

Community Well-Being

Introduction

The City of Seattle 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.

The Community Well-Being Element connects the physical features of the city and its neighborhoods with the overall well-being of Seattleites. While physical features such as walkable land use patterns, good quality housing, and accessible parks and open spaces can enhance Seattleites' health and well-being, the overall well-being of a community depends on much more than its physical form. This element emphasizes the importance of the human and social infrastructure that is provided through social relationships formed around common values, arts and culture, ethnicity, education, family, and age groups.

The Community Well-Being Element recognizes that the City provides many services directly while also supporting the work of other public and private organizations. This element is about building community capacity through programs, services, activities, and citizen involvement to make the places we live, work and play, welcoming, safe, and engaging.

Supportive and Healthy Communities

Discussion

Healthy, sustainable, and safe communities are products of people working together, respecting one another, and investing time, energy, and commitment. City government has important roles to play, but institutions alone cannot create or sustain community. Children and youth are critical to the future, and elders can help sustain our history and culture. Through involvement in civic and neighborhood activities, people see the impact of their actions, recognize the difference they make, and can build supportive relationships with the people around them. This reinforces the understanding that personal well-being and connection to community are crucial to the development of a vibrant, growing community. The City can support relationship-building by encouraging the participation of all members of the community.

GOAL

CWG1 Make Seattle a place where everyone feels they can be active in family, community, and neighborhood life; where they help each other, contribute to the vitality of the city, and create a sense of belonging among all Seattleites.

POLICIES

- CW1.1 Promote opportunities for people to build connections with their peers, neighbors, and the greater community by supporting intergenerational and inter-cultural programs, activities and events.
- CW1.2 Use relevant and respectful ways to encourage broad participation in neighborhood and community activities and events.
- CW1.3 Promote volunteerism and community service among people of all ages and cultures by providing information about opportunities to contribute their time, energy, or resources.
- CW1.4 Partner with other governments, schools, institutions, and community-based organizations to involve people of all backgrounds meaningfully in planning and decision-making that impact their community and their personal well-being.
- CW1.5 Enhance opportunities for children and youth to gain skills, increase self-esteem, and envision a positive future.
- CW1.6 Reinforce efforts that strengthen the ability of children, youth, and families to participate in their health, wellness, and education, and contribute to the development of a vibrant, growing community.
- CW1.7 Celebrate young people's accomplishments and promote activities for children and youth to increase their participation in the community.
- CW1.8 Engage older residents in community conversations and volunteer opportunities so they can find fulfillment in ways that benefit themselves and the community.

Access to Food and Shelter

Discussion

Seattle's quality of life and economic future depend on the overall health of its people, and the City's ability to be innovative and responsive in helping people meet their basic needs. There are people who lack food or shelter, who are vulnerable, or who face barriers to functioning independently. The City recognizes its role in making Seattle the kind of place all people want to live and raise their families, and where those who are most vulnerable will have access to assistance they need. The Housing Element of this Plan specifically addresses ways in which the City supports the provision of housing for low-income

households. The safety of our communities may also need special attention before and after an emergency or disaster.

GOAL

CWG2 Reduce poverty and its effects that make people, especially children and elderly adults, vulnerable.

POLICIES

CW2.1 Encourage coordinated service delivery for food, housing, health care, and other basic necessities for people and families in need.

CW2.2 Contribute to efforts that help people meet their basic needs, maintain their independence as long as possible, and remain in their neighborhoods of choice.

CW2.3 Allow temporary shelter for those who are homeless and invest in services and programs that provide a pathway to permanent housing and.

CW2.4 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

Health is a major determinant of quality of life and of a person's 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 both promote healthy choices to avoid risk and provide assistance to those who encounter health problems.

GOAL

CWG3 Create a healthy environment where community members of all ages, stages, and life circumstances are able to aspire to and achieve a healthy life, are well nourished, and have access to affordable health care.

POLICIES

- CW3.1 Encourage Seattle residents to adopt healthy and active lifestyles to improve their general health and well-being and to promote healthy aging. Provide affordable opportunities for people to participate in fitness and recreational activities and to enjoy available open space.
- CW3.2 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.
- CW3.3 Collaborate with Public Health – Seattle & King County, private hospitals and community health clinics to maximize opportunities under health care coverage for preventive care, behavioral health, and long-term care.
- CW3.4 Seek to improve the quality and equity of access to health care, including physical and mental health, emergency medical, 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.
- CW3.5 Support efforts to provide access to healthy, affordable food for all people in Seattle.
- CW3.6 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.
- CW3.7 Seek to expand access to healthy food by encouraging better distribution and marketing of healthy options in the greatest variety of places and by addressing nutrition standards in City purchasing programs.
- CW3.8 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, promote food security, and build community.
- CW3.9 Consider using City land, including parks and surplus property, to expand the capacity to grow, process, distribute, and access local foods.
- CW3.10 Support access to preventive interventions at agencies that serve the homeless, mentally ill, and chemically dependent populations.

- CW3.11 Support efforts to reduce exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in indoor and outdoor areas, particularly where vulnerable populations, such as children and seniors are likely to be present.
- CW3.12 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 will have the skills to pursue opportunities and careers of their choice. Achieving this requires coordination with Seattle Public Schools, as with other public agencies, nonprofit agencies, community groups and business organizations to make quality education and opportunities for learning and training available to children, youth and adults.

