

Draft for Public Review

ONE SEATTLE PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

GROWTH STRATEGY SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Seattle is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years and beyond. Forecasts of future growth and the region's growth plans indicate that the city will reach one million people by 2050. Growth represents both an opportunity and a challenge. Welcoming new people and jobs can add vibrancy to our city and address climate change by allowing more people to live near jobs, services, and transit. However, if we don't plan for and accommodate a growing population, housing costs will continue to rise, pushing many people out of Seattle, worsening our homelessness crisis, and making many neighborhoods accessible only to high-income households.

The City of Seattle is currently in the process of updating our Comprehensive Plan, which we are calling the One Seattle Plan. The Plan is a roadmap for where and how Seattle will grow and invest in communities over the next 20 years, toward becoming a more equitable, livable, sustainable, and resilient city. A major component of the Comprehensive Plan is the growth strategy, which guides the location and types of development that will occur as the city grows.

The growth strategy identifies six "place types" that describe the roles that different areas of Seattle should play and the type of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings that are appropriate in each. The location of these place types is shown on the growth strategy map. The vision contained in the Comprehensive Plan will be implemented through legislation to update the zoning maps and development standards that regulate the size, use, and design for buildings. The City plans to release draft legislation to implement the Comprehensive Plan in the second half of 2024.

A VISION OF HOUSING ABUNDANCE

The One Seattle Plan envisions a future where everyone in Seattle has housing that meets their needs. Achieving this vision will require us to address the root causes of Seattle's longstanding housing crisis. Despite substantial construction in recent years, housing supply has not kept up with population and employment growth, causing an overall shortage of homes that drives up rents and sales prices. Increasing the supply and diversity of housing in neighborhoods through Seattle can:

Allow more households to find stable housing and build roots in their community.

Give families more options to grow, downsize, and meet their changing needs.

Reduce the ongoing displacement of existing residents.

Address our homelessness crisis.

Reduce the high cost of living that makes it difficult for local employers can attract and retain workers .

Address the exclusivity of many neighborhoods and allow people to stay in their neighborhoods as their needs change.

Updating our growth strategy is a critical part of addressing our housing crisis and achieving this vision.



EXISTING GROWTH STRATEGY

The Plan's current growth strategy is called the Urban Village Strategy. This strategy, which has been in place since 1994, focuses new housing and jobs in designated Urban Centers and Villages, and industrial activity in Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs).

The Urban Village Strategy has been effective in concentrating growth. Over the last 10 years, 83 percent of new homes were built in Urban Centers or Villages; half of all housing was built in the Downtown, South Lake Union, and First Hill/Capitol Hill centers. This approach has guided residential, office, and retail development into a small number of compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods linked by transit.

At the same time, many neighborhoods outside Urban Center and Village boundaries have few housing options beyond detached homes. With the cost of these homes rising dramatically in the last 10 years, these neighborhoods are out of reach for most people who don't already own a home. A [Racial Equity Analysis](#) conducted by the City recently found that the Urban Village Strategy perpetuates a historical pattern of exclusion and increases displacement pressures on communities of color.

GOALS FOR NEW GROWTH STRATEGY

Key goals for the new growth strategy include:

Increase the supply of housing to ease rising housing prices and rents caused by competition for limited supply

Increase diversity of housing options in neighborhoods throughout Seattle to address exclusion, so more people can live and stay in the neighborhoods they love

Allow more affordable rental and ownership housing types in neighborhoods throughout Seattle

Create more opportunities for income-restricted affordable housing, especially permanently affordable homes

Reduce residential displacement and support existing residents, particularly low-income households, who are struggling to stay in their neighborhood as it grows

Address past and ongoing harms from housing discrimination, racial disparities, and exclusionary zoning

Create more complete, walkable neighborhoods throughout the city where more people can walk, bike, or roll to everyday needs

PROPOSED NEW GROWTH STRATEGY

The proposed new growth strategy would create more opportunities for people to live in neighborhoods across Seattle by making the following changes:

Retain existing Urban Centers and Urban Villages, while renaming them **Regional Centers** and **Urban Centers**, respectively, to better reflect their roles

Reclassify Ballard as a Regional Center to reflect recent growth, existing zoning, and transit investments

Expand the geographic area of Regional and Urban Centers that are very small or will have new light rail stations

