

Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill

Founded in 1869, the City of Seattle is the leading commercial, cultural and advanced technology center of the U.S. Pacific Northwest, and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European trade. With a 2010 population of more than 608,000, the city is the region’s largest and most diverse in terms of population, economic activity, and transportation options. The city has designated six regional growth centers—Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Northgate, South Lake Union, Uptown Queen Anne, and the University Community—to accept significant planned population and employment growth. Four of the city’s regional growth centers – Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown Queen Anne - are contiguous and form a core that adjoins with both the Duwamish and Ballard-Interbay manufacturing industrial centers. At less than four square miles, the concentration of regional growth centers form a dense core that contains significant concentration of current development and capacity for future growth.

The First Hill/Capitol Hill regional growth center consists of four distinct, yet interconnected neighborhoods spanning two hills that frame the eastern edge of Seattle’s downtown core. The Capitol Hill, 12th Avenue, First Hill, and Pike/Pine Urban Villages that make up the center are the sites of some of the earliest development activity in Seattle. Capitol Hill, to the northeast, is a densely populated urban neighborhood made up of multiple-family residential areas and storefront commercial streets. The Capitol Hill Urban Village’s north and east boundaries follow existing borders between multiple-family and single-family housing zones. To the south, the Capitol Hill Village borders the Pike/Pine neighborhood, the smallest of the center’s Villages. The Pike/Pine corridor, the City’s original “auto row,” is characterized by a wide variety of older commercial and mixed-use residential structures, and significant new housing development. Along with its well-established and diverse residential population, First Hill is a major employment center, and home to many of the region’s state-of-the-art medical centers and related facilities, including Swedish, Virginia Mason and Harborview medical centers. The 12th Avenue Urban Village that makes up the southeastern portion of the center is focused on Seattle University and its surrounding multiple-family residential and commercial areas. Although highly interrelated, these neighborhoods all have their own unique character and development goals.

The center has seen major transportation investments and significant development in recent years. Service to the Link light rail station on Broadway is scheduled to begin in 2016, and a street car line that will

2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	915
Average block size (acres)	2.6
Average parcel size (acres)	0.2
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.88 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	85.4
Population	
Total population	36,502
Population density/acre	39.9
Change (2000–2010)	1920
Housing	
Total housing units	25,972
Housing unit density/acre	28.4
Change (2000–2010)	2,998
Employment	
Total employment	41,645
Employment density/acre	45.5
Change (2000–2010)	3,798
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	100%
Employee access to transit	100%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	42% • 7%
Walk & Bike / Transit	32% • 19%

Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	153
Grocery	18
Cafes & Bars	52
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	2
Laundry & Haircuts	28
Home supplies	3
Clothing & Shoes	19
Banks	12
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	8
Electronics & Toys	5
Bookstores & Libraries	7
Arts & Culture	8
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	32
Schools & Childcare	15
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	3
Pharmacy	9
Healthcare	176
Residential Care Centers	10

connect the station to First Hill and the International District will be completed in 2014. At the south end of the center, the Seattle Housing Authority will redevelop low-income housing at Yesler Terrace into 5,000 mixed-income units, as much as 1,000,000 square feet of office and community-serving retail on about 30 acres.

Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity

Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill is among the largest regional growth centers in terms of total gross acreage (915 acres) with a net developable acreage of 568 acres (62% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill contains 2 percent of the city's land area, 6 percent of the population, 8 percent of the housing, and 9 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has among the largest number of total activity units (78,147), with evenly mixed activity (53% jobs/47% residents) and high density of activity (85.4 units per gross acre).

Urban Form

Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill's average parcel size is 0.2 acres, which is significantly smaller than the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill provides a walkable pedestrian environment, with a complete network of sidewalks (100% coverage) and very small blocks at a 2.6-acre average size.

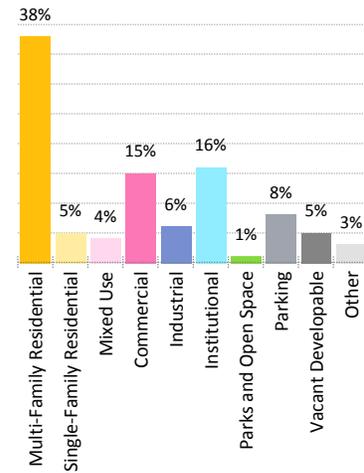
The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has a robust set of urban amenities (560 total amenities / 0.61 amenities per gross acre). Food/Drink (45%) and Public/Civic Services (40%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Healthcare, Restaurants, Cafes/Bars, and Social Services.

