



## City of Seattle

### Seattle Planning Commission

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

#### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, May 08, 2025  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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- Commissioners Present:** Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, McCaella Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde
- Commissioners Absent:** Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Matt Malloy, Radhika Nair, Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires, Nick Whipple
- Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst

*Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion.*

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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 3:06 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Stroble offered the following land acknowledgement:

*'As we begin our meeting, we respectfully acknowledge that our meeting today is taking place on occupied Coast Salish land. We pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people. To acknowledge this land is to recognize the history of physical and cultural genocide and settler colonialism, which continues to displace Indigenous people today. It is to also recognize these lands, waters, and their significance for the resilient and wise peoples who continue to thrive in this region despite the consequences of displacement and broken treaties. Those who hold settler privilege in this city must work towards supporting the Coast Salish people and all Indigenous people using the various forms of wealth and privilege they reap due to it.'*

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 370 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 Xio Alvarez moved to approve the April 24, 2025 meeting minutes. Co-Chair McCaela Daffern seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

## Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Discussion: Interim Legislation to Implement House Bill 1110

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided a brief overview of the interim legislation to implement middle housing. Mr. Hoey noted that the City Council is considering interim legislation to implement the requirements of House Bill (HB) 1110 by the state deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, and that the interim legislation could be in effect for up to one year. Mr. Hoey indicated that once the interim legislation is passed, the 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. Mr. Hoey shared the timeline for the City Council's deliberation of the interim legislation, noting that the Council will hold a public hearing on May 19<sup>th</sup> and plans to vote on the legislation on May 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Murdock noted that the Commission plans to offer comment at the public hearing.

Mr. Hoey summarized the proposed amendments to the interim legislation as follows:

1. Substitute version of CB 120969 incorporating changes in CB 120949: ADU State Compliance legislation to ensure consistency with each other.
2. Adopt a work program outlining key changes anticipated in permanent legislation.
3. Maintain current lot coverage maximums for detached single family structures; preclude single family development from taking advantage of lot coverage development standards intended for middle housing.
4. Retaining current standards for front yards along Queen Anne Boulevard.
5. Restore a minimum of 2,500 square feet of floor area for projects on lots that are less than 5,000 square feet in NR zones; as drafted, CB 120969 would reduce the permitted size of development on small lots.
6. Clarify and reorganize Neighborhood Residential and Lowrise density limits.
7. Request that the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections report to the City Council on changes that the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) has made to the types of projects that are reviewed under the Residential Code; the SBCC has been tasked by the Washington State Legislature with adopting provisions to expand applicability of the Residential Code to middle housing types.

Mr. Hoey highlighted the next steps and timeline for consideration of the One Seattle Plan:

- Mayor transmits permanent legislation to meet HB 1110 requirements to Council: Anticipated May 2025
- Council deliberations and public Hearing on proposed Comprehensive Plan and permanent legislation: Anticipated June through September 2025
- Comprehensive Plan and permanent legislation effective: Anticipated October 2025

Mr. Hoey provided an overview of recent legislation proposed by Mayor Harrell designed to unlock housing and essential development in neighborhoods that lack utility infrastructure needed for growth. He stated that twenty-five percent of Seattle city blocks outside of the downtown core lack a water, sewer, and/or stormwater mainline. Under current City code, the first developer in an area that lacks this infrastructure must cover the full cost to add it—often more than \$500,000—regardless of the project's size. Projects facing these costs are 30% less likely to move forward than those that don't.

The proposed legislation proposes an equitable cost-sharing approach that spreads the cost of these essential utility improvements proportionally among all developers who benefit from the growth. This policy would reduce the financial burden on any single developer. Development would only pay for the portion of a new main line extension directly in front of the property. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) would pay for the remaining portion through an increase in System Development Charges (SDC) paid by most new developments. Any future development on adjacent properties would pay a fee for their portion of the main line extension.

