



May 2, 2024

Re: Update Seattle's Comprehensive Plan to Protect Renters

Dear Honorable Mayor Bruce Harrell and Members of the Seattle City Council:

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap for where and how our city will grow and invest in our communities over the next twenty years and beyond.

Seattle renters are struggling in the face of a growing housing crisis. Communities like the Central District and Rainier Valley, shaped by historical racism, are being displaced. Through the Comprehensive Plan, Seattle could create a more affordable city for everyone, enhance housing security for renters and people living on low incomes, increase diversity throughout the city, reduce segregation and homelessness, combat displacement and gentrification, and start correcting Seattle's legacy of redlining.

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) put forward a draft plan in 2023 proposing anti-displacement strategies, which included five strategies to "Expand Tenant Protections" in the future, such as expanding access to information about vacancies in affordable housing, expanding tenant protections to more people, funding tenant organizing efforts, and paying for short-term rental assistance to prevent evictions.

Unfortunately, the mayor's Draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, released in March of this year, does not include anything about expanding tenant protections; it only summarizes some of our existing tenant protections. As stated by Erica Barnett in [Publicola](#), "Instead of endorsing policy proposals to prevent displacement in the future, the mayor's draft plan repeatedly pats the city on the back for policies adopted years or even decades in the past."

The mayor's proposed draft will also concentrate growth in neighborhoods that already have high density; place most new multi-family housing along loud, polluted arterials; force out existing communities in high displacement risk areas; and continue to perpetuate Seattle's racist history of exclusionary zoning. This worsens our overlapping housing, affordability, and climate crises and demonstrates a lack of integrity in the City's ongoing statements of commitments to racial equity, supporting vibrant neighborhoods, and working towards carbon neutrality.

The Seattle Renters' Commissions strongly recommends updating the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan to ensure:

- All of the strategies to "Expand Tenant Protections" proposed in the 2023 draft are included and extend these measures to include creating an office specifically dedicated

Seattle Renter's Commission

Website: www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/seattle-renters-commission

Staff Liaison Contact: don_src_liaison@seattle.gov



City of Seattle
Seattle Renters' Commission

to protecting renters' rights to secure housing and justice, equipped with comprehensive investigative procedures and strong enforcement tactics, and leveraging insights from investigations and renters' feedback to address any remaining unmet areas of renters' rights.

- Development of permanently affordable, cross-class social housing is encouraged in all neighborhoods.
- Significantly more housing can be built near our parks, away from our busiest streets.
- Housing options in areas with low displacement risk and high opportunity are expanded.
- Neighborhoods are safe and accessible.

Young people have expressed that their number one need is housing stability. Elders deserve to stay in their neighborhoods. We must support communities where people can grow and thrive.

Sincerely,
The Seattle Renters' Commission

Seattle Renter's Commission

Website: www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/seattle-renters-commission

Staff Liaison Contact: don_src_liaison@seattle.gov