

C I R C U L A T I O N D R A F T

INTRODUCING THE
SEATTLE COMMUNITY & AFFORDABILITY NETWORK

A NEW GROWTH STRATEGY FOR SEATTLE

COMPILED BY RISE UP BELLTOWN



THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

In 1881 an American journalist in California published a book that sold more copies than any book previously in our country's history. The book sold millions, because its premise was straightforward, yet also profound. It pointed out that *everywhere* in the industrializing world, there was an easily observable pattern that linked progress with poverty.

He noticed that wherever there was an increase in material wealth, there was *always* an increase in the presence of poverty. This premise was so observable that it was virtually undisputed in the press, even by the book's adversaries. 150 years later, in our blossoming frontier town, Seattle is a shining example of the enduring truth of that pattern.



Growth is great, but leaves people behind.



Decent people care about their neighbors.



Too much of Seattle is getting left behind.



It's time to try something new.

THE STATE OF SEATTLE IN 2019

Thriving urban growth in Seattle is – time and again – directly linked to the economic, cultural, and social displacement of human beings. Growth itself is not a bad thing. It is bound to happen. As long as humans are having babies, growth will be inevitable. And that is fabulous. Growth is the reason we have band-aids, pizza, and rock n' role. But in moral societies, that growth goes hand-in-hand with creative solutions to mitigate the damage that it leaves in it's wake.

Living in Seattle is becoming impossible for too many of us. Thousands of us are living outside. Tens of thousands of us are living indoors, but are **just one paycheck or health crisis away from being homeless.** Meanwhile chefs and bartenders, office assistants and retail workers; our workforce every day is driving in from places like Renton and Burien, because that's as close to Seattle as they can afford.

With cranes on every corner, we've been trying to build our way out of that problem, but so far it hasn't been working. There's not enough affordable housing, and won't be anytime soon. We are rapidly losing our workforce to the outer boroughs. At the same time, we're losing our cultural and historic icons. We're losing our neighborhoods, and our gathering spaces. It's tearing at the cultural fabric of our community, and we are desperately in need of solutions.

A lot of things we're doing *are working*. We're on the right track. But it's simply not enough.

It's time for a new approach.



IMPROVING ON SUCCESS & AND HALA v1.0

Seattle’s current response to growth is the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) and specifically the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program. These programs get a lot right, and have set us up for success. With so many impacts yet to be addressed and funded, it’s essential that we build on these programs, as this opportunity for communities is unique.

“New development capacity expected to be added under remaining MHA proposals is equivalent to approximately 1,048 acres of new developable land area.*

This proposal would increase that volume by over 3,000% and monetize it, while channeling the proceeds into public and private local investments.”

**based on an estimated 45,686 new units under remaining MHA proposals, assuming an average unit size of 1,000 square feet.*

STARTING WITH HALA AND MHA

Our current direction:

1. DOES generate new revenue for affordable housing.
2. DOES assign financial value to vertical growth.
3. DOES create new space for housing and growth.
4. DOES identify wrap-around strategies to promote affordability and livability throughout Seattle.
5. HAS identified critical zoning challenges and conditions.

IMPACTS OF GROWTH NOT ADDRESSED IN v1.0

Seattle’s historic response to the impacts of growth has been to help private developers build as much new housing as possible, by giving them more space to build it in. We do now have more housing, but we also have a 25% vacancy rate in downtown luxury buildings, and a slew of **unoccupied** condo-shaped bank accounts.

CHALLENGES

10,000 – 15,000 residents live in old brick buildings at risk of displacement.

5,000 Seattleites live outside without permanent shelter or support systems.

“One Size Fits All” approach creates lost opportunities in neighborhoods.

Neighborhood hearts are disappearing, while connective gathering spaces and legacy businesses are lost or forced out.

Our cultural, musical, and artistic icons, and essential local economic and historic spaces are being demolished.

Mobility is freedom, so we need vastly more affordable transportation options.

We’re losing our local workforce amidst ever-rising costs of living.

Real people feel a need to be seen.

CITY LIMITS & LEGO BRICKS



A CAP AND TRADED UP-ZONE

This proposal is premised on the idea of a monetized up-zone, in which each shareholder of Seattle's land is granted ownership over an amount of development capacity that is equal to their existing share of acreage within the city-limits, exempting certain lands zoned for industrial and other uses.

