City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 13, 2006
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance
Jerry Finrow - Chair, Tony To – Vice-Chair, Linda Amato, George Blomberg, Chris Fiori, Martin Kaplan, Valerie Kinast, Kay Knapton, Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald, and Carl See

Commissioners Absent
Hilda Blanco, Mahlon Clements, Tom Eanes, Kirsten Pennington, and Steve Sheehy

Commission Staff
Barbara Wilson – Director, Scott Dvorak – Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil – Administrative Assistant

Guests
Tom Hauger, DPD; David Hull, King County Metro; Jemae Hoffman, SDOT; Mike Mann, Office of Policy & Management

In Attendance
One unidentified guest

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
The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by Chair Jerry Finrow.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- **Approve June 22, 2006 SPC Minutes**

ACTION: Commissioner Martin Kaplan moved that the June 22, 2006 minutes be approved. Commissioner M. Michelle Mattox seconded the approval. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Chair's Report**

  - **Upcoming Events and Meetings**

Chair Finrow reviewed the meeting agenda, the upcoming events and meetings. He noted in particular the following meetings:

- Executive Committee Meeting on Tuesday, July 18th, 7:30-9:00am.
- Land Use and Transportation meeting on Thursday, July 20, 7:30-9:00am.
- Full Commission meeting will be Thursday, July 27, 7:30-9:00am.

Chair Finrow also noted that there will be no formal meetings in August as the Commission will be taking its usual August break. He added that there may be a few special meetings called on topics that will need attention before September.

- **Announcements and Reports**

  - Detached ADU's – Chair Finrow thanked Commissioners Steve Sheehy and M. Michelle Mattox for attending the June 27 public hearing and giving the Planning Commission's testimony. He added that the UDP committee is still considering the legislation and may be voting on it at the next UDP committee meeting.

  - Commercial Code – Single Purpose Residential issue – Chair Finrow mentioned that Commissioners Tom Eanes and Kay Knapton have been involved in the Council discussion about this issue. He noted that the main topic at this point is considering options on how to address the time gap between the enactment of the legislation and the mapping of the P designations. Chair Finrow called attention to the memo that was prepared by the ad-hoc commission committee and presented by Commissioner Knapton and Executive Director Barbara Wilson at the UDP committee meeting on July 12.

Summary of Action for the Record: Attached is the memo to the UDP committee that expresses the Commission ad hoc committee's general support the proposed alternative approach for finding a solution that will address the impacts caused by the gap in time between adoption of the Commercial Code legislation and completion of the pedestrian zone mapping.

  - Tour of White Center and Boulevard Park – Chair Finrow noted that several Commissioners took a tour of the North Highline unincorporated area on June 19th. Commissioners Tony To, M. Michelle Mattox, Kirsten Pennington, and Linda Amato all attended that tour. He added that as this issue of annexation moves forward it will be useful for the Commission to have this knowledge of the community.

  - Update on Adult Cabaret – Chair Finrow mentioned that Commission members attended a tour of the proposed adult cabaret area. He noted that the Committee hopes to have a rough preliminary draft completed for further review in the next few weeks.

  - Ethics Update – Director Wilson stated that the Legislation has been referred to City Council's Economic Development and Neighborhoods committee. She added that the Commissioners have been and will continue to meet with Councilmembers and that the Committee schedule is being worked out so stay tuned.

- **ACTION ITEMS: Planning Commission Review & Actions**

  - HNUC Chair

Commissioner Kinast presented the nominating committee's recommendation for co-chairs of the HNUC committee, Commissioners Kay Knapton and Kirsten Pennington.

ACTION: Commissioner Tony To moved that the nominations be approved. Commissioner M. Michelle Mattox seconded the approved. The motion passed unanimously.

  - Vision 2020 DEIS Comments

Scott Dvorak noted that the Puget Sound Regional Council has issued a DEIS and identified four 20 year growth scenarios. He added that the PSRC is looking for comments by the end of this month and then will produce another DEIS. Mr. Dvorak stated that we have identified a couple of issues that we would like to address with PSRC and those are contained a letter for the Commission's review.

Ms. Wilson noted that there is not a lot of time to discuss the topic today but noted that the deadline is the end of July, in just a few weeks. Chair Finrow suggested that Commissioners read the letter and then forward any comments to Barbara or Scott and those comments will then be forwarded to the LUT Committee for revisions when it meets this Thursday. He added that the LUT Committee can then make its recommendation to the Full Commission at the next meeting.

ACTION: Chair Finrow referred the Commissions comments on the Vision 2020 DEIS to the Land Use and Transportation Committee. He asked that the Committee appropriately revise the letter for review by the full Commission at the July 27th meeting.

