

PRC

From: WALT SAVELAND <wsaveland@centurylink.net>
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2020 5:49 PM
To: PRC; jodi@permitcnw.com
Subject: Project 3033991-LU & Seattle's exploding growth in new housing units

CAUTION: External Email

To the attention of Ms. Jodi J. Patterson-O'Hare,

Upon receiving from SDCI the mailed notice of change, from a Full Design Review to an SDCI Planner Review for Project 3033991, I finally decided that it was time to warn you: **THE FASTER YOU AND YOUR CLIENTS PROCEED WITH THIS PROJECT, THE GREATER THE FINANCIAL CALAMITY YOU ARE LIKELY INVITING UPON YOURSELVES.**

I've lived in this part of Belltown since coming to Seattle in the Fall of 2010, first staying in the Belltown Inn--in a room overlooking the Regrade dog park. It's my kind of neighborhood, and I've seen some venerable building fall--in the quest for a handsome profit from "development." Your prospects for a handsome profit are likely much slimmer than you suppose...

Back when Mayor Murray was putting together his COMPREHENSIVE PLAN in 2016, for Seattle's growth up to 2035, I was one of several to criticize his low-ball forecast of growth in new housing units. Where he had forecast 70,000 new housing units by 2035, I argued in favor of 105,000--half again as many. (He later suggested 100,000 units in a "sensitivity analysis," **but we have both turned out to be way short of what is already happening!**)

Forwarded below is an OPCD (Office of Planning and Community Development) newsletter from [June 28th, 2018](#). Highlighted in **boldface**, in the [second news item](#), is the following statement:

Twenty-two percent of the Comprehensive Plan's anticipated 20-year housing growth has already occurred in the first two years of the Plan's monitoring period, with about 15,000 housing units built.

That's 15 out of 70 thousand housing units forecast in Mayor Murray's Comprehensive Plan--in the first two of twenty years!

I'd been expecting a 2019 update of that newsletter item, but it never came. So, I went to the OPCD website and found this page: <http://www.seattle.gov/opcd/population-and-demographics>. On the page are three "dashboards," of which the second is "Comprehensive Plan Monitoring."

That dashboard currently shows 35,654 housing units, 51% of a forecast 70,000. Up from 22% of the 70,000 units, forecast by 2035 in the June 2018 newsletter, to 51% in June of 2020--**the growth by the third and fourth years far more than more than doubling the growth in the first two years!** With the growth in housing stock accelerating at that rate, we may expect to reach Mayor Murray's forecast 70,000 new housing units by 2024 or 2025 (rather than 2035), and there will certainly be profound economic consequences.

From my apartment, across 2nd Avenue from 2224, I can see a newer apartment building on 1st Avenue, with four top-floor apartments vacant. Two were vacated last September, and the other two have been vacant for more than two years. You and your clients would be well advised to investigate

the relative availability of rental units—the vacancy levels—in recently constructed apartment buildings in and around Seattle, compared to older, established buildings. High vacancy levels in newly constructed buildings—usually with relatively high rents—may be expected to severely compromise their economic viability.

Also, it might be no coincidence that two of the four members of Seattle City Council who did not seek reelection in 2019, Rob Johnson and Mike O'Brien, had been serving, respectively, as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning, Land Use & Zoning Committee. All that “upzoning” legislation and consequent frenzy of new construction are bound to severely distort the local housing market for years to come.

Respectfully submitted, Walt Saveland

PS to SDCI One Public Comment posted to this project is obviously misfiled: Chris Machielse wrote on April 30, 2020, regarding 12548 Lake City Way NE, Early Design Guidance 3036046-EG. I hope the Planners at SDCI are actually reading our submissions!

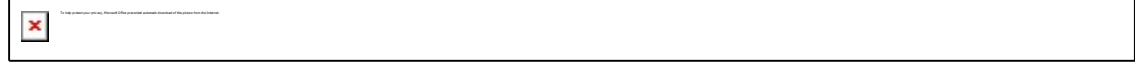
From: "OPCD Newsletter" <pcd_socmedia@seattle.gov>
To: "wsaveland" <wsaveland@centurylink.net>
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2018 4:00:02 PM
Subject: June 2018 Newsletter

OPCD's monthly newsletter.

[View this email in your browser](#)



June 28, 2018



Seattle Releases Environmental Justice and Equitable Development Plan for the Duwamish Valley

This week, Mayor Jenny Durkan released the [Duwamish Valley Action Plan](#), setting forth a series of actions and strategies to deliver measurable community health and well-being outcomes for the South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods. The community-led plan is the result of an 18-month process that engaged City staff, residents, workers, and businesses of the Duwamish Valley to create a framework that reflects their priorities. The plan will be used to guide the City's work and investments for years to come.

By applying an environmental justice and racial equity lens, the actions form an environmental justice, equitable development, and anti-displacement strategy that is focused on seven priority areas: Environment, Parks & Open Spaces, Community Capacity, Mobility & Transportation, Economic Opportunity & Jobs, Affordable Housing, and Public Safety. It includes dozens of near-term and long-term projects.

In 2016 and 2017, the City began investing in these community priorities, including tree planting and removing asphalt in industrial areas, and supporting community organizations working on affordable housing and residential displacement. This year, the city is launching projects on asthma prevention, home weatherization, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, and support for small businesses.

In the Duwamish Valley Action Plan, the City is committed over the next five years to implement new equitable development strategies in partnership with the community, including improving access to affordable housing, jobs, and contracting; and developing strategies to adapt to flood risk and other climate change impacts while helping keep people and businesses in place.

Seattle's Duwamish Valley Program is a multi-departmental effort jointly led by [Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment](#) and [OPCD](#) to advance the environmental justice and equitable development goals outlined in the [Equity & Environment Agenda](#) and [Equitable Development Implementation Plan](#).

