

Neighborhood Planning

Introduction

Neighborhood planning is a way to make the Comprehensive Plan relevant at a local level and to reflect the history, character, and vision of the local community. The purpose of these plans is to provide more neighborhood-specific guidance than the citywide policies do for areas where growth and change are occurring or desired. In some cases, neighborhood plans address topics not covered elsewhere in the Plan, while in other cases they give local examples for how a citywide policy would be best implemented in that neighborhood.

Seattle has a long history of planning for its neighborhoods. After the original adoption of this Comprehensive Plan in 1994, the City offered funds to neighborhoods that either contained an urban center or urban village or were identified as economically distressed so that they could prepare plans. Thirty-seven neighborhoods took advantage of that offer, and those neighborhoods all produced plans between 1995 and 2000. Those efforts replaced plans prepared in the 1970s and 1980s and form the basis for most of the plans contained in this element of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council adopted goals and policies resulting from those efforts into the Comprehensive Plan. Nearly half of these plans have been – or are being – updated since their initial adoption. The plans in this element are the most recent versions of the adopted neighborhood plans.

The process for preparing neighborhood plans has varied over time and according to the particular neighborhood's circumstances and concerns. The plans that were prepared in the late 1990s were led by neighborhood groups, with logistical support from City staff and technical support from consultants the neighborhoods hired with funds provided by the City. Results from those planning efforts produced the goals and policies for each neighborhood, which are included in this element of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as lists of actions and programs for each neighborhood. The goals and policies in this element constitute the adopted neighborhood plans. For many of the neighborhood plans, the vision, goals and policies remain relevant, and updates to them have brought more focus to detailed planning and implementation. As City departments develop functional plans or carry out programs in neighborhoods, they can draw some guidance from the neighborhood plans.

In recent years, updates to some of the plans have involved City staff and neighborhoods in reconsidering the original vision of the neighborhood plan, identifying specific actions to implement those visions or preparing urban design frameworks that describe a possible future physical layout for the neighborhood. These processes engage broad cross-sections of a neighborhood's residents and businesses and include focused attention from relevant City departments and other public agencies. One of Seattle's great assets is the richness of its community -- renters and property owners, foreign born and native born, youth and seniors, communities of color and mainstream communities. The City's neighborhood planning process embraces this richness. Through both the planning process and the

implementation of the plans, the City fosters meaningful engagement with the diverse communities, and collaborative efforts among residents, City, partner agencies and private interests help achieve the shared vision.

Future planning in neighborhoods could use a variety of appropriate tools to refine the current visions and to identify the necessary steps to get there. The key will continue to be collaborative efforts between the neighborhoods and City staff. It will be important for each of those plans to clearly assign roles for the implementation steps and to identify desired outcomes, so that it will be easy to monitor the success of the plans. Many neighborhood plans contain policies that seem redundant with policies in other elements of this Plan. Future planning processes in neighborhoods should consider ways to limit such redundancy in order to provide more focus on the unique circumstances and aims for the individual neighborhoods.

GOAL

- NPG1 Help fulfill this Plan's values, vision, and goals by maintaining plans for neighborhoods where the City wants or expects growth to occur and by including growth strategies in those plans that are appropriate to each neighborhood.

POLICIES

- NP1.1 Prioritize neighborhood planning in areas expecting or experiencing significant change, primarily urban centers and urban villages, especially those that have not equitably benefitted from the city's growth.
- NP1.2 Engage a wide range of people from the neighborhood in each neighborhood planning process, including homeowners, renters, business owners, and employees, with special emphasis on groups who have historically been under-represented.
- NP1.3 Develop neighborhood plans to be consistent with this Plan's vision and allow neighborhood plans to focus on issues that are unique to their areas.
- NP1.4 Consider neighborhood plan recommendations when prioritizing City capital investments and service allocations.
- NP1.5 Support neighborhood plan implementation to enhance the quality of these urban environments and to promote continued collaboration between the City and neighborhood groups.