



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 23, 2020

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Rick Mohler

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst

Guests: Cece Hoffman and Lauren Flemister, Office of Planning and Community Development; Megan Archer, Lauren Nauert, Kevin Pelstring, Charles Kerber, Dennis Noland, Mark Weed

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 & Minutes Approval

Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 7:36 am and recognized that we are on indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people. Land acknowledgement is a traditional custom dating back centuries for many Native communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgement is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgement is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth. Chair Austin announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner Rian Watt moved to approve the January 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Patti Wilma seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock announced that the Planning Commission will be holding an open house on February 13th from 5-6pm for individuals interested in learning more about the Commission. Staff will be advertising this event and Commissioners are encouraged to spread the word to their networks. This

open house will coincide with the month-long application period from February 3-28 to serve on the Commission. Applications received will be screened and reviewed before recommendations are submitted to the Mayor and City Council. The Commission currently has four vacant positions and will have three additional openings in April. Ms. Murdock emphasized the importance of reaching out to diverse groups to ensure the Planning Commission is representative of Seattle. She reminded Commissioners of the deadline to apply for the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Policy and Operations Advisory Group. Lastly, she announced several upcoming events including the Community Involvement Commission's 2nd annual report presentation and an Access to Transit workshop hosted by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

Briefing: Indigenizing Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

Cece Hoffman, Office of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Hoffman introduced herself, stating she is originally from the Umatilla Indian reservation. She moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington and is currently an intern with the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD). She will be finishing the Indigenous Seattle internship in June. Her work has been focused on how Indigenous people could be more involved and represented in the City's Comprehensive Plan. She noticed that Native Americans were not mentioned very much in the current Plan, and any references to Indigenous people were not very positive. She is interested in identifying ways to work with the community to change this.

Ms. Hoffman highlighted some data Policy Link collected for the previous Comprehensive Plan that predicted the Native American population in King County will decrease to 0.3 percent. She stated that there is a prevalent public impression that Indigenous people are of the past. The goal is to change the system that continues ongoing oppression of Indigenous people. To do so, policymakers must recognize that Indigenous populations continue to co-occupy the city. She stated the importance of including Indigenous peoples to combat erasure and enable more self-determination. To do so, we must first recognize that "Indigenous people and non-Indigenous settlers co-occupy place, and yet they do so in ways that are rarely common with each other and often fundamentally different" (Porter & Barry, 2016).

Ms. Hoffman highlighted several examples of Indigenous values and a variety of organizations that have incorporated those values. She shared some general examples from Seabird Island in Canada, the City of Vancouver, and the Maori lands of New Zealand, including how those concepts translate into policy and planning. She highlighted another example from the Tseil-Waututh Nation, who started a partnership with the City of Vancouver to plan for its north district. This included a goal that all new structures would have a unified Coast Salish design, but there has not been enough funding to implement this. The Stolo people of Seabird Island came together to form their own community and wrote their own comprehensive plan. Ms. Hoffman shared some highlights from the Executive Summary. The plan is very intentional about community feedback. It shows where their values are and how to prioritize those. The Indigenous culture is embedded in the plan, which is powerful and important to see.

Ms. Hoffman offered some ideas on how these examples and values could be translated to here and now to center Indigenous values, including earth, community, and inter-connectedness, and how to make decisions around those values. She shared the following quote about going beyond land acknowledgement: "Acknowledgement of Indigenous "ownership" (and therefore, implicitly, of colonial occupation and dispossession) is one thing. Granting Indigenous people some determination over the land upon which our cities and suburbs have been imposed, quite another." (Paul Daley, 2016). She cited examples of how this is happening now, including a Native American tribe regaining land in California. She shared her thoughts on how Indigenous values could be reflected in the work of OPCD, especially in the Comprehensive Plan. This could include respecting Indigenous values, consulting Indigenous peoples and working together on contributing and referencing maps for placemaking, developing a shared understanding of what it means to be on Indigenous land, and including Indigenous people in developing policy changes.

