



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 12, 2025
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, McCaella Daffern, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Matt Malloy, Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires, Dylan Stevenson, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple
Commissioners Absent:	Andrew Dannenberg, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Policy 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 3:16 pm 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 the Boards and Commissions Room 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 Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson moved to approve the May 8, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Matt Malloy seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Commission Business

Ms. Murdock reminded Commissioners to submit their nominations for Planning Commission leadership by June 19th. She announced that two candidates for the Planning Commission will be considered for appointment at the City Council's Land Use Committee meeting on June 18th. Ms. Murdock acknowledged that this is the last meeting of two long-term Commissioners, Jamie Stroble and Lauren Squires. She expressed her gratitude to them for their years of service and provided some highlights of their contributions to the work of the Planning Commission.

Briefing: One Seattle Plan and Permanent Legislation to Implement House Bill 1110

Michael Hubner and Brennon Staley, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Mr. Hubner provided an overview of the One Seattle Plan, the Mayor's Comprehensive Plan Major Update. The Plan was originally brought to the City Council in January. The Plan's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was appealed, resulting in a process delay. The City Council's Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan is now reviewing the One Seattle Plan, as well as permanent legislation to implement House Bill (HB) 1110.

Mr. Hubner shared highlights of the Comprehensive Plan update process and the project timeline. He thanked the Planning Commission for its comments throughout the process. He stated that the One Seattle Plan is a substantive update and will replace the previous Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. He noted some revisions that have been made to the Plan since its introduction in January.

Mr. Hubner highlighted the Mayor's recommended growth strategy as the centerpiece of the Plan. He stated that there have been minor revisions to the boundaries of several Neighborhood Centers and Urban Centers and one Regional Center since the last time he briefed the Planning Commission. These adjustments were made based on environmental conditions, as well as access to transit and amenities.

Mr. Hubner stated that the City Council is conducting a unified process for the Plan and the permanent legislation to implement HB 1110. The Comprehensive Plan legislation will not only adopt the new Plan but make some changes to the City Code to align with the Plan. The Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan is holding a public hearing on June 23. Amendments will be introduced in early July and the legislation will be finalized in September. Mr. Hubner stated that separate zoning legislation to implement the Comprehensive Plan will be introduced later this fall.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested confirmation that the changes to Neighborhood Center boundaries have resulted in a net reduction of area included in the Neighborhood Centers across the city. Mr. Hubner stated the changes represent a net reduction other than an expansion to the Whittier Neighborhood Center.
- Commissioners commented on the analysis to refine Neighborhood Center boundaries, noting that the areas proposed for elimination are mostly characterized by lowrise zoning.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the analysis OPCD used to reduce Neighborhood Center boundaries and its effect on the City's ability to deliver necessary affordable housing. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD's responsibility is to provide land uses that are affordable. That is one of the main reasons OPCD took a criteria-based approach to revisiting the Neighborhood Centers. He stated that OPCD did not do any additional housing estimates as part of the analysis. The One Seattle Plan will provide enough density theoretically to provide affordable housing. Mr. Hubner stated that the zones that allow four- and five-story housing will provide more affordable housing. He stated that the One Seattle Plan goes above what the state requires.
- Commissioners asked why no changes were made to Neighborhood Centers in District 2. Mr. Hubner stated that the existing Comprehensive Plan has a concentration of Urban Centers in District 2. OPCD scanned all the proposed Neighborhood Centers in District 2 for potential revisions. The factors used to revise other Neighborhood Centers did not exist in any of the District 2 Neighborhood Centers.
- Commissioners thanked OPCD staff for including crosswalk tables in the One Seattle Plan to compare text revisions to the previous Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners stated that the One Seattle Plan includes some very significant changes that reflect more progressive innovations in urban living. Commissioners expressed support for density in new places other than Southeast Seattle, Neighborhood Centers that reflect walksheds, and adoption of middle housing as a common urban planning term.
- Commissioners expressed concern that the Neighborhood Centers with reduced boundaries are in areas where there is not currently a lot of multi-family housing. This demonstrates that the City is still largely upholding the dominant pattern of single-family zoning with some of the proposed Neighborhood Centers. There were many more than thirty Neighborhood Centers originally proposed. Commissioners expressed disappointment that the City has further reduced some of these. There has been no effort to make up for the reductions or expand other Neighborhood Centers. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD has posted new information online, including a summary of their community engagement efforts. He stated that they heard a range of comments from "great, do more" and "this is too dense, this is the wrong place." OPCD considered all the comments. Mr. Hubner stated that comments received saying "I don't like this" were not enough to warrant changes. He stated that OPCD made fact-based decisions to change the proposed boundaries.
- Commissioners inquired whether comments to expand Neighborhood Center boundaries would be useful. Mr. Hubner stated the comments should focus on the policy reasons for increased density and the need for housing. He stated that OPCD would be interested in hearing about opportunities related to specific locations.

