



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Rick Mohler and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, September 09, 2021

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Dhyana Quintanar, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde
Commissioners Absent:	Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires
Commission Staff:	John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator
Guests:	Ubax Gardheere, Patrice Thomas, and Michael Blumson, 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.

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

Co-Chair Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm. She made the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we would like to actively recognize that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities. We commit to identifying racist practices and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'

Co-Chair Stroble 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 David Goldberg moved to approve the August 12 meeting minutes. Commissioner Patience Malaba seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Kelabe Tewolde abstained.

Announcements

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission Staff, 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 eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting.

Briefing: Equitable Development Initiative Overview and Update

Ubax Gardheere, Patrice Thomas, and Michael Blumson, Office of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Thomas provided some background information on the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) program including the demonstration projects that paved the way for the initiative such as South Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (CORE) and the Race and Social Equity Taskforce (RSET). RSET was a coalition formed to help inform and create the Equitable Development Implementation Plan. She mentioned that EDI is housed in the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) with support from the Office of Civil Rights. Ms. Thomas then reviewed the EDI Values and described how the values informed their funding and programming work.

Ms. Thomas reviewed the main objectives of the EDI including performing an equity analysis, including Race and Social Equity goals in the Comprehensive Plan, and management of the Equitable Development Implementation Plan. She also described how historic policies in Seattle such as redlining created the inequities we see today and explained how knowledge of those historic inequities inform and guide their work. Ms. Thomas went on to show several maps the EDI team uses in their equity analysis work, including the Risk of Displacement and Access to Opportunity maps. Mr. Blumson pointed to parallels between the displacement map and historic redlining maps and noted that these inequities and geographies were actively manufactured by city policies.

Ms. Thomas reviewed the EDI team's place-based strategies. She explained that the EDI work prioritizes neighborhoods that exhibit the following characteristics: high levels of chronic or recent displacement, a history of racially driven disinvestment, significant populations of marginalized communities, community strategies created through inclusive engagement, and major transportation investment.

Mr. Blumson reviewed the Equitable Development Framework that the EDI team uses as pillars of their work. He noted they are based on the equitable development goals of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The drivers help the team to determine which projects to select and how to offer support to programs. Mr. Blumson also shared a map to show the location of projects the EDI has funded. Geographic dispersion across the city is a goal of the EDI when selecting projects. He noted that the 2021 round of projects will be announced on September 10th.

Ms. Thomas described the process of how the EDI Advisory board was established. She noted several past Council resolutions that affirmed the City's core value of racial and social equity and laid the foundation for the Equitable Development Implementation Plan and Investment Strategy. Ms. Thomas also named the Council Bill that established the EDI Advisory Board in 2020, CB 119887. She mentioned that 2021 is the first year that they have been able to establish some of their permanent advisory board seats.

Ms. Thomas described the role of the EDI Advisory Board and explained how the board is established through a policy that aims to provide representation from a variety of geographic locations among the high risk of displacement and low access to opportunity neighborhoods of the city. The policy also seeks board members from community groups that have experienced significant displacement due to histories of discriminatory practices or that have lived experience with involuntary displacement from Seattle. Ms. Thomas shared the list of current permanent board members that have been appointed and she noted that they have two vacancies still on the board that they are working to fill.

Mr. Blumson explained how the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) aligns and diverges from the EDI work. He noted that the EDI and the SIF have similar priorities and are based on similar values but have different funding sources and different project requirements. Mr. Blumson explained that the SIF funds are held under a proviso by City Council and as such are under Council control to determine when awards are released. They expect the proviso to be lifted at the end of September and project selections should begin to roll out after that point. The main idea is to select sites in places where the market is changing and where, if the City does not get involved in these areas now, it will be even more challenging in the future to provide community access to land in these areas.

Mr. Blumson explained that the JumpStart Payroll tax should begin to send around 9% of revenue from the tax to EDI each year, starting in 2022. They expect this will amount to approximately \$20 Million a year, which is a large jump from the approximately \$5 Million a year they have worked with so far. The EDI team will be working with their advisory board to determine how best to use these additional resources.

