To the employees of OPCD,

Comprehensive plans were first devised by the Growth Management Act of 1990. They were created with the intent to defend the “health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by the residents of this state.”[1] We as students and workers in and around the University of Washington have struggled under housing prices which have adversely affected our health, safety, and quality of life. The current comprehensive plan doesn't deliver enough housing to adequately lower these housing prices, and puts most new housing far away from our work. We therefore ask for an addition in housing capacity in these areas:

- Montlake
    - A new urban center encompassing land within 4 blocks of the route 48 from Boyer Ave to the cut
- Portage Bay
    - A Neighborhood Anchor around the Little Market
- Lower Laurelhurst
    - A new urban center within 3 blocks of both the route 75 and the Burke-Gilman trail up to 75th street, and within 4 blocks of Children's Hospital to accommodate nurses
- Wallingford
    - An expansion to the existing urban village in Wallingford between 40th and 50th streets from Wallingford Ave to 2nd street

We as students and workers are also one of the primary beneficiaries from affordable housing schemes. We furthermore ask that the Seattle Social Housing Developer be given the same incentives as other affordable housing types.

Why These Demands

A 2017 study found that a gap between housing supply and demand was one of the largest factors in driving up housing prices.[2] The study also specifically mentions that changing zoning was the "greatest opportunity to close this gap immediately.”[3] The current comprehensive plan does not do enough to meet the challenge considering the scale of the problem.

To most effectively close this gap, we ask for the creation of Urban Villages, which allow for apartment level density over raising overall city density. This level of density would incentivise developers to build new units far more than slightly raising density citywide.

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[1] Growth Management Act 1990 36 R.C.W § 36.70A.010

[2] Maritz, Benjamin, and Dilip Wagle. “Why Does Prosperous King County Have a Homelessness Crisis?” *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 22 Jan. 2020, www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/why-does-prosperous-king-county-have-a-homelessness-crisis.

[3] Maritz, Benjamin, and Dilip Wagle. “Why Does Prosperous King County Have a Homelessness Crisis?” *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 22 Jan. 2020, www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/why-does-prosperous-king-county-have-a-homelessness-crisis.

While the needs of developers should not be the guiding principle behind housing policy, the city does not support enough public housing construction to provide the units Seattlites will need. There will need to be a heavy reliance on private developers to provide the city with housing. Higher density would allow for a level of private investment that would match the scale of the problem we face.

Why These Locations

We would like for these locations to be upzoned due to 3 main concerns:

1) Social and historical justice
    - The areas we ask to rezone have some of the highest median incomes in the city, and have some of the lowest minority populations
    - All of the areas we ask to rezone have the lowest displacement risk in the city
2) Climate justice
    - Housing costs make workers working in these areas live hours away from their work, so they may access affordable housing. This forces them to commute using heavily polluting cars. All of the areas we ask to rezone have access to frequent transit
    - All the areas the areas we ask to rezone, save Wallingford, will have access to good bike infrastructure within a decade
    - Dense housing emits far less carbon emissions than single family housing[4]
    - Building dense urban housing prevents tree canopy loss on the city limits[5]
3) Proximity and Happiness
    - Short commutes make people happier[6]
    - Dense, walkable neighborhoods make people happier[7]
    - We live and work in and around the areas highlighted. We are invested in these areas, and should have a say on their future

OPCD has one chance every 10 years to solve this problem. We ask that your department doesn't put this off another 10 years, and delivers affordable housing to our city now while it has the chance.

Signed,

Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) Student Senate

ASUW Board of Directors

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[4] *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2014, 48, 2, 895–902 Publication Date:December 13, 2013 https://doi.org/10.1021/es4034364

[5] A.P. (2005, January 11). *Groups: Urban sprawl threatens species*. NBCNews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna6814251#.UelSneDR3ia

[6] Han L, Peng C, Xu Z. The Effect of Commuting Time on Quality of Life: Evidence from China. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 Dec 29;20(1):573. doi: 10.3390/ijerph20010573. PMID: 36612893; PMCID: PMC9819363.

[7] Kevin M. Leyden, Michael J. Hogan, Lorraine D'Arcy, Brendan Bunting & Sebastiaan Bierema (2024) Walkable Neighborhoods, Journal of the American Planning Association, 90:1, 101-114, DOI: 10.1080/01944363.2022.2123382