A hundred years ago, when an American city ran out of space, the city leaders would **expand the city limits**. They'd **sell the new land** to private owners, and use the cash from the sale to mitigate the impacts of growth.

Today, Seattle is boxed in by water and other cities. **The only way to expand is UP**, which is what we've been doing for decades. But this time there's no cash from the land sale, and the problems are too big to tax our way out of. Luckily, we can still adopt ideas from older American cities, we can innovate on them in true Seattle fashion, and we can generate the cash we need to **preserve a network of land in the city for community and affordability**.

Est value* of Seattle land per acre:	\$9.9 Million
Privately owned land :	29,279 acres
Publicly owned land:	5,003 acres
Potential Private Valuation:	\$289.8 Billion
Potential Public Valuation:	\$49.5 Billion

**this figure is based on an algorithm used in a recent study by economists at the University of Illinois and at the University of Michigan.*

EXPAND THE CITY LIMITS

This proposal would **raise the vertical city limits by one story** through a system that creates a **real value** for that new developable land in the sky; a value equivalent to the land on the ground.

By locally **capping and trading** those "new acres" of development capacity, new growth is given a dollar value by creating a marketplace for new development. Within a **Community and Affordability Network**, development would be managed and "new acreage" sold off. Outside the network, density increases would be purchased.

A CITY MADE OF LEGO BRICKS

We recruited a **nine-year-old** to explain this concept, and he made us a video using Lego bricks. New land was represented by "air-colored" Legos, stacked one story high across all the buildings and public lands in the city. Each Lego brick became a commodity with value. He called it "invisible air money".

Some would sell (or donate) their Lego bricks, protecting the underlying buildings. Others might buy up those Lego bricks, and build them into denser development, generating revenue from the rents. Still others might trade them independently, like commodities on a stock exchange.



Generate Revenue



Invest in Seattle



A Seattle for All



Starting Now

A PLAN IN FOUR PARTS: THE SEATTLE COMMUNITY & AFFORDABILITY NETWORK

1

GROWTH CAN SAVE OUR SOUL

*Just as it did historically, new growth should generate new **public revenue** up front. By putting a price on **35,000 new acres of developable space**, Seattle can generate that revenue. But that growth shouldn't come at the cost of displacing communities and losing existing affordability.*

- Every community needs a **preserved commercial, and cultural heart**.
- **New acreage** will be added through a localized cap and trade system of transferable, tradable development rights.
- **Communities will be empowered** to draw their own growth maps, in a citywide framework.
- **Community Land Trust incentives** will provide options for communities.

2

INVESTING IN SEATTLEITES

*Saving Seattle means investing revenue from new growth back into Seattle for the long-term. That means investing in **land**, investing in **partnerships** with existing landholders, and investing in the **people** who help make that land productive.*

- Invest in a **land buy-back program** to provide public priorities like affordable housing and cultural retention.
- Develop partnerships with private landholders of community and affordability assets, to promote **long-term private stewardship**.
- Invest directly in people, through a **localized economic stimulus package** for Seattle's creative economies.

3

CREATING A SEATTLE FOR ALL

*If we're going to be saving Seattle for some, then we should definitely be saving Seattle for everyone. Decent people care about their neighbors, and that means investing in our **workforce**, supporting our **most vulnerable**, and ensuring that **local mobility** is affordable.*

- A **housing support network** will connect local workforces with local affordable housing.
- Vulnerable populations living outside should have an **equal amount of infrastructural support** as those who are living indoors.
- New investments in **public transportation infrastructure** will be prioritized based on affordability and access.

4

STARTING SOMEWHERE

For something to work everywhere, it's got to work somewhere. This plan starts by establishing pilot areas, identifying near-term revenue, and trusting our policy professionals to refine certain details of the proposal to ensure success.

- Immediately establish near-term **protections for community**, cultural, and affordability assets that face an imminent and high risk of displacement.
- Provide direction for City leaders to generate new sources of **near-term revenue**, to implement programs and make essential acquisitions.
- **Increase benchmarks** for civic engagement, and empower existing public policy professionals.

EVERYONE DESERVES A WORKING HEART

Seattle is city of villages. Every community has a commercial and cultural heart, and if we hope to save our communities, we have to start by saving the hearts.

