



City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

David Cutler, Chair
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION OCTOBER 25, 2012 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton, Kadie Bell Sata, Catherine Benotto, Luis F. Borrero, Grace Cho*, Colie Hough-Beck, Bradley Khouri, Jeanne Krikawa, Kevin McDonald, Matt Roewe, Morgan Shook, Sarah Snider

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Chair David Cutler, Josh Brower, Mark Johnson, Leslie Miller, Chris Persons

COMMISSION STAFF

Barbara Wilson-Executive Director, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative

IN ATTENDANCE

Lloyd Douglas, John Pehrson, Peter Steinbrueck, Cascade SLUCC; Emily Alvarado HDC; Rick Hooper, OH

* Not yet confirmed

Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton called the meeting to attention at 7:35 am.

▪ **Chair's Report**

- Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton

Vice-Chair Leighton noted the upcoming meetings and events calling special attention to the upcoming Transit Communities Leadership Discussion series events. She noted that the November 8, 2012 meeting of the Full Commission has been cancelled due to the Transit events.

▪ **Briefing: Housing & Transportation affordability index**

- Diana Canzoneri, SPC Staff

Vice-Chair Leighton welcomed Diana Canzoneri. Ms. Canzoneri's presentation is linked below.

http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/MSG_Overview_HUD_Hsg&Transpo_Afford_Index_under_devel.pdf

Ms. Canzoneri noted that the Housing and Transportation index from the Center for Neighborhood Technology was included in the Seattle Transit Communities report. She added that, although transportation is the second biggest expenditure, both households and planners often overlook it. Ms. Canzoneri reported that they are still evaluating how to use the index and listed three ways it can be used; to inform regional land use and transit planning; use for affordable housing policy development and funding; and counseling for prospective homebuyers.

Ms. Canzoneri stated that she was invited to participate in the beta testing for the on-line tool and she would like to see if any of the Commissioners would also like to participate. Commissioners Krikawa, Benotto, Cho, Bell Sata, and Snider all volunteered.

Ms. Canzoneri explained how the Housing & Transit affordability index works noting that it compares regional typical households and approximate income with existing housing costs and does not consider housing stock. She added that they are not adjusting for household size, which is a concern.

Commissioner Khouri asked if they are comparing rents to mortgages. Ms. Canzoneri replied that they are and that they are taking gross rents in the block group on average and average monthly housing cost ignoring those who do not have mortgages and have their houses completely paid off. She added that it is very complicated to try to do this type of analysis in an index.

Commissioner Krikawa asked if it were based on census blocks. Ms. Canzoneri replied that it is block groups.

Commissioner Snider stated that this is a great starting point but that adding in education is very important because of the value public education brings to an area and when you buy a house in an area like Mercer Island you are also buying the quality of the education.

Commissioner Benotto asked if the income that was shown was the median. Ms. Canzoneri replied that it was.

Commissioner Krikawa suggested that it would be great if transit facilities were located based on this information.

Commissioner Borrero stated that it looks more like Census blocks. Ms. Canzoneri stated that the ACS only goes down to the block group level. Commissioner Borrero noted that you can zoom into a block level for vacancy rates. Ms. Canzoneri stated that basic housing and demographic information is all down to the block level and that gets finely detailed.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanked Ms. Canzoneri.

- **Presentation & Discussion: South Lake Union**
 - Commissioner Matt Roewe

Vice-Chair Leighton welcomed Commissioner Matt Roewe.

Vice-Chair Leighton called for any disclosures and/or recusals.

DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:

- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 Architects, does multi-family projects and other work in this area.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR Design Company is working on the streetscape in the South Lake Union area.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, worked on the Urban Design Framework in South Lake Union, assisted the City with the LEED ND Certification of South Lake Union and that the firm is located in that area. She added that a member of the firm serves on the South Lake Union Community Council.
- Commissioner Luis Borrero disclosed that his firm, DRiVE, has a strategic partnership with Heartland, LLC, which is working in South Lake Union.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that she lives and works in the South Lake Union area and that her firm, HBB, does public infrastructure projects in the area including the Mercer Corridor East Improvements and the Denny Substation.
- Commissioner Morgan Shook disclosed that his firm, Berk Consulting, has worked with the city of Seattle on projects in the South Lake Union area.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, Via Architecture, is providing zoning evaluation and design services for several property owners in the South Lake Union area and he volunteers with the Uptown Alliance and the Queen Anne Community Council Land Use Review Committee.

Commissioner Roewe stated that he has been involved in the South Lake Union neighborhood for 9 years and noted that from the start this has been a very public process. He shared that his thought would be to look at this for development propensity rather than looking at the maps.

Commissioner Roewe's presentation is linked below:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/121205-SLUUpzone.pdf>

Ms. Wilson gave a brief background regarding the Planning Commission's history on South Lake Union noting that the Housing & Neighborhoods Committee has been looking at this in more detail and they have had presentations at Full Commission meetings as well. She added that Sara Nelson, legislative aide for Councilmember Conlin, was here today.

Ms. Wilson noted the timing stating that the public hearing would be on November 14 and the PLUS Committee would begin deliberation in December. She added that it is not likely to be approved until the first quarter of 2013. She stated that they are aiming for recommendations to be done by early December.

Ms. Wilson shared that the Commission has expressed overall support for the proposal but that there has been concern regarding missing public benefits associated with incentive zoning and ground related amenities. She mentioned the 8th Ave space noting that the Commission is convinced that there should be additional residential development in transit communities.

