



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, May 12, 2022  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Austin Moreman, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires

**Commissioners Absent:** Patience Malaba, 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.*

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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

Co-Chair Rick Mohler called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm. Co-Chair Mohler offered the following land acknowledgement:

*'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to acknowledge that the city of Seattle is on stolen Coast Salish land, specifically the ancestral land of the Duwamish, Suquamish, Stillaguamish, and Muckleshoot Tribes. We strive to remedy this injustice through our beliefs and actions in helping to steward our land and communities in Seattle.'*

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

**ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the April 28, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner Roque Deherrera seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

#### Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Executive Director, provided a brief review of the format for the online meeting and noted that due to the online format, public comment must be submitted in writing at least eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting.

## **Update: Office of Planning and Community Development**

Lauren Flemister, Deputy Director, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Ms. Flemister provided an overview of the OPCD 2022 work program. She shared OPCD's mission: "We lead collaborative planning, advance equitable development, and create great places." She described OPCD's work in the following categories:

- **Community Development**
  - The Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) works with community-based organizations to lend resources and increase their capacity for land acquisition and project development.
- **Housing Policy**
  - Black Homeowner Initiative. This work is focused on those who have been displaced and are interested in returning to communities.
  - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
  - Townhouse Reform legislation
- **Transportation and Station Area Development**
  - This work includes the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions and the 130<sup>th</sup> Street station area planning.
  - OPCD is also conducting work around existing stations including Mt. Baker and Judkins Park focused on enriching those communities and providing economic opportunities in those communities.
- **Economic Opportunity**
  - Industrial and Maritime Strategy. This work includes a jobs initiative.
  - Downtown Recovery. Recent media and public attention have been focused on hate crimes, property crimes, and homelessness in Chinatown/International District and Pioneer Square. This work will focus on resilience in our central business district.
  - EDI Investments
- **Environmental Justice**
  - Outside Citywide. This work is focused on the open space network and how it relates to access.
  - Community Reconnection and Highway Removal. This includes supporting a community effort focused on the future of SR 99 in South Park.
  - Duwamish Valley Program. Now in a position of looking at a resiliency district.

Ms. Flemister stated that OPCD is operationalizing how to let community lead, recognizing that the department has so much more potential to be effective if they take a step back and let community dictate. OPCD's Community Engagement Ethos is available on their website and is as follows:

### **What we believe in.**

- Seattle will become a more equitable, livable, and sustainable city by centering community and racial justice in our planning, community development, and design processes and decisions.
- Our work will engage all residents of Seattle in shaping the city's future and will prioritize giving voice and power to communities, especially BIPOC, that have been historically marginalized.

**How we strive to do the work.**

- Build and maintain respectful, meaningful relationships with community over time and across projects.
- Center the work with an intersectional, race-conscious lens, informed by the City's history of racial discrimination and disinvestment.
- Bring engagement to community, don't make community come to us.
- Be responsive to the needs and goals identified by and within communities.
- Value and elevate the assets and experience that exist within community.

She stated that OPCD has been talking about what the department's values are in community engagement and how to best do that work. This includes trying to understand the complexities of racial discrimination and underrepresented communities, as well as valuing and elevating assets within communities.

Ms. Flemister provided an overview of OPCD's current project engagement priorities, including:

- Chinatown/International District
- South Park
- Georgetown
- Crown Hill
- Jackson Hub
- EDI Grantees
- Website, Social Media, and Storytelling Videos

She provided additional details on several areas of OPCD's 2022 work program as follows:

2022 Mayoral Priorities

1. 'One Seattle' Comprehensive Plan Major Update
2. Planning for Long-Term Downtown Recovery
3. Industrial Maritime Strategy (IMS)
4. Sound Transit 3 (ST3) West Seattle to Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE)
5. Chinatown / International District (CID) planning
6. Equitable Development Initiative / Strategic Investment Fund

Comprehensive Plan Major Update

- Stronger emphasis on racial equity
- Focus on anti-displacement and access to opportunity mapping 2.0
- Robust community engagement
- Reconsideration of Neighborhood Residential zoning
- Coordination and integration with the Seattle Transportation Plan

