



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

McCaella Daffern and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 24, 2025
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, McCaella Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Dhyana Quintanar, Monika Sharma, Dylan Stevenson, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple
Commissioners Absent:	Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Matt Malloy, Radhika Nair, Lauren Squires, Nick Whipple
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 Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:35 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Stroble 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 Stroble noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with some Commissioners and staff participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in Room L280 at Seattle City Hall. She 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. She 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 may be provided in person at City Hall, submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the meeting, or offered on the hybrid meeting platform MS Teams. Public comment must be able to be given in two minutes or less.

ACTION: Commissioner McCaela Daffern moved to approve the April 10, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Matt Hutchins seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Discussion: Interim Legislation to Implement House Bill 1110

Ms. Murdock provided a brief overview of the interim legislation to implement middle housing and the context for the Commission's discussion. Ms. Murdock noted that the City Council is considering interim legislation to implement the requirements of House Bill 1110 by the state deadline of June 30th, and that the interim legislation could be in effect for up to one year. She stated that the interim legislation is also drafted to meet the requirements of several other state bills including HB 1293, SB 6015, and HB 1287. Ms. Murdock indicated that once the interim legislation is passed, City Council has signaled their intention to take up permanent legislation on middle housing along with the legislation to finalize the Comprehensive Plan later this year.

Ms. Murdock shared the timeline for the Council's deliberation of the interim legislation, noting that the Council will hold a public hearing on May 19th and plans to vote on the legislation on May 27th. She noted that given the short timeline, the Commission would not have time to draft a formal letter on the legislation and instead could offer comment at the public hearing. She suggested the group spend the rest of the meeting discussing what to include in the Commission's comments for the public hearing. Ms. Murdock noted that the Commission has one more full commission meeting ahead of the public hearing, part of which would be dedicated to fine-tuning draft comments from today's discussion.

Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided the following overview of highlights and potential issues identified with the interim legislation. Ms. Baker noted that staff do not know at this time what amendments, if any, will be proposed but the items below have been raised at Council meetings and are presented here for Commissioner awareness.

Interim Legislation Highlights

- Proposed interim legislation only changes the standards that are required by state law or that are addressed in the HB 1110 model ordinance.
- The changes to NR zones are very similar between the interim legislation and proposed permanent legislation with a few exceptions such as how density is measured.
- Many other changes included in the draft permanent legislation such as the stacked flat bonus, corner store allowances, and parking requirements are not included in the interim legislation.

Issue Identification

- Any amendments introduced for the interim legislation would have to be reintroduced in permanent legislation.
- Stacked Flats – May see an amendment to try to incentivize retaining existing homes on a lot for owner-occupied units with an FAR increase.
- Homeownership retention incentive – May see an amendment to try to incentivize retaining existing homes on a lot for owner-occupied units with an FAR increase.
- Conflicting legislation regarding ADUs – CB 120949 to implement HB 1337 is also at Council and does not count ADUs toward unit density. Interim middle housing legislation does count ADUs toward total unit density. The two bills need to be reconciled.
- Tree protections – May see an amendment to decrease lot coverage allowance or provide additional development standard waivers to help accommodate existing trees on a lot.
- Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) in Neighborhood Residential (NR) zones – Inclusionary zoning policies must be applied when benefits such as upzones are put in place, so MHA in NR zones would have to happen during interim or permanent legislation that provides upzones to NR zones. Councilmember Moore has commissioned a nexus study which is expected this summer.
- Street improvement requirements – Current requirements for street improvements in NR zones apply for new developments of 10 or more units. The City Council may consider changing these requirements given planned increases in density in NR zones.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked why Council is still working on interim legislation if the appeals of the Environmental Impact Statement have been resolved. Ms. Murdock noted that Council has decided to continue to move forward with the interim legislation to meet the state deadline of June 30th.
- Commissioners noted that the timeline of the interim legislation does not align with plans to have a nexus study on MHA completed this summer. They asked if it was possible that Council could pass legislation to implement MHA in NR zones before that study is complete. Ms. Murdock stated that Commission staff would follow up with Council central staff to learn more about timing.
- Commissioners raised general frustration with the process for the zoning implementation and interim legislation. They asked if staff is aware of a particular plan for changing street improvement requirements or a particular Councilmember interested in such a change. Ms. Baker noted that the information shared came from a Council central staff memo, so it is unclear if any Councilmember is interested in the idea. Ms. Murdock clarified that Council central staff work as impartial staff for the full Council to provide policy support and may just be doing their due diligence by providing this information. Not all information included in central staff memos is a direct result of Council requests.
- Commissioners shared their fear that many of the policy changes highlighted as potential amendments could all have negative consequences and have the effect of dampening full implementation of middle housing in NR zones. They noted that the goal of allowing middle housing was to allow less expensive types of housing than single family homes to flourish in NR zones. Each of the potential amendments makes development more expensive and makes it less likely that we will see market-produced housing that is affordable.
- Commissioners agreed that adding constraints to the development of middle housing is concerning when the housing market is constricted. Any added costs will lead to less housing. They noted that

