



Special supplement to The Voice, produced by Seattle Housing Authority

# Draft Environmental Impact Statement: a reader's guide

Last April, the Seattle Housing Authority and the city's Human Services Department began an environmental review process for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment project. The process resulted in an extensive study by consultants to produce an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS. The study examined how various redevelopment alternatives could affect the project's environment.

The eighteen issue areas studied—including air quality, noise and energy—were specified in the EIS regulations. A public scoping process last spring captured input from stakeholders on how these factors should be evaluated for Yesler Terrace. Results of the thorough study are published in a Draft EIS now available for public review and comment.

"We are excited to see the process moving forward to this point," said Project Manager Anne Fiske Zuniga. "Now all stakeholders can review and comment on the Draft EIS and provide us with their additional feedback."

As the 700+ page document (available at [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org)) is quite detailed and technical in nature, the Seattle Housing Authority devoted this entire Special Report as a companion Guide to the Draft EIS. This guide provides an overview of Draft EIS contents, offers various ways to access the Draft EIS, explains where and by when to comment on the Draft EIS, and next steps in the process.

## How will Seattle Housing Authority use the information in the Draft EIS?

The environmental review process is an important tool for deciding the future of development at Yesler Terrace. It is important to remember, however, that it is not the only tool. "The Guiding Principles developed with the Citizens Review Committee will continue to a fundamental framework for deciding what happens at Yesler Terrace," notes Development Director Stephanie Van Dyke. "The EIS helps us understand how the changes we are proposing could affect the environment, and that's an important part of the process. But ultimately, the Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners will also consider what is best for future generations of low-income residents and what makes the most sense from a financing standpoint."

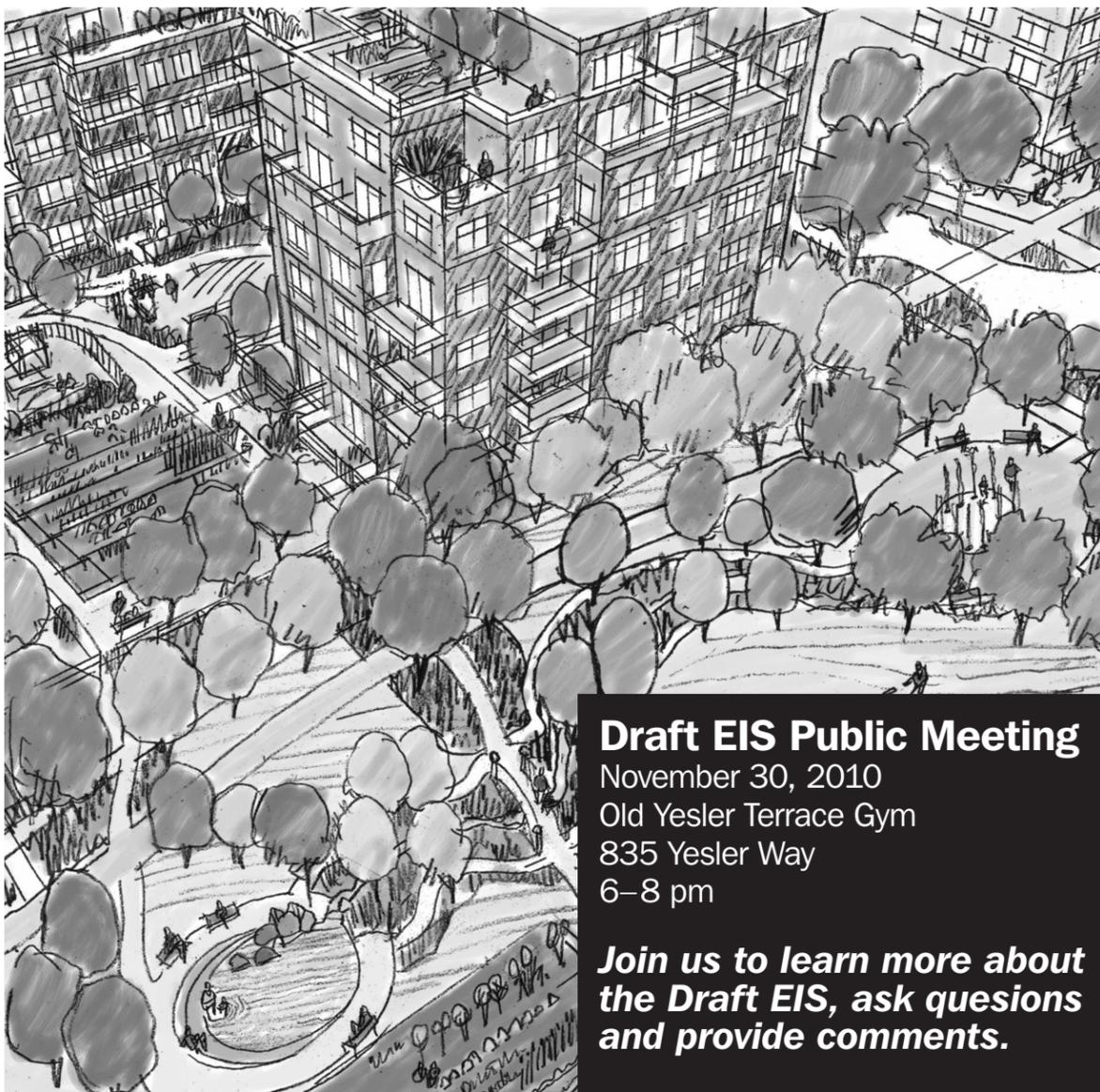
The Draft EIS also suggests ways to correct, or "mitigate," possible negative impacts to the environment caused by redeveloping Yesler Terrace. These suggestions are very valuable to the planning team as the work on Yesler redevelopment proceeds. For example, the Draft EIS notes that some glare from buildings might be created by the new development. It suggests that by paying attention to the kinds of materials used on the exterior walls of buildings, glare could be eliminated.