- Commissioners stated that adding density in areas with hills makes these areas more accessible for everyone because people do not have to go as far to access their daily needs.
- Commissioners expressed disappointment that when the Neighborhood Center boundaries were adjusted, expansions were not also considered.
- Commissioners stated that geological critical areas are not the same as other critical areas, such as wetlands and streams. These different critical areas can be mitigated differently. Geologic hazards can be mitigated for and can be buildable.
- Commissioners asked about the timing of adding more Neighborhood Centers. Mr. Hubner stated that would be the purview of future elected officials in the form of annual Comprehensive Plan amendments. He stated that the City has a lot of work to do in the near term, not only implementing the One Seattle Plan but considering where to plan. Mr. Hubner stated that this was another year of significant housing legislation in Olympia. It can be difficult for the City when Olympia keeps changing the rules. Between now and 2029, the City will need to make changes to comply with the recently adopted transit-oriented development (TOD) legislation.
- Commissioners inquired whether amendments from recent parking legislation will be considered. Mr. Hubner stated that, for ease of compliance, a change to one parking space for every two units is built into the permanent legislation. The City has until 2027 to come into compliance, but legislation will probably be introduced in 2026.

Mr. Staley provided an overview of the permanent legislation to implement HB 1110. He stated that the recently adopted interim legislation will become effective on June 30. The permanent legislation is currently being considered by the Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the primary purpose of the permanent legislation is to update Neighborhood Residential zoning and comply with HB 1110. It would also implement changes to comply with other state legislation including:

- House Bill 1293: Design Standards
- Senate Bill 6015: Off-street Parking
- House Bill 1287: Electric Vehicle Charging

Mr. Staley stated that the permanent legislation:

- Repeals the interim legislation
- Repeals and replaces the entire Land Use Code chapter that includes standards for Neighborhood Residential zones (Chapter 23.44)
- Amends other Seattle Municipal Code chapters to comply with new state law and meet other goals
- Goes beyond interim legislation to implement a complete overhaul of Neighborhood Residential zones, address existing code issues, and encourage stacked flats

He highlighted the following reasons for updating Neighborhood Residential (NR) zoning:

- Required to comply with state law (especially HB 1110)
- NR zones have not been comprehensively updated since 1982

- Updating NR zones is a critical step towards addressing our current and future housing needs and increasing access to neighborhoods that have been primarily composed of single-family homes. These changes can:
 - Increase supply and diversity of housing, especially homeownership opportunities
 - Allow a wider range of people to live in neighborhoods currently accessible only to high-income households
 - Create opportunities for new housing types that are more accessible for young people and can allow people to age in place in their neighborhoods

Mr. Staley provided an overview of the following proposed changes to NR zones:

Density and minimum lot size

- The number of dwelling units allowed on a lot would be the greater of:
 - –1 unit per 1,250 square feet;
 - –4 units; or
 - –6 units if the lot is located within one half mile of a major transit stop or if at least two units are affordable.
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) count toward density limits.
- Density on lots with environmentally critical areas (ECAs) would be reduced in proportion to the percentage of a lot that contains ECAs.
- Minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet required for new lots to prevent using subdivision to avoid density limits.

Floor area ratio (FAR)

- Varies with density
- On a 5,000-square-foot lot, it would result in:
 - One home: 0.6 FAR
 - Two homes: 0.8 FAR
 - Three homes: 1.0 FAR
 - Four or more homes: 1.2 FAR
- Generally results in 3-bedroom homes

Height

- Building height limit would increase from 30 feet to 32 feet to allow more livable floor-to-ceiling heights.
- Pitched roofs continue to be allowed up to 5 feet above base height.
- Shed roofs would be newly allowed up to 3 feet above base height to support solar panels.

