

Community Engagement Report

To the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

In support of the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update

February 2023



Capitol Hill
EcoDistrict

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Introduction

In 2022, the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict conducted community engagement toward informing the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update, leveraging our [public life](#) outreach to build a vision for more equitable public spaces. The following memo summarizes the methodology used, key findings, and recommendations regarding housing, economic development, growth strategy, climate change, transportation, and parks and open spaces for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan, where possible.

For the purposes of this research, the EcoDistrict defines community as centered upon impact – if an individual is affected by the decisions made regarding resources in Capitol Hill, they are a part of the community studied here. This identification allows for a broader data set and acknowledges the relevance of this central neighborhood to residents across Seattle.

In 2016, the Office of Planning and Community Development determined Capitol Hill to be a high access-to-opportunity, high displacement risk neighborhood as part of its [Growth and Equity Analysis](#). According to 2022 American Community Survey 5-year data, 80% of Capitol Hill’s nearly 40,000 residents are renters, most of whom live in the southern end of the neighborhood.

Capitol Hill is the historic home of the LGBTQ community in Seattle and the city’s first Arts District with more than 60 galleries, venues, and arts organizations at risk of displacement. With its history of redlining and racial covenants, this neighborhood embodies the legacy of the systematic exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities while also stewarding Cal Anderson Park, named after Washington’s first publicly LGBTQ lawmaker and a central gathering space for activism and protest.

The complexity of needs present in Capitol Hill along with its experience of decades-long skyrocketing growth, infrastructure investment, and social problems create an ideal study area where lessons learned may bear fruit across the city.

Methodology

Our central research question may be summarized as: how can community resilience and stability in Capitol Hill and Seattle be improved through specific sectoral and overarching planning and community development strategies?

To answer this question, the EcoDistrict conducted a [community resilience mapping](#) exercise that surveyed eight social determinants of health (housing, environmental resilience, demography, education and job training, food security, health care services, social connection, and safety) to better understand the ability of the community to respond to stressors, where weaknesses and strengths lie, and how gaps are trending.

Census data proved an important tool for establishing a clear understanding of the residential community but was not adequate to describe service needs. A more accurate measure was established through a direct engagement approach with residents, commuters, workers, students, service providers, and other users.

Through 19 intercept interviews, five meetings with community leaders, and three focus groups, the team tested findings and asked broad questions regarding health, connection, environmental resilience, and safety with a focus on fostering belonging in public spaces.

Finally, a [digital survey](#) administered at events, over social media, and via the EcoDistrict's community partner network offered insight across sectors, inviting respondents to participate in both issue identification and strategy generation. With 123 respondents, survey demographics indicate mapping relative to demographic decennial census data for the neighborhood.

Findings

Major Themes

Safety and Access

Vox pop interviews conducted in Cal Anderson Park and a subsequent focus group noted that safety concerns focused more on park stewardship, accessible bathrooms, adequate lighting, services for unhoused people, and stronger enforcement of leash laws than feelings of physical insecurity or threat.

In open-ended questions, survey respondents most frequently named safety (49%) as a barrier to feeling a sense of belonging, followed by accessibility (18%), availability of social services (16%), and the presence of stewardship (16%). Respondents noted social connection (32%) and housing (27%) as needs preventing a sense of resilience. When referencing safety, many respondents named police presence as a threat rather than a supportive strategy.

Respondents reported feeling a sense of stability 77% of the time over the past year, referencing social connection (32%), housing (27%), and safety (19%) as primary barriers.

North-South Divide

Demographic and housing data gathered through community resilience mapping revealed that north Capitol Hill residents earn roughly twice the household income of those in southern census tracts, though housing is five times as dense in the southern part of the neighborhood¹. This stratification plays out regarding housing, climate change impacts, and vehicle collisions, as well.

By sector

Housing

In ranking effective strategies for preventing displacement, survey respondents overwhelmingly supported housing solutions that included more affordable housing (75%) and a greater diversity of housing options (74%). At every opportunity across the survey, respondents named access to stable, affordable housing as a primary barrier to stability for themselves and their households.

Three interviews with housing agencies that serve unhoused residents in Capitol Hill highlighted existing barriers to affordable housing beyond housing supply. All cited that lengthy application processes, required deposits, background checks, and identification documentation were barriers that prevented or delayed individuals from being placed in currently available affordable housing units. A housing inventory showed only 2% of existing stock in Capitol Hill as dedicated to shelters, transitional, permanent supportive housing, or assisted living units. GIS mapping showed a concentration of studios, one-, and two-bedroom units in southern Capitol Hill, very few of which were “family-sized” (i.e., 2+ bedroom units).

Economic Development

As income stratification worsens and costs rise, the north-south divide in Capitol Hill is likely to grow. The decennial census split several existing tracts, allowing for a clearer understanding of demographic data, which illuminated income stratification as well as more precise densification.

¹ 2022 American Community Survey 5-year updated in April 2022

Survey respondents ranked more living wage jobs (54%) higher than other anti-displacement strategies, such as equitable support for arts and culture organizations (43%), equitable support for small businesses (39%), and more job training (25%), which were also popular.

Growth Strategy

Many survey respondents noted support for more housing and commercial development in less densely populated neighborhoods (47%). When asked what they needed to manage the impacts of displacement for their households, respondents overwhelmingly pointed to affordable housing (51%) followed by a living wage (17%) and transit (8%).

Climate Change

While flooding remains a significant local climate impact, extreme heat and wildfire smoke were recent experiences for survey respondents. As tree canopy degrades by 13% moving southward in the neighborhood², heat islands can produce temperatures up to 23 degrees hotter than shade³.

Respondents reported that they were moderately impacted by environmental stressors such as flooding, extreme heat, poor air quality, extreme cold, or snowstorms over the past three years. They leveraged the following strategies:

- Stayed home (79%)
- Used an air filter (54%)
- Used air conditioning (48%)
- Used a park or green space with shade (34%)

When asked what strategies they could imagine being helpful in the future, survey respondents emphasized increased tree canopy and greenspace (26%), more efficient buildings (26%), and more accessible public spaces generally (18%). Car reduction strategies (17%) and temporary shelters (16%) were also popular ideas.

Transportation

While not a first-tier transportation hub, Capitol Hill is home to important nodes of several transit systems: light rail, buses, trolley, bike lanes, and cars. Only one official Greenway – Melrose Ave – runs through the neighborhood.

² Lang, N., Jetz, W., Schindler, K. & Wegner, J.D. (2022) A high-resolution canopy height model of Earth

³ Seattle and King County Heat Watch Report 2021

As vehicle collisions with both pedestrians and cyclists have increased particularly in the south along the Pike Pine corridor, Broadway, and the Olive-Denny connection, the intersection of these transit systems is failing to divert car traffic or avert safety concerns. Lack of north-south routes and of adequate wayfinding between economic corridors and transit systems prevent ease of travel, and hazards such as poor sidewalk infrastructure and lack of illumination discourage pedestrian movement.

In ranking effective strategies for preventing displacement, survey respondents pointed to the need for access to more public transportation options (58%) and more direct public transportation routes with fewer transfers for longer trips (50%). In a neighborhood with plentiful options, coordination between them and lack of reliability discourages community members from taking advantage.

Parks and Open Spaces

Survey respondents reported feeling a sense of belonging in public spaces 57% of the time over the past year. Respondents reported feeling a stronger sense of belonging in public spaces when they:

- Are free to access (79%)
- Have opportunities to connect with nature (70%)
- Are accessible for all ages and abilities (70%)
- Reflect neighborhood identity in art and design (60%)
- Offer connection opportunities (59%)

Respondents would like to see a variety of improvements made to public spaces, especially increased shade (74%), car-free zones (65%), more seating (60%), free public toilets (60%), Green Stormwater Infrastructure (51%), and art and music, such as murals and buskers (51%).

