



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 08, 2018

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Michael Austin, Eileen Canola, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma
Commissioners Absent:	Sandra Fried, Ellen Lohe
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Katy Haima, Planning Analyst
Guests:	Nathan Torgelson, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections; Jenifer Chao, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods; Colin Drake, Seattle Department of Transportation; Lyle Bicknell and Vera Giampietro, Office of Planning and Community Development; Carrie Avila-Mooney and Ron Endlich, Sound Transit
In Attendance:	Erica Barnett, Kevin Freitas, Rick Mohler, Kelly Rider

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

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 Parham called the meeting to order at 3:03pm. He provided an overview of the meeting agenda and upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the January 25, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Julio Sanchez abstained.

Announcements

Executive Director Vanessa Murdock informed the Commissioners of several upcoming community events. She provided an update on the Commission's annual retreat, which will be held on March 2nd. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend the ongoing Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) public meetings. The Commission's Draft MHA guiding principles will be discussed at the February 15 Land Use and Transportation committee meeting. The City Council's Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee

voted to approve the three recommended new members of the Planning Commission. The full City Council will take a vote to approve these new Commissioners on February 12.

Update: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director, Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), provided an overview of his department's ongoing operations, major projects, and new initiatives. The department issued more than 52,000 permits (796 Master Use Permits, 10,420 building permits, and 23,949 electrical permits), completed 191,451 inspections (building, land use, electrical, demolition and sign inspections), and responded to more than 7,400 code complaints (construction, housing, noise, vacant buildings, and zoning) in 2017. The dollar value of all permits issued was more than \$5 billion. The net number of new residential units last year was 8,756. Permit intake has slowed down from last year, but not significantly. This trend is attributed to a large number of projects vesting under the old energy code at the end of 2016. The City is on track to meeting the 50,000 new units goal under HALA, but not the 20,000 affordable units goal.

Mr. Torgelson highlighted several major projects being reviewed by his department. The Washington State Convention Center has proposed an \$1.8 billion addition. This project has gone through Design Review, and a proposed street vacation will go to the City Council in March-April. A redevelopment project at 23rd and Union includes a creative partnership that land-banked a portion of the site for future development. The Civic Square project across from City Hall is moving forward. The University of Washington master plan includes up to 6 million square feet of additional building space, and includes recommendations to handle additional traffic generated by the expansion. The Seattle Center Arena redevelopment Environmental Impact Statement is currently being reviewed by the department.

SDCI is currently working on a number of code changes, including new parking regulations for commercial and multi-family zones. These changes aim to simplify the definition of "frequent transit service" and allow property owners to let others use unused parking spaces. SDCI is proposing new legislation for bus layover facilities in Downtown, Uptown, and South Lake Union. The Living Building Challenge has only permitted two projects to date. SDCI is working to make this program's incentives more attractive to developers, in addition to adding incentives for existing buildings in the 2030 District that want to add additional Floor/Area Ratio and building heights for downtown buildings.

Among SDCI's public outreach activities, Mr. Torgelson mentioned the annual South Seattle Home Fair, which provides homeowners the opportunity to talk with many city agencies in a more casual environment. SDCI is also conducting outreach as part of ongoing HALA coordination activities, as many code amendments originated in the HALA recommendations. SDCI's new permit tracking software system Accela will go live in 2018. A new Renting in Seattle website portal will go live in March-April as a one-stop information source for renters to get information on many topics, including renters' rights. SDCI has new innovative partnership with Block Architects to build one Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit on every block. The department is talking with a non-profit called Weld to utilize vacant buildings to house people

