



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Eileen Canola, David Goldberg, Veronica Guenther, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler (by phone), Tim Parham, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Amy Shumann, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma
Commissioners Absent:	Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant
Guests:	Lish Whitson, City Council Central Staff; Diana Canzoneri, Michael Hubner, and Geoff Wendlandt, Office of Planning and Community Development; Justine Marcus, UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project (by phone)

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 Tim Parham called the meeting to order at 7:32 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner Marj Press moved to approve the January 10, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Patti Wilma seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Rick Mohler abstained.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, encouraged the Commissioners to attend or watch the upcoming MHA Select Committee meetings, including a public hearing on February 21st. She announced that the Office of Housing is hosting two upcoming events – 1) to discuss open bedrooms in Seattle's affordable housing on February 6th, and 2) to discuss next steps for community preferences in Seattle's affordable housing on February 13th. She reminded the

Commissioners of the upcoming Race and Social Justice Initiative training on January 28th. Lastly, she announced that the open positions on the Commission were advertised last week. Applications are due by February 15th. Commissioners are encouraged to think of potential candidates and forward on the announcement.

Briefing: Mandatory Housing Affordability Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Lish Whitson, City Council Central Staff; Geoff Wendlandt, Office of Planning and Community Development

If you would like to view the Mandatory Housing Affordability Comprehensive Plan Amendments presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Mr. Whitson introduced the Comprehensive Plan Amendments needed to support the citywide Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) legislation. These include two separate types of amendments – Future Land Use Map changes to reflect expansions to existing urban village boundaries, and changes to neighborhood plan policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wendlandt described the history of the neighborhood plans and how they were referenced in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and Department of Neighborhoods (DON) has conducted extensive community engagement around the proposed MHA legislation, as well as separate engagement to inform the specific neighborhood plan policy amendments. Engagement efforts starting in October 2017 were focused on neighborhood plan policies that call for protection of single-family zones. Several alternative suggestions were provided. Mr. Wendlandt referred the Commissioners to a handout describing these options.

Mr. Whitson listed the ten urban villages where boundaries are proposed to be expanded. He stated those neighborhoods have very good transit, either Rapid Ride or light rail. The boundaries of these urban village are proposed to expand to include a ten-minute walkshed from frequent transit nodes. He showed the North Beacon Hill proposed expansion as an example of the urban village boundary changes. This neighborhood has high access to opportunity but also has a high displacement risk according to the Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Analysis. In much of the expansion area, this urban village is proposed to receive the smallest degree of change except for the area immediately adjacent to the light rail station – Single-Family zoning is proposed to change to Residential Small Lot zoning at the outer portions of the urban village. Mr. Whitson then listed the nine urban villages with proposed Neighborhood Plan goal and policy changes. He highlighted a proposed change to a policy in the Aurora-Licton Springs Neighborhood Plan that would replace language about protecting single-family zones with new language about maintaining the physical character of historically lower-density areas of the urban village. He then shared separate language proposed for the Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan. This neighborhood provided suggested policy language for a new neighborhood plan policy regarding conducting community planning, which was not proposed by community members in the other urban villages.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated disappointment that the West Seattle Junction and Westwood/Highland Park Neighborhood Plan retained language to protect single-family zoning. Mr. Whitson read the proposed language from the West Seattle Junction Neighborhood Plan: "Maintain a character and scale in historically single-family areas similar to the existing single-family housing."
- Commissioners stated that the Comprehensive Plan should reflect parity among neighborhoods. One or more neighborhoods using language about maintaining single-family character and/or zoning encourages continued privilege for some neighborhoods while others accept more density.
- Commissioners asked for more information on how new urban villages are designated and expressed support for new urban villages around the future light rail stations at Othello and NE 130th Street.
- Commissioners inquired where growth rates are included in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Whitson stated that the Plan includes individual growth estimates for each urban village.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the revised Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan policy language. Mr. Wentlandt stated that OPCD tried to reflect the constructive input received from this neighborhood during community engagement. Mr. Whitson stated that Morgan Junction currently has a very low growth rate compared to other urban villages. Commissioners asked for the word "significantly" to be dropped from the suggested language and asked for more specific objective language to be included.
- Commissioners stated that it has been five years since the MHA goal of 6,000 new affordable housing units was created. Commissioners asked if additional modeling has been done to determine how the recently proposed MHA amendments will contribute to achieving this goal of 6,000 units. Mr. Whitson stated City Council members are currently considering the proposed MHA amendments to determine which will be sponsored. OPCD did some modeling of these amendments. None of the changes proposed would have substantial impacts on citywide capacity, except for proposals to remove all single-family zoned land from urban villages.
- Commissioners stated disappointment with the Aurora-Licton Springs Neighborhood Plan not being included in the list of urban villages proposed for expansion. The Commission has been a strong proponent for expanding urban villages to the full extent of their frequent transit walksheds. The Aurora-Licton Springs urban village now has frequent transit and should be subject to full implementation of MHA, including expansion of its urban village.
- Commissioners highlighted the use of the word "character" and encouraged the use of more descriptive phrases, as this word means different things to different people. Commissioners also stated that the word "significant" needs to be defined or replaced with something more specific, objective, or measurable. Mr. Wentlandt stated there was some discussion about numeric growth triggers for the Morgan Junction neighborhood but those were not included in the final language, in favor of more general language that allowed for balancing of several factors as consistent with overarching policy language in the Seattle 2035 plan.
- Commissioners stated that allowing the Morgan Junction neighborhood plan to adopt much more specific policy language than the other proposed neighborhood plan changes is inequitable. Commissioners expressed reservations with supporting the Morgan Junction amendment as proposed. Mr. Whitson stated that similar language as included in the proposed Morgan Junction amendment exists in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and is therefore applied across the city.