Mr. Hoey summarized the following benefits of this proposed cost-sharing legislation:

- Building out water, wastewater, and drainage infrastructure will unlock parcels of land for development that today are not financially feasible.
- Project costs are more predictable up front.
- Benefits future homeowners by reducing long service lines that are expensive to maintain.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners inquired about how sidewalks are funded and why they were not included in the proposed cost-sharing legislation. Ms. Murdock stated that she did not know specifically how sidewalks are funded but would find out and provide that information.
- Commissioners noted strong support for the SPU cost-sharing legislation, stating that the proposal responds to previous public comment from a developer who could not pay for their project.
- Commissioners stated that the Seattle Department of Transportation has a sidewalk development program funded by the Transportation Levy. Individual development projects are also responsible to some degree for sidewalk repair and retention.
- Commissioners noted that they had previously received a briefing on sidewalk development prioritization. That briefing highlighted that sidewalks are very expensive and subject to limited funding sources, resulting in the need for alternative and innovative sidewalk treatments.
- Commissioners expressed concern about the amendment that would reduce the required setback for front yards along Queen Anne Boulevard, stating that this is a very site-specific amendment and could set a precedent for other similar requirements. Commissioners stated that this proposed

amendment creates a unique “spot setback.” Queen Anne Boulevard includes a lot of buildings with nonconforming setbacks. This amendment creates an administrative complication and a template for other streetcar boulevards around the city.

- Commissioners asked if there are other restrictions on development along historic landmarked boulevards. Ms. Murdock stated that staff would research this and provide more information.
- Commissioners suggested public comment to the Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan reinforce the message that the interim legislation should be adopted as soon as possible.
- Commissioners stated that the narrow definition of major transit will limit the number of places where six units are allowed by right. The Council should consider expanding the definition to fixed guideways such as trolley lines.
- Commissioners stated that they would like to see legislation that would maximize the creation of housing units in more parts of the city. Affordable homeownership needs long-term compliance and monitoring.
- Ms. Murdock recommended that the Commission’s public comment highlight what they would like to see included in the permanent legislation. She noted that the timeline is tight between the public hearing and the vote on interim legislation.

### **Working Session: Seattle Planning Commission Independent Work**

Ms. Murdock provided an overview of the Planning Commission’s selected past independent work:

- Issue-specific issue briefs to inform the Comprehensive Plan Major Update
- A Racially and Equitable and Resilient Recovery
- Evolving Seattle’s Growth Strategy
- Neighborhoods For All
- Family Sized Housing
- Seattle’s Transit Communities
- The Future of Seattle’s Industrial Lands

She summarized draft independent work scope highlights from the Commission’s recent retreat:

- Build on/evolve past work – Neighborhoods for All 2.0
- Increase housing choice
- Remove barriers to greater housing choice and affordability
- Build a network of connected, thriving neighborhoods for all
- Weave in/address other issues raised:
  - Accessibility
  - Anti-displacement
  - Climate
  - Cultural Spaces
  - Homelessness
  - Youth

Ms. Murdock presented the following questions for discussion:

- Does the proposed scope feel right?
- Are there items to add or save for a future piece of work?
- What are you particularly passionate about that you could bring energy to this effort?

Four small groups of Commissioners summarized the results of their preliminary discussions.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners suggested topics to consider including zoning reform, sidewalk infill, Neighborhood Centers, and maintaining and enhancing existing commercial cores.
- Commissioners recommended talking with organizations such as Africatown to learn more about their process of engaging stakeholders.
- Commissioners suggested a focus on the top three priorities and barriers to enable more people of different backgrounds and income levels to live in the city.
- Commissioners identified a need to focus on one big idea and to be clear on that specific issue. The Commission has been the most impactful with its independent work.
- Commissioners stated that growth of Neighborhood Centers would lead to a major transformation of Seattle. A de-centralized city would include a connected network of neighborhoods.
- Commissioners suggested a topic of "Housing for All" with the goal of realizing a full spectrum of housing in Seattle. Example topics to explore include identifying all the barriers to housing choice and the City's role in what choices are available.
- Commissioners stated that the Comprehensive Plan includes a wide range of policies but does not articulate strategies.
- Commissioners expressed support for the network of neighborhoods concept, including housing and services. Commissioners recommended exploring a poly-centric city with small neighborhoods in between other larger neighborhoods.
- Commissioners recommended a focus on connecting Housing for All and bridging communities through creating access to the city, including unpacking the barriers and opportunities for each.
- Commissioners expressed additional support for focusing on housing choice.
- Commissioners suggested incorporating lessons learned from the Comprehensive Plan process. The City should focus on not only access to transportation, but access to amenities, housing potential, and density of opportunities.
- Commissioners stated that it has become urgently apparent that the City needs to move its plans into action. This will determine what happens over the next ten years.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.**

#### **Resources**

[Proposed legislation on infrastructure cost sharing for new development.](#)  
[Seattle Department of Transportation Sidewalk Development Program](#)