



Seattle Community Outreach:

Planning for the
Future

Policy Report
February 2023

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Acknowledgements

This project is the result of partnerships with different community and labor organizations. We want to emphasize and thank our organizational partners for continuing to uplift and share our survey with their community. APALA's survey was just the tool for our communities to share and give input to help shape the future of Seattle, especially from the working people who make the city a success every single day. As a community-based organization, we recognize the changes we want to see cannot be done without trusted partners and coalitions to move the agenda of working people forward.

We would like to thank the Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) for the opportunity to hear the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are involved in the city development plan. We acknowledge their commitment to putting racial equity in the planning process of the city. We would like to express gratitude for the support to the staff for continuing to work with us to create policy from the feedback and voices of our community.

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Seattle
Office of Planning &
Community Development



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

APALA
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LABOR ALLIANCE, AFL-CIO
SEATTLE CHAPTER



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	3
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS	5
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS	6
CHAPTER 4: OPCD RECOMMENDATION	9
CHAPTER 5: SDOT RECOMMENDATION	21
APPENDIX A:	

Executive Summary

Observation

Seattle has experienced significant growth and development in recent years, leading to the displacement of low-income communities. This displacement is largely due to the high cost of housing and gentrification that is a result of it. Due to the increase in displacement, the working class is being pushed out of the city and into the suburbs where there are more affordable housing options. Workers now cannot live where they work and this is what we hope to see change.

Purpose

The aim is to understand the impact of gentrification on BIPOC communities in Seattle. By conducting a survey and gathering qualitative data from residents and workers, the project seeks to learn about their experiences with access to affordable housing and transportation in the city. The findings of this study will inform policy recommendations aimed at promoting equity and addressing the needs of the communities. The ultimate goal is to ensure that these considerations are incorporated into the city's comprehensive plan and that all residents and workers, who typically are not at the planning table, have a say in the planning process.

Questions

To help our organization meet our goals, APALA Seattle formed questions that would guide our work:

1. Who is mostly impacted by gentrification in Seattle?
2. To what extent do racial and economic disparities affect BIPOC communities in housing and transportation?
3. How do the impacted communities envision Seattle in 20 years?

Methodology

To answer these questions, APALA Seattle designed an online survey structured as semi-structured interviews. The survey was divided into six sections: *Demographics, Housing, Transportation, Community, and Jobs*. To ensure a focus on BIPOC working communities, APALA Seattle partnered with multiple community and labor organizations. Additionally, 1:1 interviews were offered to provide a more in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences. The survey aims to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the stories, perceptions, and experiences

of BIPOC residents and workers in Seattle. The quantitative data collected in the survey provides an estimate of the cost of living, type of transportation used, and demographic characteristics of the participants. The qualitative data collected through interviews provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences in Seattle's housing and transportation systems.

Findings

Housing

1. Lack of Access to Affordable Housing
2. Inaccessible Rent Application Process
3. Gentrification pushing BIPOC community, especially those that grew up in the city
4. Income Inequality

OPCD Recommendations

1. Rent Stabilization
2. Expansion of Rent Subsidization
3. Zoning Reform
4. Improving Housing Quality and Safety
5. Workers' Protection for unionizing in the City

"IN THE LAST 20 YEARS, HOUSING PRICES HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY JUMPED, AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS CHANGED, WITH MORE PEOPLE OF COLOR BEING PRICED OUT. I HAVE SEEN MORE HOUSING BEING PUT IN AT AN UNAFFORDABLE PRICE"

Transportation

1. Reducing bus routes and times & replacing it with light rail
2. Limited availability of affordable/free parking
3. Eroding roads
4. Safety/Concerns for commuters
5. Increase of Traffic

SDOT Recommendations

1. Increase Public Transportation Accessibility
2. Affordable & Free Parking
3. Better road infrastructure
4. Increase safety for public transportation

"LIGHT RAIL GOT PUT IN, BUSES GET CUT AND NOT GOING EAST AND WEST. MILES BETWEEN THE STOPS AND MAKE THINGS HARDER FOR FOLKS. WHAT LOOKS GOOD ON A MAP DOESN'T TRANSLATE TO THE REALITY OF PEOPLE'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS. WE USED TO HAVE FREE ZONES AND THEY WENT AWAY, KEEPS FEELING THE CITY IS DESIGNED FOR TOURIST AND FUN DAY TRIPS AND NOT FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BUILD COMMUNITY YEAR ROUND..."

01

Introduction and Context

Background

Seattle's 2035 Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the city's future, outlining a 20-year vision and roadmap for improving housing, transportation, jobs, and more. The plan sets ambitious goals for making Seattle a more livable, sustainable, and equitable city for all residents. This will guide decision-making on everything from environmental to infrastructure investment over the coming years.

Over the years, Seattle has been experiencing challenges in managing its growth while also trying to keep the diversity and inclusivity of the city. The comprehensive plan seeks to address the challenges and follow these four core values of

1. Community
2. Environmental Stewardship
3. Economic Opportunity and Security
4. Race and Social Equity

Project Overview

The city of Seattle collaborated with community-based organizations to conduct community outreach to focus on the housing and transportation experiences of BIPOC communities in the city. The Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) have partnered with our organization, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) Seattle Chapter to learn more about the experience of the community we represent but also other marginalized groups that are often left out in conversation on the planning of the city. We were tasked to identify the barriers to accessing safe and affordable housing and transportation options. We also wanted to identify the root causes of these barriers and the factors to contribute to them. Finally, recommending to both the OPCD and SDOT possible policy recommendations that the city may incorporate into their respected comprehensive plan.

Who are we as an Organization?

