



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Xio Alvarez and Matt Hutchins, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, July 09, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, Rebecca Brunn, Andrew Dannenberg, Amir Ehsaei, Dylan Glosecki, Hailey Karcher, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, T.J. Stutman, Patrick Taylor, Nick Whipple

Commissioners Absent: McCaela Daffern, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson, Margaret Szeles, Kelabe Tewolde

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior 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.

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Xio Alvarez called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm. Co-Chair Alvarez 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 Alvarez 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, announced several upcoming Commission meetings and reviewed the format of this meeting.

ACTION: Commissioner Nick Whipple moved to approve the July 11, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rebecca Brunn seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Ms. Murdock welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners - Amir Ehsaei, Hailey Karcher, T.J. Stutman, and Patrick Taylor - and thanked outgoing Commissioners Matt Hutchins and Radhika Nair for their service. Ms. Murdock introduced the proposed slate for Commission leadership as follows:

- Commission Co-Chairs: Xio Alvarez and Nick Whipple
- Housing and Neighborhoods Committee Co-Chairs: Rebecca Brun and Dyland Glosecki
- Land Use and Transportation Committee Co-Chairs: To be determined

ACTION: Commissioner Cecelia Black moved to approve the proposed Commission leadership slate. Co-Chair Xio Alvarez seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

Ms. Murdock 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.

There was no public comment.

Briefing: Seattle Streets Illustrated Update

Gabriel Seo, Aditi Kumbaj, and Peter Samuels (SDOT)

Mr. Seo introduced the Streets Illustrated Update project. He stated that Streets Illustrated is how SDOT designs, builds, and manages the right-of-way. It is an online resource that provides design guidance, standards, and processes. It is adopted through a joint Director's Rule with SDOT and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). Streets Illustrated is used by City staff, design consultants, contractors, developers, advocacy groups, and community members. The Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) sets out requirements and when they would be triggered. SMC Title 23.53 refers to Streets Illustrated (Seattle's Right-of-Way Improvements Manual) for street and alley improvements.

Mr. Seo highlighted several examples of Street Type Standards for a variety of principal arterials, minor/collector arterials, and non-arterial streets. Streets Illustrated includes Street Design Standards for the following: sidewalks, traffic calming, street trees, accessibility, intersections, clearances, drainage, street and pedestrian lighting, transit, bicycle, and freight. He shared examples of recent projects that have utilized Streets Illustrated for right-of-way improvements, including:

- 3rd Ave S and S Main Street bus stop
- Thomas Street: 5th Ave N to Dexter Ave N
- East Marginal Way Corridor
- Rapid Ride H Line Delridge Way SW
- Greenwood Raised Community Crosswalk

Mr. Seo summarized the following reasons that SDOT is updating Streets Illustrated:

- Updated and new modal networks and growth strategy included in the Seattle Transportation Plan, One Seattle Plan, and Regional Center Plans
- Updated design guidance (PROWAG final rules, NACTO Design Guidance, etc.)
- New legislation (WA Senate Bill 5595 Designated Shared Streets)
- New and emerging mobility (micromobility, EV, AV, etc.)

He presented the phased approach for this update:

- Prioritize topics to advance each year
- Develop content with subject matter experts (SMEs)/consultants
- Engage with stakeholders (including Modal Advisory Boards) for input
- Adopt update content through Director's Rule

Mr. Seo listed the following priority topics for the update:

- Safety (Vision Zero)
 - Traffic Calming, Daylighting Intersections, No Turn on Red (NTOR), Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI), Pedestrian Crossing, etc.
- Accessibility (ADA)
 - Curb Ramps, Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI), Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS)
- Public realm
 - Design guidance and elements
- Streets Illustrated Map
 - Street Type designation update in response to the One Seattle Plan growth strategies

He presented the following questions for discussion:

- What are the Planning Commission's topics of interest in transportation as it relates to the implementation of the Seattle Transportation Plan and One Seattle Plan?
- Are there any specific Streets Illustrated design standards and guidance that you feel are missing or need an update?

