



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, October 22, 2020
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: David Goldberg, Katherine Idziorek, Grace Kim, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Michael Austin, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez

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

Guests: Michael Hubner, Office of Planning and Community Development; Rian Watt

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

Vice-Chair Patti Wilma called the meeting to order at 7:35 am and recognized that we are on indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people. Land acknowledgement is a traditional custom dating back centuries for many Native communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgement is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgement is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth. Vice-Chair Wilma 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.

ACTION: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the September 24, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

ACTION: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the October 8, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Katherine Idziorek seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

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 recognized that this is Rian Watt's last meeting as a Get Engaged Commissioner and welcomed Kelabe Tewolde as the incoming Get Engaged Commissioner.

Briefing: Racial Equity Analysis of Urban Village Strategy

Michael Hubner, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Mr. Hubner stated that the Racial Equity Analysis is a first step in the process to update the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the Urban Village growth strategy. This analysis was originally requested by the City Council, specifically focusing on the urban village strategy. OPCD is working to identify areas for improvement in policy and implementation, especially as they relate to racial equity outcomes. OPCD is also developing a plan for meaningful engagement with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. The approach to the Racial Equity Analysis includes an inter-departmental team involving OPCD, Department of Neighborhoods, and Office of Civil Rights staff. This is a valuable partnership to take on critical questions of race and equity, but also for outreach. OPCD is working with PolicyLink to revisit race and equity issues in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. OPCD is also working with Puget Sound Sage to facilitate outreach with community stakeholders. The team is in the process of identifying critical questions and issues for considering racial equity in the Comprehensive Plan alternatives. This work will inform the approach to data collection and analysis, the Racial Equity Toolkit process, and development of the growth strategy alternatives.

Mr. Hubner stated that four focus groups will have been held leading up to a workshop on October 29th. The focus groups include participants representing many different communities and are facilitated by SouthCORE (Puget Sound Sage) and community liaisons with assistance from the Department of Neighborhoods. The groups will discuss questions on visioning, growth and development, community assets and needs through racial equity lens. The Racial Equity Analysis Workshop on October 29th will be convened and facilitated with PolicyLink. Approximately seventy-five attendees are anticipated to participate, including many community-based organizations, focus group participants, Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) grantees, members of the Planning Commission, and members of other boards and commissions. Most of the work will be in small groups and will focus on exploring critical questions about the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and a Plan update centered on a racially equitable growth strategy.

Seattle 2035 was the first Comprehensive Plan to emphasize racial equity. Recognition of a long history of racial exclusion, including discriminatory lending, real estate practices, land use policy and practices, is a starting point for considering the Racial Equity Analysis of Seattle 2035. Mr. Hubner stated that the project team anticipates elevating racial equity issues in developing the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. The City has grown twice as fast as anticipated in the Seattle 2035 Plan and has faced several challenges, including skyrocketing housing costs and the dual challenges of COVID-19 and racial disparities. Since 2016, new tools have been developed and implemented, including the Equitable Development Initiative, Mandatory Housing Affordability, and Accessory Dwelling Unit

reforms. OPCD has new data points to illustrate deep disparities and vulnerabilities for communities of color.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that there are obvious gaps on the City's Future Land Use Map where there are no urban villages, including Laurelhurst, Magnolia, and the north end of Capitol Hill. Some neighborhoods would like to be an urban village (for example, the Graham Street neighborhood). Commissioners inquired whether the focus groups will discuss what amenities are needed in the urban villages. Commissioners asked if there are strategies coming from the community to avoid displacement. Mr. Hubner stated that community members participating in the focus groups have been more focused on how to increase access to opportunity with investments within their communities. There has been a lot of discussion about displacement. There has been little discussion so far on areas of high opportunity that are not currently urban villages. This effort will look at what aspects of the urban village strategy are creating racial disparities and create appropriate growth strategy alternatives to respond to that challenge.
- Commissioners asked whether the racial equity analysis and community engagement plan will look at specific urban village types such as areas of high opportunity and low risk of displacement and recommend changes to the growth strategy. Mr. Hubner stated the Racial Equity Toolkit will consider racial equity outcomes associated with the No Action alternative – i.e. the status quo. The citywide analysis will consider other potential areas for growth. Citywide community engagement will include areas throughout the city, including high opportunity areas.
- Executive Director Murdock asked how this analysis relates to the Mayor's interest in the fifteen-minute city. Mr. Hubner stated that Mayor Durkan is very interested in the concept as one of the cornerstones of an equitable recovery strategy. The City has been doing similar work to that of a fifteen-minute city for years in the urban village strategy. These neighborhoods are walkable and climate friendly. The station area planning work will also be similar, but this only includes part of the city. Applying a 15-minute framework to the Comprehensive Plan update would look at many other places in the city, including identifying what is missing and what is needed to make them more complete. This will be a potentially very interesting opportunity to identify where we can create and strengthen complete communities. The project team will be working directly with community members to expand the map for growth, livability, and access to opportunity.
- Commissioners inquired about community engagement efforts in north end communities such as Lake City and Bitter Lake. Mr. Hubner stated the project team has not conducted a comprehensive scan of community groups for focus group participation. For the Racial Equity Analysis there may be a gap in north end communities. These communities will be engaged during the full Major Update process.
- Commissioners asked whether there is potential for creating new categories in the growth strategy to include smaller urban villages. Mr. Hubner stated that he has shared the Planning Commission's white papers with PolicyLink. The project team is considering a range of alternatives. The idea of a smaller urban village is very similar to that of a fifteen-minute community.
- Commissioners stated that the existing urban villages cannot handle all the growth. Opportunity and access are important criteria that should be considered to bring communities such as Laurelhurst, Magnolia, and Magnuson Park to the table.
- Commissioners noted that the previous Transit Communities work highlighted the need for services in those communities. This analysis should consider how to provide access to high opportunity neighborhoods where communities of color currently live.

Discussion: Permanent Supportive Housing

Commissioners discussed potential actions that could ease the production of permanent supportive housing specifically aimed at transitioning homeless populations and providing wraparound services.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners noted that permanent supportive housing is different than traditional affordable housing because of the wraparound services provided. With the housing crisis, Councilmember Lewis is hoping to move legislation forward that would help homeless people gain access to housing more quickly.
- Commissioners stated that there may be a lot of resistance to waiving Design Review for permanent supportive housing projects.
- Commissioners expressed support for legislation or other efforts that makes it easier to build permanent supportive housing. This is the intervention that shows the most promise for chronic homelessness. It is expensive on a per unit basis but cheaper than doing nothing. Permanent Supportive Housing is an intervention targeted toward chronically homeless populations, but we also need more affordable housing that will stem the flow of homelessness.
- Commissioners expressed support for removing all obstacles to developing permanent supportive housing, including addressing any concerns related to bike parking.
- Commissioners asked if proposed legislation is separate from the recent Omnibus legislation.
- Commissioners stated that housing agencies are aware of their staff needs for bike parking. The required space allocated for dedicated bike parking rooms may not be used. This space could potentially be used to add a few more units.
- Commissioners noted that bike advocacy organizations and housing organizations have built consensus on this issue.
- Commissioners asked if Councilmember Lewis is requesting input on this legislation. Executive Director Murdock stated that there is interest in feedback and recommendations from the Planning Commission. However, without a presentation and the opportunity to review the draft legislation, we need something more concrete to respond to. She will follow up with Councilmember Lewis and will provide the Commissioners with more information before discussing this topic again.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 am.