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), founded in 1992, is a labor constituency group under the AFL-CIO bridging the labor movement and broader AANHPI community. It is the first and only national organization of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers and community allies. APALA Seattle is dedicated to advancing the rights of workers, immigrants, and civil rights. In Washington state, our chapters have been actively advocating, training, building, and empowering AANHPI workers. We collaborate with community organizations and labor unions to support the advancement of the working people while creating a socially just movement.

We are grateful to have been able to pursue this work as a 501C3 organization due to the partnership with Legacy of Equality Leadership and Organizing (LELO) as our fiscal sponsor and long-time community partner in fighting workers' rights and empowering workers of color in Seattle.

Our vision is for a society that prioritized economic and racial justice, upholds human rights and worker dignity, and fosters a sustainable environment. We strive to create a better life for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, and all communities fighting against oppression.

Labor Consideration

Since APALA Seattle Chapter is a labor constituency group. Our organization wanted to center the experiences of workers when considering this project with the city of Seattle. The workers surveys work in a variety of industries including; hospitality (housekeepers, cooks, dishwashers), education (teachers, professors, students, and graduate assistants), government (letter carriers, disability adjudicators), healthcare (nurses, medical assistants, homecare workers), and nonprofit. Workers are often impacted by inequities that result in disparities in affordable housing, accessing transportation, and job opportunities. Lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation can make it difficult for workers to maintain stable employment and meet their basic needs. We want to address the inequities that contribute to disparities in these critical areas and how we can uplift labor in the planning and decision-making of the city for its future.

Research Questions

1. Who are the most impacted by gentrification in Seattle?
2. To what extent do racial and economic disparities affect BIPOC communities in housing and transportation?
3. How do the impacted communities envision Seattle in 20 years?

Research Methodologies

02

Semi-Structured Interviews

We designed a semi-structured interview that is divided into six sections: *Demographics, Housing, Transportation, Community, and Jobs*. These questions are structured to be easily understood by community members so that we can get a clear understanding of their experiences. We also offered necessary translations and interpreters to community members who are in need of it. To ensure a focus on BIPOC working communities, we partnered with multiple community and labor organizations in not just King County, but Washington state. Additionally, 1:1 interviews were offered to have a more in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences. The survey's purpose was to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the stories, perceptions, and experiences of BIPOC residents and workers in Seattle. The quantitative data collected in the survey provides an estimate of the cost of living, type of transportation used, and demographic characteristics of the participants. The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences in Seattle's housing and transportation systems.

Analyzing the Quantitative Data

Our organization followed the thematic framework to analyze the qualitative data gathered in the people's experiences in both housing and transportation in Seattle. We carefully analyzed the survey interview and identified certain themes that may have come from the different survey participants. We did an inductive approach where we made inferences from the data we collected and come to a specific conclusion. Our team recognizes the diverse experiences of our community members so we want to make sure that we are not generalizing their needs, so we want to pair their responses that reflect each one of our policy recommendations.

Analyzing Quantitative Data

We calculated the median income, and cost of housing. We analyzed the different housing situations by looking at the statistics of those who rent, own, and those with other situations. We also wanted to know how many people were working in and out of Seattle, and how many people living in and out of Seattle. On transportation, we were able to see the time of commute, types of transportation modes being utilized, and the barriers of travel.

03 Findings

Demographics

There were 120 people who participated in our survey. We were able to get our focus on BIPOC communities, and the results indicate that the majority of the participants were from Asian backgrounds, with East Asians being the largest subgroup at 24.4 percent and Southeast Asians at 8.4 percent. Other groups were also present in the survey like the Black/African-American, Middle Eastern, and LatinX communities.

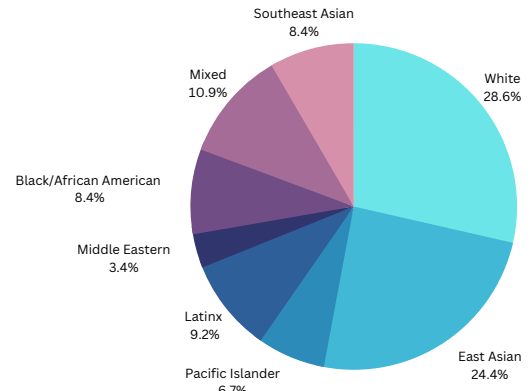


Image 1. Demographics Breakdown

The median income was \$29.53 per hour or about \$54,720 annually. The recommended salary to be able to be middle class in Seattle is about \$73,847 and more (Haegele 2023). Our findings are that the BIPOC communities surveyed were much lower.

Housing Cost

According to our survey, the cost of housing in Seattle varies on the type of housing and a number of individuals sharing a residence. The median cost for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,136 per month. However, for those renting a single room in a shared household, the median cost is approximately \$762 per month.

For homeowners, the median monthly cost of a mortgage in Seattle is \$2,304. To arrive at these figures, we analyzed data on housing costs and household sizes (see image 2). Our findings indicate that the number of people living in a household has a significant impact on housing costs. For instance, the median cost of a one-bedroom apartment may be prohibitive for a single person or small family, whereas the cost of renting a room in a shared household can provide more affordable options.

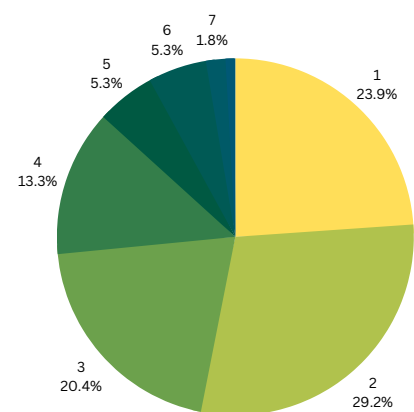


Image 2 - Number of People in a household

Based on our responses from the individuals in Seattle when asked about their experiences with housing, the patterns that emerged were predominantly negative. The words that were most commonly used to describe the experience were expensive, unaffordable, stressful, difficult, dangerous, competitive, worried, and etc.. These findings suggest that there are significant challenges and barriers to finding suitable and affordable housing in Seattle.

