

V. S.W.A.P. Concepts

The projects, policies and priorities identified in this Plan have been categorized into five community planning topics which include: **Healthy Connected Neighborhoods; Smart, Sustainable Growth; Thriving Educated Youth and Community; Economic Prosperity and Affordability;** and **Culture, Art and Innovation.** Between January and June 2015, community members were surveyed these concepts and 1,547 surveys were collected.

These 5 planning concepts are considered vital to ensuring a community is healthy, productive, inclusive and has high quality of life.

1. Healthy Connected Neighborhoods

Background: The term *healthy connected neighborhoods* is a term (first used in the City of Portland) that seeks to enhance human and environmental health by connecting people with neighborhoods, nature and recreation, education, and businesses through a system of safe and accessible road, bike, pedestrian and transit networks.

Neighborhoods are the backbone of any community. Creating sustainable neighborhoods may mean using incentives, programs or regulations to help create new neighborhoods, and preserve/support existing neighborhoods.

As stated in the King County Comprehensive Plan, encouraging mixed land use and creating safe access to jobs, shopping, and schools establishes the cohesiveness and sustainability of a neighborhood. Having opportunities for physical activity and providing for people, if they choose, to age in place and remain in their neighborhood as their lifestyle changes or they face changing physical capabilities establishes the stability of a neighborhood. In essence all of these factors contribute to creating a sustainable neighborhood.

Goals and Objectives that make a community healthy and connected include:

- Residents have safe and adequate means to connect with their neighbors, schools, community programs, local stores and services.
 - Walkways through parks and commercial areas are lighted and welcoming.
 - Crosswalks are provided to allow easier access to all businesses/services/other neighborhoods.
 - Sidewalks/pathways connecting neighborhoods to schools, businesses and services are complete and usable.

- Local transit services/stops adequately connect the community neighborhoods to their community commercial and service core.
- Local community services and activities geared toward youth, seniors or special needs populations are provided.
- Local ownership and interest in housing, property and home ownership is pursued and commonplace.
- Community members feel safe and comfortable in their homes, streets and other places they need to go.
- Community members recognize and avoid problems with residential displacement due to income/affordability issues that can come with new growth and development.
- Access to healthier food, healthcare and recreation choices are convenient and affordable.
- Dilapidated or blighted housing, structures and properties are fixed in an equitable, innovative and collaborative way.
- Structures and land uses that are detrimental to the health and appearance of the community are avoided and removed.

Projects/priorities identified to achieve Healthy Connected Neighborhoods can be broken into 4 sub-categories :

1. Connecting People to Places
2. Community Ownership and Pride
3. Community Services and Resources
4. Public Safety

*Identified Community Projects, Priorities and Policies for **Healthy Connected Neighborhoods** are as Follows:*

Connecting People to Places

Projects, priorities and policies identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Create a pedestrian-friendly environment in the Skyway business district*
Examples include:
 - *Continuous sidewalks along Renton Ave.*
 - *Pathways within commercial properties connecting parking areas and adjacent businesses.*
 - *Crosswalks connecting commercial areas along Renton Ave.*
 - *Requiring future buildings abut streets and sidewalks for easier pedestrian access (parking in rear of buildings).*

- *Increase lighting fixtures along Renton Ave and/or commercial property lines adjoining Skyway Park.*
 - *Provide landscaping within and along commercial property lines.*
- 2. *Construct a new formal lighted access point and parking area for Skyway Park from the Skyway business district.*
- 3. *Establish more informal connection pathways between the Park and business district.*
- 4. *Expand/Enhance Transit facilities (Bus) and alternative vehicle (Vans and Shuttles) service routes to the business district and the immediate area.*
- 5. *Establish a multi-purpose trail along the City of Seattle transmission lines corridor to connect with Seattle trails and locations.*
- 6. *Establish a series of bicycle routes within the community and linking existing routes outside the community to regional routes in Renton, Seattle and Tukwila.*
 - Examples include:*
 - *Improve connection to Beacon Avenue South across Martin Luther King Jr. Way;*
 - *Improve connection to Beacon-Coal Mine Road;*
 - *Establish access to Green River/Duwamish Trail system and Interurban Trail;*
 - *Improve shoulders on Martin Luther King Jr. Way to allow safe bicycle access;*
 - *Establish east-west connection along South Langston Road from South 129th Street at 64th Avenue South or along South 133rd Street - South 132nd Street from Martin Luther King Jr. Way to Renton Avenue South.*
 - *Develop safe crossing facilities to Airport Way and Lake Washington loop.*
- 7. *Establish sidewalks and bike lanes to schools from higher density residential areas.*

