May 6th, 2024

Aja Hazelhoff
Engagement Lead,
Office of Planning & Community Development
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Ave. Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: One Seattle Plan, Draft Comprehensive Plan Comments

Dear Aja,
The Northwest Universal Design Council (NWUDC), supported by DSHS and Age Friendly Seattle, is please to submit comments on the One Seattle Draft Plan. NWUDC promotes the incorporation of universal design principles, products, and processes that enable all people. Our mission is to educate others to recognize and promote equity in all environments.

Our membership includes real estate brokers, interior designers, architects of all types, builders, developers, city planners, affordable housing professionals, technology experts, transportation experts, and community advocates. Please see the attached comments formulated and compiled by our steering committee members.

Sincerely,
Carli Hoki
Steering Committee Facilitator,
Northwest Universal Design Council

We appreciate the City of Seattle's aim to eliminate barriers, promote equal opportunities, and foster social integration. The NWUDC has the same focus. We ask that the city emphasize the need for universal design in various segments of the Comprehensive Plan; including Housing, Parks, Parking and Transportation. Early integration of these design principles would have far reaching impacts on the future.

We would like to see more consideration give to the follow demographics

- The Washington Office of Financial Management estimates that between 2020 and 2040, King County's population of people aged 60 and above will grow by 44% from approx. 456,000 to 658,000. As people live longer, many will age with or into disability. (WA State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, 2022 Projections, "County Growth Management Population Projections by Age and Sex)
- Nearly 18% of adults in Seattle lived with a disability between 2017-2021. (Age Friendly Seattle Strategic Framework 2022-2027)
- There are higher rates of disabilities experienced among people of color than white people, among renters than homeowners and among people with lower incomes than those with higher incomes. In Seattle, 34% of Black people reported living with a disability, while 18% of white people reported living with a disability. (WA State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, 2022 Projections, "County Growth Management Population Projections by Age and Sex)

We know that the Comprehensive Plan Review committee has reviewed similar numbers, as is evident in the Housing Appendix. **More attention to this data and the urgent need to create an accessible city could be emphasized in both the Appendix and the Comprehensive Plan.** This is a key opportunity for the City of Seattle to convey this priority to collaborators such as private and nonprofit developers, as well as, other agencies and city partners.

Housing and Capital Facilities

We appreciate the emphasis in the "Introduction" regarding improved supply, variety, and affordable housing to provide homes for a diverse population. The increased types of housing for individuals and families must be designed to be functional and accessible by residents of all abilities. Universal Design (UD) is an approach to design that recognizes and accommodates the changes characteristics people experience over their lives.

Increased housing stock that includes accessible options at an affordable price will enable a larger percentage of our population to thrive in Seattle. Inclusive, Human-centered design that embraces diversity and uniqueness of a community helps everyone and addresses accessibility, age, culture, economic situation, education, gender, geographic location, language, and race. As new housing enters the industry it should be well equipped to suit all future occupants.

For example, providing more middle housing with multi-story buildings is not livable by our aging population. It only provides more housing for specific demographic. The new policy and zoning of duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes and cottage housing, as mention under the new Urban Neighborhoods, could be a great source for more housing, however, they must be designed and built with the greater population in mind, so that the maximum number of people can benefit from these new homes.

Inclusive housing is flexible. Residents can reinvent, redefine, and repurpose space as they experience temporary or permanent changes through their lifespan. It allows for more people to use homes without expensive modifications. If additional modifications are needed less costly to convert, adaptable home is one which designed to allow low cost and easy adaptation to the changing needs of residents. Universal design provides more resilient and sustainable housing stock.

Park, Public Spaces, Parking and Transportation

We applaud the highlighted “accessibility and mobility needs with universal design features” noted under “Diversity of Housing Types” and would like to see such language under Parks, Public Spaces, Parking and Transportation.

We also applaud “Housing Construction, Quality and Design,” Policies H7.7 and H7.8 and are hopeful regulations and incentives will be implemented that will ensure this type of diverse housing.