

*Formal Planning and Neighborhood Change in Ballard, Seattle: An Assessment of the
Impacts of 1990's Planning Policy on Attachment and Identity*

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Planning

University of Washington

2022

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Department of Urban Design and Planning

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Abstract

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Seattle is a rapidly growing and changing city. Ballard, a secluded neighborhood in the northwest quadrant of the city, has absorbed significant residential growth over the last two decades and transformed from a quiet, industrial, working class neighborhood into a bustling urban village. This is by design; in Seattle's first Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1994, Ballard was designated as a Hub Urban Village under the City's new land use plan to direct urban and economic development to specific urban centers. As a part of the 1994 plan, Ballard also underwent a local planning process to identify community needs and priorities, which culminated in the Crown Hill-Ballard Neighborhood Plan, adopted in 1998. This research seeks to uncover how these formal planning documents influenced the physical development patterns in Ballard and in turn, their impact on residents' place attachment and the neighborhood's place identity. This research employs qualitative

interviews to understand current Ballard resident's perceptions of how the neighborhood has changed. The data from the interviews reveal that while individual residents maintain a strong affinity for and attachment to the neighborhood, they recognize that new development patterns are changing the neighborhood's identity and impacting community and interpersonal relationships. These findings connect back to larger urban planning considerations of who to plan for, and how to balance resident's immediate needs for shelter with a long term desire to preserve community heritage.

Acknowledgements

I have so many people to thank for their support, especially in this project which serves as the culmination of two years of work, time, and learning. I would like to thank Dr. Christopher Campbell for his steadfast guidance and encouragement as I chose, rechose, and narrowed down the subject of this paper, and Dr. Ken Yocom for stepping in at the last minute to see me across the finish line. I thank the many other faculty and staff who taught and advised me these last two years, and for their dedication to my education through extremely difficult times. I thank my colleagues, especially Claire Farrington and Art Lansing for their support, patience, and example as we all struggled through this process together. I thank my parents Beth and David Passey for their constant support these last two years and throughout my life. I have observed their example of hard work and desire for lifelong learning since childhood, and it will stick with me for the rest of my life. Finally, I thank my wonderful partner James for following me graciously wherever I take us, supporting me in my choice to pursue this degree, and for loving me through it all.

Finally, I want to dedicate this paper to Dr. Bob Mugerauer, whose indelible happiness, encouragement, and devotion to his students deserves infinite praise and admiration.

Thank you.

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This research, place-based in nature, was conducted on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish People. I would like to express my respect and gratitude to this land and to the countless generations of Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip, Puyallup, and Muckleshoot People who continue to call this place home.

Introduction

I moved to Seattle in the late summer of 2020, shortly before beginning my master's program in Urban Planning at the University of Washington. Before relocating to the city, I had spent a grand total of four days here and knew very little about Seattle and its culture of neighborhoods. Serendipity led me to Ballard, a charming, quiet, relatively secluded neighborhood in Northwest Seattle surrounded on two sides by water and on a third by a large hill.

My first memories of Ballard were of the sea of masts in the Salmon Bay marina, the low-rise brick industrial buildings on Shilshole Avenue, and the tree-lined streets of quaint craftsman bungalows. After living in one of those bungalows for nearly two years, I have grown deeply attached to this neighborhood, its history, and the people who make up the Ballard community. I have moved a lot throughout my life and lived in many different places, and there is something unique and special about Ballard that leaves an impression on those of us fortunate enough to spend time here.

Even as a newcomer to Seattle and to Ballard, significant change in the city and my neighborhood has been noticeable over the last two years. Long-time businesses are closing and being replaced by large-scale multi-family developments. Century-old single-family homes are being demolished and tall, slim townhomes are taking their place. With each change to the built environment, I sensed a gradual but tangible shift in the neighborhood,

and from my point of view, it was not a good one. It seemed to me as if every five-over-one mixed-use development that went up was slowly chipping away at Ballard's unique and special atmosphere, that the neighborhood's character and individuality were being traded for expensive luxury apartments, trendy restaurants, and above all, profit. The more I learned about planning, the more I wondered what forces were at play to bring about what seems like so much change so quickly.

This phenomenon is not unique to Ballard or even to Seattle. Communities across the world come in and out of fashion as their physical forms are molded by culture and capitalism, and when they do they begin to blend, becoming familiar to us by virtue of their sameness. This is not a Ballard problem, it's a product of globalization, among other factors, and it's a planning problem.

My natural curiosity, my affinity for deconstructing complex problems, and the complex, nuanced case study in which I find myself living led me to the research questions explored in this paper – how planning drives change, and how change impacts identity.

Problem and Purpose

Cities are dynamic places; it's part of their allure. Cities are unpredictable and constantly evolving. Humans have a complex relationship with change, but most often we seek to manipulate and control it. In essence, planning is just that – an exercise in managing the shape and direction of how cities change.

In the last 10-15 years, Seattle has experienced unprecedented growth (Balk 2021). This demographic change has impacted the way that Seattle's neighborhoods grow and change, and Ballard is no exception. Formerly a working-class enclave of Scandinavian immigrants, fishermen, and shingle-mill workers, this Northwest Seattle neighborhood has grown 25% in the last 10 years. Decades-old small local businesses are closing and single-family homes in Ballard are being torn down and replaced by blocks of studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Seattle is a fully planned city under Washington law, and its first comprehensive plan after the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1994 designated Ballard as an Urban Hub Village. This designation marked the area as a destination for densely concentrated residential and economic growth, served by public transit, open space, and other physical and social infrastructure. These villages were designed to be mixed-use, walkable communities that served their immediate residents as well as an economic and employment center for the surrounding traditional single-family areas.

Other official planning and policy measures in the last three decades have concentrated urban growth in Ballard including changing the land use code to accommodate higher densities (upzoning) and various modes of transportation access such as bus, bike, and soon – light rail.

In 1998, Ballard was the first residential Seattle neighborhood to publish its neighborhood plan, signaling a welcoming attitude towards new growth. However, as the

years have passed many long-time Ballard residents seem less than thrilled about the direction and speed at which the neighborhood has changed. This has manifested in vocal opposition to city-led projects like the completion of the Burke-Gilman mixed use trail, and quieter mourning of lost businesses and gathering places like a bowling alley, a diner, and a burger joint

The purpose of this research is to understand the relationship between official planning and its impact on neighborhood change, displacement, and loss of identity, using Ballard as the case study. It focuses specifically on the disconnect that inevitably arises between planning goals and planning consequences, both physical and socio-cultural. The research also considers how changes caused by formal planning, both directly and indirectly, have affected residents' perception of and attachment to the neighborhood.

Research Questions

- How does formal city planning and policy influence the physical and social development and change of neighborhoods and communities?
- How has planning-initiated change impacted Ballard residents' place attachment, and Ballard's broader place identity?
- How did the 1990 Growth Management Act, 1994 Seattle Comprehensive Plan, and 1998 Crown Hill-Ballard Neighborhood Plan on Ballard impact residential attachment to place and perceptions of place identity?

Literature Review

Place

There is extensive documentation in the literature about place – how it occurs, who controls it, what it is composed of, and what gives it meaning. The idea of a neighborhood will be dissected further below, but in essence, a neighborhood can be both a setting that contains place and a place itself. The purpose of this literature review is to understand the importance of place, heritage, and identity in neighborhoods, as well as to identify major drivers of neighborhood change established in planning literature.

Most simply, place is space made meaningful by those who use it (Aranda 2014). Place is created simultaneously by many different players, by external and internal forces, from the top down and the bottom up (Desille 2019). It is a product of formal institutional construction by urban planners and policymakers, but it is also a product of social interaction. In order for placemaking to be effective, it needs to center on the people who use it (Zuang 2019; Aranda 2014). When people activate physical space by living in it, they shape the place's identity by assigning meaning to it. Placemaking is an ongoing process that requires the "continuous involvement of people and communities" (Leach 2002; Zhuang 2019; Arreola 2012).

Place is a multifaceted concept. It is made up of social, cultural, and economic elements that when brought together, create a unique, yet malleable, entity. Place is made

up of the combination of form and cultural identity, and these physical places serve as "cultural capital" that is activated by social use (Leach 2002). The physical spaces can be parks, small businesses, places of worship, or residential neighborhoods, but they are all external representations of the culture, lifestyles, and values of the people who use them (Main and Sandoval 2015; Miller 2011; Sandoval 2012; Shuch and Wang 2015; Zuang 2019; Lu and He 2013, Arreola 2012). In his 2019 article, Madrazo states that "physical and social realms are inextricably linked. Otherwise, we might have a group of buildings but not a city; houses instead of homes, and spaces instead of places" (p. 71).

Place Attachment

Place attachment is the emotional bond between a person and a physical space (Ruiz, Hernández, and Hidalgo 2011). Because the creation of place is so inextricably tied to its function, users often form an attachment to the physical space they contribute to and inhabit. The converse is also true; if an area is very transient with high levels of physical and demographic change, residents are less likely to become attached as they have not had time to establish their own patterns of behavior before the space shifts (Gosse et. al 2016; Sampson and Rautenbach 2004; Ruiz, Hernández, and Hidalgo 2011).

Similarly, if a person has negative feelings towards their neighborhood, they are not likely to experience great attachment to it, while those who feel connected and included in their neighborhood are generally more satisfied with where they live (Friedrichs et al.

2003; Lawless 2011; Gosse et. al 2016; Forrest and Kearns 2001; Sengupta et al 2013).

Place attachment generally engenders feelings of pride about one's physical neighborhood and social community, which can positively influence the broader personal and place identity (Ruiz, Hernández, and Hidalgo 2011).

Place Identity

Place attachment is closely linked to but separate from place identity. Place attachment is personal, whereas place identity is collective. Place identity is defined as “a sense of belonging that interconnects people and connects them to place over time” (Gür and Heidari 2019). It is the product of interpersonal interactions in space over generations, and one that not only infuses meaning into space, but strengthens interpersonal bonds and ultimately builds community (Ruiz, Hernández, and Hidalgo 2011; Apektar 2017; Robertson et al. 2010).

Identity is central to placemaking and there is a documented reciprocal relationship between people and place (Aranda 2014). More broadly, the development of a place's identity is a process “produced through history by human activities” (Gür and Heidari 2019). Research shows that place attachment can form rather quickly and is correlated with a desire to remain, whereas a personal relationship to a place's identity takes more time to develop, and is connected to a feeling of belonging (Ruiz, Hernández, and Hidalgo 2011).

As a collaborative and iterative creation, place identity is strongly influenced by collective experience and collective memory. In a 2010 article, Borer writes that “stories about a neighborhood’s past shape everyday meaning, making and identity, and are, in turn, shaped by exigencies of the present and plans for the future.” Identity is intangible, but is anchored to place customs, traditions, built structures, public space, and interactions (Krase 2006, 2009; Suttles 1984; Zelner 2015).

As a place’s identity evolves over time, some pieces stick, and others fade. Further, as the people who make up a place change, so too does that place’s role and significance (Abrahamson 1996). This means that a physical place or set of cultural customs that have long since disappeared can in practice remain central to a place’s identity because of their prominent location at the forefront of community memory (Aptekar 2017). For example, although Ballard is no longer a predominantly Scandinavian ethnic enclave, the neighborhood continues to celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day annually on May 17. The tradition is no longer tied only to the people who live in Ballard, it is tied to this place.

Places can even have layers of different identities ascribed to them by different groups of people. For long-time Seattle residents, Ballard may be an industrial, Scandinavian fishing community. For tourists, it's home to a quaint shopping street of trendy businesses. For twenty-somethings, it’s home to a great selection of breweries. An identity can also be superficially assigned to a place by outsiders based on historical

significance or stereotypes or outlined by the planners and designers who construct new developments (Robertson, McIntosh, and Smyth 2010).

“Urban rebranding” is a common tool to reinvigorate ‘deteriorated’ neighborhoods and attract new investment (Willer 2021). There is a long history of New York City neighborhoods donning names like SoHo (South of Houston Street), TriBeCa (Triangle Below Canal Street), and NoLiTa (North of Little Italy) to differentiate themselves from other parts of the city. Sometimes, a new identity is created through policy to disassociate an area from negative cultural association, like when the Los Angeles City Council voted to rename South Central to South Los Angeles in 2003 (Allington 2017). NoMa (North of Massachusetts Avenue) in Washington D.C. got its name when the area was redeveloped from an industrial area into a mixed-use residential neighborhood. Sometimes, however, the renaming is imposed upon a place rather than brought forward as a grassroots movement. Recently there has been community backlash against the rebranding of Harlem to SoHo (South Harlem) by real estate agents. Long-time residents view this scheme as a tool of gentrification and an erasure of the longstanding identity a community built for itself (Allington 2017).

Ultimately a place’s identity is fluid, ever-changing, and altered in small ways every day by the community that inhabits it, visitors who experience it, and strangers who hear stories of it. This can be easy to forget, however, and hard to accept when these small changes add up to something one might not recognize.

Neighborhood and Community

There are many ways of defining a neighborhood, and none is more correct than another. Neighborhoods are both locations of places and types of places. They can be defined geographically, bounded by streets and landforms, or they can be defined by the social networks that operate within space as a place where people with commonalities interact and gather (Madrazo 2019). According to a 1979 report from the National Commission on Neighborhoods, a neighborhood is “what the inhabitants think it is.” This may seem like a non-answer, but it illustrates how intimately people and place are connected, especially on a micro scale. In this paper, neighborhood refers to both the political boundaries of a place governed by civic organizations, and to a community of people living in relative proximity with shared interests in and priorities for the built environment in which they reside. The physical boundaries of this neighborhood as defined by the author are visible in figure 1.



Figure 1: Ballard neighborhood as defined by the author

Neighborhood Change

There is robust literature surrounding neighborhood change, from theories on its causes, identified patterns of change, and research into its economic and social effects.

