



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, August 13, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	David Goldberg, Katherine Idziorek, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma
Commissioners Absent:	Michael Austin, Grace Kim, Kelly Rider, Jamie Stroble
Commission Staff:	John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator
Guests:	Nick Welch, Office of Planning and Community Development; Sandra Fried

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 3:05 pm 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 Rick Mohler moved to approve the July 23 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rian Watt seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

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 8 hours before the start of the Commission meeting.

Public Comment: 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Docketing

Commission Coordinator Robin Magonegil read the following public comment, which was submitted via email:

On March 23, at 7:00pm, the West Seattle High Bridge was closed because of potentially cataclysmic cracks. The unplanned closure of this critical transportation component immediately created uncharted neighborhood and transportation related impacts for a wide area in the southern portion of the City. Please realize that thousands will be adversely impacted by the West Seattle Bridge closure for a very long time.

Because of the myriad of unknowns looming for West Seattle and the Duwamish Valley, I authored a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to assist the City of Seattle mitigate West Seattle bridge closure impacts. My goal was that the Comprehensive Plan amendment would provide methods of mitigation outside of the scope that the Seattle Department of Transportation controlled. I considered the Comprehensive Plan Amendment a 'placeholder' for future mitigation actions since SDOT did not have formal mitigation plans in place on May 15, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment request deadline. Indeed, Mayor Durkan did not authorize emergency proclamations until mid-July.

You'll note that I did not list any one specific route for mitigation. I believed that there would be many different short and long term impacts from the bridge closure, so I instead listed several potential options. I felt that one of the most valuable parts of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment process would be the discussion between City departments working together to come up with solutions to mitigate the crisis, beginning with the Planning Commission recognizing the amendment's potential and enabling the discussion to continue with docketing support.

I request that the Planning Commission think about the uncharted waters of a bridge closure emergency and take a broader view of this Comprehensive Plan amendment request. Think how the amendment it can be effective in mitigating broad impacts from a West Seattle and Duwamish Valley transportation crisis. Think about it as a proxy for actions that are outside of SDOT purview. Think about it as initiating collaboration.

Please docket the West Seattle High Rise Bridge Emergency Closure Comprehensive Plan Amendment request so that the discussion can continue. I

Thank you for your consideration.

*Deb Barker
West Seattle Bridge Community Task Force member*

Mr. Hoey read the following public comment, which was submitted via email:

My name is Ryan and I live in the Aurora Licton Springs Urban Village. I am a single family home owner and support the Planning Commission's recommendation to rename single family zoning. While I love my

house and my neighborhood, the zoning label of my property embarrasses me and my family. The name 'Neighborhood Residential' is not only a more accurate label, it also is a more welcoming one for all living situations and housing types. The name and nature of single-family zoning is exclusionary. It not only halts any housing growth; it unfairly labels anyone who needs other families to purchase or rent the property as unworthy. It is well documented the label has roots in racial injustice and by design it limits housing growth. For all these reasons, my family is embarrassed by this label and exclusivity. Please remove the racist history of this city and rename single family zoning to Neighborhood Residential.

Thanks,
Ryan DiRiamo
ALUV

Action: 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Docketing

Mr. Hoey provided an overview of the final draft docketing recommendations on the proposed 2020-2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

The Planning Commission recommends moving forward the following amendment proposal to the docket for further analysis:

#1: Extend the University District Urban Center

- The Commission recommends this proposal for the docket. The proposal meets the criteria and as such warrants further study. In particular, this application meets the intent of criterion G, which requires an amendment to the FLUM for any proposal that would change the boundary of an urban center, urban village, or manufacturing/industrial center, regardless of the area's size, to be considered for docketing.

