



Seattle
Planning
Commission



2021 Year In Review

Seattle Planning Commission

Mission

The Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle into the future, and guided by a commitment to racially equitable, community-centered planning for all members of Seattle's communities.

Structure

The Planning Commission was established by Article XIV of the City's Charter in 1946. City ordinance 109155 defines the Commission's structure which is comprised of sixteen members, seven of which are appointed by the Mayor with another seven appointed by City Council and one appointed by the Commission. The members of the Commission are volunteers who bring a wide array of expertise, lived experiences and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Principles

Our work is grounded in putting into practice racial equity principles from the Center for Urban and Racial Equity which you can view [here](#). We see these principles showing up in our work in the following ways:

- Advise the Mayor, City Council, and department staff on the elimination of systemic barriers in planning, and naming policies and practices that have produced historical and contemporary inequities based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, geography, and other characteristics
- Advance equitable planning practices by developing and promoting innovative planning and policy concepts through our independent research and work
- Foster connections, partnerships, and collaborations across departments, agencies, and communities that further racial equity and intersectionality in planning practice
- Advocate for new systems, policies, and practices that institutionalize equity and support sustainable, transformational change, including targeting distribution of resources and access to opportunity to members of groups that have experienced systemic and institutional discrimination and oppression
- Nurture a collaborative culture that builds a community of learning, mutual respect, acknowledgment of power dynamics, and a valuing of diverse experiences and identities
- Conduct meetings using the revised "[Color Brave Space](#)" norms from Equity Matters that promote equitable interpersonal interactions and ensure that commissioners have equity principles at the forefront of their approach to the Commission's work

Cover Page Photo Credits

Clockwise from the top:
Little Brook Stay Healthy Street - Mural art by Romel Belleza - Photo Credit SDOT
Lake Washington Blvd Keep Moving Street - Photo Credit Jeanne Clark
Ships on Lake Union - Photo Credit SDOT
Outdoor Dining in Columbia City - Photo Credit Jeanne Clark

2021 In Review

Learning Together in a Remote Setting

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced tremendous challenges to everyone and 2021 forced us all to recognize that there will be no quick return to pre-pandemic ways of working. The Commission continues to operate remotely, which poses challenges for collaboration between Commissioners, staff, and Seattle communities. While adapting the ways we work to a remote setting, the Commission also welcomed an unprecedented eight new Commissioners in the spring. Although working remotely while onboarding many new Commissioners posed a challenge, it also provided the opportunity for the Commission to evaluate some of our work practices and ways of interacting in new circumstances. Both new and returning Commissioners learned together about how to imbue Commission work with racial equity principles during a retreat facilitated by Heidi Sohn with Equity Matters. The Commission has used the Color Brave Space Norms by Equity Matters since the retreat to ground Commission meetings and we look forward to adding new practices in 2022 that bring us closer to our racial equity goals.

31

Briefings
from City
Departments



4

Letters to
City Council
and City Staff



1448

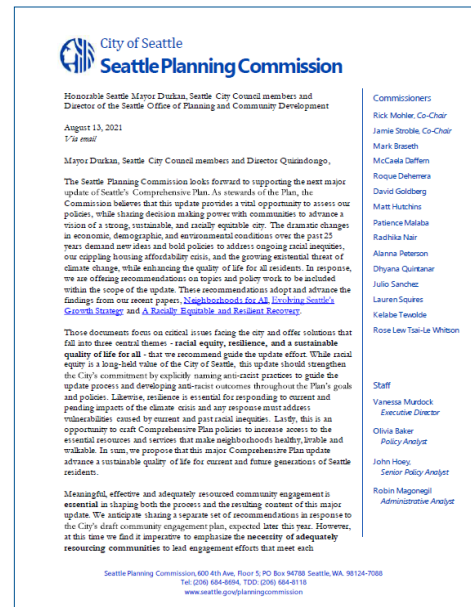
Hours
Volunteered by
Commissioners



Commissioners volunteered a total of **1448** hours in 2021. We attended a total of **57** virtual meetings and, outside of meetings, Commissioners took time to research topics, write and edit Commission letters and reports, and attend community events. Together, Commissioners contributed **638** related work hours outside of meeting times.