GOAL

- CWG4 Support an education system and opportunities for life-long learning that strengthen literacy and employability for all Seattle residents.

POLICIES

- CW4.1 Create equitable access to high quality early learning services and support families so that their children are prepared for school.
- CW4.2 Support schools' efforts to develop culturally competent disciplinary practices that keep children engaged with their schools, while still requiring behavioral accountability.
- CW4.3 Encourage parent, volunteer, business, and community support for education and their involvement in schools.
- CW4.4 Support the Seattle Public Schools efforts to create safe learning environments in and after school that promote academic and personal achievement for all children and youth.
- CW4.5 Support opportunities for community-based learning through service projects that have value to both the students and the community.

- CW4.6 Work with schools, higher education, libraries, community centers, arts and cultural agencies and organizations to link services into a seamless system that helps students stay in school, such as through co-location or services and joint use of facilities.
- CW4.7 Support programs that help people who have dropped out of high school to achieve education, personal, and employment goals.
- CW4.8 Provide literacy development and related resources for English language learners.
- CW4.9 Work with colleges, universities, other institutions of higher learning, and community-based organizations to promote life-long learning opportunities and encourage the broadest possible access to libraries, community centers, schools, and other existing facilities throughout the city.
- CW4.10 Work with schools 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.
- CW4.11 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 an individual, family, and community responsibility. It includes pro-active and responsive human service efforts that prevent unsafe situations from occurring and that intervene early before they become serious. Building safer communities requires the commitment of all Seattle's residents - youth and adults alike. City government can act as a catalyst in this effort. It can help build partnerships and make connections between the individuals, agencies and other groups that work to address persistent individual, community, and neighborhood safety needs.

GOAL

- CWG5 Reduce violence and the incidence of crimes, and increase the sense of security throughout the city.

POLICIES

- CW5.1 Coordinate across City departments and with other agencies to address violence, abuse, and exploitation and to hold offenders accountable.

- CW5.2 Plan and implement best and promising practices that focus on preventing violence.
- CW5.3 Ensure that violence prevention, intervention, and offenders accountability programs are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- CW5.4 Increase awareness of all forms of violence and abuse and the resources that exist to assist in dealing with these issues.
- CW1.5 Emphasize education, prevention, and early intervention to reduce the risk of exposure to negative health impacts, violence and injury.
- CW5.6 Encourage efforts that enhance strong family relationships and healthy child development to help prevent child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence.
- CW5.7 Work in partnership with the state, county and community agencies to prevent violence, firearms injury, and violence associated with substance abuse.
- CW5.8 Encourage a policing strategy that works in partnership with the community to reduce crime through education and enforcement, and encourage communities to build block-by-block networks to prevent crime, develop social networks, and solve common problems.
- CW5.9 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.
- CW5.10 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.
- CW5.11 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.
- CW5.12 Work with the Seattle Public Schools to make schools safe places where all youth can experience success in education and preparation for future productive lives.
- CW5.13 Promote information sharing and resource coordination among the courts, jails, prosecutors, and police for greater efficiency in the criminal justice system.
- CW5.14 Report crime statistics periodically to guide future decisions about programs and resource allocation that can help control crime and make Seattle residents feel safer in the city.

A Multi-Cultural City

Discussion

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

GOAL

CWG6 Provide equitable opportunity and access to services for all Seattle residents.

POLICIES

- CW6.1 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.
- CW6.2 Promote culturally responsive and relevant service delivery from City departments and other agencies.
- CW6.3 Provide opportunities for, and actively recruit, diverse representation on City of Seattle boards, commissions, and advisory committees that contribute to City decision-making.
- CW6.4 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.
- CW6.5 Promote race and social justice, human and civil rights, and mutual respect to reduce intolerance.
- CW6.6 Celebrate the richness of diversity through cultural activities and events that bring people together to experience ethnic and cultural traditions.

Coordination of Services

Discussion

The City plays an important role in building culturally responsive, efficient human service and public safety systems that provide easy access for all people. The City of Seattle contracts with multiple community-based organizations to help build capacity for developing and delivering high quality services to community residents. Co-location of services in neighborhoods can make it easier for people to find and use the services they need.

GOAL

CWG7 Develop a flexible, comprehensive, coordinated and efficient system of human services that addresses the needs of people, families and communities.

POLICIES

CW7.1 Encourage cooperative planning, decision-making and funding for health and human service delivery throughout the region.

CW7.2 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.

CW7.3 Strive to disseminate more coordinated information about the availability of services in the community.

CW7.4 Use feedback from participants to develop customer-focused services, using feedback from participants, and involve consumers in identifying needs and planning for service delivery.

CW7.5 Consider related issues, such as transportation and the need for dependent care, when planning for health, human services, employment, and recreation programs.

CW7.6 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.

CW7.7 Site human service providers using good neighbor guidelines that consider the needs of consumers and the community and focuses new facilities in or near urban villages.

- CW7.8 Encourage use of existing facilities and co-location of services, including joint use of schools and City and community facilities, to make services available in underserved areas and in urban village areas.
- CW7.9 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.
- CW7.10 Identify and implement effective ways to measure program performance and results, balancing accountability and efficiency with the need to encourage service innovation.