Traditionally, the cycle of neighborhood change is one of decline and reinvigoration (Delmelle 2017). This is obvious in the history of American cities and exemplified by the postwar wave of urban renewal policies that sought to rejuvenate “blighted” neighborhoods. A modern example of this cycle is the Opportunity Zone Program, introduced in 2018, which offers tax incentives to developers who choose to invest in

state-designated economically disadvantaged areas (“Opportunity Zones | Internal Revenue Service” n.d.).

More recently, the trend in neighborhood change is one of densification. Demographic change, different patterns in household size and composition, and shifting residential preferences away from dependence on single occupancy vehicles towards walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods has spurred the construction of townhouse and multi-family developments in both urban and traditionally suburban areas (Delmelle 2017).

Drivers of Change

According to some scholars, the “dynamic nature” of urban neighborhoods is a fundamental aspect of their existence (Downs 1981). They are places that experience constant change due to “inflows and outflows of residents, materials, and money” (Downs 1981). Scholars have studied drivers of neighborhood change for decades, and have identified many specific causes, but these can be broadly characterized into two categories: organic change and orchestrated change.

Organic change is evolution that happens naturally, generally over a long period of time. This can be driven by generational change, as cultural values and residential preferences shift over decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, for example, families were attracted to the open space, low density, affordability, and homogeneity of the suburbs. Today, in contrast, many people are more attracted to denser, mixed-use, walkable

neighborhoods with a variety of nearby amenities (Delmelle, 2017). People demand new things from their neighborhoods, and neighborhoods must change to meet the need or be left behind to slowly deteriorate.

In contrast, orchestrated change is more deliberate and happens rapidly. This type of change is driven by public policy, where policymakers see a problem and craft a policy solution to address it. Policy-driven change most often has an ultimate goal of improvement. Described as “urban transformation”, this type of change is intended to improve quality of life and spur economic growth and development (Gür and Heidari 2019; Iveynt 2008). However, this change often has unintended, but significant, consequences. Because place identity is linked to and driven by community, changes to space can have detrimental effects (Gür and Heidar, 2019).

Reactions to Change

Studies have shown that, unsurprisingly, residents react to change in many different ways. In their 2016 article, Gosse et al. found a relationship between residents’ sense of belonging and community inclusion and positive perceptions of change. Others found that long-term residents are more resistant to change and perceive it negatively because of the time they have invested in the status quo (Sullivan 2007). A 2020 article by Colin and Iturrieta Olivares found a strong link between nostalgia and dissatisfaction with

neighborhood change. Residents compare the current state of their neighborhood with a glorified past version linked to emotion, family, and the passage of time.

The latter is a possible explanation for why neighborhood change often corresponds with residential mobility (Feijten and van Ham, 2009). Studies show that residents select a place to live based partly on neighborhood characteristics, and when those aspects change to something that no longer aligns with residents' preferences, people are more likely to leave. However, there is also a reciprocal relationship implied. Places change, then the people in them change, and then places change again (Gür and Heidari, 2019). This cycle is ongoing, and it can often be difficult to pinpoint a distinct beginning or end.

Gentrification

One of the most discussed topics related to neighborhood change is gentrification. There are many definitions of gentrification and differing opinions in the literature about what qualifies as gentrification, but put simply, gentrification is displacement of an existing population because of new development. This displacement most often occurs when new development attracts wealthier, more highly educated, frequently white residents to a historically overlooked or underinvested neighborhood that is populated by lower- or working-class, minority residents (Eck n.d.; Summer 2018). As investment in the neighborhood increases, demand for space and the price of goods, services, and housing rises. This causes long-standing residents to be priced out and displaced.

Gentrification is usually predicated by public policy changes, capitalist profit-driven investment in real estate, or some combination of the two. For example, in Parkdale, a multicultural neighborhood in Toronto, city planning policy in the 1990s caused heavy gentrification pressure on local residents (Epstein, 2018). The policies restricted construction of low-cost housing units and imposed drastic land use and zoning changes. In Ivy City, a small historically Black community in Northeast Washington DC, Hecht Warehouse, an iconic commercial building, was redeveloped into upscale condos. The condo redevelopment served as an anchor site for gentrification, attracting new businesses that catered to the wealthy condo residents instead of the working-class Black families that called the neighborhood home for generations (Summer, 2018).

Displacement is an increasing concern in Seattle as the city grows, but Ballard is not often brought up in these conversations because gentrification is not often discussed in the context of wealthy white residents displacing low-income and working class white residents. Nevertheless, it is a looming concern to many lifelong Ballardites, one which we will explore further in the results section of this report.

Because of the relationship between people and place identity established above, when residents are displaced from a neighborhood the identity of the neighborhood is fundamentally altered. Sometimes this is intentional, but other times it is an unintended consequence. Real estate developers and agents often use specific language to market new development in gentrifying areas that is attractive to gentrifiers and alludes to the

neighborhood identity that they hope to cultivate, ignoring the identity established by the longstanding residents (Summer, 2018; Epstein, 2008). In other cases, gentrifiers are attracted to a neighborhood because of the existing character, authenticity, “ethnic charm”, “working-class grit,” or their understanding of local history (Apektar, 2017).

Newcomers use the space differently, and they ultimately alter the identity that attracted them in the first place. As place identity shifts in response to new stimuli, the original population may feel alienated or uncomfortable if they feel their space is becoming less and less recognizable (Martin, 2005; Summer, 2018). As long-term residents leave, so too does the cultural heritage and identity they maintained (Eck, n.d.). Some of the original history and identity can remain through historic buildings or flagship businesses but becomes distorted as it is interpreted, mythologized, and simplified by new residents and the passage of time.

From the literature, we come to understand the importance of place in community, and the many threats that are posed to place through both organic and orchestrated change. The remainder of this paper will attempt to understand these concepts in practice by investigating how planning Ballard has impacted its residents' attachment to the neighborhood, and the area's broader place identity.

Policy and Historical Context

Neighborhood History

With only 180 years of recorded history, Ballard is a relatively young place, especially when compared to Eastern US cities or centuries-old cities in the eastern hemisphere. Still, much like New York, Boston, Rome, Jerusalem, or Tokyo, Ballard's past is a significant aspect of what makes it unique today.

As explained above, a place's identity is built over time in thin, accumulating layers by the people who inhabit it. Further, the literature notes that places change over time due to both natural and institutional forces. In understanding Ballard's past, one can begin to understand the foundation upon which current and future identity is predicated.

Pre-Colonial

Nestled comfortably between *wiwalq^w* and *x^wəlč* (Salmon and Shilshole Bay), modern-day Ballard was home to indigenous residents long before the arrival of European settlers. The Shilshole Band of the Duwamish Tribe were the most recent native community to inhabit the area, with over 1,000 members living on the land at the community's peak (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988).

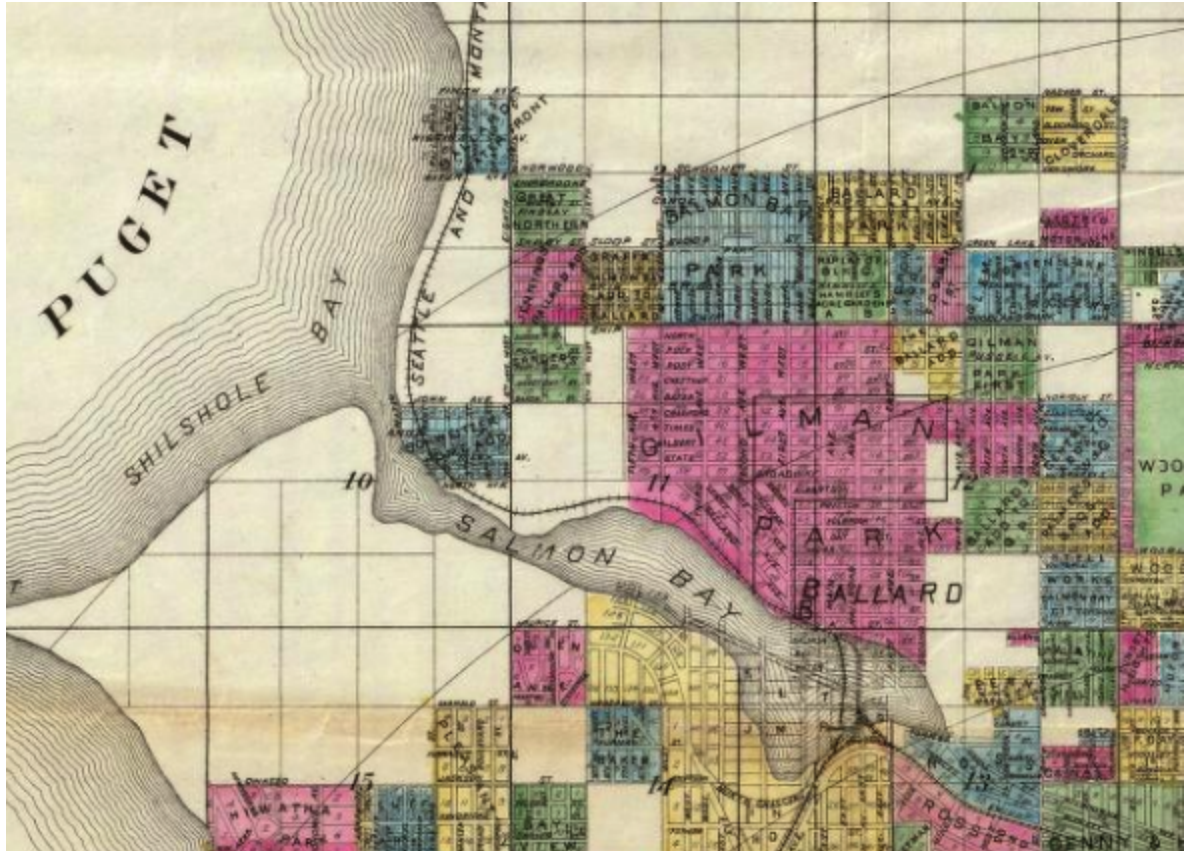


Figure 2: Ballard area map depicting Shilshole Bay and Salmon Bay, ca. 1890 (Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection)

The Shilshole village on the north shore of Salmon Bay was oriented toward the water and was made up of large cedar plank homes that housed multiple families. The village was advantageously located at the junction between salt and freshwater, concealed from unfamiliar and potentially malicious passersby on Puget Sound, and located along a major salmon migration route. The Shilshole people relied on the land and the water to support their community and provide a livelihood, hunting, fishing, and gathering roots and berries from the area's old growth forest (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988).

Unfortunately, the small band was a frequent target of raids in the 17th and 18th centuries by more northerly tribes. The Shilshole population dwindled over the centuries and by the time the first European settlers arrived with the intention to establish roots, the Shilshole village had shrunk to a group of only three homes housing 12 families (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988).

Early settlers lived alongside the Shilshole people, trading goods and even intermarrying (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Unfortunately, many Indigenous Ballard residents faced pressure to relocate to government-established reservations. Still, those who left the area maintained their connection to the land.

Western Settlement

The area's first European settler, Mr. Ira W. Utter, arrived in 1852 or 1853 (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988; Pheasant-Albright 2007). Born in New York, Mr. Utter originally sailed for San Francisco before heading north to the Puget Sound region. Other settlers joined Utter over the years, and by 1865 all the land along the waterfront had been claimed under Washington territorial pre-emption law by eighteen different households (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Plats varied in size, with Utter controlling over 820 acres which was sold off to other homesteaders by his family following his death in 1871.

By 1870, there were nearly 100 white settlers living in the area. This small ensemble of residents of different backgrounds and status relied on one another, whether by desire or necessity, for food, trade, and company. It was also during this time that the landscape of Salmon Bay changed rapidly and dramatically as the forest was clear cut to allow settlers to graze livestock and farm crops. Although it was known in its early days as Farmdale Homestead, the town's official name honored Captain William Ballard, who won a large tract of local land in a bet (Nyberg and Steinbruek 1975).



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

Figure 3: Loading logs at a Stimson Mill Company logging camp, Ballard. ca. 1900 (Source: MOHAI)

Ballard Town

By 1890, all the land south of what is now NW 65th Street had been cleared of forest (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). In November 1889, the small settlement officially incorporated into a city of 1,173 residents, predominantly young, single men (Pheasant-Albright 2007). Ballard was the first city to incorporate following Washington's statehood in 1889 (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). The town grew rapidly after incorporation, and its second mayor expanded the city limits in 1891. More sophisticated infrastructure was constructed; it was in this decade that many of the streets were platted and planked in lower Ballard. This street layout persists to this day, and in 1895 a street numbering system was established (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). In 1894, a gas-powered plant was approved to provide electric lighting for street lamps and public buildings.

It was also during this decade that Ballard Avenue grew into the economic hub of the community, home to a feed store, saloons, bars, a grocer, a bakery, a meat market, and more (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Many of these original brick commercial buildings still stand today, protected by the Ballard Avenue Landmark District. Ballard's rapid residential and economic development was bolstered during this period in part thanks to its accessibility to all parts of Seattle by two streetcar lines and a traditional railway.



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Figure 4 (above): Ballard Ave and NW Vernon Place, ca. 1925 (source: MOHAI)

Figure 5 (below): Ballard Ave and NW Vernon Place, ca. 2019 (source: Google Street View)



At the turn of the century, Ballard's primary industry was lumber processing. The town housed more than ten sawmills and provided lumber to the greater Seattle area, including materials used to rebuild Seattle after the great fire in 1889 (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Fishing, manufacturing, and farming were also significant local industries. By 1900, Ballard had grown to 4,568 residents, making it the seventh largest city in the state of Washington ("Ballard - CityArchives | Seattle.Gov" n.d.).