Vox pop interviews and a focus group concentrated on Cal Anderson Park noted a desire for opportunities to linger, increased lighting, more art in the vicinity, greater enforcement of leash laws, accessible bathrooms, greater stewardship of the space, and more activation.

Recommendations for One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

General recommendations

Invest in infrastructure to pace growth. Taken as a whole, our findings indicate that, as Capitol Hill has densified over the past decade, government-supported infrastructure has not kept pace with increasing needs. Over the past three years, community members reported significant concerns regarding living wage jobs, stewardship of the public realm, adequately coordinated transit, and especially the accessibility and availability of social services for unhoused or drug involved individuals. Housing

remains a primary need, but as this is addressed, inadequate infrastructure investment will lead to lower community resilience even as housing stock increases.

Focus safety strategies on activation and connectivity rather than surveillance. Generally, community members perceived lack of safety as most closely related to inaccessible resources such as public restrooms, lack of illumination, presence of law enforcement, and property damage. Greater investment in community stewardship through maintenance and trash removal, investment in infrastructure, and scrutiny of tools such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) through a racial equity toolkit is recommended.

By sector

Housing

Eliminate single family zoning and invest in family-sized units. Community members named affordable housing as a consistent need in every forum we engaged, and community resilience mapping indicated an inadequate supply of family-sized units. Eliminating single family zoning would go a long way toward equalizing the impact of densification, and mixed income levels within urban zones is a hallmark of healthy public life.

Economic Development

Increase financial stability for residents, small businesses, and cultural/service organizations through risk mitigation programs (rent stabilization, wage subsidy, etc.). With rising rents and other costs outpacing wages, residents of Seattle grow more vulnerable to economic shocks. High market entry costs (triple net leasing, street use vending limitations) prevent already marginalized groups from participating in commerce and engaging in entrepreneurship. Together, these and other factors contribute to further income stratification across Seattle but especially in the center city.

Growth Strategy

Steer growth toward geographic equity. Capitol Hill should serve as a cautionary tale as skyrocketing growth over the past decade has increased the north-south divide within the neighborhood. While Mandatory Housing Affordability was a critical step in addressing Seattle's housing crisis, neighborhoods to the south, neighborhoods bearing historic underinvestment and underrepresentation in civic decision-making, have shouldered the vast majority of this effort. These neighborhoods not only suffer from a lack of infrastructure to support growth, but they also hold the tensions of this growth as newcomers with more wealth purchase homes. Any future efforts to densify across Seattle, whether

along transit corridors or around community assets such as parks and schools should be shouldered equitably in acknowledgment of existing wealth gaps.

Climate Change

Leverage existing systems, such as the right-of-way and Greenways model, to increase accessible green space, tree canopy, and Green Stormwater Infrastructure. Climate change impacts, such as flooding, extreme heat events, and wildfire smoke, increasingly plague the Pacific Northwest, and BIPOC, people with disabilities, and seniors bear the brunt of these impacts, which wears down community resilience against environmental stressors of any kind. Unhoused people are especially vulnerable, and their experience helps to highlight existing systems that are underutilized. Planting strips and other marginal land should be used to maximize tree canopy and green space for biodiversity. Greenways exist across Seattle but currently bear no environmental benefit beyond car reduction, wasting a critical opportunity to offer better connectivity, invitation, and opportunities for community stewardship. This network should grow, and its potential impact should be maximized. Emergency shelters should also be staffed adequately with accessible transportation coordinated at the neighborhood level.

Transportation

- **Create pedestrian prioritized zones along existing and forthcoming economic and transit corridors to improve safety, activation, and experiences of belonging for historically marginalized communities.**
- **Scale wayfinding to support improved connectivity within and between neighborhoods, emphasizing community assets and transportation systems.**
- **Improve stewardship, reliability, and accessibility of transit systems.**

Car reduction strategies that prioritize pedestrian movement must be accompanied by improved transit to ensure the health of economic corridors and commerce at transit-oriented development sites. The urban village model has exacerbated inequity across neighborhoods in Seattle, and a healthy transportation system that supports ease of movement for all people is essential to healing this ongoing harm. Activation strategies that invite and support connection and incorporate a diversity of art and culture will offer true invitation and foster belonging, but only with adequate social service provision.

Parks and Open Spaces

Invest in institutional and community stewardship of parks and open spaces, emphasizing public amenities such as restrooms, places to linger, and shade. Our shared spaces have become places that show most plainly our lack of resilience as a community. We bring our unmet needs with us into the public realm, and existing stewardship models no longer work to maintain these places. Increased

investment in public restrooms, access points to social services, support for resilience networks such as community feeding programs, and educational resource to assist with navigating transportation, housing, and other social programs are now critical elements to the success of parks and open spaces.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Digital Survey

A Vision for Public Life in Capitol Hill

What does a resilient Capitol Hill look like?

Please complete this 5-7-minute survey to help us envision more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces for all in Capitol Hill. This learning and other community engagement activities will influence a Public Life Vision and Implementation Plan for Capitol Hill. Learn more about public life planning [here](#).

Fostering Belonging

The following questions relate to experiences of safety and belonging in public spaces in Capitol Hill.

What is your relationship to the Capitol Hill neighborhood? Please check all that apply.

- I live here.
- I work here.
- I recreate here.
- I receive services here.
- I travel through the neighborhood.
- Other: _____

What helps you to feel a sense of belonging in a public space? What might you need to feel this way in a public space? Please check all that apply.

- Lots of people
- People that look like me
- Opportunities to connect with people
- Access to social services
- Accessibility for all ages and abilities
- Accessible signage and wayfinding
- My identity and/or culture reflected in art and design
- Spaces and events that are free to access
- Opportunities to connect with nature
- Other: _____

Over the past year, what percentage of the time did you spend feeling a sense of belonging in public spaces in Capitol Hill?

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

When you haven't felt like you belong, what was going on?

Stability and Resilience

The following questions relate to experiences of stability and resilience as they pertain to stable housing, access to health services, employment, food security, and social connection.

Over the past year, what percentage of time have you spent feeling a sense of stability (stable housing, access to health services, employment, food security, social connection)?

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

When you haven't felt a sense of stability, what was going on?

Climate Change and other Environmental Impacts

The following questions relate to experiences of vulnerability due to climate change and other environmental impacts.

Over the past THREE years, to what extent were you affected by environmental impacts (e.g. flooding, extreme heat, poor air quality, extreme cold, snowstorms, rats)?

Not impacted 1 2 3 4 5 Significantly impacted

What strategies did you use to cope? Check all that apply.

- Stayed home
- Stayed with friends or family
- Park or green space with shade
- Temporary shelter
- Air conditioning
- Air filter
- Pesticides
- Other: _____
- None of the above

What strategies could you imagine being helpful in the future?

Gentrification and Displacement

The following questions relate to your experience of the impacts of gentrification and displacement in Seattle.

What strategies do you think would be most effective at addressing displacement resulting from gentrification? Please check all that apply.

- More affordable housing
- A greater diversity of housing options
- More housing and commercial development in less densely populated neighborhoods
- More community input on development projects (housing, commercial, institutional)
- Access to more transportation options
- More direct public transportation routes (fewer transfers for longer trips)
- Equitable support for arts and culture organizations
- More job training
- More living wage jobs
- Equitable support for small businesses
- Other: _____
- None of the above

What do you need to manage impacts of displacement for your household?



Design this space.

The following questions relate improvements that could create more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces in Capitol Hill. See examples of designed spaces from our [2021 Community Forum](#).