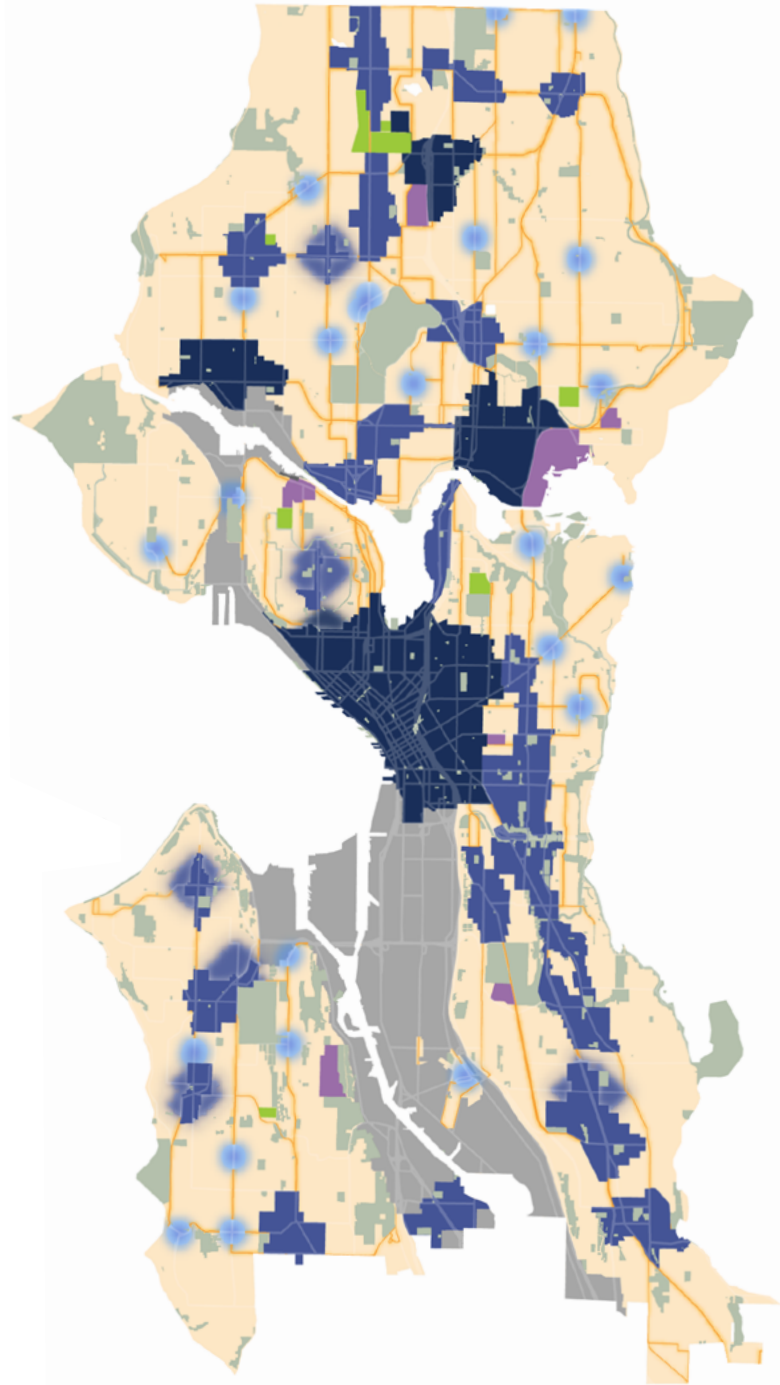
Designate a new Urban Center around the planned NE 130th Street light rail station

Create a new designation called Neighborhood Centers which would allow a greater variety of housing around existing business districts and/or areas with access to frequent transit

Create a new designation called Urban Neighborhood for areas outside centers, major institutions, and industrial areas

Allow a wider variety of housing including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage housing in areas currently dedicated primarily to detached homes in order to increase housing choice and implement recent changes to state law enacted by House Bill 1110

As part of the above changes, the growth strategy would focus relatively more growth in areas with lower displacement risk. The map on this page depicts the location of updated place types and the following pages include descriptions of the role that each place type would play.








FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

Place Types

-  Regional Center
-  Urban Center
-  Neighborhood Center
-  Manufacturing & Industrial Center
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Expanded Regional or Urban Center
-  New Urban Center

Other Areas

-  Industrial outside Manufacturing & Industrial Centers
-  Major Institution
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Cemetery
-  Frequent Transit Route
Frequent transit network, existing and future, along with zoning for higher density housing will be considered.

