BELLWETHER
HOUSING

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

May 6, 2024

Re: Support for Additional Residential Capacity Downtown

Dear Mr. Quirindongo,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS"), as well as the Draft One Seattle Plan.

Established in 1980, Bellwether Housing has been a pioneering force in Seattle's affordable housing landscape. As the largest nonprofit affordable housing provider in Seattle, Bellwether Housing manages over 3,000 apartments across 35 buildings, serving over 5,000 residents. Our mission is to create stable and equitable communities by developing and managing affordable homes for individuals and families with low incomes. We commend the commitment to affordable housing and the other values articulated in the draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

Given our mission, we are eager to see allowances for additional residential development across Seattle – particularly in downtown areas, where many of our buildings are located. We firmly believe that increasing housing capacity in the downtown core is essential for addressing Seattle's housing affordability crisis and fostering a more inclusive urban environment.

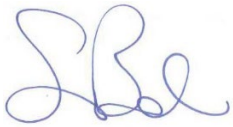
Accordingly, we are writing to urge that you move forward with the completion and implementation of the Downtown Subarea Plan as quickly as possible. As one of the most densely populated and economically vital areas in the city, downtown Seattle presents a unique opportunity to significantly expand housing options and create more affordable units. Expediting the completion of the plan for this neighborhood will help accommodate the urgent and growing demand for affordable housing.

In addition, we encourage you to study and support plans for additional height and density allowances throughout Seattle, particularly in downtown, during the remainder of the comprehensive planning and subarea planning

processes. We note that all alternatives of the DEIS direct the most jobs to downtown, but not necessarily the most housing. An alternative should be studied that creates a better balance between new jobs and new housing units in downtown Seattle. Specifically, areas of Belltown and the Downtown Retail Core zone should be targeted for additional height and mixed-use density. The challenges posed by the recent Covid-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of a robust residential community to a thriving downtown. Maintaining focus on increased housing capacity and affordability will facilitate the creation of vibrant, diverse, and equitable neighborhoods.

We would be pleased to collaborate with your department as may be helpful to ensure that the One Seattle and Downtown Subarea plans reflect a strong emphasis on residential capacity and affordability, including greater height and density allowances. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Susan Boyd, Chief Executive Officer
Bellwether Housing