Ms. Gardheere provided an overview of the 2022 EDI Program Workplan. She mentioned that fund coordination would continue and would grow due to the new funding sources. The EDI team is also looking into how to form a more comprehensive EDI funding strategy by expanding those involved in the process. Ms. Gardheere noted they intend to begin paying EDI Advisory Board members for their time. She stated that the EDI team hopes to add an Indigenous Planner role to the team. The position would help to inform both EDI work but also OPCD work more broadly. They also intend to continue to do community learning series such as Organizational Development trainings, Asset Management Training, and collaborative lunch and learns.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if the displacement risk maps would be updated with the newly released 2020 census data. Mr. Blumson noted he expects those maps to be updated going into the next Comprehensive Plan update.
- Commissioners gave kudos to the EDI team for their impressive workplan and noted the importance of their work in the broad scope of planning work at the city. They asked if the EDI team could describe what role they will play in the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan and how best the Commission could support their work in shaping the Plan. Ms. Thomas noted that the EDI team intends to play a close role with OPCD. They also hope to work closely with the Commission on the Comprehensive Plan update. She noted that the team hopes the EDI Advisory Board and the Commission will have a close relationship. Ms. Gardheere noted that the EDI Team and the Advisory Board were involved in the PolicyLink Racial Equity Analysis of the Growth Strategy. Mr. Blumson described the importance of adding an Indigenous Planner role to the team ahead of the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. He hopes that with an indigenous planner on board, OPCD can bring indigenous frameworks back into the planning process for the city.
- Commissioners noted that many conversations are happening around the city surrounding the potential upzoning of single-family areas and the conflict of displacement that such development raises. They asked what conversations are happening within the EDI Team related to alternative growth strategies and how to mitigate additional displacement. Ms. Thomas noted that the EDI team has been in conversation with Black legacy homeowners in the Central District. The group has contacted EDI, OPCD, and the Office of Housing (OH) about how they can leverage their land equity to fill the gaps in housing available to the community. Such groups help to expand the ideas of what anti-displacement work could look like. There are hurdles to jump in terms of legal boundaries and in terms of interdepartmental collaboration.
- Mr. Blumson added that there are gaps in the city's definitions of wealth building and intergenerational wealth. He also pointed to debates on what City support of the wealth building process should look like. The EDI team is trying to bring attention to the conversation around what is the role of government in equitable wealth building and to what extent should the City be investing in communities that have previously not had access to wealth building through land and home ownership. He also noted that the EDI team received a lot of creative applications from community trying to solve the issue of displacement.
- Commissioners asked how many of the EDI Fund projects are occurring within the urban villages as opposed to outside of designated growth areas. Mr. Blumson noted the circular process of how the communities the EDI is supporting are mostly located in urban villages due to redlining and other historical policies that limited where communities of color could live, which then also informed where the urban villages were designated. As a result, he noted that many of the projects are located in those same areas by nature of the communities they aim to support.
- Commissioners offered additional kudos and expressed excitement around the additional funding that the JumpStart tax will bring to the EDI fund. They asked how the EDI team is getting along with other departments like OH and asked if they ever partner with other departments if they come up short on funding for projects. Mr. Blumson noted that EDI was designed to be a disruptive program to change existing norms in the City but they also want the program to be effective for the community, so they do their best to work creatively and work together with other departments. He also noted that they do not have nearly enough funding for the project requests they receive. They can sometimes work within boundaries of OH policies or timelines to partner EDI projects with OH funds or project limits. A major part of their team's role, however, is to raise philosophical questions within the City about equitable development. They have partnered with other departments on

experimental projects to help move important ideas forward that support EDI program goals. He noted the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support a food sovereignty project, for example, or projects within the New Green Deal investments.

- Commissioners inquired about actions that the Commission could take to support the EDI team in their work. Ms. Thomas asked in return, as EDI sets up the permanent advisory board, what should relationship building look like between the two groups? They would like to be in step with advocacy work, for example. They would like to see the groups build a strong relationship and continue working together. Mr. Blumson added that the Planning Commission has played an important role in the past by raising difficult questions for internal City teams to consider and has helped to push the boundaries of conversations within Seattle. They hope the Commission continues to help keep the EDI team accountable to their long-term goals.
- Commissioners stated that they want to continue to support EDI work and collaborate between groups. They noted there may be a chance to collaborate with EDI on future work the Housing and Neighborhoods Committee is doing to elevate anti-displacement strategies.
- Commissioners thanked Ms. Thomas, Mr. Blumson, and Ms. Gardheere for their time and expressed their appreciation for their presentation.

