

One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Draft EIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

March 2024

Background & Objectives

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan is the guide for how our city grows and makes investments. The Plan guides City decisions about where we locate housing and jobs, and where we invest in transportation, utilities, parks, and other public assets. The City is currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. The updated plan, which is proposed to be called the One Seattle Plan, will address challenges new and old: racial equity, housing costs, access to economic opportunity and education, climate change, and more. We will explore different approaches to growth and investment, along with new strategies to reduce displacement pressures. The goal of the update is to make the city more equitable, livable, sustainable, and resilient for today's communities and future residents.

The objectives of the update include:

- **Equity:** Provide equitable access to housing, jobs and economic opportunities, services, recreation, transportation, and other investments. Center the work with an intersectional, race-conscious lens, informed by a history of racial discrimination and disinvestment.
- **Livability:** Foster complete neighborhoods where more people can walk or bike to everyday destinations such as local shops, parks, transit, cultural amenities, and services.
- **Affordability:** Increase the supply of housing to ease increasing housing prices caused by competition for limited supply and create more opportunities for income-restricted affordable housing.
- **Inclusivity:** Increase diversity of housing options in neighborhoods throughout Seattle to address exclusivity and so more people can live and stay in a variety of neighborhoods. Reduce residential displacement and support existing residents, particularly low-income households, that are struggling to stay in their neighborhoods.
- **Climate resiliency:** Reduce emissions from buildings and transportation and promote adaptations to make our city more capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change.
- **Consistency with other plans and policies:** Meet state and regional policies and requirements for the Comprehensive Plan Update including, but not limited to growth and housing affordability targets.



For more information

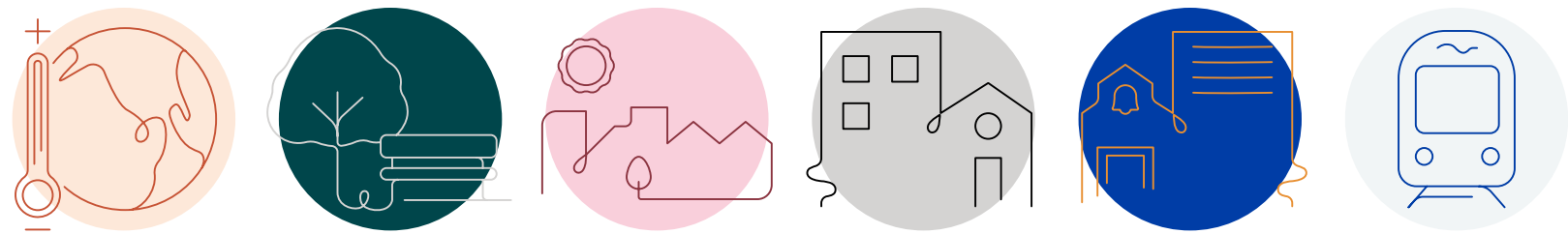
seattle.gov/opcd/one-seattle-plan

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Contact

Jim Holmes

206-684-8372 | Jim.Holmes@seattle.gov



Proposed Alternatives

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement evaluates five alternatives for providing more housing and improving the jobs/housing balance in Seattle. Each alternative has been reviewed for likely environmental impacts. The purpose of evaluating alternatives is to understand the impacts of different approaches to accommodating housing and jobs. The final plan and implementing legislation would likely implement a combination of changes analyzed in different alternatives.

The current Seattle Comprehensive Plan (Seattle 2035) focuses most housing and jobs within existing designations called urban centers and urban villages. Alternative 1 is called the No Action alternative and represents likely outcomes if no changes are made to the Comprehensive Plan. The DEIS will also evaluate four “action” alternatives. The action alternatives, expand upon the current approach and include different additional strategies for accommodating growth:

Focused	Broad	Corridor
<p>(Alternative 2)</p> <p>Allow a range of housing (from duplexes to 7 story stacked housing) and commercial uses in neighborhood center areas to create more housing around neighborhood shops and services.</p>	<p>(Alternative 3)</p> <p>Allow a range of low-scale housing options (such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and stacked flats) in all Neighborhood Residential zones as part of a new urban neighborhood place type, spreading more housing growth throughout the city.</p>	<p>(Alternative 4)</p> <p>Allow a wide range of housing options (from duplexes up to 5 story stacked housing or higher heights in existing multifamily/commercial areas) in corridors to focus growth near transit and amenities.</p>
Combined		
<p>(Alternative 5)</p> <p>A mix of the strategies above—neighborhood centers, urban neighborhoods, and corridors—plus changes to the boundaries of existing centers and villages, now called regional centers and urban centers, respectively.</p>		