Land Use

The major land uses in Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill are multi-family residential (38%), institutional (16%) and commercial (15%). About 41 percent of the center's 568 net acres are in employment-related use, including mixed-use buildings. Approximately 43 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

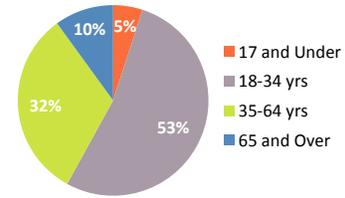
Current Land Use

(568 net acres)



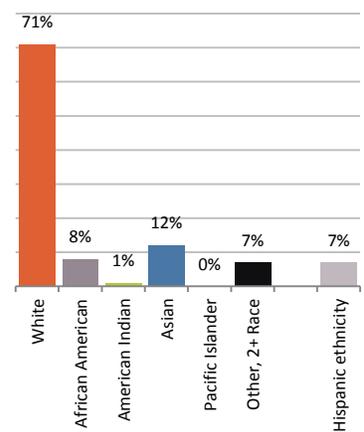
Age of Residents

(36,502 residents)



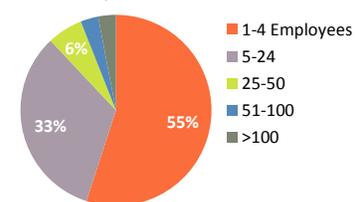
Racial/Ethnic Composition

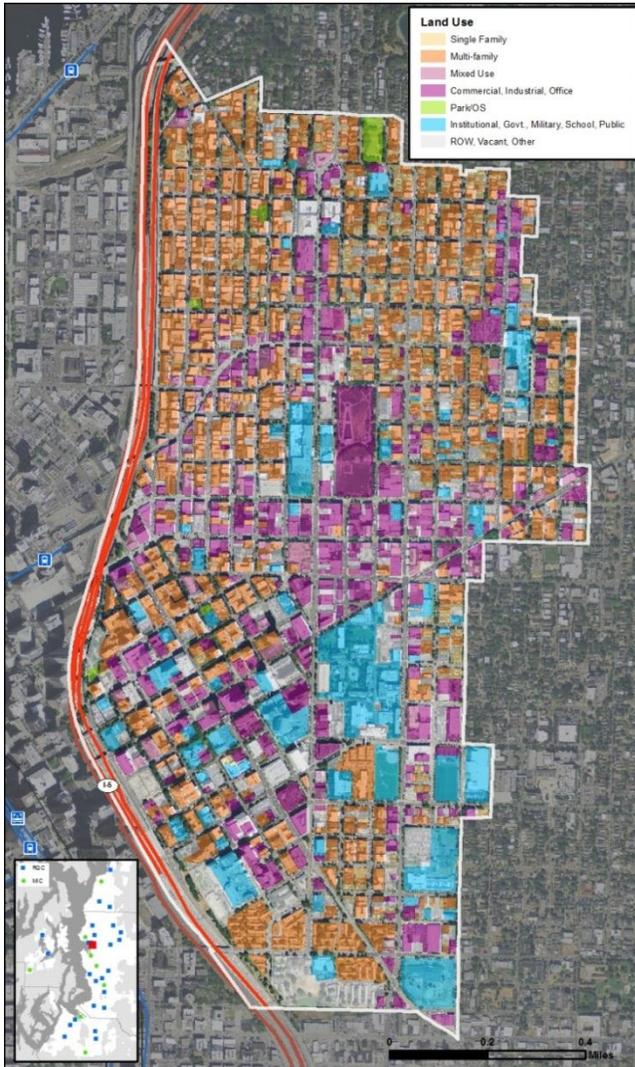
(36,502 residents)



Size of Businesses

(1,412 workplaces)





Demographics

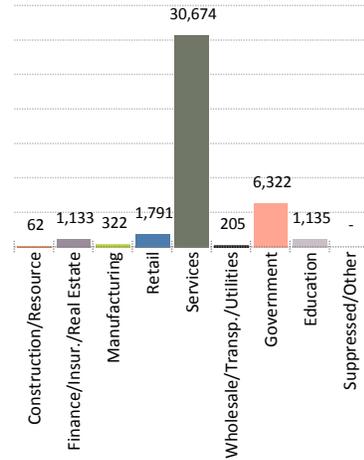
The total population in Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill is 36,502, and has grown by 1,920 residents over the past 10 years. The center has more working age residents than the region as a whole, with small shares of youth (5%) and seniors (10%). The age of residents is predominantly 18-34, followed by 35-64 (85% for both age groups combined). At 29 percent, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill's racial diversity is comparable to the region's 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill are White (71%), Asian (12%), African American/Black (8%) and Other (8%). Seven percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

Employment

The total employment in Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill is 41,645, increasing by 3,798 jobs over the past 10 years. The major industry sectors are Services (74%) and Government (15%). Some of the largest employers in this center are Swedish, Virginia Mason and Harborview medical centers and Seattle University.