## What has SHA learned from the Draft EIS?

As Seattle Housing Authority staff members reviewed the Draft EIS, they learned some very helpful facts about possible environmental impacts. These are preliminary impressions only, and are not intended as definitive statements about the Draft EIS.

- The environmental impacts identified are typical of a very large development within an urban area.
- An initial reading of the Draft EIS indicates the negative impacts identified can generally be addressed through corrective efforts. No findings indicate that redevelopment is not feasible from the standpoint of environmental impacts.
- The Draft EIS identifies that noise levels and air quality on the existing site do not meet current acceptable levels as set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Environmental Protection Agency, respectively. This is due primarily to the automobile traffic on Interstate 5 and on Boren Avenue. Redevelopment would not make these conditions worse, and could, in fact, improve them. However, it may be necessary to ask for a waiver from HUD in order to proceed. This is a very common situation for developments in urban areas where heavy car and truck traffic is close to residential areas.
- The Draft EIS recognizes the difficulty that redevelopment would cause to residents who would be required to relocate, thus having to cope with the associated disruption and inconvenience. The report acknowledges, however, that residents would be given the opportunity to return and would be eligible for relocation assistance.

These initial findings represent just a few of the issues brought to light by the Draft EIS. As Seattle Housing Authority staff members and stakeholders spend more time with the documents, additional relevant points will surely emerge.



Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration

### Draft EIS Public Meeting

November 30, 2010  
Old Yesler Terrace Gym  
835 Yesler Way  
6–8 pm

**Join us to learn more about the Draft EIS, ask questions and provide comments.**

### Draft EIS Comment Period

Please submit comments by December 13, 2010 to:

YTEISComments@seattlehousing.org  
or Yesler Terrace EIS Comments  
c/o Seattle Housing Authority  
120 Sixth Avenue North  
P. O. Box 19028  
Seattle, WA 98109-1028

# Redevelopment alternatives

The Draft EIS analyzed four redevelopment alternatives (including a variation on one alternative) and a “no action” alternative, which evaluated the site in its current state. The alternatives reflect a range of development options on the site that would result in low, medium and high population densities, including leaving the population density as it current exists. The alternatives were defined by the Seattle Housing Authority, with input from residents, stakeholders and the Citizen Review Committee.