Community Ownership and Pride

Projects, priorities and policies identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Create a community “welcoming” and “marketing” ‘action group’. Committee activities could include developing a community logo and slogan to create a new, positive and future- oriented identity for Skyway/West Hill.*
 - *Major entrances to the Skyway/West Hill area and its neighborhoods could be identified and defined with signs, pavement markings and landscaping.*
2. *Organize events that engage a broad range of community members*
 - *Help connect neighbors, project a positive image and have fun. Events could include a Jazzfest, Art walk, multi-cultural gathering, etc.*

3. *Coordinate existing community associations, efforts and activities with each other, which would also include improving community-wide communication and awareness.*
4. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to community beautification projects; could include pursuing projects along entrances to parking lots and businesses within the Skyway business district with improvements to landscaping, pavement markings or unique business signage.*
5. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to working with local governments (code enforcement) to resolve blighted and unhealthy structures, properties and land uses in the community.*
6. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to working with local governments and other community groups to establish a local business incubator(s).*
7. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to working with local governments and other community groups to establish a Local Improvement District* (LID).*

**A LID is a local government financing tool for property owners to invest in building infrastructure improvements (such as sidewalks or sewer lines) that serve their immediate area.*

Community Services and Resources

Projects, priorities and policies identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Establish a space open to the community where service providers can conduct programs geared toward activities to benefit youth, seniors and/or other targeted populations.*
 - *Some recommended services include but are not limited to the following:*
 - *parent and youth services and counseling,*
 - *education and tutoring programs, job training,*
 - *household budgeting and financial advice,*
 - *drug/alcohol counseling,*
 - *mental health counseling,*
 - *child care,*
 - *elderly/handicapped assistance and van service, and*
 - *in-door arts and cultural events and community outreach activities.*
2. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to increasing walking opportunities and access to healthy foods, establish exercise programs and groups.*
3. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to securing local participation in special programs conducted by major area employer, foundations and local governments.*
4. *Create a Farmer's Market with a gathering place that stimulates health and local economy.*
5. *Establish/expand P-Patch community gardens and Urban Farms for use by local residents.*

6. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to enhancing healthy living and stewardship from community members of all ages.*
7. *Establish a cultural garden with tourist, education and youth activities representing the diversity of the community.*
8. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to coordinating all efforts related to pedestrian and traffic improvements and advocate for traffic control project where needed.*
9. *Establish sports leagues for all age ranges of Skyway/West Hill residents.*
10. *Establish more neighborhood/pocket parks throughout the community.*

Public Safety

Projects, priorities and policies identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to increasing/coordinating neighborhood watch programs.*
2. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to establishing programs for at risk youth and individuals as alternatives to criminal and gang activity.*
3. *Increase police presence and patrol cars from the King County Sheriff's Department.*
4. *Increase safety "infrastructure" in key public and commercial areas including area lighting, police call boxes and security cameras.*
5. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to working with the King County Sheriff's Department and Prosecuting Attorney's Office to pursue alternative community policing models.*

2. Smart, Sustainable Growth

Background: The term *Smart Sustainable Growth* focuses on:

- **Land use** (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, etc.);
- **Density** (i.e. how many structures per acre); and
- **Infrastructure** (i.e. water, roads, transit, etc.)

Purpose for Smart Sustainable Growth: To ensure that as a community grows, it has the ability to provide resources for all residents to thrive and have a high quality living environment.

