



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, September 12, 2019

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, Grace Kim, Veronica Guenther, Rick Mohler, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble

Commissioners Absent: David Goldberg, Patti Wilma

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

Guests: Sam Assefa, Director, Office of Planning and Community Development; Yolanda Ho, City Council Central Staff

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 Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner Sandra Fried moved to approve the July 25, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Veronica Guenther seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Julio Sanchez abstained.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, announced several upcoming community events, including the Equitable Development Initiative funding awards press event and a 130th/145th community planning event. She thanked Commissioners Jamie Stroble and Veronica Guenther for curating the Neighborhoods For All event at the Seattle Design Festival in mid-August. She announced that Al Levine has stepped down from the Commission for personal reasons.

Connie Combs, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an update on the Commission's Neighborhoods For All outreach events. Commissioners attended an outreach event in the Admiral neighborhood and are scheduled for two more upcoming events in the Broadview and Whittier Heights neighborhoods. John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, attended an event hosted by Strong Towns and shared the Commission's Neighborhoods For All report.

Update: Office of Planning and Community Development

Sam Assefa, Director, Office of Planning and Community Development

If you would like to view the Office of Planning and Community Development presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Director Assefa reviewed the 2019 Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) workplan and the department's current priorities.

The Housing Choices background report was released in August. It provided a summary of current conditions in housing affordability and types of housing available in Seattle. This report will inform the work of the Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Committee. Director Assefa stated the report identifies several housing types that are not currently available in Seattle. These include not only affordable housing but missing middle housing. OPCD is currently reviewing a Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) follow-up resolution from Council and Executive Orders from the Mayor related to displacement. OPCD will coordinate with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), the Office of Housing (OH), and others to determine how to mitigate the impacts of the MHA recent rezones.

The Imagine Greater Downtown project is close to being completed. This project has been a multi-agency collaboration to craft a long-term vision for downtown. Several agencies worked together to agree on a 10-15-year vision that includes how to move people through downtown and how to create usable public space. The draft report includes seven distinct "big ideas" for moving goods and moving people through the downtown neighborhoods. These include funded projects and new ideas for unfunded projects. The Downtown Transportation Alliance will monitor the progress of the implementation of Imagine Greater Downtown.

The Outside Citywide project takes a holistic view of all public spaces in the city including parks and other open spaces owned by City departments such as Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle City Light, as well as the University of Washington and other agencies. Director Assefa stated this project is conducting a robust analysis of what is working, what is not, and whether the City should think in a new way about how parks perform. This project has shown that the City cannot rely only on increasing the amount of public land to meet a growing population but can use existing public space differently by utilizing connections and small interventions. The Mayor has asked Seattle Parks and Recreation and OPCD to identify ways to work together to meet three goals: grow, improve, connect.

The Lid I-5 feasibility study is funded by \$1.5 million from the Washington State Convention Center expansion. The project team is looking at technical, programmatic, and financial options. The objective of this study is to have a sound technical basis for where a lid can be sited. The feasibility study is expected to be complete in early 2020.

The Sound Transit 3 project is expected to build fourteen new stations in Seattle. This will be a transformative project for those neighborhoods. OPCD has a dedicated team working on many aspects of the planning process, including station area planning. OPCD has also been working on community engagement related to the 130th/145th Street community planning process, which includes station area planning, mobility planning, and infrastructure investments.

The Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) just completed a 3rd round of funding awards. The Mayor will announce ten recipients for \$5 million in EDI funding. This will bring the total to 24 organizations that have received EDI funds for both capacity building and capital development. Funding from the sale of the Mercer Mega-Block will be dedicated to address displacement and an EDI Site Acquisition Revolving Loan fund.

The Mayor's Industrial Lands Strategy will kick off soon. OPCD is coordinating key components of the project including the scope of work and a stakeholder/community engagement process. The work that was completed three years ago will be updated. A land use and economic study will inform future updates to the Comprehensive Plan. That update process will start in 2020. OPCD's early involvement in the Comprehensive Plan update will include a Racial Equity Toolkit to conduct racial and equity analysis.

Commission Discussion:

- Commissioners stated that indoor community spaces are just as important as outdoor public spaces. Indoor spaces will be important in future years to accommodate a wider range of needs, especially for older people dealing with heat and air quality issues. Director Assefa noted the Outside Citywide project includes an equity analysis with a health perspective. A heat map of public spaces will be developed with health criteria such as climate change and public health. The project website will show data-informed decisions.
- Commissioners requested clarification about the relationship between the Imagine Greater Downtown and Outside Citywide projects. Director Assefa stated the Imagine Greater Downtown project's primary focus is on mobility, including moving people and goods. The Outside Citywide project's focus is on open space. Some of the data in the Outside Citywide online map came from Imagine Greater Downtown planning. Commissioners asked whether the Outside Citywide project is looking at rights-of-way for future public space in the absence of money to acquire new open spaces. Director Assefa stated that the Outside Citywide analysis reviews all open space citywide, including rights-of-way. The project is working with the Seattle Department of Transportation to look at how to potentially repurpose rights-of-way.
- Commissioners inquired about the status of the Graham Street station area planning process. Director Assefa stated this is on the OPCD radar. Commissioners stated that community members

are ready to engage in a process and that delaying this project is unfair from an equity perspective given the planning efforts around a potential future 130th station.