We connect with these places, because these places are where we connect with each other. The coffee shop, or the ice cream spot. Our little village businesses are the pistons of Seattle's economic engine. New growth is driven by the desirability of these unique Seattle treasures, which must be preserved at the same time that we add new growth capacity.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Pike Place Market
- Chinatown/International District
- Pioneer Square
- Columbia City
- Ballard

THE ONLY WAY TO GROW IS UP

As long as humans are having babies, growth will be inevitable. Surrounded on all sides, Seattle can only grow skyward. But by effectively monetizing the growth, Seattle can make sure we're leaving less people behind.

We can't stop building, because space is already limited, but tearing out everything on the ground is displacing our neighbors who have the least of all of us. It is displacing our cultural and community fabric, and replacing it with spaces that only a lucky few can afford.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- New York City TDR Districts
- TDR Models Across East Coast
- Olympic Sculpture Park
- Existing TDR Banks

ONE SIZE VERY RARELY FITS ALL

The villages that make up Seattle are unique. If we hope to capitalize on local conditions, we have to empower local communities to shape local growth maps.

The City can develop a community growth framework that gives local stakeholders options regarding growth strategies that make the most sense for their neighborhoods. Innovative, locally-driven community growth plans have the capacity to integrate new capacity with existing conditions to mitigate displacement from new development.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Uptown Urban Design Framework
- Only in Seattle Program

AFFORDABILITY CREATES COMMUNITY

Providing options for Seattle single-family residents to retain neighborhoods as affordable housing options is critical. A community land trust incentive program makes those options viable.

Seattle's residential neighborhoods are a cultural treasure that are increasingly inaccessible to working families. Allowing residents to establish city-certified community land trusts would create long-term affordability and access within historic single-family housing areas.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Race and Social Justice Certification Programs
- Numerous Community Land Trust models throughout America

INVESTING IN LAND

Public priorities require public land. Seattle needs more land. Seattle has a robust history of public land stewardship through preservation development authorities, which promote community, affordability, and culture.

Through a land buyback program, Seattle can invest in new land for commercial affordability, housing affordability, cultural and historic preservation, and even much-needed new open and green spaces to balance rapidly increasing density with essential community assets.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

Tribal Buyback Programs
Pike Place Market
Chinatown / International District
Historic Seattle
Open Space Gap Analysis

INVESTING IN PARTNERSHIPS

Many of Seattle's private landowners are deeply invested in Seattle's history, culture, and economic success. Building partnerships with these shareholders of Seattle's existing land can create new opportunities for strong civic stewardship of community and affordability assets.

Most people are good people at heart, and people who own property in Seattle are no different. Supporting private landholders within areas of managed development is essential to empowering private stewardship of a Community and Affordability Network.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

Pike Place Market
Chinatown/International District
Public / Private Partnerships
Historic Landmark Tax Incentives

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

The success of Seattle's local economic engines is rooted in creative economies that drive residential, commercial, and visitor interest in geographic localities throughout the city. Investing directly in the people

Investing in music, arts and creative economies is an essential way of putting more resources directly into the hands of Seattle's working class. Music, performance, and other arts represent a massive supplemental income stream for Seattle's workforce communities, so investing in creative economies has the effect of investing in working people. Meanwhile, economic development and workforce recruitment depend heavily on the cultural desirability of Seattle's unique neighborhoods.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

Only in Seattle Program
4Culture Arts Grants
12 Avenue Arts

AN APARTMENT FOR YOUR BARTENDER

When local employees can live near their place of employment, everyone wins. The employee wins. The employer wins. Even Mother Nature wins, when less resources are being spent on transportation.

Without a local workforce, local economies suffer. As a City, it is essential that we establish a robust support network for employees to find housing as close as able to their geographic place of employment. Localized public databases of available units and walkability incentives for landlords and employers are among a host of strategies that could create a walkable workforce.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Public Housing Databases
- Public Workforce Housing Brokerages
- Walkability Incentives
- Employer Tax Incentives

A HOME IS MORE THAN A HOUSE

A person's home is more defined by a person's community, than by the structure in which they live. Those living outdoors in Seattle can be empowered through community.

Supporting struggling neighbors through community means investing in physical spaces in which outdoor residents can experience safe, sanitary, and supportive communities of other outdoor residents. This means investing in ecologically sustainable outdoor infrastructure, such through expansion of our managed encampment program and the study of urban forests for potential conversion to managed and accessible campgrounds.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Managed Encampment Program
- Community Self-Management
- Basic Sanitation Services
- Kampgrounds of America

MOBILITY SETS US FREE

The most fundamental pathway out of poverty is mobility. The power to get where we need to go is a power that sets us free.