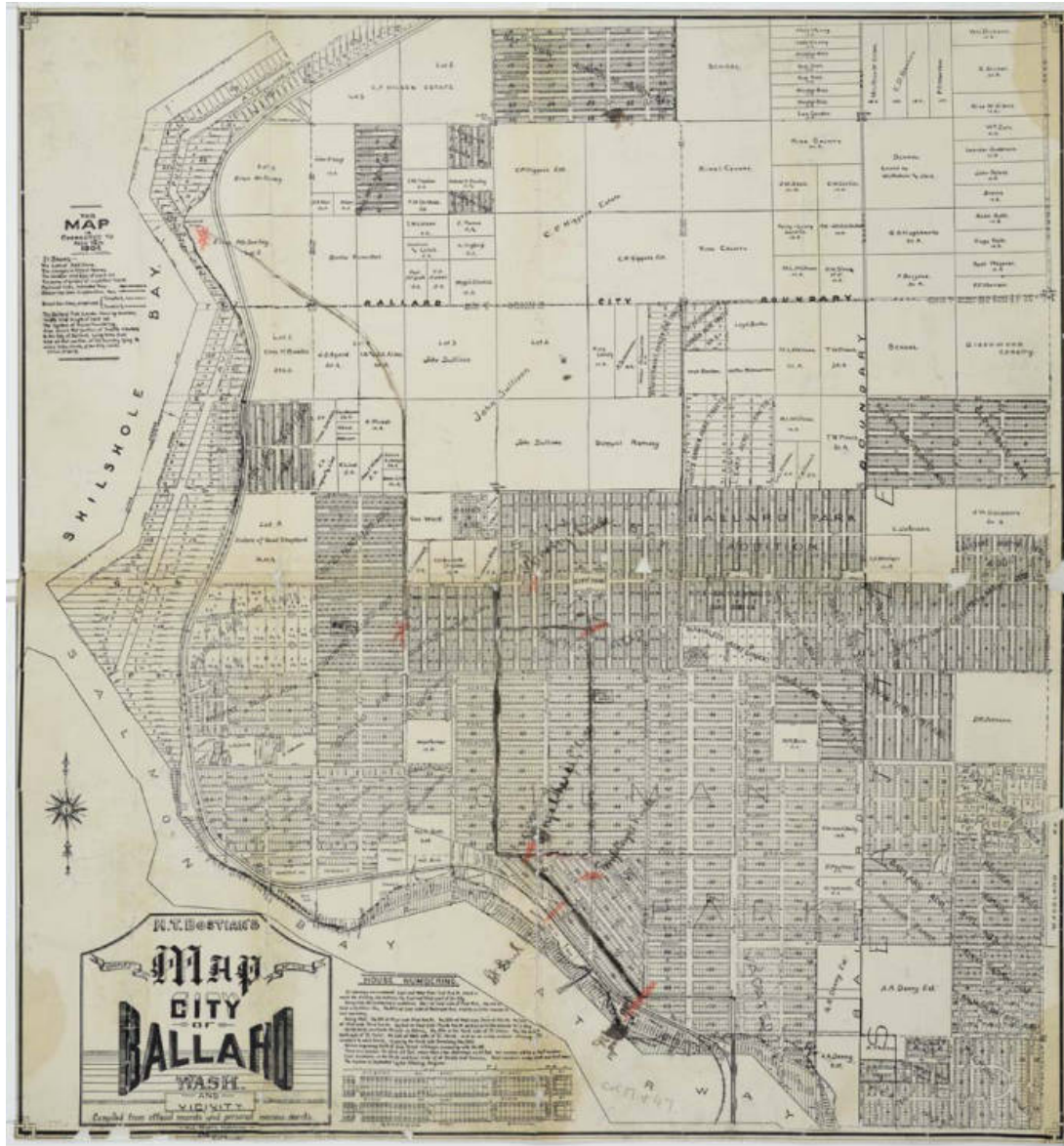
It was during this time that the first Scandinavian residents settled in Ballard, which was the beginning of a significant wave of immigration to the area from Nordic countries, primarily Norway and Sweden. These immigrants were attracted to Ballard because of the familiarity of the landscape and local industry, like logging, fishing, and shipbuilding. At the run of the century, 1 in 10 Ballard residents could trace their ancestry back to Scandinavia (Moran 2019).

A city within the City



Figure 6: 20th Ave NW looking north from Ballard Ave, ca. 1910 (Source: University of Washington Libraries)

Unfortunately, Ballard was not without its problems. Human and animal activity linked to the rapid residential growth and economic industrialization of the area polluted nearby waterways and wells, making clean drinking water a valuable commodity in the small town. Many of the town's mayors worked to remedy the problem over the years, but the water problems continued to worsen and ultimately proved to be independent Ballard's Achilles heel.



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Figure 7: Map of the city of Ballard, ca. 1904. (Source: MOHAI)

Annexation pressures began to develop in 1905, driven primarily by the larger city's monopolistic control of natural water sources like the Cedar and Duwamish River and low levels of rainfall. After three previously rebuffed attempts, in 1906, Ballard residents

reluctantly voted to be annexed to the city of Seattle. Ultimately, the annexation was born of necessity more than desire and many residents mourned the change to their small, fierce, and independent community. At the time of annexation, Ballard was home to over 17,000 residents (“Ballard - CityArchives | Seattle.Gov” n.d.).

By 1910, 90 percent of today’s Ballard was cleared of trees and platted for residential development (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). To this day, parcels in Ballard are classified with King County by the original turn of the century real estate brokers who developed, subdivided, and sold individual plots to new residents. Ballard’s commercial core crept up modern-day 20th and 24th streets, hosting banks, seamstresses, hardware stores, bookstores, and repair shops. Wood-planked streets were paved in brick, municipal garbage collection service was established, and the city bought land to dedicate as public parks. The Chittenden Locks opened in 1917 connecting the Lake Washington Ship Canal to Puget Sound.

War Years



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Figure 8: NW Market Street looking east, 1939 (source: MOHAI)

Ballard's shipyards kept busy during the First World War, and many returning veterans settled in the area because of cheap rent and readily available work. Economic prosperity continued through the 1920s, when Ballard residents worked at the mills during the day and relaxed at restaurants, cafes, and dining halls in the evenings and on weekends.

Ballard was insulated from the worst impacts of the Depression in the 1930s, as its main industries such as shipbuilding and fishing remained essential and in demand (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Ballard's characteristic shingle mills

pivoted towards lumber, though not all were able to weather the economic storm. Federally funded unemployment bonds had the dual benefit of providing jobs to local laborers and improving neighborhood infrastructure. Local family-owned businesses on Market Street and Ballard Avenue remained open to serve the community. Between 15 and 30 percent of new homes constructed in Seattle each year in the 1930s were in Ballard (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988).

In 1940, the new Ballard bridge opened, improving connections from Ballard to Magnolia, Queen Anne, and downtown. Ballard bustled during the Second World War to support wartime industries, and the population grew as workers flocked to the area to build ships and airplanes to support the war effort.

Post-War

After the Second World War, Ballard continued as a quiet, suburban-style neighborhood. Its relative isolation from other parts of Seattle due to its geographic location meant that Ballard residents generally kept to themselves, and other Seattle residents rarely ventured to Ballard. The neighborhood retained its balance of family-friendly residential enclaves and a busy industrial waterfront.

Like much of the broader Seattle area, Ballard suffered through the economic slump of the 1960s through the 1980s. A combination of residents leaving the city for the allure of low home prices and more space in the suburbs and the slow decline of domestic

manufacturing had a multiplicative negative impact on the neighborhood’s economic health. The last of Ballard’s iconic shingle mills closed in 1984, marking the end of an era (*Passport to Ballard: The Centennial Story* 1988). Further, many of Ballard Avenue’s small local stores suffered as large suburban shopping centers like the Northgate Mall drew customers away from neighborhood business districts.

In an effort to protect this area, Ballard’s original commercial district along Ballard Avenue was designated a historic landmark by the city of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board in 1976. The buildings lining it, dating from the 1890s to the 1940s, were recognized for their “modest commercial architecture” and significance to the city’s cultural heritage (“Ballard Avenue Landmark District Board: History, Introduction & Policies, Meetings and Procedures, District Guidelines.” 2015).

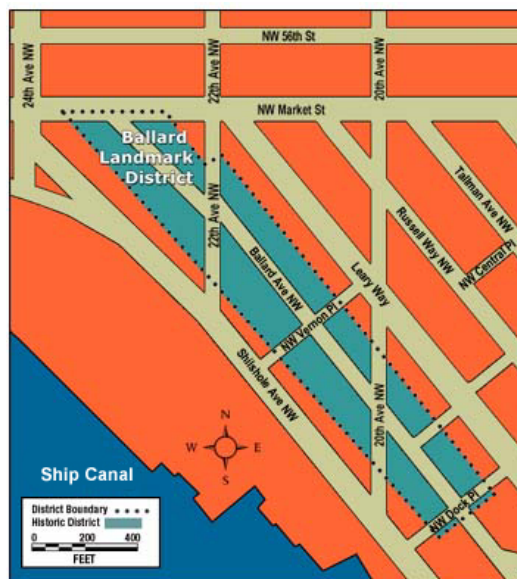


Figure 8: Ballard Avenue Landmark District boundaries (Source: Department of Neighborhoods)

Comprehensive Planning: State, City, Neighborhood.

The Growth Management Act

In 1990, following precedent set by states such as Oregon, Florida, and California, the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA required large and growing Washington cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans to anticipate and manage population growth. In the decades prior, the state population had grown by an average of over 20% each decade since the Second World War, almost doubling in size over the 40-year period. Lawmakers felt that unplanned growth at such a rapid pace was detrimental to the environment, economic development, and public health and safety of residents (RCW 36.70A.010) . They were also concerned that the rapid growth of cities would consume the state’s agricultural land. Preservation of the character of rural communities and economies was one of the law’s major goals (RCW 36.70A.011).

	2020	2010	2000	1990	1980	1970	1960	1950	1940	1930	1920	1910
Population	7,705,281	6,724,540	5,894,121	4,866,692	4,132,156	3,409,169	2,853,214	2,378,963	1,736,191	1,563,396	1,356,621	1,141,990
% Change	14.6	14.1	21.1	17.8	21.2	19.5	19.9	37	11.1	15.2	18.8	120.4

Figure 10: Washington State Population Growth since 1910 (US Census Bureau)

The GMA outlines 13 discrete goals meant to “guide the development and adoption” of land use regulations within the state (RCW 36.70A.020). These include:

- Encouraging growth in urban areas with adequate infrastructure to support dense communities

- Reduce residential development's encroachment on rural and agricultural land
- Encourage the construction of regional, multimodal transportation networks
- Planning, construction, and maintenance of a diverse and affordable housing stock
- Encouraging economic development across the state in a variety of sectors
- Maintaining and protecting of personal property rights
- A timely and predictable permitting process at the state and local level
- Maintaining and enhancing the state's natural resource-based industries
- Preserving open space for recreation and wildlife habitat
- Protecting the environment
- Encourage citizens participation in planning processes
- Maintaining adequate public facilities and services
- Identifying and preserving historic assets

Toward a Sustainable Seattle

The GMA requires largely populated and rapidly growing counties and the cities within them to develop and submit a comprehensive plan that addresses the 13 goals listed above. Seattle's first GMA-informed comprehensive plan was adopted in 1994, entitled *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*. The plan is centered around community values generated through extensive public engagement: continuity, diversity, economic security, education and life-long learning, environmental quality, freedom, good government, opportunity, health and safety, and progress. These values are further boiled down into four core values: community, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and social equity.

The community value is introduced with the following description:

“Seattleites understand that the health of the City and of the whole region depends on the strength of community within and between neighborhoods and across city and county boundaries. We are all in this place together. Seattleites share pride in the community fabric of Seattle’s neighborhoods. At the neighborhood level, residents and business people experience the greatest sense of belonging to a community.” (“The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan: Towards a Sustainable Seattle.” 1994)

Within the mandatory land use element of the 1994 plan, the City introduced the urban village strategy for development (“Guide to the Comprehensive Plan in Seattle - CityArchives | Seattle.Gov” n.d.). This was the catalyst for the development of neighborhood plans, also explicitly described in the inaugural plan, to allow areas of the city to highlight their own priorities and influence the implementation of the urban village strategy in their neighborhoods.

The Urban Village Strategy was the City’s response to citizen priorities and the plan’s core values. It is touted as a way to “preserve the best qualities of Seattle’s distinct neighborhoods while responding positively and creatively to the pressures of change and growth” (“The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan: Towards a Sustainable Seattle.” 1994). The goals of the program echo those listed in the GMA, with explicit mentions of population diversity, walkability, interconnected residential and commercial areas, and most uniquely,

a focus on preserving “unique identity reflecting local history, the village’s natural features, and other sources of community pride.” The urban village designation functions alongside the urban center and manufacturing/industrial center designations outlined in countywide planning policy also as required by the GMA. Another less broadly advertised, but still well-known, goal of the strategy was to protect the character of single-family residential enclaves from development pressure to “grow and change in character” (Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Planning Association Seattle 1996).

In a document published by the mayor’s office to accompany the plan, city officials boast the following:

“This Plan protects Seattle’s many wonderful single-family neighborhoods by directing growth to mixed-use Urban Villages where more compact development can be best supported with the services and amenities they deserve. And it protects and enhances the unique neighborhood business districts which are great places to shop, people-watch, and live, by supporting their growth with improved transportation access and transit service and clear guidelines for a healthy mix of business and residential uses” (“An Issues Guide to the Mayor’s Recommended Comprehensive Plan” 1994).

The strategy designated specific Seattle neighborhoods as one of the following types: urban center villages within county-level urban centers, hub urban villages, and residential urban villages. The designations are tiered with the highest density directed

towards urban centers, then hub villages, then residential villages. The original plan listed five urban centers, seven hub villages including Ballard, and 18 residential villages (see figure 11) .