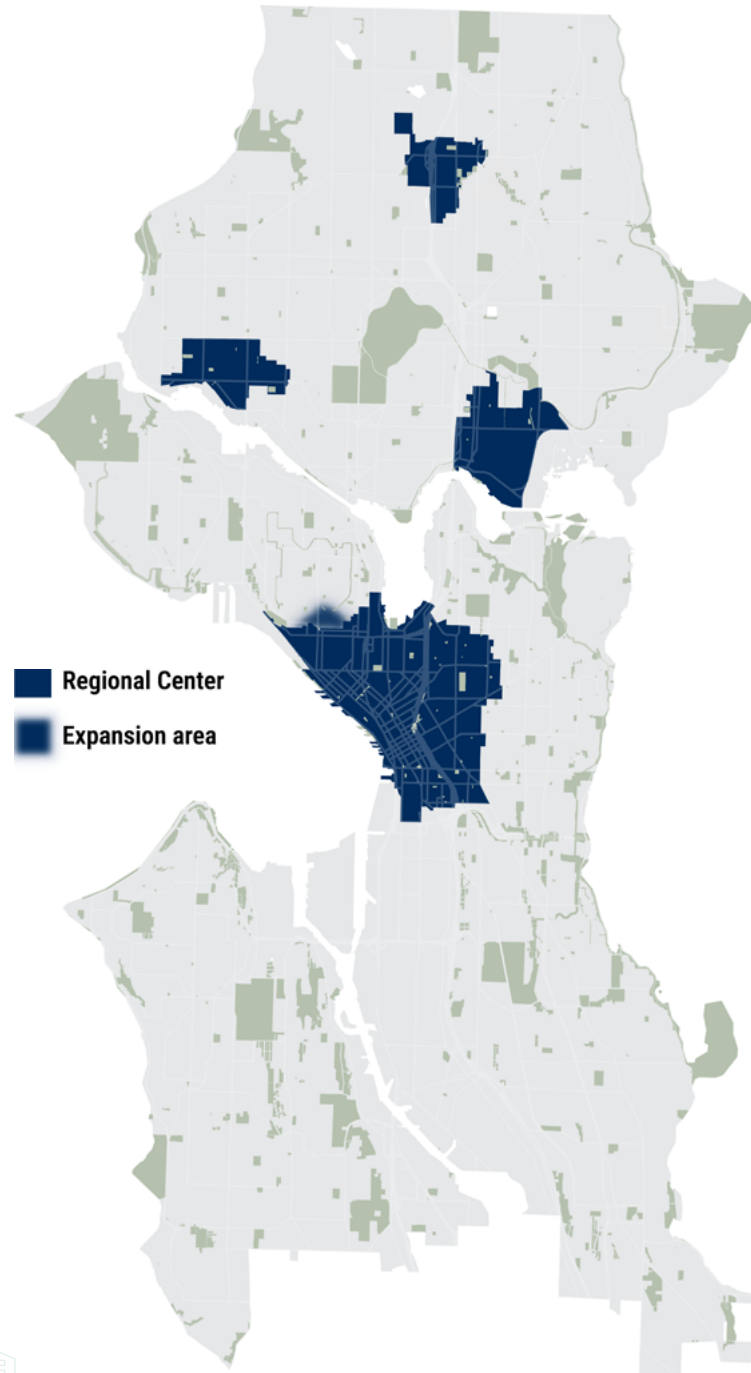
REGIONAL CENTER

Regional Centers (previously referred to as Urban Centers in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan) are Seattle’s densest neighborhoods. They are places of regional importance due to the presence of substantial housing, office, retail, and/or cultural and entertainment uses along with access to regional transit. These places contain some of the region’s largest centers for business, commerce, and tourism and are hubs in the regional transportation network, especially high-capacity transit. Given the regional importance and the significant zoning capacity that already exists in these areas, we expect that over the next 20 years about half of new homes and the majority of new jobs will be located in Regional Centers.

Regional Centers are designated as Metropolitan Regional Growth Centers by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and the King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). As such, they meet regional criteria for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics.

Regional Centers are appropriate for a wide range of housing and non-residential use including high-rise towers in many areas. Regional Centers should contain most of Seattle’s office development.

Included in the growth strategy proposal is a reclassification of Ballard as a Regional Center to reflect recent growth and existing zoning along with future light rail investment. The Uptown Regional Center would be expanded to include all areas within a half mile of the planned light rail station.