  - Livable South Downtown

Mr. Dvorak called Commissioner's attention to a one-page sheet in their folders that covers this project. He reminded the Commission that it has been briefed on this project many times but has not come up with the official Commission position on this. Mr. Dvorak mentioned that the DEIS is now scheduled to be issued in January 2007. Mr. Dvorak noted that the Commission continues to have some concerns with regard to industrial lands, freight mobility, the North Lot proposal, and how this proposal will work with the Comp Plan and the Neighborhood Plans.

Chair Finrow noted one other thing that came up in earlier discussions was the fragility of Little Saigon. He added that Mimi Sheridan had suggested some techniques like overlay districts to help mitigate the impact of huge increases of density in that area.
Vice-Chair To stated that there is a big difference between South Downtown and City Center in that they are very distinct neighborhoods. He added that Pioneer Square and the International District have some protections as they are historic areas but Little Saigon does not have these protections.

Commissioner Kaplan asked if the timeline imposes any kind of delay or potential conflicts with projects currently underway in the area (i.e., the Goodwill project or the North Lot). Mr. Dvorak

replied that he did not believe so as the project managers are aware of these projects and working in tandem with them.

DISCLOSURE: Commissioner Tony To disclosed that he is on the board of the Vietnamese-American Economic Development Association (VAEDA) noting that they have been actively involved in the Livable South Downtown Project.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

- **Briefing – 2006 Comp Plan Amendment**
  Tom Hauger, DPD

Tom Hauger gave some background on the amendment process. Mr. Hauger noted that for the purposes of presentation he has broken down the proposed amendments into categories. Mr. Hauger walked through the following amendments that are proposed in this years Comp Plan update;

1. South Lake Union

- Replace existing South Lake Union neighborhood plan with new set of goals and policies that reflect increased emphasis on housing in the area, with considerations for preserving the historic character of the area and building a sustainable neighborhood, while accommodating a significant amount of new development.
- Amend the Future Land Use Map to redesignate the Industrial rectangle in the middle of the area as "commercial/mixed-use."
- Add triangle bounded by Aurora Avenue, Denny Way and Broad Street to Uptown Urban Center.

2. Annexation

- Designate all of the North Highline area as a Planned Annexation Area.

Chair Finrow asked, if this proposal were to go forward, what would be the Comp Plan implications for Seattle. Mr. Hauger responded that that has not all been thought out yet. He noted that they have discussed how the City would provide services but they have not talked about how it would fit in with the City's planning context. Mr. Hauger added that they would probably apply new zoning there that would closely match what King County has already in place there and review the King County planning documents.

Commissioner Kaplan asked who was pushing for this annexation, Seattle or King County. Mr. Hauger replied that it was King County as it is very expensive for them to provide local services to the unincorporated areas. Ms. Wilson noted that it is also part of the Growth Management Act, to have unincorporated areas annex or incorporate. Mr. Hauger added that the Growth Management Act states that cities are the preferred service providers.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald asked that if Seattle claims all of North Highline would that set up a conflict with Burien which may want to annex some of this area. Mr. Hauger answered that once the current negotiations are resolved between King County, Seattle, and Burien they might end up adjusting this proposed amendment.

3. Central Waterfront

- Amendments that would facilitate replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct
- Amend policies to permit future commercial development, along with ferry terminal upgrade, on Colman Dock

Commissioner Carl See wondered if accommodates any kind of replacement - tunnel or rebuild. Mr. Hauger replied that it did.

Mr. Hauger noted that the Washington State Ferry System is proposing building a hotel that would help financially support the expansion and repair of Colman Dock. He added that this is a significant amendment.

Chair Finrow asked if the State Ferries was saying that the provisions to allow this would provide some income flow to offset the cost of the Colman Dock reconstruction. Mr. Hauger replied that this was his understanding of their rationale. Chair Finrow wondered, in terms of this particular change to the language, what does this allow them to really do there. Mr. Hauger replied that this does not propose any limits. He added that he knows they have been talking about a structure as high as 160 feet.

4. Industrial Land

- Exempt an area of about 40 acres in the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center surrounding First & Lander and the existing Starbucks headquarters, from limits on allowed commercial space.
- Redesignate a portion (the Goodwill site) of the industrial land in the eastern portion of the International District to mixed-use/commercial.

Chair Finrow asked what is being proposed in the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center in terms of a waiver of the limits on commercial space. Mr. Hauger stated that part of the reason that this proposal may go on hold is because the proponent is not on a fixed time line now and there is no specific project that they have in mind. He added that this was originally proposed so that, if the City adopted this amendment, the proponent could know how to plan in the future for their expansion once they are ready to.