Ms. Hoffman concluded her briefing by outlining some potential next steps, including:

- Start working with Policy Link for community outreach;
- Work with local tribes, Indigenous elders and organizations to understand the values and priorities of this area;
- Hold listening, learning, and mapping sessions with Indigenous people;
- Connect Indigenous people to those in different departments of the City, linked by their expertise; and
- Bring Indigenous planners to speak and learn with the City to better understand Indigenous planning.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked whether Ms. Hoffman had any additional material that she could share about the City of Vancouver's process to include Indigenous values. Ms. Hoffman agreed to send additional materials to the Commissioners.
- Commissioners inquired about the future of the Indigenous Seattle work at OPCD after the completion of Ms. Hoffman's internship. She answered that no full-time staff is currently dedicated to this work, but OPCD hopes to hire someone with this background.
- Commissioners recognized that City plans are often a reflection of our values. However, the Comprehensive Plan structure is rigid, focusing on subjects such as transportation, utilities, etc. Ms. Hoffman stated Indigenous communities tend to think of things holistically and comprehensively. The current Comprehensive Plan does not center wellness of the earth, but rather focuses on growth and development.
- Ms. Hoffman asked the Commissioners if the information she presented was new to them. Commissioners replied by saying this briefing was enlightening and informative; not everything was new. Commissioners expressed concern with how much of this information is implemented in local government policy and operations. Commissioners suggested that it would be helpful to investigate areas of tension between Western and Indigenous values, specifically examining whether the field of planning fits into an Indigenous framework.

- Commissioners expressed interest in continuing to focus on incorporating Indigenous values in the Comprehensive Plan. Suggestions included conducting a data walk with Indigenous people and considering incorporating the concept of placekeeping instead of placemaking.
- Commissioners expressed gratitude to Ms. Hoffman for her comments on Indigenizing the Comprehensive Plan as a form of humanizing the Plan. This should not be expressed in only a chapter of the document on race but embedded throughout the whole document. The Plan could be re-structured to be more values focused.
- Commissioners asked Ms. Hoffman if she is currently engaged with outreach efforts related to the Comprehensive Plan and how her work is being received within OPCD. Ms. Hoffman stated that she is trying to think of other forms of potential outreach that could be implemented on a smaller, more individual basis. She stated her work is being well received and is being included in OPCD's scope of work with Policy Link to reach out to other organizations.
- Commissioners stated transforming the planning process to reflect a holistic values-based approach that includes similarities across communities of color could be challenging working within the Western structure. There are synergies across many cultures. The challenge is how to center those values in planning.
- Commissioners stated concern about the statistic that Ms. Hoffman shared regarding the decreasing number of Indigenous people in King County. Commissioners questioned whether this statistic demonstrated a decreasing number of Indigenous people or a decrease in the Indigenous population as a percentage of the total population as the region grows.
- Commissioners stated a desire for learning more about the difference between Indigenous mapping and traditional mapping.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Hoffman for her briefing and expressed interest in continuing the conversation about Indigenizing the Comprehensive Plan and other planning processes.

Update: Light Rail Extensions

Lauren Flemister, Office of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Flemister provided a high-level overview of several work items that OPCD is involved in related to Sound Transit's West Seattle and Ballard Light Rail Extensions. The City is currently organizing its work planning around how to best work with Sound Transit. The City has created seven workgroups including Leadership and Management, Engagement and Racial Equity, Environmental, Engineering, Permitting, Funding, and Planning. The Leadership and Management group is led by the Mayor's Office and SDOT. The Engagement and Racial Equity group is led by the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and OPCD is getting more involved. The Environmental and Engineering groups are led by dedicated staff at SDOT. The Permitting group is led by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). OPCD is involved with crafting regulatory language for design guidance that will be standardized at the appropriate time. The Funding group is led by the Mayor's Office, SDOT, and Finance and Administrative Services (FAS). This group needs to make a commitment on third-party funding before the Final Environmental Impact Statement is prepared. The Planning group is led by OPCD.

OPCD also has three separate sub-groups. The Design Guidance group is developing a project vision and principles for the City's work, as well as design objectives to work out station area-specific issues. The Alignment and Agency Workshops group is working on staff alignment and identifying priorities for station area planning. The Strategic Framework group is working on an internal-facing document that will guide all of the City's efforts on this project.

