



Mayor Harrell's

# ONE SEATTLE PLAN

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

# GROWTH STRATEGY PROPOSAL

Updated October 2024



Seattle  
Office of Planning &  
Community Development



Photo courtesy of City of Seattle.

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Seattle has been working since 2022 to update our Comprehensive Plan. We are calling the updated plan the One Seattle Plan. The Plan is a roadmap for where and how Seattle will grow and invest in communities over the next 20 years with a goal of becoming a more equitable, livable, sustainable, and resilient city. A major component of the Comprehensive Plan is the growth strategy, which guides the location and types of development that will occur as the city grows.

In March 2024, the City released a draft One Seattle Plan, including a draft growth strategy. Following this release, the City conducted three months of public engagement, including eight open houses, and received more than 6,000 comments. This document summarizes the updated growth strategy informed by this engagement. The Mayor's Recommended One Seattle Plan will be transmitted to the City Council in December 2024. The City Council will then review the plan and consider changes before adopting a final plan in mid-2025.

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) has also released an initial proposal for implementing the updated growth strategy through changes to zoning and development standards. More information on this proposal is available at [Zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com](https://www.zoning.oneseattleplan.com). We are now seeking feedback on the draft approach to implementation until December 20, 2024. The City will also be studying additional rezones within existing Regional and Urban Centers as a separate phase of work starting in late 2025.

## A VISION OF HOUSING ABUNDANCE

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

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

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

**Limit** the ongoing displacement of existing residents.

**Help us** address our homelessness crisis.

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

**Create** more inclusive neighborhoods and allow people to stay in their communities as their needs change.

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

## SEATTLE'S CURRENT GROWTH STRATEGY

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

The Urban Village Strategy has been effective in concentrating growth. Over the last 10 years, more than 80 percent of new homes were built in Urban Centers or Villages, and half of all housing was built in the Downtown, South Lake Union, and First Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Centers. This approach has guided residential, office, and retail development into a small number of compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods linked by transit.

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

## KEY GOALS FOR THE NEW GROWTH STRATEGY INCLUDE:

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

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

**Allowing more affordable** rental and ownership housing types in neighborhoods throughout Seattle

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

**Reducing residential displacement** and supporting existing residents, particularly low-income households, who are struggling to stay in their neighborhood as they grow

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

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

## WHAT WE HEARD

In March through May 2024, the City conducted public engagement to get feedback on the Draft Plan including the draft growth strategy. Below is a summary of the key themes we heard relating to the growth strategy:

**Most comments suggested that the growth strategy should support even more opportunities for housing throughout Seattle.** These comments included general requests to plan for more new housing and specific requests for more centers, larger centers, and higher height and floor area allowances, among other suggestions.

**Numerous comments said we should allow more people to live near high-quality transit, especially light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT).** These comments especially focused on the importance of providing capacity in existing growth centers where most of our light rail stations are located.

**There were numerous requests to add more Neighborhood Centers.** Specific comments favored locations in areas near transit, parks, major institutions, and in neighborhoods considered to be in need of more housing and affordability.

**We also heard a wide range of comments** about the benefits and burdens of new development, the investments the City should make as we grow, and changes to zoning and development standards the City should consider. These comments will be summarized in more detail when we release a full One Seattle Plan Engagement Summary later this year.





Photo courtesy of OPCD

## HOW WE UPDATED THE PROPOSAL

Based on the feedback received, we propose the following changes to the Draft Growth Strategy released in March 2024.

### 1. Added five new Neighborhood Centers at the following locations:

North Magnolia	4th Ave W & W Emerson St
High Point	35th Ave SW and SW Morgan St
South Beacon Hill	Beacon Ave S & S Columbia Way
Upper Fremont	Fremont Ave N & N 43rd St
Hillman City	Rainier Ave S & S Orcas St

### 2. Expanded boundaries of the First Hill/Capitol Hill Regional Center and 23rd & Union-Jackson Urban Center to include the undesignated area between them, roughly 21st Ave to 14th Ave and E Alder St to Pine St. We also divided the 23rd & Union-Jackson Urban Center, which is large, in two, creating the Central District and Judkins Park Urban Centers.

