction, that may have led to that person’s homelessness. Removing barriers to housing reduces homelessness and helps people avoid the humiliation and vulnerability caused by not having a home.

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### GOAL

**H G1** Provide fair and **equal** access to housing for all people in Seattle.

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### POLICIES

**H 1.1** Help create a culture where everyone understands and respects the fair housing rights protected by federal, state, and local laws.

- H 1.2** Promote a diverse and inclusive city through housing programs that serve lower-income households.
- H 1.3** Work to overcome historical patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choices, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination through actions, such as affirmative marketing and fair housing education and enforcement.
- H 1.4** Remove barriers that prevent lower-income households from using rental assistance throughout Seattle, particularly in areas with **frequent transit**, schools, parks, and other amenities.
- H 1.5** Identify and remove, in coordination with other jurisdictions in the region, potential barriers to stable housing for individuals and families, such as housing screening practices that do not align with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in their use of criminal and civil records and that perpetuate disparate impacts of our criminal justice system and other institutions.
- H 1.6** Work to decrease disparities in homeownership by race and ethnicity.
- H 1.7** Support the development and preservation of affordable housing in areas with a high risk of displacement through tools and actions such as land banking, public or non-profit acquisition of affordable buildings, and new affordable and mixed-income development.

## Supply of Housing

### Discussion

Seattle is a fast-growing city, and as the population increases, demand for housing will continue to increase as well. The City is planning for seventy thousand new housing units by 2035. The majority of new housing is planned for **urban centers** and villages. These are the areas where investments in transportation, **open space**, and services are planned or have already been made. Record levels of housing development in the last few years have not been enough to keep up with the demand for housing that is caused by rapid economic growth. That inability of the market to meet demand has contributed to rising rents in Seattle.

In 2013, The City Council undertook a review of the city's affordable housing incentive programs. The Council commissioned reports on national best practices and new strategies to increase housing affordability in Seattle. In 2014, The Council and Mayor jointly convened the Seattle Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) Advisory Committee. In 2015, the mayor and Council approved the Seattle Housing Affordability and **Livability** Agenda (HALA). The HALA contains sixty-five recommendations for how Seattle can accommodate more housing. It includes steps that will help both for-profit and nonprofit housing developers build and preserve affordable housing. The HALA outlines a road map to build or

preserve fifty thousand housing units over the next ten years, including twenty thousand units of rent/income-restricted housing.

In 2016, the City published a report titled Growth and Equity. That report compiles data about several economic and demographic factors that help identify places in the city where residents, especially people of color and low-income residents, could be at risk of displacement or where there is less access to employment and other opportunities. As housing development continues, the City will promote policies that limit displacement, stabilize marginalized populations in their communities, and encourage a net increase in affordable housing over time.

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## GOAL

**H G2** Help meet current and projected regional housing needs of all economic and demographic groups by increasing Seattle's housing supply.

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## POLICIES

**H 2.1** Allow and promote innovative and nontraditional housing design and construction types to accommodate residential growth.

**H 2.2** Identify publicly owned sites suitable for housing and prioritize use of sites, where appropriate, for rent/income-restricted housing for lower-income households.

**H 2.3** Consider **Land Use Code** and Building Code regulations that allow for flexible reuse of existing structures in order to maintain or increase housing supply, while maintaining life-safety standards.

**H 2.4** Encourage use of vacant or underdeveloped land for housing and **mixed-use** development, and promote turning vacant housing back into safe places to live.

**H 2.5** Monitor the supply of housing and encourage the replacement of housing that is demolished or converted to nonresidential or higher-cost residential use.

**H 2.6** Seek to identify affordable housing at risk of demolition and work to mitigate the displacement of residents ahead of planned upzones.

**H 2.7** Evaluate the City's efforts to mitigate displacement of affordable housing.

# Diversity of Housing

## Discussion

Seattle needs a greater variety of housing types and a wider spectrum of affordability. Seattle's high housing costs are making it increasingly difficult for many households to live

in the city. Even middle-income households, especially families with children, struggle to meet the high prices of housing in most areas of the city. To address these issues, the City will consider allowing different types of housing than some zoning rules currently permit. Courtyard housing, row housing, and apartments are examples of potentially affordable and family-friendly housing options. The policies below encourage a broader array of housing choices in Seattle.

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## GOAL

**H G3** Achieve a mix of housing types that provide opportunity and choice throughout Seattle for people of various ages, races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds and for a variety of household sizes, types, and incomes.

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## POLICIES

- H 3.1** Identify and implement strategies, including development standards and design guidelines reflecting unique characteristics of each neighborhood, to accommodate an array of housing designs that meet the needs of Seattle's varied households.
- H 3.2** Allow and encourage housing for older adults and people with disabilities, including designs that allow for independent living, various degrees of assisted living, and/or skilled nursing care, in or near urban centers and **urban villages** where there is access to health care and other services and amenities.
- H 3.3** Encourage the development of family-sized housing affordable for households with a broad range of incomes in areas with access to amenities and services.
- H 3.4** Promote use of customizable modular designs and other flexible housing concepts to allow for households' changing needs, including in areas zoned for **single-family** use.
- H 3.5** Allow additional housing types in 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.

# Housing Construction and Design

## Discussion

High-quality housing design and construction can help protect our natural environment and resources, prepare for the challenges of **climate change**, and respond to changing housing needs over time. All Seattle housing should be safe, resilient, and well maintained. People generally have a common understanding of what constitutes safe housing. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) enforces codes that protect

public health, safety, and general welfare, such as the Building Code and the Housing and Building Maintenance Code. Now that the majority of housing units in Seattle are rentals, the SDCI's rental inspection program is particularly important. In addition to being safe, homes must be resilient. That is, individuals, households, communities, and regions should be able to maintain livable conditions in the event of natural disasters, loss of power, or other interruptions of normally available services.

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## GOAL

**H G4** Achieve healthy, safe, and environmentally sustainable housing that is adaptable to changing demographic conditions.

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## POLICIES

- H 4.1** Provide programs, regulations, and enforcement to help ensure that all housing is healthy and safe and meets basic housing-maintenance requirements.
- H 4.2** Encourage innovation in residential design, construction, and technology, and implement regulations to conserve water, energy, and materials; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and otherwise limit environmental and health impacts.
- H 4.3** Consider providing assistance for seismic retrofit of residential buildings, particularly those occupied by lower-income households, to reduce the risk of displacement after an earthquake.
- H 4.4** Increase housing opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities by promoting universal design features for new and renovated housing.
- H 4.5** Promote opportunities to combine housing and historic preservation efforts by rehabilitating structures of historic value for residential use.
- H 4.6** Promote access to public decision-making about housing for all Seattleites.
- H 4.7** Promote housing for all Seattleites that is safe and free from environmental and health hazards.
- H 4.8** Explore ways to reduce housing development costs.

# Housing Affordability

## Discussion

Affordable housing for Seattle's lower-income residents increases their ability to access opportunities in Seattle and helps reduce existing disparities. Research shows that investing in affordable housing for lower-income households yields positive social and economic outcomes, especially for families with children.

Washington State's **Growth Management Act** (GMA) requires each jurisdiction to include an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs in its Comprehensive Plan. King County's Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) provide additional direction and guidance for the inventory and analysis. The report on Seattle's housing supply and needs is provided in the **Housing Appendix** of this Plan.

As of 2015, there were approximately 27,200 units of rent/income-restricted housing in Seattle. Although this number may seem large, there is still significant need for affordable housing for households at the lowest **income levels**.

Seattle also currently has some low-cost market-rate rental housing, although not nearly enough to meet demand. Higher-income households occupy a portion of this housing. Roughly a third of units that have rents affordable to households with income below 80 percent of the **area median income** (AMI) are actually rented by households with higher incomes. That leaves a shortage of rental units for the households who need them. There would be no shortage of units for households with incomes between 50 percent and 80 percent of AMI were it not for down-renting by higher-income households. That is not the case for units with rents affordable at or below 50 percent of AMI, where the affordable rental housing shortages far exceed those caused by down-renting.

The Housing Appendix presents information on renter households in Seattle that have incomes in three income ranges—0 to 30 percent of AMI, 30 to 50 percent of AMI, and 50 to 80 percent of AMI. The Housing Appendix shows that in the two lowest of the three categories, there are many more households than there are affordable and available rental units. For instance, households with incomes of 0 to 30 percent of AMI outnumber the affordable and available units by at least 23,500. Rent/income-restricted housing plays a critical role in ensuring that low-cost housing actually serves lower-income households.

To meet needs associated with growth, an estimated 27,500 to 36,500 additional housing units affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of AMI will be needed by 2035. This includes 10,500 rent/income-restricted housing units for extremely low-income households.

The City's housing programs and regulatory strategies will continue to prioritize affordable housing for extremely low- and very low-income households. These households have the greatest housing need by far. The City assumes the large majority of units affordable to

**AMI (area median income):** the annual median income for families in the Seattle area, as published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, with adjustments for household size assuming 1 person for studio units and 1.5 people per bedroom for other units

**Lower-income** includes the following subcategories:

**Extremely low-income:** a household whose income is equal to or less than 30 percent of AMI

**Very low-income:** a household whose income is greater than 30 percent of AMI and equal to or less than 60 percent of AMI

**Low-income:** a household whose income is greater than 60 percent of AMI and equal to or less than 80 percent of AMI

**Moderate-income:** a household whose income is greater than 80 percent of AMI and equal to or less than 100 percent of AMI

**Middle-income:** a household whose income is greater than 100 percent of AMI and equal to or less than 150 percent of AMI



households with incomes between 60 percent and 80 percent of AMI will continue to be provided by the market.

Seattle in 2016 is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. The goals and policies in this Housing Affordability section help establish a framework for making Seattle a more affordable and **equitable** city.

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## **GOAL**

- H G5** Make it possible for households of all income levels to live affordably in Seattle, and reduce over time the unmet housing needs of lower-income households in Seattle.

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## **POLICIES**

- H 5.1** Pursue public and private funding sources for housing preservation and production to provide housing opportunities for lower-wage workers, people with special needs, and those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.
- H 5.2** Expand programs that preserve or produce affordable housing, preferably long term, for lower-income households, and continue to prioritize efforts that address the needs of Seattle's extremely low-income households.
- H 5.3** Promote housing affordable to lower-income households in locations that help increase access to education, employment, and social opportunities, while supporting a more inclusive city and reducing displacement from Seattle neighborhoods or from the city as a whole.
- H 5.4** Monitor regularly the supply, diversity, and affordability of housing for households by income level, and use this information to help evaluate whether changes to housing strategies and policies are needed to encourage more affordable housing or to advance racial and social equity.
- H 5.5** Collaborate with King County and other jurisdictions in efforts to prevent and end homelessness and focus those efforts on providing permanent housing and supportive services and on securing the resources to do so.
- H 5.6** Increase housing choice and opportunity for extremely low- and very low-income households in part by funding rent/income-restricted housing throughout Seattle, especially in areas where there is a high risk of displacement. Also increase housing choice in areas where lower-cost housing is less available but where there is high-frequency transit service and other amenities, even if greater subsidies may be needed.
- H 5.7** Consider that access to frequent transit may lower the combined housing and transportation costs for households when locating housing for lower-income households.
- H 5.8** Strive for no net loss of rent/income-restricted housing citywide.

- H 5.9** Use strategies that will reduce the potential for displacement of marginalized populations when making decisions related to funding or locating rent/income-restricted housing.
- H 5.10** Encourage rental-housing owners to preserve, rehabilitate, or redevelop their properties in ways that limit housing displacement, maintain affordable, healthy, and safe living conditions for current residents, and consider cultural and economic needs of the surrounding neighborhood.
- H 5.11** Require advance notice to all tenants and payment of relocation assistance to tenants with household incomes below established thresholds before issuing permits for housing demolition, change of use, or substantial rehabilitation or before removing use restrictions from rent/income-restricted housing.
- H 5.12** Require culturally sensitive communication with the neighbors of proposed rent/income-restricted housing for extremely low- and very low-income households, with the goal of furthering fair housing.
- H 5.13** Seek to reduce cost burdens among Seattle households, especially lower-income households and households of color.
- H 5.14** Encourage and advocate for new federal, state, and county laws, regulations, programs, and incentives that would increase the production and preservation of lower-income housing.
- H 5.15** Encourage a shared responsibility between the private and public sectors for addressing affordable housing needs.
- H 5.16** Consider implementing a broad array of affordable housing strategies in connection with new development, including but not limited to **development regulations**, inclusionary zoning, incentives, property tax exemptions, and permit fee reductions.
- H 5.17** Consider using substantive authority available through the State Environmental Policy Act to require that new development mitigate adverse impacts on housing affordable for lower-income households.
- H 5.18** Consider implementing programs that require affordable housing with new development, with or without rezones or changes to development standards that increase development capacity.
- H 5.19** Consider requiring provision for housing, including rent/income-restricted housing, as part of major institution master plans and development agreements when such plans would lead to housing demolition or employment growth.
- H 5.20** Implement strategies and programs to help ensure a range of housing opportunities affordable for Seattle’s workforce.
- H 5.21** Encourage major employers to fund local and regional affordable housing for lower-income, moderate-income, and middle-income households.
- H 5.22** Continue to promote best practices in use of green building materials, sustainability, and resiliency in policies for rent/income-restricted housing.

- H 5.23** Support programs that enable Seattle’s lower-income homeowners to remain safely and affordably housed.
- H 5.24** Support financially sustainable strategies to provide homeownership opportunities for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households, especially for families with children, in part to enable these households to have a path toward wealth accumulation.
- H 5.25** Work to mitigate the potential demolition of housing units that are affordable to low-income households without subsidies.
- H 5.26** Explore implementation of models that could provide opportunities for affordable homeownership, such as community land-trusts, down payment assistance, mixed-income housing requirements and limited equity housing co-ops.

# Capital Facilities



## Introduction

Seattle has a comprehensive network of facilities that provide important services to the city. These are known as **capital facilities**. Maintaining and expanding them is critical for providing a high-quality of life as the city grows. These facilities include those owned and managed by the City, such as police and fire facilities, libraries, neighborhood service centers, City office space, and Seattle Center. Other capital facilities are ones that the City funds or otherwise supports, such as schools and health clinics. The City encourages non-City organizations, such as Seattle Public Schools and Public Health—Seattle & King County, to meet the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan. This section generally applies to buildings, and it does not apply to transportation **infrastructure**, utility infrastructure, or affordable-housing projects, which are discussed in other sections of this Plan.

Overall, the City's network of capital facilities is generally sufficient to accommodate forecasted housing and job growth through 2035. The **Capital Facilities Appendix** contains

information about City-owned facilities, including parks and libraries, as well as information about Seattle Public Schools. Unlike utilities and transportation, demand for capital facilities is determined largely by factors other than population, such as service areas or response times. However, the City continues to invest in existing and new facilities to improve the system and ensure that it remains relevant and useful to changing populations. Over the next twenty years, the City will aim to ensure that Seattle's capital facilities and programming

- *contribute to a high degree of personal and public health and safety;*
- *are equitably distributed based upon Seattle's Race and Social Justice principles and the different needs of individuals and communities;*
- *provide services that are relevant to neighborhoods throughout the city and are consistent with each community's priorities;*
- *support the City's goals of protecting and restoring the natural environment, in particular to reduce the impacts of and adapt to climate change;*
- *encourage the healthy physical, educational, and cultural development of children and adults;*
- *provide space for the city's growing population to gather, connect, and build community;*
- *respond to increasing diversity, changing technology, and additional demand on limited facilities; and*
- *are resilient to the effects of natural and human-made disasters.*

Achieving this vision will enable the City to create a capital facilities system that is an exceptional resource for all Seattleites. Part of the challenge in achieving the vision will be in recognizing and serving the disparate needs of different portions of the population.

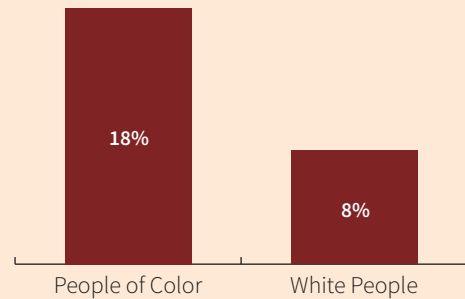
An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities and a forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities are included in the Capital Facilities Appendix. Detailed information about specific planned capital facility improvements, including the proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities and a six-year plan for financing these improvements, is contained in Seattle's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is updated as part of the City's annual budget process.

People in different racial and ethnic groups and income segments vary in the extent and ways they use facilities provided by the City. Community Centers, for example, are used at a higher rate by residents of color than by other residents.

Community centers are designed to provide gathering spaces and recreational opportunities that are both culturally inclusive and affordable regardless of income.

The 2014 Parks Legacy Plan survey indicates that the Community Centers provided by the City are an especially important resource for persons of color. A greater share of respondents of color than whites said they visited a community center on a weekly basis.

### Percentages of Survey Respondents in Each Group Who Visit a Community Center on a Weekly Basis



Source: September 2014 Parks Legacy Plan survey.

## Strategic Investment

### Discussion

The City has limited physical and financial resources available to maintain and improve our capital facilities network. The investment decisions we make will have long-term implications for our ability to serve a changing population. Consequently, Seattle must be strategic about investing these resources. This section describes the overarching goals and policies that apply to all aspects of capital facility development and management. These considerations will guide our actions through all aspects of working with capital facilities, including maintenance, acquisition, design, construction, and service-provision operations.

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#### GOAL

**CF G1** Develop and manage capital facilities to provide long-term environmental, economic, social, and health benefits for all residents and communities when using public investments, land, and facilities.

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#### POLICIES

**CF 1.1** Assess the **policy** and fiscal implications of potential major capital facility investments as part of the City's capital decision-making process. The evaluation should include consideration of a capital project's

- consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and functional plans;

- effects on Seattle’s environmental, social, economic, and human health over the lifetime of the investment;
- contributions to an **equitable** distribution of facilities and services especially to correct historic under-investment in low-income areas;
- ability to support **urban centers** and villages that are experiencing or expecting high levels of residential and employment growth or those with lower access to the benefits of City-sponsored capital facilities; and
- total costs of ownership over a project’s life, including construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning.

- CF 1.2** Prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities, making efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.
- CF 1.3** Provide capital facilities that are models of environmental, economic, and social **stewardship** and that serve as examples for private development.
- CF 1.4** Provide capital facilities, such as libraries and community centers, that will keep Seattle attractive to families with children.
- CF 1.5** Encourage the protection, enhancement, and adaptive reuse of City-owned historic facilities.
- CF 1.6** Develop resilient capital facilities by considering the potential impacts of changing demographics, conditions, and events—such as **climate change**, technological changes, and natural and human-made disasters—in planning and investment decisions.
- CF 1.7** Structure user fees and scholarships to mitigate disproportionate cost burdens on low-income households.
- CF 1.8** Leverage investments to create training and living wage job opportunities, particularly for **marginalized populations** and local residents.
- CF 1.9** Continue to invest in Seattle Public Library programs and resources so that they remain free and open to all.

## Facility Operations and Maintenance

### Discussion

Seattle has already made substantial investments in developing existing facilities. For this reason, the operation and maintenance of the facilities we already have is key to making efficient use of resources. This section applies to daily operations and monitoring of these facilities, as well as minor improvements to them.

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## GOAL

- CF G2** Reduce ongoing resource consumption and day-to-day costs of the City's capital facilities, and protect their long-term viability, while serving the needs of the people who use them.

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## POLICIES

- CF 2.1** Use maintenance plans for capital facilities to make efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.
- CF 2.2** Manage existing facilities with a resource-conservation approach and the specific aim of continuously reducing energy use, water use, and **stormwater** impacts, as well as lowering utility costs.
- CF 2.3** Seek to achieve 20 percent energy savings from a 2008 baseline across the City's portfolio of buildings by 2020 and to achieve **carbon neutrality** by 2050.
- CF 2.4** Manage existing facilities to maintain healthy environments for occupants and users.