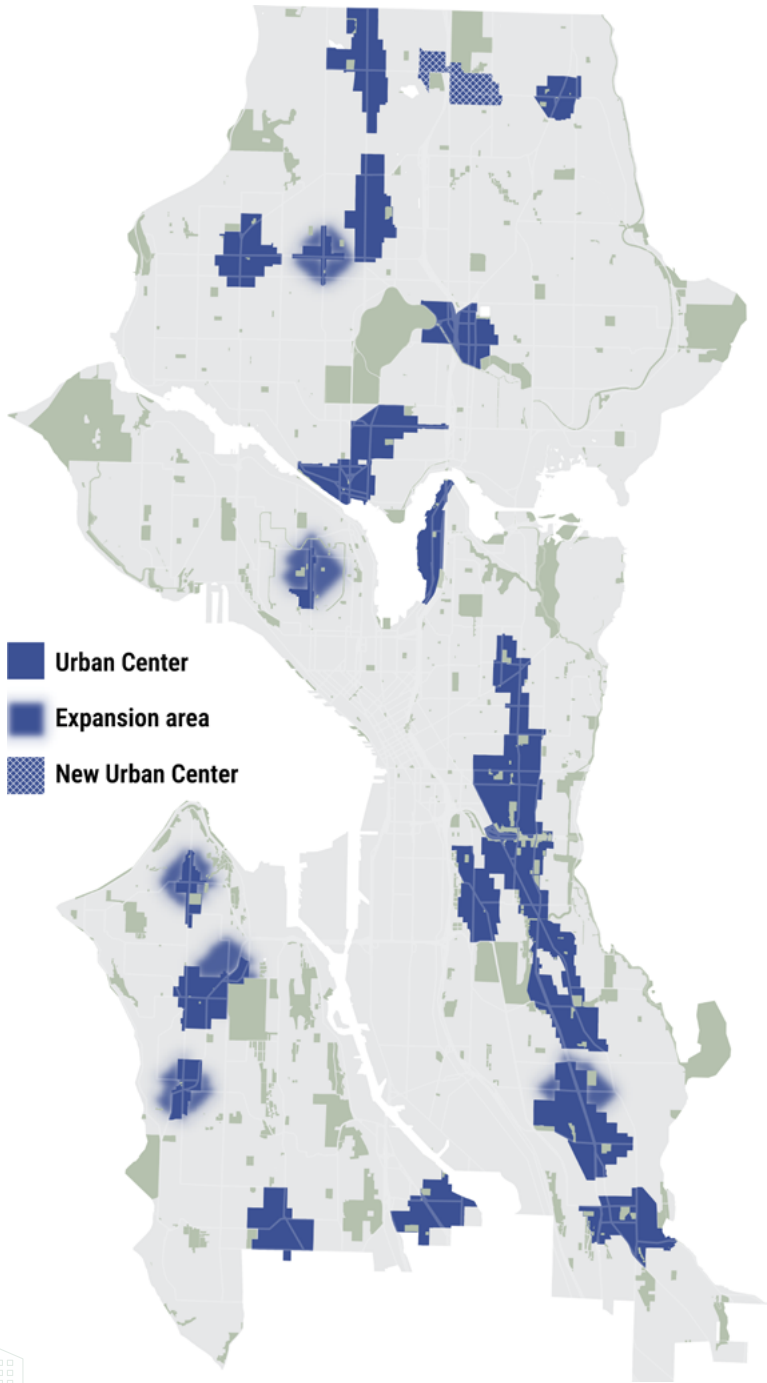
URBAN CENTER

Urban Centers (previously referred to as Urban Villages in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan) serve as destinations for surrounding neighborhoods and the entire city. Urban Centers include a wide range of housing, jobs, restaurants, shops and services, access to regional or local transit, and biking and walking infrastructure. These areas have added a significant share of the city's new housing stock, primarily mid-rise multifamily housing, and are expected to continue in this role into the future.

Urban Centers are proposed for designation as Countywide Centers by the King County GMPC. They are intended to meet criteria in Countywide Planning Policies for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics.

These areas are generally appropriate for buildings of 3 to 8 stories. Urban Centers are also appropriate for a wide range of non-residential uses including office, retail, and entertainment. Buildings greater than 8 stories and major office developments should be encouraged primarily near light rail stations.

