



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 10, 2021  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde

**Commissioners Absent:** Alanna Peterson

**Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

*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 3:04 pm. He read 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 offer land acknowledgement because Native land was taken by force and colonized to form the United States as we know it today. Through this process, which is ongoing through systematic oppression, Native identity, history, and land ownership has been ignored by colonizers and attempted to be erased. Land Acknowledgement is the first step in opposing the systematic oppression and historic erasure of Native people and Native Land ownership.'

Co-Chair Mohler asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for any additions or amendments to those norms before stating the expectation that everyone practice those norms.

<p><b>ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the May 27, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Roque Deherrera seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.</b></p>
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#### Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission 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 8 hours before the start of the Commission meeting. She announced that this meeting was intended to be Connie Combs' last meeting. However, Ms. Combs was unable to join this meeting due to illness. She will join a Commission meeting in July to say goodbye.

### **Discussion: Staff Draft Industrial and Maritime Strategy Recommendations**

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the staff draft recommendations on the Mayor's Industrial and Maritime Strategy. The first three sections of the staff draft letter provide introductory context under the following headings:

- Unique Characteristics of Seattle's Industrial Lands
- Previous Seattle Planning Commission Reports and Recommendations
- Ongoing Evolution of Industrial Lands Policy

The remaining sections of the staff draft letter have headings to match the names of the strategies recently approved by the Industrial and Maritime Strategy Citywide Advisory Group. Mr. Hoey reviewed highlights of the letter from each of these sections:

- Workforce Investments to Support Access to Opportunity for BIPOC, Youth, and Women
- Public Safety Partnership to Support Maritime and Industrial Areas
- Transportation Priorities to Improve the Movement of People and Goods
- Environmental Justice and Climate Action
- Stronger Protections for Industrially Zoned Land
- High Density Industrial Development
- Healthy Transitional Areas near Urban Villages
- No New Residential Uses
- Georgetown and South Park Neighborhood Goals
- Master Planning for WOSCA and Armory Sites
- Ongoing Stewardship Entities to Champion this Vision

Mr. Hoey stated that comments on this staff draft letter will be incorporated into a revised draft letter for discussion at the June 24 Commission meeting.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners questioned the rationale for the draft recommendation stating that no additional housing should be built in South Park. Mr. Hoey clarified that this recommendation is intended to caution against additional housing in the areas of South Park that will be subject to sea level rise.
- Commissioners noted that the South Park community raised concerns about proposed upzoning and potential consequences of displacement during the Mandatory Housing Affordability process.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the draft recommendation related to open space in industrial areas. Open space in industrially zoned areas can have a similar impact as conversion of industrial land to residential uses in terms of displacement of affordable industrial uses. Green space should fit within its context. Landscaping in industrial areas should be navigable by trucks for freight movement. Trees can be problematic, especially at corners where they impede sightlines.
- Commissioners agreed with a comment from the Office of Planning and Community Development that construction of modern multi-story industrial buildings will not affect the affordability of industrial spaces within those buildings. Industrial uses with housing above could prove

problematic, however, given the need for additional soundproofing and ventilation. Commissioners stated that conventional wisdom predicts that commercial space above industrial uses will offset the cost of new industrial space. New construction is going to demand higher rents than current industrial spaces. If older industrial buildings are demolished, ground floor industrial spaces in new multi-story buildings may experience vacancies for a while after construction is completed.

- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the inclusion of recommendations related to public health considerations in the draft letter. For example, there are significant public health concerns associated with housing in industrial areas.
- Commissioners stated a desire to amplify the unusual set of circumstances facing industrial lands in Seattle. One-half of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension light rail stations will be built in industrially zoned areas. The potential impacts to industrial lands from this project alone raise a significant series of regional considerations.
- Commissioners stated that the draft recommendation on Tribal engagement should be strengthened to amplify indigenous concerns. The Shoreline Management Act requires coordination with Tribes on issues related to water quality and fisheries. Commissioners noted that previous industrial land policy strategies have avoided shoreline issues in industrial areas given Tribal rights to natural resources in adjacent waterways.
- Commissioners suggested a focus on the economic and cultural concerns associated with Tribal fisheries. There are public health concerns related to contaminants in fish from waterways adjacent to industrial areas. These same fish are a significant food source for indigenous populations.
- Commissioners recommended increased attention to restoration of lands and shorelines that have been contaminated by industrial activities. Restoration sites near industrial areas could implement green stormwater infrastructure solutions to treat polluted runoff.
- Commissioners encouraged strengthening the recommendation related to access to Georgetown and South, noting that community members have already spoken on the need for better access to these neighborhoods. Commissioners suggested referencing strategies identified in the Duwamish Valley Action Plan and generating a gap analysis of what has and has not been studied to date. These communities are disproportionately affected by issues including poor air quality.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the overall lack of planning around sea level rise in the Industrial and Maritime Strategy's environmental action commitments.

### **Briefing: Proposed 2021/2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Mr. Hoey provided an overview of the proposed 2021/2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. He stated that the Commission will review a staff draft letter at its June 24 meeting and take action on the final docketing recommendations at the July 8 meeting. Mr. Hoey reminded the Commissioners that the annual amendments are reviewed against a set of criteria established in City Council Resolution 31807. The amendments are not evaluated at this point in the process on the merits of their substance. Proposed amendments that meet all the docketing criteria are recommended for further study.

The City Council received seven application forms for the 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment process, including two proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map and five proposed text amendments. Mr. Hoey reviewed the seven amendments and the preliminary staff draft recommendations for which of these proposed amendments should be docketed.

### FLUM Amendments

#### #2: 9201-9215 3rd Avenue SW

Amend the Future Land Use Map to change 9201-9215 3rd Avenue SW in the south Seattle/South Park neighborhood from Single-Family to Multifamily

- This amendment has not previously been submitted.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion G.
- These three parcels are in a Single-Family Residential zone with a zoning designation of SF 7200, which generally allows only detached single-family houses. Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements do not apply to development in this zone.
- A 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.
- These three parcels are less than a full block in size, and the adjacent land is Single-Family.

#### #3: 1511-1551 W Armory Way

Amend the Future Land Use Map to change 1511-1551 W Armory Way from Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing/ Industrial Center to Commercial/Mixed Use

- This amendment has not previously been submitted.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion B5.
- These parcels are in the Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center with a zoning designation of IG2 U/45, which generally allows only industrial and certain commercial uses. MHA requirements do not apply to development in this zone.
- This amendment would be better addressed through another process, in this case the Mayor's Industrial and Maritime Strategy.

### Text Amendments

#### #1: Florentia Street

Reclassify W Florentia Street between 3rd Avenue N and Queen Anne Avenue N and Nickerson Street as non-arterial streets

- This amendment has not previously been submitted.
- Staff draft recommendation: Pending input from the Office of Planning and Community Development and Seattle Department of Transportation.

#### #4: Setbacks and Trees

Amend the Land Use element policies related to building setbacks and yards to allow for preservation and planting of trees

- This amendment has previously been submitted, most recently in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- This amendment was not docketed in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D.
- This proposal has been previously submitted and rejected.

#### #5: Skybridges, Trams and Tunnels

Amend the Transportation element to add a policy that discourages pedestrian grade separations, including skybridges, trams and tunnels

- This amendment has previously been submitted, most recently in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- This amendment was not docketed in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D.

- This proposal has been previously submitted and rejected.

#### #6: Open and Democratic Government

Add a new Open and Democratic Government element to the Comprehensive Plan

- This amendment has previously been submitted, most recently in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- This amendment was not docketed in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D.
- This proposal has been previously submitted and rejected.