# Facility Siting

## Discussion

When the City builds new capital facilities, it's making substantial long-term investments. These are facilities that should serve the city for many decades to come. The location of these facilities can have major impacts on the long-term cost of providing services. They must be thoughtfully placed in order to provide the most benefits for local communities. As a result, Seattle must consider a wide range of questions in making these decisions. How will potential locations impact the efficiency of operations? Will services be provided equitably to all members of the community? What are the environmental consequences of each location, and how will they affect our ability to serve a growing population?

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## GOAL

- CF G3** Locate capital facilities to achieve efficient citywide delivery of services, support an equitable distribution of services, minimize environmental impacts, and maximize facilities' value to the communities in which they are located.

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## POLICIES

- CF 3.1** Encourage the location of new capital facilities in urban centers and villages to support future growth and attract both public and private investments.



- CF 3.2** Encourage the location of new capital facilities where they would support equitable distribution of services and address the needs of marginalized communities.
- CF 3.3** Locate capital facilities so that the majority of expected users can reach them by walking, bicycling, and/or taking public transit.
- CF 3.4** Seek to avoid siting new facilities in areas known to be prone to the effects of natural or human-made hazards, such as earthquake **liquefaction**-prone areas.
- CF 3.5** Encourage the joint use, reuse, and repurposing of existing City-owned land and buildings to further the City's long-range goals.
- CF 3.6** Consider future climate conditions during siting, particularly sea level, to help ensure capital facilities function as intended over their planned life cycle.
- CF 3.7** Consider alternate service delivery models that may be more resource efficient or that could better reach marginalized communities.

## Facility Design and Construction

### Discussion

As with location, the design and construction of capital facilities have a profound impact on how they are able to serve the city. The way the facilities are built affects the long-term cost of the services they provide, how well they serve the community, and their environmental impacts. By considering a range of perspectives, the City can design and build facilities that better suit the needs of Seattleites, now and in the future. The following policies address design and construction of the City's capital facilities, including major improvements and rehabilitation to existing facilities.

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#### GOAL

- CF G4** Design and construct capital facilities so that they are considered assets to their communities and act as models of environmental, economic, and social stewardship.

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#### POLICIES

- CF 4.1** Seek to make all capital facilities accessible and relevant to people of all abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and cultures.
- CF 4.2** Strive for high levels of energy and water efficiency in City-owned facilities.
- CF 4.3** Use materials efficiently, prioritize local and environmentally preferable products, and minimize waste.

- CF 4.4** Create healthy indoor and outdoor environments for both users and occupants.
- CF 4.5** Provide building-design strategies that promote active living through the placement and design of stairs, elevators, and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- CF 4.6** Encourage a wide range of transportation options by promoting car sharing and by providing bicycle, transit, and electric-car charging facilities for visitors to City facilities.
- CF 4.7** Consider future climate conditions during design, including changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level, to help ensure capital facilities function as intended over their planned life cycle.
- CF 4.8** Seek to mitigate impacts of City projects on adjacent communities, especially lower-income residents and small locally-owned businesses, in order to reduce the possibility of displacement.

## Non-City Service Providers

### Discussion

In addition to directly providing services through its own capital facilities, the City works with other entities that serve Seattle. These include Seattle Public Schools, Public Health—Seattle & King County, Washington State, and King County, as well as other jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations. Working together—for instance, through joint planning, funding other service providers, and allowing other groups to use City-owned property—we can better provide services to Seattle’s residents.

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#### GOAL

- CF G5** Make efficient use of resources when investing in facilities and service delivery that involve other agencies and organizations.

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#### POLICIES

- CF 5.1** Collaborate with other public and nonprofit organizations to include location within **urban villages** as a major criterion for selecting sites for new or expanded community-based facilities or public amenities.
- CF 5.2** Work with other public or nonprofit agencies to identify and pursue new co-location, joint-use and temporary use opportunities in public facilities for community programs, services, performances, exhibits and meetings.
- CF 5.3** Partner with Seattle Public Schools to plan for expected growth in student population, explore opportunities to reduce the costs of developing new schools,

encourage the siting of new school facilities in or near urban centers and villages, and make it easy for students and families to walk and bike to school.

**CF 5.4** Join with other jurisdictions in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties to explore regional funding strategies for capital facilities, especially those that serve or benefit citizens throughout the region.

**CF 5.5** Use nontraditional strategies for service delivery, such as the leasing of City-owned buildings or funding of non-City facilities, where they would provide greater benefit to the city.

# Utilities



## Introduction

Utilities are basic services that keep the city working. As a highly urbanized area, Seattle has a fully developed and comprehensive utility **infrastructure** system. This system provides energy, drinking water, water for fire suppression, drainage, sewers, solid waste management, and communications services throughout the city. These services are managed by different public and private providers that must share space within the city's street **right-of-way**. Seattle City Light provides electricity throughout the city and beyond the city boundaries. Seattle Public Utilities provides drinking water, drainage and sewer systems, and solid waste services within the city limits. In addition, it provides water service directly or indirectly to much of King County. King County provides combined drainage and sewer services in portions of Seattle and is responsible for treating all wastewater generated in the city. The City's Department of Information Technology maintains an extensive data and fiber optic network. It shares conduit installation and maintenance with multiple partners, and leases excess fiber capacity to private providers.

Privately owned utility companies also serve Seattle. These provide natural gas, district steam, and communications infrastructure and services. Additionally, various companies operate wireless communications facilities such as television, radio, and cellular phone towers and antennas. As the regulator of the public right-of-way, the City has limited control of private utilities. However, its agreements with cable companies do help ensure technical quality, protect customer rights, and support public services.

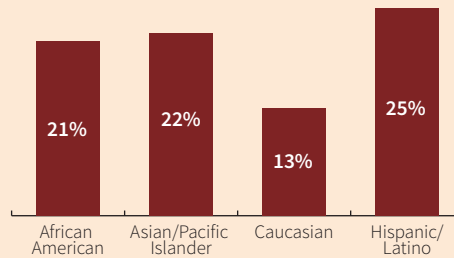
As Seattle continues to grow over the coming years, the existing utilities infrastructure is well poised to accommodate new buildings, although some development strategies and construction modifications may be required to bring services to individual lots. With proper maintenance and strategic planning, the existing infrastructure will also be able to support this Plan's broader goals of sustainability, economic efficiency, and **equitable** service access for all Seattleites. The **Utilities Appendix** contains information about the Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities systems, as well as about privately owned utilities providing natural gas, district steam, and other energy, and communications services.

The utilities system will need to address historic conditions and respond to changing needs, technologies, and other factors in order to thrive over the next twenty years. The electrical system will have to increase capacity and become more reliable in order to adapt to emerging technologies such as local solar energy production and electric vehicles, while continuing to address **climate change** and maintaining a significant distribution system. The drinking water, drainage, and sewer systems will have to respond to new goals and regulatory mandates for water quality, as well as prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. At the same time, the drainage and wastewater utilities need to make updates to older systems that have produced combined sewer overflows and degraded creeks. The communications systems will need to grow to continue to address City, business, resident, education, health, service sector, and mobile communication needs.

Future investments will need to help the City address race and **social equity**. Seattle must ensure that the burdens and benefits of high-quality utilities infrastructure are distributed equitably throughout the city. Future infrastructure investments should help rectify existing environmental and service disparities while supporting the health and economic opportunity of underinvested communities. These areas of the city are disproportionately impacted by environmental contaminants or lack of service such as high-speed Internet availability.

A City survey shows disparities in access by race and ethnicity, with Hispanic or Latino households the least likely to have access to the Internet. Considering the importance of the Internet for receiving information, conducting business, and looking for work, having access to it is critical for people to participate in the economic life of the community.

### Percentage of Seattle Households without Internet Access at Home



Source: Community Technology Survey 2015

The Utilities element of this Plan outlines goals and policies that will guide City decisions about providing and updating services. It also addresses emerging issues that utilities face. Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities periodically prepare strategic plans that guide the work of the utilities consistent with this Plan. An inventory of existing infrastructure as well as the forecasted future needs for City-owned utilities are discussed in **this element's appendix**. The capital programs planned over the next six years are included in the City's most recently adopted **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**. Though this element focuses on how the City operates its own utilities, it also discusses how the City influences non-City utilities, such as communications, natural gas, and district steam.

## Service Delivery

### Discussion

Utilities providers must plan strategically to invest in maintaining and improving service delivery within finite physical and financial resources. Decisions we make today will have long-term implications for our ability to serve a changing population. This section describes the overarching goals and policies that apply to all aspects of service delivery.

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#### GOAL

- U G1** Provide safe, reliable, and affordable utility services that are consistent with the City's aims of environmental **stewardship**, race and social equity, economic opportunity, and the protection of public health.

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## POLICIES

- U 1.1** Provide equitable levels of service by accounting for existing community conditions, considering how decisions will impact varied geographic and socioeconomic groups, and making service equity a criterion in decision-making.
- U 1.2** Coordinate planning, programs, and projects for City utilities with those of other City departments to lower costs, improve outcomes, and limit construction and operational impacts.
- U 1.3** Strive to develop a resilient utility system where planning and investment decisions account for changing conditions, such as climate change, fluctuations in demand, technological changes, increased solar energy generation, and natural disasters.
- U 1.4** Support innovative approaches to service delivery, such as the development of **distributed systems** or joint ventures by City and non-City utilities, where they could further overall goals for utilities.
- U 1.5** Ensure that new private development provides adequate investments to maintain established utility service standards.
- U 1.6** Make utility services as affordable as possible through equitable delivery of utility discount programs and incentives.
- U 1.7** Leverage investments and agreements with private utilities and vendors to create training and living wage job opportunities, particularly for low-income and local residents.
- U 1.8** Support asset-management programs for the renewal and replacement of utility infrastructure.

## Utility Resource Management

### Discussion

Natural resources such as water, fuel, and materials, as well as hydropower capacity, are the basic inputs and outputs of the City's utilities. Issues related to energy supply, water supply and disposal, and waste management are essentially about how these resources are used, changed, and released. While the City has adequate existing capacity to provide electricity, drinking water, and waste disposal over the next twenty years, proper stewardship of these resources is vitally important for meeting the utilities' key goals. These goals include reducing impacts on the environment and preparing for climate change and a growing population.

This section describes how the utility providers manage energy supply, water supply and disposal, and materials to make the most effective use of these resources.

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## GOAL

- U G2** Conserve potable water, electricity, and material resources through the actions of the utilities and their customers.

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## POLICIES

- U 2.1** Use cost-effective **demand management** to meet the City's utility resource needs, and support such practices by wholesale customers of City utilities.
- U 2.2** Consider short-term and long-term environmental and race and social equity impacts related to acquiring and using natural resources.
- U 2.3** Remain **carbon neutral** in the generation of electricity by relying first on energy efficiency, second on renewable resources, and third, when fossil fuel use is necessary, on offsetting the release of greenhouse gases.
- U 2.4** Strive to be carbon neutral in the delivery of drinking water, drainage, sewer, and solid waste services, both directly and through partnerships with private utilities and vendors.
- U 2.5** Pursue the long-term goal of diverting most of the city's solid waste away from landfills by increasing recycling, composting, and promoting products that are made to be reused, repaired, or recycled back into nature or the marketplace.
- U 2.6** Prevent pollutants and high water flows from damaging aquatic systems by preserving native vegetation, limiting **impervious surfaces** and **stormwater** runoff, reducing contamination of street runoff and stormwater, addressing combined sewer overflows, and minimizing illegal discharges into water bodies.
- U 2.7** Provide opportunities for **marginalized populations** to participate in conservation programs provided by the City's utilities and through partnerships with private utilities and vendors.
- U 2.8** Monitor waste reduction programs and develop new strategies when goals are not being met.

# Utility Facility Siting and Design

## Discussion

New substations, reservoirs, pump stations, green stormwater facilities, treatment facilities, and other utility infrastructure represent substantial long-term investments. As capacity increases and demand changes throughout the city, Seattle may need to add new utility facilities. Since the location and design of these facilities can have major impacts on their long-term cost and effectiveness, we must consider a wide range of perspectives in making these decisions. For example, siting and design decisions may impact efficiency, equity of



service provision, environmental outcomes, and our ability to serve a growing population. We must also take existing conditions into account, such as the historical concentration of large polluting industries and utility operations in areas that also house low-income, racially diverse communities. By considering a range of desired outcomes for new facilities, the City can also design facilities that meet a broad range of utility goals.

The following policies address the location and design of Seattle’s utility facilities.

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## GOAL

- U G3** Site and design facilities so that they help to efficiently and equitably provide services to all Seattleites and provide value to the communities where they are located.

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## POLICIES

- U 3.1** Consider and budget for the potential operation and maintenance costs of new facilities when developing them.
- U 3.2** Discourage siting and design alternatives that may increase negative impacts, such as traffic, noise, and pollution, particularly in communities that already bear a disproportionate amount of these impacts.
- U 3.3** Apply consistent and equitable standards for the provision of community and customer amenities when they are needed to offset the impact of construction projects, ongoing operations, and facility maintenance practices.
- U 3.4** Build facilities that are models of environmental stewardship by including high levels of energy, water, and material efficiency, effectively managing stormwater on-site, prioritizing local and environmentally preferable products, and limiting waste.
- U 3.5** Consider opportunities for collocating facilities, allowing **mixed-use** development, or creating accessible **open space** when siting and designing utility facilities, provided doing so would still allow for safe and secure utility operations.
- U 3.6** Consider future climate conditions during siting and design, including changes to temperature, rainfall, and sea level, to help ensure **capital facilities** function properly as intended over their planned life cycle.
- U 3.7** Consider and address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities of color and lower-income communities when prioritizing projects.

# Coordination within the Right-of-Way

## Discussion

Above, below, and on the ground, Seattle’s roads, paths, and other right-of-way spaces contain a vast array of utility infrastructure. Pipes, conduits, wires, poles, service vaults, storage tanks, pollution-control structures, streetlights, gutters, swales, and infiltration facilities are carefully integrated into the city’s overall landscape. Due to limited space, however, the way these facilities are placed and maintained must be carefully managed. The City must work to minimize conflicts between the utilities and other uses of the right-of-way, as well as to make sure that infrastructure investments are well maintained.

At the same time, new investments in these facilities—particularly projects that result in opening the pavement—also provide opportunities to improve a variety of existing facilities and meet multiple objectives. Consequently, the City should look for opportunities to share costs, undertake joint projects, or otherwise consider the goals of other departments when undertaking projects in the right-of-way.

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### GOAL

- U G4** Coordinate right-of-way activities among departments to meet transmission, distribution, and conveyance goals; to minimize the costs of infrastructure investment and maintenance; to manage stormwater; and to support other uses such as transportation, trees, and public space.

---

### POLICIES

- U 4.1** Engage departments in early coordination and collaboration on transportation and utility projects in the right-of-way to avoid space conflicts, identify joint project opportunities, and minimize life-cycle costs across all City departments.
- U 4.2** Coordinate construction to limit cost and public inconvenience caused by road and right-of-way disruption.

# Non-City Utilities

## Discussion

There are a few ways the City generally works with non-City utilities, such as natural gas, district steam, and communications providers. The City reviews street use permits, coordinates projects, creates development and leasing policies, and executes franchise agreements or

programmatic term permits. These relationships offer opportunities to improve service provision for customers, reduce the impacts of construction, and encourage non-City utilities to work toward City goals. Specific policies about the location of communications facilities are included in the Land Use element. The following policies address the operation of non-City utilities in Seattle generally.

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## **GOAL**

**U G5** Work with non-City utilities to promote the City’s overall goals for utility service and coordinated construction within the right-of-way.

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## **POLICIES**

**U 5.1** Provide affected non-City utilities with timely and effective notices of planned road and right-of-way trenching, maintenance, and upgrade activities.

**U 5.2** Support competition among private providers by giving equitable access to the right-of-way for all data and telecommunications service providers to reach their customers.

**U 5.3** Encourage improvements in the communications system to achieve the following:

- Universal and affordable access for residents, businesses, and institutions within Seattle, particularly for marginalized populations
- Customer options and competitive pricing
- Consumer privacy, system security, and reliability
- State-of-the-art services

# Economic Development



## Introduction

Seattle is the vital center of the Puget Sound economy and is a leading West Coast hub. Over the past fifty years, Seattle's economy has successfully transitioned its focus from timber, shipping, aerospace, and the military to more diverse sources that reflect traditional industry, emerging technology, and innovation-driven sectors. After a challenging decade that included the Nisqually earthquake, impacts from September 11, and the Great Recession, Seattle's economy recovered more quickly than that of many other cities. By 2013, Seattle had regained the 35,000 jobs lost during the recession, pushing unemployment below 5 percent for the first time since 2008. The highest job growth occurred in the services sector. Although the number of jobs in the city's two **manufacturing/industrial centers** has shrunk, they still account for 16 percent of all jobs in the city.

The City is anticipating an additional 115,000 jobs over the next twenty years. The urban village strategy identifies the geographic areas best suited for job growth—**urban centers**, **urban villages**, and manufacturing/industrial centers. Some businesses and jobs are

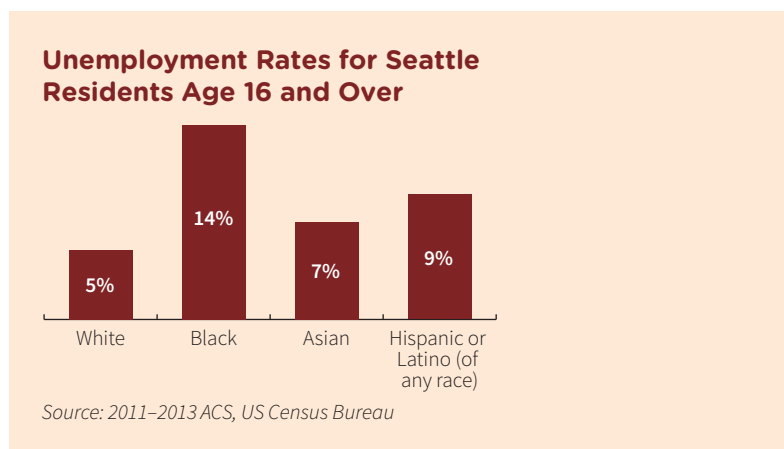
best suited to the **mixed-use**, walkable urban centers and villages. Others require unique features, services, and targeted land uses that fit best in manufacturing/industrial centers. Seattle must balance these varied demands in order to sustain existing businesses while also anticipating the needs of emerging businesses and industries.

The purpose of the Economic Development element of this Plan is to provide direction about how to maintain and grow Seattle’s vibrant, diverse, and increasingly global economy to benefit individuals across **income levels**, as well as business, industry, and the city’s diverse communities. As Seattle grows, the City will strive to reduce income inequities and to identify and address policies that contribute to or create inequity.

Seattle is an attractive place to live, giving it a competitive advantage. Seattle’s beautiful physical setting, thriving cultural scene, walkable neighborhoods, diverse restaurants, unique shopping, access to nature, and historic locations generate direct economic benefits to residents. These attributes also contribute to the high-quality of life that draws businesses, people, and tourists to the city. Seattle also benefits from the way leaders from public and private sectors work together to encourage innovation and to support business formation, retention, and expansion.

However, not all residents have shared in Seattle’s economic prosperity. Communities of color, for example, have higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes, and less education when compared to the city as a whole. Unemployment rates in Seattle have remained higher for people of color than for whites in the wake of the Great Recession. The 2011 to 2013 American Community Survey found that close to 14 percent of African American residents in Seattle were unemployed during that time span. This is over twice the unemployment rate for whites. More recent data shows lower overall unemployment in Seattle, and national statistics show that unemployment among African Americans is also declining. However, current data about African American unemployment in Seattle is not available.

