

Seattle 2035

Comprehensive Plan 2021 Amendments

Managing Growth to Become an
Equitable and Sustainable City
2015-2035

November 2021



Special Uses: Telecommunication Facilities

POLICIES

- LU 4.3** Prohibit new major communication utilities, such as radio and television transmission towers, in ~~single-family~~ neighborhood and multifamily residential zones and in pedestrian-oriented commercial/mixed-use zones, and encourage existing major communication utilities to relocate to nonresidential areas.

General Development Standards

POLICIES

- LU 5.7** Employ development standards in residential zones that address the use of the ground level of new development sites to fit with existing patterns of landscaping, especially front yards in single-family neighborhood residential areas, and to encourage permeable surfaces and vegetation.

Land Use Areas

Discussion

Historically, zones were created so that different types of uses could be developed only in distinct areas of the city. One reason for this was to keep the uses in one area from affecting the uses in another in a negative way. For example, industrial activities like manufacturing were separated from residential areas to protect residents from harm. Over time, the city evolved in a pattern similar to that basic idea. There are still areas in the city that have distinct uses, but over time commercial uses and residential uses began to blend more to give people better access to shops and services. These changing patterns helped give Seattle its unique neighborhoods. For instance, areas with commercial zoning that allows shops and small offices have become the heart of many neighborhoods.

Areas that already had business cores and multifamily housing and that are zoned for more housing and businesses have become the cores of the urban villages. ~~Some single-family areas~~ Areas in the city were developed at different times, giving them distinct characteristics that show their history. For instance, houses might have a similar architectural style or have a similar relationship to their surroundings.

Each of the land use areas plays a unique role in the city. Used in combination, they help Seattle grow in ways that meet the city's needs. They allow us to place new housing in the areas where the most jobs and services are or will be in the future. They also allow us to encourage housing in places that already have frequent and reliable transit service or that will have better access as improvements and investments are made in rail or bus service.

Single-Family Neighborhood Residential Areas

~~Single-family Neighborhood Residential zones~~ areas cover much of the city, including ~~single-family zones~~. While they are thought of as residential neighborhoods, they include a variety of uses beyond housing. For instance, most of the public parkland is found in these zones, as are many of the public schools, cemeteries, and fire stations. In most of these areas, houses are usually not very tall and typically have yards and open space around them. That open space provides recreation opportunities for residents and land for much of the city's tree canopy.

Much of the land in these areas has been built to the densities the current zoning rules allow. However, some different housing types, such as **accessory dwelling units** or backyard cottages, could increase the opportunity for adding new housing units in these areas. Over time, some ~~single-family neighborhood residential~~ areas could be incorporated into nearby urban villages, and there could be a new definition of what is allowable in these zones when they are inside urban villages.

GOAL

- LU G7** Provide opportunities for detached single-family and other compatible housing options that have low height, bulk, and scale in order to serve a broad array of households and incomes and to maintain an intensity of development that is appropriate for areas with limited access to services, **infrastructure** constraints, fragile environmental conditions, or that are otherwise not conducive to more intensive development.

POLICIES

- LU 7.1** Designate as single-family neighborhood residential areas those portions of the city that are predominantly developed with single-family houses and that are large enough to maintain a consistent residential character of low height, bulk, and scale over several blocks.
- LU 7.2** Use a range of single-family neighborhood residential zones to
- maintain the current low-height and low-bulk character of designated single-family neighborhood residential areas;
 - limit development in single-family neighborhood residential areas or that have environmental or infrastructure constraints;
 - allow different densities that reflect historical development patterns; and
 - respond to **neighborhood plans** calling for redevelopment or infill development that maintains the single-family neighborhood residential character of the area but also allows for a greater range of housing types.
- LU 7.3** Consider allowing redevelopment or infill development of single-family neighborhood residential areas inside urban centers and villages, where new development would maintain the low height and bulk that characterize the single-family area, while allowing a wider range of housing types such as detached accessory units, cottage developments or small duplexes or triplexes.
- LU 7.4** Allow detached single-family neighborhood residential dwellings as the principal use permitted outright in single-family residential areas.
- LU 7.5** Encourage accessory dwelling units, family-sized units, and other housing types that are attractive and affordable, and that are compatible with the development pattern and building scale in single-family areas in order to make the opportunity in single-family neighborhood residential areas more accessible to a broad range of households and incomes, including lower-income households.
- LU 7.6** Limit the number and types of nonresidential uses allowed in single-family neighborhood residential areas and apply appropriate development standards in order to protect those areas from the negative impacts of incompatible uses.
- LU 7.7** Prohibit parking lots or other activities that are part of permitted uses in neighboring higher-intensity zones from locating or expanding in single-family neighborhood residential areas.