The updated growth strategy would add a new Urban Center around the future 130th Street Light Rail Station and expand the geographic area of four Urban Centers that are too small to meet Countywide Planning Policies (Greenwood, Queen Anne, Admiral, and Morgan Junction) and two Urban Centers that will have new light rail stations (West Seattle Junction at Avalon Way and Othello at Graham Street). Urban Centers should generally include areas within a 10-minute walk (half-mile) of a current or future light rail station or an 8-minute walk (2,000 feet) of the central intersection if no light rail exists.

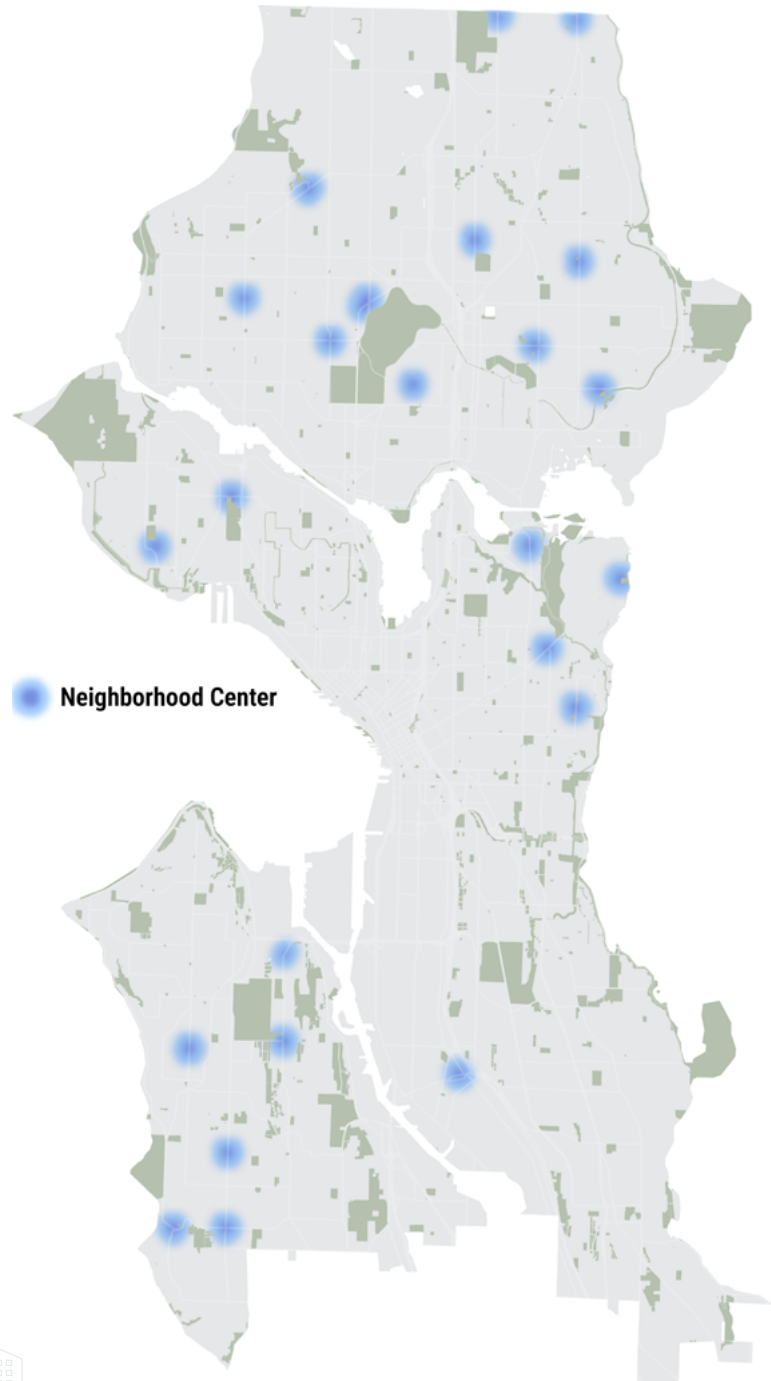


NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Neighborhood Centers are places with a diversity of housing options around a locally focused commercial core and/or access to frequent transit. Neighborhood Centers represent in many cases the core of a neighborhood providing shops, services, grocery stores, restaurants, and other businesses that residents need to access on a regular basis. Allowing more housing in these areas can increase opportunities to live in complete, connected neighborhoods and help people reduce reliance on cars. It can also strengthen local businesses districts and expand the range of shops and services in these areas by increasing the number of people living nearby. Neighborhood Centers are a new place type. The map shows locations for 24 proposed Neighborhood Centers.

