

City of Seattle

Growth and Livability Report



October 2017



Seattle
Office of Planning &
Community Development

Contents



Letter from the Director 3

A Growing City 4

Focus Areas



Making a More Affordable City 6



Moving People & Goods 8



Providing Parks & Green Space 10



Enhancing Utility Services 12



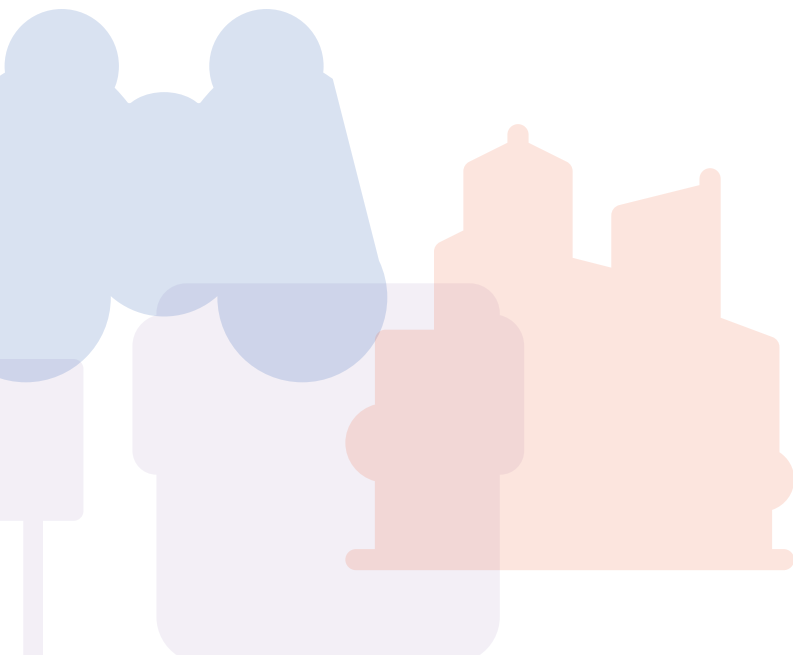
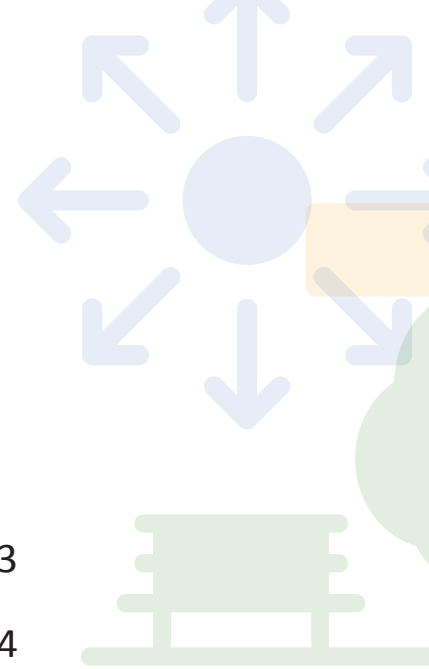
Supporting Our Youth 14



Ensuring Opportunity 16



Shaping Design 18



Dear Neighbors,



Seattle is again the fastest growing city in the country. Our beautiful natural environment, diverse communities, and strong job market all serve to attract people to this region. As our population grows, we must grow our supply of housing and infrastructure and invest in amenities that help maintain and enhance the quality of life Seattleites are accustomed to. If we fail to create enough housing for those who live, work, and aspire to share in our communities, and if we fail to put livability at the center of our growth strategy and investments, the benefits of our strong economy and high quality of life will be denied to many.

While there are many benefits to living in a growing city, including more job opportunities, lively streetscapes, a greater diversity of businesses, and more vibrant public life, there are also challenges. In Seattle, our challenges include increasing competition for housing, risk of displacement of current residents, more traffic, and more demand for public infrastructure. As we address these challenges, we are committed to continually investing in livability to make sure that growth brings benefits to everyone.

Voter-approved levies are making big investments in parks, affordable housing, schools, and transportation. Development is contributing more to public infrastructure and affordable housing. Demand for transit is bringing new bus and light rail service. We are working to ensure that each of these investments contributes to a more equitable and livable city.

This document represents a snapshot of the planning, policies, and investments that are currently underway across many departments to support a high quality of life for everyone who calls Seattle home. This approach is the result of significant planning and many public conversations. As Seattle grows and changes, we will continue to plan and invest to support a high quality of life in our city.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Assefa', written over a light blue background that resembles a pen nib.

Samuel Assefa
Director

Office of Planning and Community Development

A Growing City

Between 2015 and 2035, Seattle is expected to add 120,000 people and 115,000 jobs. Between 2015 and 2016, we added about 57 people per day - our fastest growth since the Gold Rush.



Growth brings opportunities and challenges for our city that will significantly impact how we will live, work, play, and get around for decades to come. For example, our strong economy is providing new job opportunities, but is also increasing competition for housing and making it harder for many to afford their rent. As our city changes, we must also ensure that the benefits and burdens of these changes are shared equitably.

One reason many people are choosing to move to Seattle is because, for many, it is a great place to live. This “livability” comes not from any one thing, but rather from access to the many elements that lead to a high quality of life - good jobs, housing, essential services, parks, natural areas, stores, and vibrant public spaces. Many people have expressed uncertainty about how we can continue to maintain what they feel is essential to their quality of life if the physical environment is changing quickly to accommodate more people.

This document summarizes how planning, investments, policies, and programs are working together to improve access to these elements of livability. By proactively planning and investing in our communities, we are working to build on opportunities and address our challenges head-on in order to achieve an ever-higher quality of life as we grow and ensure these improvements benefit more people.

This document focuses on seven key topics that are particularly affected by a growing population and are frequently raised in public discussions:

- Housing & Homelessness
- Transportation
- Parks and Green Space
- Utilities
- Children and Families
- Access to Opportunity
- Urban Design

While these issues are front and center in our conversations today, there are many other ways in which we continue to work hard delivering essential services. Although not discussed here, these areas of service keep Seattle a high-functioning place in ways both visible and unseen. This includes our work [improving public safety](#), [providing fire safety](#), [supporting arts and culture](#), [expanding library services](#), and providing [human services](#).