The issue of affordability appears to be particularly acute, with many respondents describing the cost of housing as a major source of stress and financial strain. The competitive nature of the housing market in Seattle was also mentioned frequently, with many individuals describing the difficulty of finding suitable housing due to it being in high demand and limited. Additionally, some individuals expressed frustration and worry about the lack of options available to them.

"Very hard to find affordable housing. Always had to live with roommates to afford housing. Ended up on the outskirts for cheaper rent in older buildings - more affordable to buy a house far from the city"

When asked about the housing changes they've seen over 10 to 20 years, the most commonly cited words were an increase in cost, homelessness, gentrification, income inequality, expensive, and unaffordable. The most significant change noted was the increase in housing prices. Many of them reported that the cost of living has become unaffordable, making it difficult for them to stay in their homes. This trend has led to many community members being pushed out of the city. Gentrification was definitely a concern in the displacement of long-time residents and the loss of their own community. Income inequality was another issue that many respondents mentioned, with some noting that the increase in prices had not been met with corresponding wages. This has made it difficult for working people to make ends meet.

"There have been more homes being build and changes to the neighborhood that I grew up in. Apartment buildings have replaced the once neighborhood stores and local businesses. The housing market and availability with a lens of affordability does not exist anymore. No one at my age can really purchase a home in the city where they grew up in"

The respondents were also asked about factors that would contribute to moving back to the city. The most frequently cited factors is the issue of finding durable and lasting solutions for those experiencing homelessness, which they saw an important factor in making the city a more livable place. Some addressed safety concerns due to the increase of crime in the city.

We were also able to ask about the meaning of affordable housing to people. The participants offered a variety of responses. Some individuals indicated that affordable housing should be accessible to all communities, regardless of socioeconomic status. Other emphasized importance of affordability in terms of the percentage of household income that housing costs should represent. Specifically, saying that rent should not exceed 30 percent of your income and not sacrifice necessary amenities for people.

"Accessible to all communities and not hard to get into. Individuals are not rent burden. In a good location and people aren't displaced."

What does an ideal Seattle look to you?

Many people expressed a desire for affordable housing transportation options in Seattle which includes a need for more affordable housing options, as well as public transportation that is accessible for all residents and abundant. Ability to live where you work without having to commute long distances or deal with high housing costs. Many people also expressed a desire for more diverse community spaces that are welcoming to BIPOC communities. This means more inclusive spaces and reflective of the city's diverse population while also expressing cultural area should be able to stay in the city. Housing for all with pathways to ownership, so more working people would be able to not just be able to rent but own a home in city. And lastly, people expressed desire for a walkable, affordable, and equitable community.

"All affordable housing, nobody who is unhoused, universal healthcare, affordable healthy foods, free (for those who need it) public transportation, city-wide affordable internet, solar panels and other alternative energy sources, lots more charging stations for electric vehicles, walkable neighborhoods, More diverse neighborhoods that better represent the area"

Relationship to Seattle

Based on the available data in this survey, it appears that a significant partition of the participants have some sort of connection Seattle. Specifically, 41.9% of the participants both live and work in Seattle. Additionally, 18.9% of the participants work in Seattle, which suggests that they are commuting into the city. Finally, 12.8% of participants live in Seattle, indicating that they live in Seattle, indicating that may commute outside of Seattle or within the Seattle area (see image 3).

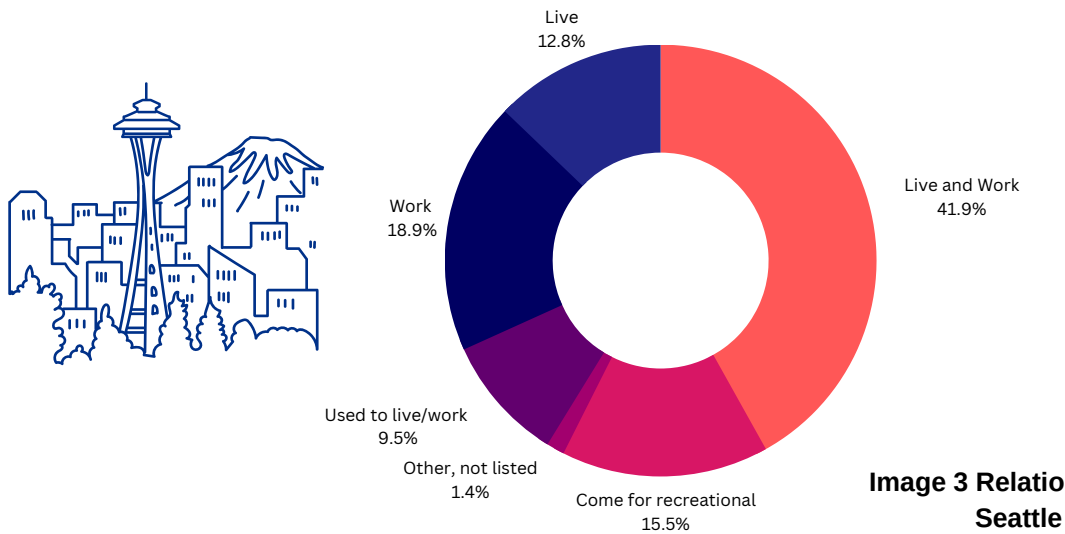


Image 3 Relationship to Seattle

Where in the Greater Seattle Area they live and work?

