

# 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

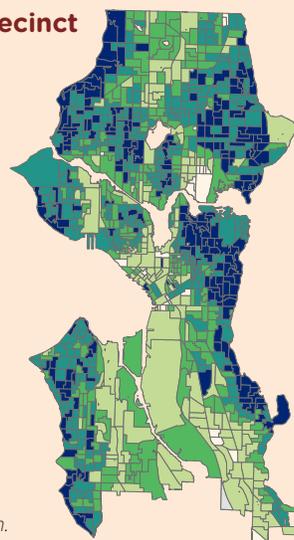
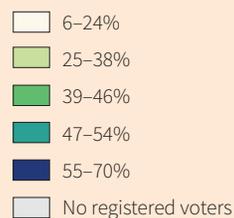
### Discussion

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.

## 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, 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

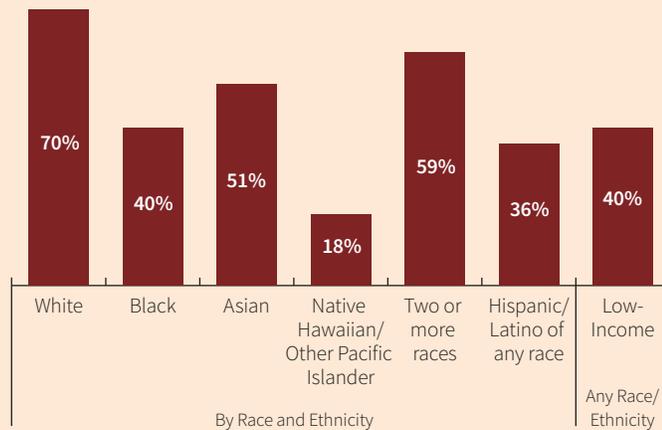
### Discussion

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 colocation 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.

## 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 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, and use good-neighbor guidelines that consider the needs of consumers and the community.
- CW 7.8** Encourage use of existing facilities and colocation 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.