Widening gaps in income and opportunity hurt Seattle’s future prospects. Closing these gaps will require, among other things, more training and education for the city’s **marginalized populations**. Improving education and job skills within these communities will reduce the need to import workers from elsewhere. Community-led economic development in underinvested neighborhoods can spur small-business start-up and growth. It can also provide economic opportunities for current resident, immigrant, and refugee entrepreneurs. Shared prosperity is not just about what low-income communities need—it is about what they can contribute.



The **Land Use Appendix** shows the number of jobs in each urban center and urban village.

# Commercial Districts

## Discussion

Seattle enjoys an attractive, flourishing Downtown core that houses about 30 percent of all jobs within the city. Outside of Downtown, a network of long-standing, distinctive, walkable places (known as **hub urban villages** and **residential urban villages**) exists. This is where small businesses thrive, communities come together, and many local jobs are created. About 12 percent of Seattle's jobs are located in these areas. The Equitable Development Implementation Plan is one of the tools that the City is using to implement the policies in this section.

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### GOAL

**ED G1** Encourage vibrant commercial districts in urban centers and villages.

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### POLICIES

- ED 1.1** Enhance the Downtown core as the economic center of the city and the region, and strengthen its appeal as home to many of Seattle's vital professional service firms, high technology companies, and regional retailers, as well as cultural, historic, entertainment, convention, and tourist facilities.
- ED 1.2** Promote a comprehensive approach to strengthening neighborhood business districts through organization; marketing; business and retail development; and clean, safe, walkable, and attractive environments.
- ED 1.3** Prioritize assistance to commercial districts in areas of lower economic opportunity with high concentrations of small locally-owned businesses..
- ED 1.4** Enrich the vibrancy of neighborhood business districts through the integration of design, public art, public space, historic preservation, small locally-owned businesses and cultural spaces and programming.
- ED 1.5** Support small locally-owned businesses in commercial districts to reinforce local neighborhood and cultural identity and strengthen the local economy.
- ED 1.6** Pursue strategies for community development that help meet the needs of marginalized populations in multicultural business districts, to reinforce local neighborhood and cultural identity by preserving small locally-owned businesses that are at risk of **displacement** due to increasing costs.
- ED 1.7** Seek new tools to support the creation of spaces attractive and affordable to businesses threatened with displacement so that small locally-owned businesses are able to remain in their neighborhoods.

- ED 1.8** Support formation of Business Improvement Areas to help provide clean and safe services, marketing and promotion, business and economic development planning, **community** appearance and pedestrian environment, urban design, advocacy, and organizational development/administration in commercial districts.

## Industry Clusters

### Discussion

Seattle's best prospects for future economic growth are in its key “**industry clusters**”—concentrated networks of interdependent firms in a defined geographic area that share common markets, technologies, and a need for skilled workers. Examples of Seattle's industry clusters include manufacturing, maritime, biotech and life sciences, global health and health care, clean technology, information technology, tourism, and film and music.

These clusters certainly help the associated businesses, which benefit from the rapid exchange of information, leading to innovative and efficient operations. The clusters are also an asset to the overall economy. Generally, businesses in industry clusters pay higher than average wages, bring new capital into the economy, are environmentally minded, and add variety to the economic base. By identifying key sectors of the economy in which Seattle has a competitive advantage, the City can better shape industry clusters and help achieve a vibrant, balanced, and diversified economy that benefits individuals across all income levels.

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### GOAL

- ED G2** Enhance strategic industry clusters that build on Seattle's competitive advantages.

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### POLICIES

- ED 2.1** Improve linkages between industry clusters and research institutions, hospitals, educational institutions, and other technology-based businesses.
- ED 2.2** Encourage collaboration among businesses within and across industry clusters in the areas of marketing, research, capital and talent acquisition, job training, and expansion of highly skilled jobs.
- ED 2.3** Improve the ability of industry clusters to transfer technology in cooperation with other jurisdictions and with major education and research institutions.
- ED 2.4** Encourage industry clusters to have workforces that are representative of Seattle's racial and socioeconomic groups.

- ED 2.5** Promote coordination of economic development and community development among City departments, as well as with all levels of government, the business community, and nonprofits, to strengthen industry clusters.
- ED 2.6** Seek to identify and support innovative small locally-owned businesses that could form new industry clusters.

## Business Climate

### Discussion

A city's business climate is determined by how well it attracts and sustains businesses. The external factors that shape this climate include quality of the workforce, taxes, regulations, incentives, and other government policies and investments, as well as overall quality of life in the city. Seattle is renowned for its mild climate, extraordinary access to recreation and natural resources, and diverse cultural offerings. Seattle's collaborative culture is another economic advantage. However, some aspects of Seattle's business climate pose challenges for business, such as complex **development regulations**, earthquake risk, and underfunded transportation and education systems.

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#### GOAL

- ED G3** Encourage a business climate that supports new investment, job creation, and **resilience** and that values cultural diversity and inclusion.

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#### POLICIES

- ED 3.1** Promote the expansion of international trade within Seattle and throughout the region.
- ED 3.2** Strive to make the business climate more competitive through use of transparent and predictable regulations, efficient approval processes, and reasonable taxes, fees, and utility rates.
- ED 3.3** Foster partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve business climate.
- ED 3.4** Improve coordination of information and services between city, county, regional, state, and federal agencies to develop and implement economic-development policies and programs.
- ED 3.5** Address the needs of culturally relevant businesses most vulnerable to redevelopment pressure and displacement.
- ED 3.6** Consider the needs and priorities for long-term economic recovery in postdisaster recovery and mitigation planning.



- ED 3.7** Evaluate taxes, regulations, incentives, and other government policies and investments to determine the benefits and burdens for marginalized populations.
- ED 3.8** Recognize and maintain a high-quality of life for all residents as one of Seattle's competitive advantages.
- ED 3.9** Support the retention and growth of the industrial sector, retain existing businesses and small firms, and actively seek to attract new industrial businesses.

## Workforce

### Discussion

The success of industry clusters depends on a skilled and competitive workforce. However, many employers have noted a lack of qualified job applicants for some positions in Seattle. This includes a variety of industries that have been unable to find enough local college graduates to fill jobs in certain engineering, computer, and life science fields, as well as traditional industries looking to replace an aging highly skilled workforce. As a result, many employers look to attract talent from elsewhere. Better education and training of local workers can connect displaced workers, disadvantaged youth, and recent immigrants to highly skilled job opportunities.

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#### GOAL

- ED G4** Maintain a highly trained and well-educated local workforce that effectively competes for meaningful and productive employment, earns a living wage, meets the needs of business, and increases opportunities for social mobility.

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#### POLICIES

- ED 4.1** Create a coalition of business, labor, civic and social service agencies, libraries, and educational institutions that can develop and expand education and training programs targeted to the needs of business, especially for high-demand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics skills.
- ED 4.2** Increase job training, internships, and job placement to overcome barriers to employment and to achieve greater racial and social inclusion in the workforce.
- ED 4.3** Encourage all businesses to pay a living wage, provide necessary employment benefits, and train and hire local residents so that the existing workforce can share in the city's prosperity.
- ED 4.4** Explore opportunities to coordinate community-development activities with place-based workforce-development opportunities in communities with high unemployment.

- ED 4.5** Promote programs aimed at reducing unemployment among people of color in Seattle.
- ED 4.6** Support efforts that connect youth to internships and other education and career opportunities.
- ED 4.7** Support efforts to provide training and job placement for older workers and others who may have unique challenges finding employment.
- ED 4.8** Work with the local community in areas with low access to opportunities to provide training and education opportunities such as culturally relevant early learning training, community college centers and food industry training.

## Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development

### Discussion

Our city is home to major national companies such as Trident Seafoods, Filson, Cascade Designs, Starbucks, Amazon, Tableau, and Nordstrom, to name a few. However, most Seattle businesses are much smaller and have fewer than ten employees. Sectors with an especially high proportion of small businesses include construction, wholesale trade, manufacturing, retail and related services, and increasingly, start-ups in technology and other creative industries. In addition, food growers, processors, and distributors are a quickly expanding presence within the local economy.

As technological advances continue to lower the cost of starting new businesses, the rate of new entrepreneurs will rise. In addition to attracting new types of businesses, we must redouble our efforts to retain the small, culturally diverse businesses that support equally diverse communities.

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#### GOAL

- ED G5** Strengthen the entrepreneurial environment for start-ups and small businesses.

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#### POLICIES

- ED 5.1** Encourage institutions of higher education toward commercialization of research innovations to fuel the growth of start-ups.

- ED 5.2** Enhance arts and culture activities in order to attract creative-class workers, living wage employers, and tourists to Seattle, as well as to enrich our overall culture of innovation.
- ED 5.3** Expand the network for technology and innovation entrepreneurs to learn about services and jobs, build relationships, and find resources—all of which will help enable their businesses to flourish.
- ED 5.4** Establish incentives to encourage property owners and building owners to offer affordable spaces for start-ups and small businesses.
- ED 5.5** Reduce barriers to business start-up and entrepreneurship, especially barriers that confront marginalized populations, immigrants, and refugees.
- ED 5.6** Promote the growth of local small businesses.

# Environment



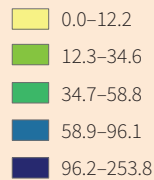
## Introduction

Choices the City makes about how to grow and operate deeply affect the health and sustainability of our natural environment. Over the next twenty years, the City has an amazing opportunity to act to protect the climate and restore the natural environment. We can improve human health, make vibrant green spaces, create habitat for wildlife, generate jobs, and reduce the burdens on the environment. As a city of outstanding creativity and appreciation of the natural environment, Seattle can set an example that inspires others and leads to improvements beyond the City's actions by demonstrating what a strong, climate-friendly economy can look like. The City can make investments to restore green spaces and creeks and develop a twenty-first-century transportation system that integrates old (walking, biking, cars) and new (light rail, car sharing) approaches. Measures like these can help a growing region accommodate people and jobs in urban areas, create livable communities, and reduce the impacts of sprawl.

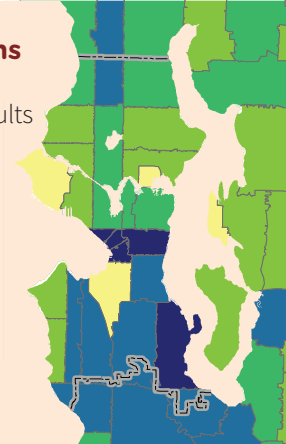
Seattle is committed to understanding how its decisions impact different individuals and communities. To fulfill its vision for race and **social equity**, the City must ensure that environmental benefits are equitably distributed and burdens are minimized and equitably shared.

Exposure to indoor and outdoor pollutants increases the risks of hospitalization for people with asthma. There are large racial, income, and geographic disparities in the hospitalization rates for asthma. Within Seattle, Beacon Hill, Southeast Seattle, Downtown, and the Central Area have the highest rates of hospitalization for asthma, and these are among the highest rates in King County.

### Adult Asthma Hospitalizations by Zip Code 2008 to 2012 Average Annual Rate per 100,000 Adults



Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County:  
Community Health Indicators Project.



The City is actively working to reduce future greenhouse gas emissions. But because of past emissions we know that some amount of climate change is now inevitable. The City must learn to understand and adapt to these changes.

This element of the Plan contains goals and policies that are relevant to all other elements of this Plan. And other elements also touch on environmental policies specific to those topics. For example, the Plan's Land Use element considers policies that regulate development near **environmentally critical areas**, and the Transportation element addresses how various types of transit could impact or improve outcomes for the environment. Significant among Seattle's efforts to implement environmental policies is the Equity and Environment Initiative, a partnership of the City, the **community**, several City departments, and private foundations to deepen Seattle's commitment to race and social justice in environmental work.

## Land

### Discussion

Seattle's growth and identity have been profoundly shaped by its stunning natural landscape. The first native and European settlers were drawn here by the area's natural bounty as well as the economic value of the land for logging and resource extraction. Today, our city has become a magnet for those attracted to its lush landscapes and access to the

exceptional natural places in the region. Over time, our relationship and interaction with the land has changed dramatically, but its critical importance in our lives remains.

Although the region looks very different than it did when European settlers first arrived 150 years ago, Seattle's trees, vegetation, and soils still make up a vitally important system that manages water runoff, cleans the air, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions and impacts, improves human health, and reduces the heat island effect. This natural system also provides wildlife habitats, supports livable neighborhoods, and is integral to the essential character of the Emerald City.

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## GOAL

**EN G1** Foster healthy trees, vegetation, and soils to improve human health, provide wildlife habitats, improve drainage, give residents across the city access to nature, provide fresh food, and increase the quality of life for all Seattleites.

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## POLICIES

- EN 1.1** Seek to achieve an **urban forest** that contains a thriving and sustainable mix of tree species and ages, and that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem that is valued and cared for by the City and all Seattleites as an essential environmental, economic, and community asset.
- EN 1.2** Strive to increase citywide tree canopy coverage to 30 percent by 2037 and to 40 percent over time.
- EN 1.3** Use trees, vegetation, green **stormwater infrastructure**, amended soil, green roofs, and other low-impact development features to meet drainage needs and reduce the impacts of development.
- EN 1.4** Increase the amount of permeable surface by reducing hardscape surfaces where possible and maximizing the use of permeable paving elsewhere.
- EN 1.5** Promote sustainable management of public and private **open spaces**, trees, and vegetation by preserving or planting native and naturalized vegetation, removing invasive plants, improving soil health, using integrated pest management, and engaging the community in long-term **stewardship** activities.
- EN 1.6** Strive to manage seven hundred million gallons of stormwater runoff each year with green stormwater infrastructure by 2025.
- EN 1.7** Promote the care and retention of trees and groups of trees that enhance Seattle's historical, cultural, recreational, environmental, and aesthetic character.
- EN 1.8** Encourage gardening and food production by residents as a way to make fresh, healthy food available in the city.

- EN 1.9** Work with other levels of government and with the private sector to support and encourage the cleanup of contaminated soil and other environmental remediation associated with the re-use or expansion of industrial sites.

## Water

### Discussion

Seattle is a city of water. Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union, the Lake Washington Ship Canal, the Duwamish River, Green Lake, urban creeks, and small lakes all enhance the quality of life for the people and wildlife that live here. Four species of salmon—including the threatened Chinook salmon—call this area home, as do resident trout, blue herons, bald eagles, and a variety of other water-dependent species. Seattle’s major waterways bustle with business and recreational opportunities, while also supporting one of the premier industrial seaports on the West Coast. Moreover, Seattle’s aquatic areas give residents the chance to enjoy and experience nature close to home.

Yet despite their integral place in the local culture, landscape, and economy, Seattle’s aquatic resources have been significantly degraded as a result of urban growth. A six-mile stretch of the Duwamish River is now a federal Superfund site. Over 90 percent of Seattle’s 146 miles of shoreline have been modified and now lack natural connections to the water. The city’s creeks have seen stormwater flows equivalent to some rivers. Fish in local waters contain high amounts of mercury and PCBs, and some of our coho salmon are dying before they can reach Seattle streams to spawn. Yet even these resources, polluted as they may be, have amazing vitality and **resilience**. They have the potential to become even greater assets to Seattleites.

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#### GOAL

- EN G2** Foster healthy aquatic systems, including Puget Sound, lakes, creeks, rivers, and the associated shorelines, to provide a high-quality of life in Seattle for all its residents and a valuable habitat for fish and wildlife.

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#### POLICIES

- EN 2.1** Protect and improve water and sediment quality by controlling pollution sources and treating stormwater through best management practices.
- EN 2.2** Reduce combined sewer overflows by reducing stormwater inflows and increasing storage in combined system areas.
- EN 2.3** Seek to clean up existing contaminated sediments.

- EN 2.4** Limit the use of chemicals that have negative impacts on aquatic or human health, especially on City-owned property or rights-of-way.
- EN 2.5** Manage flows in creeks to support a variety of aquatic life and to control flooding and property damage caused by unregulated flows.
- EN 2.6** Promote quality wildlife habitats in Seattle’s waterways by protecting and improving migratory fish passageways, spawning grounds, wetlands, estuaries, and river mouths.
- EN 2.7** Work to identify and reduce flooding through improvements to drainage and wastewater systems and reductions in impervious surfaces and runoff, particularly in traditionally **underserved** areas.

## Climate

### Discussion

Climate change is a challenge of sobering magnitude and urgency. To confront it, Seattle will need to draw on its own capacity for resilience and innovation. The ways we use our land, design our buildings, and get around the city significantly impact the amount of energy we use and the greenhouse gas emissions we produce. One of the key ways the City will work toward its climate goals is through the urban village strategy. Cars and trucks are Seattle’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and concentrating new housing and jobs in **urban centers** and urban villages near **frequent transit** service will reduce motorized-vehicle use in the city.

While concerted efforts to decrease greenhouse gas emissions can help address climate change, emissions from past decades and ongoing emissions will continue to affect the global climate. The most significant changes to the Pacific Northwest will be to temperature, precipitation, and sea level. The projected flooding, heat waves, and extreme high tides are not new challenges in Seattle, and the City has strategies for responding to them. However, climate change will shift the frequency, intensity, and timing of these events. If we don’t prepare for these types of events now, they will significantly impact the city’s health, infrastructure, and economy.

**Marginalized populations** are at greater risk from the impacts of climate change because they have the fewest resources to respond to changing conditions. Taking action to reduce the impacts of climate change and foster resilience in these communities is critical, as will be supporting their recovery after extreme events.



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## GOAL

- EN G3** Reduce Seattle’s greenhouse gas emissions by 58 percent from 2008 levels by 2030, and become **carbon neutral** by 2050.

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## POLICIES

- EN 3.1** Expand transit, walking, bicycling, and shared-transportation infrastructure and services to provide safe, affordable and effective options for getting around that produce low or zero emissions, particularly for lower-income households and communities of color.
- EN 3.2** Implement the urban village strategy with the goal of meeting the growing demand for conveniently located homes and businesses in pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where residents can walk to a variety of recreation and service offerings, in order to increase the number of trips that do not require automobile use and increase access to opportunity for lower-income households and communities of color.
- EN 3.3** Implement innovative policies, such as road pricing and parking management, that better reflect the true cost of driving and therefore lead to less automobile use, while employing strategies that mitigate impacts on low-income residents.
- EN 3.4** Encourage energy efficiency and the use of low-carbon energy sources, such as waste heat and renewables, in both existing and new buildings.
- EN 3.5** Reduce the amount of waste generated while at the same time increasing the amount of waste that is recycled and composted.
- EN 3.6** Reduce the emissions associated with the life cycle of goods and services by encouraging the use of durable, local products and recycled-content or reused materials, and recycling at the end of products’ lives.
- EN 3.7** Support a food system that encourages consumption of local foods and healthy foods with a low carbon footprint, reduces food waste, and fosters composting.

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## GOAL

- EN G4** Prepare for the likely impacts of climate change, including changing rain patterns, increased temperatures and heat events, shifting habitats, more intense storms, and rising sea level.

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## POLICIES

- EN 4.1** Consider projected climate impacts when developing plans or designing and siting infrastructure, in order to maximize the function and longevity of infrastructure investments, while also limiting impacts on marginalized populations and fostering resilient social and natural systems.

- EN 4.2** Prioritize actions that reduce risk and enhance resilience in populations nearest the likely impacts of climate change, including actions that are driven by the communities most impacted by climate change.
- EN 4.3** Focus strategies to address the impacts of climate change, in particular, on the needs of marginalized populations and seniors, since these groups often have the fewest resources to respond to changing conditions and therefore may be more severely impacted.
- EN 4.4** Partner with communities most impacted by climate change to identify local community assets, including infrastructure, cultural institutions, community centers, and social networks that can be supported and leveraged in adaptation planning.