Mr. Seo ended his presentation with a summary of the next steps for the Streets Illustrated update:

- Draft Design Standards and Guidance working with SMEs
- Engage with stakeholders when draft content is ready to share
- Prioritize topics to advance in the next cycle

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed their opinion that curbless streets are not really curbless and asked about alternative designs if the preferred design cannot be accommodated. Commissioners appreciated SDOT's efforts at tactile wayfinding. What if the design cannot be accommodated. Mr. Seo stated that there is a distinction between a shared street and a curbless street. A designated shared street

is where people will be legally allowed to walk in the street. During the pandemic, SDOT had closed streets to through traffic to enable Stay Healthy Streets where people could walk in the travel lanes. A new state law for shared streets (SB5595) allows municipalities to designate non-arterial streets as shared streets to provide legal priority for pedestrians within the travel lane, which differs from other streets where pedestrians do not have a legal right to be in the travel lane if there are sidewalks on the street. There are international examples of shared streets, including the UK, where they call them either Shared Streets (urban commercial context) or Home Zones (residential neighborhood context). He stated that accommodating for people with visual impairment has been a key component in considering how to make shared streets safe for all users, including people with disabilities. A curbless street does not necessarily mean a shared street, as it could be a transit street or a green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) feature, or other design that does provide priority to pedestrians within the travel lanes but may nonetheless provide benefits of calm traffic and easier access into the street for pedestrians. SDOT is currently working in progress to set up processes for designating shared streets along with design criteria.

- There are 350 block faces where SDOT is obligated to deliver sidewalks through the recent transportation levy. Mr. Seo stated that alternative sidewalk treatments guidance is currently included in Streets Illustrated. SDOT may deliver many projects using alternative sidewalks to meet the levy commitment.
- Commissioners stated that the One Seattle Plan includes policies about developing along corridors. The Commission has had discussions about expanding frequent transit corridors to include a block or more on either side of the main arterial. Commissioners asked how SDOT is thinking about the side streets, adjacent to main arterials. Mr. Seo noted that there are conversations happening at a policy level, including between the SDOT Transportation Planning team (c/o Jonathan Lewis) and OPCD. The corridors concept has not officially filtered down to the design standards level. Other infrastructure decisions would need to be made, including how to manage water, waste collection, etc. with increased density, before getting to the design level. This concept will be a challenge in existing neighborhoods.
- Commissioners inquired about whether SDOT is considering including a matrix in updated Streets Illustrated to document tradeoffs for allocating right-of-way. This would establish a hierarchy to ensure that SDOT has a say in how design decisions are made about the function of the road and its type. This would identify what fits, what is important, and what should be prioritized. Mr. Seo stated that the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) was intended to provide cohesion and collaboration between individual modal elements. However, many of the modal priority issues need project level analysis before determining project design direction. For example, the Fremont Urban Center has many competing modal priorities, including transit, freight, bike, and pedestrian. Streets Illustrated provides tools to help with making informed decisions.
- Commissioners asked whether SDOT has a lane reconfigurations document like those used by other jurisdictions. Mr. Seo stated that SDOT has an operational policy about lane reconfigurations, also known as “road diets”, through the complete streets process. This is not included in Streets Illustrated at this time.
- Commissioners expressed support for adaptation of commercial alleys for uses other than trash collection. Mr. Seo stated that there are strong voices for maintaining alleys for freight delivery (loading, unloading, etc.) as well as waste collection. The People Streets and Public Spaces section

of the STP includes some named alleys in Pioneer Square and CID. There are some good examples of adapting alleys into multi-use, pedestrian-oriented spaces while accommodating utility/freight needs. SDOT is collaborating with UW's Urban Freight Lab on some of those topics.