### 3. Redesignated South Park as a Neighborhood Center and reduced its size to be consistent with the intended scale and definition of that place type. The Neighborhood Center designation better matches the vision for more limited future growth expressed by community in past engagement and recognizes the constraints imposed by adjacent industrial uses, limited transit availability, flooding, and sea level rise.



## PROPOSED NEW GROWTH STRATEGY

The revised growth strategy continues to identify six “place types” that describe the roles that different areas of Seattle should play and the type of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings that are appropriate in each. The location of these place types is shown on the growth strategy map.

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

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

**Designate Ballard as a Regional Center** to reflect its recent growth, existing zoning, and transit investments

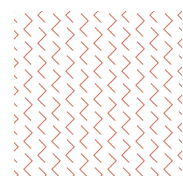
**Expand the geographic area of Regional and Urban Centers** that are very small or will have new light rail stations

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

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

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

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



*The following pages depict the location of updated place types and describe the role that each place type would play.*

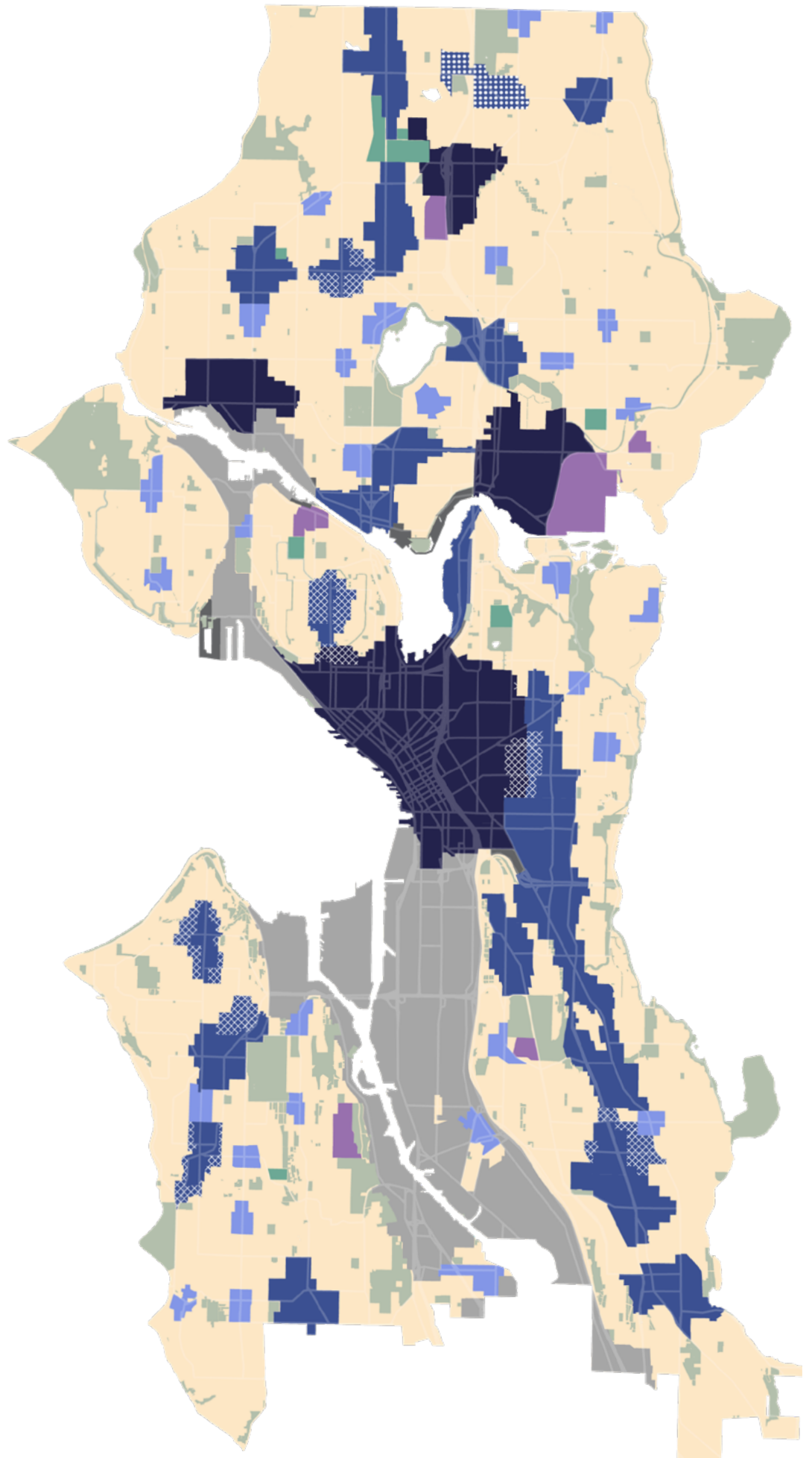
# FUTURE LAND USE MAP

## PLACE TYPES

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

## OTHER AREAS

- Industrial outside Manufacturing & Industrial Centers
- Major Institutions
- Parks and open space
- Cemetery