Commission Business

Mr. Hoey provided an overview of a proposed Land Use Code Amendment for Indoor Sports and Recreation facilities. He provided the following information to facilitate Commissioner discussion. OPCD is proposing to amend the Land Use Code, SMC Title 23 to permit indoor sports and recreation uses up to a maximum size of 50,000 sq. ft. in Industrial General (IG) zones on lots in the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center (BINMIC) that meet criteria limiting eligible geographic locations. The current maximum size of use for indoor sports and recreation facilities is 10,000 sq. ft. in the IG zones. The proposal would also amend minimum parking requirements to decrease the amount of required parking from 1 space per 500 sq. ft. to 1 space per 2,000 sq. ft. for indoor sports and recreation facilities that exceed 25,000 sq. ft. in size in the BINMIC.

Examples of the type of sports courts that could be created that would typically exceed 10,000 sq. ft. and be less than 50,000 sq. ft. include basketball/volleyball gyms, indoor soccer fields, indoor hockey rink, bowling alley, etc. One potential entity that could apply to construct an indoor sports and recreation facility is the Seattle Storm professional women's basketball team. The Seattle Storm has expressed interest to the City in funding and building its own practice facility. Some of the limiting conditions of the code stipulate that the facility location: must be located in the BINMIC, must be within 300' of an existing Seattle Mixed or Neighborhood Commercial zone, must be within ¼ mile of a Seattle Park with active recreational uses (courts, ball fields, etc.), must not be within 500' of the shoreline, and may not be located within one mile of another increased-size indoor sports and recreation facility. Mr. Hoey showed a map that highlighted only three sites in the BINMIC that fit these requirements.

Mr. Hoey noted that OPCD has considered the proposal's consistency with Comprehensive Plan policies and compatibility with nearby land uses. The proposed code amendment may appear to potentially conflict with comprehensive plan language. The proposal facilitates the introduction of increased non-industrial activities – in the form of indoor sports and recreation – into a designated MIC. The proposal, however, would facilitate only one or two facilities and is consistent with other policies concerning

recreation and arts/culture. Regional and city policies suggest that amounts of non-industrial activity and some non-industrial uses are allowable in MICs. City policies LU 10.10 and 10.28 address limiting commercial uses, specifically referencing office and retail as uses to be limited. Relevant Parks and Open Space policies include P G1 that calls for providing a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces throughout the city for all people to play, learn, contemplate, and build community and P 2.3 which calls for establishing partnerships with public and private organizations to supplement recreational programming that supports residents' needs and interests.

Mr. Hoey noted that OPCD has recommended legislation to adopt the proposed code changes, stating the code changes would support City objectives concerning recreation while including limiting conditions adequate to minimize potential adverse impacts to industrial uses in the vicinity of potentially eligible areas. The City Council's Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee will hold a briefing and public hearing on this proposed code amendment on Wednesday, September 22.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked about the City's rationale for limiting the location of this proposed use to the BINMIC. Mr. Hoey stated that Geoff Wentlandt, OPCD staff, provided the following information: in Commercial zones, a 50,000 sq. ft. indoor sports and recreation facility is allowed in the NC₃, C₁ and C₂ zones. They are limited to a maximum size of 25,000 sq. ft. in NC₂, and 10,000 sq. ft. in NC₁. Indoor Sports and Recreation is allowed in all SM zones, without a size limit. They are allowed in most Downtown zones without a size limit.
- Commissioners expressed concern that they did not hear about this code amendment earlier.
- Commissioners asked for clarification that there is no requirement for providing a public benefit when building a private facility under this code amendment. Mr. Hoey noted that the information provided by Mr. Wentlandt information stated that public benefits associated with this proposed use include potential recreational opportunities for a variety of residents. The siting criteria require a location near another public park with active recreation use. The intent is to allow clustering of recreational opportunities so attendees of recreational activities such as camps and clinics could make use of multiple recreation facilities in close proximity.
- Commissioners asked if this amendment would allow a sports team to build a spectator facility. Mr. Hoey clarified that a facility created for spectators would not be allowed.
- Commissioners asked if the current code allows industrial facilities of that size in the BINMIC, and if yes, are there measures to reduce environmental impacts related to buildings of such a large scale. Commissioners noted that a State Environmental Policy Act review would be required. Commissioners stated that the best way to reduce the environmental footprint of industrial facilities is to use new facilities that would be required to meet updated environmental codes.
- Commissioners expressed concerns with the public health implications of a sports facility in the BINMIC area, consistent with the Commission's previous concerns about health impacts of residential uses in industrial areas.
- Commissioners asked whether the industrial business community has been informed of this code amendment, and if yes, whether industrial stakeholders are in favor of or opposed to this proposal. Mr. Hoey stated that staff will look into what stakeholders have already been consulted on this.
- Commissioners stated that the proposed code amendment is written so specifically as to create only a few eligible sites. This raises concern that this is a boutique amendment written specifically

