



**City of Seattle**  
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION**

Thursday, February 13, 2020

Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma

**Commissioners Absent:** Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann

**Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Planning Analyst

**Guests:** Brennon Staley, Geoff Wentlandt and Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD); Sarajane Siegfriedt; Megan Kruse

*Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion.*

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Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

**Chair's Report & Minutes Approval**

Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm and recognized that we are on indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people. Land acknowledgement is a traditional custom dating back centuries for many Native communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgement is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgement is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth. Chair Austin provided a preview of the agenda and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

**ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the January 23, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Patti Wilma seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

**Announcements**

Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director Vanessa Murdock announced that the application process for future Commissioners is underway. Applications are due by Friday, February 28. She

encouraged Commissioners to reach out to their networks for interested candidates. The Commission will host an open house immediately after this meeting to meet potential applicants.

### **Briefing: Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Committee**

Brennon Staley, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Staley provided a broad overview of the Mayor's Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Committee (AMIHAC) policy recommendations. This Committee was formed in early 2019 and included market rate and affordable developers, lenders, community organizations, and labor representatives. The recommendations of this committee as well as a summary of Housing Choices community engagement have gone to the Mayor's Office for review and decisions on any next steps. The AMIHAC report was recently released and contains a summary of the committee's recommendations.

The mission of the AMIHAC was broad and focused on what the City and other partners could do to encourage middle-income housing for people in the 60-120% Area Median Income (AMI) range. The consulting firm ECO Northwest provided modeling to determine the minimum rents that would qualify for these types of housing.

Mr. Staley provided a high-level review of the AMIHAC policy recommendations, as described in Appendix 1 of the report:

1. Create More Multifamily Rental Housing Choices Affordable to Middle-Income Families and Individuals
2. Create More Affordable Ownership Opportunities for Middle-Income Households
3. Strategies to Encourage More Housing Production
4. Establish Comprehensive Housing Production Goals and Monitor Progress to Meet Them
5. Align City Organization to Support Housing Production
6. Support the Future of Housing Development

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if any renters were included in the advisory committee. Mr. Staley replied no, but the Housing Choices community engagement effort included input from renters. This included an online survey and small group conversations. An effort was made to reach out to historically underrepresented communities.
- Commissioners requested more information about the 60-120% AMI metric, including what percentage of the City's population this represents. Mr. Staley stated that he did not have that information at this time, but he will follow up to provide it to the Commissioners. Commissioners asked if the policy recommendations were targeted at that population or were the recommendations intended to provide information about housing units that would be affordable to that income bracket. Mr. Staley stated that the recommendations were generally about increasing the supply of housing that was affordable to households in this income bracket including both market-rate and rent- and income restricted units. The City of Seattle is in the process of deciding how many of the region's housing units it should provide.