All four redevelopment alternatives would replace each of the existing 561 units of extremely low-income housing units. Alternatives 1-3 would add additional low-income housing serving very low-income residents. All four alternatives would provide infrastructure upgrades. Alternatives 2 and 3 anticipate changing the location of several streets.

The alternatives provide for new parks and open spaces, improve the walking environment and better connect to surrounding neighborhoods, including Little Saigon. The four alternatives would also add market-rate housing to the site. Alternatives 1-3 also include office, neighborhood commercial and neighborhood service areas. Under Alternative 4, no new non-residential uses are planned. All of the alternatives will keep the new Yesler Terrace Community Center building.

## Alternative 1 – Lower density

This alternative represents a lower-range redevelopment option.

- 3,000 housing units
- 800,000 SF office
- 40,000 SF neighborhood commercial
- 50,000 SF neighborhood services (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 6.0 acres public open space (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 7.3 acres semi-private open space
- Limited improvements to transportation, street and utility infrastructure

## Alternative 1A – Lower density with less office

This scenario is very similar to Alternative 1 but with less office space (400,000 SF verses 800,000 SF).



Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration

## Alternative 2 – Medium density

This alternative represents a mid-range redevelopment option. It calls for a new street system to better connect with the surrounding community, including “green” streets (with sidewalk widening, landscaping, traffic calming and other pedestrian-oriented features) and transit (including the streetcar). It also intends to create a drainage system that captures and re-uses storm-water on the site.

- 4,000 housing units
- 1 million SF office
- 60,000 SF neighborhood commercial
- 50,000 SF neighborhood services (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 6.5 acres public open space (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 9.4 acres semi-private open space
- Substantial transportation, street and utility infrastructure improvements

## Alternative 3 – Higher density

This alternative represents a high-range redevelopment option. It calls for a new street system to better connect with the surrounding community, including “green” streets (with sidewalk widening, landscaping, traffic calming and other pedestrian-oriented features) and transit (including the streetcar). It also intends to create a drainage system that captures and re-uses storm-water on the site.

- 5,000 housing units
- 1.2 million SF office
- 88,000 SF neighborhood commercial
- 50,000 SF neighborhood services (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 6.9 acres public open space (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 9.2 acres semi-private open space
- Substantial transportation, street and utility infrastructure improvements