to sneak this use into the BINMIC. This proposed use is not the highest and best use in an area zoned for industrial uses and scheduled for light rail expansion.

- Commissioners expressed frustration that this proposed use opens a new loophole in the land use code when other loopholes, such as allow storage facilities in industrial zones, are not being closed. Mr. Hoey stated that legislation has been introduced to close an existing loophole by prohibiting new mini-storage facilities in industrial areas.
- Commissioners stated that if this proposal was included in the recent discussion of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy, it would have been opposed by the Commission.
- Commissioners noted that this conversation raises the question of “if not here, where?” Not allowing an indoor sports and recreation facility in the BINMIC could result in such a facility being located outside of the city.
- Commissioners expressed concern that adoption of this amendment may lead to similar code amendments in the future.
- Commissioners stated that teams such as Seattle Storm are often regional in their audience and supporters so there may not be a need to locate their practice facility within the city limits.
- Co-Chair Stroble asked Commissioners if it was important for the Planning Commission to provide public comment on this issue. Commissioners suggested the possibility of providing no response on this amendment given the complexities of the issue.
- Mr. Hoey noted that the briefing and public hearing on this issue is on September 22nd and a potential vote is scheduled for September 24th.
- Commissioners indicated a consensus to not provide public comment on this issue.
- Commissioners expressed concern that the Commission was not made aware of this issue earlier. They suggested communicating this concern with OPCD or the Mayor’s office.

Public Comment

Mr. Hoey read the following public comments, which were submitted by email:

Dear Planning Commission,

My name is Ryan and I live in an urban village raising a family. Because I live in an urban village, I am given the opportunity to watch my neighborhood change and grow with more housing.

*Recently The Urbanist outlined a Planning Commission recommendation that suggested expanding and adding new urban villages for the city's growth strategy for the upcoming Major Comprehensive Plan Update. I disagree with this recommendation. **We don't need more or slightly larger urban villages, we need to do away with the urban village strategy completely.***

These boundaries are furthering the divide between wealthy and working-class communities. Per the Seattle redlining map used by banks to segregate our city, over 80% of the land dedicated for urban villages resides in "declining", "hazardous" or "industrial areas". A recent study shows the city's growth strategy is furthering the racial and economic divides that are problematic with creating an equitable city.

The bare minimum of the recommendation should be turning the whole city into one large urban village by eliminating all their boundaries. This is our one big shot at making Seattle into a real city that lets every neighborhood participate in growth and diversity. If we continue with the notion of tapering

density away from arterials and lower income areas, we will just taper away any chance of mixed incomes living on the quiet residential streets of our leafy neighborhoods, and we will taper away any chance we have at making this a more economically just city.

We need real housing growth everywhere. *We won't get there with triplexes in Wallingford, or a DADU in Windermere. We need equitable urban growth everywhere. Otherwise, we have to look in the mirror after these recommendations are done and ask ourselves if we truly meant it when we said Black Lives Matter.*

*Thanks,
Ryan DiRaimo*

Hi, my name Laura and I am a renter near Interbay in NW Queen Anne.

As you know, Seattle has an urgent need to include affordable multifamily housing in our exclusionary zoned neighborhoods. And as you know, we aren't going to see the scope of the need met by just small changes like triplexes and DADUs. These are needed changes, but they won't be enough to address climate change, and we are running out of time. The Urban Village Strategy has got to go.

We need you to be a louder bolder voice for the people already displaced, currently priced out and future residents who will come here and need safe cheap abundant housing in our fantastic city. End the apartment bans everywhere. Go very bold near frequent transit. Share our city.

*Laura Loe
98119 renter*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 pm.