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Purpose & Process

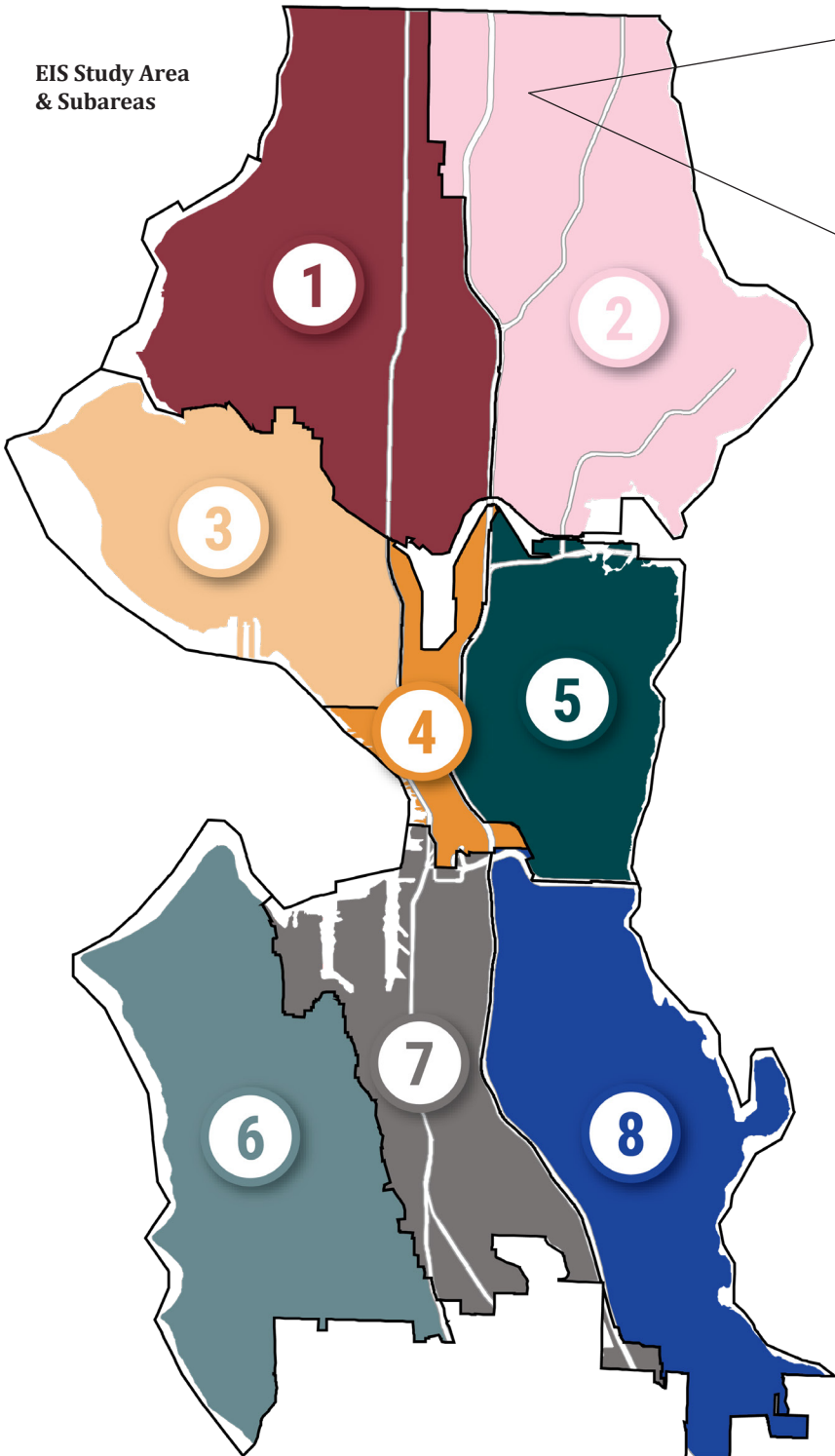
Under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), agencies conduct environmental review of actions that could affect the environment—including policy and regulation changes (considered non-project actions). Preparation of an EIS is required for actions that have potentially significant impacts so that the public, agencies, Tribes, and City decision-makers have information about the environmental effects of changes before a decision is made. The City is looking for feedback on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement during a 60-day comment period from March 7 through May 6, 2024.