LU 7.8 Use minimum lot size requirements to maintain the character of single-family neighborhood residential areas and to reflect the differences in environmental and development conditions and densities found in various single-family areas throughout the city.

LU 7.9 Allow exceptions to minimum lot size requirements to recognize building sites created under earlier regulations and historical platting patterns, to allow the consolidation of very small lots into larger lots, to adjust lot lines to permit more orderly development patterns, and to provide more housing opportunities by creating additional buildable sites that integrate well with surrounding lots and do not result in the demolition of existing housing.

LU 7.10 Reflect the character of existing low-density development through the regulation of scale, siting, structure orientation, and setbacks.

LU 7.11 Permit, through Council or administrative conditional use approval, variations from established standards for planned large developments in single-family neighborhood residential areas, to promote high-quality design that

- is compatible with the character of the area,
- enhances and preserves natural features and functions,
- encourages the construction of affordable housing,
- allows for development and design flexibility, and
- protects **environmentally critical areas**.

Such developments should not be considered as sole evidence of changed circumstances to justify future rezones of the site or adjacent properties.

LU 7.12 Emphasize measures that can increase housing choices for low-income individuals and families when considering changes to development standards in single-family neighborhood residential areas.

Multifamily Residential Areas

Discussion

The city's multifamily areas contain a variety of housing types. You might find duplexes or town houses, walk-up apartments or highrise towers. These structures may include units that are owned by the residents or may provide rental housing. Overall, these areas offer more choices for people with different living styles and a wider range of incomes than ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential zones.

POLICIES

LU 8.10 Designate lowrise multifamily zones in places where low-scale buildings can provide a gradual transition between ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential zones and more intensive multifamily or commercial areas.

Diversity of Housing

POLICIES

- H 3.4** Promote use of customizable modular designs and other flexible housing concepts to allow for households' changing needs, including in neighborhood residential areas zoned for single-family use.

- H 3.5** Allow additional housing types in neighborhood residential areas ~~that are currently zoned for single-family development~~ inside urban villages; respect general height and bulk development limits currently allowed while giving households access to transit hubs and the diversity of goods and services that those areas provide.

Parks and Open Space



Introduction

Parks and open space help make Seattle a great place to live, play, and raise families. These places contribute not only to the city's environmental health but also to the physical and mental health of its residents. Access to **open space** can benefit individuals by giving them places to exercise their bodies and refresh their minds. Open spaces also provide valuable wildlife and vegetation habitat that might otherwise be scarce in the city.

The City-owned park and recreation system comprises about 11 percent of the total city land area. It includes gardens, community centers, boating facilities, and environmental education centers. From the magnificent views off the bluffs of Discovery Park to the tree-lined boulevard system and intimate pocket parks, these areas provide opportunities for residents and visitors to relax, enjoy competitive games, exercise, or meet with friends and neighbors.

Developed parks are not the only sources of open space that people enjoy in the city. There are also open spaces and recreation opportunities located in public rights-of-way, such as along Cheasty and Ravenna Boulevards or in Bell Street Park. Off-road bike trails, including the Burke-Gilman Trail and Alki Beach Park, offer other types of active recreation. An extensive system of P-Patches and community gardens throughout the city offer gardening spaces for residents to grow their own fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Seattle Center, which itself is not part of the City parks system, is nevertheless a unique urban amenity that offers both open space and a wide variety of cultural activities.