they agree with the overarching goals of some of these amendments, the city needs more sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure but making it a condition of housing development can have big impacts. Commissioners wondered if interim legislation is the best place for making choices that could have such a big impact on housing.

- Commissioners also noted that interim legislation is seen as a risk to developers because it is only temporary, and development conditions could change with permanent legislation. They suggested it makes more sense to spend time on carefully considered permanent legislation.
- Commissioners suggested the group discuss their top priority topics to include in their remarks for the public hearing. They suggested the comments articulate where there are data gaps in the decision-making process for some of the proposed changes and that the comments recommend more analysis.
- Commissioners noted that they appreciate the wide variety of perspectives their fellow commissioners bring to this discussion. They suggested that from a housing lens, it is important to tailor policy decisions toward improving housing choice for all, including renters and others who are left out of the current housing market. The goal should be to unlock our neighborhoods for more people. We need to look at our city and note where there is access to great parks, schools, and other amenities and make sure all residents have the chance to live in the neighborhoods of their choice.
- Commissioners agreed that we as a city should commit to building the infrastructure that everyone deserves and make more street improvements happen, but those improvements should not be the burden of new housing development alone. They suggested that costs should be shared for street infrastructure development and paired with utility upgrades needed for new density when possible. Others noted that while pairing with planned work is helpful, focusing on where the need for improvements are highest is still important for prioritization.
- Commissioners reflected on the potential amendments for incentives for stacked flats and homeowner retention highlighted in the presentation and noted that while these are great to see, they would like to see more anti-displacement measures, especially those focused on renters and people displaced by new development.
- Commissioners stated that the group's testimony should note the cost to the city of prolonging the zoning implementation process with interim legislation and many phases.
- Commissioners shared concerns that prolonging the discussion of zoning implementation for middle housing was distracting from the broader issue of affordability and slowing down the process of finding solutions for truly affordable housing. The conversation should always circle back to who is going to benefit from these changes at scale and who is left out of the results?
- Commissioners noted that the difference between how density is measured in the interim legislation versus the permanent legislation is significant. They suggested that the Commission's testimony prioritize changing interim legislation to match the density provisions of the permanent legislation.
- Commissioners suggested that the testimony should highlight shared values with some of the potential amendments but note that it is critical to approach such solutions carefully and with the right information. They suggested the comments note that the Commission agrees that displacement, pedestrian infrastructure, and housing affordability are all important issues that the City needs to address, however, the interim legislation is not the proper venue for such policy

solutions. The solutions to these issues require more analysis and more time to move proposals through proper public processes. Instead, the Council should focus on a few small amendments that better align interim legislation with the permanent legislation and improve the usability of interim legislation.

- Commissioners agreed with this approach. They want to see solutions to these issues but want to be intentional so that the City does not end up with outcomes that are counter to what we want to achieve in terms of housing access and choice.
- Ms. Murdock noted that part of the time at the May 8th full Commission meeting would be to continue this discussion and review draft comments prepared by staff.
- Commissioners expressed an interest in learning more about the Mayor's proposed infrastructure cost sharing legislation that was shared in the meeting chat. Ms. Murdock stated that staff will find out more information to share with Commissioners.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 am.

Resources

[Proposed legislation on infrastructure cost sharing for new development.](#)