We were also able to see the common zip codes on where they reside. See below

Lives in Seattle	Lives outside of Seattle	Works in Seattle	Works outside of Seattle
Beacon Hill 98144	Lynnwood 98036	International District/SODO 98104	Federal Way 98023
Central District 98122	Renton 98055	Central District 98122	Edmonds 98026
Rainier Valley 98118	Kent 98031	UDistrict	SeaTac 98158

Table 1 Relationship to Seattle with Zip Codes and Area

Shift Hours

We thought it was important to know the shift hours of workers so that SDOT have the ability to know the accessibility of public transportation when maybe some busses or trains are not running. We found that 42% of our respondents work a 8 AM to 4 PM job, but there are also those who work 4 PM to 12 AM or 12 AM to 8 AM jobs. In Addition to that, 38% said "Other" in which may indicate that shifts vary day by day or they have multiple jobs (see image 4).

Commute Time

Commute time is very important to know more about accessibility of public transportation in the city. It gives us information on the average time riders either go to work. In our datasets, we found that majority of our respondents take more than 30 minutes to commute in Seattle whether for work related or other reasons.

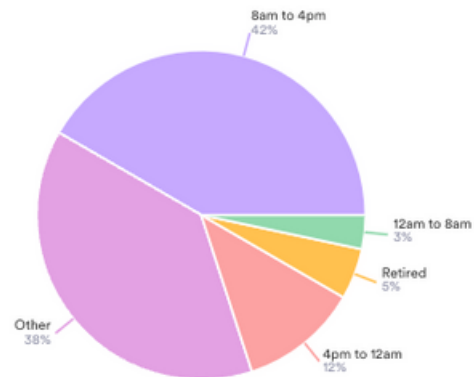


Image 4 Relationship to Seattle

Mode of Transportation

We found that that 34.1% of the respondents prefer to use a car. Though we think that this is particularly high because of the convenience for commuter to get to work. The majority of Seattle still uses public transportation with 21.1% of respondents said they used the light rail or train and the same amount of percentage for those using the busses in the city. There is also about 4.5% of people who bike in the city.

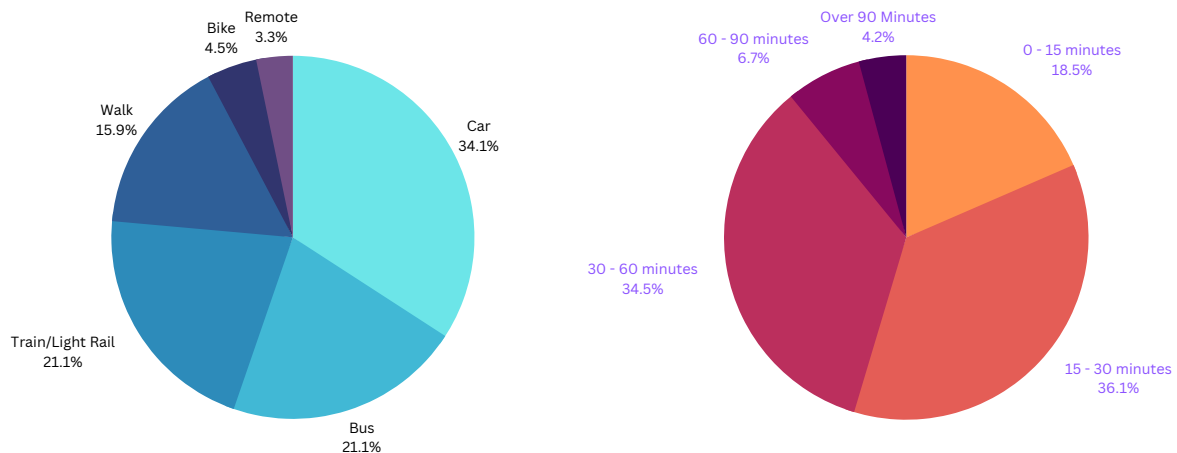


Image 5 Mode of Transportation and Commute time

Transportation Experience

Our survey regarding experience in transportation in Seattle reveals that the lack of reliable public transport for standby/call hours or night service is a significant issue. Many commuters report feeling stranded during standby/call hours or night service. The fewer bus routes and longer wait times between transfers are another issue that many commuters face. This can significantly increase the overall travel time and can make getting work or appointments a challenge. Another major concern is the heavy traffic that plagues the city, which may increase duration of commute for a lot of workers that's driving into and out for the city. Furthermore, unfixed potholes on many roads have been a persistent for decades, making driving on the streets a bumpy, increasing the risk of accidents and tear on vehicles. Lastly, we found that people were concerned about the poorly maintained sidewalks for pedestrians, making it not accessible. This is also an issue on weather conditions when they can become slippery and hazardous. This can pose a particular risk for those with mobility issues or disabilities. Safety was also expressed by some of the respondents.

"Frequently accessed roads are full of potholes - this is worse in neighborhoods that are not primarily single family homes. Most buses I take come either early or late, rarely on time with the posted schedule"

Future Transportation

The top priorities for Seattle's transportation system are affordability, promoting livability, safety and comfort, accessibility, and be racially equitable. They highlighted the specific improvement to the city's transportation infrastructure, including wider sidewalks, bike-friendly roads, shuttles to light rail, and proximity to light rail stations. Survey participants also expressed strong desire for more presence of community safety or social workers to help ensure the safety of all users of the transportation system. They emphasized that transportation is a critical component and must be designed with the needs of all residents in mind, regardless of race, income, or ability. In addition to that, affordability and promoting livability that supports sustainable lifestyle. We think that these priorities are essential to take into account in transportation planning and policy.