Other agencies also provide open spaces in the city. These include fields and playgrounds at public and private schools, areas such as the federal Chittenden Locks, several waterfront access points provided by the Port of Seattle, and the open spaces on several college and university campuses. Numerous private developments have made plazas and other open areas available to the public, such as Waterfall Garden Park in Pioneer Square.

In addition to the areas enjoyed by the public, there are many private open spaces in the city. These areas—such as yards in ~~single-family~~ **neighborhood residential** and **multifamily zones**—also provide light, air, and breathing room that benefit everyone in the city.

Puget Sound and the city's lakes provide another form of open space. These wide stretches of water are open to the sky and offer visual relief from the urban environment, as well as visual connections to other areas of the city and region.

In 2014 voters in Seattle approved the formation of the Seattle Park District. This district provides a new taxing authority and funding source for the maintenance and improvement of City parks, as well as for programs aimed at serving historically **underserved** residents and communities. Some of the ways the City obtains new parkland are by using state funds, acquiring surplus federal land, establishing requirements for new development projects, providing incentives for developers, and creatively using public rights-of-way.



Adopted Neighborhood Plans

Admiral

LAND USE POLICIES

- A-P2** Maintain the character and integrity of the existing single-family neighborhood residential zoned areas by maintaining current single-family neighborhood residential zoning outside the urban village on properties meeting the locational criteria for single-family neighborhood residential zones.

Aurora-Licton

DESIGNATION OF THE AURORA-LICTON RESIDENTIAL URBAN VILLAGE POLICIES

- AL-P1** Maintain the current balance of residential and commercial areas within the urban village boundaries. Consider future zoning changes that would reduce conflicts between adjacent areas; promote the development of a neighborhood-serving and pedestrian-oriented commercial core and promote transitions between ~~single-~~ family neighborhood residential areas and commercial areas.

Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake

LAND USE & HOUSING POLICIES

- BL-P23** Use the permitting and environmental review process to minimize or mitigate the impacts of commercial and higher density residential uses on nearby ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential areas.
- BL-P24** Encourage design and site planning of single-family and multifamily housing that fits with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- BL-P25** Develop and use neighborhood design guidelines to help establish an urban design vision for Linden Avenue, to guide multifamily and commercial development that enhances the pedestrian environment, and to ensure appropriate transitions between ~~single-family neighborhoods~~ neighborhood residential areas and denser commercial areas.
- BL-P26** Develop regulations, incentives, and educational materials to minimize lot clearing and ensure creative site designs that retain mature trees.

Central Area

23RD AVENUE CORRIDOR POLICIES

CA-P68 Consider rezoning ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential zoned parcels to neighborhood commercial to support continuation and expansion of services provided by local institutions as the Cherry Hill Baptist Church.

MADISON-MILLER GOALS

CA-G19 A vibrant, revitalized pedestrian-oriented commercial district on East Madison from 16th to 24th Avenues that serves both local and destination shoppers with a variety of shops and services.

CA-G20 A vibrant, revitalized pedestrian-oriented commercial node at Madison Street between 19th Avenue and 23rd Avenue that principally serves local residents.

Columbia City

HOUSING GOALS

CC-G7 A community with healthy and attractive single-family neighborhood residential areas.

Crown Hill/Ballard

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

CH/B-P6 Maintain the physical character of the ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential-zoned areas in the Crown Hill/Ballard plan area.

CH/B-P6.5 In the Crown Hill Residential Urban Village, ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential-zoned portions of split-zoned lots having an existing multifamily use may be rezoned to an abutting multifamily-zoning designation. This policy is intended to guide future rezone decisions and to lead to amendment of the Land Use Code by changing limits on the zones to which ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential areas may be rezoned within the Crown Hill Residential Urban Village, ~~as prescribed by~~ SMC 23.34.010.B.2.