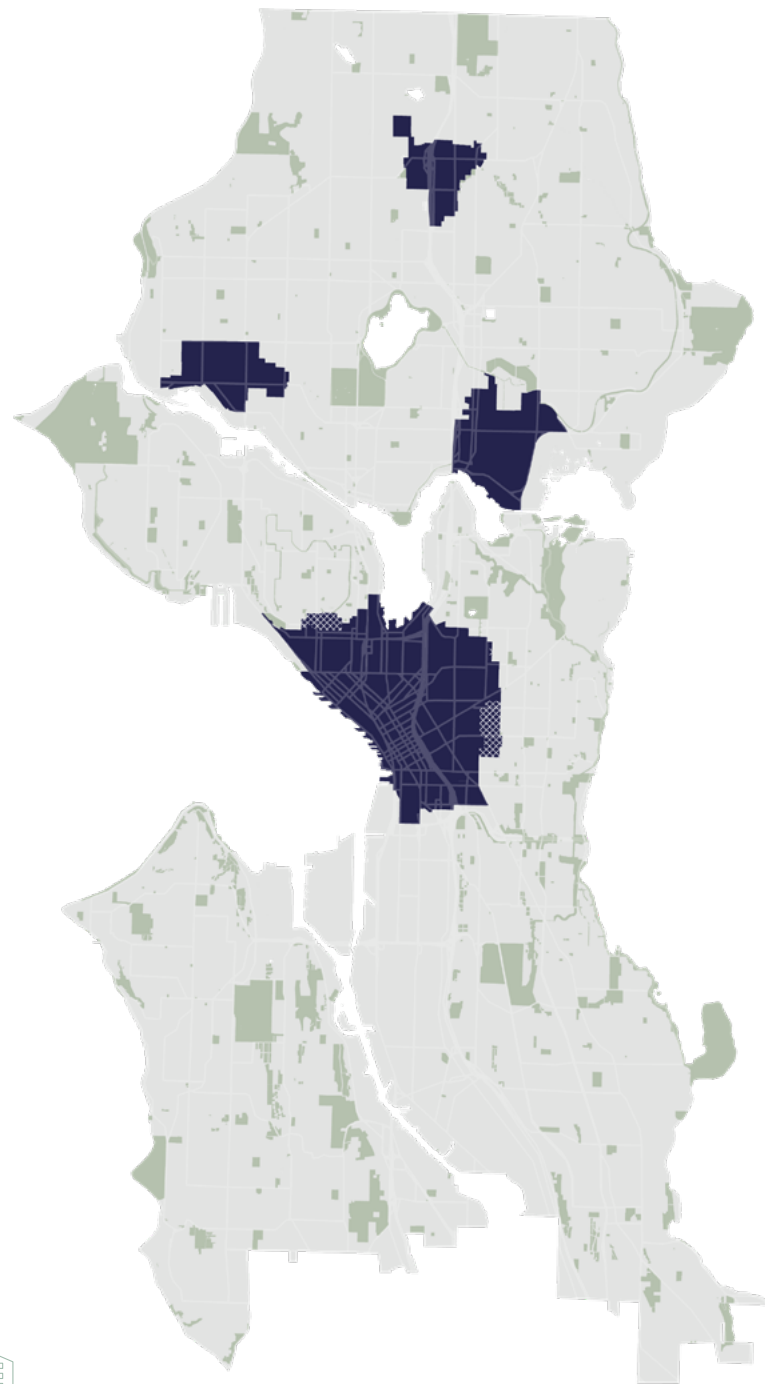
## REGIONAL CENTER

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

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

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

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





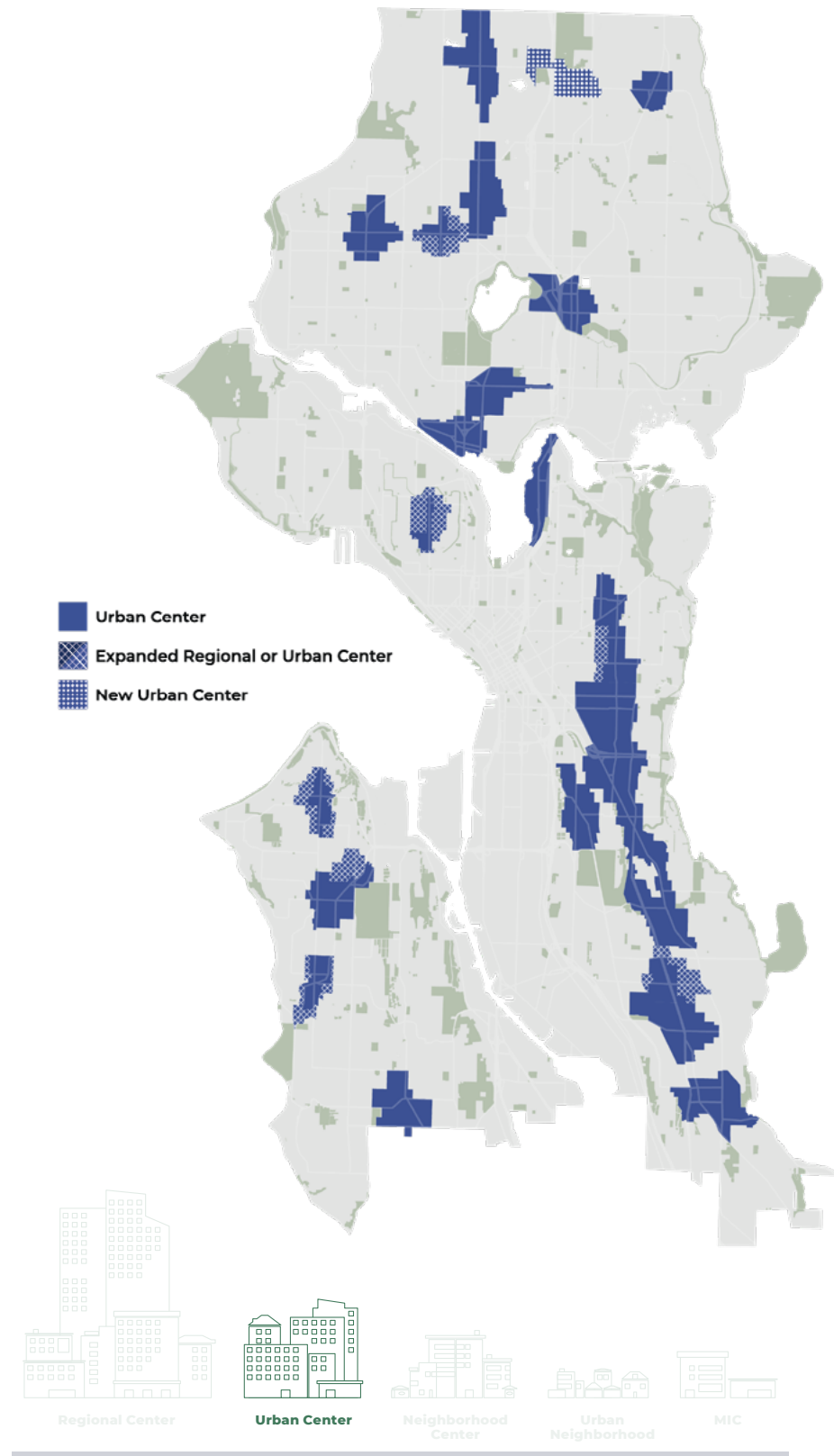
## URBAN CENTER

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