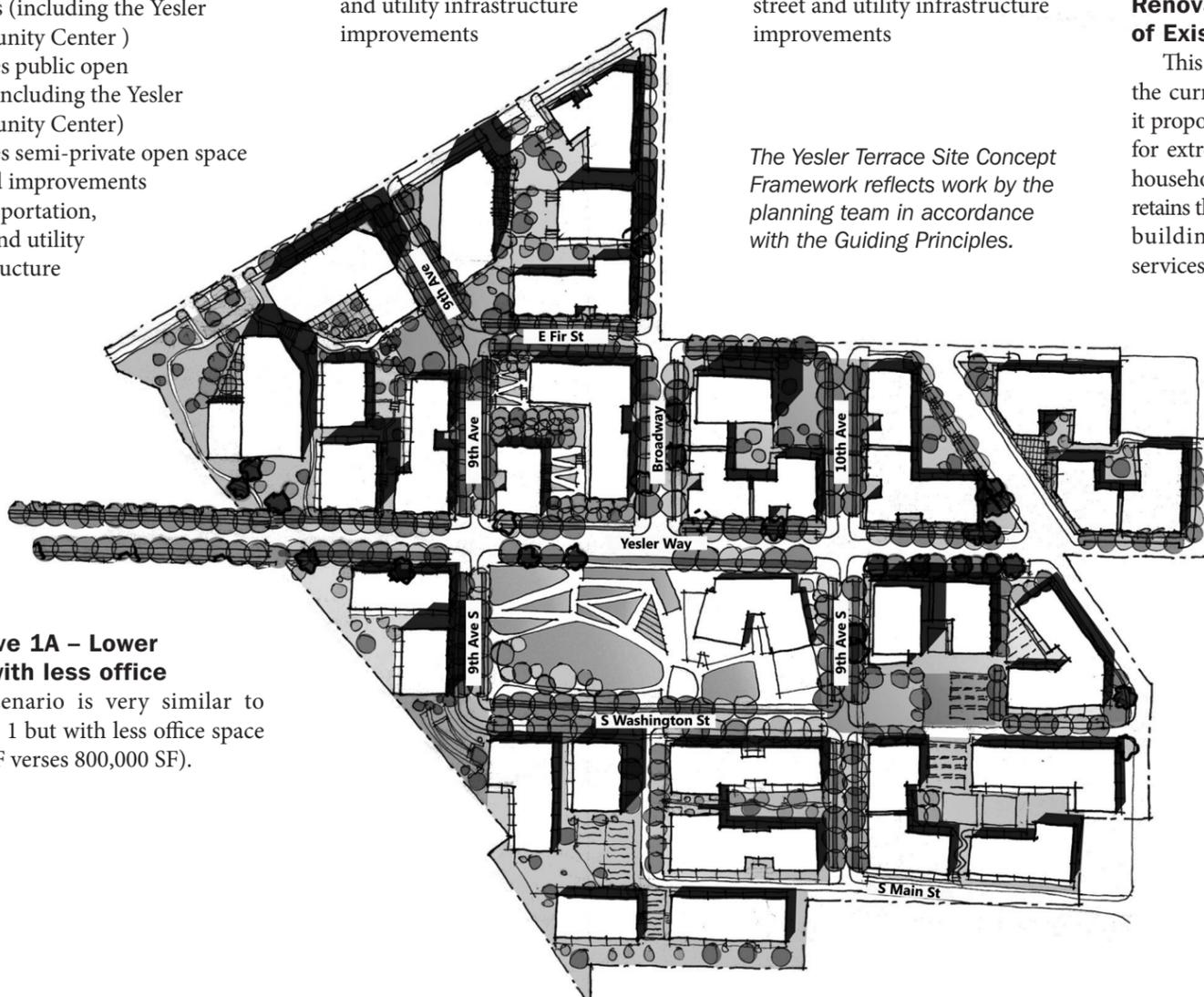
## Alternative 4 – Residential development under current zoning

This alternative represents minimal redevelopment. It would likely replace all 561 units of low-income housing. It proposes no additional housing units for extremely, very low or low-income households or market-rate housing. It also proposes keeping the Jesse Epstein building.

- 1,523 housing units
- 20,000 SF office (current space)
- 10,000 SF neighborhood commercial
- 50,000 SF neighborhood services (current space)
- 5.2 acres public open space (including the Yesler Community Center)
- 7.9 acres semi-private open space
- Minimal transportation, street and utility infrastructure improvements

## No Action Alternative – Renovation and Replacement of Existing Buildings

This alternative makes no changes to the current site. As with Alternative 4, it proposes no additional housing units for extremely, very low or low-income households or market-rate housing. It retains the existing on-site, non-residential buildings and the neighborhood services within them, including the old community center and gym Head Start building, the Jesse Epstein building, the Steam Plant, the Yesler Community Center, the existing baseball field, and the private and semi-private open spaces near existing housing. It proposes to repair residential units, existing streets, utilities and other infrastructure as necessary over time.