Commissioner Benotto noted that she personally has been obsessing about the removal of open space as part of the incentive zoning. Commissioner Roewe stated that it is struck out in the draft code for incentive zoning and, if they are pulling it in several months, he wonders what is happening in the interim. Commissioner

Benotto stated that early in the process, the open space incentive or requirement was discussed as the tradeoff for high rise towers. Ms. Sheehy mentioned that the EIS indicated there was adequate open space in SLU and Nexus study would be required by the City if it was included as part of the incentive package. Commissioner Benotto stated that the HR zones have neighborhood open space as part of the incentive zoning, and wondered how they were then able to include it in those zones. Ms. Sheehy replied that was a good question and she did not know. She added that she would get Brennon Staley and possibly someone from the City's law department to come to the next Housing & Neighborhoods Committee meeting to explain this.

Commissioner Benotto asked if, the numbers for housing and jobs are consistent with the EIS yields. Commissioner Roewe responded that it is a target and that the EIS numbers were much bigger. He added that they have fewer towers than they did.

Commissioner Roewe stated that there was no incentive. Commissioner Hough Beck asked if money collected for affordable and market housing will be allocated to stay in this neighborhood. Rick Hooper stated that right now, it is set up across various neighborhoods and the money is permitted to be spent elsewhere but is prioritized in the neighborhood. He added that the only way to guarantee it staying in the neighborhood is to write it into the code and the likelihood that it will get spend outside of South Lake Union is remote.

Commissioner Roewe noted that there is a lot of special need in Cascades and there is not a lot of housing west of Fairview. He added that the City is in negotiations with Vulcan regarding mixed use/affordable housing.

Sara Nelson asked if the neighborhood goal for affordability would be met by the proposed legislation. Mr. Hooper stated no and that they presented numbers, goals and objectives going forward regarding the Comp Plan. He added that the package starts to push the envelope on incentive zoning and other resources would be needed. Mr. Hooper continued that the zoning package is just part of what would be needed.

Commissioner McDonald noted that he appreciated the profile views with the different perspectives and aerial elevations. He wondered if there were any ground level views from either Queen Anne or Capitol Hill to illustrate the view corridors. Commissioner Roewe replied that the model does not show that but they have done a number of photomontages from key vantage points.

Commissioner McDonald stated that, regarding transportation, one of the modes that it is seldom talked about is pedestrian and bike connectivity within and between the neighborhoods. He added that he is advocating for improved pedestrian connections to Capitol Hill. Commissioner Roewe stated that he would send him the mobility plan.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanked Commissioner Roewe for his time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice-Chair Leighton those with public comment to come to the front of the room.

Peter Steinbrueck, principal and architect with Steinbrueck Urban Strategies, stated that he is representing some community members. Mr. Steinbrueck stated that he has first-hand knowledge regarding South Lake Union as during his 10 years serving on the City Council; he led the effort for the SM rezone, Amazon rezone, Mercer Corridor and the last Comp Plan major update. Mr. Steinbrueck noted that accelerating this rezone is

out of step with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Comp Plan. He added that it sets make believe targets that are inconsistent with the GMA. He wonders why the rezone is in this form and suggested that there are significant fixes that the Commission could help address as stewards of the Comp Plan. Mr. Steinbrueck stated that the existing zoning provides sufficient capacity for 2024 growth targets. He added that there is obfuscation in the director's report and that it is a process issue. Mr. Steinbrueck noted that there are other areas where there are significant issues with the proposal and that urban form is at cross-purposes with the neighborhood character goals. Mr. Steinbrueck noted that historic preservation protections are woefully inadequate and the flight plan has shifted to a very difficult and awkward angle.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanked Mr. Steinbrueck for his comments.

John Pehrson stated that he lives in the South Lake Union area and that he worked in Land Use for 12 years. He added that he is here representing the Mirabella Community and others. Mr. Pehrson noted that South Lake Union looks like an amphitheater with the higher sides and framed by Queen Anne and Capitol Hill. He continued that this topology is important to the neighborhood and the proposal destroys that. Mr. Pehrson stated that this is not necessary to meet the requirements of the Comp Plan and the current zoning is working. Mr. Pehrson continued that the projects are dense, they are not breadboxes and that there are other ways.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanked Mr. Pehrson for his comments.

Lloyd Douglas, SLU Opportunity Alliance, stated that he lives in Cascade and their problem relates to transportation and transit noting that the lack of transit is a unifying principle that crosses all groups and everyone is concerned. He added that there is not enough transit now and there will not be much added. Mr. Douglas stated that voluntary projects regarding transit do not work and it has to be an integrated, cumulative model. He suggested including Denny Triangle and Uptown and there are no mitigation strategies for transportation in the rezone package.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanked Mr. Douglas for his comments.

Emily Alvarado, Director of the Housing Development Consortium, noted that they are very excited about the rezone and wondered if they are getting the right amount of housing. She added that moderate wage workers need to live near their jobs and in a place like SLU she wonders how the administrative assistants who work for those businesses should be able to live in that neighborhood. Ms. Alvarado suggested a broad rate but incentive zoning is intended to serve 50-80%. She added that they are pleased that it might enhance conservation but it leaves affordable housing flat and she advocates for a mandatory set aside and a requirement to produce on site. Ms. Alvarado continued that she is looking forward to talking with the Commission concerning the proposal and will share an information sheet with the Commission. She added that Yesler Terrace has stepped up incentive zoning and if we don't take advantage of South Lake Union now we never will.

Vice-Chair Leighton thanks Ms. Alvarado.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Amalia Leighton adjourned the meeting at 9:09 am.