For more information on the Comprehensive Plan Update process, go to our Comprehensive Plan EIS website at <https://maps.seattle.gov/OneSeattlePlan-EIS> or see our [EIS 101 video](#) ▶.

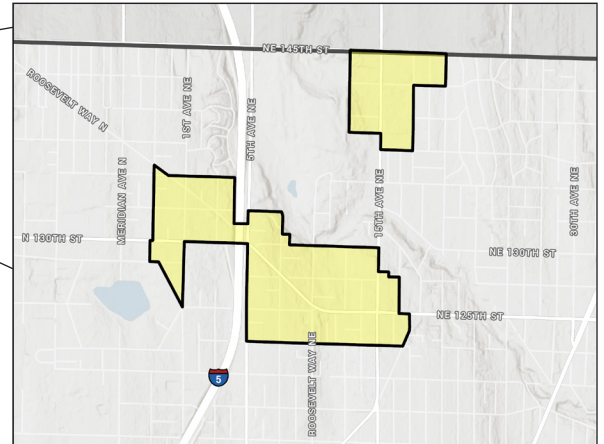
Study Area

The study area includes the full city limits. The city has been divided into analysis areas to organize the evaluation of conditions and impacts. This EIS also provides a focused review of alternative growth and zoning strategies in the 130th and 145th Street Station Areas and options for the City to streamline future environmental review in that area.

EIS Study Area & Subareas



130th and 145th Street Station Areas



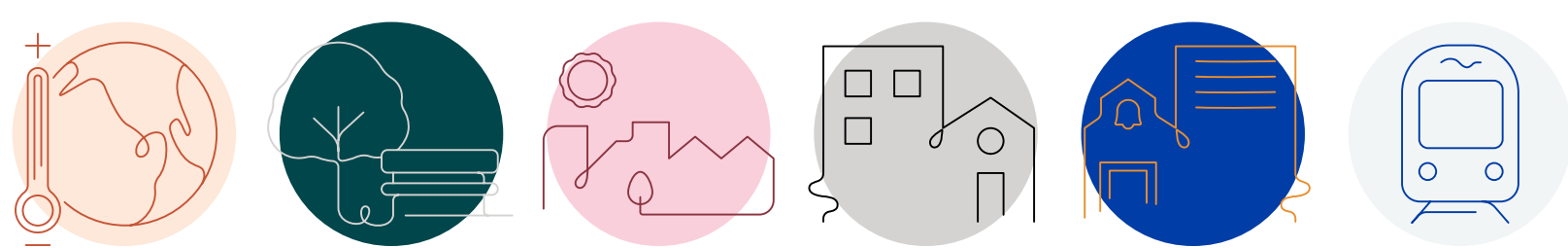
Draft EIS Alternatives

This EIS examines alternative land use concepts to achieve the City’s objectives. This includes a No Action Alternative to serve as the baseline for comparing the potential impacts of the action alternatives. Each alternative is summarized below.

No Action	
(Alternative 1)	
Maintains the status quo—implementing the existing Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan by focusing housing/job growth in existing urban centers and urban villages. 80,000 new homes and 158,000 new jobs would be added over the next 20 years.	<u>130th/145th Station Area:</u> Retains current zoning. About 195 new homes and 110 new jobs would be added around the 130 th station area. About 650 new homes and 610 new jobs would be added around the 145 th station area.