Goals and Objectives that make a community smart and sustainable include:

- Promote efficient use of the land by providing the necessary utilities and services at an efficient cost.
- New residential development, infill or redevelopment opportunities shall be at an “urban density” to support diversity of housing types (i.e. single-family, duplex and multi-family), densities and preserve price affordability.
- Ensure new commercial and industrial development encourages mixed use development, a pedestrian-friendly environment, and limits nuisance impacts on adjacent residential areas.
- Ensure growth in housing, business and population is adequately supported by a full range of urban utilities and services (i.e. adequate roads, sidewalks and water/sewer, etc.).

*Identified Community Projects, Priorities and Policies for **Smart Sustainable Growth** are as Follows:*

Residential Land Use and Density

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *New re-development and in-fill (building on vacant lots) in single-family neighborhoods should continue to be at the same size, scale and density as the traditional existing development.*
 - *Note: Our community has an average single-family neighborhood density of approx. 5 or 6 homes per acre on 6,000 to 7,500 square foot lots.*
2. *New re-development and in-fill (building on vacant lots) in single-family neighborhoods should allow a mix of housing types, scales and densities to provide for more housing choices but not exceed an average density of 7-8 homes per acre.*
 - *Note: Other housing types include duplex, garage apartments, cottage homes, and other clustered homes where the square footage of the home may be less than the surrounding homes in the neighborhood.*

3. *Larger parcels (example 1 or more acres) within single-family neighborhoods should develop at a higher density of 3,000 square foot to 5,000 square foot lots which approximates 8 or 12 homes per acre. [See Example Graphic C]*
4. *New multifamily residential development should be limited to 12 to 48 homes per acre, and be confined to areas currently designated for multifamily development (See Map A).*
5. *New multifamily residential development should be allowed to exceed 48 homes per acre if such developments provide public amenities and/or public infrastructure.*
6. *Mixed-use buildings (multifamily and commercial/office) should be allowed in the Skyway Business District.*
7. *An 'action group' should be convened to advise on ways to keep the average home price in the community affordable to lower and moderate income families.*

Commercial, Industrial and Recreational Land Use and Density

Priorities identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *A community 'action group' should be convened which pursues businesses and uses to locate in the Skyway Business District*
2. *A community 'action group' should be convened which pursues businesses and uses to locate in the Skyway Business District that provide health and professional services to residents.*
3. *A community 'action group' should coordinate the development of a model mixed-use project combining affordable housing with commercial services within the Skyway Business District.*
4. *Establish/expand P-Patch community gardens and Urban Farm properties for use by local residents that provide additional choices for wider-variety of healthy and fresh foods.*
5. *A community 'action group' should be convened to promote the development of housing for the elderly near public transportation, recreation and medical facilities, and retail shopping services in West Hill.*
6. *A community 'action group' should be convened to pursue enhancing the appearance of existing commercial buildings and properties.*
7. *Existing industrial lands and uses should be preserved as is, but allow only industrial uses that are compatible and not harmful to the surrounding residential areas.*
8. *Convert existing industrial lands and uses into mixed-use zones (commercial and multifamily residential).*
9. *Establish more recreational uses such as neighborhood/pocket parks throughout the community.*

Infrastructure

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Provide pedestrian/bicycle access along streets, parking lots and between and through commercial areas.*
2. *Provide pedestrian/bicycle access along streets, parking lots and between and through residential areas.*
3. *Pursue improvements to transit (bus services/facilities) in the community to more easily access locations in surrounding cities.*
4. *Pursue more transit and other modes of transportation to connect residents to the Skyway Business District.*
5. *Develop better vehicle and pedestrian circulation, safer driveway entrances and parking systems within the commercial properties located in the Skyway Business District.*
6. *Improve pedestrian circulation and the function and appearance of parking lots in the business areas, and reduce the need for public off-street parking requirements.*
7. *Existing entrances to parking lots within the Skyway Business District should be delineated with landscaping, pavement markings or signs.*
8. *Seek to have remaining septic systems in use to be transferred to public sewer.*
9. *The drainage basin within the community should be evaluated for retention/detention facility needs to correct existing and future storm water runoff problems.*
10. *Create an 'action group' dedicated to working with local governments and other community groups to establish a Local Improvement District* (LID).*