04 OPCD Recommendations

Rent Stabilization

Many residents struggle to find affordable housing, and the city has seen significant increases in rental prices in recent years. Rent stabilization could help ensure that tenants are not priced out of their homes and communities, and could provide more stability for renters who are often subject to sudden and dramatic increases. The city could look at rent stabilization in New York City. Rent stabilization are cover units in buildings of six or more units that were built between February 1947 an December 1973 (Parker 2019). Then there are also certain threshold for increasing rent prices. Rent stabilization is a policy that has the potential to make housing more affordable and accessible in Seattle for low- and middle-income renters.

"I used to live in West Seattle and over the past 10 years there have been new, 6-10 story apartment complexes on all main streets, new ones every few months / year. Homelessness is getting worse in areas like CID, downtown, everywhere, because the rent is rising everywhere. Black and brown families getting pushed out of South end, central district, and more white or young people moving into those areas where the rent is just cheap enough for them but too expensive for other low income families who have been there for a long time. More policing terrorizing poor neighborhoods"

"I cannot afford to save money, support my elderly parent and grandparent and pay average rental costs within the City of Seattle (and do not want to continue a shared or substandard living situation). Purchasing a condo or townhouse is out of the question expensive, and even if I could afford the downpayment would leave my cash poor to save enough to support my family. Living with my family in an aging house in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood and helping with living expenses, utilities (which are so unreasonably high!) and taxes has been the only way to continue to live within the city limits"

"I am constantly trying to find other places to move that might be more affordable. (Out of the city) Landlords have had it too good for too long and not fixing anything in their units for the safety of their tenants"

"I have lived in 4 subsidized housing apartments before moving into this house. We have been pushed further south because of rising rent prices"

"It is very difficult to find affordable housing in Seattle in general. Affordable rent is already difficult enough to find, let alone a pathway to home ownership. Personally I was lucky that a friend referred me to the manager of the apartment building where I currently live. Trying to find an affordable one bedroom home has been extremely difficult and I have mostly stopped searching for the time being"

"I will be priced out of my apartment once it hits \$2000/month, though it just increased by \$100 when previously rent only went up yearly by \$50. I thought I had a few more years here until I got notice my rent jumped to \$1900. Now I'll probably have to search for a place within the year, and it makes me angry that my rent is now what I would've been paying had the COVID-19 rent moratorium not happened. I was able to keep paying my rent during the pandemic (as most of my other neighbors likely were), so it's frustrating to still get notice of rent increase when my landlord was not losing money in the slightest during the pandemic. I dread moving, it gives me anxiety, which is why I haven't moved from my place, and I know I'll likely have to downsize once I leave this place"

"People can pay rent at a reasonable price if they are not making too much money. People's bills to live in the house also is not too expensive. While it is easy to look for a place, we have to think about all the expenses that come with it such as rent, utilities and any emergency that comes with it. Housing must be affordable as a total package where you aren't spending your entire paycheck"

04 OPCD Recommendations

Expansion of Rent Subsidization

This can provide crucial lifeline to those who are struggling to afford housing in Seattle. It can help to reduce the burden of housing costs for working households, making it possible for them to remain in their homes and avoid eviction or homelessness. This can help to stabilize communities and reduce the social and economic costs of homelessness. The Seattle Housing Authority already have low-income public housing programs. However, there is certain eligibility restriction such as "one household member" should at least be a citizen or have eligible immigration status. This puts burden to undocumented immigrants who maybe looking for affordable housing. Other criteria can be increasing the 30% or less of Area Median Income (AMI).

"Moving to Seattle, it was very difficult to find housing that I could afford on a PhD student salary. My partner and I were moving from abroad and inquired about dozens of subsidized apartments under the King County MFTE program. We were finally able to secure an MFTE unit, but it required a lot of work and diligence to get one. We lived there for three years until we had saved up enough money to purchase a town home. We were only able to do so because we are a double income household and had lived extremely frugally for several years"

"Finding affordable housing options for a couple. Eventually, we were able to get into housing subsidized by UW (at Radford Court) because I am a graduate student. However, we had to sign up months in advance for the wait list. When I first moved here, I had no idea about these apartments and it was hard to find"

"Subsidize more cost effective housing".

"Subsidies for low income tenants in the form of rebates"

"Housing is a human right and everybody needs to have access to housing. I think the structure of taxes in Washington state is unfair. People who has more money has to pay more taxes. And regressive taxes doesn't help to improve the lives of low income people. Affordable housing needs to be subsidize by the state if change the structure of taxes"

"Some parts of the community do not have much and are being pushed out. Others are prosperous or have little but are secure in subsidized or section 8 senior housing. There are many inequalities in the API or CID community (and Seattle overall) and a significant that part of these communities face rising rents and displacement"

"Increase subsidies for all renters. Tax breaks and incentives for properties that have low rental costs. Market caps on costs for 1-2 bedrooms, etc."

"Subsidize housing. Increase knowledge of renter's rights. Increase burdens on landlords for increasing rent"

"...greater subsidies for housing for people who fall below the poverty line in the area, creating more regulation around new developments having more affordable housing units"

*"If the new buildings being made had subsidized housings and the light rail would expand further in all directions that would give us fewer unhoused people and
But affordable housing is important and would be nice to see in 20 years"*

"Can try to subsidizes homes or increase costs for second homes for incentives first time home buyers"

04 OPCD Recommendations

Zoning Reform

One of the main reasons for this housing crisis in Seattle is restrictive zoning laws that limit the construction of new housing units. Single-family zoning laws were used to restrict marginalized communities before. This is consistent with earlier studies in Seattle where they found that African-American were much less likely to receive multifamily zoning while Chinese-Americans tended to receive less multifamily-zoning (Twinam 2018). Additionally this has resulted in barriers of new development for affordable housing, leading to increase of homelessness in the city.