## Environmental Justice

### Discussion

Marginalized populations are more likely than other Seattle residents to live close to pollution sources. This is because rents are often lower in these areas. However, living in those places could expose those populations to potential negative effects of the nearby pollution. Seattle wants to make the city a safe and healthy city for all people who live here.

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#### GOAL

- EN G5** Seek to ensure that environmental benefits are equitably distributed and environmental burdens are minimized and equitably shared by all Seattleites.

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#### POLICIES

- EN 5.1** Consider the cost and benefits of **policy** and investment options on different communities, including the cost of compliance as well as outcomes.
- EN 5.2** Prioritize investments, policies, and programs that address existing disparities in the distribution of environmental burdens and benefits.
- EN 5.3** Prioritize strategies with cobenefits that support other **equity** goals such as promoting living wage jobs or enhancing social connectedness.
- EN 5.4** Assess facilities and services periodically to determine the environmental impacts they may be having on marginalized populations, and identify ways to mitigate those impacts.
- EN 5.5** Work towards achieving racial and social equity in health outcomes so that members of all communities have the opportunity to live long healthy lives.

# Parks and Open Space



## Introduction

Parks and open space help make Seattle a great place to live, play, and raise families. These places contribute not only to the city's environmental health but also to the physical and mental health of its residents. Access to **open space** can benefit individuals by giving them places to exercise their bodies and refresh their minds. Open spaces also provide valuable wildlife and vegetation habitat that might otherwise be scarce in the city.

The City-owned park and recreation system comprises about 11 percent of the total city land area. It includes gardens, community centers, boating facilities, and environmental education centers. From the magnificent views off the bluffs of Discovery Park to the tree-lined boulevard system and intimate pocket parks, these areas provide opportunities for residents and visitors to relax, enjoy competitive games, exercise, or meet with friends and neighbors.

Developed parks are not the only sources of open space that people enjoy in the city. There are also open spaces and recreation opportunities located in public rights-of-way, such as along Cheasty and Ravenna Boulevards or in Bell Street Park. Off-road bike trails, including the Burke-Gilman Trail and Alki Beach Park, offer other types of active recreation. An extensive system of P-Patches and community gardens throughout the city offer gardening spaces for residents to grow their own fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Seattle Center, which itself is not part of the City parks system, is nevertheless a unique urban amenity that offers both open space and a wide variety of cultural activities.

Other agencies also provide open spaces in the city. These include fields and playgrounds at public and private schools, areas such as the federal Chittenden Locks, several waterfront access points provided by the Port of Seattle, and the open spaces on several college and university campuses. Numerous private developments have made plazas and other open areas available to the public, such as Waterfall Garden Park in Pioneer Square.

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** and **multifamily zones**—also provide light, air, and breathing room that benefit everyone in the city.

Puget Sound and the city's lakes provide another form of open space. These wide stretches of water are open to the sky and offer visual relief from the urban environment, as well as visual connections to other areas of the city and region.

In 2014 voters in Seattle approved the formation of the Seattle Park District. This district provides a new taxing authority and funding source for the maintenance and improvement of City parks, as well as for programs aimed at serving historically **underserved** residents and communities. Some of the ways the City obtains new parkland are by using state funds, acquiring surplus federal land, establishing requirements for new development projects, providing incentives for developers, and creatively using public rights-of-way.

## Access to Open Space

### Discussion

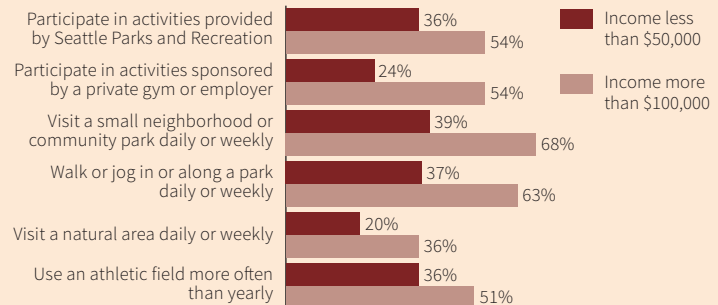
The city has a robust citywide park and open space system. These open spaces are available for use by all. However, the City continues to look for ways to improve this system. Seattle is already very developed, so there aren't many opportunities to find new land for open spaces. Creating the system that we desire—and one that will serve the growing city—will require new strategies, including some that will increase the capacity of existing parks. We will have to find the right balance between active and passive recreational activities throughout the park system, build better access through the City's transportation planning,

and provide access to open space and recreational programming as part of public and private development.

Public health studies indicate that proximity to parks is associated with greater levels of physical activity as well as increased park use. Open spaces in Seattle are well distributed and available throughout the city. However, a recent study found that lower-income people are less likely to participate in physical activity than people with higher incomes, as shown on the accompanying table.

### Seattle Residents' Participation in Recreational Activities

Percentage of residents who participate



Source: City of Seattle Parks Legacy Plan Survey, conducted in 2012

This section addresses the design and distribution of our citywide park and open space system, including how new parks and open space are acquired and developed. The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department's Development Plan also contains specific goals for Seattle's parks, open space, and facilities such as community centers, athletic fields, and playgrounds.

#### GOAL

- P G1** Provide a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces throughout the city for all people to play, learn, contemplate, and build **community**.

#### POLICIES

- P 1.1** Continue to expand the City's park holdings and open space opportunities, with special emphasis on serving **urban centers** and **urban villages** that are home to **marginalized populations** and areas that have been traditionally underserved.
- P 1.2** Provide a variety of parks and open space to serve the city's growing population consistent with the priorities and level-of-service standards identified in the City's Parks and Open Space Plan.
- P 1.3** Provide urban trails, **green streets**, and boulevards in public rights-of-way as recreation and transportation options and as ways to connect open spaces and parks to each other, to urban centers and villages, and to the regional open space system.
- P 1.4** Make rights-of-way available on a temporary basis to provide space for community events, such as street fairs, farmers' markets, or neighborhood celebrations.

- P 1.5** Provide areas to preserve important natural or ecological features in public ownership, and allow people access to these spaces.
- P 1.6** Provide public access to shorelines by using street ends, regulation, or acquisition.
- P 1.7** Encourage or require private developers to incorporate on-site publicly accessible open space.
- P 1.8** Consider the use of open space impact fees and other financing mechanisms to help fund open space system improvements that will serve the expected growth.
- P 1.9** Use cooperative agreements with Seattle Public Schools and other public agencies to provide access to open spaces they control.
- P 1.10** Create healthy places for children and adults to play, as well as areas for more passive strolling, viewing, and picnicking.
- P 1.11** Make investments in park facilities and programs to reduce health disparities by providing access to open space and recreational activities for all Seattle residents, especially marginalized populations, seniors, and children.
- P 1.12** Design open spaces that protect the natural environment and provide light, air, and visual relief within the built environment.
- P 1.13** Make the most of the limited available land by developing parks and open spaces so that they can accommodate a variety of active and passive recreational uses.
- P 1.14** Provide for access by transit, bicycle, and foot when siting and designing new park facilities or improving existing ones.
- P 1.15** Engage with community members to design and develop parks and facilities based on the specific needs and cultures of the communities the park is intended to serve.
- P 1.16** Increase access to public land by assessing, managing, and cleaning up contaminated sites.
- P 1.17** Create innovative opportunities to use existing public land, especially in the right of way, for open space and recreation, including street plazas, pavement to parks, parklets, lidding of reservoirs and highways, and community gardens.

## Parks and Recreation Activities

### Discussion

Seattle Parks and Recreation provides programs and facilities that let people play, learn, and lead healthy, active lives. People gather, take classes, exercise, and play sports at community centers, pools, and lakes. Other City facilities, such as golf courses, boating centers, and tennis courts, offer additional opportunities for recreation. Seattle Parks and Recreation

offers programs for teens and classes that provide opportunities for lifelong learning and recreation options for those with disabilities.

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## **GOAL**

- P G2** Continue to provide opportunities for all people across Seattle to participate in a variety of recreational activities.

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## **POLICIES**

- P 2.1** Consider the use of open space impact fees to help fund recreational facility system improvements that will serve the expected growth.
- P 2.2** Develop a long-term strategic plan that accounts for citywide and neighborhood demographics, as well as the demand for various active and passive recreation activities.
- P 2.3** Establish partnerships with public and private organizations to supplement programming that supports residents' needs and interests.
- P 2.4** Develop activities at community centers based on the specific needs of each community they serve and make them neighborhood focal points where people can enhance their individual health and well-being and strengthen a sense of community.
- P 2.5** Promote the use of open spaces and park facilities in the city for events that celebrate our history and the many cultures of our community.
- P 2.6** Provide recreation and social programs that allow older adults to remain healthy and actively involved in their community.
- P 2.7** Provide athletic fields that can serve as places where people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and interests can engage in a variety of sports.
- P 2.8** Offer fun and safe water experiences through a diverse range of healthy and accessible aquatic programs at outdoor and indoor venues throughout the city.
- P 2.9** Provide welcoming, accessible, and affordable recreation and social programs for people with disabilities and their families.
- P 2.10** Engage teens with activities that help them to build their identities and to acquire skills that will lead to healthy and productive lives.
- P 2.11** Develop programs that foster awareness and appreciation of nature from the neighborhood scale to the regional scale and provide activities for residents to help protect or restore the environment.
- P 2.12** Provide programs that are culturally responsive, accessible, welcoming, and affordable to communities of color and to immigrant and refugee communities.

- P 2.13** Provide welcoming, accessible, and affordable recreation and social programs for LGBTQ youth and adults.
- P 2.14** Develop partnerships with organizations that consider race and social justice to be fundamental to their operations and business practices.

## Maintaining Park and Recreation Facilities

### Discussion

The City's park system makes up a significant amount of the city's land, and that land contains many types of buildings, swimming pools, trails, landscaped and natural areas, and **urban forests**. Keeping these facilities safe and enjoyable requires constant attention.

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#### GOAL

- P G3** Manage the City's park and recreation facilities to provide safe and welcoming places.

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#### POLICIES

- P 3.1** Implement capital improvements that are driven by a long-term programmatic strategic plan.
- P 3.2** Maintain the long-term viability of park and recreation facilities by regularly addressing major maintenance needs.
- P 3.3** Look for innovative ways to approach construction and major maintenance activities to limit water and energy use and to maximize environmental sustainability.
- P 3.4** Enhance wildlife habitat by restoring forests and expanding the tree canopy on City-owned land.
- P 3.5** Protect habitat and wildlife areas through education, interpretation, and wildlife-management programs.
- P 3.6** Preserve and reclaim park property for public use and benefit, and ensure continued access to parkland for the growing population.
- P 3.7** Leverage capital and program investments and agreements with private vendors to provide training, apprenticeships, youth employment, and living wage job opportunities for marginalized populations.



# Major Open Space Attractions

## Discussion

Some of the facilities maintained by Seattle Parks and Recreation and certain other open spaces in the city attract many visitors from outside their immediate neighborhoods. Washington Park Arboretum, Woodland Park Zoo, Kubota Garden, Seattle Aquarium, Magnuson Park, the Olympic Sculpture Park, and Seattle Center are examples of locations that offer natural and cultural attractions and bring users from across the region into Seattle's neighborhoods.

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### GOAL

- P G4** Plan and maintain regional parks and facilities to accommodate the people who will want to visit them, while respecting the facilities' neighbors.

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### POLICIES

- P 4.1** Develop plans for regional and special-use parks to take advantage of unique natural and cultural features in the city, enhance visitors' experiences, and nurture partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations.
- P 4.2** Design parks and program activities in Downtown in ways that create a welcoming and safe environment.
- P 4.3** Recognize that visitors to major regional attractions can impact the neighborhoods surrounding those facilities, and look for ways to limit those impacts, including through enhanced walking, biking, and transit connections.
- P 4.4** Look for innovative ways to conduct construction and major maintenance of park facilities that will provide training, apprenticeships, youth employment, and living wage opportunities for marginalized populations.

# Arts and Culture



## Introduction

Arts and culture are part of the city's rich history. They will play a major role in Seattle's future as a vital, thriving city. As in any dynamic urban area, the city's arts and culture contribute to its identity and sense of place. This aspect of the city enriches the lives of its residents and inspires their creativity and innovation.

Arts and culture extend to all aspects of civic life. For instance, the arts can teach students valuable skills—like critical thinking and observation—that can also be applied in math, science, and reading. These skills help students succeed in school and in the workplace. The city's arts and culture scene creates jobs and attracts visitors, customers, and highly skilled workers to the area. At the same time, arts and culture play an important social role by nurturing a welcoming and diverse urban **community**. Arts and culture can expand perspectives and encourage empathy toward people with different experiences. They help cultivate a greater appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures across Seattle.

A 2012 study by Seattle Public Schools found large disparities in access to arts education among its students. The study measured the number of students taking at least six arts classes during their middle school and high school years. The students who took fewer than six art classes were

- *from low-household incomes,*
- *non-native English speakers, and/or*
- *African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic.*

The Arts and Culture element of this Plan outlines goals and policies related to the arts, cultural institutions, and historic preservation. Together these aspects of the city encompass a broad range of people, activities, spaces, and levels of involvement. The City is committed to supporting the arts and to offering great experiences for art consumers and creators of art across Seattle. Making arts and culture accessible to all requires programs that represent Seattle's diversity. As Seattle grows, the City must make an extra effort to help everyone feel welcome within Seattle's arts and cultural environment.

Experiencing arts and culture should be fun and challenging. It should also be accessible so that it can be enjoyed regularly by all. There are so many ways to experience art. It can be created or observed or collaborated on. From tangible, physical objects, books, and digital works to experiences, gatherings, performances, and oral histories, the Seattle arts scene has many different points of entry. Cultural spaces are varied and can range from traditional theaters, galleries, and studios to schools, parks, libraries, and coffee shops.

As noted in the Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources section contained in the Land Use element of this Plan, historic and cultural resource preservation recognizes and protects aspects of our shared cultural heritage— buildings, districts, and designed landscapes that link to Seattle's past. Older buildings, sites and objects play a vital role in defining Seattle's sense of place and the character of its neighborhoods.

## Public Art

### Discussion

By integrating art into diverse public settings, Seattle has built on its reputation as a cultural center of innovation and creativity. Letting both visitors and locals alike encounter art in parks, libraries, and community centers—as well as on roadways, bridges, and other public venues—enriches people's daily lives and gives voice to artists. The City's public art collection includes more than four hundred permanently sited and integrated works and three thousand portable works. The collection will continue to grow through the City's 1 Percent for Art program, which requires that 1 percent of the funds from eligible capital improvement projects be set aside for the commission, purchase, and installation of artworks in a variety of settings. To commission public art, the City uses a panel made up of artists and

arts professionals, alongside community and City representatives. All public art is cared for through ongoing conservation, which includes inspections, major restorative work, and routine maintenance.

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## GOAL

**AC G1** Strengthen the diversity of public art and expand the City's collection of public artworks.

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## POLICIES

**AC 1.1** Continue to set aside funding for new public art as part of capital improvement projects.

**AC 1.2** Encourage the inclusion of artists early in the design of capital improvement projects.

**AC 1.3** Prioritize locations for new public art where it is desired by the community, can be accommodated safely, and will be enjoyed by many people in locations throughout the city.

**AC 1.4** Enhance the diversity of panelists and community representatives that are included in the public-art selection process.

**AC 1.5** Strengthen the diversity of expression in public art to embrace a variety of artists, sites, disciplines, and media to fully reflect the cultural diversity of the city.

**AC 1.6** Encourage public participation in the planning and implementation of public art projects.

# Creative Economy

## Discussion

Partnering with individual artists, as well as arts and cultural organizations, the City strives to offer all Seattleites a rich array of quality art opportunities while promoting a healthy and diverse cultural community. Encompassing a wide variety of arts and cultural businesses, ranging from nonprofit museums, symphonies, and theaters to for-profit film, architecture, and advertising companies, the creative economy also includes thousands of independent artists working in Seattle.

When supported, arts and culture can help drive the City's future economic growth. Arts companies and their employees stimulate innovation, playing an important role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy in Seattle. They employ a creative workforce, spend

money locally, generate government revenue, and are a cornerstone of tourism. The arts are also an economic-development tool, creating neighborhoods where businesses want to operate and employees want to live. The creative economy also contributes to Seattle's high-quality of life, helping our city and region attract talent from across the globe. Encouraging creative economy activities in communities of color can provide pathways to new skills, jobs, and prosperity. In other words, the impact of the arts reaches far beyond aesthetics.

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## GOAL

**AC G2** Enhance support for artists, creative professionals, and cultural organizations, allowing them to grow and mature.

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## POLICIES

- AC 2.1** Recognize and expand the economic impact of arts and culture. Consider ways to support arts and culture as part of an economic development strategy.
- AC 2.2** Recognize and regularly assess the economic impact of Seattle's music and nightlife sector.
- AC 2.3** Encourage collaboration across the spectrum of traditional and creative economy businesses, especially businesses that rely on innovation and design to be competitive.
- AC 2.4** Encourage access to affordable workspaces for artists, musicians, arts, and cultural organizations.
- AC 2.5** Improve technical- and financial-assistance programs to better target and serve artists and arts organizations, musicians and live music venues of various sizes and at various stages of growth, representing a broad range of cultures. Consider ways to make the City's funding programs more accessible to small, independent artists, musicians and arts organizations particularly from **underrepresented** communities.
- AC 2.6** Enhance **equitable** access to technical and financial assistance for all artists and organizations.
- AC 2.7** Work with public, not-for-profit and private organizations to support artists, arts organizations and cultural organizations to help them thrive.

# Youth Development and Arts Education

## Discussion

All students in all schools should be given the chance to learn through the arts. The arts are a core component of basic education, uniquely suited to develop twenty-first-century skills

such as creative and critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and perseverance—skills directly linked to student success in school, career, and life.

Partnerships, both inside and outside of City government, are needed to bring back equitable access to arts education for all K–12 students. These collaborations will also help support after-school arts programs in diverse neighborhoods throughout the city. Through these in-school and after-school programs, experienced teaching artists, community groups, and cultural organizations can introduce children to all types of art, including visual arts, theater, dance, and film. Such programs give young people a chance to shine, to express themselves, and to develop positive goals for the future. Providing arts programs in schools with high numbers of low-income students is especially important, as many schools provide arts programs with additional funding from parents. This may not be possible in some schools.

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### GOAL

**AC G3** Improve access to arts and music education in all schools and outside the school setting so that students are prepared to be successful in school and life.

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### POLICIES

- AC 3.1** Encourage schools to offer culturally relevant K–12 arts curricula that emphasize development and assessment of twenty-first-century skills.
- AC 3.2** Encourage schools to provide professional development in the arts for teachers and community arts partners.
- AC 3.3** Expand partnerships with educational institutions, arts and music institutions, youth service agencies, libraries, foundations, businesses, and arts and cultural organizations to increase participation in arts, music and cultural programs, creative learning opportunities, and creative economy careers.
- AC 3.4** Help make arts and music education available in areas of high violence and poverty or where school performance is poor.
- AC 3.5** Prioritize arts and culture opportunities for youth and communities with limited or no access to the arts.

## Cultural Space and Placemaking

### Discussion

Every successful **neighborhood** includes cultural spaces, which not only house a range of cultural activity but also help define the very social character and identity of neighborhoods. These spaces include traditional spots such as theaters, galleries, art-house

cinemas, and museums, as well as nontraditional areas such as music clubs, coffeehouses and bars that hang art, bookstores, and behind-the-scenes places such as artists' studios, rehearsal rooms, and offices. Creative **placemaking** uses arts and culture to increase the vibrancy of neighborhoods, cities, and regions. Instead of a single arts center or a cluster of large arts and cultural institutions, placemaking enriches public and private spaces, structures, and streetscapes to enhance quality of life and strengthen neighborhood identity. Creatively attracting people to places that need revitalization or are vacant or underutilized can also improve local business and public safety while bringing diverse people together.