Greenwood/Phinney Ridge

LAND USE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOALS

- G/PR-G7** A neighborhood where the scale and character of historical or existing single-family neighborhood residential areas have been maintained.

Morgan Junction

HOUSING & LAND USE GOAL

MJ-G5 A community with strong ~~single-family neighborhoods~~ neighborhood residential areas and compatible multifamily buildings offering a wide range of housing types for all people.

HOUSING AND LAND USE POLICIES

MJ-P13 Maintain the physical character and scale of historically single-family housing zoned areas within the urban village by encouraging housing choices such as cottages, townhouses, and low-rise apartments, in these areas.

MJ-P14 Encourage a mix of housing stock to promote generational wealth creation through the retention or creation of affordable, entry-level, family-sized housing units that provide homeownership opportunities in the historically single-family housing zoned areas of the urban village.

North Beacon Hill

LAND USE & HOUSING POLICIES

NBH-P9 Allow alternative housing types, such as cottage housing, in ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential zones to support affordable choices while preserving the ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential character.

NBH-P10 Support a continuing mix of small businesses and encourage new small businesses by providing technical assistance and access to financing.

TOWN CENTER GOALS

NBH-G7 A Town Center urban form that transitions from denser development at the Town Center core to less dense and ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential neighborhoods in a manner that is responsive to the context and character of the North Beacon Hill neighborhood.

North Neighborhoods (Lake City)

HOUSING DEMAND POLICIES

NN-P36 Encourage development of non-single-family parcels adjacent to ~~single-family zoning~~ neighborhood residential zones to provide transitions or buffers adequate to protect the ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential area from adverse impacts.

North Rainier

HOUSING GOALS

NR-G2 Housing in the neighborhood meets community needs for a range of household incomes and unit sizes, and makes a compatible transition from higher-intensity mixed-use and multifamily residential to single-family neighborhood residential areas.

HOUSING POLICIES

NR-P10 Include a portion of single-family neighborhood residential area located between 24th Avenue South and 25th Avenue South, north of S. McClellan Street, within the urban village and within the Station Area Overlay District, and support a multifamily zoning designation for the area that would allow more compact residential development.

Northgate

GOALS

NG-G2 A thriving, vital, mixed-use center of concentrated development surrounded by healthy ~~single-family neighborhoods~~ neighborhood residential areas transformed from an underutilized, auto-oriented office/retail area.

LAND USE & HOUSING GOALS

NG-G3 The surrounding ~~single-family neighborhoods~~ neighborhood residential areas are buffered from intense development in the core, but have ready access to the goods, services, and employment located in the core via a range of transportation alternatives including walking, bicycling, transit, and automobile (the core area is shown on the Northgate map).

LAND USE & HOUSING POLICIES

NG-P6 Promote additional multifamily housing opportunities for households of all income levels to the extent that a compatible scale and intensity of development can be maintained with adjacent ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential areas.

Queen Anne (Uptown)

GOALS

QA-G2 Queen Anne has many ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential, multifamily, and mixed-use neighborhoods that preserve cultural and historic resources and which include affordable, subsidized, and special-needs housing.

POLICIES

QA-P2 Preserve the character of Queen Anne's ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

QA-P11 Provide for an attractive and harmonious transition between different land uses, including commercial areas and ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential areas.

QA-P12 Legal non-conforming uses exist in Queen Anne's ~~single-family neighborhoods~~ neighborhood residential areas, and these shall be allowed to remain at their current intensity, as provided in the Land Use Code, to provide a compatible mix and balance of use types and housing densities.

QA-P13 Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in ~~single-family zones~~ neighborhood residential areas, in the Queen Anne planning area, should continue to be limited to the principal residential structure, and consider requiring that they be subordinate in size and character in order to discourage the development of duplexes and other multifamily structures in these zones.