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

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

The updated growth strategy would add a new Urban Center around the future NE 130th Street Link Light Rail Station and expand the geographic area of four Urban Centers that are too small to meet criteria in the CPPs (Greenwood–Phinney Ridge, Queen Anne, Admiral, and Morgan Junction) and two Urban Centers that will have new light rail stations (West Seattle Junction at Avalon Way and Othello at Graham Street). The 23rd & Union–Jackson Urban Center would



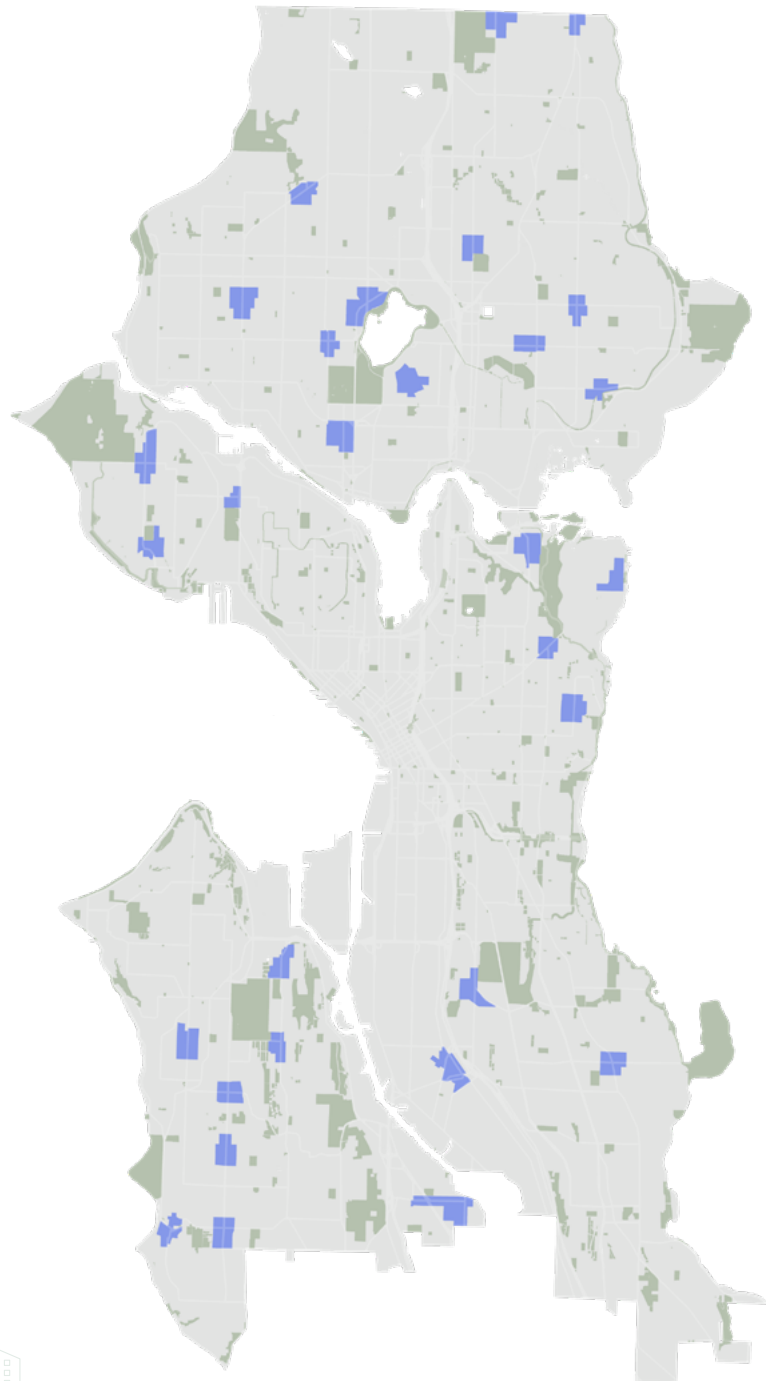
be expanded to the west and be divided in two, creating the Central District and Judkins Park Urban Centers.