- Commissioners asked for clarification whether Bell Street is a curbless street or shared street. Mr. Seo stated that when Bell Street was being developed, the overall intent may have been to create a shared space and that the terms curbless streets and shared streets may have been used interchangeably at the time. It is one of the streets that SDOT is assessing for a designated shared street. There are some elements that can still be improved, including visual and tactile delineations between pedestrian only and shared portions of the street particularly for the visually impaired.
- Commissioners asked how climate leads into which framework is applied. Mr. Seo stated that a sustainability component is included in the STP. Streets Illustrated is not the place to directly address those sustainability issues. SDOT has extensive bike network designs, but the policy discussion is at a higher level. Many components contribute to the sustainability discussion, including funding, implementation, and operations.
- Commissioners asked whether there are any situations where innovations are proposed but are not allowed because of the design standards. Mr. Seo stated that SDOT has a deviation process. For example, the recently redeveloped east-west streets in Pioneer Square were provided with a deviation from the design standards to enable curbless street design elements.
- Commissioners inquired about preventing cars from parking in landscape/ furniture zones when there is no physical deterrent to stop them. How to ensure the standard is enforced? Mr. Seo stated that there are often complex land use components that conflict with transportation investments such as sidewalk widths. In the case of alternative sidewalks, there are cases where additional preventative measures are needed, including curb edging considerations to help prevent vehicular intrusion on to landscape / furniture zones.

Update: Future Independent Work of SPC

Ms. Murdock introduced a draft preliminary overview of potential upcoming independent work.

- **Purpose:** Visualize denser residential streets off the arterial/corridor with right-of-way improvements to facilitate active transportation options and promote healthier, greener streets.
- **Audience:** Mayor's Office and related Departments as they develop One Seattle Plan implementation legislation following completion of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), City Council as they deliberate that legislation and, constituents of both as an educational piece meant to visually inform community members.
- **Timeframe:** Develop over the summer and finalize in the fall.
- **Scope:** Focus on examples of denser residential areas along corridors.
- **Case studies:** To be determined.
- **Visualizations:** Mix of sketches and photos.

She summarized Commission discussions since the June 11 meeting:

- Define terms – arterial, corridor, neighborhood residential street, Stay Healthy Street
- Define and illustrate function of each street type

- Define components of a livable residential street and benefits (for instance - public safety, public health, etc.)
- Suggest improvements across a range of investment
- Need a name for the work
- Review of illustrations collected by staff

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners encouraged the use of the term “corridors” rather than “streets.” Corridors are a topic in the One Seattle Plan. The Commission should respond to that.
- Commissioners noted that they all live in different neighborhoods with different typologies. Commissioners can all think of the specifics of their neighborhoods. For example, some neighborhoods do not have sidewalks. This work should acknowledge the different kinds of residential streets in different parts of the city.
- Commissioners stated that Streets Illustrated has a lot of great graphics that can be combined with the Commission’s concepts. One example to consider is how a five-story building will look when it is developed in a neighborhood with no sidewalks. The new sidewalk would be isolated waiting for other improvements.
- Commissioners noted that Delridge was highlighted in the previous presentation as an example. Density can be added to these streets without being a detriment to the character of the neighborhood.
- Commissioners asked if this work is originating from the Planning Commission independently or has there been interest from any external audience. Ms. Murdock stated that this type of work typically comes from the Commission. She could only recall one example of the Commission responding to an external request. The Commission informs the elected officials of the work but does not put them in a review capacity.
- Commissioners suggested connecting with Jonathan Lewis at SDOT to discuss corridors. Ms. Murdock stated that Planning Commission staff talk with SDOT Policy and Planning staff at a bi-monthly meeting. Staff can reach out to him and ask how their policy team is thinking about corridors and whether the STP will need to be updated to align with the One Seattle Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Resources

[Streets Illustrated Map: Seattle Streets Illustrated](#)

[Chapter 23.53 - REQUIREMENTS FOR STREETS, ALLEYS, AND EASEMENTS | Municipal Code | Seattle, WA | Municode Library](#)