



**City of Seattle**  
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION**

Thursday, September 24, 2020  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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- Commissioners Present:** Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Katherine Idziorek, Grace Kim, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Rian Watt
- Commissioners Absent:** Kelly Rider, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma
- Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator
- Guests:** Michael Hubner, Diana Canzoneri and Bo Zhang,, Office of Planning and Community Development

*Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion.*

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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 7:36 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. Chair Austin 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 Patience Malaba moved to approve the September 10, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg 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.

## **Briefing: Anti-Displacement Framework**

Bo Zhang, Office of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Zhang provided an overview of an anti-displacement framework. She stated that displacement comes down to disconnection and healing comes from re-connection. She provided a history of racist and exclusionary policies and shared the importance of recognizing not only trauma in Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, but also the trauma in the white lineages that perpetrated these painful policies. Relationships and the language we use are important and reflect the historic trauma that is so prevalent today that we often do not notice it. To argue over density is only to argue over whether there is a crowd on the sidewalk when we actually care about belonging and being seen in the crowd. Affordability is about saving money, when we actually care most about agency and our ability to contribute our whole value. Society currently talks about wealth as an accumulation of things; we actually experience wealth as a flow of gifts and ideas among people. Renters of color are twice as likely to not be caught up on rent as of this month.

Major turning points include the possibility of disaster gentrification; climate refugeeism; talk of reparations; and us experiencing the limits of economic growth on a finite planet. We are still in a paradigm where people who provide money for real estate expect interest and return on their investment, but this doesn't recognize that we are where we are today due to historic over-extraction from the planet and from BIPOC communities. BIPOC communities were forced to experience the limits of our system sooner than white communities, and therefore carry wisdom on how we need to move forward. That is the thinking behind the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) and how to invest EDI funds moving forward. This effort started with twenty-one organizations in South Seattle. With the completion of the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, people started organizing together for Seattle to invest in their communities so they can stay. The EDI focuses on six equity drivers that evolved from this community work.

The EDI currently funds twenty-five organizations and will fund more. A request for proposals is out now. Applicants need to show how they meet at least three equity drivers. This is a systemic response to a systemic problem. Community wealth and ownership emphasizes how to evolve the real estate industry to center relationships. The current real estate model of development is still very mechanical and makes it very hard to maintain relationships in the process. The affordable housing industry involves a lot of creative financing. Equitable development will need not only creative financing, but also creativity to shift real estate development to center relationships.

The EDI has already spent \$30 million and the hope is to spend future funding in close coordination with other departments and programs to move as a system. The EDI focuses on early wins, prototypes, and experiments. This is a deliberate effort at reframing how we think of success in terms of return on investment. What was considered risky is exactly what we need to do now. When we shift, we are able to separate from the traditional silos and work together.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners complimented Ms. Zhang for her compelling, hopeful, inspiring, and restorative presentation and asked how it has been received by others that have seen it. She stated that the presentation seemed to be motivating for Seattle Public Utilities staff and encouraged them to think of how they can support this work.
- Commissioners requested additional clarification on how relationships perpetuate wealth within community. Ms. Zhang shared an example of how community was able to pivot during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure money was being spent on BIPOC businesses.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the concept of shifting away from material transactions, adding that funders should think about relationships, not only transactions.
- Commissioners stated that this is an opportunity to rethink priorities, especially as related to the housing affordability discussion/debate when we have an incredible shortfall of housing units. Historically most housing units have been built by private sector. While this approach has problems, it does address a need. This presentation could be interpreted by some as a call for white developers to stop producing housing. Ms. Zhang stated that not only wealthy white homeowners have an emotional response to building housing. This is also an issue of cultural displacement with the sense that development, even new affordable housing, is bringing gentrification to communities. The larger issue is the need to shift how real estate is done. This will not be done overnight. Speed and urgency are currently prioritized over relationships.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the EDI's focus on collaboration. Joint ventures are needed on both the developer side and on the community side to truly partner with BIPOC communities. Is it possible to expand financing tools beyond what the EDI currently offers? Ms. Zhang stated that this conversation is alive in the community now.
- Commissioners stated that there are still significant institutional blockages in the real estate development industry. For example, projects get stuck in the system by those who do not have the bigger vision. Funders have tremendous power. It is gratifying to hear that the EDI team is meeting with funders.
- Commissioners asked Ms. Zhang if she has connected with King County to grow the collective effort of this framework. She stated that coordination occurs monthly with peers in Vancouver, Portland, and San Jose, and the City is collaborating with King County Communities of Opportunity as well the Equitable Development Program in King County and other organizations on capacity building.