Ms. Flemister reviewed the City's and Sound Transit's co-planning responsibilities, including where the two organizations' roles are discrete and where they overlap. The City is responsible for thinking about community planning, including how the future stations integrate with community, transportation connections, and a strategy for stations in industrial areas that involves rethinking industrial lands with transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities. She reviewed the different planning approaches for stations, station contexts, and station areas. Station context includes two to three blocks outside of the station. Sound Transit is not just going to build stations; rather they will turn over land adjacent to the station for TOD opportunities, access improvements, and other City investments. OPCD will identify a vision and expectations within the footprint of the broader station areas.

A series of agency workshops are already underway. The Smith Cove and Interbay workshops are complete. The Chinatown/International District (C/ID) workshop was postponed to allow for an opportunity to have additional dialogue with the community. This is anticipated to be a robust conversation and was requested by the South Downtown stakeholders. Other station areas also need additional early supportive work for racial equity reasons, as these station areas present opportunities for significant redevelopment. Sound Transit has hired design consultants to evaluate station siting, circulation, bus stop/layover information, and eventually TOD opportunities. These consultants will submit their work to the City for technical review. The City will flag any concerns and opportunities. It is anticipated that the Smith Cove and Interbay station areas will be revisited.

The Station Area Profiles are intended to document planning efforts to date, address connectivity, and identify additional issues. The profiles are currently under strategic review and revision by consultants. The profile graphics show land use, zoning, connectivity, and development potential at each station. Ms. Flemister described community engagement efforts to date. City staff attended Sound Transit's community workshops and is working to leverage existing relationships by attending community meetings that are already scheduled. There will be another round of community meetings later this year. A focus is on targeting people that are harder to reach. Sound Transit is very interested in these City-led meetings and will attend all.

The City is working on design guidance, vision and principles that are easy for the community to understand. The design guidelines and standards represent a framework for the level to which the City will regulate in future station areas. The City has developed a draft vision and guiding principles for light rail expansion that include Dependable Transit, Vibrant Communities, Climate Action, and Equity. The City and Sound Transit are co-planning on a Racial Equity Toolkit.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated an intentional effort around station area planning will be very important, including coordination and accountability with Metro. The Mt. Baker station is an example of how this coordination could have been better. Ms. Flemister stated the City and Sound Transit have increased their efforts around early coordination with Metro.
- Commissioners emphasized the importance of the community having the opportunity to voice their concerns, hopes, and dreams. The meetings that have already happened were organized by Sound Transit, while these latest meetings will be organized by the City. This could be very confusing for the public.
- Commissioners requested additional clarification about stations in industrial areas and what those stations will mean for those communities. Ms. Flemister replied that it is the City's job to set the tone for setting expectations around stations in industrial areas. There is a tremendous opportunity around reconceiving what industrial areas could be. It is the City's responsibility to be creative. The City will have a clear plan for any leftover parcels and redevelopment opportunities after construction is complete.
- Commissioners asked for an update on the status of the 130th Street and Graham Street stations. Ms. Flemister stated that the 130th Street station is a predicament for Sound Transit. The current question to be determined by the Sound Transit Board is whether to build the station earlier than planned. It would be more expensive to build early but City Councilmembers and community members are advocating for this station to open sooner than planned. The City is trying to figure out the potential for rezoning around this station. Ms. Flemister stated that there is not a lot that she can say publicly about the Graham Street station. Sound Transit has not staffed that project. The station is the subject of a conversation at the Executive level.
- Commissioners reiterated the importance of industrial lands and expressed gratitude for the City's thoughtful approach being taken on the C/ID station. Race and equity are the most important considerations. Commissioners encouraged recognizing the Japanese cultural community and looking at businesses that will be impacted.

Public Comment

Dennis Noland spoke on behalf of the Youngstown Community Association. He stated that Youngstown residents feel the Yancy/Andover alternative is best for that community, as it does not directly impact the neighborhood and existing homes. He suggested some refinements to the proposed alternative for traffic circulation and truck access. This alternative could become a community asset rather than destroy existing housing stock.

Mark Weed stated he is very interested in what the City is doing on the light rail expansion project. He is optimistic about the station area planning process and encouraged the Planning Commission to continue to support the City's efforts.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 am.