coming out of prison who are employed in construction jobs. Mary's Place is also helping to utilize vacant buildings.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked whether developers are filing permits now in order to avoid the upcoming MHA requirements. Mr. Torgelson stated the opposite is occurring, as developers are proactively opting in to the MHA requirements to take advantage of the additional development capacity. Although it is difficult at this time to anticipate exactly what action the City Council will take on this legislation, SDCI is encouraging developers to proceed with their projects.
- Commissioners asked whether the City is engaging proactively with Seattle Public Schools in advance of their upcoming levy campaign to encourage more development around schools and other investments through permit streamlining or other incentives. Mr. Torgelson replied that the School District is still very early in the levy process, but the City would consider working with them on this.
- Commissioners asked how many of the total rental units completed in 2017 are 2+ bedrooms. Mr. Torgelson did not have that information, but stated that number is probably not very high.
- Commissioners asked whether the recent development boom has affected staffing related to displacements and relocations. Mr. Torgelson stated that 92% of his department's budget is funded by development fees. There are ongoing discussions with the Mayor's Office about contingent budgets for staffing as the department is thinking strategically about the future.
- Commissioners inquired about the status of efforts to regulate unreinforced masonry buildings. Mr. Torgelson replied that they are waiting for the Mayor's guidance on those policy recommendations. Meanwhile, the state legislature passed its capital budget, which included statewide funding for an inventory of unreinforced masonry buildings.
- Commissioners encouraged SDCI to consider parking regulation changes in single-family zoned areas to remove parking requirements as car ownership declines.
- Commissioners asked whether the Renting in Seattle portal will be translated into other languages. Mr. Torgelson stated that SDCI currently has information on renter's rights in 10-12 languages.

Briefing and Discussion: Sound Transit 3 West Seattle to Ballard Link Light Rail Representative Alignment

Jenifer Chao, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods; Colin Drake, Seattle Department of Transportation; Lyle Bicknell and Vera Giampietro, Office of Planning and Community Development; Carrie Avila-Mooney and Ron Endlich, Sound Transit

If you would like to view the presentations from Sound Transit and the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development, they are included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Ron Endlich, Sound Transit Design Project Director, provided an overview of the West Seattle to Ballard Link light rail extensions, including the following three segments: West Seattle, Ballard, and a new Downtown Transit Tunnel. He highlighted a new approach to project development. Sound Transit is hoping to identify a preferred alternative earlier in the environmental review process. The planning phase includes a Level 1, 2, and 3 screening phases that will lead to an identified preferred alternative. Mr. Endlich highlighted Sound Transit's community engagement and collaboration plans. A Stakeholder

Advisory Group and an Elected Leadership Group will provide input throughout the planning process. The Early Scoping process is an opportunity for the public to weigh in on station locations and the route alignment to study further. The Early Scoping comment period is open until March 5. Sound Transit will be holding three open house meetings on February 13, 15, and 20.

Jenifer Chao from the Department of Neighborhoods highlighted some considerations for the representative alignment's potential impacts on the Chinatown/International District and Delridge neighborhoods. She encouraged Sound Transit to consider the potential for impacts to people of color and historically underrepresented communities. Colin Drake from the Seattle Department of Transportation summarized the partnership agreement between the City and Sound Transit. This agreement includes the involvement of designated representatives from each City department, a station area planning team, and ongoing community engagement.

Lyle Bicknell from the Office of Planning and Community Development provided an overview of the representative alignment and stations. He identified some potential challenges and issues to consider for each of the station areas.

Commission Discussion

Clarifying Questions

- Commissioners asked for more information about connectivity between the existing and new tunnel stations at Westlake.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the location of the new Chinatown/International District station and the relationship between the existing and new stations at this location.
- Commissioners asked whether there will be two stations (the existing and a new station) at SODO. Mr. Bicknell replied that a new elevated station is proposed at this location. Commissioners inquired whether this new station will have an impact on freight mobility in the vicinity.
- Commissioners asked about the height of the proposed Delridge station. Mr. Endlich replied that he did not have specific information on the height, but stated that topography is a significant challenge at this location. Jenifer Chao stated that the Delridge community has concerns about the height of the guideway and station.
- Commissioners asked whether operational costs are paid for through ridership or Sound Transit 3 package funding, as it does not appear that the preliminary alignment and station locations are prioritizing maximizing ridership.