Rainier Beach

LAND USE POLICIES

- RB-P4** Seek to preserve the character of Rainier Beach’s single-family neighborhood residential zoned areas. Encourage residential small-lot opportunities within single-family neighborhood residential areas within the designated residential urban village. In the area within the residential urban village west of Martin Luther King Way South, permit consideration of rezones of single-family neighborhood residential zoned land to mixed-use designations.

Roosevelt

LAND USE POLICIES

R-LUP3 Promote the development of new multifamily dwellings, in properly zoned areas, that will buffer ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential areas from the commercial core, freeway, and commercial corridors.

HOUSING POLICIES

R-HP1 Promote the preservation and maintenance of existing ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential homes in single-family zones and control impacts to homes on the edge of the ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential zones.

West Seattle Junction

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL

WSJ-G1 A small-town community with its own distinct identity comprised of a strong ~~single-family~~ neighborhood residential community and a vibrant mixed-use business district serving the surrounding residential core.

HOUSING & LAND USE POLICIES

WSJ-P13 Maintain a character and scale in historically single-family zoned areas similar to the existing single-family housing.

Westwood/Highland Park

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL

W/HP-G1 A diverse community with two distinct areas, Westwood and Highland Park, composed of a mix of single-family neighborhood residential and multifamily residential areas, significant public facilities, regional and local commercial businesses, and natural resource opportunities that together offer a variety of choices for its residents.

HOUSING GOAL

W/HP-G5 A community with both single-family neighborhood residential and multifamily residential areas and the amenities to support the diverse population.

HOUSING POLICIES

W/HP-P18 Seek to maintain a character and scale in historically single-family areas similar to existing single-family neighborhood residential areas.

Housing Appendix

Residential Capacity

OPCD's development capacity model estimates the amount of development that could be accommodated in Seattle. The model is based on current zoning and makes assumptions about likelihood of redevelopment and ultimate development densities achievable in those zones. The City uses development capacity estimates to inform regional and countywide growth planning and to determine potential outcomes of planning efforts conducted for areas of the city.

Housing Appendix Figure A-1 contains residential estimates generated from the development capacity model. This figure shows the amount of residential development capacity for Seattle as a whole. It also shows the capacity in major zoning categories as well as in the city's urban centers and villages.

Seattle's current zoning provides development capacity to accommodate more than 220,000 additional housing units. This capacity is ample for the City's residential growth estimate of 70,000 net new units between 2015 and 2035.

Seattle's mixed-use and residential zones allow a wide range of housing types and densities. About 75 percent of Seattle's residential development capacity is in zones allowing a mix of residential and commercial uses. Of this 75 percent, Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and Seattle Mixed zones account for 60 percent of capacity, with Downtown zones accounting for the other 15 percent.

The remaining 25 percent of Seattle's residential development capacity is in zones that allow only residential uses—meaning these zones do not allow a mix of residential and commercial uses. Of this 25 percent, 20 percent is in zones allowing multifamily structures. The remaining 5 percent is in single-family neighborhood residential zones.