Hub urban villages were designed to be commercial and employment centers serving not only the immediate residents but attracting residents from surrounding areas as well. This would be made possible by the establishment of hub villages as significant public transit nodes. Policies accompanying these goals included upzoning for higher density mixed-use and residential development (“The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan: Towards a Sustainable Seattle.” 1994). The plan aimed for 30 percent of citywide residential growth over the next twenty years to be directed to hub and neighborhood urban villages, which the city estimated to be between 15,000 and 18,000 households.

Land Use Figure 1

ADOPTED JULY 25, 1994

**Urban Centers, Urban Villages,
Manufacturing Centers, and
Neighborhood Anchors**

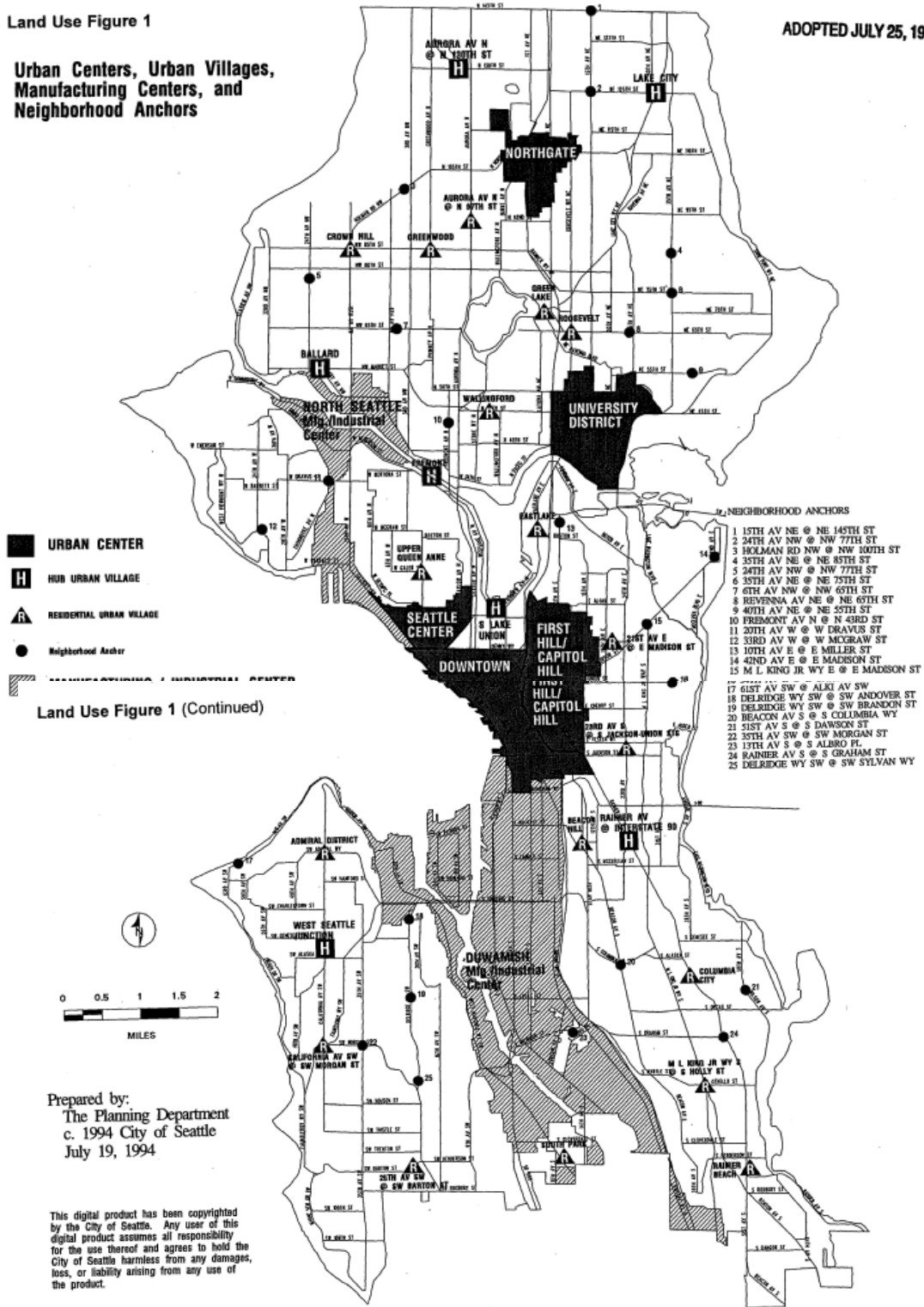


Figure 11: Urban Village designations from 1994 Comprehensive Plan (Source: City of Seattle)

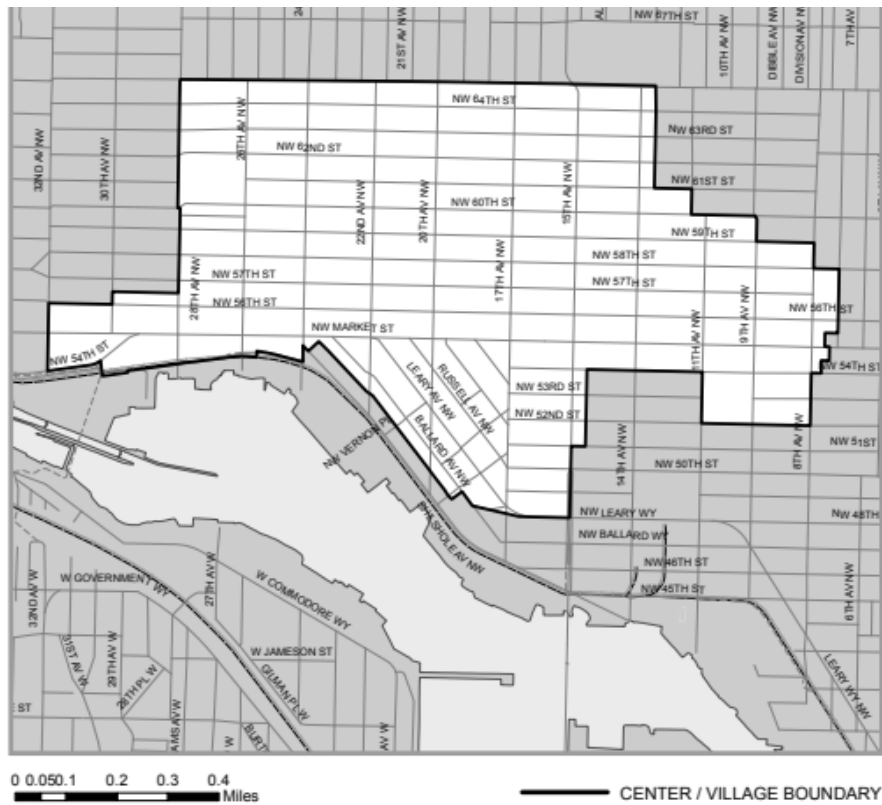
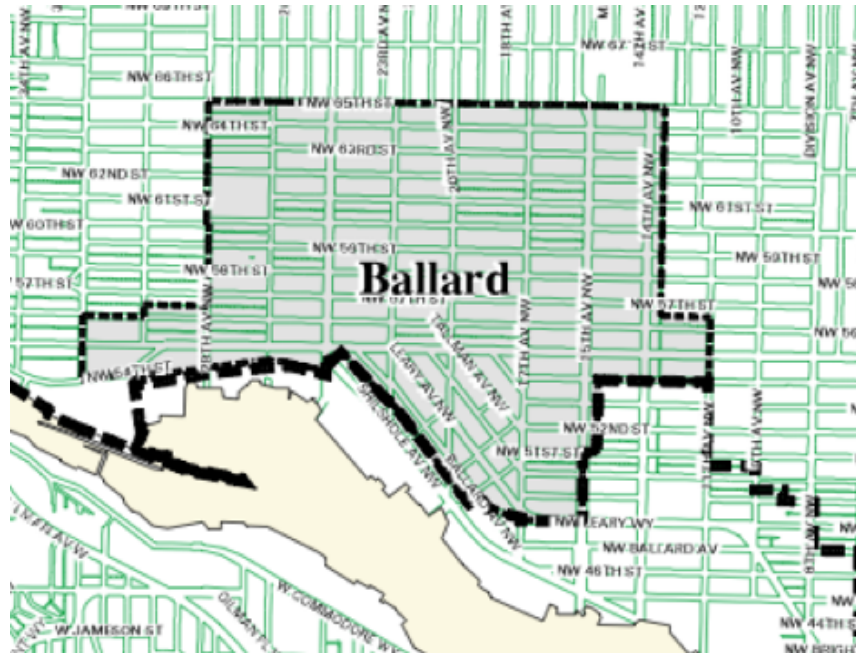


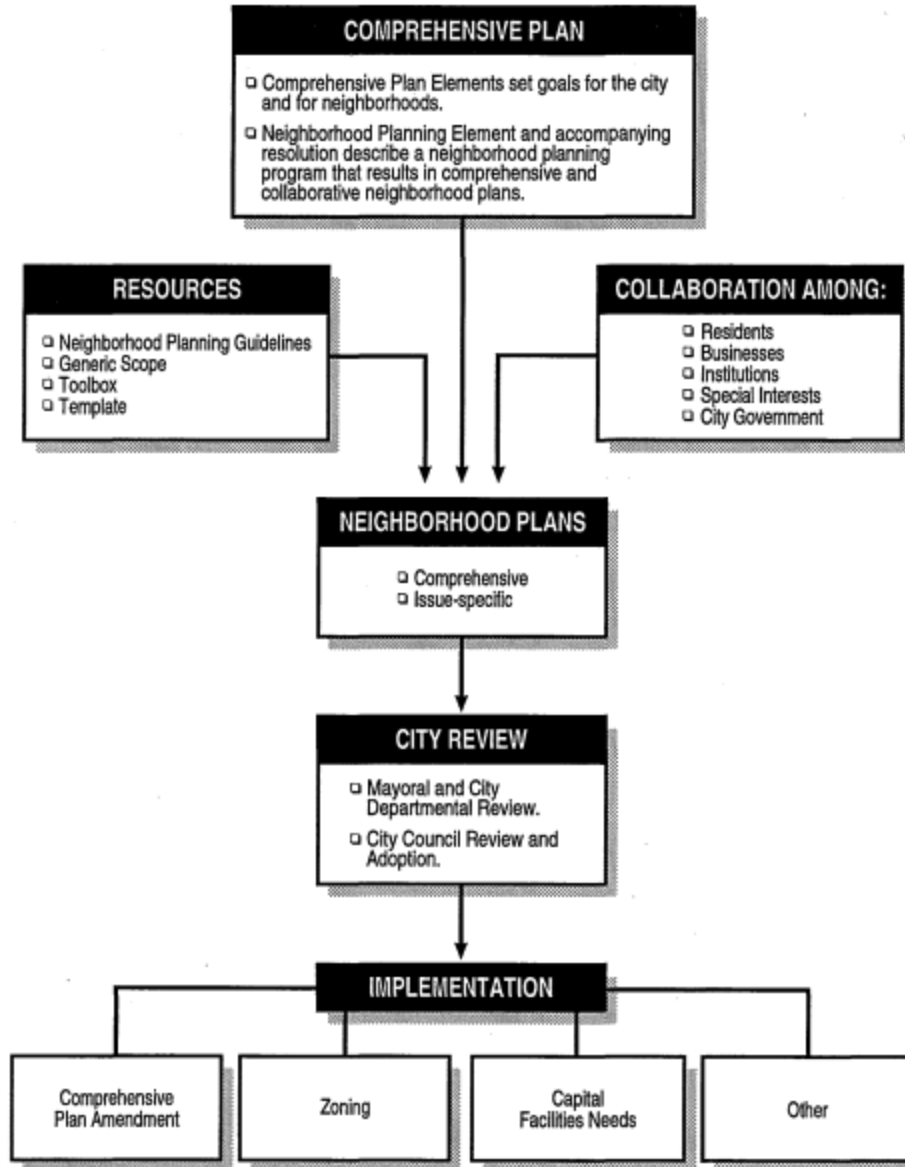
Figure 12: Ballard Urban Hub Village boundaries from 1994 (above) and 2035 (below) Comprehensive Plans

Neighborhood Planning

The neighborhood planning element of the 1994 plan was born out of citizen concern about how the new urban village strategy would directly impact the communities expected to absorb the lion's share of the city's growth. The Seattle Neighborhood Planning Office was created for the sole purpose of developing and implementing citizen-driven plans at the neighborhood scale. The Crown Hill-Ballard Neighborhood Plan was the first resident-led plan to be adopted by the City Council in 1998. Unlike the comprehensive plan, there is no requirement from city or state code that neighborhood plans be regularly updated.

Neighborhoods were given guidelines under the Comprehensive Plan on how to develop their plans and what content to include, but there was no prescriptive outline of what each neighborhood should do. Neighborhoods were required to appoint Organizing Committees to lead plan development, which were staffed by community volunteers and advised by city staff from the Office of Neighborhood Planning (Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Planning Association Seattle 1996). Committees were encouraged to focus on six broad topic areas – land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and economic development – but could choose any subset of these as well as additional topics that were particularly relevant, such as arts and culture (Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Planning Association Seattle 1996).

Neighborhood Planning Process



npchart.cdr(14.0)

Figure 13: Neighborhood Planning process as outlined in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan

Neighborhood residents formed the Crown-Hill Ballard Planning Association, which incorporated as a non-profit organization in late 1995. The association was led by a steering committee and further organized into six subcommittees: support services, finance, education, special events, contracts, and emphasis. There were also three volunteers appointed over geographic areas - Crown Hill, Central Ballard, and overall Ballard. Each committee was staffed by resident volunteers who worked diligently over the next year, meeting regularly amongst themselves and with other stakeholders to develop the neighborhood plan.