- Commissioners expressed concern that specific communities may not have the same degree of involvement as others and encouraged a continuing dialogue with all neighborhoods. Mr. Wentlandt stated that many neighborhoods did not engage in the MHA outreach efforts, while some did to a higher degree. The City has ongoing engagement in many neighborhoods. Communities scheduled for additional community planning in the near-term include Westwood/Highland Park, Aurora-Licton Springs, and the Graham Street station area.
- Commissioners stated that all neighborhoods having the same foundation for growth is important and asked how the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) monitoring program will ensure that each community is taking their fair share. Mr. Whitson stated that Councilmember Mosqueda recently sponsored a Statement of Legislative Intent that would conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit analysis on the urban village strategy. He stated that it is expected that work will draw heavily on the EDI monitoring program.
- Commissioners acknowledged that the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments are necessary to implement MHA. While the Commissioners may have some reservations with specific language used in the amendments, they acknowledged that the new language is better than previously adopted policies. Commissioners support the amendments' intent to create consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the MHA legislation.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Whitson and Mr. Wentlandt for their briefing.

Discussion: Equitable Development Monitoring Report

Diana Canzoneri, Office of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Canzoneri stated that the City has contracted with the Urban Displacement Project (UDP) at the University of California-Berkeley. She introduced Justine Marcus, graduate student researcher with the UDP, who called in to the meeting by speakerphone. UDP will be researching and recommending a set of indicators to indicate that displacement risk is likely to heat up soon or that substantial displacement is occurring. These indicators will be compiled and updated frequently (e.g., generally annually, and in some cases, quarterly). The indicators are meant to complement long-range indicators of displacement that inform the Comprehensive Plan update's growth strategy.

She referenced a briefing document that was sent to the Commissioners in advance and presented two questions for them to consider:

- What feedback do Commissioners have on the draft criteria for the selection of indicators?
- What are some specific ways you'd like the City to be able to use the monitoring data? Please flesh out specifics in examples or suggest additional uses.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated an interest in using the Equitable Development data to better understand the relationship between growth and displacement, and why people are considering moving. Ms. Canzoneri stated that they are working on the quantitative aspects of displacement risk. Staff are looking for opportunities to ask people who are facing displacement pressures questions about why they are considering moving.