Click on the image to identify the places where you recommend improvements. Click as many places as apply.



What types of improvements would you like to see made? Please check all that apply.

- Art and music (e.g. murals, buskers)
- Free public utilities (e.g. Wi-Fi)
- Seating (e.g. benches)
- Bike parking
- Car-free Zone
- Family-oriented programming
- Street vending
- Shade (e.g. trees, canopies)

- Free public toilets
- Improved lighting
- Skate park
- Off-leash dog park
- Spaces to connect (e.g. conversation table)
- Improved wayfinding
- Green stormwater infrastructure (e.g. rain gardens)
- Other _____

What else would you add or change about public spaces in Capitol Hill?

Getting to know you.

The following OPTIONAL section gives us a better understanding of who you are and helps us to ensure that we are listening to the many different sectors, identities, and perspectives contained within our community.

Are you willing to answer demographic questions?

- Yes
- No

Demographic Questions

The following questions are optional.

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

By what race and/or ethnicity do you identify? Please check all that apply.

- Black or African American
- White or Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Other _____

Which best describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Heterosexual
- Other _____

Which of the following best describes your gender identity? Please check all that apply.

- Trans female/Trans woman
- Trans male/Trans man
- Genderqueer/Gender-nonconforming/Genderfluid
- Female (Cisgender)
- Male (Cisgender)
- Other _____

Do you have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or climbing stairs?

- Yes
- No

What is your annual household income?

- Under \$15,000
- Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
- Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
- Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
- Between \$75,000 and \$99,999
- Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- Over \$150,000

What is the current status of your housing? Please select all that apply.

- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I am staying with friends
- I am staying at a shelter, tiny house village, or other managed facility
- I live in assisted living
- Other _____

Appendix 2: Community Resilience Mapping

In 2021 and 2022, the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict conducted a community resilience mapping exercise to inform public life planning. COVID-19 both illuminated and changed the extent to which community members bring unmet needs into public spaces. For this study, the EcoDistrict sought to develop a statistically sound understanding of existing needs relating to systems of resilience evident within the Capitol Hill neighborhood, to project future need based upon current trends and best available thinking, to establish clarity and visibility of existing systems capacity for Capitol Hill community stakeholders, and to identify gaps between existing and projected needs and existing capacity for systems of resilience to address those needs.

The EcoDistrict identified eight social determinants of health (demography, education and job training, environmental resilience, food security, health and human services, housing, safety, and social connection) and posed the following research questions for each determinant:

- What systems exist and what resources are available?
- What gaps exist between need and capacity? How accessible are systems? What is the quality of resources?
- How are needs, service availability, and gaps trending?
- What is the impact of the pandemic?

Demography

To understand the population of Capitol Hill and their needs for study, the team looked at census data from the American Community Survey in 2013, 2018, and 2020, tracking several indicators. A legacy of redlining and racial covenants has defined the population over time, and tracking these changes is critical in understanding whether and how progress toward equity has been made and how, as a result, existing needs might be shifting.

The US Census Bureau restructured census tracts in Capitol Hill ahead of the 2020 census, making some direct comparisons impossible and allowing for deeper insight into others. Census tracts with 2013 and 2018 data include 74.01, 74.02, 75, and 84. Census tracts with 2020 data include 64, 65, 74.03, 74.04, 74.05, 74.06, 75.01, 75.02, 75.03, 76, 84.01, and 84.02.

From 2013 to 2020, the population of Capitol Hill rose by 23% to 39,510. Median household income rose by 52% to \$82,029. The non-white population increased from 21% to 30%, though the Black/African American population decreased by 3% and the Asian population increased by 5% – to 3% and 13% respectively. The median age rose by 11% to 33.4 years. Population density rose by 11% to 22,629 people per square mile, and the number of housing units rose by 37% to 26,814. These data, taken as a whole, describe a neighborhood transformed by growth.

With twelve census tracts rather than seven, it becomes possible to disaggregate to gain a clearer understanding than ever before of geographic difference within the neighborhood. In 2020, census block groups in north Capitol Hill making up 40% of land mass reported a median household income of \$131,728 whereas southern block groups making up 29% of land mass reported a median household income of \$68,157, nearly half that of northern households. In all but three block groups, white households earned at or above the median, sometimes by more than 50%. Southern block groups also reported a significantly larger percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits (10-14%) compared to northern block groups (1-3%). These inequities align with densification as south Capitol Hill reported more than five times the housing, households, and population per square mile.

2020	64	65	74.03	74.04	74.05	74.06	75.01	75.02	75.03	76	84.01	84.02	Total	% Total/ Average
Population	3,732	4,843	3,107	2,799	2,887	2,458	4,312	2,676	2,222	4,786	2,850	2,838	39,510	
Households	1,509	2,640	2,199	1,912	2,070	1,910	3,215	1,960	1,714	2,304	1,995	2,138	25,566	
Race/Ethnicity (Population)														
White	3,068	3,774	2,028	1,912	1,365	1,064	3,188	2,034	1,657	3,932	1,623	1,928	27,573	70%
Black	26	19	96	76	57	174	236	0	82	135	170	185	1,256	3%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	42	9	4	0	92	0	0	0	38	0	6	3	194	0%
Native Hawaiian	24	15	0	0	0	0	137	0	0	0	0	0	176	0%
Asian	248	626	749	420	217	444	168	299	348	419	744	370	5,052	13%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	131	325	180	214	262	125	130	214	20	396	185	207	2,389	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 162,313	\$108,160	\$ 74,954	\$100,529	\$ 55,417	\$ 52,995	\$ 67,450	\$ 63,106	\$62,426	\$ 96,744	\$85,739	\$71,196		\$ 82,029
White	\$ 163,833	\$104,347	\$ 81,667	\$100,036	\$ 66,927	\$ 54,826	\$ 67,912	\$ 41,299	\$94,185	\$115,227	\$90,817	\$70,815		\$ 85,879
Black	-	-	-	\$103,194	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$63,537	\$64,818		
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Native Hawaiian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Asian	\$ 172,031	\$137,589	\$ 54,075	\$120,000	-	\$ 66,833	250,000+	\$104,742	\$45,226	\$ 58,462	-	-		
Hispanic or Latino Descent	\$ 169,844	\$ 64,766	\$ 25,778	\$ 80,147	\$ 48,191	-	\$ 56,304	-	-	-	\$68,040	-		
Households receiving food stamps	46	37	107	18	108	224	464	189	230	184	42	68	1717	7%
% of total households	3%	1%	5%	1%	5%	12%	14%	10%	13%	8%	2%	3%		
Median Age	38.2	38	32.6	32.6	29.7	30.4	35.1	30.6	29	32.9	33.4	32		33.4
Under 18 years	731	416	36	54	161	0	187	107	0	584	94	33	2403	6%
65 years and over	592	607	92	82	149	125	496	0	0	445	502	3	3093	8%
Density														
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.046	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.746	
Total Housing Units	1,516	2,890	2,296	1,912	2,209	1,974	3,329	2,134	1,714	2,344	2,071	2,425	26,814	
Pop per sq mi	12,440	12,108	67,543	27,990	28,870	24,580	43,120	26,760	22,220	23,930	28,500	28,380		22,629
Households per sq mi	5,030	6,600	47,804	19,120	20,700	19,100	32,150	19,600	17,140	11,520	19,950	21,380		14,643
Housing units per sq mi	5,053	7,225	49,913	19,120	22,090	19,740	33,290	21,340	17,140	11,720	20,710	24,250		15,357