The two-phase plan was developed through citizen-led stakeholder engagement. Phase I focused on community education and on identifying community issues, concerns, and wishes. Volunteers gathered community feedback through subject-area meetings such as transportation, human services, and economic development, as well as through survey responses. The general trends identified in the first phase were that residents like the “small town” feel of the community and the quiet character of single-family residential areas, but also appreciated walkable access to a neighborhood commercial center. Major concerns were traffic congestion, few local employment opportunities, and buildings that did not align with the neighborhood’s existing built character. Residents wanted more access to green space, a complete Burke-Gilman trail, economic development, and a regional library. The community outlined “vision elements” for each of the subject areas

that articulated what existing and potential elements of the neighborhood were most important.

In Phase II, committee leadership conducted further stakeholder outreach and worked with the Office of Neighborhood Planning and pro bono consultants to draft the final plan. The core tenets of the final plan were the construction of a Ballard Municipal Center, a focus on arts and culture, strengthening human services, improving access to open space for recreation, continued economic development, improved multi-modal transportation, and strategic residential development. After nearly four years of work by hundreds of volunteers, the Crown Hill-Ballard Plan was ratified by the Seattle City Council in May 1998.

The most significant component of these plans to this research is their goals. The documents vow to protect neighborhood character, individuality, and community. They also offer residents the opportunity to outline an agenda of priorities for neighborhood improvement and call attention to the infrastructure required to comfortably welcome density.

Methodology

This study employs a combination of empirical data analysis, qualitative interviews, and document review to address the broader research questions. I began my work by

researching Ballard's history and demographics to get an objective understanding of the physical area and the people who reside in it.

Preliminary Research

I analyzed census data from the late 19th century to the present day to understand changing demographic trends in Ballard. I narrowed census data to the study area by using historic census tract maps and ZIP code information. Data included population, household size, household income, building inventory, etc. Data were then aggregated and plotted to understand demographic trends over the neighborhood's approximately 150-year history.

I also read numerous historical records on Ballard. The books I found focused primarily on Ballard's early history from European settlement in the 1850s to the 1920s shortly after Ballard was annexed into the city of Seattle. In these records, I observed elements of the community culture that was established from Ballard's inception and the historical culture of hard work, humility, and camaraderie that developed in this area over the decades.

I visited the Seattle municipal archives in February 2022 to review government documents on formal city planning in Ballard. I reviewed documents from the 1940s to the present day. The records that I found focused on economic development, urban design, and growth management. I also reviewed extensive documentation detailing the development of the 1994 Seattle Comprehensive Plan *Towards a Sustainable Seattle* to understand the

motivation behind and the goals of the Urban Village Strategy, the 1998 Crown-Hill Ballard Neighborhood Plan, and many other documents relating to the development, goals, and implementation of both the aforementioned planning and policy documents. From these documents I understood the process of the plan's development, the attention to detail paid by plan authors, and gained an understanding of both the city's goals for the plan and the motivations of the resident stakeholders who developed it.

Qualitative Data Collection

After I conducted preliminary background research, I developed questions for the qualitative interviews with Ballard community members. Questions were informed by peer studies and the research questions – how 1990s planning policy influenced neighborhood change and impacted resident place attachment and broader neighborhood identity. The questions focus on three broad topics: the interviewee's personal history in the neighborhood, the interviewee's perception of change in the neighborhood, and the interviewee's perception of Ballard's identity and community (see Appendix A). The questions were written to encourage respondents to offer answers that were reflective and contributed to my analysis.

Study participants were recruited through purposeful sampling. My highest priority in recruiting participants was to gather a group of people that represented a diverse sample of Ballard residents. The goal was not to collect a demographically representative subset of

Ballardites, but to hear from people from all stages of life with varied backgrounds, interests, and experiences. This meant finding respondents of different socioeconomic backgrounds, renters and homeowners, long-term residents and new transplants, men and women, and people with and without children. Each of these attributes lends itself to a different perspective of and relationship to place and to other people within the community that I thought would add depth and breadth to the data.

By recruiting a diverse pool of participants, my goal was to make sure that my findings weren't skewed towards the experiences of one demographic. There is a perception that homeowners have a greater stake in their neighborhoods because they've invested their money in the area and therefore their opinions on political decisions outweigh those of renters who may not have the privilege to participate as actively in the political process. My goal was to hear an opinion from a cross section of Ballard residents to ensure a broad sample of responses.

Participants were recruited through a mix of existing community and personal connections and cold outreach. I found two participants through my neighborhood's Buy Nothing page on Facebook, a fellow worshiper at my church, and a personal friend. I also emailed the Ballard District Council and was able to speak to two members of the organization's leadership. Finally, I was referred to interested participants by other interviewees and fellow students at the University. My first interviewee connected me with three women whose children all attended the local preschool, and another MUP graduate

student conducting research in Ballard referred me to participants she had interviewed for her work.

All twelve participants were volunteers, which introduces self-selection bias – those who chose to participate were intrigued by the research topic and willing to share personal thoughts and experiences pertaining to the topic. I do believe that a random sample would have produced different results. However, my objective was not to understand a single average opinion, but to hear a variety of diverse opinions and experiences. In this instance, the biased selection of participants contributed to the richness of the data. Because the research questions center on place attachment, the experiences of a small group of passionate residents provides more insight than would a larger, more demographically representative sample to whom place is less important. Even within the purposeful sample, there was some variety in level of attachment which, in itself, was an insightful data point.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom and in person in February, March, and April of 2022. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between twenty and sixty minutes depending on the flow of conversation and participant responses. Questions were drafted ahead of the interviews, but I often asked additional questions sparked by participant responses. After conducting three interviews, I reexamined the questions a second time to ensure that they were still effective in gathering responses relevant to the research questions and adjusted them. Further, I added and changed questions slightly in each

interview to tailor them more appropriately to the interviewee's experience and to augment prior responses.

I saw themes emerge after the first three interviews, and those themes began to solidify after six interviews. The common themes were consistent across respondents regardless of their personal backgrounds. I continued interviewing participants to further develop the emerging trends, gather more data, and hear from a more diverse population. After 12 interviews, a primary set of themes emerged and I thought that additional interviews would likely not have contributed novel information and decided to shift from data collection to analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze participant responses, I created a spreadsheet with columns for each question and rows for each participant. I pasted my notes on the responses to each question in the corresponding cell so that I could quickly scan a brief synopsis of each respondents' answer and look for key words and phrases that popped up multiple times across participants. An extract of the matrix can be found in Appendix B. After extracting the main themes, I reviewed the transcript and audio recording of each interview to confirm these themes and identify supporting quotations.

Results

Participant Demographics

Through the interview process, I was able to speak to 12 area residents. Of the 12, four identify as male and eight identify as female. Eleven interviewees live in ZIP code 98107, and one person lives further north in ZIP code 98117. Seven interviewees have lived in Ballard for fewer than 10 years, and five have lived in the area for longer than 10 years. The newest to the neighborhood interviewee moved here only a year and a half ago, and the longest-term resident has lived in the neighborhood since the 1970s. Eight interviewees are property owners and the remaining four rent their homes. Interviewee ages range from mid-twenties to mid-eighties.

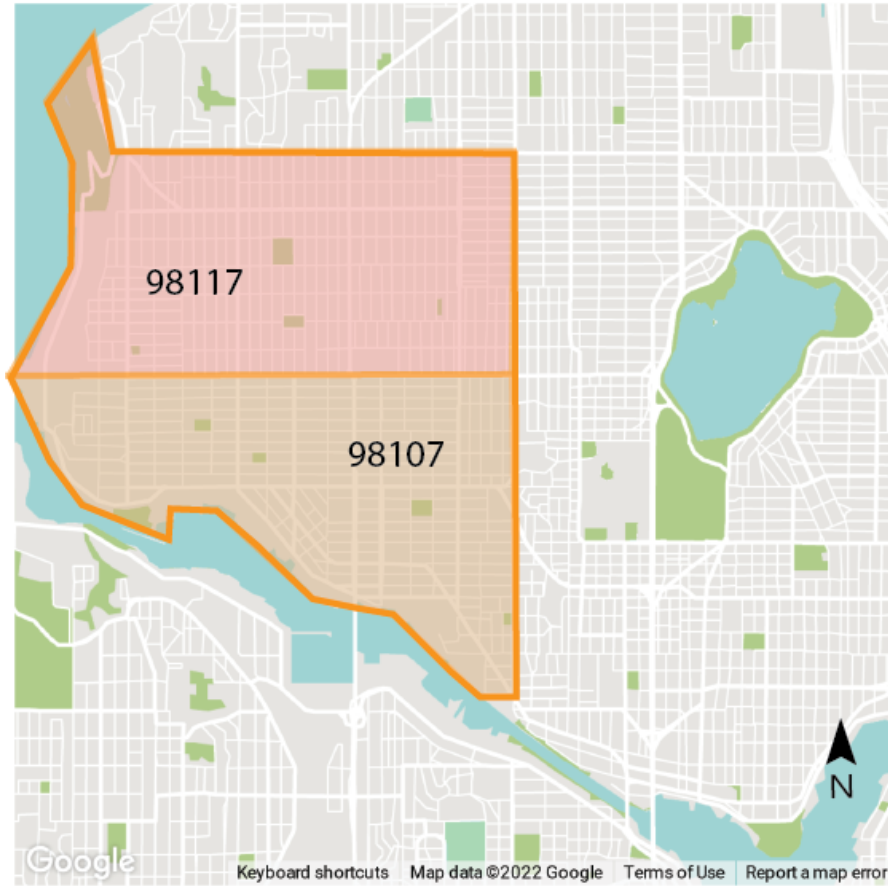


Figure 14: Ballard Zip Codes

Interview questions were broken into three sub-categories: resident perception of Ballard, resident perception of change in Ballard, and resident perception of community and identity in Ballard. Five main themes emerged in the interviews. These themes are interconnected, and all relate or connect to the main research questions surrounding place attachment, place identity, and change in the context of Ballard in the post-growth management phase of urban planning. Each theme is explored and explained further below.

Themes

Place Attachment

Each of the 12 interviewees express that they enjoyed living in Ballard. When asked why they chose to live here and what their favorite things about Ballard were, respondents are unanimous in their appreciation for the neighborhood's walkability and access to a variety of shops, restaurants, and other businesses and services. The very first person interviewed describes Ballard as:

"Super walkable with tons of amenities, it has probably I'd say more available than most other Seattle neighborhoods...we also wanted to, you know, have a better quality of life as well and where we could spend less time driving and more time with our family."

Other participants throughout the research process echoed the same sentiment, responding:

"Walkability is definitely the number one and I guess along with that is convenience, which kind of goes hand in hand. But I mean, I can walk to the podiatrist....we can have such easy access to a choice of amenities and easy access to downtown."

“The walkability. You know the fact that I have, I can walk to the Ballard market, and you know kind of like friends everybody knows your name, you know or just knows you.”

Residents also cite access to nature and green space as another attribute they like about Ballard, be it neighborhood parks, the beach at Golden Gardens, the Ballard Locks, or just proximity to the waterfront. One participant describes the amenities and nature combination as “the best of both worlds:”

“A lot of cities where you can have this kind of access to so much great stuff but not literally be downtown so you can still just have trees and parks and a little bit of space, you know, unlike living in Manhattan or San Francisco or downtown Seattle so I thought it was a really great blend.”

The neighborliness and family-friendliness of Ballard is another strong sentiment. One respondent says of Ballard that *“it has just a nice small-town feel.”* Another respondent who grew up in the neighborhood referred to Ballard specifically throughout our discussion as their hometown, not Seattle. Another expressly admits that they feel an attachment to this place when they said:

“We do have these distinct neighborhoods and people feel connected to those neighborhoods. So, if someone asks you where you live, you say Ballard, you know, or U District or something.”

All of the interviewees express just how much they like their neighborhood and do so with a sense of pride and appreciation for the area. One long-time Ballard resident says:

"I feel really lucky by like how many small businesses, you know what a unique community it still feels like and that with all the growth and change there still is something you know that feels unique about where we are. And I like that it's kind of the city within a city feel that you can basically do everything within Ballard but then you also, of course, have the rest of the city to explore beyond that, but if you don't want to leave, I feel like we just keep getting more amenities and more resources locally, which is really neat."

When asked if they planned to stay in the area for the foreseeable future, every respondent said yes, and went further to say that there were no other Seattle neighborhoods they would prefer to live in, despite acknowledging systemic issues like crime, homelessness, and the high cost of housing.

"I like walking through the neighborhood, like it just makes me happy."

These quotes all speak to the larger theme of place attachment. These people who live in Ballard love Ballard, not just for what it offers, but for what it embodies. It's a quiet neighborhood that, on the surface, is proud of its history and still embraces modernity. Respondents generally feel safe here and those with children called it family-friendly. Although interviewees do have some criticisms of the neighborhood, it seemed that their

qualms were more often associated with broader issues like the economy and homelessness rather than with the neighborhood; as if the problem is how Ballard is being acted upon by external forces, not Ballard itself.

Ballard Identity

Interview data support the idea presented in the literature of a relationship between place attachment and place identity. When asked if they thought that Ballard has a distinct identity, all 12 respondents agree that it does. The most common and instinctive response to what that identity is Nordic or Scandinavian. This association comes from a wave of Northern European immigrants that arrived in Washington and settled in Ballard in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to find work in local industries that were familiar to them, like logging, fishing, and shipbuilding. Interviewees also associate Ballard with attributes like “feistiness” and “independence” that likely come from the area’s past as an independent city, its relative geographic isolation from other parts of Seattle, its industrial and maritime industry, and its working-class legacy:

“I think some of that is just because we are geographically, you know kind of like West Seattle or other neighborhoods that are just kind of tucked off because of the nature of our hills and waterways. But then I definitely do feel like that industrial maritime influence still.”

“There’s a feistiness to Ballard and definitely just kind of a unique mindset that, for all I mean obviously there’s all kinds of different people with different political viewpoints ... and everything but there definitely seems to be something about once you get kind of tucked in this corner of the world there’s something to being a Ballardite.”