- Commissioners stated that recommendation #2 could help existing homeowners reduce their property tax burden. Many seniors are staying in their homes and aging in place, but this trend is also creating a lot of empty bedrooms that could be available to renters.
- Commissioners recognized that the AMIHAC work could provide some lessons learned for the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Staley agreed that the recommendations will be helpful, but they are broad.
- Commissioners expressed concern that the policy recommendations did not contain any specific language on racial equity. Commissioners stated that many of the policy recommendations could have a racial equity element. Mr. Staley stated that the omission of racial equity language represents the difference between the work of an outside advisory group and a City staff report. The advisory committee did not get into that level of detail.
- Commissioners requested clarification on Recommendation 3.03: "Identify Sites that have Experienced Localized Barriers to Development and Consider Code Changes to Address Underlying Issues." Mr. Staley stated that this recommendation is the result of several specific experiences. For example, the Mt. Baker light rail station area is adjacent to critical areas (steep slopes) that make housing development difficult. In a very urban context, the City may need a different approach for such specific development conditions.
- Commissioners requested clarification on Recommendation 3.04: "Amend Recent Bike Parking Changes to Address Unintended Consequences." Mr. Staley stated that bike parking requirements were recently increased; however, a one size fits all approach does not always consider unique contexts such as townhouses, downtown high-rise towers, and senior housing. In these cases, the bike parking requirements can have unintended consequences.
- Commissioners expressed surprise that there were not more policy recommendations about parking requirements. Mr. Staley stated that transportation affordability came up during the committee's discussions but was not a focus.
- Commissioners requested more information on the overlap between OPCD's work on Housing Choices and the AMIHAC recommendations, specifically with regards to affordable housing development. Mr. Staley stated the overlap between Housing Choices and the AMIHAC recommendations demonstrate a high level of support for more housing. There is a significant level of concern with the cost of new housing, how to make it more affordable, and improving the permitting process. Feedback from the Housing Choices community engagement process was much broader and included more focus on family housing.
- Commissioners asked for clarification on the policy recommendation about expanding training partnerships. Mr. Staley stated that this subject was not among the expertise of the Advisory Committee, but the members recognized this as an important topic to include.
- Commissioners asked whether specific locations were considered in Recommendation 3.02b: "Allow More Townhouses, Duplexes, Triplexes, and Cottages to Increase Access to Smaller, Less Expensive Ownership Options." Mr. Staley stated this group did not get into the details of zoning.
- Commissioners asked whether there was any discussion of the City taking a more active role in the implementation of the policy recommendations. For example, the City developing additional training. Mr. Staley replied by saying no, the City should continue to do what it is best at.

- Commissioners inquired whether the subject of municipal banks came up during the AMIHAC discussions. Mr. Staley stated that there were a lot of parallel discussions about such topics as the City providing loan guarantees, but not much else.
- Commissioners requested to be kept informed about any policy implementation work that relates to duplexes, triplexes, and cottages.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the Appendix 1 table format that clarifies the role of primary actors and advocacy/conveners. Commissioners noted that the City is listed as the primary actor thirty-two times and the private sector is listed as the primary actor only nine times. Mr. Staley stated that the committee was charged with identifying what the City could do. The City is comfortable with that and is working to get other partners to commit a significant amount of money toward this effort.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the next steps related to these policy recommendations. Mr. Staley stated that the Mayor has been focused on housing, but it is not known at this point if there will be a specific timeline for implementation.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Staley for his briefing.

#### **Update: Industrial Maritime Strategy**

Geoff Wentlandt and Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Wentlandt provided a high-level overview of the Industrial Maritime Strategy. He stated that the Mayor is very interested in equitable access to jobs. A Citywide Advisory Group and four neighborhood-specific stakeholder groups have been meeting for the past few months. Mr. Wentlandt stated that this effort is meant to recognize that Seattle has two of the region's designated manufacturing/industrial centers (MICs) and to create guidelines on how to approach those. He shared three draft land use concepts that are being discussed by the Citywide Advisory Group. The following are only broad concepts at this point:

#### Maritime + Manufacturing + Logistics

- Challenges include pressure for industrial land conversion and vulnerabilities due to the interdependence of clusters
- These are places that are near the water, such as port facilities, and are near major infrastructure (rail, water)
- Opportunities include strengthening policies that prioritize industrial and maritime clusters; transportation investments that prioritize freight; revamping industrial general zones and closing zoning loopholes that allow encroachment

#### Industry + Innovation

- This concept would include transit-oriented development
- Challenges include zoning has not been updated to reflect modern industrial practices; lack of new investment (buildings & infrastructure); trends toward automation
- Location would include a 1/4 – 1/2-mile walkshed
- Light industrial, multi-story buildings – industrial uses in stacked density near future light rail

## Makerspace

- This would include a mix of production, arts, and sense of place
- Challenges include some industrial uses adjacent to urban villages with large residential populations; people like to walk to breweries, etc.; strong demand for workforce housing near jobs, but housing is not allowed
- Opportunities include a mix of small-sized production spaces, artisan spaces, and ancillary retail spaces; improve the pedestrian and cycling environment; allow for limited amount of workforce housing subject to strict criteria
- Locations could include SODO, Georgetown, South Park, and northeast Ballard.