2018	64	65	74.01	74.02	75	76	84	Total	% Total/ Average
Population	3,616	4,995	5,502	5,560	9,289	4,389	4,865	38,216	
Households	1,369	2,560	3,842	3,699	6,221	2,273	3,345	23,309	
Race/Ethnicity (Population)									
White	3,132	4,241	3,959	3,957	6,998	3,567	3,304	29,158	76%
Black	39	24	116	292	203	177	378	1,229	3%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	9	9	0	0	280	0	13	311	1%
Native Hawaiian	22	19	0	0	0	0	39	80	0%
Asian	215	321	1,135	738	710	394	888	4,401	12%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	169	236	346	293	532	310	255	2,141	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 157,670	\$103,750	\$71,453	\$55,181	\$68,838	\$80,152	\$60,910		\$ 68,303
Households receiving food stamps	43	33	126	369	481	151	143	1346	6%
Median Age	38.8	36.6	32.3	31	30.9	33.3	32.2		29.2
Density									
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.15	1.55	
Total Housing Units	1,379	2,700	3,956	3,930	6,309	2,352	3,793	24,419	
Pop per sq mi	12,053	12,488	55,020	55,600	30,963	21,945	32,433		24,655
Households per sq mi	4,563	6,400	38,420	36,990	20,737	11,365	22,300		15,038
Housing units per sq mi	4,597	6,750	39,560	39,300	21,030	11,760	25,287		15,754

2013	64	65	74.01	74.02	75	76	84	Total	% Total/ Average
Population	3,233	4,032	4,330	5,310	7,214	3,927	4,098	32,144	
Households	1,272	2,345	3,175	3,528	4,465	1,913	2,873	19,571	
Race/Ethnicity (Population)									
White	2,882	3,554	3,444	3,740	5,875	3,012	2,890	25,397	79%
Black	61	17	219	409	580	311	325	1,922	6%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	0	97	0	105	71	18	25	316	1%
Native Hawaiian	0	0	0	12	0	0	17	29	0%
Asian	132	284	346	642	355	334	608	2,701	8%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	112	246	217	369	646	304	193	2,087	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 143,125	\$ 83,839	\$62,639	\$35,812	\$52,781	\$61,329	\$41,497		\$ 54,099
Households receiving food stamps	0	58	207	473	291	88	360	1477	8%
Median Age	39.8	39.8	32.7	30.6	33.1	32.7	32.7		30.1
Density									
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.15	1.55	
Total Housing Units	1,302	2,429	3,443	3,798	4,658	1,988	1,988	19,606	
Pop per sq mi	10,777	10,080	43,300	53,100	24,047	19,635	27,320		20,738
Households per sq mi	4,240	5,863	31,750	35,280	14,883	9,565	19,153		12,626
Housing units per sq mi	4,340	6,073	34,430	37,980	15,527	9,940	13,253		12,649

Education and job training

As a centrally located neighborhood, Capitol Hill is served by a great number of educational facilities, including 22 public schools and 29 private schools with tuitions ranging from \$14,000 to \$44,000. Three colleges are located nearby, two of which are public. In addition, there are 15 job training facilities located within the neighborhood or nearby. Seattle Central College, notably the most affordable nearby institution for higher education and job training, noted significant reductions in funding and

matriculation during the COVID-19 shutdown, greatly impacting and endangering programs such as the Culinary Academy, Wood Technology Center, and Yesler Community Center.

Looking at K-12 public schools serving the neighborhood in 2020, all reported more than 50% students attending their area school. Despite census tracts reporting no more than 33% BIPOC population, nearly every public school in the area reported more than 40% minority students with 11 of 16 schools reporting more than 60%. BIPOC students are overrepresented in public schools while their white counterparts appear to be opting for private facilities.

Lowell Elementary stood out as noting a 78% minority population with 58% of the student body as economically disadvantaged. 40% of students experienced some form of homelessness and all students qualified for the free lunch program. The school, which has experienced significant faculty turnover, is in the midst of another leadership transition in 2023, and the family services counselor reported a caseload of 105 students, noting than an average caseload should be 35 students or less.

2019-2020	Live in Area	Live in Area and Attended	Attended Total	Percentage of Students in Area that Attended	Percentage of Students from outside the Area that attend
Meany Middle	826	477	516	57.75%	7.56%
Washington Middle	404	311	606	76.98%	48.68%
Lowell Elementary	442	235	273	53.17%	13.92%
Madrona Elementary	347	212	261	61.10%	18.77%
Garfield High	1518	1222	1632	80.50%	25.12%
Bailey Gatzert Elementary	294	230	304	78.23%	24.34%
Thurgood Marshall Elementary	267	215	478	80.52%	55.02%
Leschi Elementary	406	309	358	76.11%	13.69%

School	Neighborhood	Green Space per person by neighborhood school is located (m ²)	GreatSchools Rating	Equity Rating	% Minority	% Black	% Economically Disadvantaged	Students Per Teacher	Students Per Counselor
Garfield Highschool	Minor	1 m ²	3/5	1/5	59%	25%	30%	22:01	371:01:00
Summit Public School: Sierra	Yesler Terrace	3 m ²	2/7	0	69%	34%	37%	21:01	--
Bailey Gatzert	Yesler Terrace	3 m ²	0	0	94%	57%	71%	10:01	319:01:00
Northwest School	First Hill	3 m ²	--	--	42%	3%	--	--	--
TOPS K-8 at Seward School	Eastlake	4 m ²	4/5	--	51%	11%	25%	19:01	473:01:00
Madrona School	Madrona	7 m ²	2/7	0	65%	33%	42%	13:01	393:01:00
Kimball Elementary	Mid Beacon Hill	8 m ²	2/7	1/5	75%	25%	42%	16:01	743:01:00
Lowell Elementary	Broadway	9 m ²	4/5	2/3	78%	29%	58%	13:01	385:01:00
Leschi School	Leschi	13 m ²	2/7	0	64%	36%	44%	15:01	--
Stevens Elementary School	Stevens	16 m ²	1/2	1/5	49%	16%	29%	15:01	290:01:00
Meany Middle	Stevens	16 m ²	1/2	2/7	67%	31%	--	18:01	273:01:00
Thurgood Marshall	Atlantic	20 m ²	2/3	2/7	65%	25%	35%	17:01	965:01:00
Beacon Hill School	North Beacon Hill	23 m ²	3/5	2/5	83%	6%	49%	11:01	417:01:00
Franklin High School	Mount Baker	23 m ²	2/5	2/7	90%	28%	62%	20:01	367:01:00
John Muir Elementary	Mount Baker	23 m ²	2/5	1/5	83%	52%	58%	13:01	--
Montlake	Montlake	51 m ²	4/5	--	30%	3%	4%	16:01	538:01:00
McGilvra	Madison Park	56 m ²	1/2	--	39%	4%	7%	15:01	--

Environmental resilience

In Seattle, the main impacts of climate change are increased flooding, wildfire smoke, and extreme heat events. Rats proliferate in warmer temperatures, and winter storms stretch already thin resources. As southern Capitol Hill continues to densify at staggering rates while northern Capitol Hill remains relatively constant, tree canopy erodes by 13% moving south. During an extreme heat event, a Seattle and King County Heat Watch Report in 2021, temperatures in paved heat islands like the Seattle Central College Campus on Broadway can reach 23 degrees hotter than that of canopied green space like Volunteer Park.