Interestingly, the most frequently referenced symbol of the Scandinavian heritage by interviewees was a Safeway grocery store located at the intersection of 24th Ave NW and NW 85th Street that flies the flags of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and Finland on its facade. The Nordic Heritage Museum was also mentioned several times.



Figure 15: Safeway on the corner of 15th Ave NW and NW 85th St (Source: Author)

There are other physical reminders of Ballard's Northern European heritage scattered throughout the neighborhood like Bergen Place Park on NW Market Street and the Leif Erikson Hall and statue on NW 56th Street. Still, one interviewee admits that they came to know about Ballard's heritage

"more hearing about it than anything. From just people around and I think, you know, just various festivals or you know, and things would go on you'd, always see something great."

Another interviewee describes how this intangible cultural heritage makes Ballard unique, saying:

"We have sort of built-in traditions. I mean, a lot of neighborhoods have to make up something to have parades about and we have 17th of May [Norwegian Constitution Day]. And there's just a kind of a I think a strong work ethic here because we did start out to be a very working-class community."

Ballard certainly embraces the cultural heritage of its early residents and their history through these events, and developers have also used it to ground new construction with buildings like the Søren Ballard Apartments, Vik Condominiums, and Viking Apartments. These not-so-subtle nods to the neighborhood's past are an attempt at incorporating a new blocky condo building into the popular nostalgic idea of Ballard as a

historically Scandinavian neighborhood. It seems like a way of trying to soften the blow of new development by acknowledging what came before.

The commodification of heritage by developers and real estate professionals is a documented trend and is often linked to a mythical, watered-down, or cleansed version of a neighborhood that is more palatable and more marketable (Summer, 2019). One interviewee alludes to this possibility when they said:

“I think the whole Scandinavian thing gets over hyped and in my mind, Ballard is more about, from the European Heritage anyway, it's more about the loggers and the fishermen and it's not it's not just Scandinavian, so I think that thing gets overdone...”

The same interviewee mentions seeing Asian-Americans in an old Ballard High School yearbook and laments the loss of the Indigenous peoples and their heritage in the area before colonization by white settlers. This diversity is almost never mentioned in historical narratives about Ballard.

Other interviewees acknowledge that the Scandinavian mythos behind Ballard may not be as strong as some might lead you to believe, but that the cultural heritage provides an important foundation for the neighborhood's identity to be constructed on.

“So, I feel like though that [Scandinavian] characterization of Ballard has kind of faded with time, it's still there and it's probably never going away. But, you

know, this used to be an old immigrant neighborhood, a working-class immigrant neighborhood. Now we're generations later and the spirit of that still remains, but it has changed..."

"I think the Scandinavian heritage is really helped because it gives Ballard an identity which, you know, the percentages of Scandinavians living here is certainly going down, but I think that just having – it's kind of a matter of having some roots, you know?"

"Ballard's identity is kind of a basis for things. So, I think even for newer people who come here, who aren't Scandinavian, I think it kind of provides that kind of grounding in a way. Maybe it's like the difference between moving into any neighborhood that has history as compared to moving into some places that are brand new and there's kind of nothing there to lean on."

While there was overlap in participant responses about the nature of Ballard's identity, there was a divergence of opinions on the impact of changes in the neighborhood to it. To some, changes to Ballard threaten its identity, so much so that one respondent said they "think it's losing its soul."

The semantics of a place having a soul indicate a deep personal attachment to the place and its identity as the individual perceives it. This personification of place is a way for

a person to make sense of their emotional relationship to it, and mourn changes as it gradually shifts away from their personal nostalgic understanding of it.

This is also a theme in the writing of Sharon Zukin in the 2010 book *Naked City*. She correlates the idea of a gradual loss of authenticity with the process of urban homogenization. Zukin defines authenticity similarly to definitions of place identity explored above: “a continuous process of living and working, a gradual buildup of everyday experience, the expectation that neighbors and buildings that are here today will be here tomorrow” (2, 2010). From Zukin’s perspective, it is when this continuity is broken that a place’s soul is lost.

This same idea is echoed by the research participants. As the built environment and the familiar people inhabiting it slowly change, Ballard slowly ceases to be the special place they once perceived it to be.

“It's getting blander you know... what I've noticed is, if you go between 15th and 24th there's a ton of town homes because the zoning, they're allowed for it, so all the little cute little bungalows went away. So, I felt like Ballard used to have much more of a distinct personality and I think it still does, but I think it's going away.”

While the homes this participant mentions may not seem meaningful on the surface beyond their subjective aesthetic value, in their mind these structures are symbolic of a palpable cultural shift in the neighborhood. The classic two-bedroom

bungalow was a symbol of Ballard's working class roots. The trend of modest homes disappearing, only to be replaced by larger, modern ones is a visible representation of the socioeconomic shift among residents, as long-term residents are priced out due to increasing demand for housing in the neighborhood by high-paid white collar workers.

However, other respondents see the changes as not inherently bad, just different:

"I love where I live, and I feel like it's really nice for neighborhoods to have a personality or to have an identity... And I think there should be flexibility within it, and I think, I think things do change and think should change. And we're like yeah, things are – the world is changing all the time. I think it's definitely a reality of it, but it is nice to have like some staples or like some things that feel authentic within it."

Authenticity is a complex topic that is often debated within historic preservation circles, but as demonstrated here, has applications beyond just landmarking historic buildings. It is linked to perceptions of place identity, which in turn affect place attachment. If authenticity is threatened, so too are identity and attachment.

Even so, another respondent welcomes the diversity that comes with change:

"This was always a place to go out with the saloons and the bars, you know, but it was a place probably more for European men to go out. And now it's still a place to go, which I think is kind of cool you know it's people are doing the same"

stress relief fun stuff that they've always done, but in a different, more diverse way."

It is interesting to note that, consistent with the literature analyzed, respondents who view change more negatively were typically longer-term residents than those who approach change with a more open mind. Still, both above quotes from those unopposed to change reference history or refer to a sense of originality and authenticity that signifies some attachment to or at least acceptance of Ballard's history as fundamental to its identity.

One interviewee offered an insightful thought:

"I have mixed feelings on that on the whole because on the one hand, that's the sort of thing that you kind of like to preserve. But on the other hand, how far do we go to preserve something like that, you know? So, I mean, like I said, I don't think it's ever really going away as long as there's people around. People are going to keep that alive and the Nordic Museum does a ton to promote the Nordic culture in the area as well. So of course, the neighborhood's character is going to change over time. I don't really see that as a positive or negative. That's just, I think that happens."

Still, some residents believe that change comes at a high cost.

"I want pretty, I want beauty, I want individuality, I want uniqueness... Maybe this is what people want but my honest opinion is that some of these people are

going to really regret it. We're going to regret having places with no individuality."

The Price of Change

When asked if they could pinpoint a moment in time that they noticed change happening rapidly, interviewees generally concur that they couldn't, that the change was much more gradual but constant. However, participants' reactions to and perceptions of that change vary.

One third of interviewees perceive changes as neutral or even positive. They appreciate the new density of housing and the more diverse population that it welcomes.

One participant said:

"I'm for the growth in most cases. I think it's good to bring in new people and density like I said is good for the environment and for the kind of vitality of it so in general I'm quite happy."

Others, however, argue that the new development is diminishing Ballard's diversity. As housing prices rise, the proportion of the general population that can afford to live in Ballard shrinks, and one participant noted that from an economic point of view, "it feels like that's getting a lot more homogenous." Another commented on ethnic and cultural uniformity, saying:

"I always kind of hoped for when I was raising my kids was to have more diversity around, I think that's kind of something that is lacking in this area yeah I mean, I think that would be something that I'd appreciate, but I mean I don't have much control over that."

A third noted that demographically, it is becoming more difficult for people at all stages of life to live in Ballard:

"I don't feel like it's as friendly of a neighborhood for seniors, I feel like it's a lot harder to grow older here, which is a bummer. I feel like there's not enough family housing, you know for younger families, which is a bummer I feel like."

Because place identity is linked to how people use it, as those people change and become more homogenous, the breath and nuance of identity is diminished.

In addition to decreasing residential diversity, many residents remark on changes to the built environment they perceive as negative. Ballard has experienced significant residential development in the last decade especially, of which one resident commented:

"It also feels like a Canyon like above Market Street just west of 15th you know some of that. I used to kind of almost get lost, you know going around that area, because it literally just you didn't have your bearings of little old buildings that used to be there."

Four of the interviewees discuss at length long-standing businesses that had closed in recent years, unable to withstand the pressures of development. One participant remarks that they've "seen a lot of like a lot of what were sort of you know as Ballard institutions have just not been able to hang with increases in commercial rent."

Still, many of those with whom I spoke accept that change is an inevitable part of life, especially life in cities. As one participant said, "people gripe a lot. And I said, well, we live in the city. Get over it." They then went on to say:

"I think there are people who don't recognize that things change. And that really a lot of times there's nothing we can do about that. But some people don't recognize what they could do about it. Like if you don't want developers here, don't sell your house. There are other ways to deal with whatever problems you have, but I think people need to have a better idea of what they could do and what they could control."

Other participants are less cavalier and seem to "accept that change needs to keep happening". One person remarked "there isn't any way the world is supposed to be, and you just have to be flexible." However, some residents do feel like change is happening with very little oversight or communication about location, timeline, and purpose. One respondent, a representative on the Ballard District Council said:

“It doesn't really feel like there's ever a lot of kind of communication or overall, like you mentioned some of the planning behind it, all I feel like that ends up being pretty invisible to the neighborhood at large, and it doesn't really feel like people know kind of where it's going or how to participate in that.”

Coming from a community leader, this statement carries a lot of weight. Despite the City's best intentions, the 1998 Neighborhood Plan was developed nearly 25 years ago. There has been more recent planning policy specific to Ballard, such as updated Neighborhood Urban Design Guidelines and the development of a Transportation Framework. Additionally, the Neighborhood Plan goals live on in each comprehensive plan update, albeit without any significant updates beyond small changes to Urban Village boundaries. When the plan was developed, there was also no clear strategy for prioritizing goals, ensuring timely execution or evaluating outcomes. It is no longer a living document, because there is no one making sure that the goals it outlined are met.

The same interviewee went on to say:

“There just isn't an overall sense that anyone is really looking out for keeping things in balance, you know when it comes to adding so many new people and then not having enough, you know, public safety, resources are planning around that...it feels chaotic. “

The city was so successful at supporting neighborhoods in the 1990s through the Office of Neighborhood Planning, providing professional guidance throughout the entire neighborhood plan development process. However, since the office was dissolved in the 2000s and planning authority is disaggregated in different departments across the municipal government organization, it has become increasingly difficult for local residents to know who, when, and why decisions are made about growth, land use, and urban development in recent years.

Housing and Gentrification

When asked about changes to the neighborhood, all but one interviewee said that they noticed some changes throughout their tenure. Still, the topic that arose in every interview was housing affordability and displacement. I asked no questions that directly broached this topic, but when asked about change, each participant inevitably mentioned the drastic increase in cost of living that Ballard has seen in recent years.

Average Rental Cost 98107



Figure 16: Average rental cost in 98107 zip code from 2014 to 2022 (Source: Zillow)

Home Value 98107

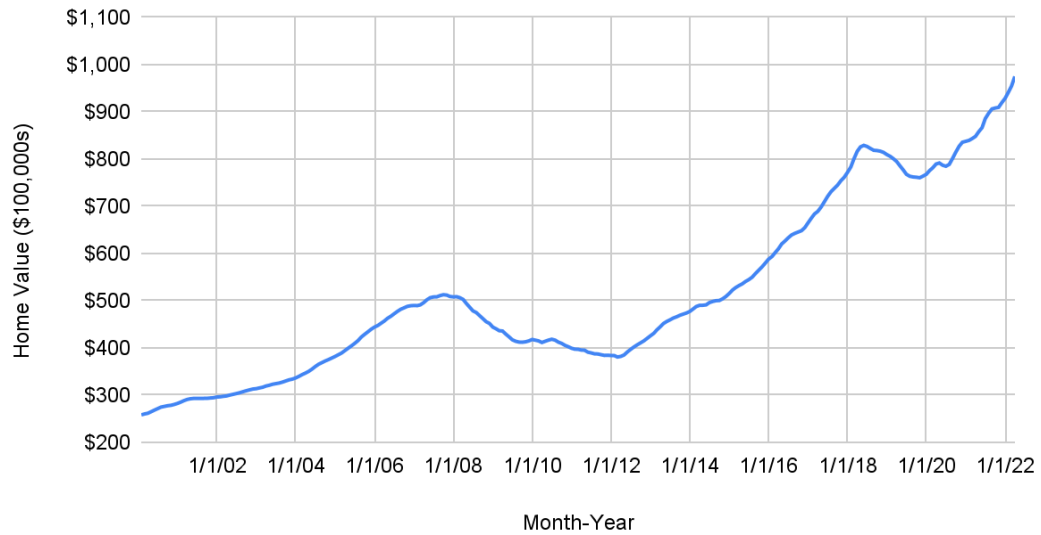


Figure 17: Average home value in zip code 98107 from 2000 to 2022 (Source: Zillow)

This phenomenon has impacted Ballard residents in wildly different ways. One interviewee was priced out of their home and had to leave Ballard for nearly a year in 2016-2017, while another interviewee purchased their home in 1979 and it has now increased in value more than tenfold. Despite these differences in fortune, all of the research participants agree that this is a problem.

Many participants remarked on the change to Ballard's housing stock in recent years as the area densifies in response to high demand:

"There's been new development, especially over on Market Street...watching some of the condos going up"

"We live...right up to the limit, where I believe they have approved zoning...for multiple homes on one lot. And I've noticed that a lot of homes have recently been demolished and two to three homes are being put on one lot"

Some residents perceive this new development as an improvement that makes the area more accessible:

"My gut reaction is that building these town homes, although annoying, I think it'll allow more people to like afford housing. So, I think that's actually a positive thing. Even if I might change the neighborhood...it feels silly to make something super exclusive."