Focused	Broad	Corridor
(Alternative 2)	(Alternative 3)	(Alternative 4)
<p>Creates a neighborhood center designation (like existing urban village designation, but smaller and lower intensity) around certain existing neighborhood business districts. Neighborhood centers could have a range of housing from townhouses to 7 story stacked housing.</p> <p>Assumes 100,000 new homes and 158,000 new jobs. The additional 20,000 homes are located in neighborhood centers; 15% of new jobs would be shifted based on the location of new housing.</p> <p><u>130th/145th Station Area:</u> Designate 3 new neighborhood centers, creating mixed-use nodes with heights up to 80 feet near transit. About 1,050 new homes and 284 new jobs around 130th Street. 1,160 new homes and 695 new jobs around 145th Street.</p>	<p>Broadens the range of low-scale housing options allowed in all Neighborhood Residential zones (which currently allow only detached homes and accessory dwelling units) as part of a new urban neighborhood place type. Housing in the urban neighborhood place type could include detached and attached homes including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes as well as stacked flats and sixplexes on larger lots.</p> <p>Assumes 100,000 new homes and 158,000 new jobs. The additional 20,000 homes are located within Neighborhood Residential zones; 15% of new jobs would be shifted based on the location of new housing.</p> <p><u>130th/145th Station Area:</u> No changes beyond citywide changes to Neighborhood Residential zones described above.</p>	<p>Allows wider range of housing options in newly designated corridors to focus growth within a short walk of frequent transit and amenities. Corridors could have a range of housing options from duplexes to 5-story stacked housing or higher heights in existing multifamily/commercial areas.</p> <p>Assumes 100,000 new homes and 158,000 new jobs. The additional 20,000 homes are located in corridor areas; 15% of new jobs would be shifted based on the location of new housing.</p> <p><u>130th/145th Station Area:</u> No changes beyond citywide changes to create corridors described above.</p>

Combined		
(Alternative 5)		
Allows the largest increase in supply and diversity of housing across Seattle by including strategies from Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 plus designating Ballard as a regional center, expanding boundaries of seven existing urban centers (formerly called urban villages), and designating the 130 th Station Area as an urban center.	Distribution of housing units and jobs is a combination of other alternatives but assumes a total of 120,000 new homes and 158,000 new jobs.	<u>130th/145th Station Area:</u> Adds about 1,645 new homes and 360 new jobs within a new urban center at 130 th Street and 1,060 new homes and 650 new jobs within a new neighborhood center at 145 th Street



Environmental Impacts

The purpose of an EIS is to identify and disclose significant unavoidable adverse impacts likely to result from proposed changes. This section is an abbreviated summary of impacts and mitigation for each environmental area. Chapter 1 of the draft EIS provides a more detailed summary and Chapter 3 discusses each environmental area in detail and potential mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

Significant adverse impacts regarding transportation are identified for studied alternatives that can be partially mitigated.

Significant adverse impacts regarding Noise and Cultural Resources are possible but mitigation measures can reduce impacts to a less than significant level.


It is important to recognize the urban context for the proposed changes. The gradual conversion from low-intensity to higher-intensity development patterns is an expected characteristic of urban areas. Channeling population and employment growth into cities helps relieve regional transportation emissions and land conversion pressures on rural lands.

The City of Seattle has regulations and policies in place to manage intensifying development patterns in a way that supports livability, sustainability, and resilience. In fact, many of the regulations in place—such building codes and stormwater standards—result in redevelopment decreasing negative environmental impacts because old uses are brought into compliance with current standards through redevelopment. In this way, the proposed alternatives and the current and amended policies and regulations can minimize impacts and produce opportunities for housing and jobs, supported by equitable public services and infrastructure, which can achieve the One Seattle Plan objectives.

Abbreviated Summary of Impacts

The table below presents a summary of impacts to the natural and built environment if alternatives are implemented along with potential options for mitigating impacts. It is highly summarized from the full analysis in the Draft EIS. Impacts are identified for all studied alternatives unless specified by name. For the full context of the affected environment, impacts, and mitigation measures, please see the full Draft EIS document.

Potential impacts and mitigation relevant to climate change and equity are noted with a star (★).

Earth & Water Quality: No significant adverse impacts expected.		
	Likely Impacts/Outcomes	Mitigations Options for Consideration
	<p>Increased hard surfaces, decreased vegetation, and increased local vehicle travel could result in additional discharges to waterways. However, new development would be subject to current stormwater requirements which would mitigate impacts on some sites and result in improved stormwater management on other sites.</p> <p>★ Regarding exposure to flooding, sea level rise, and landslides, Alternatives 3 and 5 could expose more population compared to other alternatives, but all action alternatives advance the City’s climate resilience with a new climate element based on a climate vulnerability assessment.</p>	<p>Updating stormwater code requirements.</p> <p>Updating environmentally critical areas ordinance.</p> <p>Investing in restoration of natural areas.</p>

Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions at a regional scale as more people could live near transit, jobs, shops, and services and in areas with smaller homes.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions per capita at a local scale.