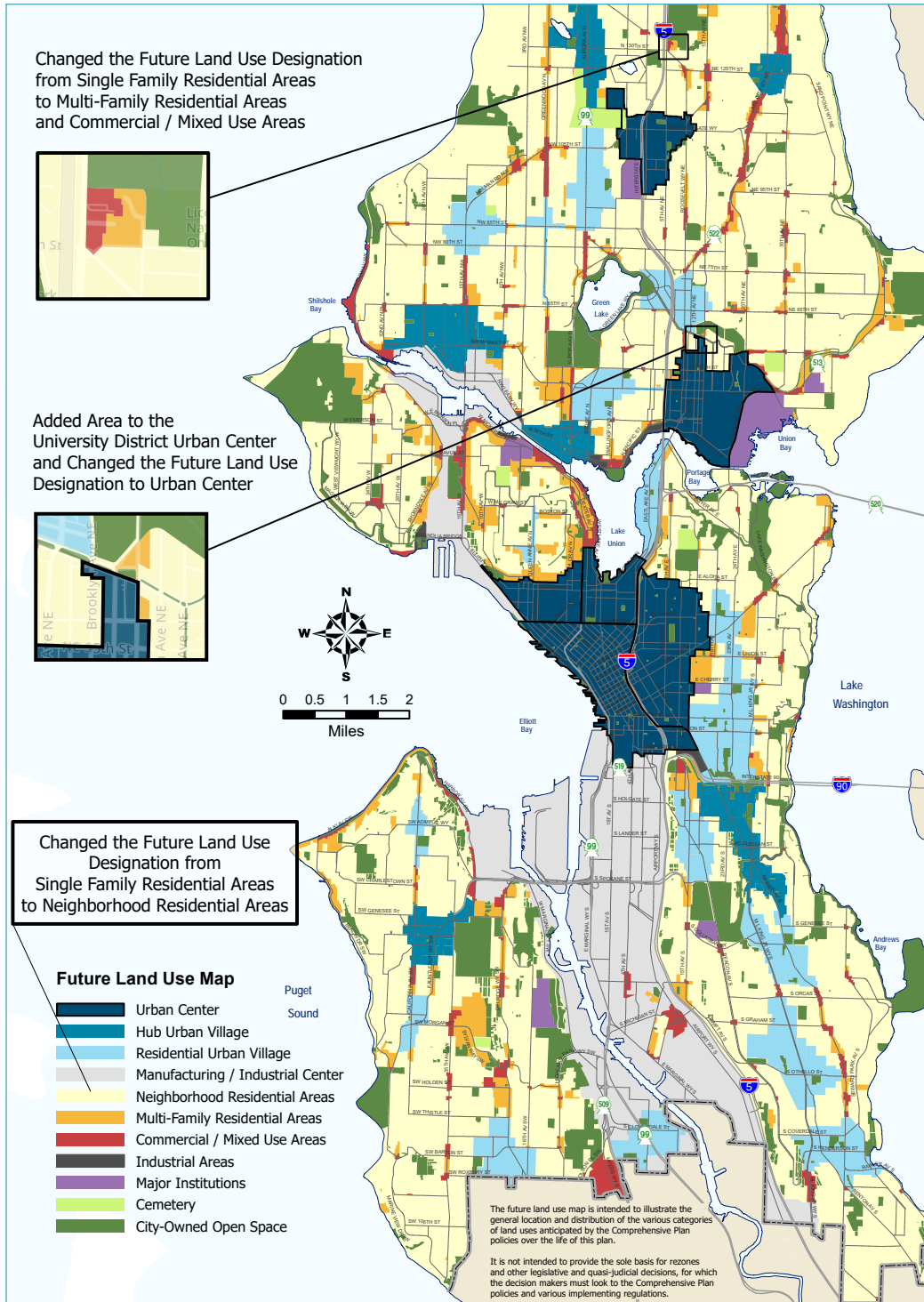
Housing Appendix Figure A-1

Seattle Residential Development Capacity (Model Estimates)

	Residential Development Capacity (Housing Units)	Share of Total Residential Development Capacity
TOTAL	223,713	100%
By Future Land Use Designation:		
Single-Family Neighborhood Residential	10,959	5%
Multifamily	46,803	21%
Commercial/Mixed-Use	132,439	59%
Downtown	33,512	15%
Major Institution	N/A	N/A
City-Owned Open Space	0	0%
By Urban Centers/Villages:		
Inside Urban Centers	96,862	43%
Downtown	33,512	15%
First Hill/Capitol Hill	19,009	8%
Northgate	10,966	5%
South Lake Union	20,277	9%
Uptown	4,165	2%
University District	8,933	4%
Inside Hub Urban Villages	36,227	16%
Inside Residential Urban Villages	39,386	18%
Outside Centers and Villages	51,207	23%