#### #7: Heavy Vehicles

Amend the Transportation element to reduce road and bridge damage from heavy vehicles

- This amendment has previously been submitted, most recently in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- This amendment was not docketed in the 2020-2021 cycle.
- Staff draft recommendation: Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D.
- This proposal has been previously submitted and rejected.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners noted that proposed amendment #3: 1511-1551 W Armory Way also does not comply with the Countywide Planning Policies, which is the subject of docketing criterion B2.
- Commissioners asked why proposed amendment #1: Florentia Street requires a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Executive Director Murdock stated that this amendment proposes to reclassify an arterial street to a non-arterial street. Arterials are listed in an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan. Planning Commission staff is coordinating with staff from the Law Department, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to determine whether this proposal requires an amendment.
- Commissioners requested more information about the future process when a proposed FLUM amendment does not meet the docketing criteria. Mr. Hoey stated that any proposed FLUM amendments that are not recommended to be docketed for further study can continue through another administrative process, such as a contract rezone. Ms. Murdock stated that the Planning Commission has encouraged better coordination between departments including OPCD and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to ensure clarity for these applicants.

#### **Discussion: Draft Comprehensive Plan Overarching Themes Letter**

Ms. Murdock provided an overview of the Commission's draft recommendations on overarching themes for the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the Commission will take action on a final draft letter on June 24. This letter is intended to present high-level themes and early guidance at the beginning of the Major Update process and will be followed by a series of short, more specific issue papers. Ms. Murdock presented a summary of the contents as follows:

- Introduction
- Pursue reparations and racial equity outcomes
- Reevaluate the Growth Strategy and revise land use policies
- Ensure further accessibility in the built environment
- Explore adding density while employing strong anti-displacement strategies
- Embed climate actions
- Make code changes to improve public health

- Embrace and explore alternative frameworks and practices
- Expand transit and prioritize other transportation modes
- Repurpose the right-of-way
- Invest in graphic design that increases the accessibility and utility of the Plan

Ms. Murdock stated the following topics still need input from the Commissioners:

- Case studies or more specific information related to anti-displacement strategies
- Additional recommendation language to expand transit and prioritize other transportation modes

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for clarification on the appropriate level of detail for anti-displacement content to be included in this letter or the future issue-specific papers. Ms. Murdock stated that one or two case studies would be helpful for inclusion in this letter. Commissioners recommended a report titled "Disaster Gentrification in King County" by the Rainier Beach Action Coalition, the Multicultural Community Coalition, and Puget Sound Sage.
- Commissioners asked if there is a legal limitation on speaking to the need for funding as the Commission emphasizes anti-displacement strategies around homeownership opportunities. Ms. Murdock stated that Commission staff will follow up on that question and provide an answer.
- Commissioners expressed support for the draft letter's recommendation related to setting multi-modal targets and encouraged including additional language recommending parking demand strategies. Travel mode choices are directly related to availability of parking. A shift in walkable neighborhoods will require a parking demand strategy. Setting modal shift targets for urban villages will require funding for SDOT and OPCD to conduct a parking inventory. There is an existing incentive to maintain parking to generate revenue for other transportation projects.
- Commissioners recommended the University of Washington's Seattle campus as a case study for parking demand management. The campus has grown substantially in recent years without expanding parking. This strategy has successfully provided access to other forms of mobility. Ms. Murdock stated that this case study would be especially helpful with the inclusion of statistics.
- Commissioners noted that the I-5 Lid feasibility study concluded that including parking in the project area would not allow a complete community to be feasible. Parking is the most important thing that can shape the form and function of cities. Regulation of parking is currently scattered across departments.
- Commissioners encouraged highlighting the recommendation for a robust community engagement strategy in the body of the letter, rather than only in the introduction. This strategy will require a new approach to community engagement that intentionally enables participants that do not normally engage in these types of planning processes. The Puget Sound Regional Council's Equity Cabinet is a good example of this type of participation.
- Commissioners recommended reiterating adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in the section of the draft letter on climate action.
- Commissioners noted that the draft letter's recommendations on the Growth Strategy do not currently include explicitly renaming Single Family zoning and reimagining the urban village strategy to include smaller areas such as urban hamlets.
- Commissioners stated that the draft letter's recommendation to indigenize the Comprehensive Plan could be expanded to elevate other non-Western centric planning processes. Ms. Murdock encouraged Commissioners to submit any recommended sources on this subject.

- Commissioners suggested that the Growth Strategy section of the draft letter be expanded to include discussion of jobs and displacement of small businesses.
- Commissioners recommended that the alternative frameworks section include fifteen-minute cities and any other similar planning processes that the City is considering.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.**