Urban Centers generally are delineated to include areas within a 10-minute walk (half-mile) of a current or future light rail station or an 8-minute walk (2,000 feet) of the central intersection if no light rail exists.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Neighborhood Centers are places with a diversity of housing options clustered around a locally focused commercial core and/or access to frequent transit. Neighborhood Centers represent in many cases the core of a neighborhood providing shops, services, grocery stores, restaurants, and other businesses that residents need to access on a regular basis. Allowing more housing can increase opportunities to live in complete, connected neighborhoods and help people reduce their reliance on cars. It can also strengthen local businesses districts and expand the range of shops and services in these areas by increasing the number of people living nearby, generally within a 4 minute walk of the core of each center. Neighborhood Centers are a new place type. The map shows locations for 30 proposed Neighborhood Centers.

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



Regional Center



Urban Center



Neighborhood Center



Urban Neighborhood



MIC





## URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

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

Urban Neighborhood is a new place type and combines the neighborhood residential, multi-family, and commercial areas outside centers and villages shown in *Seattle 2035*. These place types are being combined as they created overly prescriptive boundaries about where different uses should be allowed.

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

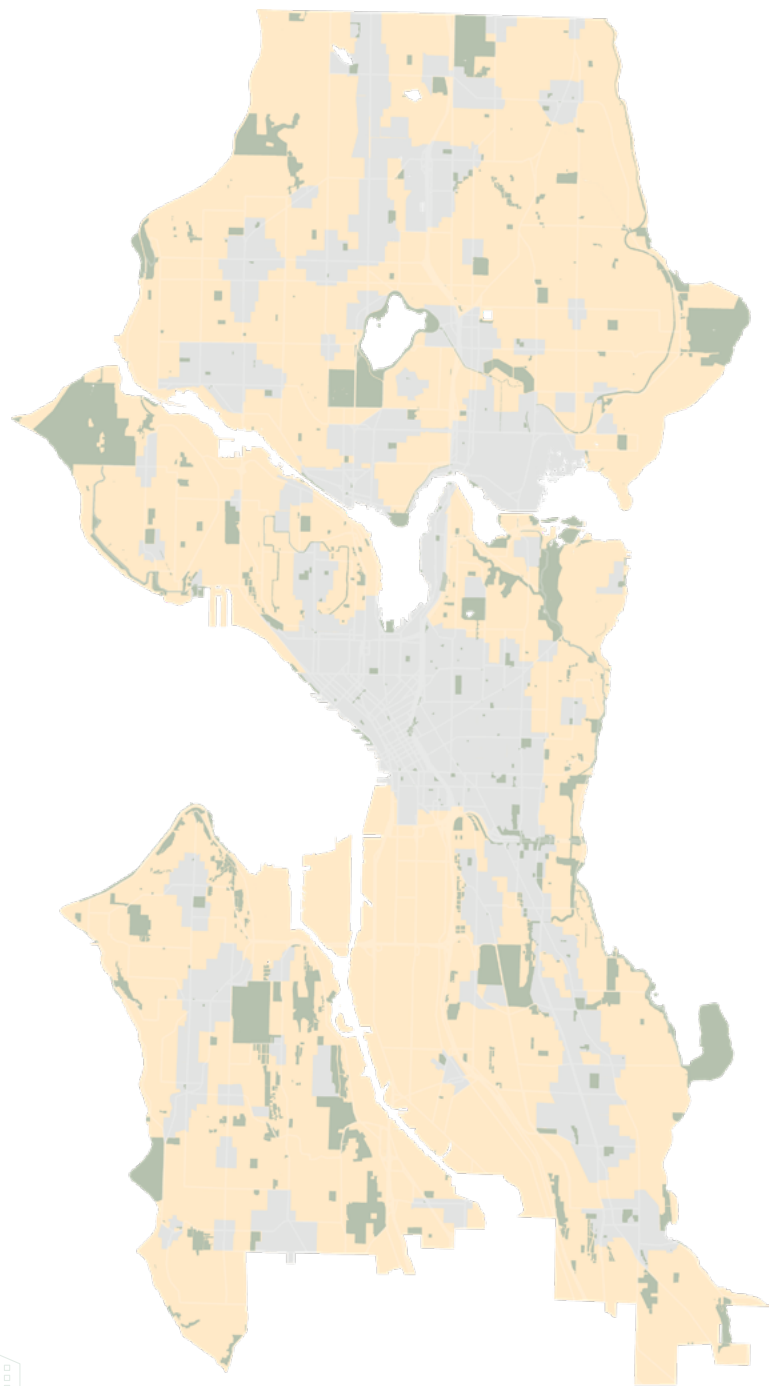


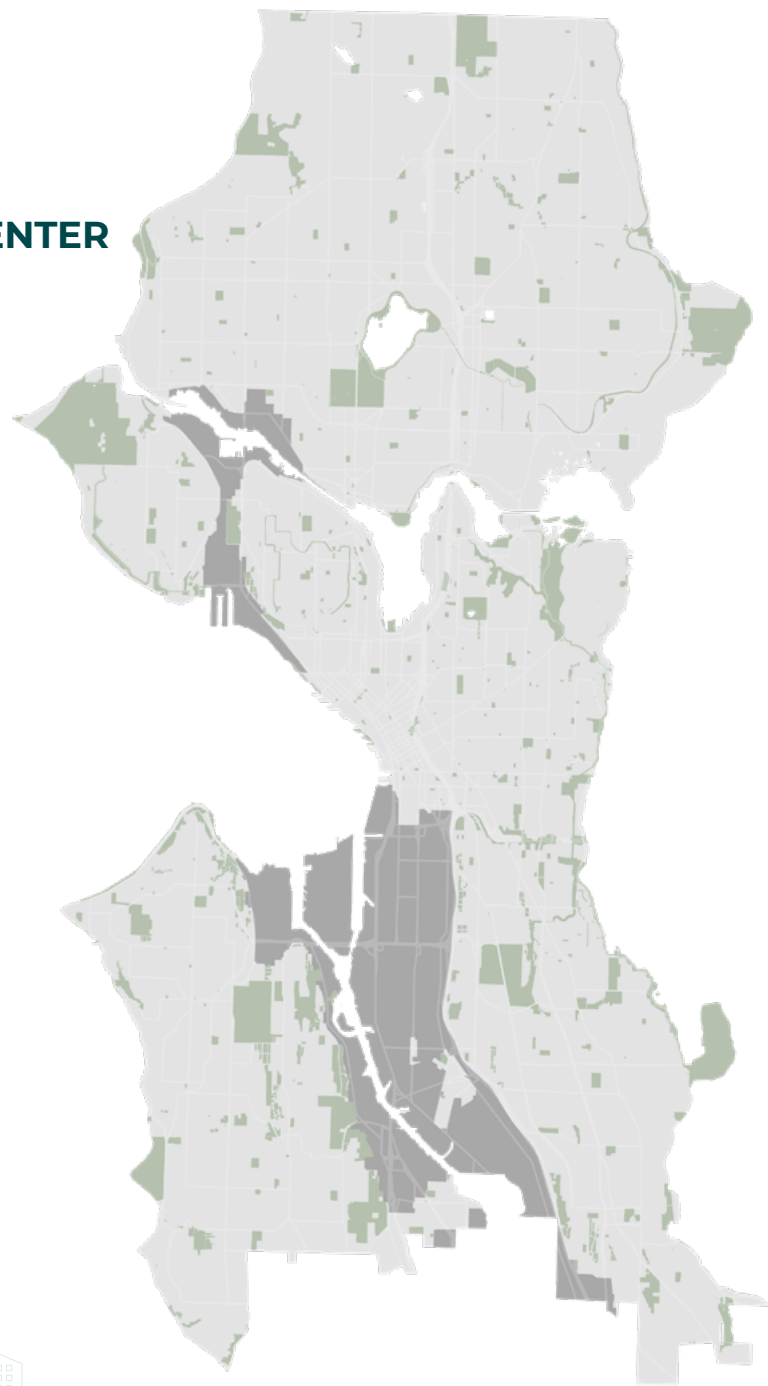
Photo: Hybrid Architecture

## MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRIAL CENTER

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

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

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



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



Jefferson Park, Beacon Hill Seattle, 2024. Photo courtesy of OPCD.

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

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

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

## **MAJOR INSTITUTION**

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

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

# IMPLEMENTING THE GROWTH STRATEGY THROUGH ZONING CHANGES

Zoning laws determine how property can be used in specific areas of Seattle. Every property in Seattle has a zoning designation, which comes with a set of development standards regulating the use, size, and design of buildings.

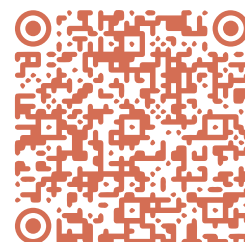
We are proposing to implement the growth strategy in the One Seattle Plan by updating zoning laws to support our vision for the future. The Mayor will release legislation for these changes in several phases for City Council consideration.

**Phase 1** will include an update of Neighborhood Zoning and changes necessary to comply with 2025 Washington state deadlines. Legislation to implement these changes will be transmitted to Council in March 2025.

**Phase 2** will include zoning changes in newly designated centers in expansions of existing centers and along frequent transit arterials in Urban Neighborhood areas.

