



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Rick Mohler and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 09, 2022
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	McCaela Daffern, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Lauren Squires
Commissioners Absent:	Mark Braseth, Roque Deherrera, Patience Malaba, Austin Moreman, Alanna Peterson, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Jamie Stroble
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst

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

Co-Chair Rick Mohler called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm. Co-Chair Mohler offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to actively recognize 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.'

Co-Chair Mohler asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color BraveSpace norms. He reminded the Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Executive Director, noted that this meeting is the Planning Commission's first hybrid meeting where some Commissioners are participating remotely via the MS Teams platform while other Commissioners and staff are participating in person in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. She noted that public comment could be submitted in writing

at least eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting or provided in person by any members of the public attending the meeting at City Hall.

Briefing: 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan Amendments docketing staff draft recommendations

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's staff draft docketing recommendations for the proposed 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan amendments. He reviewed the criteria from City Council Resolution 31807 that are used to determine whether proposed amendments should be docketed for further analysis. He stated that the City Council received five amendment forms for the 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan amendment process, including one proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment and four proposed text amendments. The proposed amendments and preliminary staff recommendations are as follows:

#1: Essential Daily Needs

Amend the land use element to allow for uses that serve residents' everyday needs within a quarter mile of their homes

- Not previously submitted

Draft recommendation: Not recommended for the docket, citing criterion B (5).

- This amendment is better addressed through another process, specifically the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan.

#2: Equitable Urban Forest Canopy

Provide a comprehensive strategy for an equitable urban forest canopy within all Seattle neighborhoods

- Similar application was submitted during the 2020-2021 cycle
- Not docketed in the 2020-2021 cycle

Draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing, citing criterion B (5).

- This amendment is better addressed through another process, specifically tree protection regulations and the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan.

#3: 4822 S Holly St.

Amend the Future Land Use Map from Neighborhood Residential to Multifamily

- Not previously submitted

Draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing, citing criterion G.

- This parcel is in a Neighborhood Residential zone. Zoning is NR 5000. Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements do not apply to development in this zone.
- FLUM amendment is not necessary when it would affect an area less than a full block in size and adjacent land is the same or compatible.
- This parcel is less than a full block. Adjacent land is Low-Rise 3 (M), a Multifamily Residential zone where residential development such as townhouses, rowhouses, and apartments are allowed.

#4: Urban Freight Delivery

Amend the Transportation element to address Transportation Network Companies and delivery trucks

- Previously submitted in 2019-2020 cycle
- Not docketed in the 2019-2020 cycle
- Applicant provided supplemental information to be considered for the 2022-2023 cycle

Draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing, citing criterion B (5).

- This amendment is better addressed through another process, specifically the Seattle Transportation Plan.

#5: Interbay and East Magnolia

Amend the Future Land Use Map in Interbay and East Magnolia near the future Dravus light rail station

- Not previously submitted

Draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing, citing criterion B (5).

- This amendment is better addressed through another process, specifically the Industrial and Maritime Strategy and West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions station area planning.

Mr. Hoey stated that the Commission's next steps on this issue include review a draft docketing recommendations letter at the June 23 meeting and taking action on a final docketing recommendations letter at the July 14 meeting.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked how the annual amendment process is affected in years that the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan is being prepared. Ms. Murdock stated that the Comprehensive Plan can only be amended once per year. During the years that the Major Update is being developed, the annual amendment can proceed as usual. In the year that the Major Update is adopted, the annual amendment process may be suspended.
- Commissioners requested clarification on the staff recommendation for proposed amendment #1: Essential Daily Needs. Ms. Murdock stated that if this proposed amendment were to be docketed, study of the proposed amendment would start this summer and take six to nine months. The Comprehensive Plan Major Update already has dedicated staff and community engagement efforts are underway. This amendment would be better addressed through the Major Update process. The Commission could consider including the issues addressed by this proposed amendment in its scoping comments for the Major Update EIS.
- Commissioners requested additional information on proposed amendment #2: Equitable Tree Canopy to determine how substantially different this application is from the 2020-2021 application referenced in the staff draft recommendations. Ms. Murdock offered to send the previous application to Commissioners for further review.
- Commissioners asked for a more detailed explanation of Criterion G. Mr. Hoey stated that Criterion G applies to proposed FLUM changes. These types of Comprehensive Plan amendments are typically the only time that the Planning Commission reviews site-specific property issues. Criterion G states that a proposal that would change the boundary of an urban center, urban village, or manufacturing/industrial center requires an amendment to the FLUM, regardless of the area's size. An amendment that proposes to change the FLUM is not necessary and will not be considered when it would affect an area that is less than a full block in size and is located adjacent to other land designated on the FLUM for a use that is the same as –or is compatible with–the proposed

designation. Mr. Hoey stated that this criterion has applied to several proposed amendments in recent years and requires careful consideration to determine if these amendments should be docketed for further study. Ms. Murdock stated that this criterion was modified several years ago to provide clarity for applicants.

Briefing: Seattle Transportation Plan scoping letter overview

Radcliffe Dacanay, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS: Commissioner Radhika Nair disclosed that her employer, Berk Consulting, is leading the environmental review process for the Seattle Transportation Plan. She recused herself from the discussion. Commissioner Lauren Squires disclosed that her employer, Nelson Nygard, is working on the Seattle Transportation Plan. She recused herself from the discussion.