Heat mapping results shows that South Capitol Hill is on average 5-10 degrees hotter than North Capitol Hill. The proximity of North Capitol Hill to large green spaces, like Volunteer Park and Interlaken Park, help keep the area relatively cool. North Capitol Hill is significantly wealthier and whiter than South Capitol Hill. The physical features of north Capitol Hill mean people that are living in a safer and healthier environment with less stress from heat-related events. There are larger buildings in South Capitol Hill as compared to more single-family homes in north Capitol Hill. This in turn creates larger areas of impervious surfaces. Industrial areas, which are already below target canopy ranges, heat up more during the afternoon and are unable to cool down. Tree canopy mapping correlates the coolest places in Capitol Hill to green spaces, which are in the north. In industrial parts of Capitol Hill, canopies are below target. In east Capitol Hill, 36% of the neighborhood has cooling-level canopy coverage. This level exceeds the city of Seattle goals of 30% by 2037.

The lack of greenspaces and more impervious surfaces is associated with hotter temperatures in South Capitol Hill, specifically the lack of cooling seen in between morning and evening temperatures. During

heat waves, this especially puts pressure on unhoused individuals, and residents of south Capitol Hill, who are more likely to live in homes without adequate cooling strategies.

There is not a difference in Air Quality between North and South, but air quality worsens in proximity in to I-5. Particulate matter mapping shows that proximity to major roads, like I-5, leaves more PM2.5 in the surrounding areas. However, near volunteer park these affects are mitigated in a linear relationship. Cal Anderson, the largest greenspaces in South Capitol Hill, has not been studied for air pollution mitigation effects. Some argue that magnetic signatures, that pick up on magnetic signatures on leaves at ground level, could be more accurate ways to monitor air pollution as opposed to the ~20 laser particle sensors distributed throughout Capitol Hill. These sensors often measure pollution inaccurately near very polluted areas like highways. There are notably no sensors for the part of south Capitol Hill that borders I-5.



Figure 1: City of Seattle Tree Records

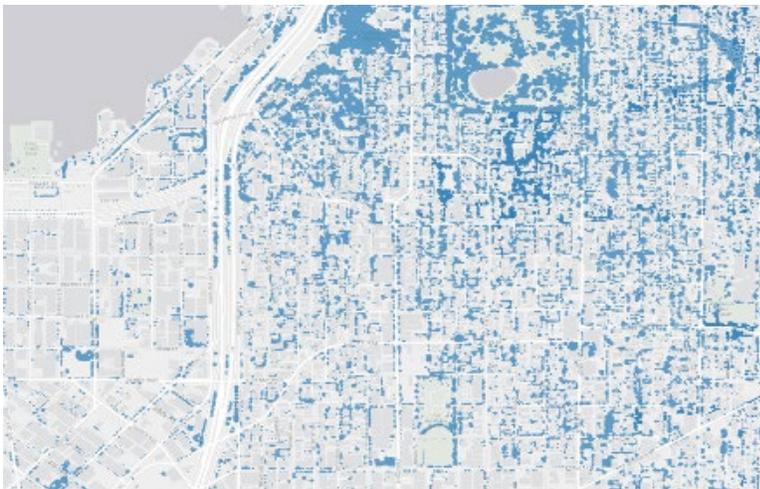


Figure 2: Urban Tree Canopy



Figure 3: Morning Heat Mapping during extreme heat event, 2020



Figure 4: Afternoon Heat Mapping during extreme heat event, 2020

Capitol Hill has relatively good air quality compared to the rest of Seattle. However, during extreme heat events, hospital admissions for ages 18-64 related to respiratory and cardiovascular issues match the rest of Seattle's admissions. Heat mapping was primarily conducted in north Capitol Hill, data used to create an index in southern Capitol Hill was taken from the First Hill area. This data was taken along Aloha St., and a more representative road in south Capitol Hill might be helpful for pinpointing the most affected heat islands.

Seattle experiences about 14.2 unhealthy pollution days a year. Half of these days can be attributed to high ozone and the other half to high PM2.5 (particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter).

This is more than double the US Environmental Protection's Agency's recommended amount of unhealthy air quality days. There is a variety of producers for the pollutants in the Seattle area. For example, the EPA suspects that population growth (an increased number of vehicles), construction and severe wildfires can be blamed for a decent amount of the air pollutants. According to the American Lung Association in 2020, Seattle ranked 36th (out of 299 metropolitan areas) nationally for high ozone days. It also tied for 14th (out of 216) for worst 24-hour particle pollution.

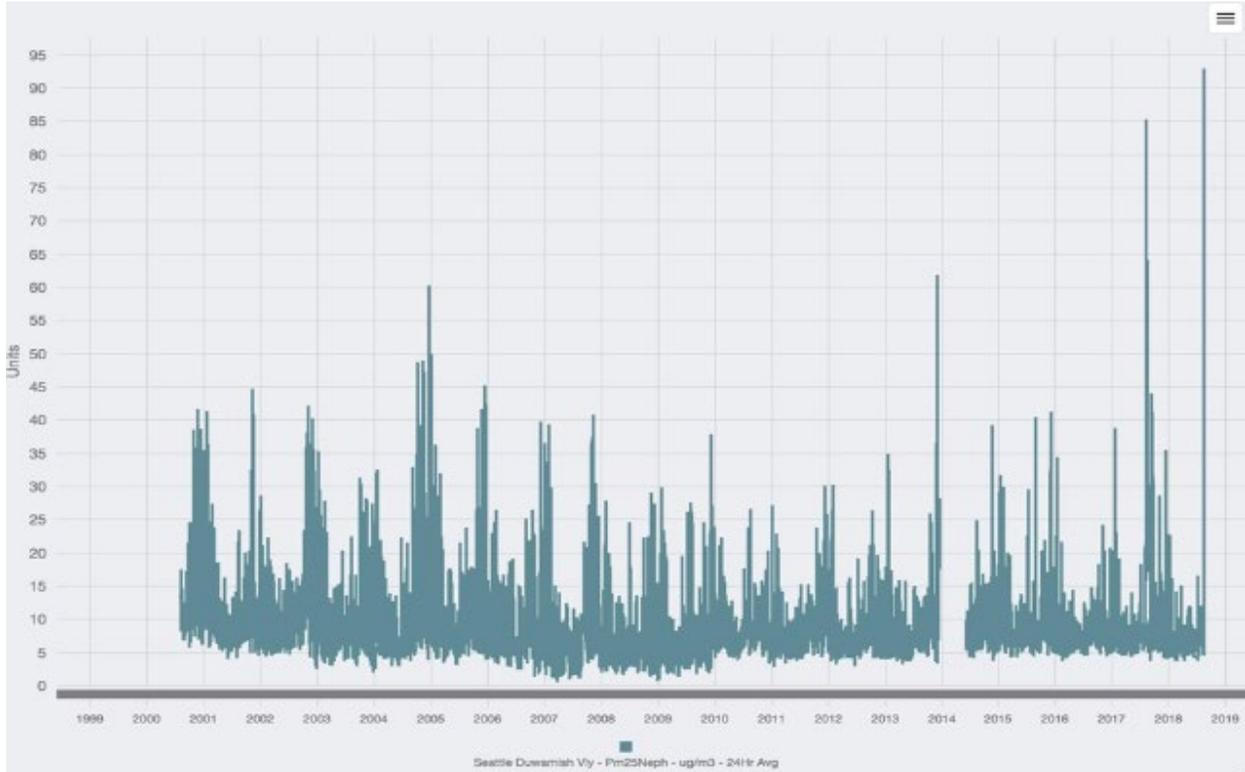
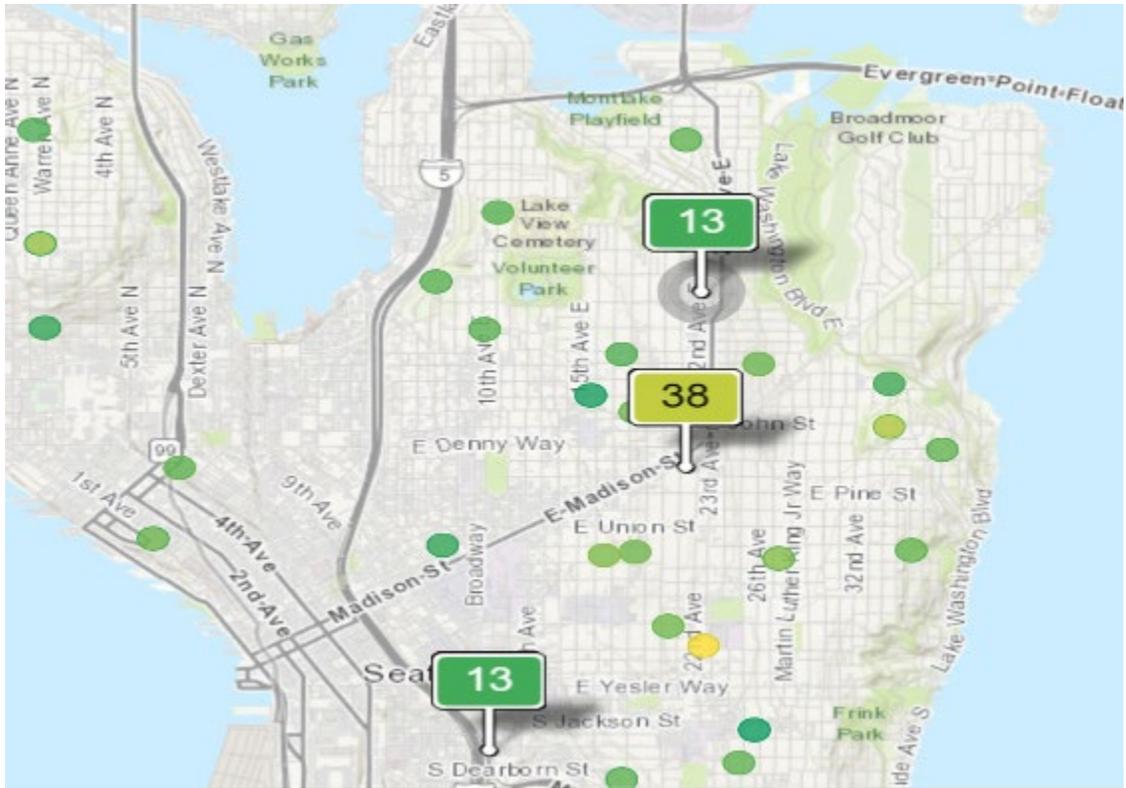