Draft maps showing center boundaries and new zoning designations is available at [Zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com](https://Zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com). Final legislation will be sent to Council in mid-2025. Legislation to implement these changes will be transmitted to Council in May 2025.

**Phase 3** will analyze potential zoning changes to allow more housing in existing Regional and Urban Centers. The City will begin the process of scoping environmental analysis in late 2025.



For more information about the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Zoning Update, visit [Zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com](https://Zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com)



# NEXT STEPS

## Phase 1 Legislation

Neighborhood Residential (NR)  
update to implement HB 1110  
requirements

2024

Draft NR Proposal Released Mar '24

Updated NR Proposal Released Oct '24

Final Environmental Impact  
Statement Released Dec '24

Phase 1 Legislation sent to City Council Mar '25

Council Adopts Phase 1 Legislation Jun '25

Contract with Consultants Jul '25

Begin to Scope Supplemental  
Environmental Impact  
Statement (SEIS) Oct '25

## Phase 3

Rezoning in existing  
Regional & Urban Centers

## Phase 2 Legislation

Rezones for new Neighborhood  
Centers, new and expanded Regional  
and Urban Centers along frequent  
transit routes

Oct '24 Draft Rezone Proposal Released

May '25 Phase 2 Legislation sent to City Council

Sep '25 City Council Adopts Phase 2 Legislation

2025

2026

2027