Increased total emissions at a local scale.

Temporary emissions from construction.

★ Exposure of population living in new buildings near high volume roads to air pollution.

Alternatives would not prevent or deter statewide, regional, or local efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

★ Promoting electric vehicles.

★ Updating energy code requirements.

★ Implementing strategies to reduce GHG emissions from transportation including funding vehicle electrification or improvements to walking, biking, and transit infrastructure.

★ Implementing strategies to reduce air toxics near residential areas such as increasing tree canopy or implementing street sweeping.

★ Improving air filtration for new buildings.

Plants & Animals: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

No appreciable impacts on regional populations of plants or animals.

All alternatives would result in moderate tree canopy loss on properties undergoing development within Seattle. However, a substantial portion of development-related reductions in canopy cover would be reversed over time as replacement trees grow and the potential for any such reductions would be limited by regulations that protect existing trees and require replacement of trees that are removed from private parcels. Alternatives 3 and 5 would likely result in the largest tree canopy loss due to lower-density development in Neighborhood Residential zones.

Action alternatives would tend to increase regional tree canopy by focusing growth in urban areas and preventing sprawl.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Implementing additional incentives to encourage retaining/expanding tree canopy.

Utilizing an adaptive management approach to collect, monitor, analyze, and learn from the results of code application.

★ Increasing funding for tree planting, forest restoration and green infrastructure.

★ Increasing investment in the equitable distribution and resilience of the urban forest.

Energy & Natural Resources: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Increased total energy use at a local scale.

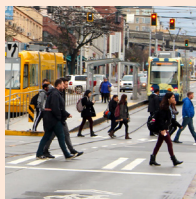
Decreased per capita energy use at a local scale.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

★ Upgrading electrical infrastructure to reduce use of power and increase reliability.

★ Updating building and energy codes to improve efficiency.

Noise: Moderate adverse impacts identified that can be adequately mitigated .



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Increased construction noise, particularly from pile driving and foundation work.

Increased transportation noise associated with growth. Change in transportation noise would be lower than 3dBA, the threshold of change that is perceptible.

★ More people living near/exposed to noise of transportation corridors.

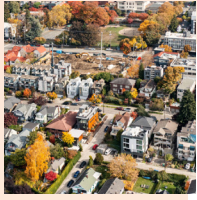
Mitigations Options for Consideration

Restricting hours for aboveground jack hammering and pile driving.

Installing barriers and selecting haul routes that protect noise-sensitive areas.

★ Updating regulations related to noise generation and sound attenuation.

Land Use & Urban Form: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Increased frequency of areas with mixing of uses and heights. Awkward transitions may temporarily result in older, less-intense development next to newer, more-intense ones during redevelopment.

Additional height and bulk changing views, ★ casting longer shadows, and displacing trees.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Implementing gradual transitions in zoning.

Plans & Policies: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Action alternatives are generally consistent with existing plans and policies.

All alternatives meet total housing growth targets and Alternatives 2 through 5 add more emphasis on middle housing and other housing types, particularly Alternatives 3 and 5.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Evaluating the final proposal for conformity to state and regional plans and policies.

Population, Housing, & Employment: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

★ Increased housing supply, variety, and affordability.

★ Increased supply of income-restricted housing.

★ Alternative 3 is expected to produce more ownership units; Alternatives 2 and 4 are expected to provide more rental housing. Alternative 5 would produce a mix of ownership and rental units. All alternatives increase the overall number of units and improve housing affordability.

★ Action alternatives can produce new income-restricted affordable housing units based on the alternative and whether/how Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) might be applied in Neighborhood Residential zones.

★ Reduced economic displacement due to slowing or preventing price increases resulting from limited supply of housing.

Increased physical displacement from demolitions. Action alternatives would result in additional renters being displaced due to demolition of a building. Alternative 3 would result in the highest level of renter displacement due to a higher ratio of homes demolished to new homes built.

Overall, the action alternatives would tend to reduce displacement as the benefits in terms of reduced economic displacement pressure and increased production of affordable units offered by the action alternatives outweigh any increased risk of physical displacement.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

★ Implementing MHA requirements in Neighborhood Residential zones.