### **Update: Equitable Development Indicators**

Michael Hubner and Diana Canzoneri, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Hubner and Ms. Canzoneri provided an update on the Equitable Development Monitoring Program (EDMP), including community indicators of equitable development and indicators of heightened displacement risk. This program was designed to provide an ongoing source of readily accessible data for City decisionmakers to use in making program, policy, and investment decisions, and community stakeholders to use in targeting their programs, demonstrating need, and advocating for action. This data will be available through an interactive dashboard, with hopes for growing the amount of available data in the future. Ms. Canzoneri stated that the program used the City's existing equitable development framework and selected twenty-one indicators with stakeholder input. These indicators are inter-connected, organized around four themes, and will serve as a baseline to gauge progress toward erasing inequities.

Ms. Canzoneri provided highlights of several community indicators and a summary of heightened displacement risk indicators, including those that are included in the dashboard and others under consideration or subject to additional work. All components of the EDMP are included on an integrated website, including community indicators, displacement risk indicators, and new data on neighborhood change featuring historic and recent data on shifts in racial and ethnic demographics.

Mr. Hubner discussed how the City can use the EDM Indicators, such as early scoping for the Comprehensive Plan and data for analyzing its growth strategy alternatives. This data can also inform budget decisions, including the Mayor's proposed \$100 million commitment to BIPOC communities.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if any of the indicators were new in this effort. Ms. Canzoneri stated that the initial baseline report focused just on existing data with feedback from community members. EDMP staff intends to add community-based participatory research.
- Commissioners requested more information about homeownership data in Black communities. There are many statistics on how the Black population in the Central District has dramatically declined. Statistics reflect how many people have moved in that are not Black. The Black population has remained relatively stable. Ms. Canzoneri stated the neighborhood change monitoring data includes racial and ethnic demographic information but does not separate data on renters and homeowners.

#### **Public Comment**

Executive Director Murdock read the following public comment, which was received by email.

*My comment lacks context without first hearing the presentation. It would be better if it were made live.*

*Seattle Fair Growth has been very concerned about displacement since its inception. Displacement and gentrification are functions of income inequality, not race per se. However, we would all agree that previous lending and hiring practices have led to very large disparities in income, leading to far lower homeownership and lower ability to pay rent among people of color. More BIPOC families live in low-income housing, concentrated in low-income neighborhoods. Development in the Central District has led to a reversal of this historically 80% black neighborhood to now less than 20% black. What is SPC recommending to protect those who remain from predatory Realtors and developers?*

*We know for-profit developers are not building any three-bedroom rental units, and that they are almost exclusively supplying the high-end market. We know that 40% of Seattlelites can't afford market rent, so subsidized housing is where the housing need is. Did you know that 23% of single-family standalone homes are rented, and that this is necessarily the only housing available to large, extended immigrant families?*

*We know single-family homeownership is still the American Dream, the source of stability and the engine of family wealth accumulation. What are your recommendations to encourage preservation of older, 3+-bedroom single-family homes, perhaps with very low-cost energy-efficient rehab loans that are made to owners in exchange for maintaining affordable rent?*

*Are there plans to grant funds for earthquake reinforcement of the 1,200 Unreinforced Masonry buildings, in exchange for maintaining their low rents?*

*We don't know how many households are being displaced, both by development and by rent increases or job losses. Will you support tracking this essential number?*

*We don't know how many naturally affordable rental units Seattle has. You can't manage what you can't count. Would you support an inventory if it were a question or two added to the Rental Registration & Inspection Ordinance?*

*Thank you,*

*Sarajane Siegfriedt  
Seattle Fair Growth*

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 am.**