Others view it as a threat to Ballard's uniqueness and charm:

“They've torn down the bungalows. And I love the individuality of the little houses, I thought that they were really cute even though again I live in a townhome, so I can't really you know point my fingers, but I just think when everything's the same it just makes for really boring, and no character and no craftsmanship.”

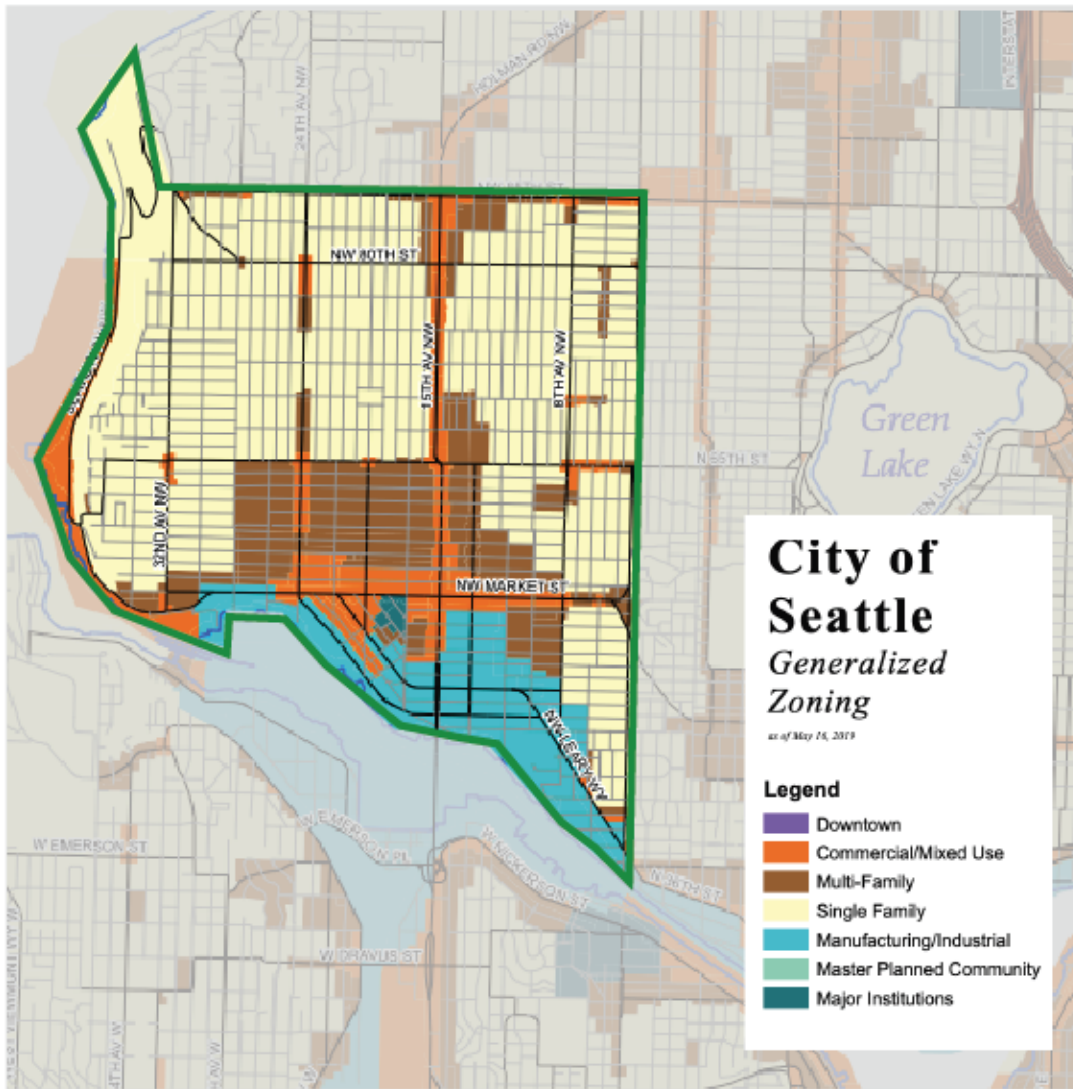


Figure 18: Ballard Zoning Map (Source: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections)

This new housing is an example of orchestrated change. It's the direct result of Ballard's designation as a hub urban village and the intentional upzoning that came along with it. However, the increased volume and diversity in the housing stock has not made it easier for people of all economic backgrounds to settle here. Many interviewees remarked

on either their own personal struggles to find housing or the struggles of others in their circle.

"We've added a tremendous capacity of housing and not much of it affordable. And so, there are a lot more people here and Ballard has become sort of one of the places...there's a lot more, you know, young tech people with money they don't know what to do with."

"I think really the thing that's most missing is affordable housing. I mean there are too many service workers and entry level workers who have to travel way too far, and which costs the money and is polluting and takes the time."

"Home prices are outrageous right now. It's keeping you know a lot of people out of this area which has been sad. We have friends that would love to move here and it's just hard for them to find a home."

Beyond lack of accessibility for new residents, the rising cost of housing has also displaced lifelong Ballardites:

"I still want to live here, but it's so expensive that I might have to leave... Growing up, it felt like a middle-class neighborhood to me. And then now it feels like Amazon town or something like that, like bidding wars for houses, nothing less than a million bucks then like, I feel priced out of my hometown, you know?"

“Just in terms of displacement, I certainly don't think it's some vast conspiracy or a concerted effort...I think it absolutely just has to do with if you're a third, fourth or even second-generation family who's lived here, and you work down on the docks or something. And all of a sudden property tax increases and your family home - you can no longer afford to keep it. That has happened to a lot of families who had been here for a long time.”

This problem goes beyond City of Seattle policy but is certainly influenced by it. It is one example of a broad, nationwide trend of gentrification in urban neighborhoods, albeit not in the most recognized context. As one interviewee put it:

“There's something unique about this neighborhood...of all the quasi-residential mostly single-family neighborhoods in American urban centers, this is one of the few that I've found that's been hit so hard with the gentrification hammer where the displaced populations have been white. And like if it's just an interesting, different dynamic I'm thinking about a lot of working class, largely Scandinavian or Northern European people just being displaced.”

As previously established, with residential change, shifts in place identity inevitably follow.

Community and Social Stratification

As the physical landscape of Ballard has changed in recent years, the community and social landscape has shifted as well. Many of the twelve residents interviewed like the small-town neighborly feel of Ballard, but struggle to make meaningful connections with those around them for a variety of reasons. For some it is due to physical separation. One family whose children attend Adams Elementary School spoke about how isolated they feel from other families:

“There are very few families here [on our street]. It seems like all the families are north of Market Street, and mostly, not even just north of Market Street – more along lines of west of 24th. And in terms of like our school, there's only like three or four families in the whole school that live south of Market Street.”

This isolation is due in part to the land use code. The elementary school is located on the edge of the urban village boundaries, bordered to the west by LR1 single-family zoning. The school attendance area includes families living on the opposite end of the boundaries, separated by nearly one mile of dense blocks framed by walls of high-rise apartment buildings, townhomes, and condo developments.

It is not the apartments themselves that cause this divide, but simply the juxtaposition of size and scale in the built environment - a problem of urban design rather than of who lives where. The difference between urban village blocks and those outside is

obvious to street-side observers, and the major thoroughfares feel like rivers between canyons of new development that lead to both physical and social separation that pose a tangible obstacle to developing a true sense of community.

"...And just around how kind of how splintered it feels like the neighborhood is in a lot of ways that people don't really know. People know how to connect within certain channels, like everyone kind of gets their own patterns going, but then to feel like you're in tune with the neighborhood at large, I think, is a really challenging thing. And that's just kind of the nature of the era we live in, not unique to Ballard."

According to the interviewees, those who go searching for a community can find it, but it requires more effort these days. As one participant puts it, "we have to be purposely community-minded, it's not just accidental."

But others feel that separation more deeply:

"I think the main thing to me is just the ability to connect and have an identity in a way of functioning as a neighborhood but I don't think people know how to foster community for the neighborhood at large... One of the biggest things that's missing is the ability to engage like in neighborhoods civics that for people to not just be involved in the school their kids go to or you know the sports club they enjoy or that you know everyone has all their hobbies or little

communities, but to really feel like you know how to be a part of Ballard. I feel like that's missing."

Further, there is an ongoing feedback loop between stratification and city policy. Because the neighborhood has so much residential turnover, fewer people are invested in the area's long-term future. This leaves long-term residents, generally property owners and renters, to engage with the city and set policy priorities for the neighborhood which may not favor newer, younger, or less affluent Ballardites. One interviewee, a renter of nearly ten years, said that they still feel disconnected from residents outside the urban village boundaries, noting that *"it does feel like it does make one feel, if not ostracized, at least just marginalized in terms of community input."*

Discussion

Ballard has gone through many iterations since Ira Utter laid claim to the first plat of land here. It changed rapidly and dramatically, especially in the last 25 years. Some changes have been organic, as residential, labor, and consumer preferences have changed with shifting social norms and values. Other changes were orchestrated, like upzoning associated with the urban village strategy, new transit connections, and gradual progress towards the completion of the Burke Gilman trail. The latter were instituted to control and direct the former.

Plan Effects

Objectively, the 1994 Comprehensive and 1998 Neighborhood Plans were successful for Ballard in many ways. Seattle has added more than 250,000 residents since the passage of the city's first Comprehensive Plan, and much of that growth has been funneled into high density urban centers.

In the Issues Guide to the Mayor's Recommended Comprehensive Plan, an Urban Village is defined as "a part of the city which is identifiable as a vital and cohesive urban neighborhood with a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use business district at its center." If we judge the success of the Urban Village Strategy in Ballard by this definition, then on all counts it was successful. The designated urban village portion of Ballard is cohesive in its urban design - visually denser and more mixed-use than adjacent sections of the neighborhood. It is a major employment center with jobs in service, healthcare, and professional services. At its center, NW Market Street serves as a pedestrian corridor that runs through the heart of the neighborhood's core with wide sidewalks, frequent transit service, and ground floor retail.

This same document elaborates on what an urban village should be. It goes on to say, "the Urban Village designation is a commitment to protect and enhance that area's community character." In this, as the interviewees above clearly illustrated, the plan fell short on both counts: protecting both community and character.

Towards a Sustainable Seattle promises that:

“...the city will facilitate and support a strong sense of community within neighborhoods. The City will strive to support people of all ages and ethnic, economic, or social groups in finding a sense of belonging and ownership, accessing needed services, and connecting with other people.”

Unfortunately, the city falls woefully short of that promise. The land use code and subsequent development stand as a physical barrier between sections of the neighborhood. High-rise residential development on major arterials like Market, 24th Ave, and 15th Ave feel like canyon walls, and their too-wide, too-congested streets feel like rivers that carry you through the neighborhood without the ability to access what stands behind them.

Residents living west of 24th Ave NW must cross this barrier to access community spaces like the library or Ballard Commons Park. Residents south of NW Market St must cross it to take their children to school at Adams Elementary or Salmon Bay School. Residents east of 15th Ave NW must cross it to patronize the businesses at the heart of Ballard’s commercial strip. Because the density is so stark and so concentrated, it slices the neighborhood into sections and makes it difficult for people to build social connections. The land use pattern is a form of physical, social, and economic segregation that, while unintentional, is detrimental to residents’ ability to build meaningful connections and foster a unified sense of community.



Figure 19: 24th Ave NW looking North (Source: Author)

Secondly, the comprehensive plan set into motion cascading, irreparable alterations to Ballard’s character and identity. The mayor’s office issues guide describes Seattle as an “assembly of distinct neighborhoods, each of which is unique in many ways.” However, as Ballard has absorbed new growth, much of what made it unique and distinct was washed away by the crushing tide of development. In her 2018 article, Summer described how the renaissance of one building, like the Hecht Warehouse, can lead to the gentrification of an

entire neighborhood. In Ballard, we see a similar phenomenon as buildings and businesses are lost.

In 2008, a Googie-style Denny's at the corner of NW Market St. and 15th Ave NW was demolished. Originally built in 1964 as Manning's Cafeteria and reconfigured into a Denny's in 1984, the building had been designated a historic landmark by the Seattle Landmarks Commission just three months earlier. The landmark designation was revoked when the developer appealed on the grounds that preserving the building would make it impossible to recoup their investment (Eskenazi 2008). Interestingly, the developer purchased the property at auction from the city after the failure of the Seattle Monorail project which was originally planned to occupy the parcel. The demolition plans caused a public outcry from community members. In an article published by the Seattle Times, a local resident commented:

"This just makes way for a more homogeneous culture," he said. "Years from now, people are going to ask, 'What happened to all of our culture?' Well, too bad, we destroyed it" (Krishnan 2008).

Today the lot is occupied by an eight-story multi-use building with ground floor retail and apartments above. This case stands out long-term Ballard residents as a turning point in the neighborhood; it was mentioned in at least a quarter of the interviews.. As one Seattle Times reporter wrote, the incident "sparked passions because it touched on property rights, historic preservation, growth and the continued evolution of once quaint

Seattle neighborhoods.” (Eskenazi 2008). The fact that this event is still at the forefront of residents’ minds more than a decade later is an indicator of just how deeply the community felt this loss. It is also one of many examples of how Ballard has come to resent the growth and change it welcomed just 10 years prior and resist future change.



