BHCS BEACON HILL COUNCIL SEATTLE

May 6, 2024 e-distribution

OneSeattleCompPLan@seattle.gov
Mayor Bruce Harrell
Seattle City Council Pres. Sara Nelson
Seattle City Council Members
OPCD Director Rico Quiridongo

Re: Beacon Hill Neighborhood Input to 2025 One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the 2025 Draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan (OSCP). We are commenting from the Beacon Hill Council.

We are sending our OSCP input not only to OPCD staff, but to Mayor Bruce Harrell and Council President Sara Nelson and all Councilmembers to make sure that when the updated OSCP moves to the Mayor's Office, then to the Seattle City Council, that you have a collective understanding of our Beacon Hill neighborhood, our assets, challenges and why we gave our input for housing equity and climate equity in a conditional manner that would not harm us.

Our Beacon Hill Council mission is to "advocate for a welcoming, diverse, and healthy neighborhood community" for our population of 29% below federal poverty level, 70% people of color and 40% immigrants and refugees. We have several neighborhood challenges:

- The housing shortage and the passage and implementation of the Mandatory Housing Affordability Act resulted in our Beacon Hill neighborhood reported by Seattle Times as the most gentrified neighborhood. We conducted a joint housing, art/culture and business survey with strong results that we need low income housing for 30 to 60% AMI with larger units to accommodate families and extended families, and below market business and art/cultural spaces. *23 BHC BA BBA Red Apple Community Visioning Project Report.pdf*

- We have three sources of pollution, air, and noise from roads (I-5, I-90, Rainier Avenue and MLK Way) and aircraft from two airports (SeaTac Airport and King County Int'l Airport) and indoor air and noise pollution from gas/oil heating.

- We are an identified as heat island prone (6 degrees hotter) given that we are a tree desert and have lower canopy on the average than the rest of the City. These trees are

critical assets to sequester carbon/GHG, buffer air and noise pollution, cool temperatures and provide physical, mental, and spiritual benefits to our neighbors.

We understand that there are new strategies for neighbors to stay in place and for climate response that are not included in the OSCP. We look forward to seeing these strategies and discussing them with you to see if they can be helpful in keeping our neighborhood diverse and help our neighbors stay in place.

Our input below is consistent with our desire to keep our Beacon Hill neighborhood healthy, race/ethnically and class diverse and the long-term work to help our current and future residents.

1. **Housing & Equity:**

   a. To stay in place and ensure class diversity, we advocate for OSCP to 1) establish a 29% housing goal for those who earn 30 to 60% AMI (Average Median Income)based on the Census 2020 population for Beacon Hill, and 2) monitor every six months the cumulative granted building permits to ensure that 29% housing units for 30 to 60 % AMI housing projects are included. The latter recommendation is intended to mitigate rapid gentrification which would result in the loss of federal HUD Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Census Tracts (WCT) status. It is based on our lived experience at north Beacon Hill. Upon gentrification of the area as an urban village, the AMI went up and the area lost QCT status. We need to retain the QCT status for middle and south Beacon Hill so low-income and affordable housing developers can access critical federal low-income tax credits for their financing packages.

   b. With the above 1) 29% housing goal for 30 to 60% AMI and 2) close monitoring every six months to ensure that 29% of cumulative building permits are granted to 30 to 60% AMI housing projects, we support the creation of dense, multi-family housing across Beacon Hill, that allows for our current and future residents to live in neighborhoods with a mix of income levels.

      This means the intentional and careful update to the Comprehensive Plan for Beacon Hill to expand the currently proposed north Beacon Hill Urban Center and establish middle and south Beacon Hill Neighborhood Centers as illustrated (roughly) below.

These proposed changes, in blue, are based on the frequent transit available in Beacon Hill, and our desire and to have 15-minute walkable community centers throughout Beacon Hill to ensure food access, business/commercial resources, gathering places and the overall urban nature of the area.

c. We support the restructuring of city policies to allow for the construction of more middle housing options, such as four and six-plexes and SROs, and encouragement of stack construction of rental apartments or condos in addition to current town houses. Current city regulations make such projects untenable and restrict building options for developers.

d. We strongly advocate for preserving the hard-earned equity for redlined communities such as Beacon Hill's fair representation of people of color home ownership in middle and south Beacon Hill by providing them with technical assistance on developing their property to add housing units and defer payment of the construction permit until point of sale.

e. We support the efficient redesign and drastic rollback of the design review process, which slows construction of new housing in this severe housing crisis.

2. **Climate & Equity:**

   a. We strongly advocate for centering climate in the OSCP to reflect policies that would reduce greenhouse gasses and promote community resiliency. Beacon Hill has 800 homeowners earning between 30-60% AMI on gas/oil heat needing clean energy conversion and energy assistance.

   b. To assist our Beacon Hill community climate resiliency, we strongly advocate for restoring the 30% tree canopy goal which is the basis of the Seattle Citywide Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan, and Reaching Urban Tree Equity (RUTE) Initiative. *24 BHC 4-2 Mtg Lauren Urgenson Tree Equity Presentation.pdf*

   c. We support reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by letting people live closer to where they work, shop, and play, needs to be a central goal in the SCP.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan regarding the future of our beloved Beacon Hill neighborhood. The OSCP highly impacts our ability to meet our mission to "advocate for a welcoming, diverse and healthy Beacon Hill neighborhood community."

We welcome your questions and comments. We are willing to meet in person or online to collaborate on the future of our neighborhood and our beloved Seattle City.

We commit to engaging closely on the OSCP process as it moves from the Mayor's Office to the Seattle City Council for passage.

Respectfully,
Beacon Hill Council
Adam Vance, Treasurer Amy Kaminishi, Deirdre Curle, Gerry Chambers, Kalia Carter, Chair Maria Batayola, Mark Solomon, and Vice Chair Megan Slade

c: Seattle City Council D2 Rep. Tammy Morales
Seattle D2 Council Rep. Director of External Relations Evelyn Chow
Beacon Arts Board President Betty Jean Williamson
Beacon Business Alliance ED Angela Castaneda
Beacon Hill Councilmembers
Beacon Hill Clean Energy & Climate Resiliency Task Force Co-Stakeholders
Bethany United Church of Christ Rev. Angela Ying
El Centro De La Raza ED Estela Ortega and Miguel Maestas