Our Approach to Planning

The [Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan](#) sets an overall vision for improving our quality of life as we grow by:

- Focusing growth in areas with more access to transit and community assets
- Investing in new infrastructure and amenities to support livability
- Supporting good design to integrate new development in existing neighborhoods
- Ensuring our decisions advance racial and social equity



Construction cranes in Seattle's Stadium District

Seattle's Urban Village Strategy

The foundation of our Comprehensive Plan is the urban village strategy. This strategy guides most future job and housing growth to the areas best able to welcome it due to existing transportation assets, local retail, parks, schools, and other amenities and services. By encouraging both business and housing growth in these areas, we make it possible for more people to live near job opportunities and near services that can meet their everyday needs. At the same time, the urban village strategy focuses new investments in these areas to improve livability in these communities.

We also do local planning in neighborhoods across the city to identify local priorities and understand how a broad vision can be refined in specific areas. Over the next five years, we will conduct community planning efforts in select neighborhoods experiencing high levels of change due to growth, major transit investments, and/or displacement.

The vision outlined in Seattle 2035 and community planning efforts is implemented through coordinated work across many departments and agencies. This document describes how we do a lot of this work and shows how, together, these efforts advance quality of life for all Seattleites.

Neighborhood Snapshots

To illustrate how the citywide approach outlined in this document is implemented at a neighborhood level, we have produced neighborhood snapshots for seven areas across Seattle where we are currently working or planning to work with communities to address local issues. These snapshots illustrate how local investments are enhancing livability in those places.

Click on the neighborhoods below to see snapshots

[Crown Hill](#)

[Judkins Park](#)

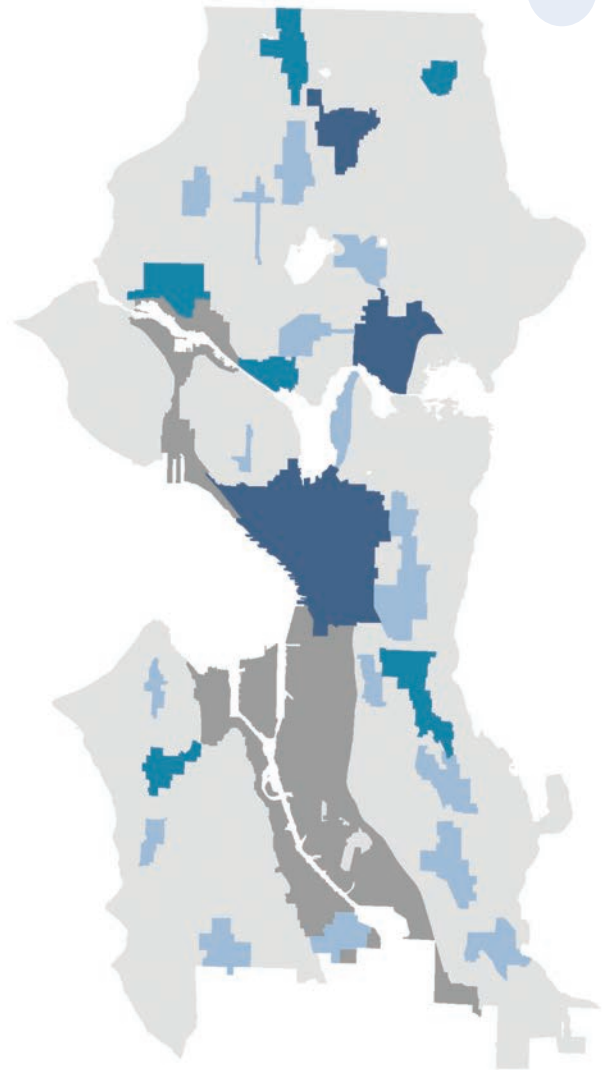
[Northgate](#)

[Rainier Beach](#)

[Roosevelt](#)

[Uptown](#)

[West Seattle Junction](#)



Urban Centers

These are Seattle's densest neighborhoods. They act as both regional centers and local neighborhoods that offer a diverse mix of uses, housing, and employment opportunities.

Hub Urban Villages

These areas offer a balance of housing and employment but are generally less dense than urban centers. Hub Urban Villages provide a mix of goods, services, and employment for their residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

Residential Urban Village

These are areas for residential development, generally at lower densities than urban centers or hub urban villages. While they are also sources of goods and services for residents and surrounding communities, for the most part they do not offer many employment opportunities.

Manufacturing & Industrial Center

MICs are home to the city's thriving industrial businesses. Like urban centers, they are important regional resources for retaining and attracting jobs and for maintaining a diversified economy.

Making a More Affordable City

For many people, livability is primarily a question of whether they can afford to live in the city at all.

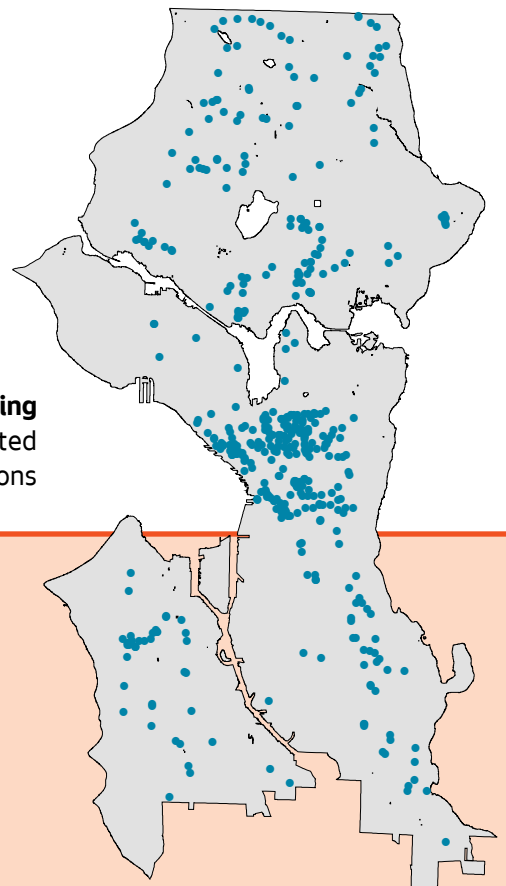
Providing housing options for people of all incomes, especially low-income households, is the foundation to realizing our vision of an equitable city. While many people have always struggled to afford housing, the growing population has increased competition for housing and led to substantial increases in cost. From 2012 to 2017, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Seattle increased 35%. In August 2017, the average cost of a home in Seattle was \$730,000, putting homeownership further out of reach for more people.

