May 6, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Office of Planning and Community Development
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue, 5th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104
Attn: Rico Quirindongo
Email: PCD_CompPlan_EIS@seattle.gov

Re: Comments on One Seattle Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Quirindongo,

On behalf of the Ballard Alliance, we would like to thank you for meeting with our organization to discuss the City's One Seattle Plan ("Plan") and its potential impacts on our Ballard neighborhood.

The Ballard Alliance is a business and community development organization committed to ensuring that our Ballard community remains a unique, distinct, and economically vital area for its visitors, residents, businesses, and property owners. Through our programs and services, we strive to cultivate a vibrant and thriving environment in Ballard, focusing on urban design and transportation, economic development and business retention, marketing and promotions, and maintaining a clean, healthy, and safe neighborhood.

We share many of the goals expressed in the Plan and appreciate the City's dedication to increased affordable housing and to healthy commercial areas. After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS"), we believe that several issues would benefit from additional attention and review.

We request that the Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS") and future planning processes reflect attention to the following issues:

1. **Expedite the subarea plan:** If Ballard is designated as a Regional Center but its subarea plan and implementing zoning is not completed until 2027, as the proposed current timeline suggests, the uncertainty around the potential zoning specifics may stifle investment in Ballard as owners wait for clarity. If Ballard is to be designated as a Regional Center, we encourage the City to prioritize the implementation of the subarea plan to be the first to be completed.

   Additionally, as part of the subarea planning process, the City should ensure that the Ballard Alliance and our members, who have a deep commitment to the success of Ballard and the unique needs, character, history, and opportunities in our neighborhood, are represented on any further subarea planning initiatives, committees, and outreach. We encourage the City to study the unique needs of our retail stakeholders and the successes of our Ballard-specific design guidelines through additional urban design and retail studies in the subarea plan. Lastly, as we understand from our University District colleagues who implemented a similar effort

with the U-District rezone, this subarea planning effort will require significant time and commitment from Ballard Alliance staff and members. We encourage the City to explore grant and other financial support, as authorized by law, to compensate for highly active participation.

2. **Preserve existing density along the Market Street retail core:** Within the potential Regional Center, we encourage the City to focus the significant additional growth, height, and density near light rail and along the key north-south corridors above Market Street, such as 15th Avenue NW. While the potential Regional Center designation may support 160 foot (or taller) high-rise density near the light rail station, we encourage that highest density to be targeted. The unique retail core of Market Street – between 15th Avenue and 24th Avenue – should be carefully designed to support the vibrant, mixed-use retail and residential character of that area. Ballard Alliance members wish to avoid the potential for a "canyon" effect along Market Street.

3. **Perform a cumulative transportation analysis:** With the potential Regional Center designation, we also express concern about existing and planned projects that pose significant impacts on our community, such as the Route 40 bus-only lanes and Burke-Gilman Trail expansions, which will impede key arterials and threaten future growth and accessibility in Ballard. As part of the FEIS, the City should provide a more detailed cumulative analysis of potential Regional Center neighborhood transportation systems with includes planned SDOT projects within our neighborhood. We encourage this to be completed both at the FEIS stage so the City can understand the potential transportation related needs with a Regional Center designation, and if the City adopts the Regional Center, further analysis will likely be needed.

   We urge that all City major transportation projects in Ballard be placed on hold until this cumulative impact analysis is complete to ensure cohesive and thoughtful development and policy-making. Future infrastructure programs must be grounded in data-driven analysis to justify their necessity and effectiveness, unlike the Route 40 project, which the Ballard Alliance strongly believes lacks sufficient justification and community input to proceed at this time.

4. **Foster an "18-hour city" environment:** We support approaches to planning that would prioritize job and retail growth in Ballard over additional population growth, consistent with the character of an 18-hour city. Ballard's distinct retail character is essential to the neighborhood and must be preserved, including through zoning incentives.

5. **Support Ballard job growth:** Currently, the One Seattle Plan shows a roughly 3 to 1 ratio in the targeted net housing units to jobs projected for the future Ballard Regional Center. We encourage the City to adjust the housing to jobs ratio for the Ballard Regional Center. Additionally, as part of the subarea planning, the City should explore policies, programs, and incentives that will encourage more high-quality jobs to be created in or relocated to Ballard.

6. **Invest in public safety:** We advocate for a significant investment in public safety resources, including the establishment of a dedicated police precinct in Ballard. With Ballard poised to become a Regional Center, adequate utilities and infrastructure, including police and fire services, are imperative to support the anticipated growth and ensure the safety of our residents and businesses.

7. **Invest in livability:** We emphasize the need for increased green space and pedestrian amenities to enhance the livability and well-being of our community. These areas contribute to the physical and mental well-being of our residents, improve the environment, and complement active retail centers. As part of the Regional Center zoning standards, the City

should work with Ballard stakeholders to identify and adopt local zoning incentives and opportunities to encourage development of parks and open space with new construction.

Again, we appreciate the City's attention to these considerations and look forward to continued collaboration in achieving our shared goals of vitality and sustainability in Ballard. We look forward to working with the Mayor and City Council to implement a vibrant future for our Ballard community.

Sincerely,

Mike Stewart
Executive Director
Ballard Alliance

cc: Council President Sara Nelson
Councilmember Dan Strauss
Councilmember Tanya Woo