



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 23, 2022
Approved Meeting Minutes

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

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 Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:36 am. Co-Chair Stroble 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 who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities. We commit to identifying racist practices and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'

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

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the May 26, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner Julio Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.
--

ACTION: Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson moved to approve the June 9, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, noted that this meeting is the Planning Commission's second 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.

Discussion: 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan Amendments docketing draft recommendations

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's draft docketing recommendations for the proposed 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan amendments. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan can only be amended once per year. The Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan happens every 8 years. Procedures and criteria established in City Council Resolution 31807 are used for consideration of proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the annual "docket." The proposed amendments are reviewed independently by the Planning Commission, the Office of Planning and Community Development, and City Council Central Staff. These entities determine whether the proposed amendments should be recommended for further analysis based on whether they meet all the docketing criteria, not on the merits of the amendments.

Mr. Hoey 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 draft 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 Multi-Family

- Not previously submitted

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

- This parcel is in a Neighborhood Residential area. Zoning is Neighborhood Residential 3 (formerly Single Family 5000).
- 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. All adjacent parcels are designated on the FLUM as Multi-Family Residential.

#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

Align future transit services to Interbay and East Magnolia anticipated between 2035 and 2040 with transit-orientated development, including mixed uses

- 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 will take action on a final docketing recommendations letter at the July 14 meeting. The Land Use Committee of the City Council has tentatively scheduled a briefing and public hearing on the 2022-2023 Comprehensive Plan amendments on July 27 and a vote on September 14.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed concern with the draft recommendation on amendment #1 due to the potential for delay of the Comprehensive Plan Major Update process. Ms. Murdock stated that many factors play into completion of the Major Update. The date for completion and approval of the Major Update is set by the state. Occasionally factors such as a recession can affect the schedule. The last update to the Comprehensive Plan was delayed by nine to twelve months due to factors outside of the City's control. This Major Update is delayed a few months.

- Some Commissioners stated a preference for changing the recommendation to not docket proposed amendment #1, citing the lag time between the annual amendment process and completion of the Major Update.
- Co-Chair Stroble ask all Commissioners to indicate their preference for maintaining the draft recommendation on amendment #1 or revising it to recommend the amendment for docketing. The majority of Commissioners present indicated a preference for keeping the current recommendation not to docket the proposed amendment.
- Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission could address the components of this amendment in its upcoming scoping comment letter on the Comprehensive Plan Major Update Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Briefing: Comprehensive Plan Major Update EIS Scoping Overview

Michael Hubner and Brennon Staley, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Mr. Staley stated that the City anticipates addressing the following topics in the Comprehensive Plan Major Update EIS:

- Earth and water quality
- Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Plants and animals
- Energy and natural resources
- Noise
- Land use patterns and urban form
- Historic resources
- Relationship to plans, policies, and regulations
- Population and employment
- Housing and displacement
- Transportation
- Services: Police, Fire, Parks, and Schools
- Utilities

He stated that the City's existing growth strategy since 1994 has been focused on Urban Centers and Urban Villages. This strategy concentrates new housing and jobs in compact, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods linked by transit and focuses industrial development in Manufacturing and Industrial Centers. As a result of this strategy, 83 percent of new housing has been located in Seattle's urban centers and urban villages. Growing concerns with this strategy include that it reinforces a history of racial exclusion, restricts housing supply and diversity, and exacerbates displacement pressures.

Mr. Staley stated that the EIS will analyze five alternatives as described below.

Alternative 1: No Action. This alternative maintains the status quo of focusing most housing and jobs within the existing urban centers and urban villages with no change to land use patterns. This would mean:

- new housing is primarily rental apartments concentrated in existing mixed-use areas
- most land outside urban villages remains limited to high cost detached houses
- no new strategies to increase housing supply or address exclusivity
- assumes 80,000 new homes and 132,000 new jobs over 20 years, which is the minimum requirement for Seattle under a regional framework

Alternative Concept 2: Focused. This alternative creates additional areas of focused growth, including new and expanded urban villages and/or new smaller village-type nodes. This concept is designed to:

- increase opportunities to grow “complete neighborhoods” where more people can walk to everyday needs
- create a greater range of housing options, primarily rental apartments, near amenities and services in more neighborhoods
- result in a slight increase in at-home and commercial businesses due to a larger number of people living in Seattle
- address the City Council’s proviso requirement (b) on 15-minute neighborhoods

Alternative Concept 3: Broad. This alternative allows a wider range of low-scale housing options, like triplexes and fourplexes, in all Neighborhood Residential zones. This concept is designed to:

- expand housing choices, particularly homeownership, in all neighborhoods
- address the exclusionary nature of current zoning
- allow more housing options near existing large parks and other neighborhood amenities
- result in a slight increase in at-home and commercial businesses, spread throughout the city
- address the City Council’s proviso requirement (a) on Neighborhood Residential

Alternative Concept 4: Corridors. This alternative allows a wider range of low-scale housing options only in areas near frequent transit and amenities. This concept is designed to:

- expand the diversity of housing options near transit and amenities
- result in a slight increase in at-home and commercial businesses, focused along corridors

Alternative Concept 5: Combined. This alternative accommodates a greater supply and diversity of housing across Seattle. Distribution of housing would combine Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, resulting in more areas identified as appropriate for more housing and mixed-use development. This concept is designed to:

- promote abundant rental and ownership housing, primarily in areas well served by transit
- address past underproduction of housing and rising housing costs
- support complete neighborhoods across more of the city
- result in a larger increase in at-home and commercial businesses
- address the City Council’s proviso requirements (a) and (b)

Mr. Staley stated that the EIS will also include analysis of the 130th and 145th Station Areas, including three alternatives:

- No Action
- Nodes and corridors
- Urban Village at 130th; nodes and corridors in other areas

Mr. Staley stated that the EIS will have a significant focus on addressing displacement. He stated that the City cannot address displacement without increasing housing supply. Increasing housing supply is, on its own, insufficient for addressing displacement. OPCD will craft all action alternatives to consider higher levels of growth in areas of low displacement risk while still increasing housing choice in high displacement risk areas. The EIS will evaluate each alternative for its potential impacts on displacement. The Plan will support measures to address displacement beyond the growth strategy, such as creating more income-restricted affordable housing in rezoned areas, supporting existing businesses and institutions, and preserving existing lower-cost housing. This approach will address the City Council's proviso requirement (c) on anti-displacement strategies.

Mr. Staley reviewed the project timeline and next steps: The EIS scoping process will end on July 25. OPCD will refine the alternatives for analysis in August and September and release a scoping report with the final alternatives in October. The public release of the Draft EIS will be in April 2023, and the public release of the Final EIS, including a preferred growth alternative, will be in April 2024.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested more information on the baseline numbers of 80,000 new homes and 132,000 new jobs over 20 years in Alternative 1. Mr. Staley stated that those numbers come from the state and are minimum targets. He stated that these targets may be setting the City up for continued under-production. Mr. Hubner stated that the target of 80,000 homes is slightly more than the 70,000 target from the previous Comprehensive Plan. The actual rate of growth was significantly higher. It is difficult to predict future trends, so these targets may be a low estimate, as Seattle could continue to be an attractive place.
- Commissioners asked for additional details on the proposed alternative to expand existing urban centers and villages. Mr. Staley stated that OPCD does not have a specific proposal at this time and is seeking input on the conceptual alternatives. Mandatory Housing Affordability expanded some urban centers and villages, while others were not affected. Those not affected could be a possibility for expansion. Access to the frequent transit network and amenities is an important criterion. Mr. Hubner stated that the new Countywide Center designation aligns closely with Seattle's urban villages. There is a minimum size criterion for funding. Several existing urban villages are smaller than this minimum size. OPCD will be looking at all urban villages to determine whether to bring them up to that standard.
- Commissioners stated that Alternative 1 would benefit from considering bookends ranging from the 80,000 housing target at the low end to an educated high target that considers the doubling

rate we are seeing, given that Alternative 1 will be used as a baseline and would be helpful to assess our alternative futures.

- Commissioners asked how each of the alternatives address essential daily needs and services beyond housing and jobs. Mr. Staley stated that all the alternatives consider additional at-home businesses and commercial services. The distribution of these would be roughly similar to the distribution of housing. In the Nodes alternative, distribution would be focused while the Broad alternative would have a wider distribution. The alternatives are high level without details at this point. Mr. Hubner stated that the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment submitted by Councilmember Morales is in line with the alternatives. OPCD will be developing a more complete description of the alternatives and will start to think about how they would be described and carry forward into the EIS.
- Commissioners asked which of the alternatives will best address the need for low-income housing and affordable services for BIPOC communities. Mr. Staley stated that at this point, these alternatives are only ideas of what to study. OPCD does not have opinions on which is best. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD will be evaluating the alternatives through the EIS and will address the questions of what those communities need and what they are concerned about. Each alternative will have different impacts and benefits.
- Commissioners requested more information on the Countywide Center designation and the specific size necessary to be upgraded to that designation. If Seattle is taking on a large amount of growth, an equity lens could be applied to these designations to mitigate displacement. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD could come back to the Commission for a longer conversation on addressing displacement risk. The Countywide Planning Policies provide a mandate to identify Countywide Centers for planning a share of the city's growth at higher densities and near transit. The challenge of mitigating displacement risk involves being cognizant of those risks and planning in a way that is not forcing people out.
- Commissioners asked if the City may end up reinforcing existing land use and transit patterns because of the size of Countywide Centers. Mr. Hubner stated that this topic is a great opportunity for deeper conversation, perhaps with Seattle Department of Transportation staff. Transportation improvements will be necessary to improve mobility to and between centers. The City will be building on urban centers and villages to achieve balance and address the history of exclusion.
- Commissioners asked if there is an opportunity within all the alternatives to study the feasibility of applying density and housing opportunities in areas subject to flooding and seismic risks. Mr. Staley stated that those topics are within the scope of the EIS and will be considered.

