

Date

Seattle City Council
via e-mail

RE: Seattle Planning Commission comments on proposed amendments to the One Seattle Plan and permanent legislation to implement HB 1110

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

As you discuss and potentially amend the final draft of the One Seattle Plan and the permanent legislation to implement State House Bill (HB) 1110 on middle housing, the Seattle Planning Commission welcomes the opportunity to offer the following comments on the Council's proposed amendments to Council Bill (CB) 120985 and CB 120993 for your consideration.

Adopt the final One Seattle Plan in its boldest form.

The Planning Commission supports the adoption of key amendments that would increase housing supply and expand Neighborhood Centers. To expedite this process, we recommend that the City Council reintroduce any amendments that would require significant and lengthy additional environmental review during the 2026 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process.

Support a robust network of Neighborhood Centers.

The Planning Commission has been consistent in strongly supporting the creation of Neighborhood Centers. These centers are critical to achieving our vision of a Seattle where all residents live in a great neighborhood that is accessible and connected to the rest of the city and the region. They will serve as a new opportunity for where affordable and accessible housing can be built and are crucial to address Seattle's history of exclusionary zoning.

The Planning Commission supports maintaining the original boundaries of the Neighborhood Centers to maximize housing opportunities and to support both existing and new small businesses. Making revisions at this point in the process to reduce the boundaries does not support the vision of the One Seattle Plan.

Respect the years long process of broad community outreach that informed the plan's development.

The amendments, developed at this late stage in the process, prioritize more recent and narrow feedback without regard to the full range of input received throughout plan development. This approach risks undermining the transparency, shared values, and equity commitments that have guided the Comprehensive Plan update to this point.

We support the following proposed amendments that would:

- **Incentivize more types of housing.**
Stacked flat bonuses, height bonuses, additional density for affordable housing and accessible units, and allowances for higher buildings would remove barriers to developing housing, especially affordable housing.
- **Expand opportunities for small-scale neighborhood commercial establishments.**
Allowing a wider variety of small commercial establishments in more locations throughout the city would foster neighborhoods where goods and amenities are accessible within a short walk or roll. More locations and more operational flexibility make for a more diverse and resilient neighborhood commercial environment.
- **Eliminate minimum parking requirements.**
Parking minimums are an outdated and harmful barrier that adds significant costs and directly suppresses housing production. We also support increasing the number of areas where parking maximums apply, including not only existing but future light rail station areas. We recognize that adding housing density and changing parking requirements must be part of a comprehensive travel demand management strategy that coordinates the use of the right-of-way as demand changes over time.
- **Provide additional flexibility for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).**
Excluding ADUs from floor area ratio limits and density calculations, allowing larger maximum size for ADUs, and exempting ADUs from Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations would help incentivize this particular form of housing, benefiting both homeowners and their families as well as renters and newcomers to a neighborhood.
- **Expand the definition of Major Transit Service to include frequent bus routes.**
Doing so would open far more neighborhoods to housing without costly parking mandates, making it easier and cheaper to build new homes.

The Planning Commission does not support amendments that create barriers to housing affordability.

Of particular concern are those amendments that add bureaucratic hurdles to the production of more homes such as:

- design standards for historic districts
- requiring alternative site plans to demonstrate that trees can be retained

Seattle is facing an ongoing housing affordability crisis, characterized by rapidly increasing home prices, rents outpacing income growth, and a limited supply of affordable housing. The intent of the One Seattle Plan is to implement the City's growth strategy, remove barriers, and provide incentives for the production of a variety of housing types for all affordability levels across the city.

Conclusion

The Commission supports the boldest form of the One Seattle Plan: one that reflects the vision cultivated through intentional engagement with the public, with a robust network of Neighborhood Centers and diverse housing types, and that envisions a city that is affordable and accessible to all Seattleites.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on CB 120985 - the One Seattle Plan, and CB 120993 - the permanent legislation to implement HB 1110. If you have any questions, please contact Vanessa Murdock, the Commission's Executive Director.

Sincerely,

Xio Alvarez and Matt Hutchins
Co-Chairs, Seattle Planning Commission

DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS:

Cc: Ben Noble, Lish Whitson; City Council Central Staff
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