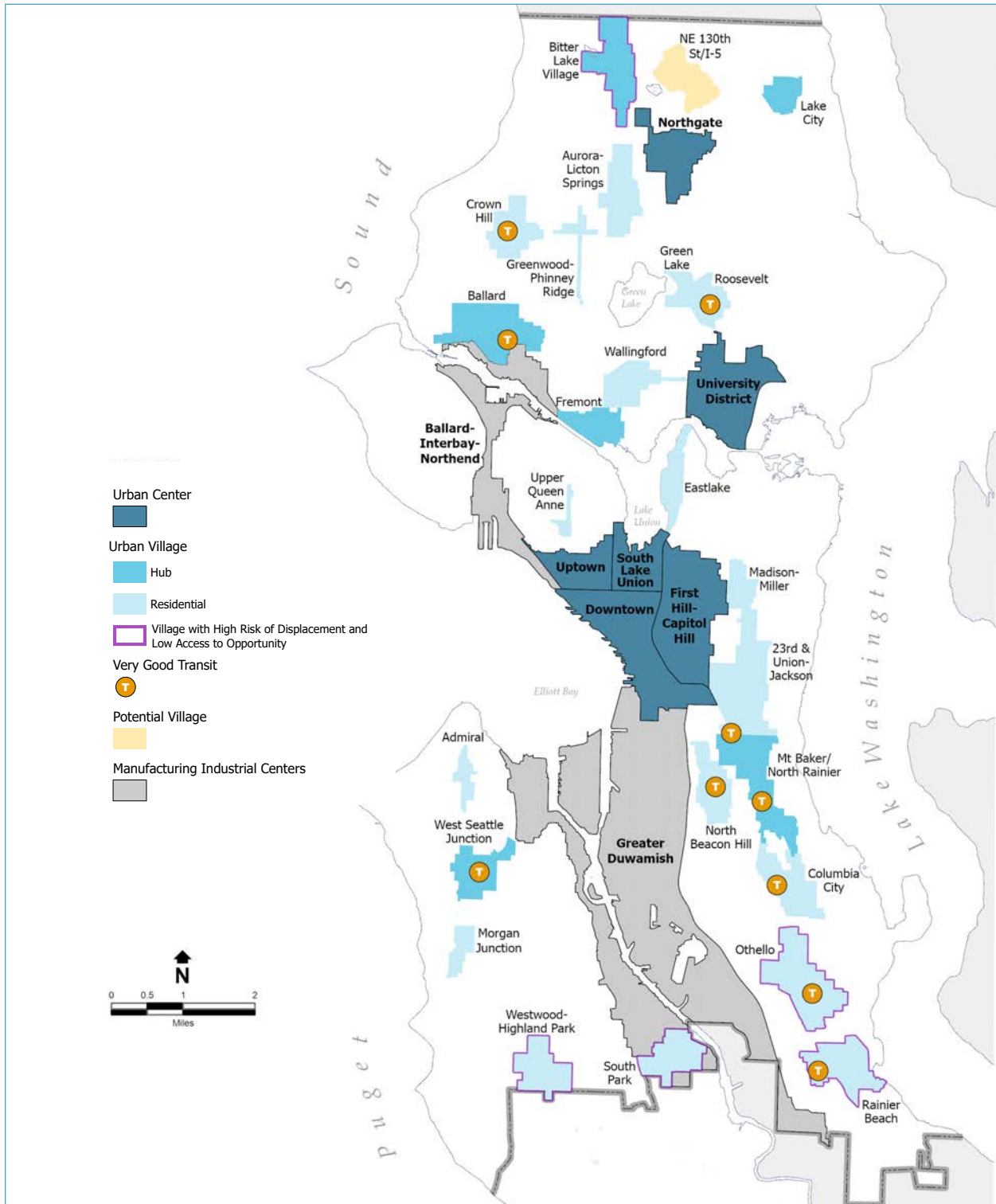
Source: Development Capacity Report, DPD, September 2014

Future Land Use Map



Growth Strategy Figure 4

Urban Centers, Urban Villages, Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



Housing Units Built 1995–2014