Downtown Planning

- Downtown Subarea Plan – this work will be kicking off later this year
  - Emphasis on small business support
  - Consideration of the homeless population
  - Emphasis on resiliency and recovery
- Consultant contract to aid BIPOC businesses and COVID recovery – the funding source for this work is LID I-5 funds
- Work with CID and Pioneer Square
  - Jackson Hub
  - Pioneer Square Planning
  - County Master Planning
- Mitigation and future planning around the Downtown stations for ST<sub>3</sub> WSBLE

#### Chinatown/International District Planning

- Program development and enhanced engagement at behest of the community
- ST<sub>3</sub> station area coordination and early planning
- Jackson Hub project coordination and engagement
- Supporting the Friends of Little Saigon Action Plan
- Ongoing collaboration with the Department of Neighborhoods

OPCD is developing the C/ID work program considering current resource constraints and community needs. This work will be a collaboration with other departments. The C/ID station is the most complex of the WSBLE stations given the technical complexity around the station, which will be a large mobility hub, as well as cultural assets and past harms to the community.

Ms. Flemister provided an overview of OPCD's 2022 work program by division as follows:

#### Area Planning

- Sound Transit 3 WSBLE
- FTA Grant
- Sound Transit 3 Graham Street and 130th Street
- TODI Grant
- Downtown Subarea Plan
- South Park 99 Removal
- Crown Hill Design Guidelines
- Westwood Highland Park – will start later this year
- Aurora Licton Springs – will start later this year
- Duwamish Valley Program
- Indigenous Planning Program – adding an indigenous planner this year to help build that program

#### Community Investments

- EDI Grant Management
- Strategic Investment Fund
- Equitable TOD Program Development

- JumpStart Funding Program Development
- Red Barn Ranch
- Capital Subcabinet

#### Land Use Policy Division

- Industrial and Maritime Strategy
- Housing Policy
- Design Review Update and RET – supporting the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) in reducing barriers to permitting, especially for those who have traditionally been left out of development opportunities
- Equitable Development Zoning
- Station Area Interim Controls and Rezones
- ST3 Design Guidelines and Guidance

#### Long Range Planning Division

- Comprehensive Plan Major Update
- Comp Plan Annual Amendments
- Subarea Planning Strategy
- Climate Change and Resilience

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked how OPCD is thinking about strengthening racial equity in the Comprehensive Plan Major Update, noting that the current Plan has some themes related to racial equity that could be improved on. Ms. Flemister stated that racial equity is not sufficiently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. OPCD will be working on the methodology related to addressing displacement risk, so the next Plan does not overlook unique cases. She stated that the City Council has expressed some concern about not advancing that work. Other ways of addressing racial equity can come through the engagement process. The Major Update will also reconsider issues related to single family zoning. General pushback on that issue tends to come from homeowners who are better resourced. Any attempt to revise single family zoning will be challenged. OPCD will need to be ready to engage in contentious and controversial discussions. OPCD will be conducting a Racial Equity Toolkit analysis of this issue, including a review of similar efforts by other jurisdictions. The Transportation Equity Workgroup will inform the Seattle Transportation Plan's approach to racial equity.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the coordination and integration between OPCD and SDOT on the Comprehensive Plan Major Update and the Seattle Transportation Plan. Ms. Flemister stated that the Capital Sub-Cabinet will be instrumental in this effort. There has been a disconnect between early planning, design, and project delivery. There is an opportunity to strengthen coordination at the planning level.
- Commissioners inquired about the status of a proposed program to provide capital funding assistance to those who are interested in building ADUs. Ms. Flemister stated that the City will have a Housing Sub-Cabinet tasked with looking at housing needs in every income bracket. OPCD will be supporting that work. One of the first priorities will be a consideration around how to get ADUs

built in legacy Black neighborhoods including Southeast Seattle and North Seattle. Commissioners suggested that could change the conversation around Neighborhood Residential zoning in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners stated that progress on ADU construction also lacks access to builders. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity would be interested in working with the City to build more ADUs at cost.

- Commissioners asked about OPCD's reaction to the I-35 Social Housing Initiative. Ms. Flemister stated that she is not aware of an OPCD position on this initiative. This topic will be very interesting to follow as the EDI continues to evolve and the Office of Housing addresses issues around affordable housing. The equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD) model is an innovative approach to building and operating transit-oriented development.
- Commissioners inquired about OPCD's work as it relates to the City's climate change goals. Ms. Flemister stated that a primary focus of climate change conversations has been on carbon emissions. The City would like to pivot these conversations to resiliency. The new Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment is interested in creating a Climate Sub-Cabinet to determine how to be more aggressive about the City's response to climate change.