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## GOAL

**AC G4** Support affordable cultural spaces in all neighborhoods, especially **urban centers** and villages where they are accessible to a broad range of people and where they can help activate the public realm.

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## POLICIES

- AC 4.1** Create and maintain an inventory of both public and private cultural spaces.
- AC 4.2** Create incentives to preserve or expand space for artists, arts organizations, musicians, music organizations, and other cultural uses.
- AC 4.3** Consider making surplus City-owned property available to artists, musicians, and arts and cultural organizations.
- AC 4.4** Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic community structures, such as meeting halls, schools, and religious buildings, for uses that continue their role as neighborhood anchors.
- AC 4.5** Consider public-private partnerships as a way to provide affordable space to artists and arts, musicians, and cultural organizations.
- AC 4.6** Encourage partnerships to use public and institutional spaces, such as parks, community centers, libraries, hospitals, schools, universities, and City-owned places, for arts, musicians, and culture.
- AC 4.7** Encourage the designation of existing clusters of cultural spaces as cultural districts.
- AC 4.8** Encourage partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to engage in creative placemaking projects.
- AC 4.9** Create a toolkit, in partnership with City departments and communities, to assist communities in making their own art, music, and culture.
- AC 4.10** Establish creative placemaking as part of local area planning.
- AC 4.11** Encourage the creation of cultural spaces for informal gathering and recreation, especially in more densely populated urban centers and villages and in communities of color that lack cultural spaces.

- AC 4.12** Enhance access to a variety of arts, music and cultural institutions and programs for at-risk youth, non-English-speaking residents, seniors, the visually and hearing impaired, and people with other disabilities.
  
- AC 4.13** Recognize the importance of live music and entertainment venues to the vibrancy of the city's culture. Support the viability of these small businesses and nonprofits in areas undergoing development through policies that proactively engage and balance the interests of music venues and new residents.



# Community Well-Being



## Introduction

The goal of the planning, building, and investing described in other elements of this Plan is to make Seattle a better place for its residents. While the city's physical features, such as its walkability, good quality housing, and accessible parks and **open spaces**, can enhance Seattleites' health and happiness, the overall well-being of a **community** depends on much more. This element of the Plan goes beyond the physical features of the city and its neighborhoods to focus on the overall well-being of Seattleites. The City invests in people so that all families and individuals can meet their basic needs, share in our economic prosperity, and participate in building a safe, healthy, educated, just, and caring community.

This element emphasizes the importance of the human and social **infrastructure** of the city. Seattle's community is built and strengthened through social relationships formed around common values, arts and culture, ethnicity, education, family, and age groups.

While the City provides many services directly, it also supports the work of other public and private organizations. This element addresses how we build communities through programs, services, activities, and **community involvement** to make the city welcoming, safe, and engaging.

## Supportive and Healthy Communities

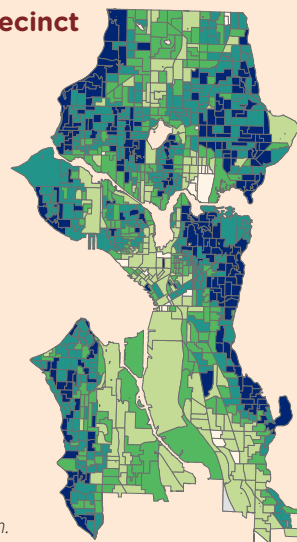
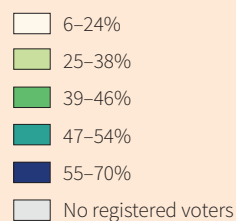
### Discussion

Healthy, sustainable, and safe communities are products of people working together. When residents respect one another, invest time and energy in their collaborations, and commit to them, their communities thrive. City government has an important role to play, but government and institutions cannot create or sustain community if individuals do not connect to the community. Children and youth are critical to the future of our city's social well-being, while elders can help sustain our history and culture. Getting involved in community activities allows people to see the impact of their actions and can help them build supportive relationships with those around them. The City can support relationship-building by encouraging the participation of all members of the community.

One way to measure people's participation in their community is whether they choose to vote in elections that affect decisions that could impact their lives. Nationally, people with low-incomes turn out to vote at lower rates than people with high incomes. Voter turnout also varies by age, educational attainment, homeownership, and years living in the same home. The varying voter turnout rates seen in Seattle's neighborhoods suggest similar dynamics here.

#### Voter Turnout by Precinct

November 2015 Election



Source: King County Elections

Note: Voter turnout refers to the percentage of registered voters who cast their vote in an election.

### GOAL

**CW G1** Make Seattle a place where all residents feel they can be active in family, community, and neighborhood life, and where they help each other, contribute to the vitality of the city, and create a sense of belonging among all Seattleites.

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## POLICIES

- CW 1.1** Promote opportunities for people to build connections with their peers, neighbors, and the greater community by supporting intergenerational and intercultural programs, activities, and events.
- CW 1.2** Promote volunteerism and community service among people of all ages and cultures by providing information about opportunities to contribute their time, energy, or resources.
- CW 1.3** Enhance opportunities for children and youth to gain skills, increase self-esteem, and envision a positive future.
- CW 1.4** Reinforce efforts that strengthen the ability of children, youth, and families to participate in their health, wellness, and education, and to contribute to the development of a vibrant, growing community.
- CW 1.5** Celebrate young people's accomplishments, and promote activities for children and youth to increase their participation in the community.
- CW 1.6** Engage older residents in community conversations and volunteer opportunities so that they can find fulfillment in ways that benefit themselves and the community.
- CW 1.7** Collaborate with marginalized communities on strategies they identify to reduce and ameliorate displacement and related issues specific to those communities.

## Access to Food and Shelter

### Discussion

Seattle's quality of life and economic future depend on the overall health of its people. With a growing population, the City must be innovative and responsive in helping all Seattleites meet their basic needs. There are people in the city who lack food or shelter, who are vulnerable, or who face barriers to functioning independently. The City's goal is to make Seattle the kind of place where all people want to live and raise their families, and where those who are most vulnerable have access to the assistance they need. See the **Housing element** for how the City works to provide housing for low-income households. Ensuring that people in our communities have access to food and shelter before and after an emergency or disaster is especially critical.

Area service providers and shelters report heightened risk for homelessness for people of color, youth identifying as LGBTQ, military veterans, the disabled, people with mental illnesses, and people with substance abuse. For example:

- *About 71 percent of the people in family shelters are people of color.*
- *58 percent of people in Seattle’s shelters for adults report having a disability, and 16 percent report having served in the military.*
- *More than 20 percent of the city’s homeless and unstably housed youth and young adults identified as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer).*

Source: “Homeless Needs Assessment,” City of Seattle 2014–2017 Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development.

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## GOAL

- CW G2** Reduce poverty and its effects, which make people, especially children and elderly adults, vulnerable.

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## POLICIES

- CW 2.1** Encourage coordinated service delivery for food, housing, health care, and other basic necessities for people and families in need.
- CW 2.2** Contribute to efforts that help people meet their basic needs, maintain their independence as long as possible, and remain in their neighborhoods of choice.
- CW 2.3** Support efforts to provide access to healthy, affordable food for all people in Seattle.
- CW 2.4** Encourage public and private efforts that support culturally appropriate food opportunities, including grocery stores, farmers’ markets, food banks, and nutrition programs, especially to meet the nutritional needs of infants, children, elders, and other vulnerable populations in their neighborhoods.
- CW 2.5** Provide access to healthy food by encouraging better distribution and marketing of healthy options throughout the city and by addressing nutrition standards in programs supported by the City.
- CW 2.6** Encourage local food production, processing, and distribution through the support of home and community gardens, farmers’ markets, community kitchens, and other collaborative initiatives to provide healthy foods and promote food security.
- CW 2.7** Consider using City land to expand the capacity to grow, process, distribute, and access local food, particularly for distribution to households in need.
- CW 2.8** Invest in services and programs that prevent homelessness, provide a pathway to permanent housing, and allow temporary shelter for those who are homeless.
- CW 2.9** Place special emphasis on programs addressing those who are most vulnerable to homelessness.

- CW 2.10** Develop an increased level of emergency preparedness among all segments of the population to help coordinate governmental response and recovery efforts that seek to minimize the adversity of a major emergency or disaster.

## Healthy Growth, Aging, and Lifestyles

### Discussion

A person's health greatly affects his or her quality of life and ability to participate fully in the community. Social and environmental factors, as well as access to health care, all contribute to an individual's overall personal health. City efforts can promote healthy choices, help people avoid risk, and provide assistance to those who encounter health problems.

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#### GOAL

- CW G3** Create a healthy environment where community members of all ages, stages of life, and life circumstances are able to aspire to and achieve a healthy life, are well nourished, and have access to affordable health care.

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#### POLICIES

- CW 3.1** Encourage Seattleites to adopt healthy and active lifestyles to improve their general physical and mental health and well-being and to promote healthy aging. Provide information about and promote access to affordable opportunities for people to participate in fitness and recreational activities and to enjoy the outdoors.
- CW 3.2** Work toward the reduction of health risks and behaviors leading to chronic and infectious diseases and infant mortality, with particular emphasis on populations disproportionately affected by these conditions.
- CW 3.3** Collaborate with Public Health—Seattle & King County, private hospitals, and community health clinics to maximize access to health care coverage for preventive care, behavioral health, family planning, and long-term care.
- CW 3.4** Seek to improve the quality and **equity** of access to health care, including physical and mental health, emergency medical care, addiction services, and long-term care by collaborating with community organizations and health providers to advocate for quality health care and broader accessibility to services.
- CW 3.5** Support access to preventive interventions at agencies that serve the homeless, mentally ill, and chemically dependent populations.
- CW 3.6** Support efforts to reduce exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke in indoor and outdoor areas, particularly where vulnerable populations, such as children and seniors, are likely to be present.

**CW 3.7** Require healthy building methods and materials in City-funded projects, and encourage private development to use construction methods and materials that result in healthy indoor environments for all Seattleites.

## Lifelong Learning

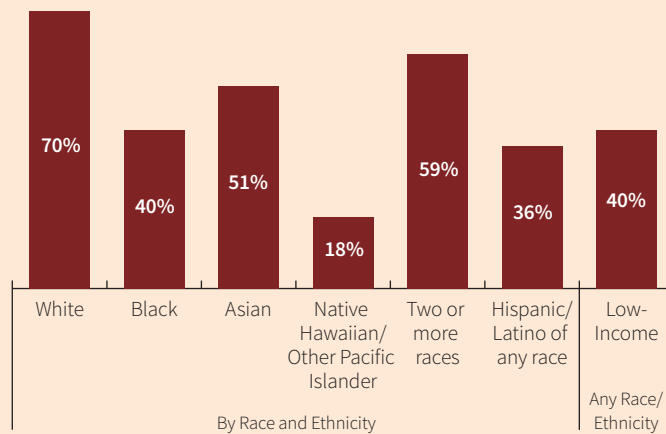
### Discussion

Well-educated people have the skills to pursue opportunities and careers of their choice. Providing quality education for all Seattleites requires coordination with Seattle Public Schools, libraries, colleges, and universities, as well as with other public agencies, nonprofit agencies, community groups, and business organizations. Through cooperation with these groups and with the community, the City can help make quality education, learning, and training available to children, youth, and adults.

Each fall, kindergarten teachers in Washington do an assessment of their students' skills in six domains: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and mathematics. Seattle Public Schools teachers find that students of color and students in low-income households are less kindergarten-ready than classroom peers. In 2015, 52 percent of students overall demonstrated skills typical of a kindergartner across all six domains, compared with significantly lower percentages of low-income students and students of black or African American, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic ethnicity.

### Kindergarten Readiness in Seattle Public Schools

Share of Students Demonstrating Expected Skills in All of the Six Domains Assessed



Source: Fall 2015 WaKIDS assessment, Washington State School Report Card, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### GOAL

**CW G4** Support an education system and opportunities for lifelong learning that strengthen literacy and employability for all Seattleites.

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## POLICIES

- CW 4.1** Create **equitable** access to high-quality early-learning services, and support families so that their children are prepared for school.
- CW 4.2** Support schools' efforts to develop culturally competent disciplinary practices that keep children engaged with their schools, while still requiring behavioral accountability.
- CW 4.3** Encourage parent, volunteer, business, and community support for education and involvement in schools.
- CW 4.4** Support Seattle Public Schools' efforts to create safe learning environments in and after school that promote academic and personal achievement for all children and youth.
- CW 4.5** Support opportunities for community-based learning through service projects that have value to both the students and the community.
- CW 4.6** Work with schools, higher education institutions, libraries, community centers, and arts and cultural agencies and organizations to link services into a seamless system that helps students stay in school, such as through collocation of services and joint use of facilities.
- CW 4.7** Support programs that help people who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of high school to achieve education, personal, and employment goals.
- CW 4.8** Provide literacy development and related resources for English-language learners.
- CW 4.9** Work with colleges, universities, other institutions of higher learning, and community-based organizations to promote lifelong learning opportunities and encourage the broadest possible access to libraries, community centers, schools, and other existing facilities throughout the city.
- CW 4.10** Work with schools, libraries, and other educational institutions, community-based organizations, businesses, labor unions, and other governments to develop strong educational and training programs that provide pathways to successful employment.
- CW 4.11** Support youth-based job-training opportunities that provide classes, coaching, and the development of skills leading to jobs with livable wages.

## Public Safety

### Discussion

Public safety is a shared responsibility shouldered by individuals, families, and communities alike. It should include focus on early intervention, such as human service efforts that prevent unsafe situations from occurring and other efforts that intervene before situations

become serious. Building safer communities requires the commitment of all Seattleites, from youth to adults. City government can act as a connector in this effort. It can help build partnerships between the individuals, agencies, and other groups that work to address the safety needs of individuals and the community at large.

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## GOAL

**CW G5** Reduce violence and the incidence of crimes, and increase the sense of security throughout the city.

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## POLICIES

**CW 5.1** Coordinate across City departments and with other agencies to address violence, abuse, and exploitation and to hold offenders accountable.

**CW 5.2** Plan and implement best and promising practices that focus on preventing violence.

**CW 5.3** Ensure that violence prevention, violence intervention, and offender accountability programs are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

**CW 5.4** Increase awareness of all forms of violence and abuse and the resources that exist to assist in dealing with these issues.

**CW 5.5** Emphasize education, prevention, and early intervention to reduce the risk of exposure to negative health impacts, violence, and injury.

**CW 5.6** Encourage efforts that enhance strong family relationships and healthy child development to help prevent child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

**CW 5.7** Work in partnership with state, county, and community agencies to prevent violence, including that associated with substance abuse, and firearms injuries.

**CW 5.8** Encourage a policing strategy that works in partnership with the community to reduce crime through education and enforcement.

**CW 5.9** Encourage communities to build block-by-block networks to prevent crime, develop social networks, and solve common problems.

**CW 5.10** Provide competent, professional, and efficient City criminal-justice services that hold those who commit crimes accountable, reduce recidivism, and achieve a fair and just outcome.

**CW 5.11** Work in partnership with the state, King County, and community organizations to connect local detention facilities with the health and human service systems.

**CW 5.12** Reinforce the linkage between public safety and human services to encourage lawful behavior, reduce vulnerabilities of street populations, and address family violence and sexual assault.

**CW 5.13** Strive to prevent youth crime, youth violence, and gang activity by promoting efforts that strengthen the community and create capacity for youth to be involved in



programs and activities that are alternatives to crime and violence, and that provide a positive path for their lives.

- CW 5.14** Work with Seattle Public Schools to make schools safe places where all youth can experience success in education and preparation for future productive lives.
- CW 5.15** Strengthen the relationship between Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle Public Library to provide safe places outside of school for children and youth to learn, explore, and connect with other educational, workforce, and personal development opportunities.
- CW 5.16** Promote information sharing and resource coordination among the courts, jails, prosecutors, and police for greater efficiency and more equitable outcomes in the criminal-justice system.
- CW 5.17** Report crime statistics periodically to guide future decisions about programs and resource allocation that can help control crime and make Seattleites feel safer in the city.

## A Multicultural City

### Discussion

Seattle benefits from diversity. We celebrate the richness of our diverse heritage, talents, and perspectives, all of which build a stronger Seattle. Seattle envisions a city where racial inequities have been eliminated and racial equity achieved. The City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative aims to end institutional racism in City government, eliminate race-based disparities, and promote multiculturalism and full community involvement by all residents.

The number of people of color living in Seattle continued to increase between 2000 and 2010, but much more slowly than it did in the remainder of King County. This was true particularly for people under age eighteen. The number of children of color increased by only 2 percent in Seattle, compared with 64 percent in the balance of King County.

#### Population Growth from 2000 to 2010

Seattle and Remainder of King County

	Increase in Total Pop.	Increase in Pop. of Color	Growth Rate of Total Pop.	Growth Rate of Pop. of Color
Seattle	45,286	24,240	8%	13%
Remainder of King County	148,929	193,802	13%	69%

	Increase in Total Pop. Under Age 18	Increase in Pop. of Color Under Age 18	Growth Rate of Total Pop. Under Age 18	Growth Rate of Pop. of Color Under Age 18
Seattle	5,686	896	6%	2%
Remainder of King County	17,170	59,062	6%	64%

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**GOAL**

**CW G6** Provide equitable opportunity and access to services for all Seattleites.

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**POLICIES**

- CW 6.1** Enhance opportunities for people with low-incomes, disabilities, limited English, cultural barriers, time constraints, transportation limitations, and other barriers to gain access to services they need.
- CW 6.2** Promote culturally responsive and relevant service delivery from City departments and other agencies, including translation and interpretation services.
- CW 6.3** Provide opportunities for, and actively recruit, diverse representation on City boards, commissions, and advisory committees that contribute to City decision-making.
- CW 6.4** Promote respect and appreciation for diversity of ability, age, culture, economic status, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation, including economic, racial, cultural, and individual differences, and support efforts to achieve diversity throughout the city.
- CW 6.5** Promote racial and social justice, human and civil rights, and mutual respect to reduce intolerance.
- CW 6.6** Celebrate the richness of diversity through cultural activities and events that bring people together to experience ethnic and cultural traditions.
- CW 6.7** Support community development activities in areas with low access to opportunity and high displacement risk.

## Coordination of Services

### Discussion

The City plays an important role in building human service and public safety systems. These systems must be culturally responsive, efficient, and accessible to all people. The City contracts with multiple community-based organizations to help develop and deliver high-quality services to residents across communities. Locating multiple services in neighborhood centers can make it easier for people to find and use the services they need.

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**GOAL**

**CW G7** Develop a flexible, comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient system of human services that addresses the needs of people, families, and communities.

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## POLICIES

- CW 7.1** Encourage cooperative planning, decision-making, and funding for health and human service delivery throughout the region.
- CW 7.2** Join with other public and private institutions in the region to develop a stable and adequate funding base for services that support safe and **healthy communities**.
- CW 7.3** Strive to disseminate more coordinated information about the availability of services in the community.
- CW 7.4** Develop customer-focused services, using feedback from participants, and involve consumers in identifying needs and planning for service delivery.
- CW 7.5** Consider related issues, such as transportation, access to frequent transit, and the need for dependent care, when planning for health, human services, employment, education, and recreation programs.
- CW 7.6** Encourage neighborhood organizations to address a broad range of human service issues to match neighborhood or community strengths and needs, and to identify solutions that make service delivery more relevant, responsive, accessible, and user-friendly.
- CW 7.7** Site new human service facilities in or near **urban centers** and villages, considering access to frequent transit, and use good-neighbor guidelines that consider the needs of consumers and the community.
- CW 7.8** Encourage use of existing facilities and collocation of services, including joint use of schools and City and community facilities, to make services available in **underserved** areas and in urban village areas.
- CW 7.9** Collaborate with community organizations and other jurisdictions to advocate for strong health, human service, and public safety systems, including services for mental health and substance abuse.
- CW 7.10** Identify and implement effective ways to measure program performance and results, balancing accountability and efficiency with the need to encourage service innovation.

