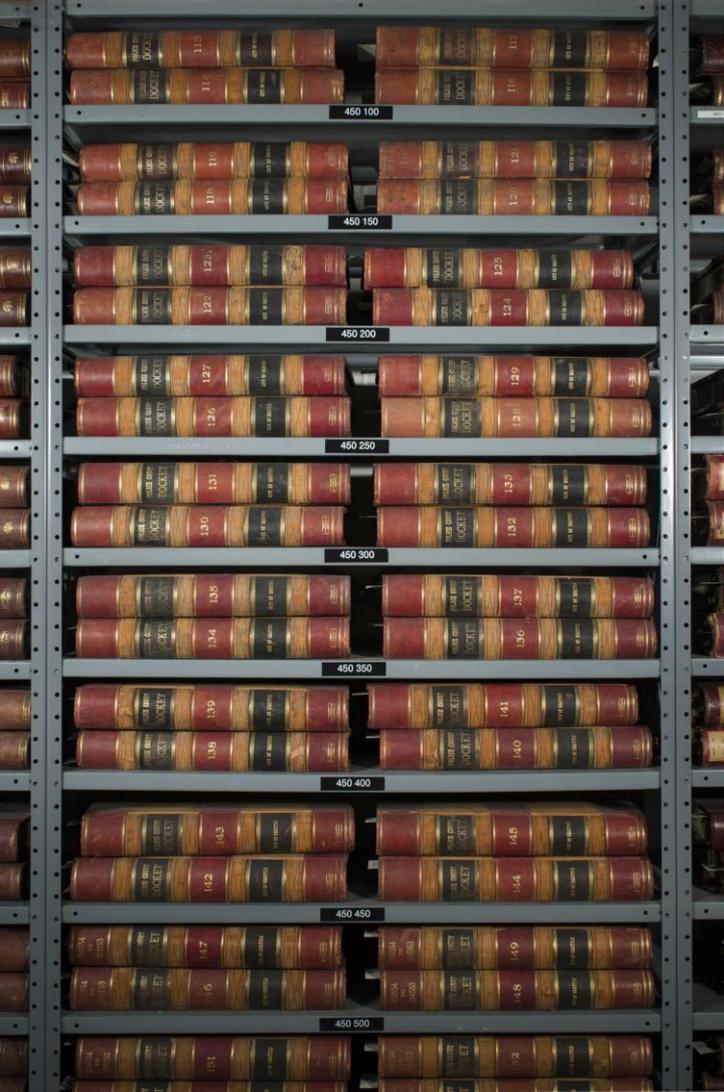




# Introduction to the Seattle Municipal Archives

# What this course will cover:

- Seattle Municipal Archives function and mission
- What records are in the archives (and what records aren't)?
- How do records come to the archives?
- What kinds of questions can the archives help answer?



# About the Seattle Municipal Archives

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Founded in 1985, the Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA) documents the history, development, and activities of Seattle city agencies and elected officials. SMA is part of the Office of the City Clerk.

The archives promotes open government by providing access for all to records relating to City actions and decisions.

# What's in the Archives?

SMA holds records created and received by City of Seattle agencies and elected officials.

(That is, **city government** records.)



What types of records  
are included?

# PIKE PLAZA

## Urban Renewal Project

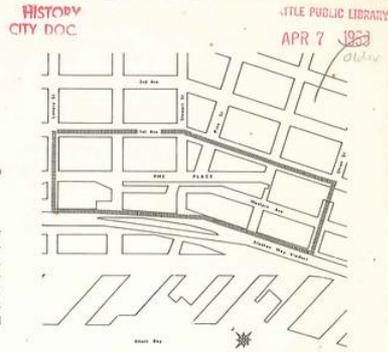
The Pike Plaza Project is planned as the first step in a major rebuilding of Seattle's central business district.

First noted in 1930 by the general manager of the Pike Place Public Market, the area's need for renewal was pinpointed by the 1963 Seattle Central Business District Plan. Redevelopment would serve a number of uptown needs, including off-street parking for 2000-3000 cars, a new terminal facility for Seattle Transit, a water view park three blocks in size, including a restored or rebuilt public market and various apartments and office building.

Today, application for \$400,000 in Survey and Planning funds has been made, and an announcement of this appropriation is pending. With it, a full study of the 20.4-acre project area will be possible.

At present, 88.7 per cent of the 53 buildings in the area are deficient, used for a mixture of commercial, industrial and residential hotel uses. Sanitation is haphazard, topography of the area not conducive to repair, even if it were possible, many small ownerships of property limit private development.

The pending Survey and Planning Application will finance a detailed building survey, property appraisal, social and



economic study of the approximately 450 transients in the area and business relocation report.

Estimated cost of project improvements to the area is \$10 million. It is further estimated there would be a return of \$6 million in sale of land to be made available through the project, leaving a \$4 million balance to be financed through federal funds and local sources.

A preliminary feasibility study by the Central Association and Seattle Urban Renewal Enterprise in August of 1964 projects \$58 million in private development.



# Documents

Correspondence, memos, newsletters, project files, published reports, brochures, and more starting from the late 1800s

# Photographs



Negatives, prints, slides, and  
born-digital photos from the  
1880s to the present

# Audio



City Council meetings and  
public hearings from 1955  
to the present

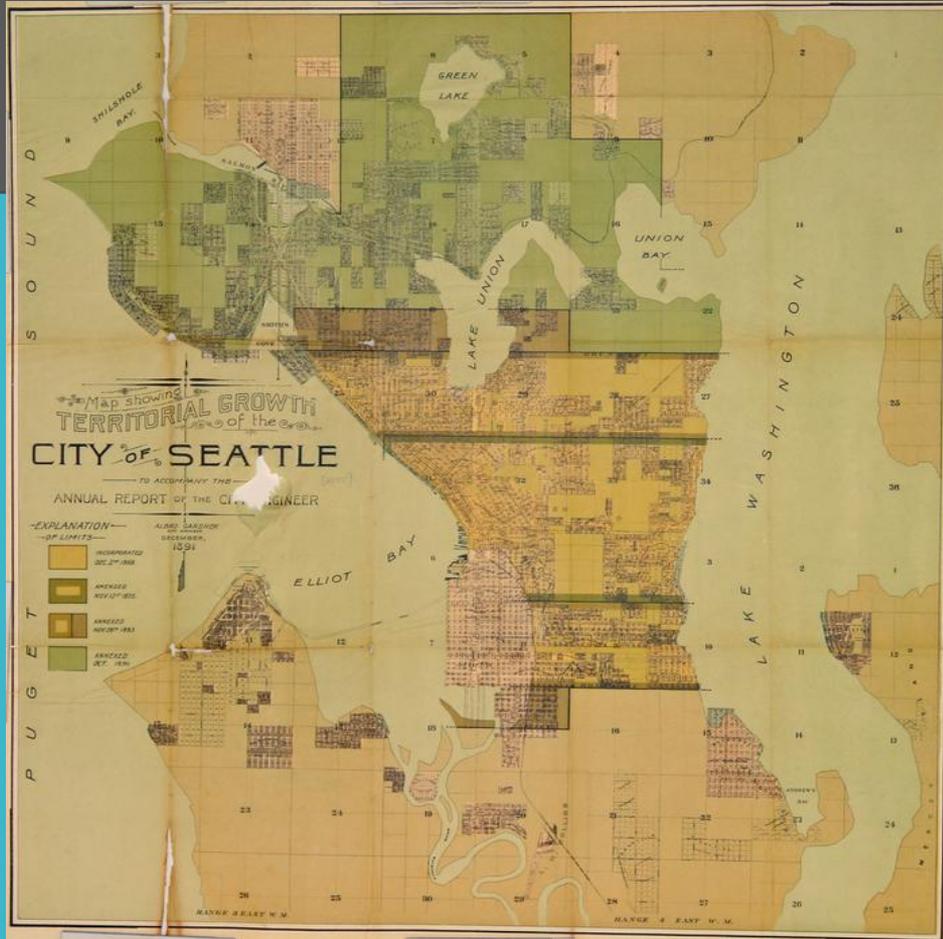
# Moving Images



Motion picture film, video, and digital video from the 1940s onward, including both finished products and outtakes

# Maps

Maps and atlases of the Seattle area from the late 1800s to the present



# Electronic Records

Born-digital textual records, email, websites, and social media, mainly from 2005 forward

**⚠️ Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in King County**  
Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in King County. [Find out more at King County Public Health.](#)

**⚠️ SDCI Inspections, Closures, and Service Updates**  
On Friday, June 5, King County received approval from the State Department of Health to move into a Phase 2 Restart for ALL private construction activities that are low-risk and adhere to [strict COVID 19 Job site Requirements](#). The City of Seattle has issued [requirements for construction projects](#) seeking inspections. SDCI [customer service areas remain closed](#) and [continues with the service changes](#).

## Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

[About Us](#) [Permits](#) [Codes](#) [Renting](#) [Inspections](#) [Resources](#)

[Home](#) > [Codes](#) > [Common Code Questions](#)

ភាសាខ្មែរ, Khmer, 中文, 한국어, ግዕዝ ቋንቋ, Oromiffa, русский язык, af Soomaali, Español, Tagalog, ភាសាប៊ែត, Tiếng Việt

 [Log in to Seattle Services Portal](#)

### Vacant Buildings

See also: [Vacant Buildings Code Updates](#), [Vacant Building Standards](#), [Weeds & Vegetation Code](#)

#### What Is It?

Vacant buildings in Seattle must be secured and maintained to prevent unauthorized entry and deterioration from the weather. Our Housing and Building Maintenance Code contains the City's Vacant Building Maintenance standards.



We may add vacant buildings our Vacant Building Monitoring Program if:

#### What Do You Want To Do?

[Make a Property or Building Complaint](#)

#### Check Status

Enter a [record number](#) | [Find it on a map](#)

# What kinds of things are outside our scope?

Personal papers, letters, diaries, manuscripts

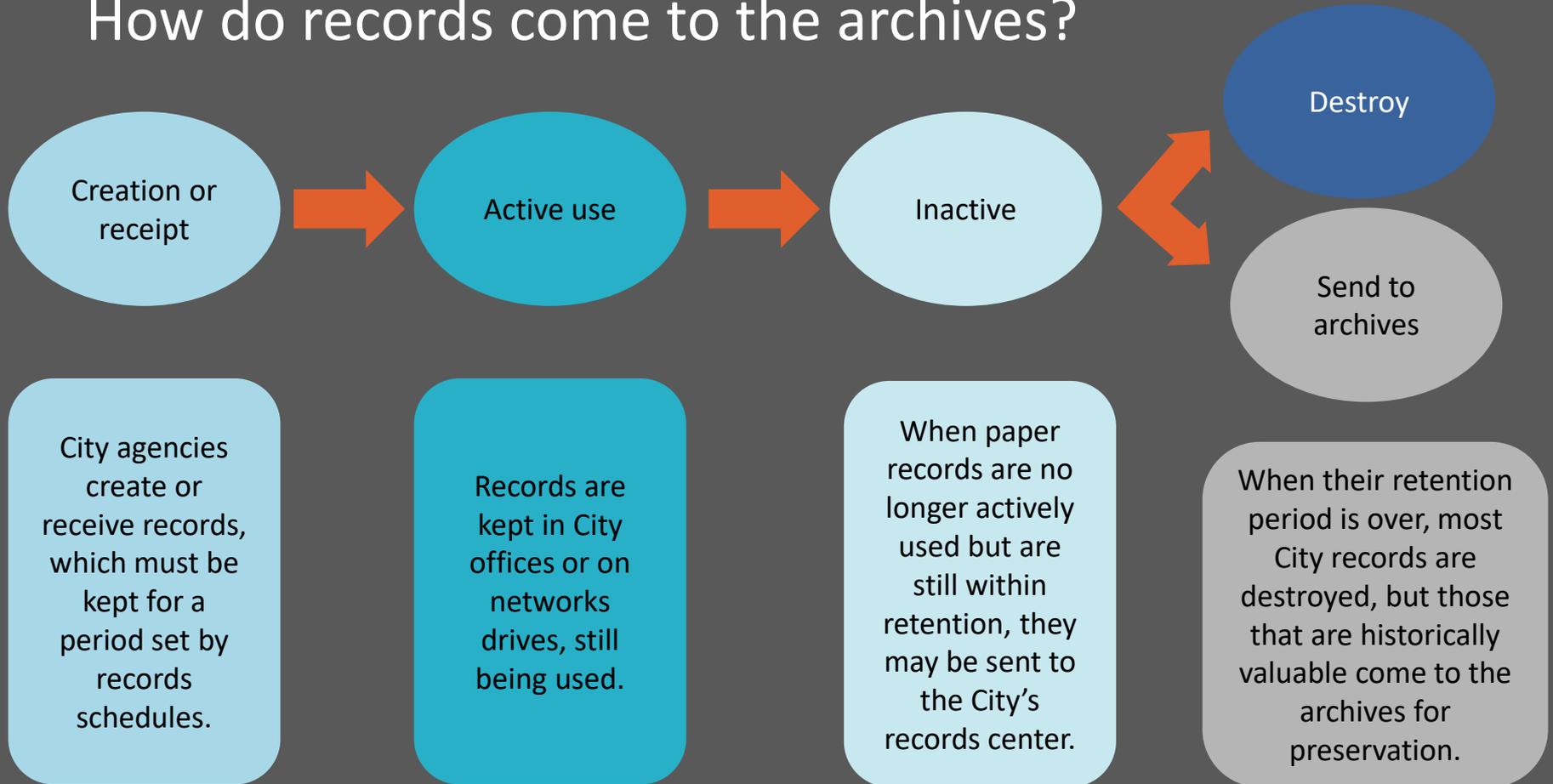
Business records, unless documenting interactions with City government

Birth, death, and marriage records

Court records (with some exceptions)

We can point you to other places that hold these types of records!

# How do records come to the archives?



# Who uses the archives?

City  
employees

Students &  
teachers

Lawyers

Historians

Engineers &  
architects

Journalists

Anyone  
with a  
question

SMA is open to everyone!



# What kinds of research can I do in the archives?

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- Neighborhood history
- Land use and environmental history
- Genealogy
- Transportation history
- Legislative history
- And more...

# Some sample questions:

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- What's the history of my neighborhood park?
- What were the arguments for and against this 1996 ordinance?
- My great grandfather was a Seattle firefighter. What can I learn about his employment?
- How was this bridge planned and built?

# How do I use the records?

Many (but not all) photos, maps, moving images, and audio recordings are available online in SMA's Digital Collections

Most textual records are not digitized but can be viewed in our research room



# Visiting the Archives

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Our research room is located on the third floor of City Hall. Appointments are encouraged! Archives staff can assist in finding records that may be helpful for your research.

Learn more in our Visiting the Archives course.

I don't have a specific research question – I'm just interested in Seattle history.

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Our [website](#) has many resources, including online exhibits, lists of Seattle facts like election results and elected officials through the years, research guides, and much more. Check out our Get SMART elearning for more about our other resources.





## Learn more

Contact [archives@seattle.gov](mailto:archives@seattle.gov) with questions about how to use our records or other questions about SMA.

Check out our other courses to learn more about searching our collections, visiting the archives, and more.