Figure 5: Washington Air Quality Map



Overall, there is low variability in AQI across Capitol Hill. Multiple types of sensors and monitoring companies are used to collect data. Standard EPA procedure outlines that sensor should be between 3-6 feet above the ground. Sites are also specifically chosen to be away from pollution sources or sinks, which could be potentially skewing data. Notably, there are no sensors on the Southwest end of Capitol Hill.

In terms of rainfall, Seattle does not appear to be getting wetter. Capitol Hill, however, does experience significant flooding around Cal Anderson Park.

Year	Precipitation (inches in rain)
2016	45.18
2017	47.87
2018	35.73
2019	33.8
2020	41.32

Food security

Food security research involves macro-level data collection that assesses availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. If costs rise and wages are stagnant, the portion of income dedicated to meeting this need increases and households become cost burdened. The EcoDistrict worked with

students at the University of Washington College of Built Environments to build a food price index. Students identified 15 stores (10 supermarkets, four neighborhood stores, and one drug store) and compiled pricing data on one pound of chicken, onions, broccoli, rice, apples, and a gallon of milk. A “total price index” related the total cost of these ingredients from each store to the average cost from all stores. Grocery Outlet at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard was most affordable with a ratio of .58 whereas PCC at 23rd Avenue and E Union St was most expensive with a ratio of 1.48. Amazon Fresh at 610 E Pike St came closest to the average price with a ratio of .99.

Students then mapped price ratios to the percentage of people receiving SNAP benefits (2018 American Community Survey). They found little reprieve for households living in south Capitol Hill where wages are lower and costs are higher.

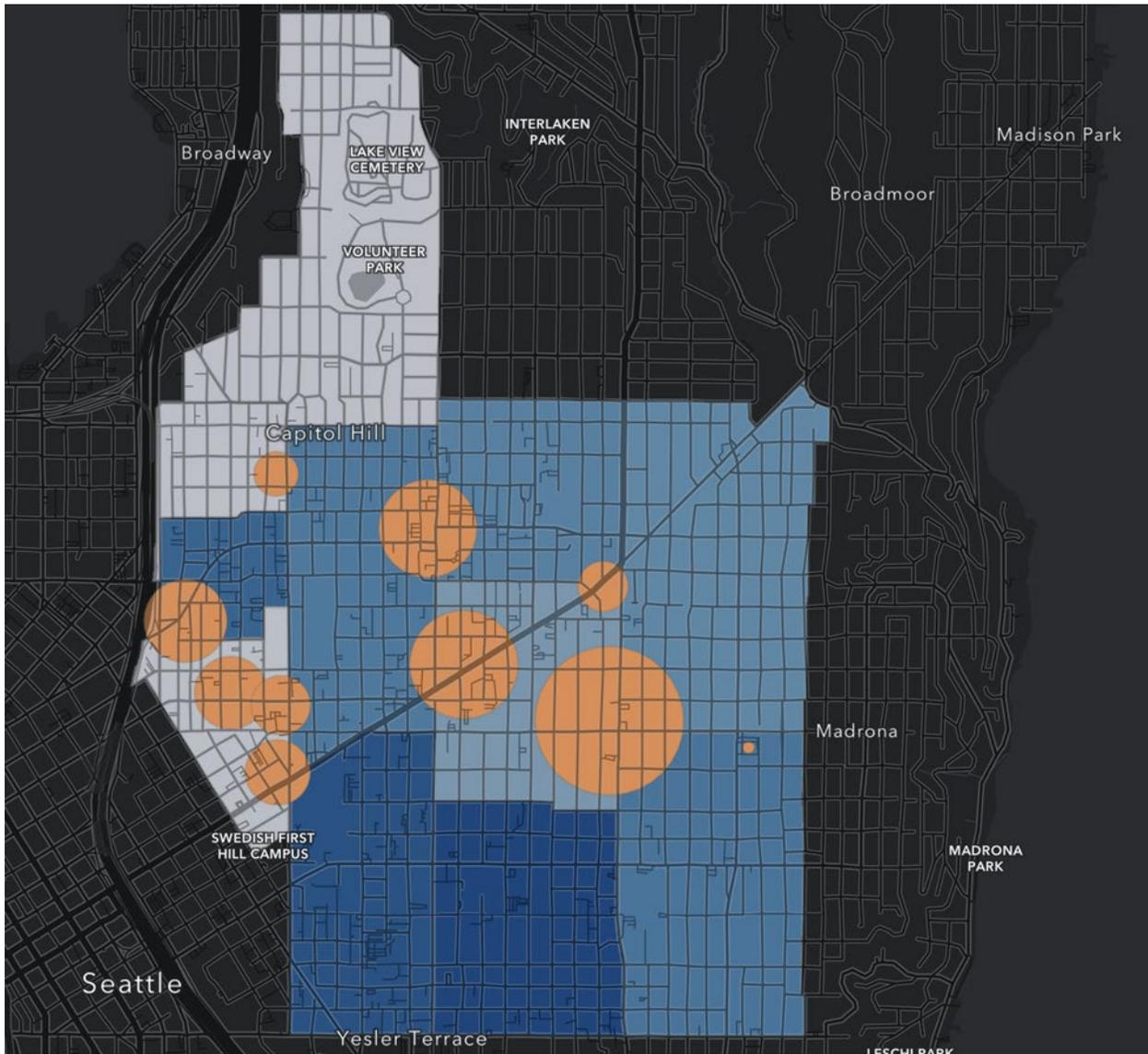


Figure 6: Price ratios and % population receiving SNAP benefits.