"Hell yeah! Restricting zoning Strict rules and regulations on development (# of units in apartments) and for mixed-income apartment complexes. Aggressive taxes on developers that make apartment complexes that don't develop buildings for low-income so money can go towards completely low-income housing. Slowing down the development pace for high-end and expensive apartments"

"Lift zoning restrictions in low density areas - this is the number one biggest problem"

"Take housing out of the market economy. Build more affordable housing, regulate developers, change zoning laws"

"I think so. Something I can see is zoning and what kinds of dwelling can be built in various places. How the city makes decisions about zoning. And another is closer scrutiny of developers and how they gain access and what their intended audiences are. There could be a better policy or requirement before the developer can throw their money to build in the city. There could be more oversight and analysis on who's coming in the city build. There are certain developers who specialized in being predatory to buying people's houses in the city"

"Change zoning laws to allow more multi-unit dwellings in areas zoned for single families. Create exhibits on a website for what this may look like connecting interested parties to available dwellings or contractors that specialize in adapting an existing structure into a multi-unit building"

"Generally less affordable than it should be. We need more social housing and housing in general, and we need an end to single family zoning"

"Build more dense housing and less single family zoning."

"Yes. Keep rent control. Pushing for more housing. Zoning the city safely in a better way"

"Eliminate single-family zoning"

"Single family zoning laws should be changed"

We don't have enough of it. The supply is being choked by zoning laws for a city of half its current population.

"In U-district - a lot of tearing down of single-family homes for apartments and condos 3 years in Beacon Hill: homes are being renovated and being sold for a higher price"

04 OPCD Recommendations

Improving Housing Quality and Safety

The city of Seattle can review and update its building codes and regulations to ensure that all buildings, both old and new, are up to standard in terms of safety and quality. In addition to that, the city should review rentals in Seattle if landlords are meeting the quality and standard of the city. The city can take measure to improve tenant rights and protections to ensure the renters are living in safe and healthy conditions. But also looking at food justice or food availability in the area. This can improve housing quality and safety for all residents.

"It means housing that poor people can afford -- not just using AMI, but just providing housing for everyone who needs it. Social housing in which wealthier people's rent offsets poorer people is one solution, with initiative 135, we can make this a reality. Furthermore, affordable housing does not mean dilapidated projects - it means high quality living on the same standard as everyone else, it should mean safety, having access to basic amenities, and community -- not isolation"

"Housing: Affordable, high quality, safe housing for everyone..."

"Housing that is decent quality to live in and is within a reasonable price so that I am not spending 40-50% of take home income on rent."

"No one has to sacrifice essential quality of life stuff (nutritious food, healthcare, transportation, school supplies, ability to buy a house, etc.) because of high cost of housing"

"Worst experience ever. Rat infested complex... smell of human feces.. Expensive considering the quality. Black mold.. unresponsive land lord"

"I could not survive living there now even then i could barely survive. Living in Seattle my economic opportunities would be cut in half. Reliable on having a car. In general, find space to occupy in the city. I don't know how people live in the smallest spaces with the highest cost. Feels like so many people who are landlords don't live in the city. Even the care, with more money doesn't mean the quality of the housing is better but worst than others. Seattle is general is ripe of scum lords"

"I think that housing now is too expensive for students/new grads to enter, and are very rushed and lower quality if new"

"I think that housing now is too expensive for students/new grads to enter, and are very rushed and lower quality if new"

"Extremely difficult to find housing that meets your needs, short timelines and turnarounds, usually very very expensive (I got lucky with my current home, which I was able to get only through a personal connection to a former tenant). Have had very bad experiences with housing in the past, negligent landlords, mold, expired fire extinguishers, deteriorating housing etc. One house I lived in had an outlet (under the kitchen sink) that was exposed to dripping water, & was burnt because it would frequently spark. The landlord refused to repair this, so me and roommates paid \$900 to have it fixed. We then demanded our landlord cover the cost, they refused so we withheld rent, and they immediately sent out an eviction warning"

*I am constantly trying to find other places to move that might be more affordable. (Out of the city)
Landlords have had it too good for too long and not fixing anything in their units for the safety of their tenants.*

04 OPCD Recommendations

Worker's Protection for Unionizing in the City

It's important to rebuild the dwelling middle-class in the city and for the city to accomplish that, they must protect worker's rights because there's no future without workers. Protecting workers' right to unionize is an important step in addressing the housing issues in Seattle and other cities. By doing this, they would have the ability to negotiate fair wages, have affordable health-care, and remove financial baggages that may burden their cost of living in the city. The city can look at protecting workers against retaliation, higher labor standards, and paid sick leave. In addition to that, the city can support workers through exercise of public leadership like education and outreach, general advocacy for unionizing, and additional resources.

"ongoing concern about the underfunding of community and technical colleges. The percentages of public funding that goes to public education has continued to drop over the years. This is concerning because community and technical colleges are still the open door policies"

"\$410 per month-Medicare premium+medigap+prescription drug premium"

"Understaffing. Workload increase. Paid sick leave. High cost of employer based healthcare"

"As an internationally subsidized worker, I had to fight for my right to get employer-based healthcare. This should be the standard"

"Low pay for others in my workplace. Incredibly rent burdened"

"...High cost of employer based healthcare"

"Expand the ability for workers to organize and form unions in a neutral and fair process, rent control (which would have to pass state legislature first), greater subsidies for housing for people who fall below the poverty line in the area, creating more regulation around new developments having more affordable housing units"

"Every day people would have the freedom to choose where to live no matter the market. Workers can decide where to raise their families. The government would do more to help the people - I.e provide social housing. Tax the rich!. Social welfare and healthcare - a more community-oriented government that cares for the most vulnerable. Everyone has a union"