The Planning Commission recommends the following amendment proposals not move forward to the docket for further analysis:

#2: West Seattle High Bridge emergency closure

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion B4 and B5; this proposal would be better addressed through a budgetary or programmatic decision or another process

#3: Potential Landslide Area Covenants

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion B3; the intent of this proposal can be accomplished by a change in regulations

#4: Pedestrian Grade Separations

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#5: Yards and Trees

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#6: Open and Participatory Government

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#7: Demolition and Displacement

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#8: Heavy Vehicles

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#9: Development Monitoring

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#10: Rezones and Conditional Uses

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

#11: Tree Canopy and Urban Forest

- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D; proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

Mr. Hoey stated that of the eight proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments that were docketed by the City Council in Resolution 31896 for further analysis, five were not analyzed in the 2019-2020 annual amendment cycle. The Planning Commission would like to draw attention to their specific comments on one of those proposed amendments. The City Council proposed an amendment that would recommend an alternative name for single family zones, such as Neighborhood Residential, and amend the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan to implement this change. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) stated this amendment could be more appropriately addressed through the next Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission recommends moving the effort to rename single family zoning forward sooner than the Major Update. This change could serve to inform the policy process considering alternatives to single family zoning.

The Commissioners suggested an edit to the section of the letter regarding an alternative name for single family zoning to include a reference to the Commission's recent report, *A Racially Equitable and Resilient Recovery*.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Docketing letter. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Briefing: New Accessory Dwelling Unit Resources from OPCD and SDCI

Nick Welch, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Welch introduced ADUniverse, a website to aide owners of single-family homes to assess the eligibility and desirability of building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) such as backyard cottages and

in-house mother-in-law apartments. He stated that the website is not yet live but is an attempt to fulfill several actions Mayor Durkan called for in an Executive Order to help residents afford ADUs. He provided a detailed overview of the website and its various tools to assist homeowners, including:

- A step by step guide to outline key steps in creating an ADU
- Summary of ADU regulations, with links to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
- Information on the ADU design process with questions people should ask themselves
- Preview of pre-approved detached ADU (DADU) designs'
- Information on financing, costs, and permitting/construction process

Mr. Welch described a website feature which will include a gallery of 10 pre-approved DADU designs. More than 150 designs were submitted for consideration. The website will provide a list of design professionals, which will offer visibility to those who submitted designs. Another website feature is a tool that allows users to search properties to learn the feasibility of putting an ADU on their site. Commissioner Rick Mohler and Mr. Welch partnered with University of Washington students on a prototype of this tool. Users can navigate to a property and find the necessary information to determine the feasibility of an ADU, including zoning, property/parcel data, lot size, estimate of lot coverage, lot width/depth, and height limit. This tool also includes a section on environmentally critical areas and tree canopy data. The website can identify the number of ADUs in the vicinity and a simple dashboard with information such as how many, where, and when ADUs have been built.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked is there is a gallery of examples of attached units, in addition to the gallery of DADUs. Mr. Welch stated that the website does not yet include that information, and could also include examples of existing DADUs.
- Commissioners requested more information on financing ADUs. Mr. Welch stated that there was a proposal in the Mayor's budget for a low cost ADU loan fund. The City Council approved this proposal and the Office of Housing started a Racial Equity Toolkit to implement the proposal. Unfortunately, this program was eliminated due to COVID-19-related budget cuts.
- Commissioners expressed disappointment that this much-needed funding will not be available. Units will now be built where disposable income is available. Commissioners asked if there is potential for the website to identify where the need for ADUs is greatest. Mr. Welch stated that financing and complexity of the process are barriers to building ADUs. The website's pre-approved designs and list of professionals will help.
- Commissioners asked if there is a difference between ADUs that are built for renting and units for selling. Mr. Welch stated that this is not included in this website tool but a section with frequently asked questions on ownership could be a future addition.
- Commissioners asked if the pre-approved plans could be used for a single-family house. Mr. Welch stated that he did not see any reasons why not.
- Commissioners congratulated Mr. Welch on the website. It looks great and is very accessible. NMr. Welch stated that the website and its tools could evolve with feedback from users.
- Commissioners stated that this tool may increase access to high-opportunity areas with low risk of displacement and may lessen the risk in high risk neighborhoods.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.