



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

McCaela Daffern and David Goldberg, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Xio Alvarez, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Julio Sanchez, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple
Commissioners Absent:	Dhyana Quintanar, Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

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:

<https://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/meetings>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Goldberg offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd 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 Goldberg noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with some Commissioners and staff participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. He asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for volunteers to select one or more of the norms to read aloud. He suggested to Commissioners that they collectively agree to abide by these norms.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, reviewed the format of the meeting. She noted that public comment could be submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the start of the meeting or provided in person by members of the public attending the meeting at City Hall. Ms. Murdock stated that full Commission meetings will be recorded and posted to the Planning Commission's website. She noted that these recordings are not in lieu of the Commission's minutes, which are approved at the next full Commission meeting.

ACTION: Co-Chair McCaela Daffern moved to approve the September 28, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Andrew Dannenberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Rick Mohler abstained.

Public Comment: Draft Seattle Transportation Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comment letters

Ms. Murdock read the following public comment, which was emailed in advance of the meeting.

Dear Planning Commission,

Higher density along frequent transit routes will result in scores of housing units near existing services, schools, parks, jobs, etc. Our Metro bus routes are the key to achieving the equitable Seattle we need and deserve. Accordingly, we believe data-driven tactics along these lines will achieve just that:

---Arterial streets that have frequent bus service would be zoned to allow apartment buildings outright. The more hourly trips the higher the density & height. Using the Seattle Department of Transportation Frequent Transit Network data would really help with this.

---All corner lots Citywide would be zoned to allow modest sized apartment buildings.

Using these two methods you will achieve both high density (5-7 story apartments) transit-oriented development as well as make inroads into the single-family zones within scale (2-4 story) apartments that blend in.

We hope you give these suggestions your consideration and keep up this important work that will shape our City for decades to come.

*Regards,
Brent Silver
Seattle Urbanism Alliance*

PS: Link to Frequency Transit Network below:

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/transit-program/route-improvements/the-frequent-transit-network>

Action: Final Draft Seattle Transportation Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement comment letters

DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS: Commissioner Radhika Nair disclosed that she is leading the environmental review for the Seattle Transportation Plan as part of her work with BERK and she also works closely with the Comprehensive Plan consultant team on their environmental review.

Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, presented an overview of the final draft Seattle Transportation Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement comment letter. The Commissioners took five minutes to review the final draft. The Commissioners suggested minor revisions to the letter.

ACTION: Co-Chair McCaela Daffern moved to approve the Seattle Transportation Plan DEIS comment letter. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the letter passed.

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, presented an overview of the final draft Seattle Transportation Plan comment letter. The Commissioners took five minutes to review the final draft. The Commissioners suggested minor revisions to the letter.

ACTION: Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson moved to approve the Seattle Transportation Plan comment letter. Commissioner Matt Hutchins seconded the motion. The motion to approve the letter passed.

Briefing: Comprehensive Plan 101

Ms. Murdock provided an overview of the City's Comprehensive Plan in anticipation of the draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan major update.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Describes a shared vision for the city's future.
- Guides where residential and employment growth will happen.
- Has goals and policies for a range of topics – these inform the day-to-day work of City departments.
- Required by the State for all fast-growing cities to plan for current and new residents and workers.

What is required in the Plan?

- Plan must be coordinated and consistent – externally and internally.
- City regulations must also be consistent with and implement the Plan.
- Spending on infrastructure such as roads, libraries, parks must be consistent with the Plan.
- Plan is a resource for communities, and the private sector as it describes priorities.
- Plan can be amended once a year and must be thoroughly updated every eight years.

State & Regional Planning Framework

- State of Washington
 - Growth Management Act
 - Requirements for local comprehensive planning
 - Schedule for major updates
- Puget Sound Regional Council
 - VISION 2050
 - Regional centers designations
 - Transportation funding
 - Certification of local comprehensive and subarea plans
- King County
 - Countywide planning policies
 - Growth targets for housing and jobs
- City of Seattle
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - Must be consistent with above.

What can the Plan do and not do?

- Plan outlines vision, goals and polices but does not include development regulations.
- Policies in the Plan have implications for City investments but do not commit resources.

What topics are in the plan?

- Vision for how we grow, also referred to as the Growth Strategy
- State required topics:
 - Land Use
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Capital Facilities
 - Utilities
- Additional topics:
 - Community Engagement
 - Environment
 - Human Services
 - Parks and Open Space
- The Planning Commission has suggested three overarching themes be reflected throughout the updated Plan: Racial equity, Resilience, A sustainable quality of life for all.