[Read More](#)

New OPCD report shows continued population and job growth, increasing transit access, and ongoing housing affordability challenges

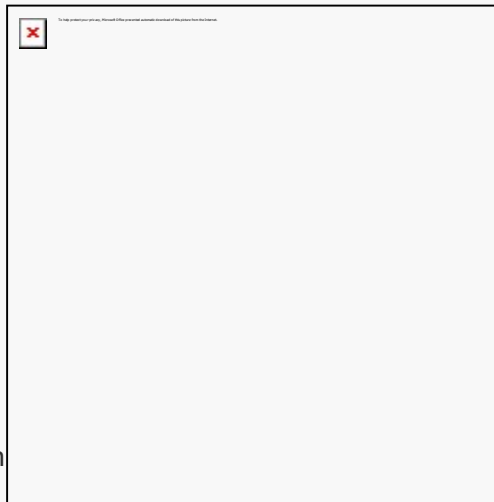
This month, OPCD released its new [2018 Urban Village Indicators Monitoring Report](#), the first in a series that will track growth and gauge progress in implementing the 20-year [Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan](#).

The heart of the Comprehensive Plan is its Urban Village Strategy, which guides growth to the areas of the city with the best access to transit and other public investments, while enabling the City to continue to efficiently expand access to services important for livability.

The monitoring report presents findings for the city as a whole and for individual urban centers and urban villages:

- Housing growth and employment growth
- Affordability of market-rate housing and the supply of housing dedicated to serving low-income households
- Access to transit, presence of sidewalks, and access to parks and open space to support urban livability

As detailed in the report, housing and employment growth continues at a rapid pace. **Twenty-two percent of the Comprehensive Plan's anticipated 20-year housing growth has already occurred in the first two years of the Plan's monitoring period, with about 15,000 housing units built.** And in just one year, Seattle experienced one-fifth of its anticipated 20-year employment growth, with South Lake Union adding more than 5,000 jobs. Despite the large number of jobs added in the city as a whole, jobs in manufacturing/industrial centers declined.



Although recent years saw record levels of housing development, that development was outpaced by demand. From 2012 to 2017, the average market rent in Seattle increased by more than one third after adjusting for inflation. More than half of Seattle renter households have incomes of 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or less, and about four in ten have incomes of 50% of AMI or less. Yet in 2016, the median market-rate rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in complexes with 20 or more units required income of 103% of AMI to be considered affordable.

Affordable housing production and preservation can help mitigate the risk of displacement of low-income residents struggling to make ends meet. Between January 2016 and March 2018, over 2,300 income-restricted affordable homes came online citywide, bringing the total to more than 29,300.

As of fall 2017, 64 percent of housing in the city is within a half-mile walk of weekday transit running at least every 10 minutes, up from 51 percent in 2016. Within urban centers and urban villages, 84 percent of homes have access to transit this frequent.

[Read More](#)



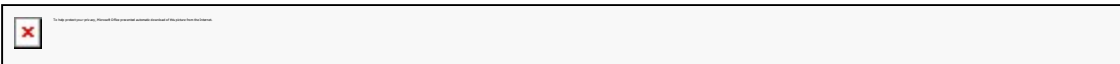
Public Comment Period Closes on Backyard Cottages Environmental Review

Interest in the City's work to encourage more backyard cottages and in-law apartments in Seattle's single-family zones has prompted hundreds of comments from homeowners and residents. During the six-week public comment period, the City received more than 800 comments on the alternatives and issues evaluated in the draft environmental review.

The City is proposing to remove regulatory barriers and reduce costs that can prevent homeowners from creating rental homes on their property. Options include reducing parking requirements, allowing larger cottages, and allowing both an in-law apartment and a cottage on the same lot. Though allowed for several years, in-law apartments and backyard cottages exist on less than two percent of single-family lots.

Each substantive comment on the [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) will receive a formal response in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, scheduled to be completed in late summer or early fall. At that time, the City also hopes to announce a preferred alternative for changes to regulations that would encourage more rental housing options in Seattle's most desirable and expensive neighborhoods.

[Learn more](#)



Chinatown/International District Community Continues to Develop Shared Vision

Residents and stakeholders from the Chinatown/International District continue to meet as part of an [ongoing community planning](#) process to determine what City investments and other strategies will support livability and affordability in one of Seattle's most historic and culturally significant neighborhoods. Meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to participate. All future meetings are posted on the [OPCD calendar](#). Gatherings are intended for community members who want to get more involved in shaping the strategies and actions that will be recommended to policymakers.

[Learn More](#)



You Decide How to Spend Park and Street Improvement Dollars

[Your Voice, Your Choice: Parks & Streets](#) is a participatory budgeting initiative in which community members democratically decide how to spend a portion of the City's budget on small park and street improvements. A total of \$285,000 is available in each City Council District – a total of \$3 million on park and street improvements all across Seattle.

The projects on the ballot were selected from over 1,000 ideas submitted in January by community members across Seattle. This year's options support improvements in areas impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges, especially in communities of color.

Until July 16, residents can cast their ballots for their top three choices in the district where they live, work, go to school, receive services, or volunteer.

Design Commission to Discuss West Seattle

Junction Park

At the next Seattle Design Commission meeting, the Commission will be reviewing a proposal by Seattle Parks and Recreation to create a new park in West Seattle Junction at 42nd Street SW between SW Alaska and SW Edmunds Streets.

The meeting is currently scheduled for July 19 at 1:00 pm in the Boards and Commission Room in City Hall, 600 – 4th Avenue.

More information will be available at the [Seattle Design Commission](#) website or by emailing SDC_Administration@seattle.gov.





Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor
Samuel Assefa, Director

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