Setbacks and lot coverage

- Front setback: 10 feet minimum
- Rear setback: 10 feet minimum for principal structure, 5 feet for ADUs, 0 feet if abutting an alley
- Side setback: 5 feet minimum
- Maximum lot coverage: 50 percent

This approach would:

- Allow flexibility for various middle housing types and site layouts
- Support adding new homes while preserving existing homes
- Align with parking requirements
- Accommodate ground-level amenity area for rear units with parking off alley
- Allow light access to homes and interior of site

Amenity rea

- Defined as outdoor space set aside for resident use, such as lawns, landscaping, patios, or roof decks
- 20% of lot must be amenity area
- Cannot include driveways, parking stalls, required bike parking, or solid waste storage
- Must have minimum size of 120 square feet and minimum width and depth of 8 feet.
- At least half must be at ground level, and only half of an amenity area not at ground level would count toward the 20% requirement.

Tree Canopy: Existing Regulations

Development in NR zones will continue to be subject to the following rules:

- The Tree Protection Code limits the number, size, and type of trees that can be removed from private property and establishes requirements for replacing trees cut down.
- Tree planting requirements require planting of trees as part of development.
- Street tree requirements limit removal of street trees and require planting of new street trees as part development.
- Environmentally critical areas (ECA) and Shoreline regulations protect trees and vegetation around shorelines, creeks, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Tree Canopy: Tree Protection Requirements

- Tree protection rules in NR are different than in multifamily zones
- Front and rear yards can be reduced by 50% to preserve a tree
- Tier 1 trees cannot be removed unless hazardous or through extreme hardship exemption
- Tier 2 trees cannot be removed unless lot coverage can't be met after using front and rear yard reductions, if it causes a dwelling unit to be less than 15 feet in width, or if needed to accommodate infrastructure needed for development

Tree Canopy: New Planting Requirement

- New requirements are based on potential canopy cover rather than size at time of planting.
- New development would have to plant or preserve trees on private property to meet a certain number of points.
- Lower density development would have to achieve more points.
- Tree points would be in addition to street tree requirements.
- Modeling suggests that tree points would result in canopy cover on redeveloped lots of 19-26% after 25 years and 36-46% at maturity.

Tree Canopy: Development Standard Flexibility

- Under existing rules, front and rear yards can be reduced by 50% to preserve a Type 2 tree. With proposed updated setbacks, this would allow setbacks to be reduced from 10 feet to 5 feet.
- We are also proposing to allow parking to be waived if it would preserve a Type 2 or 3 tree.

Parking

- Access must be taken from alley if it is available.
- Parking within 20 feet of front lot line is limited.
- Garages must be setback 20 feet.

Design Standards

Proposal would add design standards to NR zones as follows:

- Entries on front façade with 3-foot by 3-foot weather protection are required
- Minimum 20% of front façade must be windows or doors
- Minimum 3-foot pedestrian walkway must be provided to each unit

Bonus for Stacked Flats

For stacked flats within a quarter mile of frequent transit and on lots of at least 6,000 square feet:

- 1.4 FAR
- Maximum density of 1 unit per 650 square feet of lot area
- On a 6,000 sq ft lot, results in 9 units (vs. 6); more units allowed as lot size increases

Bonus for low-income housing

Buildings within a quarter mile of frequent transit where at least half of units are affordable to low-income households would be subject to following:

- Maximum height of 4 stories
- Maximum lot coverage of 60%
- Maximum density of 1 unit per 400 square feet of lot area
- Floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.8

Residential Small Lot (RSL)

- RSL zones are located only within existing Urban Villages
- RSL standards are not consistent with HB 1110
- This legislation would eliminate the RSL zone and rezone areas currently zoned RSL to Lowrise 1 (LR1)
- Currently, the RSL density limit is similar to LR1, but its FAR limit is lower
- Exception: RSL outside the updated boundary of the South Park Neighborhood Center changed to NR

Mr. Staley provided an overview of the proposed changes to Lowrise (LR) zones and the following changes affecting multiple zones:

Parking Requirements

- Today, no parking is required in centers near frequent transit.
- Consistent with HB 1110, no parking would be required within a half mile of light rail and bus rapid transit stops.
- 1 space per 2 principal dwelling units would be required in other areas.
- Accessory dwelling units would continue to be exempt from parking requirements.