# Community Involvement



## Introduction

The City is committed to **community involvement** in decision-making processes that affect **community** members. City departments use community involvement to create plans, design programs, and guide city investments and policy decisions.

The City benefits from community involvement in many ways:

- *Better understanding of community values, needs, priorities and differing perspectives;*
- *Local knowledge and expertise of community members are valued and shared;*
- *Improved decision-making leading to better quality plans and projects;*
- *Informed community members understand trade-offs in decision-making;*
- *Enhanced trust and confidence in government;*
- *Increase understanding about the different roles community input can play in the decision-making process;*

- *More community support for plans and projects; and*
- *More cost efficient and timely implementation.*

## Inclusive and Equitable Community Involvement

### Discussion

**Equity** is essential to any community involvement process to improve relationships and outcomes. The City is committed to conducting inclusive and **equitable** community involvement that effectively reaches a broad range of community members, particularly those affected by the City's decisions. Community involvement should reflect Seattle's commitment to race and social justice, and use practices that are culturally sensitive, responsive and address barriers to participation of marginalized communities.

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#### GOAL

- CI G1** Provide opportunities for inclusive and equitable community involvement.

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#### POLICIES

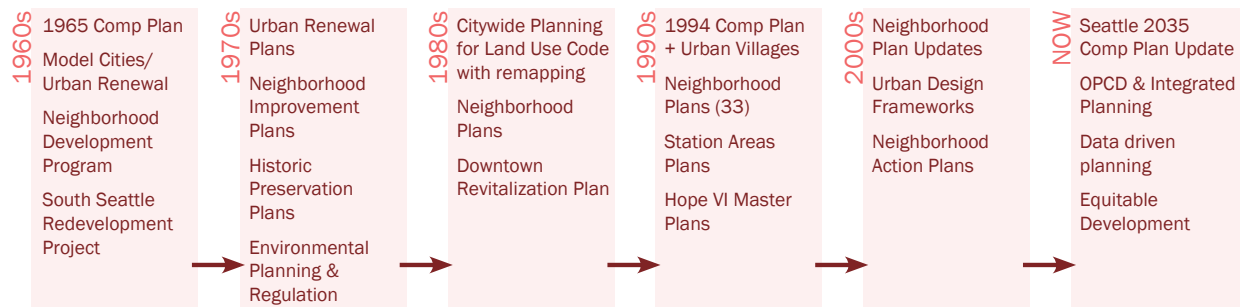
- CI 1.1** Promote racial and social justice, human and civil rights, and mutual respect to reduce intolerance, and reach out and bring people together in ways that build bridges between individuals and between groups.
- CI 1.2** Create systems that are reflective of and accessible to communities throughout the city to equitably involve community members in City decision-making.
- CI 1.3** Develop well-designed, responsive, culturally-relevant community involvement plans.
- CI 1.4** Build community capacity for meaningful and authentic community involvement, enhance the ability of community members, including those of marginalized communities, to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively participate in planning and decision-making processes.
- CI 1.5** Provide a wide range of opportunities for obtaining information and involvement in decision-making processes.
- CI 1.6** Seek greater equity and more meaningful involvement by diverse community members (homeowners, renters, businesses, employees, property owners, institutions, youth, seniors, etc.), and especially members of marginalized communities in decision-making processes.
- CI 1.7** Effectively and efficiently manage the use of City and community resources to plan and implement community involvement.

- CI 1.8** Partner with other governments, schools, institutions, and community-based organizations to plan and implement community involvement.
- CI 1.9** Seek to reflect of the diversity of the city in the membership of city-appointed boards and commissions.

## Community and Neighborhood Planning

### Discussion

Community planning is a specific type of community involvement process that produces plans for particular geographic areas. The City’s approach to community planning has evolved over time to become more inclusive. The top-down approaches of earlier decades gave way to a “bottom-up” **neighborhood planning** process for unique areas, including “urban villages” and “urban centers” designated in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. Between 1995 and 2000 the City funded neighborhood groups to draft goals, policies and actions that would encourage the pattern and distribution of growth outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. By 2000 City Council adopted policies and goals for 33 neighborhood plans (plus five urban center village plans within the Downtown urban center) into the City’s Comprehensive Plan. In recent years, city staff has initiated planning processes in partnership with many neighborhoods to update neighborhood plans, develop implementation plans, and address other planning and development issues. Currently, the Neighborhood Plans section of the Comprehensive Plan contains the goals and policies that have emerged from different community planning initiatives, these goals and policies are the city’s adopted “Neighborhood Plans.”



*Land Use and Community Planning over time*

Community planning continues to evolve as the needs of communities, the city, and the region change over time. For example, race and social justice has become an important part of planning. Moving forward, community planning will be an integrated and equitable approach to identify and implement a community’s vision for how their neighborhood will grow. Plans will reflect the history, character, and vision of the community but also remain consistent with the overall citywide vision

and strategy of the Comprehensive Plan. Creating and implementing community plans can help residents apply this Comprehensive Plan at a local level and can provide more specific guidance than the citywide policies do for areas where growth and change are occurring or desired. In some cases, these plans address topics not covered elsewhere in the plan. In other cases, community plans give local examples for how a citywide policy would best be implemented in that neighborhood. The City will undertake community planning to review and update current neighborhood plans, as well as to address ongoing and emerging issues.

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## GOAL

**CI G2** Work with a broad range of community members to plan for future homes, jobs, recreation, transportation options and gathering places in their community.

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## POLICIES

**CI 2.1** Use an inclusive community involvement process in all community planning efforts.

**CI 2.2** Undertake community planning that will guide development and public investments within geographic areas.

**CI 2.3** Consider areas with the following characteristics when allocating City resources for community planning.

- Areas designated urban centers or villages in the Comprehensive Plan
- Areas with high risk of displacement
- Areas with low access to opportunity and distressed communities
- Areas experiencing significant improvements in transit service
- Areas experiencing a growth rate significantly higher or lower than anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan
- Areas identified for multiple capital investments that could benefit from coordinated planning
- Areas experiencing environmental justice concerns including public health or safety concerns
- Areas with outdated community or neighborhood plans that no longer reflect current conditions, a citywide vision of the Comprehensive Plan, or local priorities

**CI 2.4** Encourage transparency in the development and updating of community plans by:

- Establishing a project committee that reflects community diversity;
- Creating, with community involvement, a detailed project description with the purpose of defining the plan, tasks, timeline and anticipated products;
- Creating, with the project committee, a community involvement plan outlining the tools and methods to be used, and how results will be communicated;
- Monitoring implementation of plans over time; and
- Providing sufficient funding for each step.

- CI 2.5** Determine, in collaboration with the community, which of the following topics should be addressed in a community plan or an update to a community plan:
- Land use and zoning
  - Urban design and community character
  - Parks and open space
  - Housing, amenities and services to support a range of incomes and household types
  - Transportation, utilities and infrastructure
  - Economic development
  - Community services, institutions and facilities
  - Health
  - Arts and culture
  - Climate resilience and adaptation
  - Emergency preparedness
  - Community organizational capacity
  - Equitable development and risk of displacement
- CI 2.6** Use an integrated, interdepartmental planning approach to implement community plan recommendations such as capital improvement projects, affordable housing, services, zoning and other City investments.
- CI 2.7** Collaborate with the community to implement community plans.
- CI 2.8** Assess and report on the implementation of community plans periodically.
- CI 2.9** Consult with the community to assess and refine implementation priorities as circumstances change.
- CI 2.10** Use outcomes of the community planning process to update the goals and policies in the Neighborhood Plans section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- CI 2.11** Maintain consistency between neighborhood plans and the Comprehensive Plan. In the event of a possible inconsistency between the Comprehensive Plan and a neighborhood plan, amend the Comprehensive Plan or the neighborhood plan to maintain consistency.
- CI 2.12** Provide sufficient funding and resources to work with communities to update community and neighborhood plans to maintain their relevancy and consistency with community goals and the citywide policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



# Container Port



## Introduction

One of the factors behind Seattle's strong economy is the city's role in importing and exporting goods. The Port of Seattle operates one of the largest container-shipping facilities on the West Coast. Not only do the workers who move cargo in and out of the shipping terminals make good wages, but exporting goods made in the Seattle area brings additional money into the regional economy. The Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development elements of this Plan contain related policies about the importance of these areas and how the City regulates uses and provides critical transportation services to them.

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### GOAL

- CP G1** Maintain viable and thriving import and export activities in the city as a vital component of the city's and the region's economic base.

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## POLICIES

- CP 1.1** Help preserve cargo-container activities by retaining industrial designations on land that supports marine- and rail-related industries, including industrial land adjacent to rail- or water-dependent transportation facilities.
- CP 1.2** Continue to monitor the land area needs, including those related to expansion of cargo container–related activities, and take action to prevent the loss of land needed to serve these activities.
- CP 1.3** Discourage **nonindustrial land uses**, such as retail and residential, in industrially zoned areas to minimize conflicts between uses and to prevent conversion of industrial land in the vicinity of cargo-container terminals or their support facilities.
- CP 1.4** Consider how zoning designations may affect the definition of highest and best use, with the goals of maintaining the jobs and revenue that cargo-container activities generate and protecting scarce industrial land supply for cargo-container industries, such as marine- and rail-related industries.
- CP 1.5** Consider the value of transition areas—which allow a wider range of uses while not creating conflicts with preferred cargo-container activities and uses—at the edges of general industrial **zones**. In this context, zoning provisions such as locational criteria and development standards are among the tools for defining such edge areas.
- CP 1.6** Monitor, maintain, and improve key freight corridors, networks, and intermodal connections that provide access to cargo-container facilities and the industrial areas around them to address bottlenecks and other access constraints.
- CP 1.7** Provide safe, reliable, efficient, and direct access between Port marine facilities and the state highway or interstate system, and between Port terminals and railroad intermodal facilities, recognizing that Port operations must address other transportation needs, such as pedestrian safety.
- CP 1.8** Make operational, design, access, and capital investments to accommodate trucks and railroad operations and preserve mobility of goods and services. Improvements may include improvement of pavement conditions, commute trip reduction strategies, roadway rechannelization to minimize modal conflicts, use of **intelligent transportation systems**, construction of critical facility links, and grade separation of modes, especially at heavily used railroad crossings.
- CP 1.9** Maintain a City classification for freight routes to indicate routes where freight will be the major priority. Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes may be considered in these streets.
- CP 1.10** Identify emerging cargo-container freight transportation issues by working with affected stakeholder groups, including the Seattle Freight Advisory Board. Provide regular opportunities for communication between the City, the freight community, other affected communities, and other agencies and stakeholders.
- CP 1.11** Continue joint City and Port efforts to implement relevant Port recommendations, such as recommendations contained in the Container Terminal Access Study.

- CP 1.12** Given the importance of cargo container–terminal operations to the state and regional economies, develop partnerships within the City, the Port, the region, and the State to advocate for project prioritization and timely funding to improve and maintain freight infrastructure, and explore funding partnerships.
- CP 1.13** Maintain consistency between local, regional, and State freight-related policies.
- CP 1.14** Encourage the siting of new businesses that support the goals for cargo-container activities in the City’s **manufacturing/industrial centers**.
- CP 1.15** Work cooperatively with other agencies to address the effects of major land use and transportation projects to avoid or mitigate construction and operational effects on the cargo container–industry sector.
- CP 1.16** Facilitate the creation of coalitions of industrial businesses, vocational training and other educational institutions, and public agencies to help develop training programs to move trained workers into cargo container–related jobs.
- CP 1.17** Identify opportunities to achieve economic, community, and environmental benefits from the development and operations of cargo container–related activities, including access to employment for historically excluded populations.
- CP 1.18** Form partnerships with nonprofit, community-based, private, and public stakeholders to establish environmental improvement goals, including carbon dioxide emission reductions, **stormwater** management, redevelopment and cleanup of existing marine industrial properties, sustainable design, and fish- and wildlife-habitat improvements. Develop strategies to achieve these goals that include developing funding mechanisms and legislative support.
- CP 1.19** Work with nonprofit, community-based, private, and public stakeholders to formulate plans for public **open space**, shoreline access, and fish- and wildlife-habitat improvements that incorporate community needs and area-wide habitat priorities with the need to maintain sufficient existing marine industrial lands for present and anticipated cargo-container needs.

# Shoreline Areas



## Introduction

Land near the City’s major water bodies—Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union, the Lake Washington Ship Canal, and the Duwamish River—has special importance to the city, its residents, and its businesses. These areas are covered by the State Shoreline Management Act. The City has adopted the Seattle Shoreline Master Program to describe the rules that govern the functions allowed in shoreline areas. Some businesses—like cargo terminals and boat repair—need to be right on the water. Shoreline areas also provide space for recreation, public access and viewing, and natural areas. This element of the Plan guides how the City will set rules for the development that goes in the city’s shoreline areas. Together with the Shoreline Master Program regulations in the City’s **Land Use Code**, maps of the locations of shoreline environments, and the Shoreline Restoration and Enhancement Plan, these policies constitute the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Because these policies were originally adopted through a separate process, they use a slightly different numbering system than the rest of the Plan.

# Shoreline Use

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## GOALS

- SA G1** Encourage shoreline uses that result in long-term over short-term benefit.
- SA G2** Define appropriate uses for specific segments of the shoreline.
- SA G3** Locate uses that are not water dependent or water related on upland lots to optimize shoreline use and access.
- SA G4** Protect ecological function of those areas of shoreline that are biologically significant or that are geologically fragile.
- SA G5** Restore and enhance ecological function through nonregulatory programs and policies.

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## POLICIES

- SA P1** Allow only those uses, developments, and shoreline modifications that retain options for future generations, unless identified benefits clearly outweigh the physical, social, environmental, and economic loss over a twenty-year planning horizon. Use preference will be given in the following order:
  1. On waterfront lots:
    - a. Uses that protect or restore and enhance natural areas and ecological processes and functions, particularly those areas or systems identified as containing or having unique geological, ecological, or biological significance.
    - b. Water-dependent uses—uses that cannot exist outside a waterfront location and are dependent on the water by reason of the intrinsic nature of operations.
    - c. Water-related uses—uses or portions of uses not intrinsically dependent on a waterfront location but whose economic viability is dependent upon a location in the shoreline district because
      - i. the use has a functional requirement for a waterfront location, such as the arrival or shipment of materials by water (a substantial portion of up to 50 percent of its product or materials arrive by vessel), or the need for large quantities of water in the use;
      - ii. material is stored that is transported by a vessel and is either loaded or off-loaded in the shoreline district; or
      - iii. the use provides a necessary service supportive of water-dependent uses, and the proximity of the use to its customers makes its services less expensive and/or more convenient.

- d. Water-enjoyment uses—those uses that facilitate public access to the shoreline as a primary characteristic of the use; or uses that provide for recreational use or aesthetic enjoyment of the shoreline for a substantial number of people as a general characteristic of the uses and which, through location, design, and operation, ensure the public’s ability to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline. In order to qualify as a water-enjoyment use, the use must be open to the general public, and the shoreline-oriented space within the project must be devoted to the specific aspects of the use that foster shoreline enjoyment.
  - e. Floating home uses existing as of January 2011, which are considered conforming preferred uses because of their historic role and legal recognition by the City. The intent of this policy is to recognize the existing floating home community in Lake Union and Portage Bay, while protecting natural areas, preserving public access to the shoreline, and preventing the **displacement** of water-dependent **commercial** and manufacturing uses by new floating homes. Applicable development and Shoreline Master Program regulations may impose only reasonable conditions and mitigation that will not effectively preclude maintenance, repair, replacement, and remodeling of existing floating homes and floating home moorages by rendering these actions impracticable.
  - f. **Single-family residential uses**—these are preferred uses when they are appropriately located and can be developed without significant impact to ecological functions or displacement of water-dependent uses.
  - g. Uses that are not water dependent with regulated public access or with ecological restoration and enhancement.
  - h. Uses that are not water-dependent, water-related, or water-enjoyment uses as defined above, without regulated public access or ecological restoration and enhancement.
2. On upland lots: preferred uses are those that complement uses on adjacent waterfront lots.
  3. The preference for protection of the ecological conditions of the shoreline shall be accomplished by prohibiting uses that would negatively impact natural areas, by providing mitigation for negative impacts caused by the use and by providing restoration and enhancement of natural areas where they are degraded.
  4. Preferred uses will vary according to the purpose of the shoreline environment.
    - a. Where the purpose of the environment is to encourage water-dependent and water-related uses, these uses shall be preferred by prohibiting and/or restricting the number of uses that are not water dependent or water related allowed on waterfront lots.
    - b. Where the purpose of the environment is to provide public access, these uses shall be preferred by allowing uses that provide public access.

- c. Where the purpose of the environment is to protect ecological processes and functions, uses that achieve this purpose shall be preferred.

- SA P2** In the Land Use Code, identify appropriate shoreline uses and related standards, and provide site-development standards and other appropriate criteria indicating minimal acceptable standards to be achieved.
- SA P3** Allow people to live aboard vessels in moorage areas, and provide standards that mitigate the impacts of live-aboard uses on the shoreline environment.
- SA P4** Allow a wider range of uses on upland lots than on waterfront lots in order to support water-dependent and water-related uses on waterfront lots, while avoiding potential incompatibility with those uses.

## Shoreline Access

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### GOALS

- SA G6** Maximize public access—both physical and visual—to Seattle’s shorelines.
- SA G7** Preserve and enhance views of the shoreline and water from upland areas, where appropriate.

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### POLICIES

- SA P5** Enable opportunities for substantial numbers of people to enjoy the shorelines by requiring access to public property located on the water and by allowing uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots when those uses provide additional public access to the shoreline and are located in waterfront areas less suited for water-dependent uses.
- SA P6** Promote public enjoyment of the shorelines through public-access standards that require improvements to be safe, be well-designed, and have adequate access to the water.
- SA P7** Encourage adopt-a-beach and other programs that promote voluntary maintenance of public-access areas in the shoreline district.
- SA P8** Maintain standards and criteria for providing public access, except for lots developed for single-family residences, to achieve the following:
  1. Linkages between shoreline public facilities via trails, paths, etc. that connect boating and other recreational facilities
  2. Visible signage at all publicly owned or controlled shorelines and all required public access on private property

3. Development of bonuses or incentives for the establishment of public access on private property, if appropriate
4. Provision of public-access opportunities by public agencies such as the City, Port of Seattle, King County, and the State at new shoreline facilities (encourage these agencies to provide similar opportunities in existing facilities)
5. View and visual access from upland and waterfront lots
6. Prioritization of the operating requirements of water-dependent uses over preservation of views
7. Protection and enhancement of views by limiting view blockage caused by off-premises signs and other signs

**SA P9** Waterways, which are public highways for watercraft providing access from land to water and from water to land platted by the Washington State Harbor Line Commission for the convenience of commerce and navigation, in Lake Union and Portage Bay, are for public navigation access and commerce, and in general, the City shall not request that the designation be removed from waterways. The City may request that waterways be vacated only when the City reclaims the area as street **right-of-way** or for public park purposes. The City may request that the dry land portion of a waterway be redesignated for the additional purpose of providing permanent public-access improvements.

**SA P10** Shoreline street ends are a valuable resource for public use, access, and shoreline restoration. Design public or private use or development of street ends to enhance, rather than reduce, public access and to restore the ecological conditions of the shoreline.

## Transportation in the Shoreline

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### GOALS

**SA G8** Provide a transportation network that supports and enhances use of and access to the shorelines.

**SA G9** Relocate or demolish transportation facilities that are functionally or aesthetically disruptive to the shoreline, such as the aerial portion of the Alaskan Way Viaduct on the Central Waterfront between King Street and Union Street.