- Commissioners encouraged expediting progress on the Industrial Lands strategy. The Commission has deferred consideration of several proposed industrial lands Comprehensive Plan amendments. Delay of this project has been unfair to those applicants. Commissioners asked how the Interbay Armory site fits within the Mayor's Industrial Lands strategy. Director Assefa stated the scope of work is being finalized. OPCD staff have had conversations with the Armory Advisory Committee and are following that process. The Mayor's directive is to complete an overall industrial lands strategy before considering any site-specific projects.
- Commissioners asked whether each of the EDI project applicants have a solid workplan. Director Assefa stated the range of projects selected for funding are very different, ranging from site acquisition to capacity building. The EDI needs to manage risk for the City using public money. Each unique situation depends on individual groups' capacity or expectations.

Briefing: Green New Deal Resolution

Yolanda Ho, City Council Central Staff

Ms. Ho provided an overview of the City Council's recent Green New Deal resolution. She stated the intent of the resolution was to address both economic inequality and environmental degradation. Seattle was the first city to have all electric power generated be carbon neutral. In 2011, the City established a goal to reach zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and intermediate goals for 2030. The City adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2013 that targeted buildings and transportation, which generate 97% of Seattle's total emissions. The resolution acknowledges that even though Seattle has a lot of progressive environmental policies, the City is not on track for meeting the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's suggested target of reducing carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and eliminating them by 2050. Local activists began to exert pressure on Council, stating there needs to be a greater sense of urgency and stronger measures to address the problem. The resolution passed in August is wide-ranging as an opportunity to address inequality. The goal is to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, facilitate efforts to transition away from reliance on fossil fuels, provide job guarantees and living wages, and prioritize support for communities most affected by climate change, pollution, and other environmental impacts.

Section 6 of the resolution creates a fund and an associated Green New Deal Oversight Board to include seventeen members, each serving three-year terms. Eight of the members are to be from designated communities directly impacted by racial, economic, and environmental injustices. Members must be part of a community-based organization or community group that represents a community that is disproportionately burdened by pollution and environmental hazards and, based on socioeconomic and population health risk factors, is particularly vulnerable to an increased pollution burden; and carry out the majority of their work using a community-based approach in the Seattle area. Two members are to be representatives of tribes whose treaty rights are connected to the lands and waterways of Seattle (or whose usual and accustomed places are in Seattle). Two members are to be between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five at the time of their appointment. The Oversight Board will also include three representatives of organizations engaged in environmental justice work, two representatives of labor

unions, three individuals with experience in greenhouse gas reduction and climate resiliency strategy relevant to cities and residents (e.g., public health, infrastructure, sea-level rise, extreme weather events), and one representative of an organization involved in workforce training.

Individual City departments are to identify specific climate actions. The oversight board will provide support to an inter-departmental team to identify climate actions and keep the departments accountable. Ms. Ho stated that the Green New Deal resolution addresses areas that are already being addressed by existing City boards and commissions. The new oversight board will track the relevant actions of these boards and commissions and include other boards as necessary.

Section 10 of the resolution cross-references the MHA resolution regarding displacement and mitigation monitoring. The intent of this section is to identify ways to help people who have been impacted by development and rising rents. Green Zones are place-based strategies that use community-led solutions to transform areas overburdened by pollution into healthy, thriving neighborhoods. Green Zones are neighborhoods heavily impacted by pollution - most often low-income communities and communities of color - where residents are organizing to reduce industrial pollution and cultivate new, coordinated opportunities to implement community-based solutions. Each Green Zone reflects needs and priorities in a particular community with heightened risk indicators. The community may help guide comprehensive, solution-oriented, and collaborative strategies and take ownership to prioritize investments in the selected neighborhoods.

Commission Discussion:

- Commissioners noted that the resolution references the potential for congestion pricing as a climate action tool and asked whether any other “sticks” such as parking restrictions have been considered. Ms. Ho stated that the Green New Deal resolution calls for more green building standards, community food production, and community-level energy infrastructure as potential climate action tools.
- Commissioners inquired whether there has been any discussion connecting the industrial lands strategy and new employment opportunities associated with the Green New Deal. Ms. Ho stated that the discussions have not included that level of detail at this point. However, the need to transition jobs in the fossil fuel industry is referenced in the resolution (for example, mechanics will need training to service electric vehicles).
- Commissioners asked about the relationship of the Green New Deal resolution to the City’s Environment and Equity Initiative and any potential overlap with the EDI. Ms. Ho stated that it is still to be decided how the oversight board will leverage the collective knowledge of these other efforts. Commissioners suggested that many of these issues will need to be included in the next major update to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioners asked who will be included on the oversight board. Ms. Ho stated that will be included in separate legislation to be voted on in the next week. Commissioners encouraged consideration of not only the obvious community leaders but emerging leaders also. Ms. Ho acknowledged that the legislation includes an intentional effort to include younger members.
- Commissioners inquired about the best way to support this effort. Executive Director Murdock stated this briefing is the beginning of a longer conversation. The resolution was just passed in

August. Commissioners will start thinking about their role, including alignment between the Green New Deal, the future major update to the Comprehensive Plan, and sustainability as an economic issue. The past two Comprehensive Plans had themes of environmental sustainability and racial equity. The Green New Deal could be a combination of these two themes that better recognizes the need for economic development that has frequently been absent of environmental movements.

Farewell to Veronica Guenther

Chair Austin thanked Commissioner Veronica Guenther for her one year of service to the Commission as a participant in the Get Engaged program. Commissioner Guenther thanked her fellow Commissioners for a very positive experience. She stated that her most significant takeaway from her time on the Commission is the importance of race and social justice in planning. She also stated that her most significant personal focus moving forward will be on housing issues.

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

DRAFT