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

Figure 20 (Above): Original Googie-style Manning's Cafeteria/Denny's building on the corner of NW Market St and 15th Ave NW, ca. 1964 (Source: MOHAI)



Figure 21: Denny's building ca. 1983 (source: Anne Forestieri)

Figure 22 (Below): Modern development at the same site on the corner of NW Market St and 15th Ave NW, 2022 (Source: Author)



The cries of today's residents echo those from 10 and 20 years ago. In 2021, it was announced that Ballard's Totem House, located at the corner of Market St. and 32nd Ave NW, would be redeveloped into a Pagliacci's Pizza. The Totem House was originally constructed in 1939 as an art and crafts store, and served many purposes over the years, including as a seafood and chowder restaurant until 2010, and then as a franchise location of the local burger chain Bob's Red Mill. The building was flanked by three Native American totem poles in the Nuu-chah-nulth and Haida styles. Pagliacci committed to preserving unique aspects of the building's structure, but the project was met with opposition from local residents. The totem poles and iconic sign were saved and donated to the Museum of History and Industry, located in South Lake Union (Walker, 2021). Construction is ongoing with the restaurant set to open later this summer. One interviewee noted that he felt the community outcry was more a response to the changing nature of the neighborhood as a whole than the loss of one single building.



Figure 23: Former Red Mill Totem House building (Source: MyBallard)



Figure 24: Rendering of new Pagliacci restaurant (Source: MyBallard)

In some ways, the neighborhood planning process mandated by the 1994 plan was very successful. The goal of the neighborhood planning element was to allow residents to identify local priorities and develop strategies to address them. It was more than just a public outreach and engagement tool; the planning process was a way for the community to understand its needs and for community members to understand each other. One interviewee was a steering committee member of the Crown Hill-Ballard Planning Association and described during our conversation how readily the community embraced the process:

“We had over 800 people involved in it, and we were the first residential area to get our plan in and we just – people just really worked like mad... Everyone set their usual passions aside and really considered what we needed for the neighborhood.”

Bringing a diverse group of people together and successfully achieving a common goal is a difficult task, and one at which Ballard excelled. Had there been some kind of continued plan oversight or stewardship, the neighborhood might have continued to be able to address new concerns and adapt to change more easily. Further, because the planning process was predominantly self-led and self-governed, it was self-centered. The priorities outlined in the Crown Hill-Ballard plan were one collection among thirty-seven others. No matter how ambitious or optimistic, the City was never going to be able to identify the resources to ensure that each neighborhood could accomplish all of its

planning goals. Instead, everyone applauded their success, and then went on their merry way with no systems in place to ensure that the goals the community agreed upon would ever be met. Ultimately the spirit of the neighborhood planning process failed, even though it checked all the boxes on paper.

Of course, both plans also had far reaching implications in the neighborhood beyond those anticipated. In some ways, the unforeseen consequences of these planning documents undermined their original intent.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Home Value	0.49%	.92%	.37%	.77%	3.50%	6.03%	.39%	.86%	13.38%	5.47%	4.58%
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Home Value	3.41%	2.30%	2.00%	.31%	3.54%	3.76%	6.01%	.86%	3.73%	8.25%	2.19%
Rent				3.29%	.95%	.45%	.37%	.08%	.97%	8.03%	8.22%

Figure 25: Percent change in home value and rent year over year (source: Zillow)

The first and most prominent repercussion is widespread gentrification, a direct result of the urban village strategy. In the 1990s, nobody anticipated how much and how quickly Seattle would grow. However, the present-day housing crisis comes down to simple

economics. When the areas in which growth is allowed are constrained, new housing supply is limited to very specific areas. With a rapidly increasing population comes high demand. The combination of skyrocketing demand and restricted supply caused both rent and home values to increase dramatically, especially in the years since the Great Recession (See figure 17). Many long-term Ballard residents have been forced to relocate due to rising rental prices and property tax rates, or else have been unable to resist offers from developers and the housing market and sold their homes and land and moved away.

Because there is a direct relationship between people and place identity, as Ballard's population changes through in- and out-migration, so does the neighborhood itself. This connects to a second, more subtle impact of the comprehensive and neighborhood plans – the gradual loss of unique character and broader neighborhood identity.

Planning Implications

This case study brings up many fundamental planning questions. The first of these centers around who we plan for. Seattle's original comprehensive plan was focused, implicitly and explicitly, on single-family homeowners. With more than 70 percent of the city's land area zoned for single-family, this may seem like a sensible demographic to address. Despite the zoning proportion implications, most of Seattle's population lives in more dense, multi-family zones.

Furthermore, single-family housing is notoriously inaccessible. Whether through past policies like redlining or exclusionary zoning, economic barriers to entry like down

payments, qualifying for a mortgage, and property taxes, or simply by limited access due to unreliable or missing public transit service, a vast swath of the population is not represented in largely residential neighborhoods. This is further compounded by issues of available time to dedicate to public participation, limited disposable income to donate as political campaign contributions, and historic and systemic barriers to voting. When single-family homeowners are the dominant constituency engaged in city policymaking, the social and infrastructural needs of many city residents go unmet simply because their voices are not heard.

While social segregation has been observed because of urban development between neighborhoods for decades, the intra-neighborhood stratification observed in Ballard seems like a much newer phenomenon (Downs 1981). The 1994 plan and supporting documents use language like “village” and “family” to discuss Seattle’s neighborhoods, which implies a tight knit community that may no longer exist if they ever did to begin with. As discussed above, the fragmented land use patterns lead to a fragmented social space. People are physically separated from their neighbors, making genuine connections and a sense of community harder to develop. In an attempt to welcome new residents into a place, the plan instead damaged the fundamental social structure that was so attractive and deemed worth protecting.

Solutions to the problems created by pre-millennium planning policy, however, are not clear cut. By eliminating single-family zoning and integrating housing types more uniformly across the city, many of the city’s historic vernacular buildings like homes,

businesses, and churches would be demolished. The dramatic rise in housing cost may slow, but at the expense of cultural and community anchors. This puts planners in the impossible bind of pitting housing accessibility and affordability against community identity, the present need for space and resources against preservation of history and heritage. These dichotomies drive planners to make difficult decisions with long-term impacts they may never be able to anticipate.

One of planners' biggest responsibilities is to learn from the past, and incorporate those lessons into better planning in the future. In the case of Ballard, I identified two alternatives to the status quo that, while they cannot change the past, could improve the neighborhood in the future.

The first is a different land use strategy. Much of Seattle's planning is still centered on land use policy – who can build what where. The Urban Village strategy concentrates density in less than a third of the city's land, and leaves the rest frozen in a mid-century single-use residential development pattern. It also prioritizes the preservation of some single family areas over others. Were planners to have distributed density more evenly from the outset, Seattle would undoubtedly look very different today.

Distributing density more evenly across Seattle would alleviate both development and gentrification pressure in designated Urban Villages. Increasing the supply of land on which infill development can be constructed would spread demand more evenly across the city, reducing levels of demand that drive up prices in Urban Villages like Ballard. With

steadier and more predictable housing costs, there would be less pressure on long-term residents from developers to sell their property for profit, and less fear of skyrocketing property taxes that are difficult for residents with fixed incomes to cover.

Of course, the solution is not as simple as upzoning the entire city. One of the challenges Ballard experiences as the residential population grows is insufficient infrastructure to support the increasing population. *Towards a Sustainable Seattle* promised to increase transit service, dedicate new and improve existing green space, and construct new community facilities for people to gather.

Unfortunately, this promised infrastructure has been slow to materialize. Ballard Commons Park, part of the Ballard Commons project (the one completed component of the 1998 neighborhood plan) opened in 2005. Gemenskap Park, a small local park on 14th Ave NW between NW 61st and NW 59th streets opened in 2018. These two parks offer less than two acres of additional green space to residents living within the urban village boundaries. Ballard's stop on the Link Light Rail network is currently scheduled to open between 2037 and 2039, more than forty years after the passage of the initial comprehensive plan that promised regional transit connections.

By sequencing the build out or improvement of city infrastructure in advance of residential densification, the city would be more equipped to serve growing residential populations, and meet other goals such as reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by making commute via transit more viable, and designating space in which residents can build

community. Predicating residential development is an established practice in planning. One example is the assessment of impact fees for new suburban residential development to cover the cost of roads, open space, and public safety. Further, research shows that established infrastructure improves safety and quality of life, furthers economic development, and residential neighborhoods (Hardekar et al. 2018). Change is inevitable, but neighborhoods can absorb some disruption, especially when adequately supported by city policy and city services.

Ultimately, this research leads back to one overarching and perpetual question: what do we want our cities to be? Do we see cities as economic engines where people live and work, or as hubs of community and culture that preserve heritage and create spaces for interpersonal relationships to develop? The goal may be somewhere in between, but a genuine solution is difficult to identify because variables regularly change, and no perfect compromise exists.

In this case, the role of planning is to place guardrails to ensure that the tides don't shift dramatically in favor of one extreme. Planning is an exercise in organizing chaos, in creating order from entropy so that people can live pleasant, comfortable, and fulfilling lives in an affordable and sustainable way. It is a nearly impossible task, which is why as we look back on past planning policy it is easy for contemporary planners to identify flaws in our predecessors' decisions. Still, we recognize that if they had done nothing we would be

much worse off. We work to correct the mistakes of those that came before us, improve the world we have, and mitigate future negative consequences of the choices we make today.

Ultimately, planners must be creative, nimble, and humble. Our work is full of challenges, and there is almost never a clear path forward. Still, this profession offers a myriad of opportunities to learn and to improve ourselves and the built environment over which we are stewards.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Personal information and relationship to Ballard

1. Name
2. Zip Code
3. How long have you lived in Ballard
 - a. Where did you move from?
4. Do you own or rent your home?
5. Why did you choose to live in Ballard
6. *What do you consider "Ballard" (boundaries on a map)
7. How do you feel about living in your neighborhood?
8. What are your favorite things about living here?
9. What neighborhood amenities do you use most? (parks, trails, library, etc.)

Perceptions of change

10. Have you noticed any changes in the neighborhood since you arrived?
 - a. Can you describe them? (How is your neighborhood changing)
 - b. Are the changes net positive or negative?
 - c. *Are there any places that are gone that you miss?
11. Would you say the quality of life in you neighborhood is:
 - a. Improving
 - b. Getting worse
 - c. Staying the same
 - d. Don't know/No opinion
12. Is there something you think the neighborhood is lacking?
13. In your opinion, what would improve the neighborhood?

Perception of neighborhood identity and community

14. Do you feel like Ballard has a distinct identity?
 - a. Can you describe it?
 - b. Are the changes to the neighborhood contributing to or detracting from the neighborhood identity?
 - c. Is neighborhood identity important to you?
15. Do you feel like a part of the community?
16. Do you interact with your neighbors? In what way? How often?
17. Would you characterize your neighborhood as close-knit?

18. Do you plan to stay in Ballard for the foreseeable future?
19. Would you consider moving to any other neighborhood in Seattle or another city in the Puget Sound Region?

- a. why/why not
20. Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? If not, please explain

* indicates question added after three initial interviews were conducted to collect more detailed data from subsequent interviewees.

Appendix B: Sample Matrix of Participant Responses

identity?	how would you describe it?	are changes + or - for identity?	is identity important?
yes	<p>Some of it is the story Ballard tells itself which is wonderful and deeply Scandi. Worthwhile holding on the heritage</p> <p>Change of Ballard being the end of the earth to being connected to the rest of the city.</p>	<p>Because of the expense of living here, the people who live here choose it. You don't just land in Ballard anymore. That makes a certain level of hoity toity BS</p> <p>As a Ballard convert, we're going to enjoy what is here. People embrace it. You can't gentrify a white neighborhood.</p> <p>Kind of a touristy version of the neighborhood persona, but it's a devout belief in the persona. People might not know the whole history</p> <p>Disneyfication - convenient version of scandinavian</p>	<p>Yes. proud and happy to live in Ballard. Identify as being in this neighborhood readily. Not necessarily the heritage, but we are in old Ballard where we get to be walkers,</p>
yes	<p>Nordic</p> <p>Didn't know anything about it the first time, but the second time yes</p> <p>Nice that there is character, but not an attraction</p> <p>Known about Ballard stereotypes - Ballard driving school</p> <p>characterization of Ballard has faded with time. Still there and will probably never go away but this used to be a working class immigrant neighborhood and now we're generations later the spirit will remain but it has changed</p> <p>Neutral. Mixed feelings. One hand - like to preserve, other hand, how far do you go to preserve. As long as there are people around to keep it alive, and the Nordic Museum helps promote the culture</p> <p>Neighborhood character will change over time</p>	<p>Detracting from identity - you don't see a condo and think "nordic"</p> <p>New construction doesn't have the Nordic</p> <p>Norwegian store (scandi specialties), leif erikson Bergen Place. More hearing about it than physical. Festivals.</p> <p>Safeway on 85th with scandi flags.</p>	<p>it's a nice bonus</p>

yes	<p>Some of that is because we are geographically isolated like West Seattle and other places. The industrial maritime influence still persists. New brewery district, Ballard Ave, such a new vibrant era. A destination neighborhood - people from other parts of Seattle, the Eastside come here to experience Ballard.</p> <p>Identity has changed over time.</p>	<p>Everyone just keeps reacting and adapting. Constantly evolving. Scandi influence and industrial maritime, traditional 20th century ways have had to evolve and change. Flagship businesses are finding ways to evolve and thrive. Lots of crashing influences that people are adapting</p>	<p>Yes. A sense of belonging and purpose as a community is important. Being a Ballardite is part of my identity. In some ways I feel like a new Ballardite, but because I grew up nearby, but some people have lived here for generations. There is a fiestyness to Ballard and a unique mindset - lots of people with different political and world views. Once you get tucked in here, there is something to being a Ballardite.</p>
yes	<p>as much as a neighborhood can. Often associated with scandinavians, but it gets overblown. Ballard is more about the industry than the scandis. Associate with old west jobs of loggers and fisherman</p>	<p>Diversifying the neighborhood in a good way. Still has European heritage but more diverse. It was always a place to go out, but used to be more for European men and it's still a place to go out but in a more diverse way</p>	<p>It's important to understand the history of a place but it is a European dominated culture over the indigenous culture. I'd love to see more tribute/awareness/understanding of the indigenous population.</p>