

FAQs + Facts

Information to Address Misconceptions
About the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

AIA Seattle is a membership organization with 2800+ members with a vision for the City of Seattle as a livable city with a variety of housing options near many types of amenities, retail cores, and transit that is accessible to everyone, where everything residents need can be reached by walking, rolling, or public transit.



Public Engagement

What was the process for public input on the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan?

The City of Seattle conducted extensive public outreach over multiple years to inform the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. This included meetings with community stakeholders, open houses, citywide surveys, and opportunities for public comment through the One Seattle Plan Engagement Hub. Thousands of residents participated, providing valuable feedback that shaped the Draft Plan.

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter I: Introduction and Community Engagement](#)

Why are we just hearing about this plan now?

The planning process for the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan has been ongoing and transparent, with numerous opportunities for public engagement since its inception. Despite extensive outreach, some community members may not have been aware of the plan until recent stages.

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter I: Introduction and Community Engagement](#)

Were neighborhoods affected by the plan consulted?

Yes, the City made concerted efforts to engage all neighborhoods, especially those most affected by potential changes. Through targeted outreach, community meetings, and public forums, residents from various neighborhoods were invited to provide input. The feedback received from these sessions directly influenced the development of the plan.

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter I: Introduction and Community Engagement](#)



Infrastructure

Do we have the infrastructure to support more housing, such as plumbing, electricity, and transportation?

Seattle's existing regulations ensure that new development does not overburden infrastructure. Developers are required to ensure adequate infrastructure, such as plumbing, sewer, electricity, and stormwater management, is in place for their projects. This often means funding improvements that benefit both the new development and the surrounding neighborhood.

For transportation, the city funds infrastructure improvements through dedicated levies and funding mechanisms. In 2024, Seattle voters approved an eight-year, \$1.55 billion transportation levy to maintain and modernize city streets, repair bridges, build sidewalks, and improve transit connections. While developers are not directly responsible for funding citywide transportation projects, these investments help ensure the transportation system keeps pace with growth.

References

[One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3: Growth Strategy](#)
[Chapter 6: Transportation](#)
[Seattle Transportation Levy Announcement](#)
[Seattle Public Utilities System Development Charges](#)



Tree Canopy

Will the plan lead to a loss of trees and negatively impact Seattle’s tree canopy?

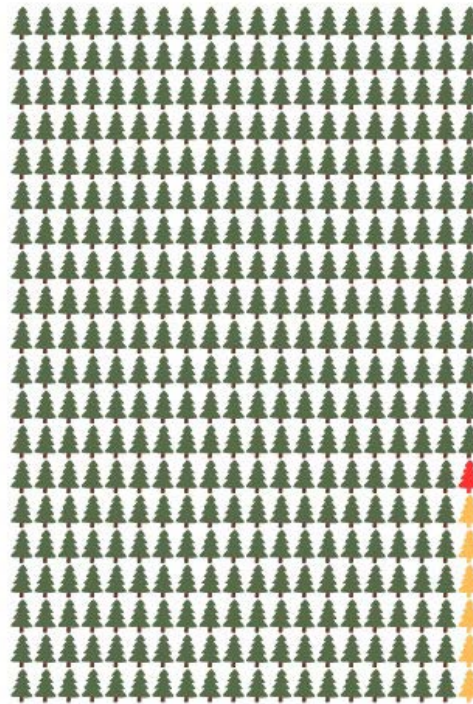
Development is not a leading cause of tree canopy loss, and in fact is a net contributor to tree coverage.

The 2021 Tree Canopy Assessment indicated a nominal decline from 28.6% in 2016 to 28.1% in 2021.

The City has implemented measures to protect and enhance the urban forest, including the Tree Protection Ordinance, which went into effect July 30, 2023. It safeguards an additional 157,000 trees, and addresses inequities in canopy distribution, particularly in historically underserved communities.

In the Comp plan FEIS calls out that less than 0.25% of our total tree canopy was lost due to development between 2016 and 2021 (pg 3.3-15). Over the same period, we built nearly 39,000 homes.

Additionally, data from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Private Property Permit Tree Tracking Database shows that more trees are planted during development than are removed.