Health Services

Health and human – or social – services represent a critical sector in addressing social determinants of health, as unmet needs show themselves in public spaces and stress systems of resilience in any community.

Students at the University of Washington College of Built Environments reviewed 42 health and human services providers serving Capitol Hill, creating typologies that included mental health, LGBTQ services, substance abuse, women’s health, hospitals, culturally specific services, and general health. They found a range of programs but little in service of substance abuse.

Ten mental health facilities. For the mental health services in the capitol hill neighborhood, there were a lot of private therapists and doctors that were welcoming of all types of issues and people. However, there are almost little to no free services for those who need help on their mental health and are not financially capable of doing so.

Five LGBTQ Services. There was a wide variety of health services for LGBTQ people, ranging from small, safe spaces, to outlets in large hospitals. Many of these health services help members of the LGBTQ community find a way to get adequate health care and most offer STD and HIV testing. Additionally, there are community-based organizations where LGBTQ people can seek connection.

Five substance abuse services. There were several resources for people that struggle with substance abuse problems in this area. Many of the bigger hospitals and medical centers offer different kinds of support and programs for substance abuse, as well. There were also a lot of separate clinics for people to choose from. Capitol Hill sees many drug-involved individuals, and there is great potential for the community to leverage these resources to welcome those who are struggling.

Seven women’s health. Many centers were all-encompassing and offered most women's health services. Many of these centers were OB/GYN services specifically, however others offered services like abortion, birth control, pregnancy services, STD and HIV testing, etc. These centers offer a great community for women and are incredibly important in emphasizing women's health.

Six hospitals. All hospitals offered an emergency room, in-patient, and out-patient services. Most hospitals had a general health clinic next door (part of the same campus). Many were clustered together in the SW corner of the neighborhood.

Four culturally specific services. These were specialized towards a certain demographic of people: religion, race, and language being the main categories. Each of these places provide culturally appropriate guidance for the community that they serve but not necessarily complex medical care. These services are in place to provide more support to individuals in communities who may feel disconnected or need more guidance regarding healthcare.

Six general health services. This type categorizes health services related to the general day-to-day health of patients. This includes but is not limited to clinics or general practices offering primary care. This serves as an important resource for the general health of community members.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services definition, Capitol Hill in its entirety does not represent a medically underserved population, as it meets standards for the number of primary care providers per capita, infant mortality, poverty, and elderly populations. However, with 2018 data, census tract 84 does qualify as medically underserved. Healthcare services are concentrated in the Central District and downtown areas. Currently, Country Doctor Community Health Clinic, Swedish Medical Center, and Kaiser Permanente offer the most medical services in the area. However, Country Doctor, which is a federally qualified health center, is the only service that offers no cost and uninsured payment options. A significant limitation of this research comes in the difficulty to identify need. Unhoused people tend to be transient, and point-in-time counts do not disaggregate by neighborhood for this reason. While there were 46% more people living in cars in King County in 2018 than in years past, data on the neighborhood level remains elusive.

A community needs assessment at Lowell Elementary ahead of the development of a school-based health center in 2020, identified 75% of the student body as students of color, 60% of the student body as eligible for free and reduced lunch, and approximately 25% were eligible for special education services. Results from surveys, key informant interviews, and a focus group revealed that families were most interested in accessing urgent care services, vaccinations, well child checks, dental and vision services, treatment of ongoing illness and infection, and behavioral health. Despite having a designated health home, families expressed frustration in lack of appointment availability, noting that providers were fully booked for extended periods of time or appointments were available at times not ideal for families. Language barriers represent a distinct challenge in ensuring equitable access to health care.

Housing

The City of Seattle is in the midst of a well-publicized housing crisis, and Capitol Hill shows itself to be a microcosm of this emergency. Plagued by a lack of affordable and family-sized housing, barriers to development and provider burnout strain the system further.

80% of the nearly 40,000 residents of Capitol Hill are renters, though vastly more people rent in south Capitol Hill than in the north. While housing supply is a primary concern, barriers to access remain a significant issue. In interviews, housing professionals identified several challenges, including lack of uniformity in application processes across providers, lack of internet access and required documentation. As well unhoused people frequently named isolation as a concern in seeking housing through coordinated care networks, as encampments provided a sense of community and security. Many opted to stay in motels where they could pay per day rather than have to amass a deposit as well as first and last month's rent to sign a lease.

Housing providers noted limited budgets and staff retention as barriers to operating. They noted uprenting and downrenting, outstanding warrants, strict tenant laws, and no-pet rules as other barriers to access for low-income individuals.

Building Type	Number of units by size												Total units	Total bedrooms (duplexes, triplexes)	Total Beds (social services, shared living)
	4 BR+	(%)	3BR	(%)	2BR	(%)	1BR	(%)	Studio	(%)	Unspecified	(%)			
Apartment (unsubsidized)	48	0.2%	418	1.4%	5263	17.7%	14980	50.5%	8969	30.2%	0	0.0%	29678		
Apartment (mixed-use, unsubsidized)	48	0.3%	85	0.6%	2255	15.3%	6399	43.4%	5961	40.4%	0	0.0%	14748		
Apartment (affordable/subsidized)	SHA	17	1.1%	71	4.4%	254	15.8%	790	49.3%	471	29.4%	0.0%	1603		
	CRH	0	0.0%	35	3.1%	212	18.9%	598	53.4%	275	24.6%	0.0%	1120		
	Bellwether	3	0.5%	55	9.7%	71	12.5%	199	35.0%	241	42.4%	0.0%	569		
	F.A.M.E.	14	14.3%	24	24.5%	34	34.7%	26	26.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	98		
Others listed as subsidized	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.8%	327	68.7%	145	30.5%	0.0%	476			
AADUs											133	100.0%	133		
DADUs											114	100.0%	114		
Microhousing											1859	100.0%	1859		
Shelter, Transitional, PSH, AL, etc	0	0.0%	10	0.9%	47	4.1%	67	5.8%	1027	89.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1151		203
Co-ops	0	0.0%	22	3.6%	83	13.7%	396	65.6%	103	17.1%	0	0.0%	604		
Condos (residential only bldg)	17	0.3%	250	3.9%	2918	45.9%	2655	41.8%	518	8.1%	0	0.0%	6358		
Condos (mixed-use bldg)	4	0.3%	36	2.9%	333	26.6%	664	53.1%	214	17.1%	0	0.0%	1251		
Retirement Facilities	1	0.1%	24	1.3%	556	30.0%	684	36.9%	590	31.8%	0	0.0%	1855		
Duplex													687		2780
Triplex													228		1159
Fourplex	0	0.0%	32	4.5%	297	42.0%	338	47.8%	40	5.7%	0	0.0%	707		
Townhouse	98	3.1%	1674	52.2%	1361	42.5%	70	2.2%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	3205		
Total	250	0.4%	2,736	4.1%	13,688	20.6%	28,193	42.4%	18,556	27.9%	2,106	3.2%	66,444	3,939	203

Figure 7: 2020 Capitol Hill housing inventory

In Capitol Hill, the majority of multi-family units are studios, one-bedrooms, and two-bedrooms with most units being one-bedrooms. Group homes, nursing homes, and rooming houses combined with subsidized apartments that offer on-site care fall into a category called “shelter, transitional, permanent supported housing (PSH), assisted Living (AL)” and only account for 2% of overall housing units in the neighborhood.

