



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Michael Austin, Eileen Canola, Sandra Fried, Grace Kim, Ellen Lohe, Rick Mohler, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Jamie Stroble, Amy Shuman, Lauren Squires, Patti Wilma
Commissioners Absent:	Julio Sanchez, Kelly Rider
Commission Staff:	John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Katy Haima, Planning Analyst
Guests:	Geoff Wentlandt, Office of Planning and Community Development

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:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

Chair's Report

Chair Tim Parham called the meeting to order at 7:32am. He provided an overview of the meeting agenda and upcoming Commission meetings, including the upcoming Commission retreat.

Announcements

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of upcoming community events and provided more details about the upcoming retreat. Mr. Hoey introduced new Commissioners Amy Shuman and Rick Mohler, who both provided a brief description of their professional backgrounds.

Briefing & Discussion: Mandatory Housing Affordability Development Standards Revisions

Geoff Wentlandt, Office of Planning and Community Planning

The accompanying presentation is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of the Planning Commission website.

Mr. Wentlandt provided an overview of the outreach done to date related to the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) and the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations. He reminded the Commissioners of the basic MHA requirements and the currently proposed preferred alternative for implementing MHA citywide. He included an overview of how the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) has responded to items on which the Commission has already commented.

Mr. Wentlandt explained the proposed development standards for Residential Small Lot (RSL), Low-Rise (L-R), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones, as well as proposed changes to Green Factor scoring. He provided an overview of several other changes to development standards intended to encourage livability and family-sized housing in new development. He reported that OPCD received input from many communities wanting more “missing middle” housing, which the proposed legislation responds to by expanding RSL zoning to 62% of the single-family zones lands that are within the current proposal. The proposed legislation would also approximately double the amount of Lowrise 1 zoned land – another zone that encourages missing middle housing such as rowhouses and townhouses.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) were allowed and encouraged in RSL zones, noting that the total density of units could be less for RSL than single-family zones if more than one accessory unit was allowed in single-family zoning. Mr. Wentlandt noted that ADUs would be allowed within the RSL zone. However, the approach of MHA isn't to necessarily encourage ADUs over principal units, as ADUs aren't subject to MHA affordable housing requirements.
- Commissioners noted that many of the revised regulations take into account lot size, but do not respond to the lot type or other contextual factors, such as if the lot is a corner lot or if there is an alley adjacent to the property.
- Commissioners asked about mechanisms or processes accompanying MHA implementation to track if projects are choosing to provide on-site performance or pay the in-lieu fee, and if there are plans to make any adjustments depending on the outcomes. Mr. Wentlandt noted that data will be collected continuously on MHA use, including the balance of payment and performance, and that data is already being collected for areas where MHA has been implemented. The policy intent for the balance of performance and payment is to achieve a mix roughly equal to half and half. If data on MHA use is dramatically different from this, the City would adjust the program requirements.
- Commissioners encouraged a plan to review urban design outcomes after projects begin construction under the new development standards.
- Commissioners asked if OPCD had noticed any early indicators of well how MHA is working in areas where the new regulations have been implemented, such as the U District. Mr. Wentlandt noted several contract rezone proposals are the first projects to use MHA, and they have all elected performance to date. Since the permitting process often takes over a year, OPCD does not yet have the results of data in other areas where MHA has been implemented.
- Commissioners thanked Mr. Wentlandt for tailoring his presentation to respond to the Commission's previous comments and feedback.
- Commissioners encouraged OPCD to continue educating community members that building a 30-foot-tall structure is already allowed in single-family zones, so RSL may be more restrictive in regard to scale than existing regulations.
- Commissioners questioned if the proposed side modulation/material change requirement is the best way to approach improving the appearance and perceived bulk of side facades, as these facades will

likely not be visible in the future, will add additional cost, and would likely only minimally reduce the perceived bulk of a new structure.

- Commissioners asked OPCD to consider allowing developers to achieve Green Factor points by contributing to the public realm off-site, such as in parks or other community open space areas. Mr. Wentlandt noted that projects currently earn Green Factor points on plantings in the right-of-way, which does contribute to the public realm, but there are legal and administrative challenges to off-site provision of green factor elements.
- Commissioners encouraged OPCD to create a graphic that shows the actual number of units expected across the urban villages, relative to the number of total single-family homes, in order to put the rezones into perspective and to better demonstrate the amount of development that is anticipated.
- Commissioners encouraged a provision that would support or incentivize consolidation of open space between two or more projects, and to make open space visually accessible from the street.
- Commissioners supported the increase in the requirement for family-sized units in the Lowrise 1 zone from a ratio of one per every eight units, to one for every four units in the current proposal.
- Commissioners expressed interest in submitting suggestions for amendments to the City Council during their review of the citywide MHA regulations.
- Commissioners encouraged OPCD to consider a demonstration project or design competition for missing-middle housing types, citing Portland's Courtyard Housing Competition as an example. Mr. Wentlandt noted that a study of this nature could be fruitful, and it could also include an analysis of tools that could support existing owners and residents to benefit from the increased development capacity provided by MHA, to ensure that not only developers would use the additional capacity provided by the MHA rezones.
- Staff reminded Commissioners that one of their concerns had been ensuring that existing residents and homeowners are able to capitalize upon extra capacity provided under the proposed rezones, and ensuring that new development standards support retaining existing residents while adding units. Staff encouraged OPCD to consider standards for small lots that would make subdividing easier for homeowners who do not have the financial means to undertake developing new units themselves.
- Commissioners encouraged OPCD and the Department of Neighborhoods to develop outreach materials to homeowners to explain what options they have to develop on their properties, and provide technical or financial support for those who want to develop.

February 8, 2018 Minutes Approval

Chair Parham reminded the Commissioners that the February 8, 2018 meeting minutes will be submitted to Sound Transit as part of the Commission's early scoping comments on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Light Rail Extension projects. Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes and suggested revisions to the minutes to more accurately reflect their comments at that meeting.

ACTION: Commissioner Patti Wilma moved to approve the February 8, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Grace Kim seconded the motion. The motion passed. Commissioners Marj Press, Sandra Fried, Ellen Lohe, and Rick Mohler abstained.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05.