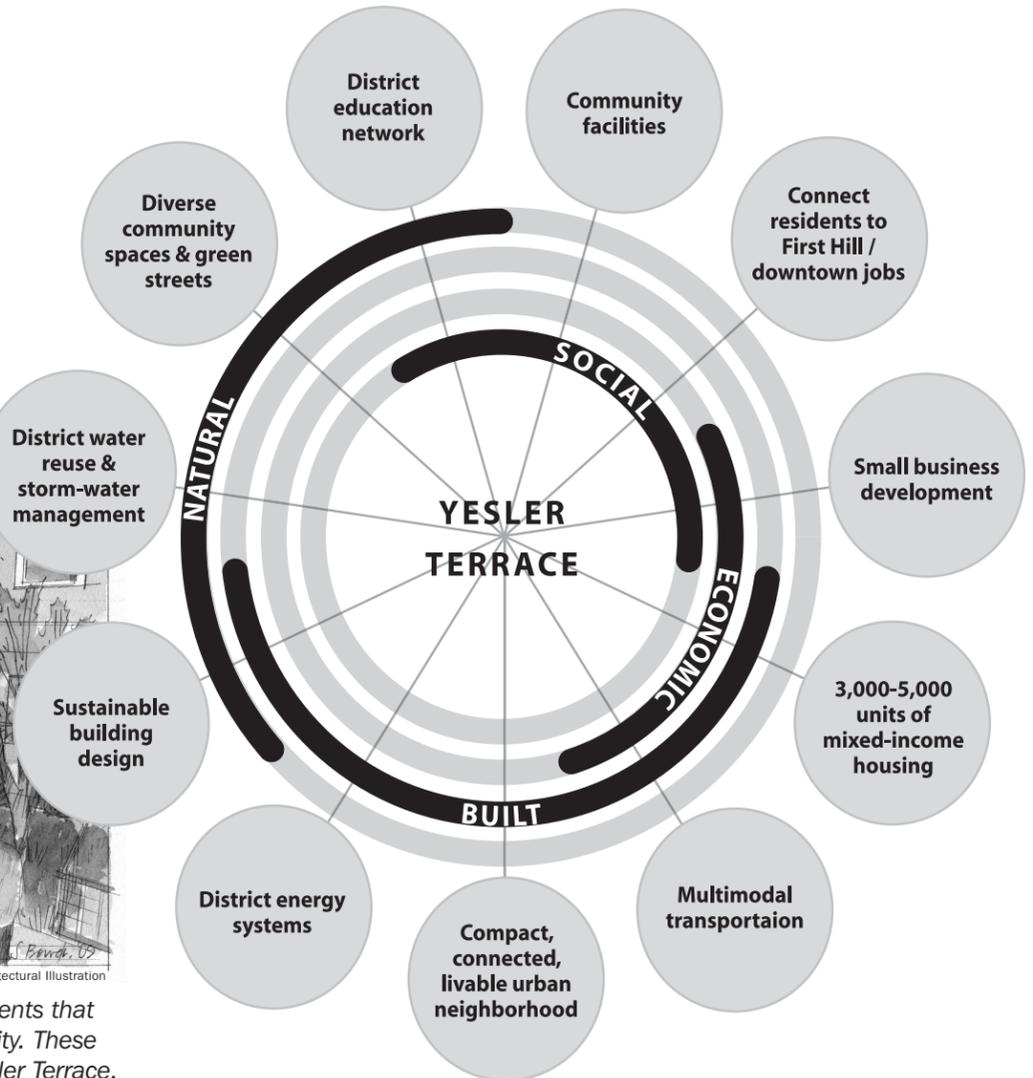
The Yesler Terrace Site Concept Framework reflects work by the planning team in accordance with the Guiding Principles.

# Planning for a sustainable Yesler Terrace



Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration

The diagram at right shows elements that comprise a sustainable community. These will be reflected in the future Yesler Terrace.



# Reviewing the Draft EIS

## Making Comments

The comment period for the Draft EIS begins Saturday, October 30, 2010 and ends Monday, December 13, 2010.

The comment period allows the public, government agencies and other stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS.

Once the Draft EIS has been reviewed, commented on and revised based upon the comments, the Seattle Housing Authority will issue the Final EIS. The Final EIS will identify a preferred alternative for redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The Seattle Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will then select what they believe to be the best option for redevelopment at Yesler Terrace. This option will become known as the "redevelopment plan" and will be used to guide the future development of the site over the 15-20 year timeframe. The Final EIS is expected to be complete in February of 2011.

## Draft EIS Components

The Draft EIS for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment is broken down into sections as outlined to the right. To get an overview of the Draft EIS, we suggest starting with the Summary and the Impacts table, both within the first chapter. For more detailed information, explore any of its six chapters and their related topics.

### Chapter 1 – Summary

The summary presents findings of the Draft EIS and identifies the project alternatives, environmental impacts and other environmental considerations.