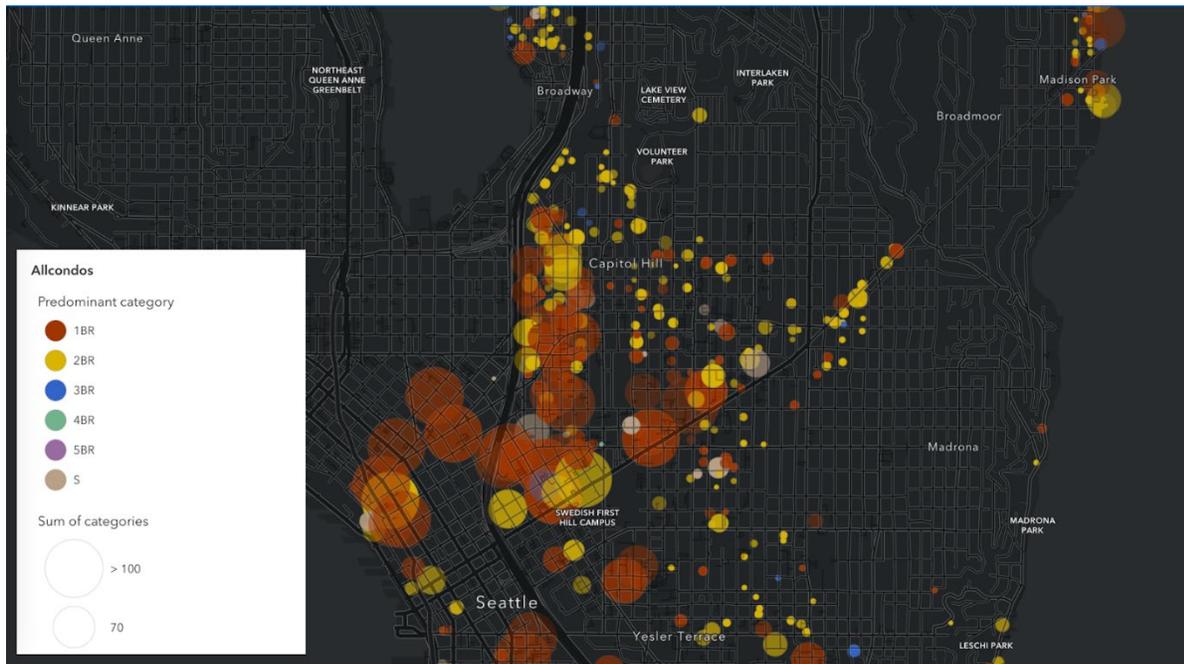


Figure 8: Map of apartments across central Seattle

Multifamily housing generally exists as townhomes, which are clustered in wealthier areas with higher rents.

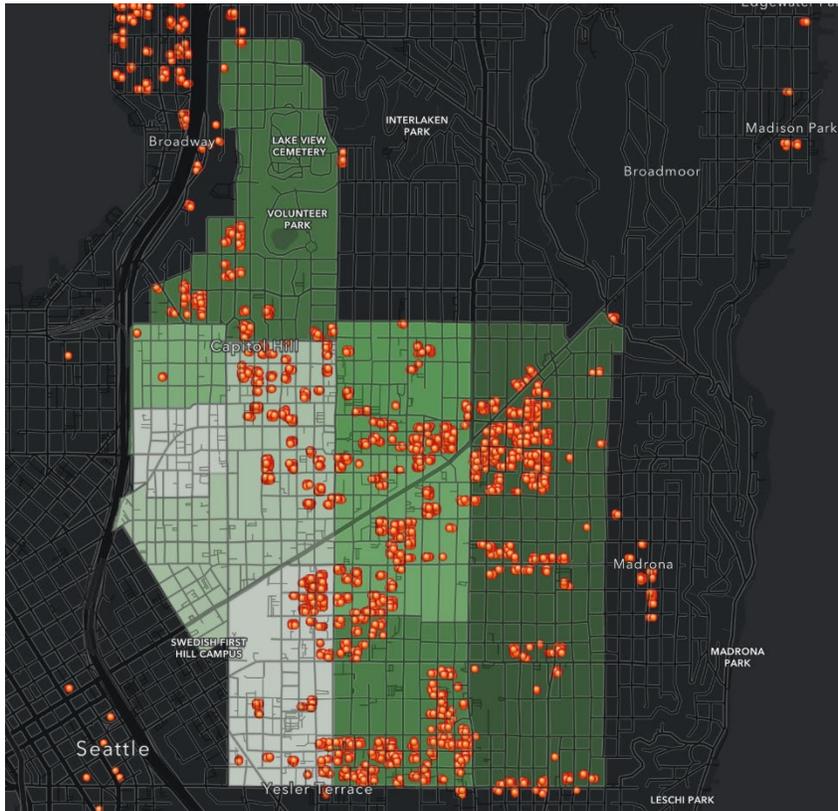


Figure 9: Townhouse plats and median income (wealthier census tracts in darker green)

Safety

The EcoDistrict assessed safety in Capitol Hill with a series of vox pop interviews conducted by students at the UW College of Built Environments, a safety forum, and archival research. These found that current implementation practices for safety are not addressing most identified needs, including activation and inclusive activities, lighting, wayfinding, and dog control. The current system is not resourced to respond to stressors, leaving the neighborhood highly impacted by funding availability, population growth, and labor shortages.

Community members reported feeling safer when Cal Anderson Park was activated with programming, events, and was well populated generally. Public and tourist reviews found that cleanliness was noted 50% of the time, citing the time of day greatly impacts their decision to move through a public space. While additional lighting has been added to Cal Anderson Park in recent years, residents still reported that a lack of lighting is one of the leading factors that influence their perception of safety in the park.

A review of a recent Cal Anderson Park CPTED analysis found that park activation policies have fallen short of consideration of user groups such as unhoused people and minorities, the latter of which

reported general feelings of unwelcome in Seattle parks. A lack of wayfinding seemed to cause confusion.

Beyond Cal Anderson Park, one of the most significant safety issues plaguing Capitol Hill, and Seattle generally, is vehicle collisions. In 2021, according to city data, there were 13 pedestrian collisions and five cyclist collisions along the Pike Pine corridor, three pedestrian collisions on Olive Way, and five pedestrian and cyclist collisions each on Broadway. While protected and unprotected bike lanes do form a network in the neighborhood, these arterials also represent economic corridors. Treating arterials as destinations in a highly populated neighborhood that is still reliant on cars creates significant danger.

Social connection

Social networks build resilience to stress, loneliness, and other challenges. During the pandemic, this became even more clear. Capitol Hill is home to many gathering spaces and convening organizations, but many are inaccessible due to inadequate transit. Physical infrastructure, such as sidewalks, are damaged and endanger people with disabilities.

The EcoDistrict built an asset map, assessing the following:

69 convening organizations. With many focus on culture and identity, these organizations offer engagement opportunities without a fee.

33 service organizations. These organizations provide services and create advocacy opportunities.

5 public transit systems. Metro bus, light rail, streetcar, and bike lanes create multi-modal access that is uncoordinated, unreliable, and with inadequate wayfinding.

28 physical public places. While everyone has access, public seating is limited with little public art and some examples of hostile architecture.

Housing stands out as a significant barrier to accessing these opportunities for connection. For those living in the neighborhood, this is not a barrier. For all others, they must contend with an unreliable transit system or be resourced with their own car or afford a rideshare.

COVID-19 represented a great challenge to social connection in Capitol Hill and, as the City offer treatments in other neighborhoods, there were no Stay Healthy Streets in Capitol Hill. Several community members applied for and secured permits for Stay Healthy Blocks.