### **Discussion: Draft Repurposing the Right-of-Way Issue Brief**

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's draft Repurposing the Right-of-Way issue brief. He shared the outline of the draft issue brief as follows:

- I. Vision
- II. Background
- III. Opportunities for the Comprehensive Plan Major Update and Seattle Transportation Plan
- IV. Addressing Equity When Repurposing the Right-of-Way
- V. Opportunity to Repurpose the Right-of-Way to Prioritize Other Modes and Community Amenities
- VI. Building on Existing City Plans

Mr. Hoey read the following draft Vision statement: "The Seattle Planning Commission envisions a transition away from dominant use of the public right-of-way for automobile use towards a future condition that prioritizes active transportation options and other uses that primarily benefit the public and the environment. This transition will balance transportation and equity goals by using right-of-way space more efficiently and at lower costs. Repurposing the right-of-way to include multiple functions and uses will increase quality of life for Seattleites of all ages, income levels, and abilities, while also contributing to the City's climate and sustainability goals."

He shared the following list under the section heading of Opportunity to Repurpose the Right-of-Way to Prioritize Other Modes and Community Amenities:

- Reduce single-occupant vehicle use and on-street parking
- Increase investments in transit and non-motorized infrastructure for bikes and pedestrians, including ongoing investments in the sidewalk network
- Build on Vision Zero principles to reduce speeds and incorporate safety measures

- Recognize the importance of the public realm for gathering and social interactions
- Maintain right-of-way uses that promote economic development such as streeteries and other vending opportunities
- Incorporate green stormwater infrastructure and other environmental benefits wherever possible
- Prepare for the transition to autonomous vehicles (car sharing versus car ownership strategy)

Commissioners took five minutes to review the draft issue brief before the discussion. Mr. Hoey stated that any suggested edits and comments will be incorporated into a revised draft issue brief. The revised draft will be discussed during a final working session at the May 19 Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting, and the final draft issue brief text will be presented for approval at the May 26 full Commission meeting.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners had the following comments related to the draft Vision statement:
  - Include both “active transportation and public space.” Public space is where life happens.
  - Create a bolder vision for how we envision our right-of-way twenty years from now.
  - The Vision should be stronger and more definitive; should include climate mitigation and adaptation, references to population growth.
  - Delete the second sentence, as it creates a perceived conflict between transportation and equity.
  - Words like “efficiently” and “at lower cost” need to be better defined.
  - The phrase “more efficiently” can refer to shared-use vehicles instead of parking.
  - We should articulate that the right-of-way is a public space. Street trees are an important component.
  - A desired future condition would allow people to travel anywhere without sharing the right-of-way with a car. This could include a network of protected bike lanes or an entirely car-free zone. Design of the right-of-way should include active protection of people from vehicles.
  - The phrase “at lower costs” could refer to households not relying on an automobile.
  - The right-of-way can be a sign of equity or inequity. For example, neighborhoods without sidewalks are often in lower-income communities. Alternative uses of the right-of-way can include sidewalks for those communities without them now.
  - Safety is missing from the Vision statement and should be featured prominently.
  - Other City goals are missing from the Vision statement. For example, the right-of-way should also serve to meet cultural goals, including people-oriented activities such as walking, outdoor dining, and interacting with neighbors. The quality of the right-of-way affects connections between people and how they interact.
  - There should be a sense of joyfulness in the right-of-way as a place for sharing space with the community and creating vibrant community spaces. We should acknowledge the creativity that will be needed in solutions to achieve these goals as we imagine the right-of-way twenty years in the future.
  - The Vision should acknowledge that the right-of-way is a space to increase social interactions and social capital.

- Streets are more than thoroughfares. Names mean a lot. The right-of-way is more than streets.
- The right-of-way is publicly owned property that can be used by the public in many ways.
- The Vision statement should not include mention of costs. The vision that we would like to see would be very expensive. The City can be more experimental. There are a lot of good examples of tactical urbanism. We should encourage the City to take some risks.
- Commissioners had the following comments related to the Equity section:
  - This section should add more specific information, including details from the Transportation Equity Workgroup and SDOT's Public Space Management Program.
  - The right-of-way includes physical space within our communities. Some communities rely on this space more than others, especially disabled populations.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm.**