### Chapter 2 – EIS Goals and the Alternatives

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the environmental review process, the EIS goals, site description, and a description of the alternatives:

- Introduction
- Background
- Environmental Review Process and Purpose
- Objectives of the Proposal
- Purpose & Need of the Proposal
- Site Description
- Description of Proposal
- Description of Alternatives
- Separate Actions/Background Projects
- Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study
- Benefits and Disadvantages of Deferring Implementation of the Proposal

### Chapter 3 – Affected Environment and the Environmental Consequences

Chapter 3 contains the results of what was studied after the scoping process, including the affected environment, potential impacts and possible ways to address, or "mitigate," these impacts:

- Earth
- Air Quality
- Water Resources
- Plants and Animals
- Energy – Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Environmental Health
- Noise
- Land Use
- Relationship to Plans, Policies and Regulations

- Aesthetics/Light and Glare/Shadows
- Historic Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Public Utilities
- Public Services
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Wind Analysis

### Chapter 4 – References

### Chapter 5 – Distribution List

### Chapter 6 – Preparers

### Appendices

- Draft EIS Distribution List
- Scoping Summary
- Redevelopment Assumptions
- Geotechnical/Earth Technical Report
- Air Quality Technical Report
- Water Resources Technical Report
- Plants and Animals Technical Report
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculations
- Environmental Health Technical Report
- Noise Technical Report
- Aesthetic Simulations
- Historic Resource Report
- Cultural Resources Report
- Transportation Report
- Public Utilities Report
- Student Generation Methodology
- Wind Analysis
- List of Preparers and Description of Qualifications

## Draft EIS Locations

Because the Draft EIS is so large, only a limited number of copies will be printed. It is available for free on the Seattle Housing Authority website ([www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org)), and on compact disks in PDF format. If you would like to review a printed copy of the Draft EIS, you may do so at the following locations:

- Seattle Public Library Capitol Hill Branch  
425 Harvard Avenue East
- Seattle Public Library Douglas Truth Branch  
2300 East Yesler Way
- Seattle Public Library Downtown Central Branch  
1000 Fourth Avenue
- Seattle Public Library International District/Chinatown Branch  
713 Eighth Avenue South
- Yesler Terrace Community Center
- Yesler Terrace Property Management Office
- Yesler Terrace Job Connection Office

To request a printed copy of the 700+ page Draft EIS for \$25, please contact Collette Frazier at 206-615-3556.

# Understanding Yesler Terrace redevelopment

Built seventy years ago, Yesler Terrace was a progressive example of public housing architecture at its time. Today, due to the project's age, as well as other site and economic factors, Seattle Housing no longer considers Yesler Terrace adequate, high-quality housing for the current or future residents.

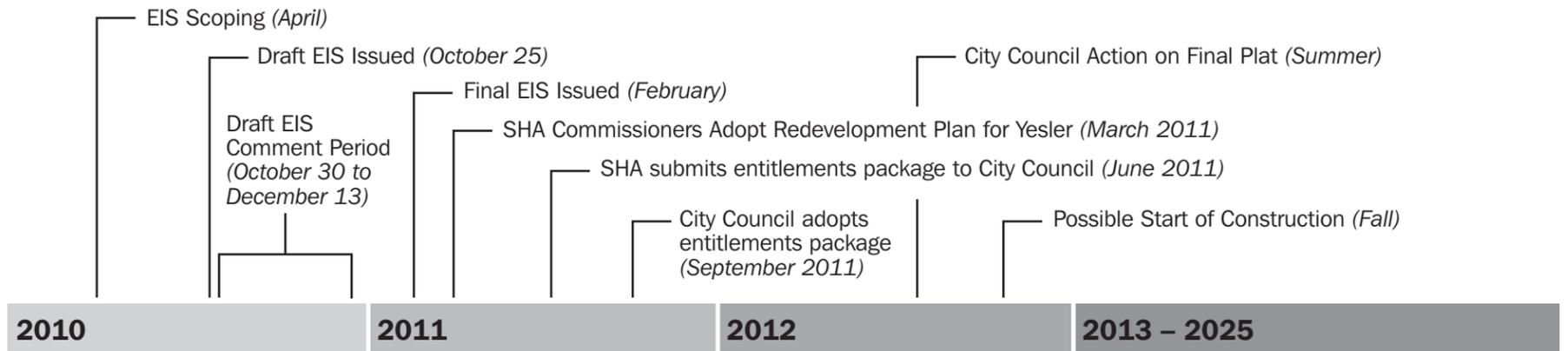
The future Yesler Terrace is envisioned as a vibrant, culturally diverse, mixed-income community with high-quality housing surrounded by parks, shops, offices and amenities.