Chair Finrow asked how Mr. Hauger sees these two issues feeding into the industrial lands study that is about to begin. Mr. Hauger replied that all of these sites have different characteristics and that the industrial lands strategy may help provide some clarity about requests for re-designating industrial zoned land based on some set of characteristics.

Commissioner Kaplan pointed out that the proposal for an amendment for Colman Dock for one specific client is one thing but then you have another single proponent who is also site specific but is looking at as much as 40 acres and would change the character of the neighborhood that seems somewhat different. He wonders if there has been any discussion on the impact of the size of the Duwamish amendment and how it could grow from one user to dozens of projects. Mr. Hauger stated that what they have looked at is ways that the amendment could be written so that it is tightly focused on making sure that whatever the new commercial uses are they do not displace existing industrial users and that the new commercial use is related to an existing presence down there.

Vice-Chair To shared his concern about traffic congestion and how it will impact freight mobility. Mr. Hauger noted that is a valid concern and they have been hearing that from the freight mobility community too.

Chair Finrow asked if there has been any sense of working with Starbucks to help them understand there are other places to expand. Mr. Hauger answered that he would inquire but he has heard that they really love their current location.

5. Station Area Planning

- Replace the Roosevelt neighborhood plan with new goals and policies that reflect the identification of a light rail station and the neighborhood's station area planning.
- Remove the reference to the proposed First Hill light rail station.

6. Open Space

- Amend existing policy LU 36 regarding open space to say: "Outside urban centers, use requirements for onsite open space or required yards to help ensure that new development maintains existing patterns of landscaped front yards, to encourage permeable surfaces and vegetation, and to mitigate the cumulative effects of development.

Mr. Hauger noted one amendment that they will not be going through with and that was to redesignate two parcels south of the Magnolia Bridge from "Industrial" to "Commercial/mixed-use" on the Future Land Use Map. He added that this is still in negotiation but is no longer in the fast track.

ACTION: Chair Finrow referred the Commissions the 2006 Comp Plan amendments to the Land Use and Transportation Committee for further review and discussion. He asked that the Committee begin to formulate comments and asked Commission staff to create a schedule for Commission review and comments to the Council UDP committee in September.

- **Briefing – King County's 'Transit Now' Initiative**
  David Hull, King County Metro
  Jemae Hoffman, Seattle Department of Transportation

David Hull noted that in April King County Executive Ron Sims announced this initiative that is called "Transit Now". He stated that this would put the latent 1/10 of a cent sales tax into play. Mr. Hull pointed out that King County Metro currently has the legal authority to collect 9/10 of a cent sales tax; they currently collect only collect 8/10 of a cent. This additional 1/10 of a cent would raise about 50 million dollars per year.

Mr. Hull went through a handout he provided with highlights of the proposal. He noted that it is a new four point initiative that will increase King County Metro Transit service to provide up to 21 million more annual rides within ten years. The 4 major points are:

1. Rapid Ride – Create "bus rapid transit" with frequent all-day service and faster travel times on five key travel corridors: three in Seattle, one connecting Bellevue and Redmond; and one serving SeaTac, Des Moines and Federal Way.
2. Improve current service – Enhance 35 major Metro routes with the highest ridership to provide more frequent two-way, all-day service between key cities and neighborhoods.
3. New service for growing areas – Develop new peak and midday service for residential areas in East and South King County.

4. Service partnerships – Set aside resources for partnerships with major employers and cities, potentially leveraging millions of dollars in additional funding from other sources to add new service in rapidly expanding employment centers.

Chair Finrow asked if Mr. Hull could talk specifically about the West Seattle – Ballard piece of the proposal. Mr. Hull noted that they are continuing to work with folks along the corridor and they have identified the connection between Ballard and Downtown Seattle and West Seattle and Downtown as one to receive some attention. He added that the question that they have now is what would happen north of 15th & Market in Ballard. Mr. Hull noted that one possibility is to split the service. Mr. Hull noted that in West Seattle they know the general corridor that they are going to look at but there are some questions about the West Seattle Junction and how you serve the Admiral District. He added that there are also some questions about how one gets on and off the West Seattle Bridge as well as how you cross the rail road tracks underneath. Mr. Hull noted that they have some ideas and they are working with the City. Jemae Hoffman added that the City is currently leading a study that will look at those two corridors and finding a good transit solution.