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### POLICIES

**SA P11** Encourage the transport of materials and cargo in the shoreline district via modes having the least environmental impact.



**SA P12** Encourage large vessels (cruise ships and cargo-container ships) to connect to dockside electrical facilities or use other energy alternatives while in port in order to reduce engine idling and exhaust emissions.

**SA P13** Discourage, and reduce over time, vehicle parking on waterfront lots in the shoreline district.

**SA P14** Encourage the maintenance and future development of intermodal commuter ferry services to complement other public transportation systems, from both intracity locations and elsewhere in the region.

**SA P15** Provide public transportation convenient to the shoreline.

**SA P16**

1. Locate streets, highways, freeways, and railroads away from the shoreline in order to maximize the area of waterfront lots. Discourage streets, highways, freeways, and railroads not needed for access to shoreline lots in the shoreline district. A replacement for the State Route 99 Viaduct with a tunnel and/or a surface roadway may be located in the shoreline district because it represents a critical link in the transportation network.
2. To facilitate expeditious construction in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner, standards for major state and regional transportation projects should be considered that will allow flexibility in construction staging, utility relocation, and construction-related mitigation and uses, provided that the projects result in no net loss of ecological function.
3. Prohibit aerial transportation structures over thirty-five feet high, such as bridges and viaducts, on the Central Waterfront in the shoreline environments between King Street and Union Street, except for aerial pedestrian walkways associated with Colman Dock, in order to facilitate the revitalization of Downtown's waterfront, provide opportunities for public access to the Central Waterfront shoreline, and preserve views of Elliott Bay and the land forms beyond.

**SA P17** The primary purpose of waterways in Lake Union and Portage Bay is to facilitate navigation and commerce by providing waterborne access to adjacent properties, access to the land for the loading and unloading of watercraft, and temporary moorage. Waterways are also important for providing public access from dry land to the water.

**SA P18** Public access shall be the preferred use for vacated rights-of-way. Public rights-of-way may be used or developed for uses other than public access, provided that such uses are determined by the City to be in the public interest, and that public access of substantial quality and at least comparable to that available in the right-of-way is provided.

# Shoreline Protection and Restoration

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## GOALS

- SA G10** Require that no net loss of ecological functions occurs as a result of uses, development, shoreline modifications, maintenance activities, or expansion of existing uses.
- SA G11** Identify those areas of shorelines that are geologically or biologically unstable, fragile, or significant, and regulate development to prevent damage to property, the general public, aquatic and terrestrial species, and shoreline ecological functions.
- SA G12** Preserve, protect, and restore areas necessary for the support of terrestrial and aquatic life or those identified as having geological or biological significance.
- SA G13** Use scientific information to guide shoreline protection, enhancement, and restoration activities.
- SA G14** Address and minimize the impacts of sea-level rise on the shoreline environment with strategies that also protect shoreline ecological functions, allow water-dependent uses, and provide public access.
- SA G15** Encourage the establishment of marine protected areas, where appropriate.
- SA G16** Restore lower Duwamish watershed habitat and marine ecology while sustaining a healthy and diverse working waterfront in this urban industrial environment.
- SA G17** Strengthen the vitality of a functioning ecosystem within Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA) 8 and 9 by integrating development projects into their surrounding environments, by supporting a diversity of habitats, and by strengthening connections between habitats throughout each watershed.

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## POLICIES

- SA P19** Use mitigation sequencing to meet no net loss of ecological functions. Mitigation sequencing refers to taking steps in this order: avoid, rectify, minimize, and/or compensate for the loss to ecological functions.
- SA P20** Protect the natural environment of the shoreline through **development regulations** that include a requirement to use best management practices to control impacts from construction and development activities.
- SA P21** Regulate development on those areas of shorelines that are biologically significant or geologically fragile to prevent harm to property, organisms, or the general public.
- SA P22** Develop methods to measure both the impacts of development in the shoreline district and the effects of mitigation so that no net loss of ecological function occurs through development projects.

- SA P23** Monitor the benefits of mitigation techniques to determine which are best suited to meet the goal of no net loss of ecological function.
- SA P24** Conserve existing shoreline vegetation and encourage new shoreline plantings with native plants to protect habitat and other ecological functions, reduce the need for shoreline stabilization structures, and improve visual and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline.
- SA P25** Avoid development in areas identified as special wildlife or priority saltwater or freshwater habitat unless no feasible alternative locations exist except for a water-dependent use or water-related use that has a functional requirement for a location over water and is located in saltwater habitat that is priority habitat solely due to its use by anadromous fish for migration, if the development mitigates impacts to achieve no net loss of ecological function.
- SA P26** Protect **environmentally critical areas** as set out in the policies for environmentally critical areas and modified to reflect the special circumstances of such areas in the shoreline district.
- SA P27** Require that all commercial, industrial, or other high-intensity uses provide means for treating natural or artificial urban runoff to acceptable standards. Developments with industrial or commercial uses that use or process substances potentially harmful to public health and/or aquatic life shall provide means to prevent point and nonpoint discharge of those substances.
- SA P28** Consider the Lower Duwamish Watershed Habitat Restoration Plan (Weiner, K. S., and Clark, J. A., 1996); the Port of Seattle Lower Duwamish River Habitat Restoration Plan, the Final Lower Duwamish River NRDA Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan and implementation documents, and the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan and implementation documents when conducting planning, permitting, mitigation, and restoration activities within the Duwamish/Green River and Cedar River watersheds.
- SA P29** Allow dredging in the minimum amount necessary for water-dependent uses, environmental mitigation or enhancement, cleanup of contaminated materials, and installation of utilities and bridges.
- SA P30** Allow fill on submerged land that does not create dry land only where necessary and in a manner that minimizes short- and long-term environmental damage, for the operation of a water-dependent or water-related use, transportation projects of statewide significance, installation of a bridge or utility line, disposal of dredged material in accordance with the Dredged Material Management Program, beach nourishment, or environmental mitigation or restoration and enhancement. Design projects to ensure no net loss of ecological function through mitigation sequencing.
- SA P31** Permit landfill that creates dry land only where necessary for transportation projects of statewide significance, repair of pocket erosion for water-dependent and water-related uses, beach nourishment, or environmental mitigation or restoration and enhancement. Construct fill projects in a manner that minimizes short- and long-term environmental damage, and design projects to ensure no net loss of ecological function through mitigation sequencing.

- SA P32** Work with other government agencies and shoreline users to reduce the input of pollutants, to restore contaminated areas, to control disposal of dredge spoils, and to determine the appropriate mitigation for project impacts.
- SA P33** Use a restoration plan to identify areas that have potential for shoreline habitat restoration. Identify restoration opportunities that will best achieve ecological improvement, describe the appropriate restoration activities for the conditions in those areas, and provide incentives for achieving restoration of the shorelines.
- SA P34** Support programs that inform the public about shoreline conservation practices, and identify methods by which public and private shoreline owners or community groups may encourage aquatic and terrestrial life, require such methods when appropriate, and provide incentives for such projects.
- SA P35** Support the scientific study of the shoreline ecosystems that will provide information to help update baseline condition information; to monitor the impact of any action; and to guide protection, restoration, and enhancement activities to meet the no net loss requirements and implement the restoration plan.
- SA P36** Where applicable, new or expanded development and maintenance shall include environmental cleanup and restoration of the shoreline to comply with any relevant state and federal law.

## Shoreline Economic Development

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### GOAL

- SA G18** Encourage economic activity and development by supporting the retention and expansion of existing water-dependent and water-related businesses on waterfront lots.

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### POLICIES

- SA P37** Support the retention and expansion of existing conforming water-dependent and water-related businesses, and anticipate the creation of new water-dependent and water-related development in areas now dedicated to such use.
- SA P38** Identify and designate appropriate land adjacent to deep water for industrial and commercial uses that require such condition.
- SA P39** Provide regulatory and nonregulatory incentives for property owners to include public amenities and ecological enhancements on private property.
- SA P40** Identify and designate appropriate land for water-dependent business and industrial uses as follows:
1. Cargo-handling facilities:

- a. Reserve space in deep-water areas with adequate vessel-maneuvering areas to permit the Port of Seattle and other marine industries to remain competitive with other ports.
  - b. Work with the Port of Seattle to develop a long-range port plan in order to provide predictability for property owners and private industry along the Duwamish River and Elliott Bay.
2. Tug and barge facilities: Retain Seattle’s role as the gateway to Alaska, and ensure ample area is designated for uses that serve Puget Sound and Pacific trade.
  3. Shipbuilding, boatbuilding, and repairs: Maintain a critical mass of facilities in Seattle in order to meet the needs of the diverse fleets that visit or have a home port in Seattle, including fishing, transport, recreation, and military vessels.
  4. Moorage: Meet the long-term and transient needs of ships and boats including fishing, transport, recreation, and military vessels. Support long-term moorage in sheltered areas close to services, and short-term moorage in more open areas. Support the efficient use of Fishermen’s Terminal, Shilshole Bay Marina, and other public moorage facilities. Protect commercial and recreational moorage from displacement by encouraging the full use of submerged lands for recreational moorage in areas less suited for commercial moorage and less sensitive to environmental degradation. Require large recreational marinas to provide some commercial transient moorage as part of their facilities.
  5. Recreational boating: Maintain diverse opportunities for recreational boaters to access the water. Allow a variety of boating facilities, from launching ramps for small “car top” or “hand-carried” boats to major marinas. Encourage recreational moorage by providing both long-term and short-term moorage at marinas and short-term moorage at cultural and recreational sites.
  6. Passenger terminals: Maintain and expand the opportunity for convenient travel by ship to local and distant ports for residents and visitors. Encourage passenger-only ferries on the Central Waterfront.
  7. Fishing industry: Maintain a critical mass of support services, including boatbuilding and boat repair, moorage, fish processors, and supply houses to allow Seattle fishermen to continue to service and have a home port for their vessels in Seattle waters. Recognize the importance of the local fishing industry in supplying local markets and restaurants. Recognize the economic contribution of distant-water fisheries to Seattle’s maritime and general economy.

**SA P41** Allow multiuse developments including uses that are not water dependent or water related where the demand for water-dependent and water-related uses is less than the land available or if the use that is not water dependent is limited in size, provides a benefit to existing water-dependent and water-related uses in the area, or is necessary for the viability of the water-dependent uses. Such multiuse development shall provide shoreline ecological restoration, which is preferred,

and/or additional public access to the shoreline to achieve other Shoreline Master Program goals.

## Shoreline Recreation

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### GOALS

- SA G19** Manage and optimize publicly owned shorelines that are suitable for public recreation.
- SA G20** Increase shorelines dedicated to public recreation and **open space**.
- SA G21** Identify, protect, and reserve for public use and enjoyment areas in the shoreline district that provide a variety of public-access activities and that connect to other public-access sites so that public access is available throughout the city.
- SA G22** Allow increased opportunities for the public to enjoy water-dependent recreation, including boating, fishing, swimming, diving, and enjoyment of views.

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### POLICIES

- SA P42** Designate for water-dependent recreation, areas where there are natural beaches, large amounts of submerged land or sheltered water, and minimal heavy ship traffic or land suitable for heavy industrial activity, while protecting ecological functions.
- SA P43** Provide for recreational boating facilities, including moorage and service facilities, on publicly owned land, and encourage the provision of such facilities on private property in appropriate areas that minimize environmental impacts.
- SA P44** Increase publicly owned shorelines, giving priority to those areas of the City that lack recreational facilities.
- SA P45** Explore alternatives to acquisition for providing public recreation at the shoreline and on the water.
- SA P46** Identify submerged lands that could be used for underwater parks.

# Shoreline Archaeological and Historic Resources

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## GOALS

- SA G23** Encourage the restoration, preservation, and maintenance of areas of the shoreline having significant archaeological and historical importance.
- SA G24** Encourage the restoration of archaeological and historic features of the shoreline where consistent with economic and environmental goals.

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## POLICIES

- SA P47** Designate, protect, preserve, and support restoration of sites and areas of the shoreline district having historic or cultural significance, including through landmark designation where appropriate.
- SA P48** Avoid impacts to areas identified as archaeologically and historically significant, unless no reasonable alternative locations exist and impacts to the resource are mitigated.

# Shoreline Environments

## Discussion

State law requires that the Shoreline Master Program address a wide range of physical conditions and development settings along the shoreline. The Shoreline Master Program spells out different measures for the environmental protection, allowed uses, and development standards for each area of the shoreline. Each distinct section of the shoreline is classified as a particular environment. The environment designations provide the framework for implementing shoreline policies and regulatory measures. The shoreline environments within Seattle's shoreline district are divided into two broad categories—conservancy and urban—and then subdivided further within these two categories.

The conservancy shoreline environments are less developed and provide for areas of navigation, recreation, and habitat protection. The urban shoreline environments are areas that are more developed and provide for single-family houses and water-dependent and water-related uses. The conservancy and urban shoreline environments are described in the following goals and policies.

# Conservancy Shoreline Environments

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## GOAL

- SA G25** The conservancy shoreline environments are intended to provide for navigation; public access; recreation; and protection, restoration, and enhancement of ecological functions in the shoreline district, while allowing some development if designed to protect ecological functions.

## Conservancy Management (CM) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G26** The purpose of the Conservancy Management Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing opportunities for shoreline recreation.

### POLICIES

- SA P49** Encourage restoration of ecological functions in areas where such function has been degraded.
- SA P50** Accommodate water-oriented public **infrastructure** projects or such projects that require a waterfront location and that are compatible with the ecological functions of the area.

## Conservancy Navigation (CN) Environment

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### GOAL

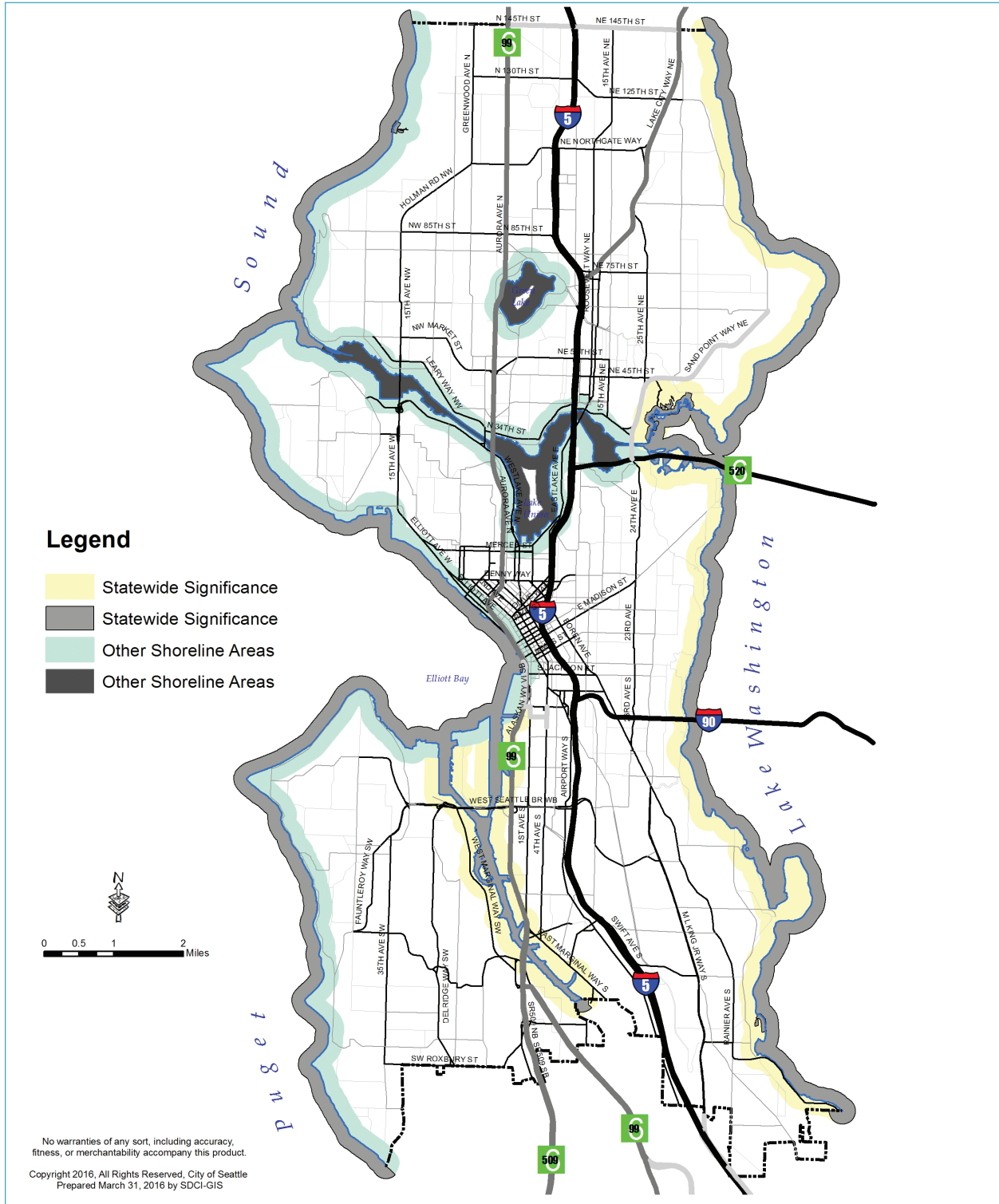
- SA G27** The purpose of the Conservancy Navigation Environment is to preserve the shoreline environment while providing navigational use of the water.

### POLICIES

- SA P51** Allow in-water and overwater structures that are primarily for navigational purposes.
- SA P52** Enhance and restore ecological function, where feasible, in areas where such function has been previously degraded.



Shoreline Figure 1  
Seattle Shorelines



## Conservancy Preservation (CP) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G28** The purpose of the Conservancy Preservation Environment is to preserve, enhance, and restore the ecological functions in the shoreline district.

### POLICIES

- SA P53** Prohibit uses that substantially degrade the ecological functions or natural character of the shoreline.
- SA P54** Prohibit commercial and industrial uses and non-water-oriented recreation.
- SA P55** Prohibit parking that can be located outside the CP area.
- SA P56** Limit access and utilities to those necessary to sustain permitted uses and activities.

## Conservancy Recreation (CR) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G29** The purpose of the Conservancy Recreation Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing opportunities for shoreline recreation.

### POLICIES

- SA P57** Prioritize public access, water-dependent recreation, and other water-oriented uses compatible with ecological protection.
- SA P58** Locate public access and public recreation only where the impacts on ecological functions can be effectively mitigated.

## Conservancy Waterway (CW) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G30** The purpose of the Conservancy Waterway Environment is to preserve and enhance the shoreline environment while providing access to the shoreline and water by watercraft.

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## POLICIES

- SA P59** Provide navigational access to adjacent properties, and access to and from land for the loading and unloading of watercraft and temporary moorage.
- SA P60** Allow in- and overwater structures only where needed for navigational purposes, temporary moorage, minor vessel repair, pedestrian bridges, and/or ecological restoration.
- SA P61** Minimize impacts on navigation, public views, and ecological functions.

# Urban Shoreline Environments

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## GOAL

- SA G31** The urban shoreline environments are intended to provide for increased development of the shoreline for residential, commercial, and industrial uses while protecting ecological functions.

## Urban Commercial (UC) Environment

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## GOAL

- SA G32** The purpose of the Urban Commercial Environment is to provide for water-oriented uses of the shoreline and for uses that are not water oriented when shoreline restoration and enhancement or public access is provided.

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## POLICIES

- SA P62** Allow uses that are not water oriented only when in combination with water-dependent uses or in limited situations where they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-dependent uses or on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.
- SA P63** Require visual access to the water through view corridors or other means for commercial and larger multifamily residential projects.
- SA P64** Provide for public access to the shoreline, and require shoreline environmental restoration and enhancement for uses that are not water dependent.