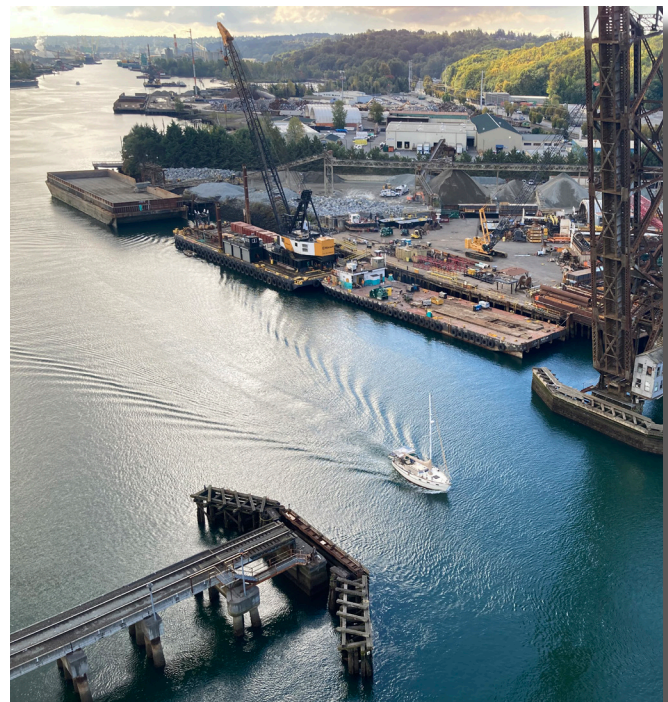
Letters to City Council and City Staff in 2021

- Permanent Supportive Housing (*January 2021*)
- Recommendations on the Mayor's Industrial and Maritime Strategy (*July 2021*)
- Comprehensive Plan Major Update Overarching Themes (*August 2021*)
- Comprehensive Plan Major Update Community Engagement Budget (*October 2021*)



Industrial and Maritime Strategy

In 2021 the city embarked anew on a process to update its industrial and maritime strategy, which had not been updated for over 35 years. The strategy will inform how the city's industrial and maritime areas evolve and will update city policy to guide that process. The industrial and maritime areas are an important resource for Seattle because they support critical businesses and supply chains. The Commission is interested in the preservation of industrial and maritime lands and provided a letter with recommendations to help inform the adoption of policies identified in the strategy. The Commission looks forward to following the strategy as it advances through the Environmental Impact Statement process and on to implementation.



Duwamish Waterway - Photo Credit: SDOT

Comprehensive Plan

Seattle's Office of Planning and Community Development began the early steps of the next major update to the City's comprehensive plan in 2021. As stewards of the comprehensive plan, the Planning Commission weighed in on the initial stages as OPCD started to outline their process and scope for the update. In August, the Commission published a letter on overarching themes for the major update, which seeks to highlight areas of focus for the updated plan. The Commission plans to expand on several of these themes through a collection of issue briefs in 2022.

The Commission also weighed in on the budget allocated for the major update over the next couple of years during the 2022 budget process in the fall. In particular, the Commission was concerned with the limited budget proposed for community engagement during the major update. Commissioners advocated for additional funds for engagement and outreach via public testimony and a written statement to City Council. The Commission pointed to the importance of an

adequately funded and equitable engagement process at a time when the city is experiencing dramatic growth and a housing crisis amidst a national racial equity awakening and a global pandemic, all further compounded by the pressures of climate change. Commissioners were happy to see additional funds allocated by City Council in the 2022 budget to support a robust engagement process.

In addition to supporting the major update to the comprehensive plan, the Commission supports the annual amendment process for the plan. The Commission reviews every proposed amendment submitted by members of the public or city staff and then advises the City Council on which amendments should be studied further before being considered for adoption. The Commission made its final recommendations on which 2020 proposed amendments should be adopted and also provided comments on which of the 2021 proposed amendments should be docketed for further analysis.