This initial proposal is that these places would generally include areas within 800 feet (3–4 minute walk) of the core. Specific boundaries for these areas would be determined based on further analysis and community feedback as part of a future stage of work on zoning implementation.

These places are generally appropriate for zoning that would encourage the development of apartments and condominiums, which would expand the range of housing choices available in these areas. Zoning in these areas should generally allow residential and mixed-use buildings up to 6 stories in the core and 4- and 5-story residential buildings toward the edges.



URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Urban Neighborhood place type represents areas outside centers that are appropriate for primarily residential development. While lacking the larger business districts located in centers, Urban Neighborhoods still provide opportunities for mixed-use and commercial development along major streets along with at-home businesses, corner stores, and small institutions located throughout. The Urban Neighborhood place type would include the majority of the area in the city.

Urban Neighborhood is a new place type and combines the neighborhood residential, multi-family, and commercial place types that previously existed outside of centers and villages. These place types are being combined as they created overly prescriptive boundaries about where different uses should be allowed.

Urban Neighborhoods contain most of the areas in Seattle that are currently dedicated primarily to detached homes. The City is proposing to allow a wider variety of housing in these areas, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage housing, to increase housing choice and implement recent changes to state law enacted by House Bill 1110. Consequently, a mix of lower-scale housing types at a 3-story scale would be appropriate throughout this place type. Residential and mixed-use buildings of 4 to 6 stories would be appropriate in areas currently zoned for such housing and along arterials where zoned densities may be increased to provide more housing options near frequent transit.

