Calling on Seattle City Council to Improve the Comprehensive Plan

(Substitute Resolution)

Whereas Seattle is currently in the process of drafting a comprehensive plan to chart the next 20 years of the city's development

Whereas Seattle recently released the draft Comprehensive Plan

Whereas the draft Comprehensive Plan is full of the language of racial, economic, and environmental justice and goals related to achieving it

Whereas 40% of Seattle residents are low-income and only 20% of newly built housing units are affordable for low-income residents

Whereas the practical aspects of the draft Comprehensive Plan do not address the need for housing that is truly affordable and part of a healthy and liveable community

Whereas mature trees are necessary for healthy and livable communities, and housing built on lots that are 85-100% hardscape creates heat islands leaving no room for trees or other green space on such lots

Whereas the draft Comprehensive Plan purports to address the need for Seattle to increase tree canopy cover, it does not advance adequate policy measures that will accomplish this

Whereas neighborhoods that were historically redlined are rapidly gentrifying and their residents are at high risk for displacement

Whereas the draft Comprehensive Plan does not offer adequate policy solutions to prevent further displacement or to provide truly affordable housing for individuals and families in these neighborhoods since housing aimed at 80% of Seattle's median income translates to an income in excess of $90,000 that is a higher income than many essential workers earn

Whereas in proposing the draft Comprehensive Plan, the City of Seattle is missing an opportunity to demonstrate how it will attract and retain families with school age children and essential workers in health care, education, other public services, hospitality and others

Whereas retaining these critical parts of our workforce depends on producing housing that is affordable to moderate income households

Whereas determining property value and tax assessment based on “highest and best use” rather than current use results in rapidly increasing property values

Whereas under the current plan, property taxes will continue to rise higher and higher, resulting in displacement and prevention of wealth-building among legacy homeowners

Therefore be it Resolved that the 37th Legislative District Democrats support excluding historically redlined areas from all density bonuses, including for non-profit and religious organizations, and remove "highest and best use" zoning for property tax purposes in these areas

Be it further Resolved that these exemptions should be retroactive to 2019 with paid “highest and best use” tax differentials used as credits against future tax years

Be it further Resolved to support creative building designs that retain trees and mirror the character of existing neighborhoods which will make these neighborhoods healthier and more livable

Be it further Resolved that the City shall identify and implement plan(s) that have proven to be effective in supporting public service workers with families, including health care workers and educators, to afford rent and the purchase of homes in Seattle

Be it finally Resolved that the 37th Legislative District Democrats will transmit this resolution to all Seattle City Council members and to the Mayor stating that it is crucial that in its effort to redress the historical wrongs of redlining, the City use an approach that brings tangible benefits to affected communities rather than creating new, oppressive, unhealthful policies and structures that exacerbate inequities.