Corner Stores

Small-scale commercial uses, such as restaurants and retail stores, would be allowed at corner locations and lots next to an alley throughout NR and LR zones provided they meet certain standards for:

- Maximum size
- Hours of operation
- Noise and odor
- Location and screening of solid waste and other outdoor activities

Other changes

- Modify parking space size and tandem parking requirements to comply with SB 6015
- Modify standards for pedestrian access and circulation and access easement requirements consistent with HB 1110
- Update EV charging requirements to meet requirements in HB 1287

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for more information on why ADUs are counted toward density limits. Mr. Staley stated that OPCD wants to disincentivize ADUs becoming condos.
- Commissioners stated that Seattle should be leading the way on parking reform and should get rid of parking requirements. We would rather have open space, trees, and patios than space dedicated to parking. Curb cuts are hostile to pedestrian environments and disrupt the public realm.
- Commissioners asked if Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations will be considered in NR zones. Mr. Hubner stated that the City Council included MHA in their adopted work program for the permanent legislation. It remains to be seen what they focus on. Mr. Staley stated that OPCD has provided relevant information on MHA to the City Council for their consideration. Ms. Murdock clarified that MHA is included in the work program adopted in the interim legislation but is not included in the permanent legislation. Commissioners stated that adopted MHA in NR zones has huge policy implications and this is not the right time to advance something that substantial.
- Ms. Murdock asked for confirmation that any amendments that were added to the interim legislation will need to be reintroduced as the City Council considers the permanent legislation. Mr. Hubner stated that this is correct.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the provision that corner stores can be allowed on lots next to an alley. Mr. Staley stated that suggestion came in public comments. It is unlikely that someone will build a new building for a corner store. Most corner stores will likely use existing buildings. The maximum size is around 1,500 square feet of ground floor space. Corner store uses are limited to restaurants, retail, and crafts (small scale manufacturing). Home-based businesses are already allowed. Commissioners asked where these rules are listed. Mr. Staley stated that

allowed uses are listed in the land use code. Commissioners suggested that corner stores should be rebranded as neighborhood stores. Mr. Staley stated that the current land use code refers to these as small-scale commercial uses.

- Commissioners recommended expanding Neighborhood Commercial zones and asked for more information about expanding commercial uses citywide. Mr. Staley stated that commercial zoning changes will be included in the centers and corridors legislation coming this fall. OPCD has received comments about expanding commercial units throughout the city, as well as comments from residents who really like the existing commercial areas and wanted more near their houses. Commissioners stated that more than forty Neighborhood Centers were originally studied.
- Commissioners asked for more information on what uses would be allowed on top of corner stores. Mr. Staley stated that the only use allowed is residential. These uses are currently limited by the residential code and energy code. It will be difficult to build new corner stores. The corner store provision in the permanent legislation is a positive opportunity for small business, especially for those already owning property. Mr. Hubner stated that the economics may be better for locations adjacent to existing commercial nodes with existing foot traffic and visibility.
- Commissioners expressed disappointment that the Neighborhood Center reductions would remove approximately 60 blocks, or approximately 1,000 lots. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD will update the City's buildable lands capacity analysis after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted. The areas removed from the Neighborhood Centers represents a very small portion of the capacity. He stated that the City needs more housing. OPCD removed these areas based on criteria and specific facts on the ground.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the top priorities it should be paying attention to and how the Commission can support the process. Mr. Staley stated that the permanent legislation is now under review by the City Council. OPCD cannot suggest how the Commission can influence the process. Mr. Hubner stated that the Commission does a really good job of communicating the big picture vision. That is the role of the Commission, so it should continue doing that.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Resources

[Crosswalk between Seattle 2035 and One Seattle Plan](#)

[Neighborhood Center boundary change maps](#)

[One Seattle Plan public comment summary](#)

[Original list of Neighborhood Centers studied in the Draft EIS:](#)

[Summary of new state housing laws](#)

[List of items the City Council plans to consider in the permanent HB 1110 legislation](#)

[Ordinance for permanent HB 1110 legislation](#)

[Home business rules – Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection](#)