

# AIA Seattle Public Testimony Guide

## One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

### Disclaimer

Your testimony reflects your personal experience as an architect, designer, or community member. Only AIA Seattle staff are authorized to speak directly as spokespeople for the organization. AIA Seattle's official position has been shared with Council through [a letter on 1-22-25](#)

If you choose to identify yourself as an AIA member, we ask that you **adhere to our values and use the talking points provided** to ensure alignment with our shared goals.

[Link to AIA Seattle's strategic plan](#)

[Link to AIA Seattle's Housing Policy Statement](#)

### Sign Up to Testify

All members planning to testify **MUST** sign up through the Council link. Public testimony sign-up **opens one hour before each meeting**. Sign up in advance using this link: [Public Comment – Council | seattle.gov](#) Even if you've used SignUp Genius through AIA Seattle, you are not signed up to testify until you've completed the public sign up linked above.

**Note:** Meeting dates and topics after February 5 are subject to change.

### Public Testimony Tips

- **Keep it brief.** You will have at most **two minutes** (about **300 words**), so plan accordingly.
- **Sign up early.** Remote sign-up opens **one hour before** the meeting. If testifying in person, arrive **at least 30 minutes early** to sign in.
- **In-person testimony has a greater impact.** Those speaking in person typically go first, setting the tone for comments. However, remote testimony is still valuable, and written comments are also accepted.
- **Personalize your introduction.** Explain **why housing matters to you** and **why you want to see more housing in your neighborhood**.
- **Be polite and positive.** Thank the Council for their work, even if you disagree on specific points.
- **Practice beforehand.** A clear and confident delivery makes a big impact.

### Testimony Structure and Talking Points

#### 1. Introduce Yourself

- Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am a [your profession or relevant role] and a resident of [Your Neighborhood/District].
- I am here to voice my strong support for the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan and urge you to approve it, including preserving all 30 Neighborhood Centers.

## 2. Explain Why This Matters to You (examples)

- Seattle is in a housing crisis, and we need a plan that allows for more housing options in every neighborhood.
- As a [architect, small business owner, renter, long-time resident], I've seen how our current zoning restrictions have limited growth, driven up housing costs, and pushed people out of the city.
- This plan creates opportunities to build housing where it's needed most, near jobs, transit, and small businesses so that Seattle can grow in a way that is sustainable and inclusive.

## 3. Highlight the Importance of Neighborhood Centers (examples)

- **Neighborhood Centers support gradual, organic growth.** This plan allows communities to accommodate natural growth over time, by creating the framework to allow for more mixed-use housing.
- **Neighborhood Centers create complete communities.** These centers make daily life more convenient and vibrant by allowing homes, small businesses, and essential services to be located together.
- **A variety of housing options makes neighborhoods more inclusive.** This plan supports different types of housing beyond just single-family homes, making it possible for people at different income levels to live in the same community.
- **Walkable, transit-connected neighborhoods benefit everyone.** Neighborhood Centers reduce reliance on cars, promote healthier lifestyles, and lower transportation costs for residents.

## 4. Make a Clear Ask

- I urge you to approve the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan and ensure that **all 30 Neighborhood Centers remain** part of the plan.
- Seattle has a chance to plan for growth in a way that benefits current and future residents. Please don't let this opportunity pass.

## 5. Thank the Council

- "Thank you for your time and leadership."

# Hot Button Issues & AIA Seattle's Position

## Trees & The Tree Ordinance

Seattle's urban tree canopy is important, but tree policies should not come at the expense of much-needed housing. AIA Seattle supports the Comprehensive Plan, which allows for both housing growth and a thriving tree canopy.

## Key Talking Points:

- **Housing and trees can co-exist.**
- **Removing trees in urban areas preserves forests elsewhere.** Allowing housing in Seattle prevents suburban sprawl, which leads to even greater deforestation in the Puget Sound region.
- **Tree policies should focus on planting, not red tape.** The best approach is **expanding tree canopy** in areas that need it most, rather than adding expensive permitting barriers that delay housing projects.
- **Make the process predictable and fair.** The plan allows for **a clear and straightforward system** where developers can remove trees with a replanting requirement or a fee, ensuring new trees are planted where they are needed.
- **Target the real problem areas.** Seattle's biggest canopy loss has been in **parks, downtown, and major institutions.** Not in the areas where housing is being built.

## Neighborhood Character & Density

Some critics of the Comprehensive Plan argue that increasing housing density will negatively impact neighborhood character. AIA Seattle supports the Comprehensive Plan, which ensures smart, well-planned density that strengthens communities, enhances walkability, and makes neighborhoods more inclusive.

## Key Talking Points:

- **Neighborhoods are always evolving.** Seattle's neighborhoods have changed over time, and the Comprehensive Plan ensures they have the opportunity to continue to **grow organically** in a way that benefits everyone.
- **Density brings vibrancy.** More residents mean more support for **local businesses, schools, and community spaces.**
- **Well-designed density maintains neighborhood appeal.** Thoughtful architecture and urban design **enhance neighborhood character** while providing more homes.

## Infrastructure & City Services

AIA Seattle supports the Comprehensive Plan, which ensures infrastructure investments keep pace with housing needs.

## Key Talking Points:

- **Growth doesn't have to strain infrastructure—it can improve it.** More housing means **more tax revenue** to invest in schools, transit, and public services.
- **Compact development is more efficient.** Higher-density housing near transit and job centers reduces the need for car travel and lowers overall infrastructure costs.