From:	Jennifer Matter [WA]
To:	PCD_OneSeattleCompPlan
Cc:	Yvette De La Cruz [WA]; Meesh Vecchio [WA]; Elizabeth Ward-Robertson [WA]; LEG_CouncilMembers; Wong, Greg
Subject:	SEA Feedback on Seattle Comp plan
Date:	Saturday, May 4, 2024 12:11:43 PM
Attachments:	image001.png

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Office of Planning & Community Development,

I am writing on behalf of the Seattle Education Association, which represents nearly 6,000 educators working in Seattle Public Schools. The Comprehensive Plan Update is a critical opportunity for the City to start correcting the wrongs of the past which have harmed BIPOC communities and resulted in a City that is segregated and unaffordable to working-class families.

According to a recent report cited in the Seattle Times, BIPOC households in King County have lost between $12 billion and $34 billion due to racially restrictive housing practices and redlining since 1950 ("How much wealth King County residents lost due to racist housing policies," Seattle Times, July 14, 2023). And, many racist practices continue in the real estate industry today, continuing to financially harm BIPOC students and families. One telling statistic from www.blackhomeinitiative.org is that Black homeownership rates in Seattle are only 26%, roughly half that of white homeownership rates (51%).

Racism in the housing market means that our neighborhoods, and thus our neighborhood schools, are segregated by race and wealth. In fact, schools in Seattle are even more segregated now than they were in the 1980s ("Why Seattle schools are more segregated today than the 1980s," Seattle Times, May 28, 2023). One of the most important promises of public education is that - no matter where children live – they should all have access to high quality, well-funded schools. Sadly, zip code remains a strong predictor of student outcomes.

Further, according to the 2020 census, Seattle ranks 3rd amongst cities with the fewest children, and Seattle has become even less affordable to families since 2020. Enrollment in Seattle Public Schools is declining rapidly (with school closures on the horizon) and this trend is predicted to continue, because of low birthrates and the low number of children per capita in Seattle. These trends are deeply alarming. What is the future of our City if families with children cannot afford to purchase a home or otherwise to live here?

The Comprehensive Plan Update needs to boldly address these issues. Prior Comp Plans underpredicted the rate of growth of the City, resulting in a significant housing shortage. And we have never taken the necessary measures to address past and ongoing racism in the housing market. We need to do better this time - we need to add enough housing capacity to address the current shortage and not to underpredict future growth. We need to act with urgency to develop policies and practices to address racism in the housing market, including promoting BIPOC homeownership, and to make

homeownership affordable for educators and other workers who deserve to own a home in the community they serve.

In order to achieve the vision of "One Seattle" we need a City where ALL families have the choice to live anywhere in the City (including neighborhoods that have been inaccessible for too long), where families feel they can actually afford to have children, where our students can see a future for themselves, and where our schools are full of students and thriving.

Thank you for your consideration. Please be bold in your approach to updating the Comprehensive Plan so that we can truly become "One Seattle."

Sincerely,

Jennifer Matter (she/her)
President
Seattle Education Association

Cell (206) 580-9381
jennifer.matter@washingtonea.org
5501 4th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98108
www.seattlewea.org

Confidential and Private Information. Not to be disclosed to any other person, except to the extent necessary to perform union obligations.