Increasing unaffordability has dire implications for many community members and the businesses that employ them. Unaffordability leads to more homelessness; reduces the amount of money households have for food, medical care, school, and other necessities; and pushes some people out of Seattle entirely, further reducing their access to good jobs and established communities. These pressures are particularly difficult for low-income people, people of color, immigrants, and older adults, who are already experiencing a range of socio-economic and environmental pressures.

Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda

To address the housing affordability crisis, we developed the [Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda \(HALA\)](#), a multipronged approach to make Seattle more affordable for people at all income levels. The goal of HALA is to create 30,000 market-rate and 20,000 affordable homes over the next 10 years. By increasing the supply of both market-rate and affordable units, we can slow housing cost increases by reducing competition for limited housing stock and [provide more homes for those who are not served by market-rate housing](#).

Seattle Office of Housing
Rent- and Income-Restricted
Housing Locations



MHA

We are in the process of implementing [Mandatory Housing Affordability \(MHA\)](#) requirements throughout Seattle. Under MHA, commercial and multifamily development are required to contribute to affordable housing by including affordable homes in the building or paying into a fund to support the preservation and creation of affordable housing. Properties subject to MHA requirements would be allowed increases in maximum height or floor area limits. By enacting these two changes together, MHA creates new rent- and income-restricted housing, which remains affordable for 75 years, and increases the supply of new market-rate housing, both of which will help address housing affordability.

MFTE

The [Multifamily Tax Exemption \(MFTE\)](#) program provides a partial property tax exemption on new multifamily buildings in exchange for setting aside 20-25% of the homes as income- and rent-restricted. MFTE is a key tool for creating affordable housing as communities grow.

Since mid-2015, we have been [working to implement a number of these recommendations](#). Key recommendations enacted or underway include:

- Renewing and doubling the City's [Housing Levy](#) in 2016
- Expanding the [Multifamily Tax Exemption \(MFTE\)](#) to all multifamily areas, allowing all unit types to participate, and adding an incentive for family-sized units
- Implementing [Mandatory Housing Affordability \(MHA\)](#) requirements to ensure new development contributes to affordable housing
- Expanding protections that prohibit discrimination against renters based on the [source of their income](#)
- Streamlining City permit processes

The implementation of HALA recommendations is also closely coordinated with other City efforts to support livability. Through extensive public engagement on HALA recommendations, we have gathered a wealth of public feedback to inform other work.

HALA supports our urban village strategy by focusing growth where we have the best available infrastructure to support it. Zoning changes proposed to implement the [Mandatory Housing Affordability \(MHA\)](#) requirement encourage more housing near transit, parks, and businesses, so more people can access jobs and outdoor space without needing a car. These changes also allow more housing types, such as cottages, row houses, and small apartment buildings, and provide incentives for family-friendly housing. These policies also support our climate protection goals by encouraging greater use of transit, walking, and biking.

By supporting housing affordability and creating more housing options, we can improve quality of life for everyone,

but also make sure that low-income families can remain here and enjoy the all benefits of our high quality of life.

Homelessness

Nearly 4,000 people are living unsheltered in Seattle, with another 4,665 sheltered but without access to safe, stable housing. Though the causes of homelessness are varied and complex, a tightening housing market works to exacerbate the problem. Many initiatives and new resources have been implemented in the last three years, led by [Pathways Home](#), the plan to create a more integrated homelessness services system based on individualized services and measurable goals. We're permitting encampments on public land, re-bidding homeless services contracts to ensure the best possible performance by City partners, and expanding funding to pay for housing and case management services.

Everyone deserves a safe, stable place to live. As we work to address this problem, we know that more needs to be done to end homelessness in Seattle.

Affordable Utilities

Seattle is committed to providing transparent and affordable utility services for all of our customers. Utility bills can make up a significant portion of a residents budget, particularly for low-income residents. In recognition, SPU & SCL provide the [Utility Discount Program \(UDP\)](#). Households are seeing their City Light and Seattle Public Utilities bills cut in half through a new auto-enrollment program that ensures individuals and families living in affordable housing have immediate access to steep discounts in their utility costs. Because of this innovative partnership, the UDP now serves more than 33,000 households, surpassing our goal to enroll 28,000 households before the end of 2018.



108 Affordable apartment homes at Mercy Othello Plaza

Housing Levy

Since 1981, Seattle voters have approved one bond and five consecutive levies to create affordable housing. Support from the [Seattle Housing Levy](#) and other local funding sources has helped:

- create more than 13,000 affordable apartments for seniors, people with disabilities, low- and moderate-wage workers, and formerly homeless individuals and families,
- provide homeownership assistance to more than 900 first-time low-income home buyers, and
- provide emergency rental assistance to more than 6,500 households.

Moving People & Goods

As more people look for ways to get in and around Seattle, we'll need to maintain and enhance our transportation system so people and goods can continue to move safely, efficiently, sustainably, and affordably.



We're working closely with our partners, King County Metro and Sound Transit, to execute a comprehensive strategy that improves our transportation system as we grow. In 2015, the City of Seattle laid out [Move Seattle](#), a 10-year vision that integrated long-range plans for transit, people walking and biking, and freight. The Plan was developed in coordination with [Metro Connects](#), a 25-year vision for improving our regional bus transit system that was adopted in 2015, as well as the [Sound Transit 3](#) plan for a regional light rail system.