Leveling the playing field for our workforce and most vulnerable populations means ensuring that people can get to their jobs, can get to public services, and can get to gathering places where they can build and strengthen their communities and circles of friends. Seattle has been a model for transit and public transportation investments, but we're also coming from behind, with a late-stage primary public transit build-out. By prioritizing affordability in new investments, Seattle can increase access to mobility.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

- Free Transit Zones
- Expanded Shuttle Services
- Affordable Bike Share
- Affordability-Based Master Planning

ALL BIG BOATS NEED PILOTS

Parts of Seattle's community, culture, and affordable spaces are disappearing so fast that without acting immediately, those critical areas will be gone for good.

Key community, cultural, and affordability-critical areas facing an imminent and high risk of displacement will serve as pilot regions within a Community and Affordability Network, and will receive immediate relief from displacement pressures through the use of new and expanded special zoning districts. These areas will serve as pilots during the process of community self-determination.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

Pike Place Market
Historic Seattle
Chinatown/International District
Pioneer Square
Columbia City
Ballard

EVERYTHING ALWAYS COSTS SOMETHING

This plan is premised on the notion of generating long-term public revenue through the sale of new development capacity, yet making these ideas viable will also require major financial resources up-front.

The City will be instructed to develop a public referendum on a philanthropic request of the Seattle region's specific people of significant means, whose individual financial resources are in excess of ten thousand times the Seattle median income. As a potential alternative, the City will also be instructed to develop a public referendum on a new high earners tax. In the interim time period, the City shall be authorized to use bonding capacity.

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

\$500M affordable housing contribution from Microsoft

Numerous State and National models of progressive municipal revenue generation options

ENGINES ARE BUILT BY ENGINEERS

If Seattle social influencers can build audiences comprising hundreds of thousands of people, our City should be just as good at communicating with voters, which would also enable greater flexibility for policy professionals.

Seattle is a shining beacon of the digital age, and there is no reason that civic engagement shouldn't reach vastly greater numbers of registered voters. Improving the required benchmarks for civic engagement by the City can greatly improve policy outcomes. Meanwhile, public policy professionals should be empowered to innovate upon existing models..

MODELS FOR SUCCESS:

Local Social Media Influencers
New Digital Marketing Platforms
Crowdsourced Policy Innovation
Civic Engagement Benchmarks



POLICY MATRIX – PARTS 1 & 2

PART 1

1. Expand and establish special use districts for at-risk neighborhood business districts, modeled after Pike Place Market and others.
2. Create 35,000+ new acres of development capacity through a series of sending & receiving districts of transferable, tradeable development rights.
3. Build a community preservation self-determination framework, incorporating a menu of growth options ranging from residential small lot and row houses, to midrise timber or even high rise.
4. Build a community land trust incentive program to provide options to landholders interested in maintaining affordable SF communities.

PART 2

1. Establish and fund a Land Buyback Initiative, designed to purchase back land and space for the public, in zoning districts where development is managed to preserve community and affordability.
2. Establish a Legacy Landholders Partnership Program, focused on supporting property owners within managed zones, especially for URM building rehabilitation and retention.
3. Invest in a series of highly localized micro stimulus packages to support and re-vitalize creative economies within a Community and Affordability Network of managed zones and neighborhood business districts.



POLICY MATRIX – PARTS 3 & 4

PART 3

1. Establish workforce community housing assistance program, focused on pairing local employees in a geographic area with housing options nearby.
2. Invest in ecologically sustainable health and sanitation infrastructure for outdoor populations, focused on building and empowering communities, including a study of Seattle's urban forests' potential conversion to managed campgrounds.
3. Empower working and outdoor communities through the expansion of public transportation options and access.

PART 4

1. Immediately establish near-term protections for community, cultural, and affordability assets that face an imminent and high risk of displacement, through a series of new special use districts across the city.
2. Instruct City leaders to generate new sources of near-term revenue (implement programs and make essential acquisitions) through a series of public referenda on philanthropic and potential tax measures, combined with certain bonding authorizations.
3. Implement a policy design process that sets improved benchmarks for civic engagement, while also specifically incorporating flexibility for policy professionals to refine and improve the proposal.