Station Specific Comments

1. Market
 - a) Consider the impacts of an elevated bridge over Salmon Bay on marine traffic and industry, and consider if this justifies tunnel construction instead.
2. Dravus

- a) Consider the larger picture of industrial lands in this area, such as potential impacts to freight corridors and how to encourage industrial workers to use transit.
 - b) Consider moving this alignment to capture more people.
 - c) Consider moving the station to the northeast to provide greater access to Seattle Pacific University students and residential areas.
3. Interbay stations
- a) Significant concern about the impacts of the representative alignment on long-term viability of industrial lands. Consider a guiding policy on how to minimize impacts of the alignment and stations in these areas.
 - b) Consider moving the alignment away from industrial areas.
 - c) Consider using the BNSF rail corridor.
 - d) Include any lessons learned from the location and use of the existing SODO station in determining how to best locate stations in industrial areas and what transit-oriented development looks like in those locations.
 - e) The Prospect/Smith Cove station has a limited catchment area. This location is significantly dependent on future Expedia campus employees.
4. Seventh (SR 99) and Denny stations
- a) The two proposed station locations are close together. Consider consolidating these to one location to serve a combined catchment area and build exits that serve both sides of this catchment area.
 - b) A station in the vicinity of SR 99 or somewhere between the two proposed locations is more desirable.
 - c) A seamless connection between Republican and Harrison is needed.
5. Chinatown ID
- a) Concern about construction impacts of this station, especially on small businesses. The community is already experiencing impacts from past large infrastructure projects - the first bus tunnel and I-5. Additionally, there are approximately 150 planned and ongoing capital projects in the neighborhood, including the Charles Street project with Seattle City Light. Design and construction activities should consider impacts on local cultural groups and activities. More extensive outreach may be necessary in this community.
 - b) Cut-and-cover tunnel construction will be catastrophic for local businesses and residents. Consider an alternative to cut-and-cover construction to reduce surface level impacts.

- c) Acknowledge that many changes are already happening in this neighborhood. This location requires a significant community engagement effort. Consider including cultural institutions such as the Wing Luke Museum and other community groups in the process.
 - d) The goal should be a new station that is part of the neighborhood, rather than forced on the community. This is a potential opportunity for creating a multi-modal station area and adding urban space that is authentic and contributes to the community.
 - e) This area is already a significant transportation hub. Many transit agencies already operate here. A new tunnel will add further regional transit connections, and should function elegantly and efficiently as Seattle's largest transit hub.
 - f) Consider spacing the new station and the existing station closer together to reduce the impacts and establish connectivity.
 - g) The area lacks urban design cohesion. This is a great opportunity for station area planning and placemaking. Create public spaces that connect Pioneer Square and the I.D.
 - h) How to incorporate affordable housing and align/integrate with new transit investments in a way that causes the least impact? Perhaps incorporate housing above the tunnel station.
 - i) This station may require a response that includes a very innovative strategy to address all of the potential impacts.
6. SODO
- a) Concern about the pedestrian connectivity between the existing at-grade station and the proposed elevated station. Consider co-locating the existing and new stations on top of each other. Many cities have examples of multiple transit lines going through single stations.
 - b) How is the station location and alignment responsive to the City's industrial lands policy recommendations?
7. Avalon and Delridge stations
- a) Consider shifting the proposed Delridge station location to the south to take advantage of a broader variety of community assets and a larger population catchment area.
 - b) Consider consolidating these two stations into one and building an underground station in the hillside.

General comments

8. Elevated vs. at-grade
- a) Other considerations besides cost, including service to a vulnerable and historically underserved population, should inform the decision to have an elevated, surface, or underground alignment.

- b) If the alignment is elevated, a significantly higher level of station and rail design should be considered.
 - c) Beautiful design should be incorporated as a mitigating factor for elevated stations. Consider this to be not only an engineering project, but an architectural opportunity as well. There are a lot of great examples around the world of beautiful bridges. For example, the Berlin S-Bahn stations create a sense of community, rather than bisecting communities.
 - d) Other uses and placemaking opportunities should be studied in elevated station areas.
9. Station entrances
- a) Allow multiple entries to serve both ends of stations, especially in areas with different grades.
 - b) Facilitate connectivity between existing and new tunnel stations by limiting the distance between them and establishing pedestrian-scale interactions.
10. Design the alignment to support future station areas as integrated, vital community assets.
11. Incorporate lessons learned from previous station design and station area planning to better include and serve affected communities and businesses.

Public Comment

Kevin Freitas, a resident of West Seattle, encouraged the Commission to consider a 10-minute walkshed for each of the proposed Sound Transit stations. He recognized that topography affects walkability, and asked the Commission to consider the scale of proposed stations and elevated guideways in the context of the neighborhood vicinities.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32pm.