Safety

The backbone of any transportation network is making sure people can get around safely, whether they're walking, biking, driving, or taking transit. In 2015, we released [Vision Zero](#), a data-driven plan to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030. Seattle is one of the safest cities in the world, but there is always more that can be done. Through smarter street designs and targeted education and enforcement, we'll become even safer.

Infrastructure Investments

Voters have affirmed our shared transportation vision by passing major ballot initiatives. In 2015, Seattle voters approved the 9-year [Transportation Levy to Move Seattle](#), which will:

- Create seven new RapidRide bus corridors
- Improve connections to three light rail stations
- Invest in Safe Routes to School for every single Seattle Public School
- Build 150 new blocks of sidewalks and 50 miles of protected bike lanes across Seattle
- Repave 180 miles of our busiest streets
- Implement freight and delivery improvements

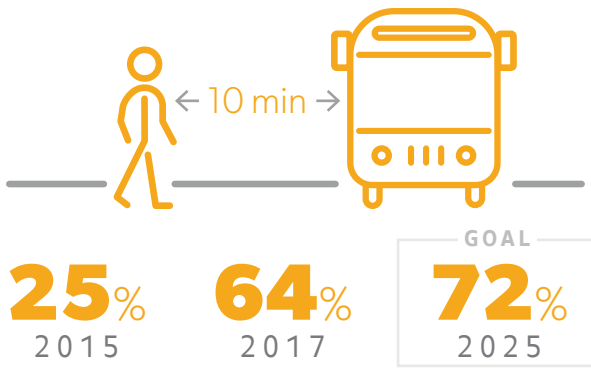
In 2016, regional voters approved the Sound Transit 3 ballot initiative to expand light rail. This proposal will complete a 116-mile regional system (five times larger than it is today) and will provide new stops in underserved communities at Graham Street and NE 130th Street, and new service to Ballard and West Seattle.

Climate Change

Transportation accounts for over two-thirds of Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions and a significant amount of air pollution. To protect our climate and air quality, we must make transit, bicycling, and walking the easiest ways for residents to meet their daily needs; allow more people to live in areas with access to transit, amenities, and local services; and electrify our cars, buses, and trucks. Our investments are already bearing results. From 2010 to 2016, while our population grew, the percentage of people driving alone to downtown Seattle decreased from 35% to 30% and the percentage using transit grew from 42% to 47%. By continuing to invest in these solutions and focusing growth where daily trips can be made without a car, we can ensure Seattle continues to lead on addressing climate change.



RapidRide C Line picks up riders in West Seattle



Percent of Seattleites that live within a 10-minute walk of high-frequency transit

Transit

In 2014, Seattle voters approved the [Seattle Transportation Benefit District](#), which generates \$45 million annually to improve transit service availability and access for six years. We’re already seeing big gains – by the end of 2017, 64% of households will be within a 10-minute walk of transit that arrives every 10 minutes or less (up from 25% in 2015).

King County Metro estimates that increased ridership and revenue will also allow bus service to grow by 70% from existing levels by 2040. This increase in service will not only mean more buses on existing routes, but will also mean new service to areas that currently have limited access. We’re also improving transit rider experience by investing in bus shelters, seating, lighting, and real-time information signs. These changes will make it easier for everyone to get around, but will especially benefit low-income people who rely on transit.

We are also working to ensure shared mobility strategies improve our system through the [New Mobility Playbook](#).

Biking, Walking, and Freight

The [Seattle Bicycle Master Plan \(BMP\)](#) aspires to encourage and accommodate more people to ride a bicycle. To achieve its vision, the BMP calls for a connected network that includes approximately 100 miles of protected bicycle lanes and nearly 250 miles of neighborhood greenways by 2035.

The City also continues to invest in new sidewalks and recently updated the [Pedestrian Master Plan](#) to work toward an integrated sidewalk system with strong connections to transit and schools. Existing standards for new buildings ensure that new development will help bring new sidewalks to many areas. Where this development leaves gaps in the existing system, the [Sidewalk Development Program](#) will help complete it. It will take time to complete needed sidewalk networks, and we are working hard to prioritize areas that are underserved.

Through the [Freight Master Plan](#) and work with the [Urban Freight Lab](#), we are working to improve the movement of goods, improve delivery rates, and reduce truck idle times.



Transportation Equity

The [Transportation Equity Program](#) was established to expand transportation options for more people and mitigate racial disparities and the effects of displacement. Through this program, we have further enhanced access to Metro’s [ORCA LIFT](#) reduced fare program for Seattle residents, an income-qualified program that allows riders to save up to 50 percent or more on transit. Additionally, we have expanded transit access for income-eligible or low-income high school students through the Youth Orca Program. Broader Transportation Equity Program goals and strategies will be defined and developed through a community engagement process that will include community members and other stakeholders, as well as other city departments, in 2018.

Parking

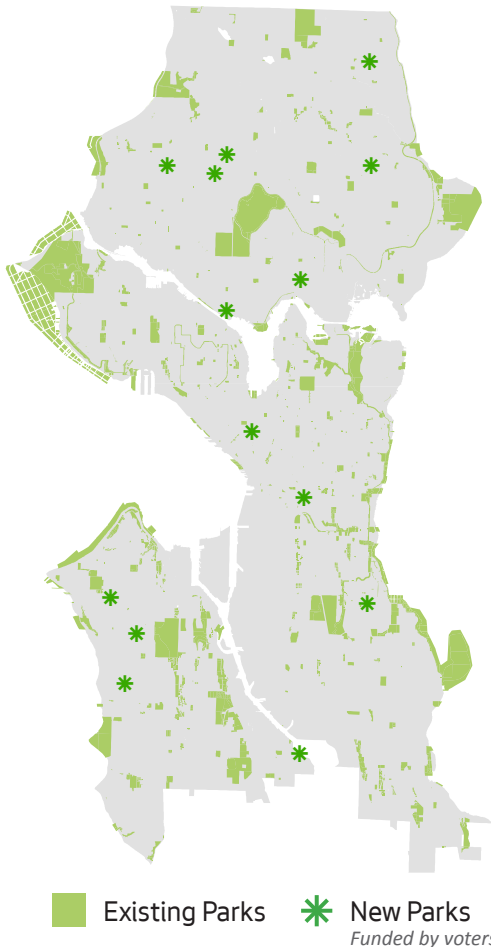
Planned transit improvements will provide more options for people to get around without driving. Despite these improvements, growth will result in more competition for existing parking spaces on our streets. We have [many programs](#) to improve management of existing spaces and maintain a level of access for local community members. In residential neighborhoods, the [Restricted Parking Zone \(RPZ\) Program](#) helps neighborhoods by implementing time limits for on-street parking, while exempting those who live in the area from meeting these requirements. In neighborhood commercial areas, [SDOT’s Performance-Based Parking Pricing](#) proactively manages parking rates so parking is well-used, but a visitor could reliably find a spot near their destination, with less time spent circling and stuck in traffic.