LIVES & LIVELIHOODS

Every day across Seattle we are losing the race against time. We lose more neighbors to homelessness. We lose legacy businesses as we watch our neighborhood centers disappear. We lose the important places where we connect with each other. And as we lose our workforce to other cities, we're losing the human and the places that help give our City some soul. Our workforce are also Seattle's artists, musicians, dancers, stylists, and performers.

“At first we were just losing neighbors, as prices began to skyrocket. Then we started losing our local businesses, too. Now, we’ve even lost our community center. Because I guess not even the City can afford the high rents anymore.”

A GENUINE URGENCY.

- 5,000 Seattleites are living outside.
- 10,000 – 15,000* residents live in buildings at risk of displacement.
- 122 Neighborhood business districts face growing risk of devolution.
- Average apartment rental is nearly \$2,000/month (77% of a minimum-wage worker's annual earnings).
- Hundreds of live music venues, churches, community centers, and legacy businesses face imminent risk of demolition and destruction.

*based on estimated occupancy in unreinforced masonry buildings without the seismic retrofitting soon-to-be-required by proposed City policies.

REAL PEOPLE. REAL RISK.

“I know people in the neighborhood,” she said. “So people know if I’m up and about. It’s a lively area, and you don’t feel so alone.”

“So what’s that mean for you?”

“It means I really would like,” she replied, her eyes finding mine and leaning in. “I would like to be able to stay in my building to the end of my days, and not be priced out.”

Because I’m 74, and I love it here.”

- Human of Belltown, 2018



MOVING FORWARD

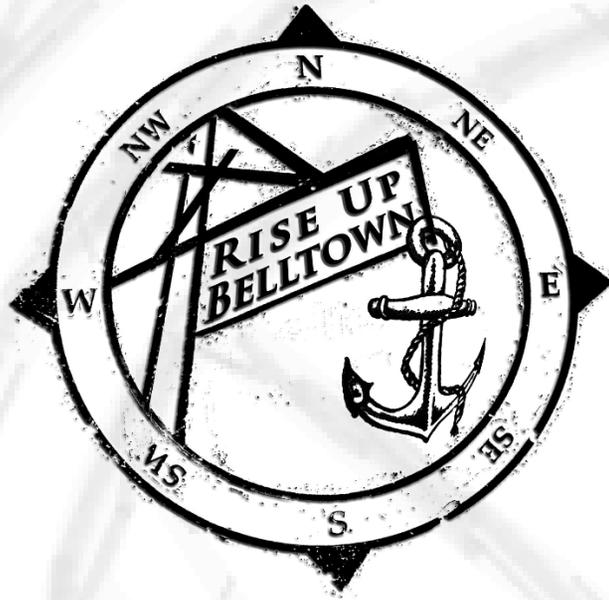
Luckily for us, Seattle is a city full of brilliant engineers, passionate community members, and thoughtful public servants. These policies are introduced here as a collection of ideas, in the belief that Seattle has the public and private wherewithal to make this system work. We've evolved from the wild west of lumber to the wild west of cloud services and block chain. But our innovative spirit endures.

Launching this plan with a public initiative would get the ball rolling, while also leaving room for public and private professionals to refine its implementation collaboratively.

2019 is a local election year with a majority of the City Council up for election, and the urgent need for affordability, workforce housing, and cultural preservation has reached a boiling point for Seattle communities. Major employers and local people of means are also recognizing the massive economic risks of insufficient action. We believe the time to act is now, so have released this *circulation draft* to begin the conversation.

13 STEPS FOR SEATTLE

1. Expand support programs for neighborhood business districts.
2. Establish a transactional zoning framework that includes a Community and Affordability Network.
3. Establish a community self-determination framework with a diverse range and menu of growth options.
4. Establish a community land trust incentive for SF affordability retention.
5. Establish and fund a land buyback program within the new network.
6. Establish a support program for legacy landholders within the new network.
7. Invest directly in localized economic stimulus of Seattle creative economies.
8. Establish a neighborhood-based workforce housing support program.
9. Invest in ecologically sustainable infrastructure, and community-building strategies, for outdoor populations.
10. Prioritize and expand affordable public transportation investments.
11. Establish immediate protections for areas facing high and imminent risk.
12. Pursue near-term revenue through public referenda on funding options.
13. Improve benchmarks for civic engagement and build in flexibility.



RISE UP BELLTOWN

To Join the Coalition, Please Get in Touch. All are Welcome.

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