Public Comment

Ms. Murdock read the following public comments, which were submitted via e-mail.

I'm writing on behalf of the Transit Riders Union to urge the Planning Commission to support the amendments to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan proposed by Councilmember Tammy Morales.

Our members are transit riders, and many of our members rely on transit because they are disabled or low-income. We strongly support expanding the uses allowed in residential zones, especially areas that are not in close proximity to existing commercial zones. Especially for people who don't own cars and rely on public

transit, biking, walking, and rolling for transportation, our quality of life is greatly enhanced when it's possible to access basics like groceries, childcare, health services and cultural activities near home. For the same reason, we support allowing nonconforming uses to reopen when they would provide essential goods and services to the surrounding community.

As Seattle is struggling to reduce its rising carbon emissions from transportation, making it possible for all residents to conveniently and comfortably access the necessities of life without getting in a car should be a high priority. Please support these important amendments to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

*Sincerely,
Katie Wilson
General Secretary
Transit Riders Union*

My name is Laura Loe and I'm writing today to support CM Morales's amendments for the Comprehensive Plan and to ask that the Seattle Planning Commission actively advocate for them to be adopted ahead of the major Comprehensive Plan updates.

I'm calling today on behalf of Share The Cities Action Fund. We have 100 folks in our slack group and over 8,000 followers on Twitter and 1,000 receive our newsletter. We work on equitable land use and affordable housing in Seattle and King County. The housing and climate crises demand bold action and we need our city to welcome more neighbors, more equitably, and we can't wait.

Please make a strong recommendation to the city that they consider CM Morales's Comprehensive Plan amendments.

We are writing in strong support of the current package of Comprehensive Plan amendments being put forward by Council Member Morales's office.

We on the 350 Seattle Housing and Green New Deal teams have learned that OPCD has suggested a pause on Comprehensive Plan amendments while the new Comprehensive Plan work moves forward. We strongly feel that it shouldn't apply to any amendments whose purpose and scope is to move the Comprehensive Plan conversation forward by improving neighborhoods throughout the city.

Specifically, we believe that climate change isn't pausing while the Comprehensive Plan work takes place, and at the same time, it's critically important that the Comprehensive Plan address climate-friendly growth in Seattle. Simply put, if all neighborhoods allow the everyday services that people need, we'll be able to walk and bike to those services, instead of driving. Climate change isn't waiting on that, and Seattle residents shouldn't either.

We believe that the Morales amendments are strongly in the same spirit as the Commission's excellent 2018 Neighborhoods for All report, and if we are to have a Comprehensive Plan that reflects the climate justice and equity values centered in Neighborhoods for All, we need to make every possible incremental move forward -- to advance the conversation in all possible ways. The Morales package reinforces the concept of thriving neighborhoods with affordability at all levels, and the services that such neighborhoods provide.

We hope the Commission will push hard for these amendments, because they will help set the stage for a Comprehensive Plan that includes walkable, thriving, neighborhoods throughout the city.

Thanks so much for your good work,

*Alice Lockhart, 350 Seattle Housing Team
Jess Wallach, 350 Seattle Green New Deal Team*

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Thank you all for your service and dedication to the people who live, work, and play in the city of Seattle. Your deliberations literally shape our city, providing consequential recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan to me and my colleagues. Therefore, I am writing today to request that you recommend moving forward with the amendment package co-created between my office and a coalition of more than 30 community-based organizations. The purpose of these proposed amendments is simple and critical: to bring essential services like fresh and healthy foods, childcare, and cultural anchors within reach of every one of our neighbors.

I understand that the Office of Planning & Community Development recently recommended against the City taking up any annual Comprehensive Plan amendments this year. Unfortunately, while the intent is to incorporate this discussion into the next major update, this recommendation will only delay important action. To tell you that I find this disappointing is an understatement. Being told to wait for City improvements is something that both my constituents and I have come to hear too often. We are told to wait when we ask for pedestrian safety improvements, as the number of our neighbors killed by cars continues to rise. We are told to wait for more dedicated youth programming for Black girls and trans youth, as they continue to grow into adults unsupported by the City and set up to fail. We are told to wait for fences around playgrounds, instead being told that fencing "isn't a substitute for monitoring children." We are told to wait for different methods to deliver affordable housing while rents skyrocket and whole neighborhoods continue to be displaced.

As I said when I was sworn into office, I was not elected to tell my constituents to wait. I believe everyone deserves to live in well-resourced, well-connected, equitably designed neighborhoods, and I believe that the need to start delivering on that merits Council's immediate attention. We have a real opportunity to kick start building a city where everyone in every corner of Seattle has access to their essential needs within

walking or rolling distance of a home they can afford. With your help, we can start to repair the institutional harms that our City has perpetuated, sooner rather than later. I urge you to recommend moving forward on these amendments now instead of letting the issue wait until 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and my sincerest gratitude again for all that you do on behalf of all who call Seattle home.

*In community,
Tammy J. Morales
Seattle City Councilmember, District 2*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 am.