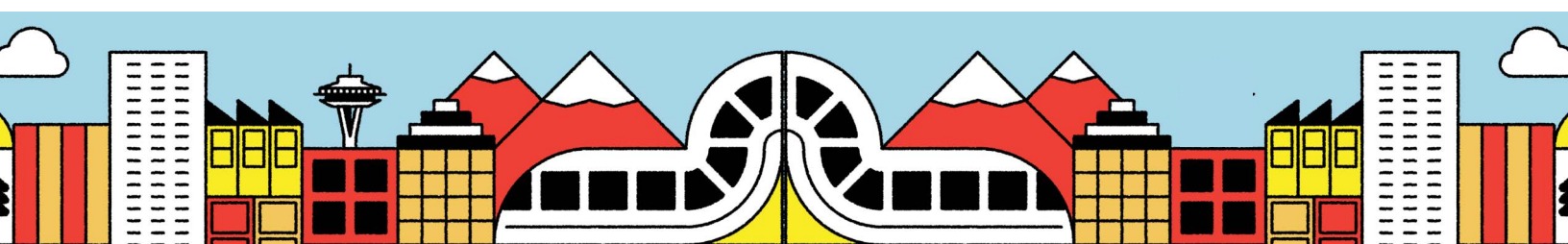


Of all the acres of tree canopy in Seattle, less than 1/4 of 1% were cut due to development and 1.4% were removed for other reasons

This database documents trees from approved, issued permits, and was enacted when the updated Tree Ordinance began July 30, 2023.

This database has four categories for the status of the tree, along with the ability to toggle between tiers of trees and between development/non-development.

Continued on page 5.



Tree Canopy, cont'd.

The four statuses are: Protected, which is a word for trees that were documented during a permit and retained with tree protection; Relocated, meaning the trees were permitted to be relocated on site; Removed, meaning the tree was allowed to be taken down through permit; and Planted, meaning trees that were planted as a requirement of the permit.

For all tiers of trees from June 30th 2023 to March 7th 2025:

- 2,397 trees were planted and 1,328 were removed as a result of development projects.
- 1,245 trees were planted and 1,500 trees were removed for some reason other than construction projects.

This suggests that development is not the primary driver of tree loss in Seattle and, in some cases, contributes to increasing tree canopy.

References:

[One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7: Environment and Climate Change](#)
[2021 Tree Canopy Assessment](#)
[Tree Protection Ordinance Announcement](#)
[SDCI Tree Tracking Database](#)



Zoning, Affordability, and Equity

Will this plan change single-family zoning and allow more density everywhere?

The One Seattle Comprehensive Plan proposes adding more housing options and does not eliminate the option of only building a single family home. It introduces policies that allow for more “missing middle” housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings in areas that currently only allow single family homes plus ADUs. The goal is to increase housing availability at a similar scale.

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 5: Housing](#)

If my property is in an area that zoning changes will I be forced to sell or redevelop?

No. Changes to zoning in the Comprehensive Plan (upzoning) will not force property owners to sell or redevelop their land.

Zoning Changes Do Not Mandate Action: Just because a property is in an upzoned area does not mean the owner must build new housing or change its use. Homeowners can continue living in their homes as before.

Development is Market-Driven: Whether a property is redeveloped depends on market demand, developer interest, and individual owner decisions—not zoning changes alone.

Protections for Homeowners: There are no legal requirements that force a property owner to sell simply because zoning laws have changed. If an owner wishes to keep their property as is, they are fully allowed to do so.

How will this plan impact housing affordability?

The plan aims to increase housing supply to help meet demand, which can help stabilize or lower housing costs over time. By allowing more diverse housing options, such as townhomes, cottage clusters, and apartments, Seattle can provide more affordable choices for renters and homeowners. Additionally, the plan includes policies to expand affordable housing programs, including incentives for developers to build income-restricted housing.

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 5: Housing](#)

What protections are in place to support equitable growth and prevent displacement?

A key focus of the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan is preventing displacement, particularly in communities that have historically been impacted by redevelopment. The plan includes anti-displacement strategies such as:

- Increasing affordable housing in high-risk areas
- Strengthening tenant protections
- Expanding community ownership models (e.g., land trusts)
- Prioritizing investments in historically underinvested neighborhoods

Reference: [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 5: Housing](#); [Chapter 8: Community Well-being](#)



Property Taxes

Will upzoning cause my property taxes to increase?

Current Use vs. Market Value: How Property Taxes Are Assessed

One of the most common misconceptions about property taxes and upzoning is that as soon as an area is upzoned, homeowners will see massive tax increases because of the potential development value of their property. However, Washington State law requires that properties be assessed based on their current use, not their future development potential unless a property is actively being redeveloped.