Updating Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

- A 20-year plan to guide how our city grows and makes investments for a more equitable and resilient future.
- Informed by our values.
- Shaped by broad and deep community engagement.
- Growth strategy for housing and jobs.

- Policies in 14 policy elements.
- Next update due in 2024.

Elements of the Current Comprehensive Plan

- Land Use*
 - Transportation*
 - Housing*
 - Capital Facilities*
 - Utilities*
 - Economic Development*
 - Environment
 - Parks and Open Space*
 - Arts and Culture
 - Community Well-being
 - Community Involvement
 - Also: Shorelines* and Container Port*
- * Required by GMA

Overview of content in key elements of 2035

- Land use
 - Goal 1: "Achieve a development pattern consistent with the urban village strategy, concentrating most new housing and employment in urban centers and villages, while also allowing some infill development compatible with the established context in areas outside centers and villages." (CP, p42)
 - Goal 2: "Provide zoning and accompanying land use regulations that:
 - Allow a variety of housing types to accommodate housing choices for households of all types and income levels.
 - Support a wide diversity of employment-generating activities...
 - Accommodate the full range of public services...needed to support a racially and economically diverse, sustainable urban community." (CP, p43)
- Transportation
 - Aims to align the growth strategy with transportation decisions.
 - Eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on city streets.
 - Create an interconnected city with reliable, easy-to-use travel options.
 - Create streets and sidewalks that generate economic and social activity and add to the city's overall prosperity and happiness.
 - Contribute to a more affordable city.
- Housing
 - "In the City's vision for the future, all people have access to housing that is safe, clean, and affordable. As Seattle grows, its housing supply grows and adapts to meet the needs of all households, regardless of color or income, including families with children, seniors, and people who have a disability" (CP, pg6).

- Goals and policies in the Housing element speak to the need to meet current and projected housing needs, achieve a mix of housing types, and make it possible for households of all income levels to live in Seattle.
- Environment
 - Discusses air and water quality.
 - Acknowledges Climate Action Plan targets to reduce GHG emissions by 58% from 2008 levels by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2050.
 - “The City can make investments to restore green spaces and creeks and develop a twenty-first century transportation system that integrates old (walking, biking, cars) and new (light rail, car sharing) approaches. Measures like these can help a growing region accommodate people and jobs in urban areas, create livable communities, and reduce the impacts of sprawl.” (CP, p131)

Growth Strategy

- By 2044, planning for at least:
 - 112,000 housing units
 - 169,500 jobs
- Existing Urban Village Strategy focuses growth and investment within Urban Centers and Villages
- Major update will explore new ideas, including:
 - New centers or villages
 - “15-minute” neighborhoods
 - More options for housing across the city

Topics Identified in SPC’s Issue Briefs

- Growth Strategy
 - Become a 15-minute city.
 - Expand the Urban Villages concept to embrace a network of complete and connected neighborhoods.
 - Actively address displacement.
- Anti-Displacement
 - Make anti-displacement policies a focus of the Comp Plan and include policies throughout many elements.
 - Evaluate displacement during the EIS process.
 - Advance community-led policy and investments.
 - Create and preserve affordable housing, commercial, and non-profit spaces.
- Repurposing the Right-of-Way
 - Re-envision the public right-of-way as a limited and valuable public space. Transition from the primary function of the movement and storage of privately owned vehicles to a critical social and cultural space, an environmental and recreational resource, and an opportunity for economic development.
- Affordable Housing
 - Address barriers and leverage existing resources to advance affordable housing as a priority in the major update.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners inquired about the role of the Comprehensive Plan in future land use decisions. Ms. Murdock stated that the Comprehensive Plan guides zoning and development regulations. Consistency of development regulations with the Comprehensive Plan is mandated by the state.
- Commissioners asked if any additional information has been announced about the release of the draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Murdock stated that no additional information has been made available.

Public Comment

Ms. Murdock read the following public comments, which were received by email.

*I am a Seattle resident with a small family home on a large corner lot next to the light rail. Expansion of transport has not changed my neighborhood density or zoning. I would like to transform it into housing that can support my family and neighborhood. How will the passing of HB1110 be enacted in Seattle?
-- Abi A.*

I am a Seattle resident and wondering what the timeline for implementation for HB1110 is and are there opportunities for residents to listen/participate in the process for implementation (ex: specific committee meetings/conferences)?

*Thank you,
Selam Ainalem*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.