Mr. Wentlandt asked the Commissioners for their initial reactions and asked what changes should be considered.

## Commission Discussion

- Commissioners challenged the Makerspace concept by stating these uses could exist in existing Urban Villages. Affordable housing should not be located in industrial areas, especially from an equity perspective. Makerspaces could be located in Neighborhood Commercial zones within Urban Villages. Mr. Wentlandt stated that it is early in the process. To allow housing in industrial areas would require rigorous examination of noise, contamination, and other impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement. Mr. Holmes stated that there is a distinction between the live/work housing model and affordable housing.
- Commissioners recognized a broader ecosystem of zoning and noted that industrial areas are not the only areas that can accommodate makerspaces. For example, there is potential for some of these uses to be located in the commercial center of Ballard.
- Commissioners asked for clarification between the Industry + Innovation concept and allowed office uses. For example, there are Class A office spaces near the stadiums. Mr. Wentlandt stated that this concept would limit offices to an ancillary use. The primary use would need to be production. Design standards would require these spaces to be built for light industry. Mr. Holmes added that there is apparent demand for this kind of space.
- Commissioners asked whether the Citywide Advisory Group has had any conversations about the differences between the Ballard Interbay Northend MIC and the Duwamish MIC. The Duwamish MIC has greater access to water and already has frequent transit. The Armory site is a big development opportunity in Interbay. Mr. Holmes stated that the land use concepts could be broadly applied to both MICs. The advisory group has not commented on the Armory site. The intent of this strategy is to develop a set of principles that could be broadly applied, not a series of one-off decisions.
- Commissioners inquired about the possibility that these strategies might result in more goods produced in the MICs also being sold there. This could result in a decrease of freight impacts. Mr. Wentlandt stated that freight movement will not likely decrease. A broader question is how to protect freight movement while single-occupant vehicle uses increase. Climate change has been discussed broadly by the advisory group, but no specific recommendations have been identified.
- Commissioners stated that makerspaces represent opportunities for people to start businesses in their communities.

- Commissioners recommended the stakeholders consider emerging trends in supply chain automation and the associated effects on manufacturing spaces and traffic.
- Commissioners suggested an analysis of land around shorelines to identify any vacant lands and possibilities for expanding industrial lands. This analysis could determine opportunities for maritime, manufacturing, and logistics uses. Other industrial uses could be located in targeted locations, such as near existing and future light rail stations.
- Commissioners suggested that makerspaces represent a “do it yourself” culture that Portland has but Seattle does not. An affordable commercial space strategy could encourage those uses in urban villages.
- Commissioners recommended the Advisory Group consider the effects of sea level rise on water-dependent industrial uses. Mr. Holmes stated that the group has not talked about that subject yet, but will, especially in South Park. Choices will need to be made in the future.
- Commissioners suggested considering the types of uses that would restrict access for pedestrians in the public realm.
- Commissioners suggested that light rail stations should provide access to jobs. The advisory group should think about the ¼ and ½ mile area around the stations that could transform, including compatible uses and other uses that should not be allowed. Mr. Holmes stated that discussions are ongoing about mobility around light rail stations. Parking will be reduced parking in these areas. The City will be looking at standards in these areas.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Wentlandt and Mr. Holmes for their update.

### **Public Comment**

Sarajane Siegfriedt spoke to her concerns about Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) and zoning. She stated that Seattle does not have an adequate inventory of low-income housing and the city is losing more low-income housing than is being built. San Francisco requires new developments to include 15% affordable units; New York requires 20%. She stated that Seattle’s option to pay a fee in-lieu of onsite affordable units is not working. She recommended that the Mayor’s office create a dashboard that clearly shows results of the MHA regulations.

Megan Kruse stated that she submitted a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan about trucks and transportation network companies (TNCs). She has new information on truck traffic that shows 40,000 trucks per day access the city core. These trucks circulate around city streets, as do TNCs. She heard that the City was considering combining TNC data with single-occupant vehicles. She stated that this would be bad idea.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm.**