- Commissioners commented on criteria #9's proposed language to "help target neighborhoods for anti-displacement efforts (e.g., EDI grants)." They suggested that the Only in Seattle grants are an important tool in anti-displacement efforts. These grants are essential for retaining culturally significant small businesses. Commissioners encouraged expanding that to consider other grants and resources available from the City.
- Commissioners expressed interest in connecting the EDI monitoring data and community planning efforts.
- Ms. Canzoneri noted the importance of continuing to involve the communities in the monitoring program. The communities could potentially be provided with resources for data gathering.
- Commissioners asked for examples of UDP's relevant work. Ms. Marcus described some of their recent projects, including a typology of displacement and gentrification risk. UDP's website has interactive maps of displacement risk utilizing thirteen or fourteen different indicators. She described a regional effort in the Bay Area on housing affordability and displacement risk that included in-depth surveys and interviews with families that have experienced displacement. Ms. Canzoneri described a pilot project at the University of Washington School of Public Health. Graduate students are talking to tenants who are being displaced because the building in which they live will be redeveloped or substantially remodeled. OPCD is also working with the Puget Sound Regional Council on putting a question on the regional household travel survey about why people have moved.
- Commissioners stated that criteria #3 about a "reasonable predictor of displacement" is important. Commissioners stated that criteria #8: "Ability to be compared across geographies" should be optional as stated in the handout. Commissioners stated that information gathered for community-based organizations in criteria #10 needs to be shared and accessible in a timely manner.
- Commissioners stated that the draft criteria are measuring the risk of something that is already happening. Commissioners suggested that the language "reasonably easy to measure" conflicts with what we need to understand. Commissioners expressed an interest in estimates or other data on actual displacements, perhaps in targeted neighborhoods. Ms. Canzoneri stated that the first monitoring report will include community stories and discussions about displacement factors. This report will help set the stage for Phase 2.
- Commissioners warned against telling communities something that they already know. Commissioners asked for more information on how this data will potentially affect change.
- Commissioners suggested identifying and highlighting in frequent reporting three indicators that are particularly useful for informing timely action by the City. Ms. Canzoneri asked for input from the Commissioners on which short-term indicators are most useful and what they would suggest the City do with that information.
- Commissioners suggested additional data points and sources, including Area Median Income (AMI) by neighborhood and permit applications (Master Use Permits or proposed tenant improvements).
- Commissioners raised a question about how different time periods might be measured. This was related to concerns Commissioners had with measuring the risk of displacement moving forward, compared to being able to make observations about what has happened in the past. Commissioners provided the example of the Central District, which may not have as much displacement risk moving forward, but experienced intense displacement over the past 40 years.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Canzoneri for her briefing.

Public Comment

Cindi Barker read the original language that was submitted by the Morgan Junction Community Association to the City via the Community Toolbox process used for collecting Comprehensive Plan amendment suggestions. The original language is: "Use community engagement and neighborhood planning approaches to find stakeholder-based solutions for land use and housing affordability issues when more than 25% of the urban village is affected by proposed changes." The Community Association did not see the new language proposed by the City until December 2018. She stated that their neighborhood is trying to prevent issues associated with growth experienced in Ballard and Capitol Hill. Their neighborhood plan has not been updated. Ms. Barker stated that Morgan Junction is a low-growth urban village. The proposed MHA legislation would affect 54% of their urban village. They are trying to be proactive with additional growth triggers. She stated the need to revise their neighborhood plan policies related to growth to receive the appropriate attention from the City.

Bonnie Williams appeared as a member of the Wallingford Comm Council. She stated that everyone is worried about displacement and neighborhoods feel like they are losing a lot. She is disgusted to hear many negative comments about single-family homeowners. She stated that these homeowners have been trying to be equally represented in the MHA process and open houses. She expressed a concern about the lack of budget for neighborhood planning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.