**A LID is a local government financing tool for property owners to invest in building infrastructure improvements (such as sidewalks or sewer lines) that serve their immediate area.*

3. Thriving Educated Youth and Community

Background: The term *Thriving Educated Youth* focuses on:

- Education and Jobs
- Public Safety
- Activities for youth

Goal of Thriving Educated Youth: To enhance the quality of life for the youth and their families in the Skyway-West Hill area and to provide for needed human services and resources focused on youth throughout the community.

Identified Community Projects and Priorities for Thriving Educated Youth and Community are as Follows:

Education and Employment

Priorities identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Strategic tutoring programs that focus on Bilingual students.*
2. *Establish music and art programs for youth.*
3. *Increase early education/preschool programs.*
4. *Create and develop youth job readiness and employment opportunities (summer jobs, internships, etc.)*
5. *Increase access to college and college preparation opportunities.*

Health and Safety

Priorities identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Provide community based services that are easily accessible to address drug/ alcohol issues and anti-gang involvement.*
2. *Establish anti-gang activities that also help youth involved with gangs or at-risk of being in a gang (i.e. youth violence prevention, help with legal services, etc.)*

3. *Establish health care programs for youth with chemical dependency, mental health and domestic violence, and other health issues.*
4. *Establish coordinate services to stabilize youth and their families impacted by loss of jobs, housing, or relocating from another community, state, or country integrate into our community*
5. *Increase transportation (pedestrian and motorized) that connects residents across the West Hill arear from (east to west).*

Activities For Youth

Projects identified from previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Create affordable recreational opportunities for youth. (i.e. Sports leagues, camp, etc.).*
2. *Establish an annual Skyway West Hill community event in summer to celebrate the diversity of our youth and their families and showcase their activities.*
3. *Establish multigenerational activities such as community gardens.*
4. *Organize youth-led activities and specific events that bring youth together.*
5. *Establish a community center that provides enrichment activities for youth and their families.*
6. *Create a Skyway Youth Council to advocate for issues that impact youth.*

4. Economic Prosperity and Affordability

Background: The concept Economic Prosperity and Housing Affordability focuses on:

- Anticipating gentrification and planning to prevent involuntary displacement.
- Identifying projects and opportunities to revitalize the Skyway Business District and ensuring residents can access the business district in a car, bus, bike or on foot.
- Identifying strategies to stabilize the average home price in the community for lower and moderate income families.

Goals and Objectives that improve the economic prosperity and affordability for the community:

- Create residential ownership models to turn more residents into homeowners.
- Advocate for affordable housing options for all income levels.
- Improve employment opportunities for residents in their community.
- Revitalize the Skyway/West Hill Business District.
- Increase the commercial tax base to stabilize services such as the King County Fire Department District 20.

Economic Prosperity and Housing Affordability topic areas

1. Improvements to Skyway West Hill Business District
2. Business District Access
3. Business District Revitalization
4. Housing Creation
5. Housing Resources

Identified Community Projects and Priorities for Economic Prosperity and Affordability are as Follows:

Improvements to Skyway-West Hill Business District

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Landscape the street and sidewalk; do a facelift of unattractive, old and plain building facades in Skyway Business District.*
2. *Develop the “empty-space” areas between commercial buildings into mini- public plazas or green spaces.*

3. *Ensure that future development or redevelopment of commercial buildings within the Skyway Business District will be built directly along the sidewalks.*
4. *Plan that new development should provide a mix of uses with retail or office space on the ground floor and residential units above.*
5. *Purchase and maintain litter bins for the business district.*