Focus Areas for 2022

- The Comprehensive Plan Major Update community engagement process
- Comprehensive Plan Major Update policy development with issue-specific briefs on: updating the growth strategy, anti-displacement policies, improving housing choices, and reimagining the right of way
- The Seattle Transportation Plan development
- Industrial & Maritime Strategy EIS process and implementation
- Incorporating new racial equity practices into the Commission's work

2021 Seattle Planning Commissioners



Jamie Stroble, Co-Chair

Jamie works for The Nature Conservancy as Climate Director and is charged with developing a new climate program and centering racial equity and climate resilience.



Rick Mohler, Co-Chair

Rick is an Associate Professor at the University of Washington's College of Built Environments and has over thirty years of experience in professional architectural practice at multiple scales.



Mark Braseth

Mark is a principle at Braseth Construction building multifamily housing in Seattle and the surrounding area. Previously Mark worked at Puget Sound Regional Council in land use and transportation planning.



McCaela Daffern

McCaela is an urban planner with King County's Department of Community and Human Services where she is lead staff for the King County Affordable Housing Committee.



Roque Deherrera

Roque is the Manager of Real Estate and Development Services for Legacy Group Capital, an infill housing development company. He has previously worked for the City of Seattle as an Urban Planner and as a Business Advocate.



David Goldberg

David helped launch Smart Growth America and Transportation for America, national movements focused on smart growth reform. He currently works as an Ombudsman/Community Liason for WSDOT.



Matt Hutchins

Matt is a founding Principal of CAST architecture and has spent more than 20 years working to increase the vitality of the city and protect the environment.



Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson

Rose is a biologist at Jacobs Engineering where she works on land use policy and environmental investigation. Rose has worked on projects ranging from residential improvements to public transit expansions.

2021 Seattle Planning Commissioners



Patience Malaba

Patience is the Director of Government Relations and Policy at the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County. Previously, she managed Seattle for Everyone and worked on Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda.



Radhika Nair

Radhika is an urban planner with more than 10 years of experience in the Puget Sound region. In her job at BERK Consulting, Radhika manages a variety of projects from community plans to housing studies to park system plans.



Alanna Peterson

Alanna is an attorney with Pacifica Law Group LLP, where she helps public, private, and nonprofit clients navigate complex issues impacting their work in our communities.



Dhyana Quintanar Solares

Dhyana is WSP's Strategic Solutions Leader and Senior Project Manager. She brings 15 years of experience to the Commission in infrastructure, public space, land use and environmental planning, and project management.



Julio Sanchez

Julio is pursuing a certificate in Energy and Capitalism in Contemporary Society from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He previously worked for PSCAA until 2020.



Lauren Squires

Lauren is a multimodal transportation planner at Nelson/Nygaard with an emphasis on active transportation, health, and social equity. She has a background in sustainable design and planning.



Kelabe Tewolde

Kelabe served as the Commission's Get Engaged member for 2020-2021. He is an Academic Counselor at Rainier Scholars, where he works with 6th-12th grade students.

About the Commission

The Seattle Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council, and City departments on broad planning goals, policies, and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle in the 21st Century, and by a commitment to engaging citizens in the work of planning for and working to reach these goals.

The Seattle Planning Commission is an independent, 16-member advisory body appointed by the Mayor, City Council, and the Commission itself. The members of the Commission are residents of Seattle who volunteer their time, and bring a wide array of expertise and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Commissioners

Rick Mohler, Co-Chair
Jamie Stroble, Co-Chair
Mark Braseth
McCaela Daffern
Roque Deherrera
David Goldberg
Matt Hutchins
Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson
Patience Malaba
Radhika Nair
Alanna Peterson
Dhyana Quintanar Solares
Julio Sánchez
Lauren Squires
Kelabe Tewolde

SPC Staff

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director
John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst
Connie Combs, Former Policy Analyst
Olivia Baker, Policy Analyst
Robin Magonegil, Administrative Analyst