How Property Valuation Works in King County:

Current Use Determines Assessed Value

- The King County Assessor's Office values a property based on how it is currently being used.
- If a property is a single-family home, it will be taxed based on comparable homes in the area—not on its potential as a multifamily building or high-rise.

Market Value Reflects Existing Conditions

- The assessed value is determined by looking at sales of similar properties used in the same way (e.g., single-family homes are compared to other single-family homes, not to apartment buildings or townhomes).
- Upzoning does not automatically change how a property is categorized for tax purposes.

Only Active Redevelopment Triggers a Change

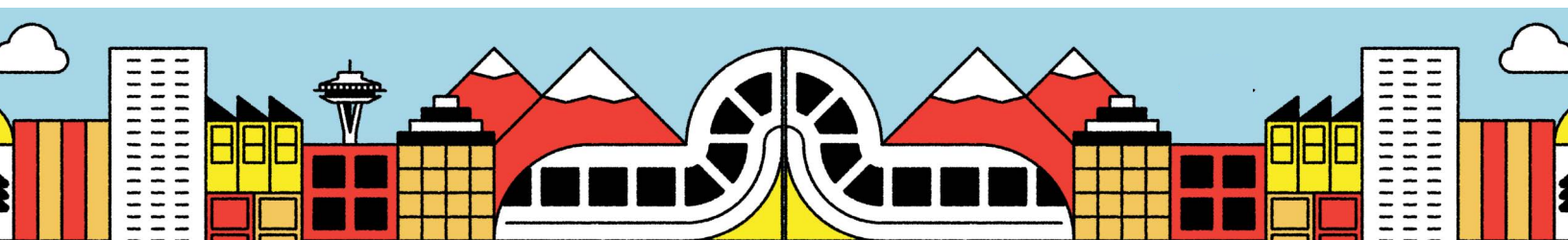
- If a property is being redeveloped (e.g., an older single-family home is torn down and replaced with townhomes), the property value may be reassessed based on the new use.
- This only applies after construction begins, not simply because zoning laws have changed.
- Special Tax Reduction Programs for Certain Property Uses

What This Means for Homeowners in Upzoned Areas

- If you own a single-family home in an upzoned area but don't plan to sell or redevelop, your property taxes will still be based on its use as a single-family home.
- Your assessed value won't automatically increase to reflect its potential for new housing.
- The only time a significant increase would occur is if the property is sold and redeveloped into multifamily housing.

For more information, visit:

[King County Assessor's Office – How Properties Are Valued](#)
[Home owners guide to property taxes.](#)



HB 1110

What is HB 1110?

House Bill 1110, passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2023, is a state-level land use reform that requires cities, including Seattle, to allow for greater housing density in traditionally single-family zones. It mandates:

- Increased Housing Capacity: Allows at least four housing units on all residential lots statewide.
- Transit-Oriented Housing: Permits up to six units on lots within a quarter-mile of major transit stops.
- Incentivized Affordable Housing: Up to six units per lot if two units are designated as affordable.

How does HB 1110 affect Seattle's Comprehensive Plan?

Seattle must update its Comprehensive Plan to comply with HB 1110 while integrating local policies on zoning, infrastructure, and housing affordability. The main adjustments include:

The City Council is considering interim legislation to implement core HB 1110 provisions ahead of full comprehensive plan adoption.

This interim action is not in place of the full Phase I Comprehensive Plan legislation.

Why Do We Need a Comprehensive Plan If HB 1110 Is Already Changing Zoning?

Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA), enacted in 1990, mandates that certain cities and counties develop Comprehensive Plans to manage population growth effectively. The GMA aims to ensure sustainable development, protect critical areas, and maintain a high quality of life for residents.

HB 1110 is a landmark state law that expands housing options across Washington, including Seattle. It allows for more housing types in residential neighborhoods, helping address the state's housing shortage. However, cities are still required to have a Comprehensive Plan to guide how these zoning changes fit into their broader vision for growth, affordability, infrastructure, and sustainability.

How HB 1110 and Seattle's Comprehensive Plan Work Together

While HB 1110 establishes statewide zoning minimums, Seattle's Comprehensive Plan ensures these changes are implemented effectively and strategically.

[What is HB 1110?](#)