Business District Access

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Parking areas for new and redeveloped commercial buildings should be located in the rear or side of the buildings, under buildings, or in shared facilities and not along Renton Avenue.*
2. *Reconfigure existing entrances to parking lots within the Skyway Business District to have formal landscaping, pavement markings and/or signs.*
3. *Clearly post reduced speed signs at entrances to the business district to calm vehicular traffic.*
4. *Increase or improve transit facilities (such as bus stops) in the business district.*
5. *Seek methods to improve the flow of vehicle traffic along Renton Avenue in and around the business areas.*
6. *Remove physical barriers such as fences and invasive vegetation between commercial properties and Skyway Park.*
7. *Create a pedestrian-friendly environment with continuous sidewalks throughout the business district, including an upgraded traffic signal system and pedestrian-operated walk lights.*

Business District Revitalization

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Develop a business improvement study to identify specific steps to business district economic revitalization.*
2. *Build kiosks and signage along Renton Avenue that promote community awareness and local businesses.*
3. *Launch a “shop local” campaign.*
4. *Launch a “local jobs” campaign.*
5. *Develop a “local-ownership” business incubation site and microenterprise clinics.*

6. *Seek methods to increase transit (bus) service to the Skyway Business District.*

Housing Creation

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Conduct a housing needs assessment specifically for the Skyway/West Hill community.*
2. *Develop housing close to public transportation, recreational and/or retail services for fixed-income elderly residents.*
3. *Identify redevelopment opportunities, properties and funding to maintain and increase affordable housing units.*
4. *Use cost-reducing housing development strategies to create and preserve affordable housing for low-to moderate-income households.*
5. *Identify housing policies that help people with multiple housing barriers (such as evictions, criminal histories, large families) to secure safe, affordable housing.*
6. *Encourage new housing types that provide affordable ownership opportunities.*

Housing Resources

Projects, priorities and policies identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Work with financial institutions and other housing agencies to expand affordable housing resources.*
2. *Educate the community on housing issues and help people find or keep their homes, such as revolving loan fund, reverse mortgage program, community based repair programs.*
3. *Campaign for direct assistance to help homebuyers such as down payment assistance, mortgage default and foreclosure counseling.*
4. *Campaign for direct assistance to help renters such as rental assistance, landlord tenant disputes, or fair rental contracts.*
5. *Support programs that help prevent homelessness such as emergency rental assistance or referrals to social service networks.*

5. Culture, Art and Innovation

Background: Why is this important?

Arts and cultural activities introduce people to new ideas, ways to communicate and modes of thinking. Exposure to these things can generate creative thoughts in working and daily life, as well as build pride and character in the community.

Purpose for Culture, Art and Innovation Projects: *To Develop a community filled with creativity, art and character.*

Guiding Principles:

- Integrate art into community character and aesthetic
- Practice safety and environmental sustainability
- Emphasize creativity
- Be inclusive of all generations and cultures
- Create cultural connectivity to businesses, other parks, and organizations
- Collaborate and foster community partnerships
- Accommodate co-existing uses and ideas

*Identified Community Projects and Priorities for **Culture, Art and Innovation** are as Follows:*

Culture

Projects and priorities identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Improve the overall appearance of the Skyway Business District to reflect the cultural diversity of this community.*
2. *Establish artistic gateways at the entrances to the Skyway Business District.*
3. *Create public spaces that help increase cross-cultural social and community connections.*
4. *Host a yearly parade, carnival or festival.*
5. *Host a cultural food festival and cultural food cooking classes.*

Art

Projects and priorities identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Create a studio for musicians to record and perform.*
2. *Form art, dance and theater groups.*
3. *Promote and Develop neighborhood art lofts to attract additional creative people to the community.*
4. *Fund multi-generational community art projects throughout the year.*
5. *Honor the legacy and future of the community through murals, statues and mosaics.*

Innovation

Projects and priorities identified in previous plans and community discussions include:

1. *Turn an empty building into a business incubator where new entrepreneurs share expenses and support each other.*
2. *Initiate a 'shop local' campaign and create a place for home-based businesses to visibly market their products or services.*
3. *Place kiosks or LED signs at critical intersections throughout West Hill to announce community events in multiple languages.*
4. *Establish Urban Farms and expand P-Patch gardens for use by local residents.*
5. *Establish a tool library, where residents can borrow tools and take classes to learn how to fix things.*