## Urban General (UG) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G33** The purpose of the Urban General Environment is to provide for commercial and industrial uses in the shoreline district where water access is limited.

### POLICIES

- SA P65** Allow commercial and industrial uses that are not water dependent or water related.
- SA P66** Require visual public access where feasible.

## Urban Harborfront (UH) Environment

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### GOAL

- SA G34** The purpose of the Urban Harborfront Environment is to provide for water-oriented uses (uses that are water-dependent, water-related, or water-enjoyment, or a combination of such uses) of the shoreline and for a mix of uses that are water oriented and not water oriented on lots where shoreline restoration and enhancement or public access is provided.

### POLICIES

- SA P67** Allow a mix of uses in recognition of this environment's roles in tourism and transportation, while ensuring a high degree of public access and recognizing the historic, environmental, and anthropogenic nature of this area.
- SA P68** Allow uses that are not water oriented as part of **mixed-use** developments or in circumstances where they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-oriented uses.
- SA P69** Allow uses that are not water oriented on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.
- SA P70** Allow uses that reflect the diversity of development in the area and support adjacent retail and the tourism industry. On waterfront lots, provide public access and opportunities for large numbers of people to access and enjoy the water in the form of restaurants and water-dependent recreational activities. Allow a broader range of uses on upland lots to support the tourism industry and retail core.
- SA P71** Maintain and enhance views of the water and the landforms beyond the water to augment the harborfront's pedestrian environment and status as an important

waterfront destination. Encourage connections to east–west corridors and waterfront trails.

**SA P72** Encourage and provide for physical public access to the water, where appropriate and feasible.

**SA P73** Development should support or enhance the existing historic character of the urban harborfront while balancing the need for ecological enhancement.

## Urban Industrial (UI) Environment

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### GOAL

**SA G35** The purpose of the Urban Industrial Environment is to provide for water-dependent and water-related industrial uses on larger lots.

### POLICIES

**SA P74** Allow uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots in limited circumstances and in a limited square footage on a site as part of development that includes water-dependent or water-related uses, where it is demonstrated that the allowed uses will benefit water-dependent uses and where the use will not preclude future use by water-dependent uses.

**SA P75** Allow uses that are not water dependent or water related where there is no direct access to the shoreline.

## Urban Maritime (UM) Environment

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### GOAL

**SA G36** The purpose of the Urban Maritime Environment is to provide for water-dependent and water-related industrial and commercial uses on smaller lots.

### POLICIES

**SA P76** Design public access to minimize interference with water-dependent, water-related, and industrial uses, and encourage that public access be located on street ends, parks, and other public lands.

**SA P77** Allow uses that are not water dependent to locate on waterfront lots in limited circumstances and in a limited square footage on a site as part of development that includes water-dependent or water-related uses, where it is demonstrated that the allowed uses will benefit water-dependent uses and where the use will not preclude future use by water-dependent uses.

**SA P78** Allow uses that are not water dependent or water related on lots where there is no direct access to the shoreline.

## Urban Residential (UR) Environment

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### GOAL

**SA G37** The purpose of the Urban Residential Environment is to provide for residential use in the shoreline district when it can be developed in a manner that protects shoreline ecological functions.

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### POLICIES

**SA P79** Provide for single-family residential use of the shoreline in areas that are not suited for industrial and commercial use, habitat protection, or public access.

**SA P80** Provide development standards that allow residential development and protect ecological functions, such as shoreline armoring standards and structure setback regulations.

**SA P81** Multifamily development is not a preferred use in the shoreline district and should be limited to locations where allowed as of January 2011.

**SA P82** Require public access as part of multifamily development of greater than four units.

**SA P83** Provide for access, utilities, and public services to adequately serve existing and planned development.

## Shorelines of Statewide Significance

### Discussion

In addition to the goals and policies of each shoreline environment, the following policies apply to all shorelines of statewide significance under the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Master Program, which include: Puget Sound, the Duwamish River (shorelines from the south city limits north to South Massachusetts Street on the east side and Southwest Bronson Street on the west side, and including Harbor Island and the East and West Duwamish Waterways), Lake Washington, and Union Bay to the Montlake Bridge, as illustrated in Shoreline Figure 1.

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### POLICIES

**SA P84** Protect the ecology of natural beaches and fish migration routes, including the natural processes associated with feeder bluffs.

- SA P85** Encourage and enhance shoreline recreational activities, particularly in developed parks.
- SA P86** Provide for quality public access to the shoreline.
- SA P87** Preserve views of Puget Sound and the landforms beyond, as well as views of Lake Washington and Union Bay.
- SA P88** Preserve and enhance the resources of natural areas and fish migration routes, feeding areas, and spawning areas.

## Height in the Shoreline District

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### POLICIES

- SA P89** The thirty-five-foot height limit provided in the Shoreline Management Act shall be the standard for maximum height in the Seattle shoreline district. Exceptions in the development standards of a shoreline environment may be made consistent with the Act and with underlying zoning and special districts where
  1. a greater height will decrease the impact of the development on the ecological condition,
  2. a greater height will not obstruct views from public trails and viewpoints,
  3. a greater height will not obstruct shoreline views from a substantial number of residences on areas adjoining the “shorelines of the state” as defined in RCW 90.58.030(1)(g) that are in Seattle and will serve a beneficial public interest, or
  4. greater height is necessary for bridges, or equipment of water-dependent or water-related uses or manufacturing uses.
- SA P90** Heights lower than thirty-five feet
  1. shall be the standard for structures overwater, and
  2. where a reduced height is warranted because of the underlying residential zone, or
  3. where a reduced height is warranted because public views or the views of a substantial number of residences on areas adjoining the “shorelines of the state” as defined in RCW 90.58.030(1)(g) that are in Seattle could be blocked.

# Shoreline Master Program Process

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## GOAL

**SA G38** Continue shoreline planning by periodically updating the inventory, goals, policies, and regulations to respond to changing priorities and conditions in Seattle's shorelines.

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## POLICY

**SA P91** Conduct periodic assessments of the performance of and the need for change in the Shoreline Master Program.



# Glossary



Term	Definition
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	A housing unit for which the occupant(s) are paying no more than 30 percent of household income for gross housing costs, which includes rent and basic utilities.
area median income (AMI)	The annual median family income for the Seattle area, as published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, with adjustments for household size, assuming 1 person for a studio apartment and 1.5 people per bedroom for other units.
boulevard network	The roadways designated in the early 20th century Olmsted open space plan for the city, that generally include generous landscaping and medians.
buffer area	An area of land separating two distinct land uses that softens or mitigates the effects of one land use on the other. Also, an area that protects sensitive environmental features from development activity.

built city	A city with little or no undeveloped land. Seattle is considered a built-out city because nearly all its land is platted and served by roads, water, and sewer and because very little of the land is vacant.
capital facilities	Physical features that support urban development; usually refers to features provided by public agencies, such as roads, developed parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.
capital improvement program (CIP)	The portion of the City's budget that describes revenue sources and expenditures for funding capital facilities.
carbon neutral	Making no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
Center City	The four contiguous urban centers: Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown.
climate change	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late twentieth century onward and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
commercial land use	Activities that include the buying and selling of commodities and services. These activities are usually housed in office or retail spaces.
community	A group of people sharing a common experience or interest; e.g., residents of a neighborhood, faith-based congregations, business owners along a commercial corridor, members of ethnic and cultural groups, gardeners at a P-Patch, school-based organizations.
community involvement	Outreach (bringing information to communities), engagement (building ongoing relationships with communities) and other actions taken to identify and/or address issues of interest to a community.
community plan	A plan developed in collaboration with a community around a shared vision that includes a set of strategies to meet community and city goals.
complete corridor	Two or more parallel roadways that together serve all types of travel – cars, transit, freight, pedestrian and bicycle.
complete streets	Streets that provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users.
conditional use	A use that may locate within a zone only upon taking measures to address issues that may make the use detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare, or issues that may impair the integrity and character of the zoned district.
Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)	The Growth Management Act requires that counties prepare countywide planning policies (CPPs) to ensure that city and county comprehensive plans are consistent. The CPPs define the county's urban growth boundary and set growth targets for all jurisdictions in the county, as well as set expectations for the growth of urban centers and for transportation priorities. The King County Countywide Planning Policies were developed and recommended by the Growth Management Planning Council, a group of elected officials who represent all the jurisdictions in the county.
cultural resources	Buildings, objects, features, locations, and structures with scientific, historic, and societal value.

demand management	The strategy of reducing demand for services such as energy, water, or vehicle trips, rather than increasing production to ensure adequate supply.
density	A measurement of the concentration of development on the land, often expressed in the number of people, housing units, or employees per acre. In Seattle, housing density ranges from areas that contain primarily single-family houses on large lots to highrise apartment buildings in one of the city's urban centers.
development pattern	The arrangement of buildings, lots, and streets in an urban environment.
development regulations	Rules the City uses to control buildings or land uses, primarily in the Land Use Code.
displacement	The involuntary relocation of residents or businesses from their current location. Direct displacement is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent/income-restricted housing. Indirect displacement occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford escalating rents or property taxes.
distributed systems	Systems where the supply of water, energy, or other resources come from many sources, such as small solar energy generators or the capture of waste heat, rather than from a central source, such as a power plant.
environmentally critical area (ECA)	Locations in the city that provide critical environmental functions, such as wetlands protecting water quality and providing fish and wildlife habitat. ECAs also include areas that represent particular challenges for development due to geologic or other natural conditions, such as steep slopes, landslide-prone areas, and liquefaction areas.
equal	A solution or outcome where every community or community member receives the same level of resources, regardless of their level of need.
equitable	A solution or outcome where resources are allocated according to each community or community member's level of need.
equity	Everyone has fair and unbiased access to the resources they need to meet their fundamental needs and fully participate in the life of their community.
flex area or flex zone	The portion of a right-of-way between vehicle travel lanes and the pedestrian area that can accommodate parking, loading, plantings, and street furniture.
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.
frequent transit	Generally, bus or train service that arrives at intervals of fifteen minutes or less.
Future Land Use Map (FLUM)	A required component of a comprehensive plan in Washington that shows the proposed physical distribution and location of the various land uses during the planning period.
goal	In the planning process, a goal identifies a desired end state.

green infrastructure	The use of vegetation to absorb, slow and cleanse stormwater.
green streets	A green street is a street right-of-way that includes a variety of design and operational treatments to give priority to pedestrian circulation and open space over other transportation uses. The treatments may include sidewalk widening, landscaping, traffic-calming, and other pedestrian-oriented features.
greening	Building or improving infrastructure in ways that will reduce environmental impacts—for instance, by using soil and vegetation to infiltrate and cleanse stormwater.
Growth Management Act (GMA)	The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the state law that requires local governments to prepare comprehensive plans. It establishes state goals, sets deadlines for compliance, gives direction on how to prepare local plans and development regulations, and calls for early and continuous public participation. (RCW 36.70A)
healthy communities	Neighborhoods where there are opportunities for people to be physically active by walking or biking to goods and services; where there is access to parks, open space, and healthful food; and where people can engage with others.
high-capacity transit	In Seattle, high-capacity transit consists of both rail and rubber-tired transit modes that can operate in exclusive rights-of-way or in mixed traffic. It can include technologies such as light rail or bus rapid transit.
historic district	Seattle has established eight historic districts: Ballard Avenue, Columbia City, Fort Lawton, Harvard-Belmont, International District, Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square, and Sand Point. A citizens' board or the Landmarks Preservation Board reviews the appearance of development activity in these districts to maintain the historical integrity of structures and public spaces.
historic landmark	A property that has been designated by the City as an important resource to the community, city, state, or nation. Designated landmark properties in Seattle include individual buildings and structures, vessels, landscapes and parks, and objects such as street clocks and sculptures. The Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board is responsible for determining which properties meet the standards for landmark designation.
hub urban village	A geographic area designated by the City where both housing and job growth are expected to occur, at somewhat lower scales and densities than in urban centers.
human-scale development	Buildings in which features such as steps, doorways, railings, fixtures, and walking distances fit an average person well.
impervious surface	A surface that cannot absorb water, such as asphalt or concrete.

income levels	<p>“Lower-income” includes three subcategories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely low-income: a household whose income is equal to or less than 30 percent of median income; also refers to housing that extremely low-income households can afford.</li> <li>Very low-income: a household whose income is greater than 30 percent of median income and equal to or less than 60 percent of median income; also refers to housing that very low-income households can afford.</li> <li>Low-income: a household whose income is greater than 60 percent of median income and equal to or less than 80 percent of median income; also refers to housing that very low-income households can afford.</li> </ul> <p>Moderate-income: a household whose income is greater than 80 percent of median income and equal to or less than 100 percent of median income; also refers to housing that moderate-income households can afford.</p> <p>Middle-income: a household whose income is greater than 100 percent of median income and equal to or less than 150 percent of median income; also refers to housing that middle-income households can afford.</p>
industrial land use	Activities that include production, distribution, and repair of goods; includes uses such as factories, container terminals, rail yards, warehouses, and repair of heavy equipment.
industry cluster	A geographical concentration of similar or related industries that gain economic advantages from their location.
infill development	Development of vacant or underused land within areas that are already largely developed.
infrastructure	Public services and facilities such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, schools, roads, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and transit systems.
intelligent transportation systems (ITS)	Systems in which information and communication technologies are used to facilitate transportation operations; ITS may include technologies such as basic management systems, including car navigation, traffic signal control systems, and variable message signs.
Land Use Code	The portion of the Seattle Municipal Code that contains regulations governing development activities. The Land Use Code describes the processes and standards that apply for each zone in the city.
landscape screening	Use of trees, shrubs, or other plantings to block the view of nearby activities.
level of service	A standard used to measure the performance of a system, such as the transportation system.
liquefaction	The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often as a result of ground shaking during an earthquake.
livability	The sum of the factors that add up to a community’s quality of life, including built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreational possibilities.
local access street	A non-arterial street that provides direct access to destinations.

major institutions	Colleges, universities, and hospitals that the City regulates through specific master plans developed in cooperation with the surrounding communities.
manufacturing/ industrial center	One of the two areas in Seattle that the Comprehensive Plan designates as places where industrial activities are encouraged and nonindustrial activities are either prohibited or strictly limited.
marginalized populations	Low-income people, people of color, and non-native English speakers. These groups have often historically been underserved and underrepresented in City processes.
master plan	A document that describes the long-term expectations for growth on a large property controlled by a single entity, such as the campus of a college or hospital.
mixed-use	Development that contains residential use plus some other, usually commercial use, such as office or retail.
mode-share	The percentage of all trips made by a certain method or 'mode' of travel, such as single-occupant vehicles.
multifamily land use	Freestanding buildings composed of two or more separate living units, with each unit having its own bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom facilities.
natural drainage systems	The use of trees, plants, ground covers, and soils to manage stormwater runoff from hard surfaces (like roofs, roads, parking lots, and sidewalks) in ways that mimic nature—slowing and cleaning polluted runoff close to its source and reducing the volume of runoff by allowing it to soak back through the soil and recharge groundwater.
neighborhood	A geographically localized district within a city; e.g., Ballard, South Park, Columbia City, Greenwood.
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.
neighborhood plan	Goals and policies adopted in the Comprehensive Plan, consistent with the Growth Management Act, that detail how the vision, goals and policies of the elements of the comprehensive plan apply to a specific geographic area.
nonconforming use	A use or structure that was valid when brought into existence but that does not meet subsequent regulations. Typically, nonconforming uses are permitted to continue, subject to certain restrictions.
Official Land Use Map	A map adopted by ordinance that shows the locations of the designated zones in the city.
on-street parking pricing	The amount of money charged to park a vehicle along a street; in some locations in the city, the amount may vary by time of day or day of the week.
open space	Any parcel or area of land that is essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, or outdoor recreation.
overlay district	A land use designation on a zoning map that modifies the underlying designation in some specific manner. Overlay zones often deal with areas that have special characteristics, such as shoreline areas or historical areas.

parklet	A sidewalk extension, usually in the parking lane, that provides more space and amenities for people using the street.
pedestrian-oriented commercial areas	Commercial zones where the development standards are intended to make walking an attractive way of getting around. These include the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Seattle Mixed (SM) zones.
placemaking	A people-centered approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces such as parks, plazas, and streets that helps give activity and identity to those spaces.
policy	A statement of principle intended to guide future action in a way that will help achieve an adopted goal or goals.
regional transportation pricing	Coordinated effort among governments in the region to set prices for parking, roadways or transit.
rent/income-restricted housing	Housing with a regulatory agreement, covenant, or other legal document on the property title that sets a limit on the income of households that may rent the unit(s) and controls the rent(s) that may be charged for a specified period of time.
residential urban village	A geographic area designated by the City where primarily housing growth is expected to occur, at somewhat lower scales and densities than in hub urban villages.
resilience	The capacity to adapt to changing conditions and to maintain or regain functionality and vitality in the face of stress or disturbance. The ability of individuals, households, communities, and regions to maintain livable conditions in the event of natural disasters, loss of power, or other interruptions in normally available services.
rezone criteria	A set of considerations specified in the Land Use Code that helps determine the appropriate locations for applying the City's various zoning designations.
right-of-way	A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, like roads, railroads, and utility lines.
roadway pricing strategies	Fees charged for the use of a road, including tolls, or time- and distance-based charges to help fund improvements and to encourage efficient use of the roads.
setback	The minimum distance required by zoning regulations to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and a property line.
shared parking	Parking spaces that may be used by more than one user, such as a parking lot that is used by a church on weekends and by commuters during the week.
shared use	In the right-of-way, this refers to two or more uses that occur in the same space at either the same or different time, such a curb lane that is used for parking most of the day, but for vehicle travel during the peak commute time.
single-family land use	Stand-alone structures on a parcel of land containing only one living unit.
single-occupant vehicle	A privately operated vehicle whose only occupant is the driver.
smart parking	A system that uses electronic signs to direct incoming drivers to available parking.

social equity	Fair access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs.
special review district	An area of the city where unique development standards and review procedures apply, such as Pioneer Square.
stewardship	Responsibility for monitoring or encouraging actions that affect the natural or built environment.
stormwater	Water that falls as rain and flows across the ground. In an urban area, most stormwater is directed to drains that collect the water and eventually direct it to streams, lakes, or other large water bodies.
sustainable communities	Areas of development that are able to meet the needs of growth, while not exhausting the natural resources that will be necessary for future generations.
transit-oriented communities	Moderate- to higher-density development located within an easy walk of a major transit stop, generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities designed for pedestrians, without excluding automobiles.
transportation demand management	Strategies to reduce the number of single-occupant car trips, such as by providing more transit, or improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
underrepresented population	Communities and groups provided with insufficient or inadequate representation relative to their proportion of the total population.
underserved population	Communities and groups provided with insufficient or inadequate resources or services relative to their needs and/or proportion of the total population.
urban centers	Key features of the regional growth strategy; relatively small areas that are expected to accommodate the highest densities of development for both housing and employment.
urban forest	The trees and lower-growing plants that are found on public and private property within the city. This includes developed parks and natural areas, as well as the trees along streets and in yards.
urban growth boundary	An officially adopted and mapped line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for natural or rural uses. Under the Growth Management Act, sewers are not permitted to be extended beyond the urban growth boundary.
urban villages	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.
vibrant pedestrian environment	An area where transit, shops, restaurants, entertainment and other uses attract a variety of people traveling on foot.
vision zero	A program to improve roadway safety with the goal of having no fatalities and serious injuries.
walking distance	Generally assumed that people are willing to walk up to ½ mile to frequent, reliable transit and up to ¼ mile to other types of transit.
zones	Designations adopted by City ordinance and applied to areas of land to specify allowable uses for property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas.