



# **A Comprehensive Plan for Managing Growth 2015-2035 | Draft**



**CITY OF SEATTLE  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
JULY 8, 2015**



# City of Seattle

## Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

July 8, 2015

Dear Seattle,

We have come a long ways since Seattle adopted its 1994 Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*. The core values from that plan are still very relevant – community building, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship and social equity. However, we are a different city now. Community building is even more important with our diversity of populations; the economy is strong, but there are significant gaps in who is benefiting from growth and who is not; climate impacts are much more evident and urgent today; and race and social equity has been identified as a core foundational value of our Plan.

We reviewed all the advice we heard from the past two years of listening to the public. We evaluated alternative growth scenarios in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. And we carefully considered the Equity Analysis that examines how growth could affect low-income and minority populations. All this information helped us compile this draft that we believe represents a solid strategy for the next 20 years.

But we know this Plan is not done yet. We need to hear from you about the changes this Plan includes and about the strategies that it would continue, like the idea of concentrating growth in urban centers and urban villages. Let us know if there are key pieces missing.

The best way to comment is to visit [2035.Seattle.gov](http://2035.Seattle.gov). and use our online comment tool, where you can see what others have said and add your thoughts. We will be taking comments through September 30, 2015.

In December 2015 the Mayor will forward his recommended Plan to City Council, and DPD will publish a Final Environmental Impact Statement. The City Council will review the Mayor's recommendation and will adopt the new Plan in early 2016.

Thank you for your interest in Seattle 2035 and for helping shape the city's future.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Sugimura

Director



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# Introduction

*We envision Seattle as a city where growth benefits and increases opportunities for all residents and offers ways to enhance and preserve our natural environment.*

The recent building boom is a reminder that Seattle is an attractive and growing place. Continued growth will present challenges about how the City can ensure that everyone in the city will have a chance to prosper. This Plan provides long-term guidance that will help the City make decisions about managing growth over the next 20 years and providing services to make the growth for all of the city. Since the Plan was first adopted in 1994, it has embraced the concept of sustainable growth, meaning that the City would accommodate additional people and businesses, while also aiming to maintain and enhance resources for future generations.

## The City in the Region

With the largest population and greatest number of jobs of any city in Washington State, Seattle is the center of the fast-growing Central Puget Sound region. Made up of King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties, this dynamic metropolitan region boasts a population expected to exceed 5 million by 2040. As its heart, Seattle plays host to many of the region's major cultural attractions such as the Symphony, Folklife Festival and professional sports teams and serves as the focal point of the region's multiple transit systems. Over the past decade, the city has grown rapidly, adding an average of almost 4,000 housing units each year and a total of about 70,000 people. In the years to come, Seattle expects to welcome a significant share of the region's growth. This Plan contains goals and policies designed to guide growth in a manner that reflects the City's core values and that enhances the quality of life for all.

## What Drives This Plan

### Seattle's Core Values

Before Seattle's Comprehensive Plan was first drafted in the early 1990s, City staff and the Planning Commission held numerous community meetings, specifically reaching out to groups that had not traditionally participated in similar planning efforts. The goal of City staff and the Commission was to identify the values that people cared most about in regard to the city they called home. The principles that emerged from these conversations came to be known as the core values for the Comprehensive Plan, and they are as relevant today as when they were first incorporated into the Plan. With this update, planners and other City staff kept these core values at the Plan's center, honoring the efforts of those participants decades ago.

**Race and Social Equity.** Seattle believes that every resident, employee and business should have access to resources, opportunities and outcomes that will improve their quality of life and enable them to

reach their full potential. All of the city's residents deserve the opportunity to thrive and to be a part of the city's growing economy.

Whenever opportunity is held out of reach by poverty, racial discrimination, or intolerance of cultural difference, equity cannot be achieved. Historically in the city of Seattle and throughout the nation, people have been denied equal access to education, jobs, homes, or even neighborhoods because of their race, class, disabilities, or other real or perceived differences. While such practices are no longer permitted by law, certain segments of the population still do not enjoy the same access to economic opportunity, safety, and freedom that other Seattle citizens have.

This value reminds us that Seattle has not yet achieved social equity for all who live and work in our city, and statistics have shown that this is particularly true for people of color. For instance, household income for whites in Seattle is more than double that for blacks and more than 30% higher than Asians. Thirty-five percent of black households spend over 50% of their income on rent, compared to 19% of white renters. The unemployment rate for black residents is more than twice the rate for whites (14% vs. 6%).

These inequities are even more significant now because the makeup of Seattle's population is changing. The city has gone from being 25 percent people of color in 1990 to 34 percent in 2010, and this trend is expected to continue. Currently, Seattle's ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated in a few locations, such as the Rainier Valley in southeast Seattle and in smaller pockets in north and west parts of the city, as shown in the map on the following page. More immigrants will arrive, and minority populations will continue to grow through natural increase.

With more people moving into the city property values could increase, or existing buildings and homes could be replaced with new and more expensive ones. Changes like these will affect some communities more than others, and these changes can make it more difficult for the residents or businesses to remain in their current neighborhoods, especially in low-income areas. In some cases these outcomes are unavoidable, but the City will endeavor to provide options for existing residents and businesses to be part of a growing and changing community.

Since the early 2000s, the City has worked to implement a race and social justice initiative, a citywide effort to realize the vision of racial equity.

The main goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the physical development of the city. However, in shaping how we create new spaces for people to live, work, and play, this Plan also promotes better access to jobs, education, affordable housing, parks, community centers, and healthy food for all of Seattle's residents. The goals and policies in this plan can also influence the actions of other government agencies and private businesses, encouraging them to promote social justice and racial equity in their work. Working toward equity will help produce stronger and more resilient economic growth – growth that benefits everyone.

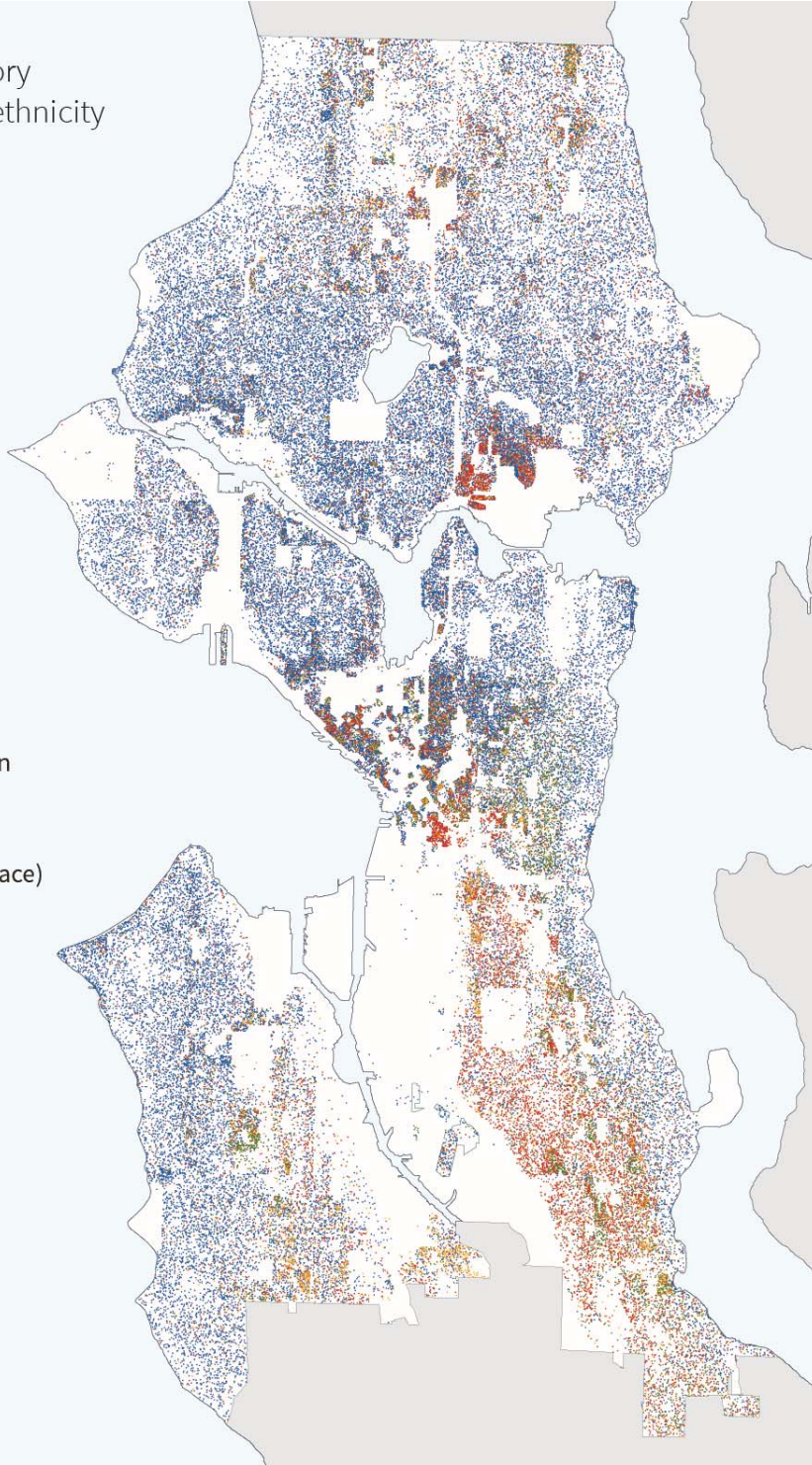
**Economic Opportunity and Security.** Seattle has been able to surpass 2008 employment levels and by 2013 the city contained 499,900 jobs. Boeing and Amazon have been major contributors to that employment growth, but other smaller firms are also providing more jobs. Growing businesses and an increasing number of jobs create opportunities for residents.

**2010 population**

by major racial category  
and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity

one dot equals five people

- Asian
- Black/African American
- White
- Hispanic/Latino (any race)



For businesses to thrive they need space to grow and skilled employees locally. Examples of how this Plan can address economic opportunity can be found in the Urban Village and Land Use Elements of this Plan, which include policies that identify locations where the City can accommodate the desired employment growth and offers policies to help direct growth to those areas. The Economic Development Element encourages businesses to locate and expand, while the Community Well-Being Element addresses the education and skills residents need to fill the new jobs created.

Sometimes, just having a job isn't enough to provide the economic security people need. They may not be able to afford to live in the city or to make the purchases they need and desire. Through the Plan, the City demonstrates its commitment to providing a livable wage and providing access to affordable housing to help give people more financial stability. The City has also developed programs to help address continuing racial disparities in education and employment.

**Environmental Stewardship.** Even as the city becomes increasingly urban, Seattle is committed to protecting and restoring the natural environment. By taking on a significant share of the region's growth, Seattle helps protect rural farmed and forested areas from development. And by concentrating growth in urban villages, we help preserve the existing green areas in the city, including the areas that now contain low-density development.

By far the boldest step the City has taken toward enhancing the natural environment is achieving our commitment to become carbon neutral by the year 2050. This is an ambitious goal that will require the government, businesses, and residents to all work together. However, the City sees this as a necessary and responsible step in order to help reduce the real threat of climate change. This Plan contains goals and policies to help guide this reduction. For instance, the Growing Seattle Element calls for a development pattern that can lower the demand for vehicle trips, and the Transportation Element promotes improvements that will make walking, biking and transit viable options for more people, so they can be less reliant on automobiles – a major source of carbon emissions in this region.

**Community.** The greater community of Seattle is made up of many smaller groups that share common bonds such as neighborhood, values, faith, country of origin, or business type, among others. Whatever the size of the group and however people come together, community occurs at so many different levels that the city becomes a large web of interwoven communities. These connections help us recognize our similarities, appreciate our differences, and see the need to cooperate to knit together the greater Seattle community.

In preparing this Plan and previous versions of it, many hundreds of people participated in meetings, filled out comment forms, and wrote e-mails and letters to express their desires for how the City should address problems and build the future. In a city the size of Seattle, there are many different interests and perspectives that can compete with each other. However, the city's cultural diversity is a strength, and when people recognize they are part of the same community, they can collaborate to find solutions that work for the greater community. This Plan encourages broad public participation in decisions that

affect all aspects of City operations, and helps bring people into forums and groups where they can share their experiences and thoughts.

## Sustainability

The Plan has been guided by the principle of sustainability – the idea that as the city grows public and private actions will preserve resources for future generations, so that they can enjoy the qualities we value today. That means preserving forests and farm lands outside the city by accepting more of the urban growth in Seattle. It also means creating urban environments where resources are used efficiently because residents are close enough to services to walk or bike to them at least some of the time, and there is enough concentration of people that providing frequent transit is a practical solution.

Since the Plan was first adopted, Seattle has accommodated more than its expected share of countywide residential growth – adding more than 67,000 new housing units, compared to the original Plan’s estimate of 50,000 – 60,000. This has helped reduce the proportion of countywide housing growth in rural areas to decrease from about 15% in the 1980s to about 3% in recent years. At the same time the percentage of people in the city who drive alone has declined, as more people walk, bike or use transit for commuting and other daily trips. Seattle has also become a leader in green building and green infrastructure, helping reduce the use of energy and water in the city.

## Washington’s Growth Management Act

The state Growth Management Act (GMA), enacted in 1990, requires that all cities and counties above certain sizes prepare comprehensive plans and update those plans at certain intervals. GMA’s goals include reducing sprawl and directing growth to areas that already have urban services. GMA calls on counties to draw so-called urban growth boundaries, outside of which urban-style development is prohibited. Comprehensive plans must show that each city has enough land in appropriate zoning categories to absorb the expected level of growth for twenty years into the future, along with the transportation, water, and sewer facilities to serve that growth. GMA also requires that cities’ plans must be consistent with other plans in the region. In this region, other plans include Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

Seattle first adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 1994. The Plan was drafted following extensive public engagement and in coordination with other regional governments who were all learning the implications of GMA at the same time.

## Vision 2040

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the regional growth management, transportation, and economic development organization covering King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties. It is governed by elected officials from across the region, and together they have adopted a regional growth strategy called Vision 2040. That strategy establishes a framework that is reflected in this Plan. It calls



for concentrating population and job growth in designated centers and for using high-capacity transit to connect these centers. Seattle's Plan identifies six regional growth centers and two manufacturing/ industrial centers that are recognized in the regional plan. In addition, Seattle has identified 24 urban villages that are concentrations of population, employment and services that carry the regional centers concept to a neighborhood scale. Vision 2040 also assumes a distribution of growth across the Puget Sound region, with especially large shares of growth going to the five metropolitan cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, Tacoma, and Bremerton. This Plan reflects Seattle's commitment to accommodate its share of regional growth.

In recent years PSRC brought together representatives from local governments and the private sector to develop guidance for how to plan for areas around light rail stations. The result was a regional agreement that Seattle signed which outlined an approach to equitable development in these transit areas so that "...the benefits of new transit investments and local development accrue to everyone, including low-income people and communities of color."

## King County Countywide Planning Policies

GMA requires that counties adopt policies that will guide the plans for all the jurisdictions in the county. In King County, the Growth Management Planning Council is a body of elected officials representing all the jurisdictions who develop the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The CPPs contain the urban growth boundary for the county, which separates areas designated for more or less development and density. These planning policies also contain twenty-year housing and job-growth targets for all the jurisdictions. These policies address the need for affordable housing in the county, for local action to address climate change, and for growing in ways that will contribute to positive health impacts for residents.

## Seattle's Urban Village Strategy

In keeping with Seattle's Core Values and anticipating future growth, the foundation of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is the Urban Village Strategy. This strategy encourages most future job and housing growth to specific areas in the city that are best able to absorb and capitalize on that growth, while providing essential public services and making amenities available to residents. These areas include designated urban centers, such as Downtown and the five others that are recognized in the regional plan, as well as smaller urban villages throughout the city. Both urban centers and urban villages are places that already have active business districts and concentrations of housing. The Urban Village Strategy:

- Accommodates Seattle's expected growth in an orderly and predictable way
- Strengthens existing business districts
- Promotes the most efficient use of public investments, now and in the future
- Encourages more walking, bicycling, and transit use in the city
- Retains the character of less dense single-family neighborhoods outside of urban villages

By encouraging both business and housing growth in the urban centers and urban villages, the Plan makes it possible for more people to live near job opportunities as well as near services that can meet their everyday needs. In this way, more people are able to walk or bike to some of their daily activities, creating more activity on the sidewalks and streets and making these communities more vibrant. It also puts more people near transit service, so that they can more easily use buses or light rail to get to other job centers, shopping or entertainment. This access is useful for all residents, but particularly those with limited incomes or physical limitations that make them reliant on public transit.

The Urban Village Strategy is a way of putting into practice the regional growth center concept called for in regional plans, but at a more local scale. The strategy includes designating regional centers, such as Downtown and the University District, as the focal points for the most growth. In addition to these urban centers, the Plan identifies two classes of “urban villages,” each intended to combine housing with employment opportunities, shops, and stores, all in compact environments that encourage walking. The plan identifies six “hub” urban villages where a fair amount of housing and employment growth should occur, though at lower densities than in the centers. On an even smaller scale, in eighteen “residential” villages scattered around the city, modest housing growth should occur near retail and services that mainly serve the nearby population.

All of the centers and villages identified in the Plan function the way the regional plans anticipate, as compact, pedestrian-friendly areas that offer different mixes of office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses, but at scales that respect Seattle’s character and development pattern.

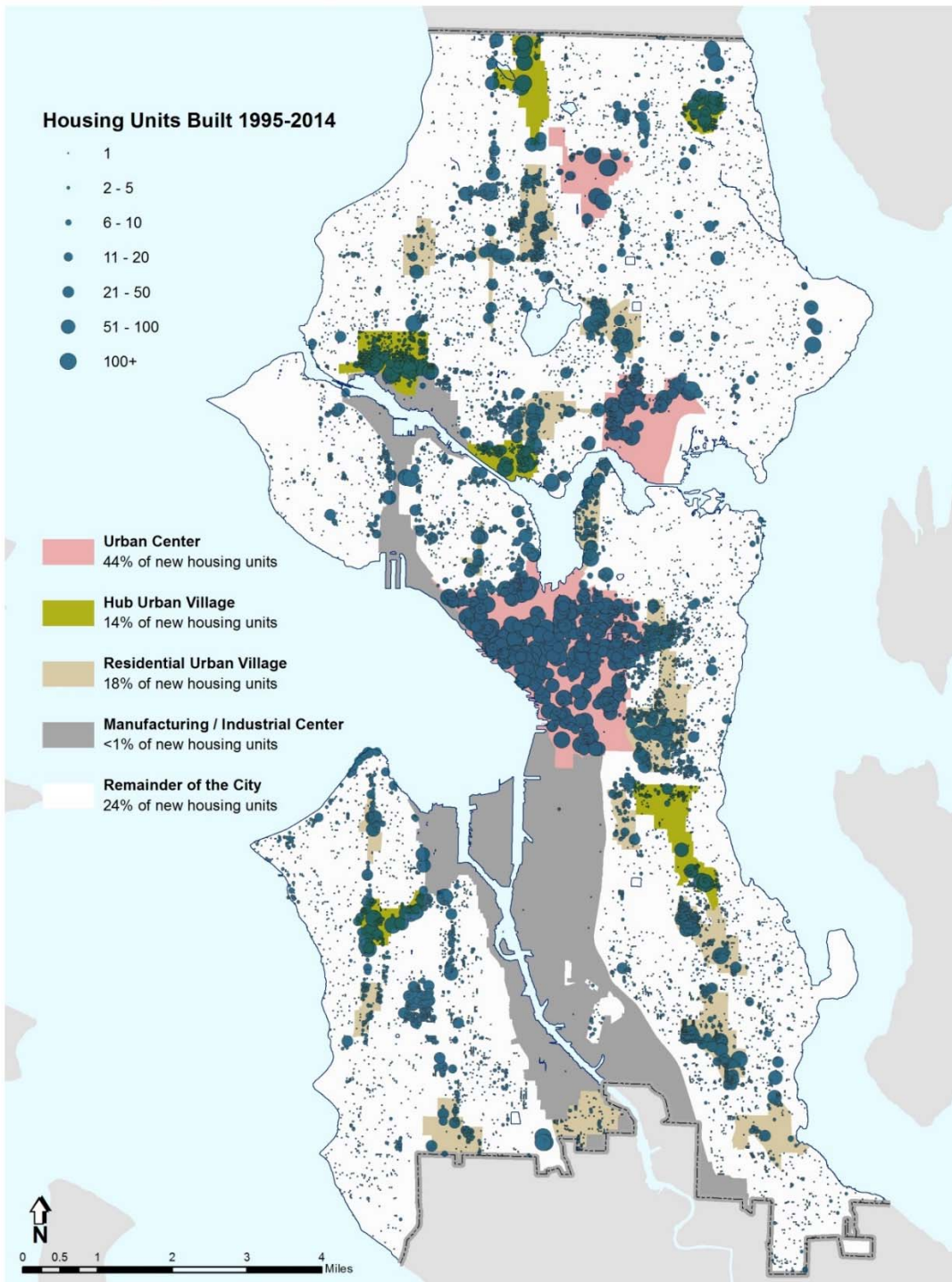
The Urban Village Strategy continues to form the backbone of the Plan because it has been successful in achieving its purposes over the 20 years it has been in place. During that time over 75 percent of new housing and new jobs located inside the urban centers and villages that together make up only about 17 percent of the city’s total land area. (See map on the following page.) More than half of the housing growth occurred in the six urban centers, and the two manufacturing/industrial centers received about 9 percent of the employment growth on 11 percent of the city’s land.

Even more of the urban villages are thriving now than in 1994, when the strategy was first adopted. Columbia City, Ballard, and Madison/Miller are just a few of the neighborhoods where added residents and new businesses have meant more people out on the sidewalks, enjoying their communities, and raising the overall vitality of each area. The villages continue to provide new services and goods for residents in nearby areas, meaning community members have less distance to travel to get what they need and want. However, the long-sought prosperity in these communities has sometimes come at the cost of changing the character of the neighborhoods and forcing some former residents and businesses to leave. Those who left were often lower-income households, whose housing was replaced by more expensive new buildings, or who could not afford the rising rents brought on by the neighborhood changes. In defining the future success of the urban village strategy, the City will look at and try to plan ways for the urban villages to include opportunities for marginalized populations to remain in the city and to access education and employment.

In many of the urban villages, ridership on Metro buses has outpaced the population growth, and several of villages have already benefited from the opening of light rail service in 2009, providing another option for traveling without a car.

Of course, urban villages are more than just the fulfillment of the regional growth strategy; they are neighborhoods where Seattle residents live, work, learn, shop, play, and socialize. After initial adoption of the Plan, the City engaged in a citywide neighborhood planning effort that produced a neighborhood plan for each area of the city containing an urban center or urban village. Those neighborhood plans found some common needs among the different communities and also highlighted some needs that were unique to each of those neighborhoods. To address the common needs caused by growth in these locations, voters approved funding for libraries, open space, community centers, and transit.

Since the neighborhood plans were first adopted, the City has worked with communities to refine more than half of those plans and help take action to accomplish the goals each community prioritized. A review of the projects suggested by neighborhood plans discovered that over 80% of those projects were completed, and a later review by the Planning Commission determined that the original goals and policies were still valid for most neighborhoods.



## Seattle 2035

Over the next twenty years, forecasts predict that Seattle will need to accommodate 70,000 additional housing units, 120,000 more residents, and 115,000 additional jobs. This updated version of the Plan builds on the success of the Urban Village Strategy to encourage that growth in a manner that works for all of the city's people. Both urban centers and villages have continued to grow rapidly during the recent building boom, and current zoning allows them to handle even more growth. Between now and 2035, the Plan expects that most housing and employment growth will occur in those urban centers and villages.

In addition, the opening of light rail service in Seattle now provides certain areas of the city with more frequent and reliable transit connections to a greater number of locations. Light rail already connects Downtown to neighborhoods in southeast Seattle and to the airport. By 2016, the service will extend northward through Capitol Hill to Husky Stadium at the University of Washington; by 2021 to Roosevelt and Northgate; and by 2023, to Lynnwood and the eastside. By 2035, there could be even more light rail lines in the city. This increased transit service signals a major regional investment and commitment to these neighborhoods, and an opportunity that Seattle should not waste. To leverage this investment to the fullest extent, the Plan calls for focusing more growth in areas within a ten-minute walk of light rail stations and those urban villages that light rail will directly serve.

As mentioned above, the City has committed to be climate neutral by the year 2050. This Plan therefore spans a critical time for the City in meeting that goal, and it provides some of the direction necessary to assist the City in achieving it. It also provides guidance about anticipating and adapting to those impacts we are unable to avoid.

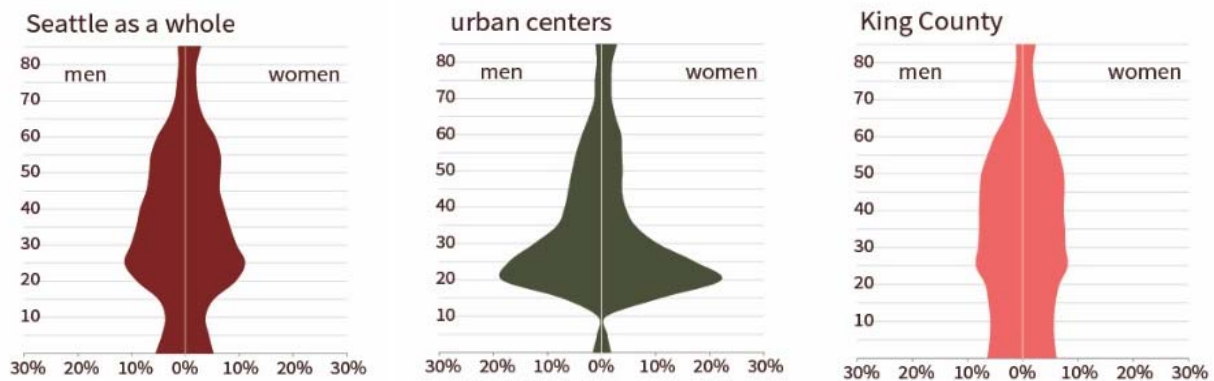
### Who We are Planning For

This Plan is for the people who live and work in Seattle today. It is also for those who will make up the community fabric of Seattle in the future—not only our children but also the newcomers who will arrive for education or job opportunities, and who will value the urban and natural features of Seattle as much as we do.

While we have an idea about how many new housing units and jobs the City should expect over the next twenty years, it is harder to know more specific information about the ages, incomes, and family structures of those future residents and workers, and to get a real picture of who our new neighbors might be.

The U.S. Census and other sources give us a good description of the city's current population and information about recent trends that help provide a general picture about the future population. Seattle's population in 2014 was 640,500, and growth over the next twenty years will add about 120,000 people to that total. Seattle's population is younger than the surrounding region, with a higher

percentage of the city's population in their twenties than in King County as a whole. However, Seattle has a much lower percentage of people below the age of eighteen than does King County. In fact, Seattle's percentage of households containing children is one of the lowest among large cities in the U.S. The age differences in Seattle households are even more dramatic in urban centers. The average number of people living in a household (2.06) is also lower than for King County (2.39). Seattle's household size has been decreasing since the 1960s, but the rate of that decrease has slowed in the past 20 years. Household size could continue to decline slowly in the future.



*2010 percentages of population by age and gender.*

As previously noted, Seattle is becoming more diverse racially and culturally. As of 2010, almost one-fifth of Seattle residents were born in another country, and more than 20 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home. The Seattle School District reports that there are over 120 languages spoken by their students. Indeed, following recent trends, it is possible that white residents could well be the minority of the city's population by 2035 or shortly thereafter. The growing diversity in the city's population poses new challenges for City departments and other institutions to meet the needs of all residents. It also provides an opportunity to benefit from the cultures and skills of the people that make up these groups.

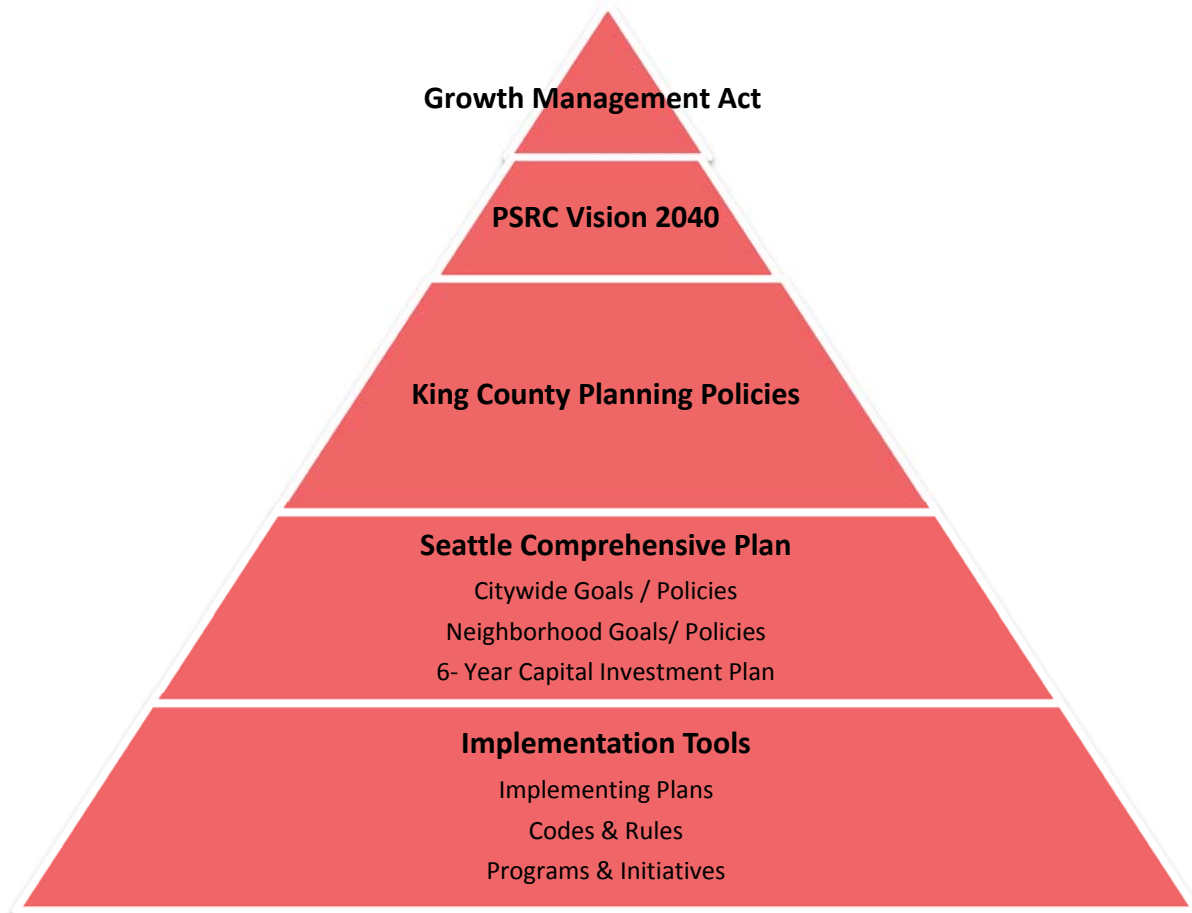
This Plan provides policy direction for locating new housing units and encourages a variety of housing types that can help meet the needs of diverse households, who may be looking for studios, larger apartments, townhouses, high-rise condominiums, or detached houses. By planning for more transportation choices, including bicycles and transit, the Plan will shape a city attractive to many potential future residents, from today's twenty-somethings who can remain in the city as they begin to have families, to aging residents hoping to grow old in the place they've called home, to those who rely on transit for getting around. At the same time, the Plan can make the city attractive to those critical businesses that provide jobs and services for Seattle residents.

## Implementing the Plan

This Plan is a framework with a strong purpose. Yet since it provides provides guidance for a 20-year timespan, it does not prescribe specific solutions for the most part.

The City carries the Plan forward more specifically through development regulations and functional plans. For instance, the City's Land Use Code is a compilation of development regulations that guide how land in the city can be used. The Land Use Element of this Plan provides the policy basis for regulations that appear in the Land Use Code. The Transportation Element of this Plan provides direction for the Bicycle Master Plan and Transit Master Plan. The illustration below shows the relationship among various City plans, this Plan, and regional plans.

While the City adopts regulations and plans for its functions, the private sector and other government agencies also help shape the city in significant ways. For example, the private sector builds most of the new housing and commercial space in the city, King County provides bus service, Sound Transit builds and provides light rail service, the Port of Seattle operates shipping terminals that bring significant international trade to the city and region, and the Washington State Department of Transportation builds and maintains state highways in the city. The City maintains partnerships with these agencies to help them make decisions that best serve the City's goals.



**Examples of Implementing Plans**

- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Transit Master Plan
- Freight Master Plan
- Move Seattle Action Plan
- Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development
- Parks Legacy Plan
- SPU Strategic Business Plan
- SPU Stormwater Management Plan
- SPU Solid Waste Plan
- City Light Strategic Plan
- My Library Strategic Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Disaster Recovery Framework

**Examples of Codes and Rules in Seattle Municipal Code**

- Land Use Code
- Stormwater Code
- Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code
- Historic Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Street and Sidewalk Use
- Parks and Recreation

**Examples of Programs & Initiatives**

- Bridging the Gap
- Housing Levy
- Seattle Parks District
- Seattle Homeowner Stabilization Program
- Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program Credit Program
- Neighborhood Matching Fund
- City Light Appliance Rebate Program
- Public Art Program
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Program
- Fire and Emergency Response levy
- Food Action Plan



## Defining and Measuring Success

This Plan specifically covers the next twenty years of growth in Seattle, but the city is expected to continue growing beyond that time period. There will always be ways the city can improve to meet changing needs and to address ongoing concerns. Because of the changing nature of our region and our city, the success of this Plan is not measured by an ideal end state. Instead, success is measured by whether we are moving in the directions the Plan lays out.