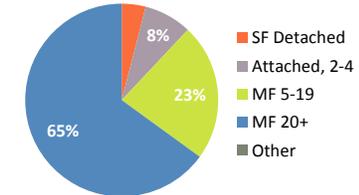
Jobs by Sector

(41,645 jobs)



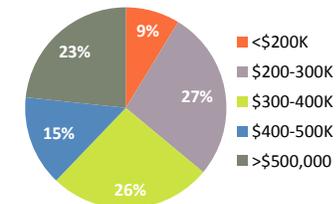
Housing Units, by Type

(25,919 units)

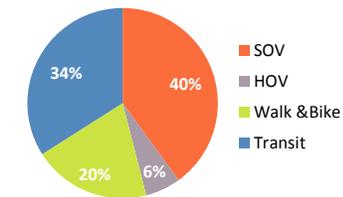


Value of Owner-Occupied Units

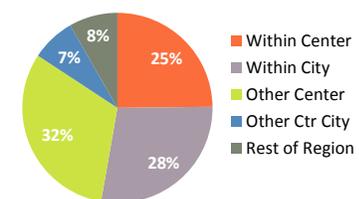
(4,570 units)



Mode Shares



Trip Destinations



Housing

Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has 25,972 total housing units, with a density of 28.4 housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by an impressive 2,998 units (13% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has a very small share (12%) of single family and 2- to 4- unit multifamily dwellings and a dominant share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily (88%). In terms of unit affordability, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill's owner-occupied housing is comparable the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 is 36 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 is 23 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

Transportation

For work-based trips, the Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill regional center's travel characteristics are very different from the region as a whole, with dramatically fewer single-occupant vehicle (SOV), more transit and significantly more walk/bike trips. The region's SOV share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 42 percent. The region's non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center's non-SOV share is 58 percent, with 19 percent in transit and 32 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill are highly focused on destinations in regional centers (56% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (25%) and trips that go to other centers (31%).

In terms of employee access to transit, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has complete access, with 100 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For residential, Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill has complete access, with 100 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk.

Plan Overview

Seattle addresses the First Hill/Capitol Hill regional growth center in a section of the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan. Through its neighborhood planning process, Seattle has developed neighborhood plans for each of its regional growth centers. Though the plans were recognized as the vision and goals of neighborhoods, only the subset of policies adopted in the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan are considered adopted city policy. Policies included in the element are based on the neighborhood plans developed for the four sub-districts of Capitol Hill (1999), First Hill (1999), Pike/Pine (1998), and 12th Ave (Central Area) (1998).

Comparison to Center Plan Checklist

The city's primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. Both the Urban Village element and the relevant section of the Neighborhood element were reviewed for this analysis. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.

Seattle has a framework in place to guide development in the city's multiple center types. Goals and policies established in the Urban Village element in Seattle's comprehensive plan are applicable to all six of Seattle's regional growth centers. Urban Village policies address a number of aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The element describes the centers in a regional context. Policies call for compact mixed-use places and transportation improvements to support walking, transit and demand management. The element calls for directing compact growth in centers and accommodating a range of economic activity. Policies focus on directing new investments in infrastructure and services to areas expected to receive additional growth and providing housing choices, accessible open space and employment opportunities. Urban centers are characterized by the presence of public facilities and human services; parks, open spaces, street designs and recreational facilities; and neighborhood design guidelines. Mode split goals, employment and residential growth targets, and a description of capital facilities for each regional growth center are described elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

The First Hill/Capitol Hill sections of the Neighborhood element address many aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The vision for the regional growth center is described through a series of goal statements. Several housing policies are included, including policies to preserve housing variety, increase affordable housing, encourage a range of homeownership options, and encourage compatible development in the historic neighborhood. For example, the city should “promote the additional development of new or rehabilitated housing units, through tools such as code modifications, incentives, and providing flexibility during development review.” A variety of policies support development of an integrated, multimodal transportation system. The Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines are well addressed through the neighborhood policies. The element also supports green streets designation for key pedestrian linkages.

The plan meets many of the existing expectations of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are aspects that the plan does not address or that could be strengthened in future updates. A stronger emphasis on the environment could be incorporated in the plan. This could include policies addressing stormwater, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. A market analysis of the center’s development potential has not been included. Given the element’s policy focus, it provides a limited amount of information on the existing conditions, such as descriptions of industry sectors or clusters and the mix, distribution, and location of existing uses in the center.

Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies

Seattle has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of its centers. These include incentive zoning, ongoing zoning amendments to increase development capacities, no minimum parking requirements, flexibility in mixing of uses, and transit oriented communities planning. Multifamily code changes have also fueled infill development in midrise and lowrise zones and more activity in highrise zones.