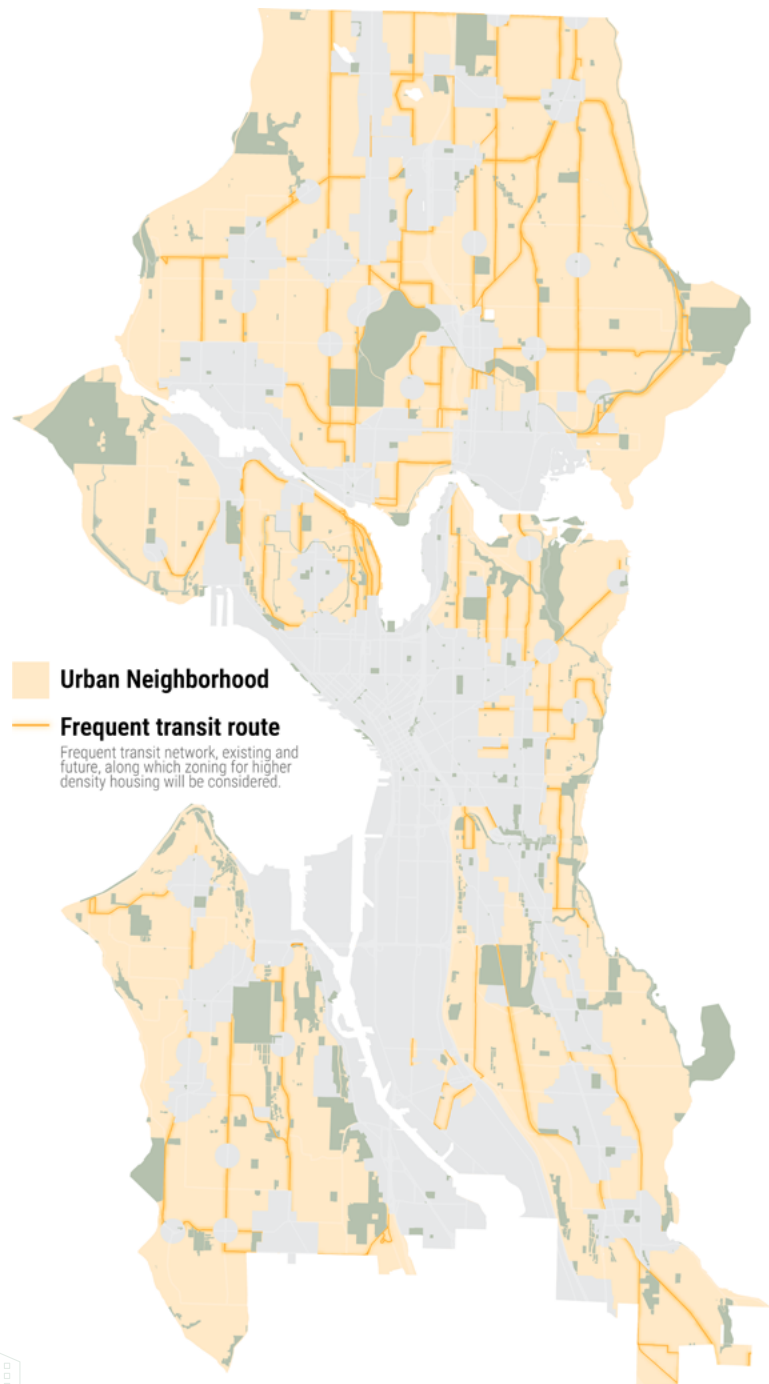


Photo: Hybrid Architecture

MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRIAL CENTER

Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs) are areas of concentrated industrial activity with limited retail, office, and residential functions. Seattle has two MICs: the Greater Duwamish MIC and the Ballard–Interbay–Northend MIC. Both MICs are places of regional importance due to the presence of industrial businesses in a range of sizes and major transportation facilities such as the container port, marinas, and rail infrastructure. MICs are regionally designated by the PSRC and the GMPC. This means they meet regional criteria for size, mix of uses, transportation, and other characteristics.

MICs are appropriate for a wide variety of manufacturing and industrial uses. Limited commercial uses are appropriate where they are compatible with the primarily industrial nature of Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.

The Comprehensive Plan Update will not change the geographic areas of MICs or the zoning within them as they were recently updated as part of the [Industrial and Maritime Strategy](#) project.



West Woodland Business Center, Ballard, WA. Photo by Aaron Locke, BCRA.



Jefferson Park, Beacon Hill Seattle, 2024

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Parks and Open Space place type includes City-owned developed parks and natural areas. This place type is primarily intended to describe existing conditions rather than desired future outcomes.

The One Seattle Plan will not change the geographic area of this place type except to reflect areas where new parks and open space have been added.

MAJOR INSTITUTION

The Major Institution place type includes the campuses of regionally important hospitals, colleges, and universities. The geography of this place type is limited to those areas where institutions have worked with the City to develop Major Institution Master Plans. These plans allow for the creation of area-specific regulations that balance the importance of accommodating major institutions with managing impacts on adjacent areas.

The One Seattle Plan will not change the geographic area of Major Institutions or the Master Plans that apply within these areas.

IMPLEMENTING THE GROWTH STRATEGY THROUGH ZONING CHANGES

Zoning refers to the laws that govern how property can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas. All properties in Seattle have a zoning designation and each zoning designation has a unique set of development standards that regulate the use, size, and design of buildings that are allowed. To implement the growth strategy, the City is proposing to develop and adopt legislation that would change zoning to allow development consistent with the updated growth strategy. The City proposes to develop this legislation so that it could be transmitted to City Council for review shortly after the Mayor's Recommended Plan, likely in early 2025.

While the specific rezone proposal would be developed as part of future phases; we anticipate that the legislation would result in the following changes:

1. Within newly designated centers and areas where centers are expanded, zoning would be updated to make it consistent with the place type description including in areas currently zoned Neighborhood Residential. This rezone would focus in particular on creating more capacity for 4- to 6-story apartments and condominiums.
2. Within areas that are already designated as a center, no zoning changes are proposed outside of Residential Small Lot zones. Areas within existing centers that are zoned Residential Small Lot and are in areas of low-displacement risk or within a half mile of a light rail station are proposed to be rezoned to Lowrise 1, a zone that allows a similar number of units but more floor area. Other areas are proposed be rezoned to Neighborhood Residential.
3. The City is considering upzoning properties located on streets with current or planned frequent transit routes. The location of these streets is shown on the growth strategy map.

4. In the remainder of the areas currently zoned Neighborhood Residential across the city, existing NR zones would be replaced with new NR zones to increase housing choice and comply with new state law. [An initial proposal for updating Neighborhood Residential zones](#) is available on the One Seattle Plan Update website.
5. The City is proposing to allow corner stores in Neighborhood Residential and Lowrise zones so that more people can walk, bike, and roll to everyday needs.
6. The legislation could also include changes to development standards in different zones to comply with new state law or address other City goals. A specific proposal will be developed over the next year, with multiple rounds of public engagement.