Providing Parks & Green Space

As Seattle grows, our parks and green space will become more important as they help support physical, mental, and environmental health in an increasingly dense city.

Seattle is a city that loves its parks - from Carkeek to Seward, Discovery to Lincoln, and the 483 other parks within our borders - and residents expect a high level of access to the outdoors. This is key to quality of life in the Pacific Northwest. We are committed to developing our park and green space system to address existing gaps and respond to growing demand. The [2017 Parks and Open Space Plan](#) establishes goals and investment priorities for traditional parks like neighborhood parks, regional parks, natural areas, community centers, and playfields. We are also developing Outside Citywide, an open space plan that identifies ways to improve our overall public space system including parks as well as trails, creek systems, greenways, green streets, schoolyards, community gardens, and green infrastructure.

Seattle Park Lands



Creating New Parks

The recently formed [Seattle Park District](#) is providing funds to acquire new park land and meet the maintenance demands of existing parks and recreation facilities. We are currently developing 14 new parks on previously acquired property and continue to fund new acquisition. The [2017 Parks and Open Space Plan](#) calls for focusing investment in two areas:

1. areas that are expected to grow, and
2. those with low-income populations, which typically have less access to private open space

Based on these criteria and extensive mapping, the plan identifies 16 urban villages that are considered underserved and will be priority areas for acquiring new park land.

We are also investing in existing parks to make them more inviting and active. Through a public-private partnership with the Downtown Seattle Association, we've activated Westlake Park and Occidental Square. We now see a greater diversity of people enjoying these parks.

Continuing to invest in our parks and recreation system helps meet the demands of new households and existing residents. It will take some time to implement these plans, but with new funding we will continue to improve the quality of existing parks and increase the number of people living within a 10-minute walk of a park.



95%

of Seattleites live within a
10-minute walk of a park



Meridian Playground in Wallingford

Protecting and Growing Our Urban Forest

The [Urban Forest Stewardship Plan](#) establishes Seattle’s goals for supporting and growing our urban forest. The [2016 canopy cover study](#) found that 28% of Seattle is covered with trees, below our 2037 goal of 30%. To help reach our goal, we have updated street tree regulations, increased planting and maintenance of public trees, and started [Trees for Neighborhoods](#), which provides free trees to communities. These efforts seek to increase canopy overall but also add trees where canopy is low or where trees are needed to address air quality. Another notable effort to improve the health and long-term viability of the urban forest is the [Green Seattle Partnership](#), a unique public-private venture to restore our forested parklands. The Partnership leverages public resources, private funding, and volunteer work to remove invasive species and restore native plants with a goal of restoring 2,500 acres of urban forest by 2025.

Improving Seattle’s urban forest requires commitment and action by both city government and the community. We have a number of policies in place to protect and expand trees on private property through a [Tree Protection Ordinance](#), stormwater regulations, [Seattle Green Factor](#), and specific tree protections for [Environmentally Critical Areas](#) such as creeks, shoreline, and steep slopes. We are currently in the process of evaluating these regulations to ensure we can meet our urban forestry goals as we grow.

Creating More Green Space

Parks will get us a long way toward our goal of greening Seattle, but as a growing population we’ll need to think of new ways to add green spaces. We are investing in new and innovative programs to provide additional green space as we grow:

- The [Green Streets program](#) designates streets that can prioritize pedestrian circulation and open space through improvements such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, and street furniture.
- [Festival streets](#) are designed so they can be easily opened for public events like festivals or farmer’s markets. Residents can also turn neighborhood streets into [play streets](#), opening them up for community activities like picnics and hula hoop contests.
- We are creating new green spaces on top of our water reservoirs as they are being covered.
- Improving [shoreline street ends](#), locations where public streets end at the water, can provide open space and access to our shorelines.
- We are building new trails through existing greenbelts to make them accessible to more people.
- The [Central Waterfront](#) redevelopment will create a new “front porch” for Downtown with substantial and iconic new open space.

Streets as Public Space

Purchasing land for new parks in a built-out city is challenging. However, the public right of way represents 27% of the city and provides an opportunity for creating space for people to stroll, relax, enjoy nature, and interact. We are working to maximize this opportunity through a system of street trees, green streets, greenways, boulevards, and festival streets. In many areas, we are now seeing streets that function as parks, plazas, trails, or play areas.

Bell Street Park in Belltown has been improved to incorporate furniture, trees, and art and make it a center of the local community.



Enhancing Utility Services

Safe, reliable, and affordable utility services are critical to public health and safety, as well as community resilience and environmental sustainability.

As Seattle continues to grow, our utility infrastructure must continue to innovate and develop to keep pace. We are putting in place policies and infrastructure investments to ensure Seattle can manage our current and projected growth, as well as the impacts of predicted weather events associated with climate change. We are approaching this challenge as an opportunity to meet modern demands and standards for sustainability.