Commissioner See asked, in regard to transit on arterials whether it would be a designated lane or bus only lane. Ms. Hoffman answered that is definitely a possibility and they will have answers after the study is completed. Commissioner See questioned whether the funding in Transit Now would address that. Mr. Hull replied that there is some funding for speed and reliability improvements but they are not saying that this service would operate in an exclusive lane all the time. He added that there is money in the proposal for signal improvements and there are other things that they can do with their resources.

Chair Finrow asked if they could talk about the other Seattle investments included in this program. Ms. Hoffman suggested that they talk about the interface between the City and the Metro proposals. She noted that they worked with Metro to see what could be done beyond the 40-40-20 sub-area equity divide of Metro resources (40% to the South County, 40% to East County, and 20% to West County – including Seattle). Ms. Hoffman noted that the Mayor's funding package has about $1.5 million for transit funding. Mr. Hull replied that this proposal also allows them to fund regularly scheduled maintenance which has not been addressed over the last several years. He added that over 73% of the dollars over the last 10 years have gone into Seattle. Ms. Hoffman added that King County Council is asking whether this formula should be used in regard to maintenance.

Mr. Hull then mentioned several routes that would be increased in frequency and operating all day long. Commissioner See asked what "all-day" actually means. Mr. Hull stated that "all day" in the Seattle Transit Plan is 18 hours a day and in King County it is more like 16 hours.

Commissioner Fiori asked about the breakdown by percentage of new revenue going into each of the four initiatives. Mr. Hull replied that the rapid ride improvements, core network and the developing areas coverage is 460,000 hours total with about 100,000 of that for rapid ride; 50,000 for developing area coverage; leaving 310,000 hours.

Commissioner Kaplan wondered why 80% is going outside of Seattle. Mr. Hull explained that it came about because right now 67% of service is in the West sub-area and this area pays (including fares) about 45% of the revenue generated. He noted that the East has about 16% of the service and generates about 35% of the revenue. Mr. Hull stated they have been trying to move system towards an equitable base and the current 40-40-20 policy is how they have been managing that rebalance effort. Ms. Hoffman noted that the City feels that service should be matched to growth and density. She

added that Seattle is not happy with the 40-40-20 policy but the more serious problem is that the pie needs to be bigger – Seattle doesn't want to see others have reduced service, we just know that we need more service in order to support the growth that we are experience and are expecting to accommodate.

Commissioner Kaplan asked if there was any talk about asking for more money. Mr. Hull stated that the current legal taxing authority is all the authority has access to at the present time. He added that King County Metro used to collect motor vehicle excise tax and sales tax but in 1999/2000 they lost the motor vehicle excise tax. Mr. Hull noted that they got 2/10 of a cent additional authority to replace that loss but they are still behind (in dollar collection) what they would have had if they had not lost the excise tax.

Commissioner Blomberg asked if urban planning figures into this and what is the relationship between transit service and land use planning. Mr. Hull responded that this is very consistent with the Seattle Transportation Plan. Ms. Hoffman added that how they did that was to start with the land use map and looked at what areas are growing and what technology and level service to use. She noted that the other thing that is in the Seattle Transit Plan is investment priorities so the criteria that they use is in line with where you invest service.

Commissioner Kay Knapton asked about the relationship with parking and the City trying to get people out of their cars and onto buses. She noted that we seem to be working faster to get people out of cars than we are at providing convenient transit service. Commissioner Knapton wondered if they could look at reduction of parking requirements as something that would get jurisdictions more service. She pointed out the need to make connections between parking policies and service. Ms. Hoffman noted that these are all important in terms of how Metro ties to the City's planning they will look at how that all fits together.

Commissioner Knapton stated that as she looks at the map of services provided, one of the major issues in West Seattle is to have increased service throughout the peninsula that connects the major business districts in that area. Mr. Hull replied that there are improvements planned for some West Seattle routes that are not on the map.

Commissioner Fiori asked whether the Rapid Ride Corridors work in harmony with Sound Transit plans. He wondered if this will force Sound Transit to reposition. Mr. Hull answered that it the proposals are complementary to Sound Transit. He added that the proposals are arterial based and is designed to be frequent and have a lot of exchange on and off the bus with other systems rather than being point to point. Ms. Hoffman added that they have attempted to show in the maps how all these systems will work together.

Mr. Hull concluded by noting that the proposal was transmitted to the County Council on the 15th of June and it was moved to the Transportation Committee and the Operating Budget Committee. The Transportation Committee's next meeting is on the 26th and he feels that there is a good chance that it will be voted out of committee on that day and go to full council in the last part of August and then to the voters in November.

Chair Finrow thanked Mr. Hull and Ms. Hoffman for their time.

ACTION: Chair Finrow referred the Transit Now discussion to the Executive Committee for possible follow up noting that the Commission may want to send comments to King County in time for their review. He asked that the Committee be prepared to bring a draft forward for review by the full Commission at the July 27th meeting.