Mr. Dacanay provided an overview of the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process and the conceptual transportation alternatives to be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He stated that the EIS process will begin in June with scoping and is anticipated to end by June 2023 when a final EIS is issued. There are two opportunities for comments, the scoping comment period in summer 2022 and a future Draft EIS comment period in the first half of 2023. The scoping period will begin on June 16, with a scoping meeting held on June 21, and will last thirty days, closing on July 16. After the scoping period, the alternatives will be refined in September. The final EIS is anticipated to be completed by mid-2023.

Mr. Dacanay stated that scoping initiates the environmental review process. The scoping process allows the public, tribal governments, and local, state, and federal agencies to comment on the range of alternatives and the topics the EIS should evaluate to shape the plan and environmental outcomes. He stated that SDOT's SEPA strategy is to develop an EIS that focuses on a narrow suite of topics. These topics will be finalized after scoping but are anticipated to include:

- Air quality/greenhouse gas
- Land use
- Transportation
- Water quality
- Noise
- Sea-level rise

Alternatives to be studied in the EIS will be developed with public input. The purpose of alternatives is to present options to decision-makers and the public in a meaningful way. Alternatives will identify different ways to meet the City's vision. The Draft EIS will test the No Action (which represents current plans and is required by SEPA) and two Action Alternatives. Within the range of alternatives, the City can develop a Preferred Alternative, which will be evaluated in the Final EIS. For the STP, Alternatives can be combinations of capital projects, programs, and policies that advances STP goals.

Mr. Dacanay stated that the STP SEPA process will coordinate externally with the Comprehensive Plan Major Update and internally with other STP tasks. STP's SEPA Alternatives will hold land use constant and vary the transportation network. The Comprehensive Plan will hold the transportation network constant and vary land use. The STP alternatives mix two policy levers to achieve this goal:

- Change the way we get around— mode shift
- Invest in the electrification of our transportation system

The Conceptual Alternatives considered for the EIS are as follows:

- Alternative 1 – No Action. This alternative represents what is likely to occur if the STP is not updated and includes a benchmark of 3 of 10 existing low-emission trips.
- Alternative 2 – Electrification and mode shift. This alternative adds 1 new trip by electric vehicle and 2 new trips by foot, bike, or transit for a total 6 of 10 low-emission trips.
- Alternative 3 – Accelerated electrification and mode shift. This alternative adds 3 new trips by electric vehicle and 4 new trips by foot, bike, or transit for a total 10 of 10 low-emission trips.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for suggestions on how to make scoping comments easy to understand and actionable. Mr. Dacanay stated that the STP team will be reviewing all scoping comments and will have the ability to determine the necessary information within those comments.
- Commissioners asked for more information on how low emission trips were selected to frame the conceptual alternatives. Mr. Dacanay stated that the primary goal is 9 of 10 trips are zero emissions by 2030. The ultimate goal is zero emission-generating trips by 2050. The City's goal is to become carbon neutral. More detailed scenarios will be included in the STP. The EIS process includes these Conceptual Alternatives as bookends.
- Commissioners inquired how the current framework addresses displacement and other inequities. Mr. Dacanay stated that could be a scoping comment to be submitted for the EIS, as those issues are not included in the Conceptual Alternatives. The EIS will support development of the STP.
- Commissioners noted that the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) EIS did look at displacement and other equity issues. Mr. Dacanay stated that the STP SEPA process is high level. SDOT is working with the Office of Planning and Community Development to look at displacement and other equity issues. Those issues would add another layer of complexity to the EIS. Different income levels will have different access to various modes of transportation. SDOT wants to make sure the City is providing the right mix of transportation options in different parts of Seattle. SDOT is committed to determine where the priority needs are from an equity perspective, but that is outside the scope of the EIS.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the meaning of "zero emissions." Mr. Dacanay stated that this mostly refers to tailpipe emissions from an EIS perspective. Other related SDOT analyses not included in this EIS include how to build out a transportation system to meet future land use patterns.

- Commissioners inquired if the STP will be a prescriptive plan or a guidance document. Mr. Dacanay stated the STP will have goals and policies but will also include scenarios on how the various transportation modes fit together, especially more opportunities for biking and walking, and funding to achieve those scenarios.
- Commissioners asked to what extent the plan will include the role of private entities related to use of the right-of-way. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT needs to think about how to best work with private development.
- Commissioners requested clarification on the difference between the conceptual alternatives and scenarios to be explored in the STP. Mr. Dacanay stated that the conceptual alternatives will serve as bookends that the scenarios could fit within. These scenarios could include a mix of electric vehicles, cycling, and walking. The analysis will determine whether these scenarios achieve the desired goals and can they be funded.
- Commissioners asked if SDOT has had discussions about the potential for higher income households to contribute to future transportation investments. Mr. Dacanay stated that the STP team is discussing options such as congestion pricing and road pricing. These options are tricky to implement in Seattle.

Commission Business

Mr. Hoey provided an overview of Seattle City Council Resolution 32055, which makes recommendations to the Sound Transit Board on the preferred alternative for Sound Transit's WSBLE project. The Sound Transit Board is expected to vote on a motion to confirm or modify the preferred alternatives for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The motion is scheduled to be heard at Sound Transit's System Expansion Committee on July 14, with Sound Transit Board action anticipated on July 28. Mr. Hoey reviewed the Resolution's preferred alternative recommendations.

Public Comment

Megan Kruse stated that she has submitted a Comprehensive Plan amendment on urban freight trucks. While use of our streets has improved, we need to recognize the increasing role of urban freight delivery. These trucks generate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The University of Washington conducted a study that showed how delivery trucks are circulating looking for parking in the downtown retail core. She encouraged the Planning Commission to consider these issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.