Regulating New Development

New requirements for development are significantly more environmentally responsible than those that were applied to most existing buildings. For example, the [Stormwater Code](#) requires new development to manage rainwater onsite to reduce stormwater flows, improve water quality in Seattle’s water bodies, and preserve capacity in our piped infrastructure. New construction is also required to be more energy- and water-efficient than older construction. From 1990 to 2010, more efficient construction combined with retrofits of existing buildings resulted in a decline in total water use in our regional water system of 30% while the population served grew by 15%. Seattle has one of the most progressive energy codes in the country, resulting

in significantly more efficient new buildings. The City also requires developers to upgrade the existing stormwater and electrical systems where necessary for their project. Consequently, new development tends to have minimal impact on infrastructure and, in many cases, can result in improved conditions.

Infrastructure Investments

We are also investing in new infrastructure to improve our systems overall. These investments include [green stormwater infrastructure \(GSI\)](#) and other drainage improvements to prevent sewer overflows, such as the Ship Canal Water Quality Facility. We are also investing in new electrical substations and feeder lines to ensure that the system is adequate to accommodate growth.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Rain rushing off hard surfaces like roads and parking lots can overwhelm our drainage system and cause flooding, back-ups, and combined sewer overflows. The runoff also carries pollution directly into our creeks and lakes, the Duwamish River, and Puget Sound. This kind of water pollution – called “stormwater runoff” – is the leading source of pollution in



Lower Mapes Creek restoration, Seward Park neighborhood



Puget Sound. The City uses a range of best management approaches to prevent stormwater-related pollution including enforcement of environmental laws, control of pollution sources, and capital infrastructure improvements.

Since 2013, the City has had a commitment to rely on green infrastructure approaches wherever feasible when infrastructure upgrades are needed to solve a problem. [Green stormwater infrastructure \(GSI\)](#) best practices like raingardens, trees, green roofs, cisterns, and permeable pavement prevent pollution much like a forest does - by slowing and cleaning the water and either reusing it or allowing it to soak back through the soil. The City is accelerating our investment in GSI, with the goal of managing [700 million gallons](#) of stormwater runoff annually with GSI by the year 2025, about three times the current management capacity. Also, to help solve priority drainage

and water quality issues in our most rapidly densifying areas, Seattle is planning for a GSI investment program tailored specifically to the needs in Urban Villages.

GSI can also improve the physical environment for residents by improving the streetscape with green space while contributing to a sense of place.

Clean Cities Initiative

As we grow, we are committed to making Seattle clean and safe for all our residents. Through the [Clean Cities Initiative](#), we have responded to over 13,500 complaints about illegal dumping and removed nearly 2 million pounds of litter, needles, and illegally dumped materials through existing and pilot programs.

Creeks and Shorelines

The City also manages our creek and shoreline areas to improve water quality and restore wildlife habitat while also providing opportunities for communities to be in closer contact with nature. Seattle Public Utilities is investing in projects to restore streams, ponds, and wetlands in a way that can reduce flooding and prepare for climate change while creating green space for people and wildlife. Investments in [green stormwater infrastructure](#) also contribute to improved water quality and stream health by catching and absorbing stormwater throughout the City. Together, these investments work toward multiple goals by improving water quality, protecting homes from flooding, and providing green space for the public.

Flood Reduction

The City's localized flooding program is working to prevent and alleviate flooding in the City, with a primary focus on the protection of public health, safety, and property. Through this program, the City has identified areas of past flooding and is working to address priority areas through the planning, design, and construction of pipes, ditches, culverts, detention ponds, and natural drainage systems. This program also involves providing drainage improvements where surface water generated from the public right-of-way is contributing to landslides.

Supporting Our Youth

The City of Seattle in partnership with the Seattle Public Schools is working to improve the lives of children from early education to their entry into the workforce so that each child has the opportunity to succeed.

After 50 years of declining attendance, Seattle Public Schools have recently experienced increases in the number of students entering school. By improving opportunity for this growing population, we can help more children find paths to fulfilling careers, enhance quality of life for individuals and Seattle as a whole, and strengthen our economy in the long-run.

Early Learning

Creating a strong foundation for children is critical for ensuring lifelong learning. The City of Seattle has a [network of programs](#) to make sure all children, regardless of their background, have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. We're also supporting the development of new childcare facilities through Child Care Zoning Incentives. This program requires large-scale development in Downtown, South Lake Union, and the University District to contribute to the creation of new childcare facilities by providing them on-site or paying to fund childcare centers elsewhere. Together, these programs expand needed access to support systems for families around Seattle so that children can start school on equal footing regardless of their background.



Seattle recently launched [Fresh Bucks to Go](#) for families enrolled in [Seattle's Preschool](#) programs. The program provides free bags of local fruit and vegetables where parents pick up their children. This program delivers preschool, nutrition, and food security services together while supporting local farmers.

In the Classroom

The City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools are also working together to improve instruction, facilities, and resources for school-age children. In response to recent growth in the number of school-age children in Seattle, and a desire to improve existing facilities, voters approved the [BEX IV levy](#) in 2013. This renewed funding source provides \$695 million to accommodate the growing population of children and replace or modernize district buildings, infrastructure, and technology. Seattle Public Schools is now developing their next capital plan to accommodate future growth. The [Families and Education levy](#) also invests in programs that support underserved children to close opportunity gaps across the district.

Outside the Classroom

Seattle also supports school-age students by providing additional services outside the classroom. A network of teen centers, community learning centers, community centers, and pools provide educational classes, sports leagues, after-school support, [summer learning programs](#), and space for childcare, as well as safe places to just hang out and be kids. We have eliminated drop-in fees, created scholarship funds, and expanded hours in low-income communities to make these programs available to everyone. We're also expanding access to playfields and converting grass athletic fields to synthetic surfaces, which increases available play time, improves conditions, and reduces water use.

Seattle Public Library free summer classes for kids



South Shore School grand opening, Rainier Beach neighborhood

Higher Education & Beyond

To help students in their transition to college and the workforce, the City of Seattle provides wraparound college and career readiness support by providing a tiered system of academic advising and college guidance for targeted students in need. This system begins in middle school and continues through high school with support for [internships](#), job shadowing, apprentice programs, and college and financial aid applications. We now contribute to the [13th Year Promise](#) which guarantees that every graduate from three South Seattle high schools can attend South Seattle College tuition-free in their first year. As a result, more students are entering college, with fifty-percent of students from these schools reporting they would not have attended college if not for the 13th Year Promise Scholarship.