- **Briefing – Mayor Nickels 'Bridging the Gap' Initiative**
  Mike Mann, Office of Policy and Management

Mike Mann presented a power point presentation. The presentation is attached.

Director Wilson noted that Councilmember Jan Drago brought up the Mayor's Bridging the Gap initiative during her recent visit with the Planning Commission and suggested that the amount of the tax may be too high, in her estimation. Ms. Wilson asked how a reduction in tax money available would impact the plan. Mr. Mann passed around a graph showing how the backlog of Seattle's transportation infrastructure could be addressed under several different financial scenarios. He noted that the mayor made a decision to deal with the problem of the backlog rather then trying to put forward a package that would not solve the problem.

Commissioner McDonald asked who owns King Street Station and wondered whether $25 million was enough to upgrade and renovate it. Mr. Mann answered that it is a $38 million project to renovate the King Street Station and WSDOT has committed $17 million to the project - so there is about a $20 million gap. He added that Amtrak currently owns it (editor's note: actually BNSF is the owner) but is in negotiations to sell it to the City for one dollar. Mr. Mann noted that the City basically gets it for free if we are willing to pay for the renovations. He continued that whether we own the station or not it needs money to be renovated and become a significant part of Seattle's transportation system.

Commissioner Kinast asked what the time frame was on all of these improvements in the Bridging the Gap initiative. Mr. Mann stated that it is calculated on a 20 year program with some projects receiving money right away. He added that half of the bridge work is bonded so that money would be available right away. The other projects would generally be over a 20 year period.

Chair Finrow asked if there was any kind of a citizens' advisory board associated with this. Mr. Mann indicated that there is an oversight board proposed that would consist of representatives from the freight advisory committee, the bike and pedestrian commissions, a designee from the Department of Transportation, and three nominations from the Mayor and Council.

Commissioner Fiori asked about the backlog of sidewalk repairs and construction that were promised to neighborhoods. Mr. Mann answered that 30% of existing sidewalks are in poor condition and this program will not be able to build a sidewalk everywhere they don't currently exist. He added that it will be the largest amount of sidewalk construction that the City has seen in 40 years.

Chair Finrow observed that this basic package proposes no investment for the Alaskan Way Viaduct project. Mr. Mann confirmed that that is correct.

Chair Finrow asked if he could change the subject to financing for the Viaduct. He asked what the thinking is about where the money for the tunnel for that project will come from. Mr. Mann responded that the State has put together an Expert Review Panel and that panel is now evaluating the

viaduct and the 520 project to ascertain their feasibility. Mr. Mann continued that the cost for the tunnel right now is at 3-3.6 billion dollars. He noted that the funds in hand include $2.4 billion from State and Federal sources that are already committed. For additional funds, Mr. Mann indicated that the City would contribute $500 million, the Port would contribute $200 million, and $800 million would be available through RTID. In addition there have been studies done to show the increase in property values that will be realized once the elevated expressway is removed from the waterfront – there may be some opportunity to capture some of the increase in property values through an improvement district. Also, an open space impact fee is under consideration for downtown and may be a source for funds to construct some of the waterfront open space once the Viaduct is removed.

Chair Finrow asked what happens next. Mr. Mann stated that by September 1st the Expert Review Panel will provide its report to the Governor on Viaduct and 520 projects and then the Governor and State Legislature will look to the City to either have a citizen vote or the Council to take an action on a preferred alternative. He added that after all that the State will be ready to select its preferred alternative.

Chair Finrow asked if his office or some office is planning on putting together a specific piece on the financing detail or has that already been done. Mr. Mann replied that they have worked with WSDOT to create such a document.

Commissioner Kaplan pointed out that when you take the Viaduct and 520 projects together there is this notion that there is just not enough money. He asked if there is any portion of that funding Mr. Mann identified for the Viaduct project that could redirected toward 520. Mr. Mann answered that his understanding is no. He added that he feels there is enough money in the RTID to complement what the State has to do the 520 project.

Commissioner Fiori asked if the ERP meetings are public and whether or not we have them on our scheduled events to track. Mr. Dvorak answered that he had not heard when the next one was scheduled. Chair Finrow suggested that we put those dates together.

ACTION: Chair Finrow referred the Bridging the Gap discussion to the Executive committee for possible follow up noting that the Commission may want to send comments to City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

An unidentified woman at the meeting asked how long an initiative process takes in the city. Ms. Wilson answered that it depends on the project and the process can vary. She explained the city's process to the guest.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finrow adjourned the meeting at 5:27 pm.