★ Increasing funding for programs combating commercial and cultural displacement.

★ Strengthening relocation assistance programs.

Cultural Resources: Potential for significant adverse impacts, but can be avoided/minimized with mitigation.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Change, alteration, or loss of architecturally historic buildings, structures, and objects that might be eligible for future designation on local, state, or federal registers.

★ Potential loss of or alterations to the physical evidence or tangible evidence of cultural history to Culturally Important Resources (CIR).

Impact on/damage to archaeological and cultural resources during below-ground work.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Updating city-level rehabilitation guidelines and incentives.

Funding additional historic resource surveys.

Modifying demolition review process so that historic review occurs even if SEPA thresholds are increased.

★ Funding public education and outreach efforts that integrate holistic histories and of impacted resources and historically marginalized communities.

Transportation: Potential for significant adverse impacts.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

Increased travel time due to traffic volumes.

Increased traffic volumes on state facilities (I-5, I-90, SR 99, SR 509).

Increased intersection times on key corridors and in the 130th and 145th St station areas.

Increased number of passenger trips on public transit.

Additional passengers will tend to result in higher revenues and more services. However, if services are not increased, additional ridership could cause crowding.

★ Increased population in areas with low sidewalk connectivity.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

★ Improving transit, bicycle, and pedestrian system.

Implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.

Implementing transit, parking management, and safety strategies.

Implementing signal timing changes and physical changes such as additional turn pockets.

Utilizing an adaptive management approach to monitor crowding in partnership with King County Metro.

Modify notice process so WSDOT continues to receive notices if SEPA thresholds are raised.

Public Services: No significant adverse impacts expected.



Likely Impacts/Outcomes

★ Additional park space would be needed to maintain existing park level of service of 8.0 acres per 1,000 people under all alternatives including No Action. Additional park space needed for action alternatives would range from 300 to 700 acres based on the alternative.

All alternatives would increase the population of school-age kids. It is not possible to develop an accurate twenty-year projection of school needs given the wide variety of factors that influence these numbers and the recent fluctuations in public school enrollment. If the portion of the population that is enrolled in public school remains the same as it is today, the action alternatives could result in 2,700 to 5,500 additional students. It is expected that Seattle Public Schools will be able to accommodate any potential increase in enrollment through regular enrollment and capital facilities planning processes.

Increased demand for police officers.

Increased demand for fire protection staffing and trucks.

Increased solid waste generation.

Compact growth patterns (Alt 2 and 4) make service delivery more efficient; diffused growth (Alt 3 and 5) distribute demand more incrementally to make better use of existing facilities.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Updating parks level of service to reflect current acquisition approach and the urban nature of the city.

★ Purchasing new park land or adding capacity on existing parks.

Allowing taller building heights for public schools.

Utilities: No significant adverse impacts expected.**Likely Impacts/Outcomes**

Increased demand for water, electricity, and wastewater/stormwater collection. However, there is ample capacity to accommodate growth in the near term for all utilities.

All alternatives have the potential to stress utility systems that are capacity constrained such as in Areas 1 and 2. This may be greatest citywide with Alternative 5 and least for Alternative 1; constraints may limit the overall number of households that could be developed in drainage capacity constrained areas.

Growth in south Seattle may require a greater degree of investment in improved drainage and electrical utilities.

Mitigations Options for Consideration

Ongoing system planning and maintenance.

**Next Steps**

The City is soliciting feedback on the Draft EIS during a comment period from March 7 to May 6, 2024. **Comments are due by 5:00 PM, May 6, 2024.**

In order to be addressed in the Final EIS, please share comments through the following methods:

- <https://maps.seattle.gov/OneSeattlePlan-EIS>
- PCD_CompPlan_EIS@seattle.gov
- Jim Holmes
Department of Planning and Community Development
P.O. Box 94788
Seattle, WA 98124-7088

While written comments are preferred, comments can also be offered at one of two virtual public hearings on April 17, 2024 at 10 AM and April 22, 2024 at 6 PM. A link to these hearings can be found at the [One Seattle Plan website](#).

The City will review public comments and publish responses in a Final EIS that refines information in this document and provides additional information or corrections. It is anticipated that the Final EIS will come out with the Mayor's Recommended Plan in Fall of 2024.