“The 13th Year Promise Scholarship Program provides Seattle’s underserved youth a bridge to opportunity, upward mobility, and the American dream. We are working with the City of Seattle and individual, business, governmental, and educational partners to expand this program city wide for all Seattle Public School students.”

- Shouan Pan,
Chancellor of Seattle Colleges

Safe Routes to School

Seattle’s [Safe Routes to School](#) program is making it easier and safer for school-age children to walk and bike, which contributes to health and classroom readiness. This effort funds engineering improvements, education, and encouragement campaigns at public and private schools. It also makes it easier for children and families to access their schools while building community, encouraging physical exercise, and reducing traffic. Through the [Levy to Move Seattle](#), we will be investing in Safe Routes to School efforts at 100% of public schools in Seattle.



Safe Routes to School improvements on Beacon Hill

Ensuring Opportunity

A growing city provides unique challenges and opportunities for low-income people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, and those with limited English proficiency as well as the small businesses and institutions that serve them.

While Seattle is a city with lots of economic and education opportunity, low-income people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, and people with limited English proficiency do not always equally share in these benefits and often experience disproportionate harm.

Rising housing costs and increasing competition for commercial space can make it difficult for existing communities to weather change and remain intact. Just as rising rents can make it difficult for individuals to stay in housing, rising commercial rents can speed up the loss of the businesses and institutions that serve and support them. The loss of cultural anchors such as community organizations and churches can be an additional challenge for residents struggling with the cost of housing. Because these businesses, institutions, and communities deserve a place in our city and are vital to Seattle's unique identity, we have implemented programs to help prevent displacement and facilitate continued access to opportunity.

Investing in Neighborhood Business Districts

Vibrant business districts anchor communities, create jobs, and attract investment. The [Only in Seattle Initiative](#) works with community leaders, small businesses, and residents to organize around a shared vision for our varied business districts. This initiative provides comprehensive, ongoing support to neighborhoods looking to organize members of their business district, attract and retain small businesses, increase foot traffic, and ensure neighborhood cohesion and safety.

Small Business Development

The [Small Business Development Program](#) works directly with small businesses to understand their priorities and challenges. They connect small businesses to resources that help them grow and remain competitive through outreach and engagement, business consulting, financing, and advocacy. We are also working to further develop



Case Study: On Board Othello

With support from Seattle's [Office of Economic Development](#), Southeast Seattle community leaders, businesses, and other stakeholders came together in 2014 to form [On Board Othello](#) to create and implement a shared vision of equitable economic development in Seattle's Othello neighborhood. On Board Othello's vision and priorities are grounded in the goals of the community. On Board Othello and community partners work to foster a strong sense of place, thoughtfully designed development, and equitable growth opportunities at Othello. As the business district grows around light rail, a community-led economic development strategy seeks to mitigate displacement and provide opportunities to retain the multicultural fabric of this neighborhood. Priority actions include small business attraction and retention, ensuring new development is aligned with community input, Hello Othello! branding, and other activities to foster a clean and safe environment.

the recommendations of the [Commercial Affordability Action Plan](#). The Plan outlines a diversity of strategies for supporting small businesses such as low-cost loans, new technical assistance programs, and an approach to exploring financial incentives to create more affordable space.

Talent Development

We have a number of programs and partnerships that strive to ensure Seattle residents get the education, training, and support they need to be ready for, and to get, high-quality jobs. These include [Pathways to Careers](#) with Seattle Colleges, [Ready to Work](#) to support residents with barriers to employment, and [Tech Hire](#). The [Youth Employment Initiative](#) provides employment and internship opportunities for over 3,000 young people. We also have numerous apprenticeship programs to help people develop the skills to connect with municipal jobs.

Anti-Displacement Strategies

Increasing costs are pushing many people and businesses out of Seattle. In addition to addressing the underlying housing affordability challenge, we have also developed programs to strengthen communities with the goal of minimizing displacement. These programs seek to connect people with new jobs, invest in community anchors, support tenants that are displaced from a building, and provide tax relief for seniors. City departments are currently working together to produce a report and video that takes a

comprehensive look at the displacement challenge Seattle is facing and describes the strategies and initiatives we are undertaking to address the challenge. We anticipate that these products will be available in late 2017. Together, these strategies and investments can help residents, businesses, and institutions grow with the community around them.

Tenant Relocation Assistance

The [Tenant Relocation Assistance](#) program provides financial and administrative support to low-income families that are displaced from a building due to demolition, rehabilitation, or expiring rent restrictions. In addition to ensuring tenants are given adequate notice and informed of their rights, it provides low-income households with \$3,490 in relocation assistance to help manage the expenses associated with moving and getting into new housing.

Equitable Development Initiative

The [Equitable Development Initiative](#) is a package of investments, programs, and policies with the dual purpose of both preventing displacement and increasing access to opportunity. As part of this initiative, we will invest in community-led projects that support job growth and help stabilize existing communities. These investments can help anchor those communities most at risk of displacement so the people, institutions, and businesses in these communities can grow together.



TechHire

This initiative for underemployed adults convenes employers, educators, and workforce partners to provide accelerated training, internship, and employment opportunities in the technology sector with an explicit focus on historically under-represented communities: women and people of color. [TechHire](#) leverages our growing high-tech economy to ensure greater opportunity for local communities.