"Every day people would have the freedom to choose where to live no matter the market. Workers can decide where to raise their families. The government would do more to help the people - I.e provide social housing. Tax the rich!. Social welfare and healthcare - a more community-oriented government that cares for the most vulnerable. Everyone has a union"

"Wages have not increased at the rate of the growth of the city"

"I am a short-term contractor that does not have benefits - working for a non-profit"

"Restaurant: Wage theft, breaking hipaa laws, not paying over time... so many problems. Asking for doctors notes... The pink door is a labor law violator each day"

"One Job Should be Enough! Wages are too low. My hours at work vary, sometimes I don't get 40 hours a week at Westin, and my stadium job is seasonal and based if there are events"

05 SDOT Recommendations

Increase Public Transportation Accessibility

One of the key benefits of a robust public transportation system is that it provides affordable and efficient transportation options to people whose only options are to use the public transportation that is accessible to them. The city of Seattle needs to increase bus frequency and routes to ensure more residents can have access. This could mean increasing routes to areas that currently have limited service. It may also be beneficial to create new bus routes that connect underserved neighborhoods to key transit hubs. The increase in bus frequency means additional hours of services for workers who need to commute late at night or early in the morning. Accessibility doesn't only mean more frequency or routes, but also the affordability of public transportation. One key ask was bringing back the free-zone area in down or more subsidies for workers who don't have their companies subsidizing it for them.

"Light rail got put in, buses get cut and not going east and west. Miles between the stops and make things harder for folks. What looks good on a map doesn't translate to the reality of people's transportation needs. We used to have free zones and they went away, keeps feeling the city is designed for tourist and fun day trips and not for people who want to build community year round. Transit workers are high stressed. They are tense. Something about their job and safety that makes them on edge. Drug use seeing on public transit is a safety concern."

"I live between two transit stations, but I live in the middle so I don't have time to go to either station because it takes 25 minutes away. It would be nice to have some kind of shuttle or busses in my area to take me to the light rail"

*"Cutbacks on public transportation so it has been hard for children to get around before having driver's license
Long rides and a lot of walking"*

"I live in Auburn and work in Pioneer Square. It's too expensive, the Sounder train \$4.25, a bus is \$3.75 for Sound Transit bus. Comes to about \$200 a month. It's more expensive than King County Metro but Metro takes 2.5 hours one way! I'm excited for the new light rail station to open in federal way. On the weekends, the train is less frequent, we need more options"

"I have to take a bus to reach the train, and the bus routes have been progressively reduced and moved further from my house over the 10 years I've lived there"

"Infrequent, not completely reliable. In areas where communities can't afford their own car, there are fewer buses and lines are being cut. Bulldozing through low-income communities - traffic and lack of safety. Buses always being late and lines being cut, very isolating"

"Time management to hit public transportation - have to have cushion for time, walkable. Challenging when you have multiple jobs to have that flexibility. Worked in Seattle & Bellevue. Drive car to Bellevue p&r at 6am, take bus to Seattle, work, bus back to Bellevue and then drive home. Public transport isn't created for workers who clock out 11pm. Either get home at 2am or drive to Seattle for parking."

"A lot of times the commuter bus I would take to work is cancelled. Then I have to drive in and pay for parking. Sometimes the morning bus is running but then the evening bus could be cancelled at the time I need it. So sometimes that could include waiting 35 to 40 minutes or taking streetcar to the light rail to transfer to a different bus and then walk 10 minutes. It's a hassle.."

"I work at Seatac and the light rail station is very close to my house. However when I worked early morning shifts, there is no light rail available that early so I have to drive myself. The roads in front of my house have parking now and streets are narrow. It is hard and scary to drive around Seattle. There are now more bike lanes which makes it scarier for me to drive around. There are also lots of potholes in the street that have not been fixed for many years"

05 SDOT Recommendations

Affordable & Free Parking

The affordability of parking is a huge concern for those who are commuting by car into the city. The city should consider providing subsidies or other forms of assistance for workers who need to drive to work, especially in the heart of Seattle. This could take the form of discounted parking rates or even free parking in designated areas. Free parking could be in areas such as on the streets around the city (with a pass) or in parking structures/lots. It could be really helpful to utilize the current parking structures available by providing space to be used for those workers who drive. This could alleviate financial burdens for those who have to drive to work, particularly for those who don't have subsidies provided by their company and are spending their wages to pay for parking to work. This is important to create a more equitable and sustainable system for workers in the city who are forced to drive due to the lack of accessible public transportation.

"... I drive because it is easier but there is always traffic. When I am going to Chinatown to buy groceries or eat, there isn't any place to really park anymore except the streets. The parking in Chinatown is more expensive than other places. I drive because it is easier for me to get around because of my hours. I get off at midnight and it is easier for me to just drive and get home. But the roads need to be fixed. Many roads including 14th Ave S and 15th Ave S have had so many potholes for over 20 years."

"...For folks that live on low incomes in these neighborhoods, cars are still a necessity due to the lack of pedestrian safety and limited transit routes, and this is a huge issue not only because of climate change mitigation and local pollution, but also because our roads and car-based transportation infrastructure is crumbling..."

"...Driving has become more difficult within the city with the increased use of bike and bus lanes. The roads themselves are generally OK. Parking with the increased density is more difficult..."