The Plan covers many topics in several chapters, and monitoring progress on every one of those topics would be a time-consuming and demanding task. To simplify the monitoring process, the City has identified the following list of key indicators that will provide insights about progress on key issues the addressed by the Plan. The City will report regularly on these indicators to help the public and elected officials judge the effectiveness of the Plan and the City's actions to implement it. These indicators are in addition to data that DPD currently publishes on housing and job growth by urban center and urban village and demographic data.

- Income Equity – gap between persons of color and overall population
- High School Graduation rates by race
- Housing Affordability, especially for cost-burdened renter households
- Transportation Choices - trips by walking, biking, transit
- Recreational Opportunities - households with access to usable open space
- Crime Rate
- Childhood Obesity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions – compared to 2008 levels
- Recycling - % waste recycled or composted
- Healthy Creeks – habitat conditions of major creeks

Where data is available, the City would report information about indicators for each urban village to help assess the status of each village.

## Developing and Updating This Plan

Seattle first adopted this Comprehensive Plan in 1994 after a multi-year effort in which residents throughout the city considered ways to shape the future of the city and to accommodate expected growth. Numerous meetings and events with the general public helped define the core values cited earlier in this introduction and helped validate the urban village strategy. Advisory committees also played a central role in the creation of the Plan. The process that produced this latest version of the Plan has also involved much consultation with the public through a variety of meetings and events and through online conversations.

The GMA limits the City to amending the Plan only once each year, with limited exceptions for certain types of amendments that can be considered at any time such as adoption of a new neighborhood plan, or incorporation of the shoreline plan. Since the Plan was first adopted, the City has amended it every year through a regular process that is defined in a City Council resolution.

## Application of the Plan

**Purpose.** The principal purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide policies that guide the development of the city in the context of regional growth management. These polices can be looked to by citizens and by all levels of government in planning for growth. Specifically, the Plan will be used by the City of Seattle to help make decisions about proposed ordinances, capital budgets, policies, and programs. Although the Plan will be used to direct the development of regulations which govern land use and development, the Plan will not be used to review applications for specific development projects except when reference to this Comprehensive Plan is expressly required by an applicable development regulation.

The Plan format generally presents a *goal*, followed by *policies* related to the goal, and may include a *discussion* about the goals and policies. Each of these components is defined as follows:

**Goals** represent the results that the City hopes to realize over time, perhaps within the 20-year life of the Plan, except where interim time periods are stated. Whether expressed in terms of numbers or only as directions for future change, goals are aspirations, and not guarantees or mandates.

**Policies** should be read as if preceded by the words “it is the City’s general policy to...” A policy helps to guide the creation or change of specific rules or strategies (such as development regulations, budgets or program plans). City officials will generally make decisions on specific City actions by following ordinances, resolutions, budgets or program plans that themselves reflect relevant Plan policies, rather than by referring directly to this Plan. Implementation of most policies involves a range of City actions over time, so one cannot simply ask whether a specific action or project would fulfill a particular Plan policy. For example, a policy that the City will “give priority to” a particular need indicates that need will be treated as important, not that it will take precedence in every City decision.

Some policies use the words “shall” or “should,” “ensure” or “encourage,” and so forth. In general, such words should be read to describe the relative degree of emphasis that the policy imparts, but not necessarily to establish a specific legal duty to perform a particular act, to undertake a program or project, or to achieve a specific result.

Some policies may appear to conflict, particularly in the context of a specific fact situation or viewed from the different perspectives of persons whose interests may conflict on a given issue. A classic example is the oft-referenced “conflict” between policies calling for “preservation of the environment” and policies that “promote economic development.” Because Plan policies do not exist in isolation, and

must be viewed in the context of all potentially relevant policies, it is largely in the application of those policies that the interests which they embody are reconciled and balanced by the legislative and executive branches of City government.

To the extent a conflict may arise between another City policy and this Plan, the Plan will generally prevail.

Discussion is provided to explain the context in which decisions on goals and policies have been made, the reasons for those decisions, and how the goals and policies are related. The discussion portions of the Plan do not establish or modify policies, but they are intended to help explain or interpret policies. Appendices to the Plan contain certain maps, inventories, and other information required by the GMA, and, in some cases, provide further data and discussion or analysis. The appendices are not to be read as establishing or modifying policies or requirements unless specified for such purposes in the Plan policies. For example, descriptions of current programs in an appendix do not require that the same program be continued, and detailed estimates of how the City may expect to achieve certain goals do not establish additional goals or requirements.