The vision for Yesler Terrace began taking shape in 2006 when Seattle Housing created a Citizen Review

Committee (CRC) comprised of residents, members of the surrounding community and other key stakeholders. The CRC developed a set of Guiding Principles and planning concepts to guide the project. These principles—social equity, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship and

sustainability and one-for-one-replacement housing—were later adopted by the Board of Commissioners. These Guiding Principles lay the foundation for all planning efforts, including for the Site Concept Framework that provides the basis for the range of redevelopment alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS.

## Yesler Terrace redevelopment timeline



## Core values provide framework for Yesler Terrace plan

**At the very start of planning for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment, the Citizen Review Committee identified core values that lay the foundation for all future planning efforts.**

Paying attention to **social equity** means making sure that the people who live at Yesler Terrace today are treated fairly and that the new community will be a culturally and economically diverse place where everyone can share in the advantages and amenities of the new neighborhood.

Promoting **economic opportunity** means improving the overall economic conditions, opportunities and quality of life for current and future generations at Yesler Terrace. It means creating living wage jobs for residents by developing partnerships with nearby businesses and institutions.

**Environmental stewardship** and sustainability means using environmentally friendly and sustainable building techniques. It incorporates the principles of “smart growth.” This means using land resources efficiently through compact building forms and people-friendly streetscapes. This also allows people to live closer to where they work.

A commitment to **one-for-one replacement housing** means that when the new Yesler Terrace is complete, it will include, at a minimum, the same number of apartments for low-income residents as it has now, with a goal of adding more low-income housing.

The Guiding Principles themselves are more detailed. Read them on the Seattle Housing website: [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org).



Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration

### For more information or to get involved:

Sign-up for e-mail notices at [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org).

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Produced by the  
**Seattle Housing Authority**

번역된 안내서가 예슬러 테라스 관리사무소, 직업 커넥션 및 커뮤니티 센터에 준비되어 있습니다.

មានផ្តល់ជូនការបកប្រែភាសាទៅតាមតម្រូវការរបស់អ្នកប្រើប្រាស់ Yesler និងមន្ទីរព្យាបាលការងារនិងសហគមន៍ (Yesler Terrace Management, Job Connection and Community Center)។

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可向“工作聯繫與社區中心”(Job Connection and Community Center)的 Yesler Terrace 管理辦公室索取各種翻譯版本。

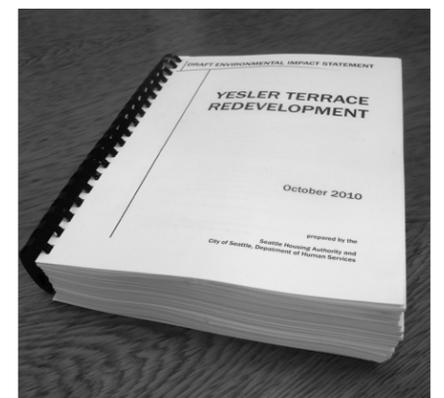
Garggarlchi unka kana ka afan keessaniin katabame Wajjira Bulchinssa Yesler Terrace, Wajjira warra Dalagaan nama qunnamsiisu (Job Connection) fii Yidugaleessa Hawaasaati ni arggama.

Waxaad ka helayaasaa iyagoo la tarjumay Xafiiska Maamulka Yesler Terrace, Xarunta Bulshada iyo Xiriirka Shaqooyinka.

Hay versiones traducidas disponibles en la Oficina de Administración de Yesler Terrace, en Job Connection y el Centro Comunitario.

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Có các bản đã được phiên dịch tại Văn Phòng Quản Lý Khu Yesler Terrace, Job Connection (Cơ Quan Giúp Tìm Việc Làm) và Trung Tâm Cộng Đồng.



Review the entire  
700+ page  
Draft EIS at [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org)