*"limited buses running east/west in northern Seattle
expensive parking fees at the UW"*

"Driving in Seattle is akin to inching through a parking lot; the bus service in Seattle is absurdly limited"

*"If driving, parking is hard to find
Workplace doesn't pay for parking and have to pay and move car
every four hours"*

"The traffic - lack of parking "

*"...In areas where communities can't afford their own car, there are fewer buses and lines are being cut
Bulldozing through low-income communities - traffic and lack of safety Buses always being late and lines being
cut, very isolating"*

"So much construction, expensive parking, not enough bus routes to get to/from work"

"Difficult for parking, difficult or dangerous for walking around depending on the neighborhood"

05

SDOT Recommendations

Better road infrastructure

People's mode of transportation depends on the type of use and where they need to get to. However, it was echoed throughout the constant construction and increase of eroding potholes has created streets that are unbearable for drivers and commuters. The city should implement a more proactive approach to repairing these potholes, as they pose a significant risk to both drivers and pedestrians. Additionally, the city should use materials that do not erode quickly to reduce the frequency of potholes. The city may also re-assess the disparities in the distribution of potholes in reflection to the zoning law as more potholes are significantly in non-single family neighborhoods. And finally, they should invest in making sidewalks more accessible to all residents, especially those with disabilities as it's sometimes difficult to navigate for individuals with mobility impairments and the elderly.

There are too many construction on the roads that creates detours which causes more traffic jam on the roads that are available. And roads that have construction may be reduced which also causes more traffic. There are too many uneven roads that impacts my car. While more people are living in Seattle, the transportation hasn't caught up. If there is any minor accident on the freeway, there is a grid lock that backs up traffic for a long time.

"There needs to be more sidewalks, as someone who walks a lot there tends to be areas that sidewalks end or are poorly maintained and makes traveling difficult. The link does a great job north and south, but branching past these stations and east/west of the stations is hard. Also the escalators tend to be broken at many stations and are poorly maintained."

"Seattle is a bumpy city and I think that phrase is true. The city need to change the asphalt we use for the roads so it can prevent potholes. The traffic is increasing every time because the city does have a good design of public transportation"

*"Roads - broken and need fixing but knows that it has to do with money and funding
Freeways seem small now for amount of traffic/people"*

"Traffic is getting worse every day. I think it's because how the public transportation in Seattle is designed makes it harder from point A to point B. In Mexico city, we have a good subway system where you can reach places while in Seattle there's only one light rail system. I know somebody that's living in a place in Seattle in Rainier that has to walk one mile to take a bus. Before there was a shuttle that passes through his home but the City off Seattle canceled that route"

"The roads in my area have a lot of potholes. It seems like Seattle has just randomly done construction on roads and not actually fixed roads that are eroding.

The roads in my area have a lot of potholes. It seems like Seattle has just randomly done construction on roads and not actually fixed roads that are eroding. Seattle transportation is just good but it's not really the best when you're trying to get to places. It also takes longer to get around the city"

"There is a lot of traffic that is created due to construction on roads and other infrastructure for my commute to work. There are a few areas of the city that feel uncomfortable to ride my bike in due to lack of spacing or poor road conditions like potholes or other surface areas that aren't smooth"

"There is always road construction on some roads but never construction on roads that need fixing. The roads are unsafe to drive on because of the deep potholes"

"The roads are horrible. There are potholes that have been in some roads since I arrives here in Seattle 34 years ago"

"The roads in my area have a lot of potholes. It seems like Seattle has just randomly done construction on roads and not actually fixed roads that are eroding. Seattle transportation is just good but it's not really the best when you're trying to get to places. It also takes longer to get around the city"

"Frequently accessed roads are full of potholes - this is worse in neighborhoods that are not primarily single family homes"

05

SDOT Recommendations

Increase safety for public transportation

Safety is a constant concern that was heard throughout our survey regarding the hesitation of people taking public transportation. One approach to increase safety for public transportation can include more types of tools such as direct communication devices to communicate with emergency services if an incident occurs. Drivers also need to be provided with training and resources to handle any incidents where passengers feel threatened on the bus so that they can be equipped to safely handle the range of situations that can occur. Another measure recommended is to install more lights at bus stops to increase safety during evening or nighttime hours. Proactive measures such as adequate lighting can help increase the visibility at bus stops for people to feel safe.

"Going north-south on the bus is really cumbersome. In addition to issues stated above, the experience of light rail and the bus (the stops/stations, the ride, the crowdedness, the harassment that can happen) is not good! These things should be so obvious, but I think most City of Seattle leadership have no regular experience relying on public transportation and needing a safe and reliable walk or transit experience to get to where they needed to go. Being an anti-racist City and making our transportation and housing policies anti-racist means that they are safe, reliable, accessible, affordable and easy to use for all people including -- anti-racism and inclusion are commitments to actions and actually moving resources to community -- not just words on a page! The city needs to stop reinforcing harmful cycles that displace people from the city and then further punish them with relying on expensive cars, traffic and pollution -- build housing and support transit now!"

"There are too many construction on the roads that creates detours which causes more traffic jam on the roads that are available. And roads that have construction may be reduced which also causes more traffic. There are too many uneven roads that impacts my car. While more people are living in Seattle, the transportation hasn't caught up. If there is any minor accident on the freeway, there is a grid lock that backs up traffic for a long time."

"Buses: Some buses in Seattle are always late and poorly maintained. A few bus stops are incredibly unsafe for women to wait for bus at (e.g. the bus stop near downtown target, since I got catcalled and harassed every time when I'm waiting for a bus there, and a lot of my friends have similar experiences). It's also difficult to go to some places through bus (e.g. cap hill to magnolia), since it takes so long for a relatively short distance (e.g. comparatively, it feels more fair if you need 45mins to go to Bellevue from cap hill instead of magnolia...)."

"the Link/bus security has been declining in the past year"

"I don't feel safe on public transportation- as a single woman it's very dangerous ."

The bus drivers in this city are absolutely amazing (shoutout to ATU metro drivers) and I wish I could take the bus more often, but the discomfort of riding the bus when it's dark out and the limited routes usually have me driving instead of using transit.

Appendix

A

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