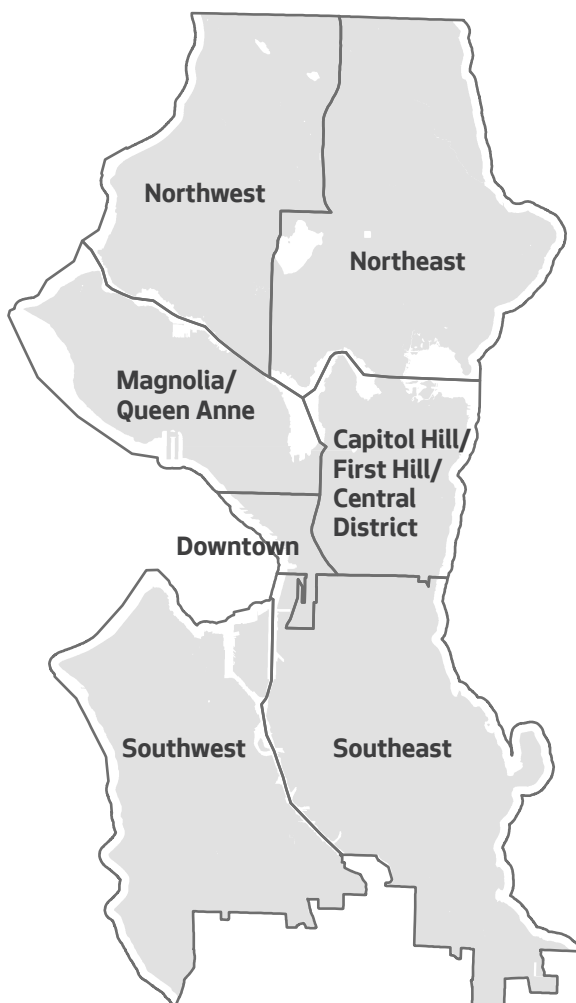
Computer programming students at Seattle Central College, a TechHire partner

Shaping Design

As Seattle grows, thoughtful design can help conserve and enhance what we love about this place.

New development is subject to building and development codes that uphold a high standard of quality for all new construction. In addition to protecting public safety, these standards include requirements for landscaping, setbacks, parking location, and other features that can improve the design of buildings. As part of implementation of [Mandatory Housing Affordability \(MHA\)](#), we are considering new standards to implement upper-story setbacks, minimize large blank walls, encourage more green space at ground level, and grow our urban forest.

Design Review Board Areas



Design Review

One way we integrate new development into existing neighborhoods is the [Design Review Program](#) which gives community members a voice in the design of most new multifamily and commercial buildings. To support this program, we worked with community members to create [design guidelines](#) for the city as a whole and for many individual neighborhoods. These guidelines describe how new development should fit into and relate to their surroundings. We are regularly updating and creating new design guidelines for different areas of Seattle to better capture the unique characteristics of these neighborhoods.

Most new multifamily and commercial development goes through the Design Review process, where community members and neighborhood Design Review Boards help shape appearance and access to these new structures using design guidelines. The Boards are made up of community members, many of whom are volunteers with professional experience in the design and development fields. Design Review meetings are held at several points in the design process for each project and are all open to the public. Public comment can be offered at the meetings or in writing beforehand. This feedback helps inform the Board's guidance and recommendations.



Anhalt Landmark Apartments on Capitol Hill



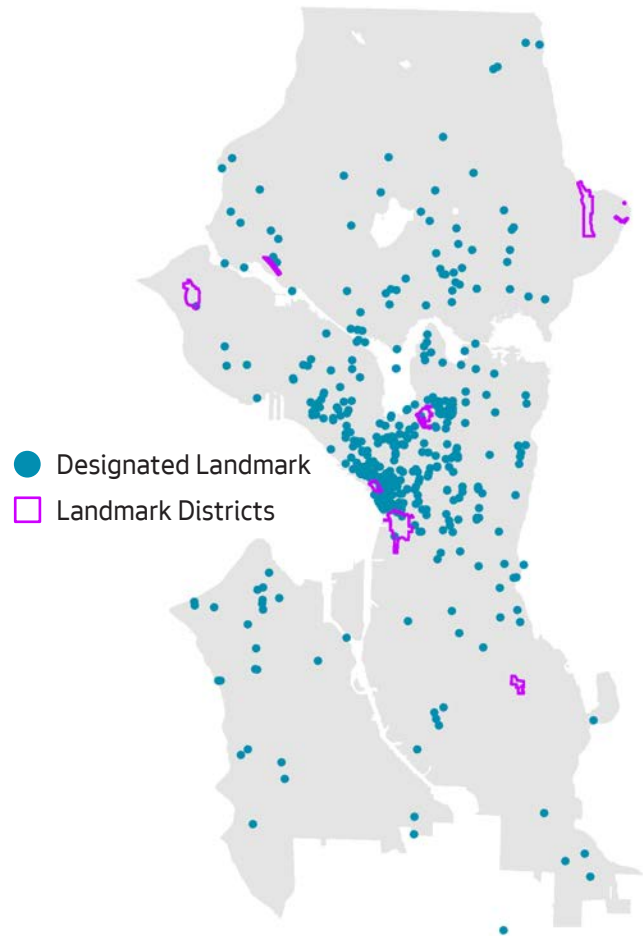
Columbia City Landmark District

Historic Preservation

For over 45 years, the [Historic Preservation Program](#) has helped sustain successful urban design by encouraging the rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties; by promoting the recognition, protection, and enhancement of landmark buildings, objects, and sites of historic, architectural, and cultural significance; and by identifying and protecting the cultural, economic, historical and architectural qualities of historic landmarks and districts throughout Seattle. Historic Preservation is about managing change, not preventing it. Designated landmarks and historic districts have protections that allow modification through a public review and approval process. This process is overseen by the [Landmarks Preservation Board](#) and local boards and commissions tied to the eight historic districts.

New development can also contribute to preservation of historic structures through the transfer of development rights (TDR) from historic properties. This means that the owner of a historic building can preserve the scale and character indefinitely by removing future rights to develop that property. In certain areas, developers can only achieve the allowed heights if they purchase these development rights through the Incentive Zoning program. Since its inception, the TDR program has resulted in the purchase of development rights from 38 buildings.

Historic Preservation Locations



Public Art

The [1% for Art](#) program specifies that 1% of eligible capital improvement project funds be set aside for the commission, purchase, and installation of artwork in a variety of settings. By providing opportunities for individuals to enjoy art in parks, libraries, community centers, roadways, bridges, and other public venues, we simultaneously enrich our daily lives and celebrate the uniqueness of our city's neighborhoods.

Glacial Canoes commissioned with SDOT 1% Art funds



