



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Rick Mohler and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble

**Commissioners Absent:** Patience Malaba, Alanna Peterson

**Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

*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:

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

#### Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:33 am. Co-Chair Stroble offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to acknowledge that the city of Seattle is on stolen Coast Salish land, specifically the ancestral land of the Duwamish, Suquamish, Stillaguamish, and Muckleshoot Tribes. We strive to remedy this injustice through our beliefs and actions in helping to steward our land and communities in Seattle.'

Co-Chair Stroble asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms. She reminded the Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

**ACTION: Co-Chair Rick Mohler moved to approve the December 9, 2021, meeting minutes. Commissioner Roque Deherrera seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

**ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the January 13, 2021, meeting minutes. Commissioner Roque Deherrera seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson abstained.**

## Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, provided a brief review of the format for the online meeting and noted that due to the online format, public comment must be submitted in writing at least eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting.

## Discussion: Draft Industrial and Maritime Strategy DEIS Comment Letter

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's Draft Industrial and Maritime Strategy Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comment letter. Ms. Murdock stated that the goal for this discussion was to provide staff with sufficient direction to prepare a final draft for action at the Commission's February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioners took five minutes to review the contents of the draft letter before providing comments.

**DISCLOSURE: Commissioner Radhika Nair disclosed that she works for Berk Consulting, the author of the Industrial and Maritime Draft Environmental Impact Statement. She is a technical contributor to the content of the DEIS.**

## Commission Discussion

Commissioners organized their comments according to the individual topics addressed in the draft comment letter. A summary of these comments is below.

### *Overarching Comments*

- It would be helpful to use bullet points in the letter to explicitly pull out all the specific comments or items we are asking for additional analysis on. It would make it easier for City staff and their consultants to refer to and analyze.
- The letter should include a quick Executive Summary at the beginning with a list of all our recommendations by topic area.

### *Land and Shoreline Use*

- The draft letter includes a request for analysis of economic impacts. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) includes rules on what can be considered as part of an EIS. Economic analysis is typically not considered. Adding more topics opens an EIS to more appeals. We could still raise the issue of economic impacts. The policy decisions around this strategy can be informed by supplemental studies outside of the EIS, but they would likely not live within the main body or appendices of the EIS. We could suggest they are studied outside as part of the process for making policy decisions.
- We should recommend analyzing the economic feasibility of higher standards for landscaping and multi-modal transportation to create healthier transitions within single-use industrial zones.
- How do these policies fit within an economic development strategy? We should point out specifically how we think this can ripple through the economy and impact many levels of the community. Group some of the analyses that we are requesting under the theme of a regional economic development strategy.

- We are asking for a comparison of the impacts in the two Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (M/ICs). It's important to identify what's happening in different sub-areas (Ballard, Sodo, etc.).

### *Housing*

- The letter references a jobs/housing analysis. We should encourage that analysis to include job quality and housing affordability and request that the EIS identify specific types of housing.
- Move the sentence about the sufficiency of housing in relation to job growth to the beginning of that section. This is the context for the whole section.
- Our request for a housing capacity analysis should not only be within the watershed of adjacent areas but within reach by regional light rail outside Seattle.
- The EIS should consult Sound Transit's West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) DEIS analysis and include similar projected ridership assumptions. This EIS includes the same assumptions. These projects will inform/impact each other.
- Citywide or regional analysis would be outside the scope of the EIS. The projected jobs numbers are aligned with the data in the current Comprehensive Plan.

### *Transportation*

- Move the discussion of light rail up to the first paragraph of the Transportation section This is a big theme for us. We need to understand more about the interaction between the light rail system, housing needs, jobs, and transit demands.
- This EIS should broadly state the consideration of assumptions and outcomes of the WSBLE DEIS.
- Even though we have a general equity section in the letter, we should have a specific request for equity when considering mitigation measures. Mobility hierarchy should be considered when assessing mitigation measures. For example, freight deserves an equity perspective. If we say freight should be prioritized and mitigate any issues, we should also consider how that impacts equity. An efficiency and equity lens should be applied for mitigation.
- The EIS should identify the disproportionate impact between job growth in the Ballard/Interbay/Northend M/IC (BINMIC) and Greater Duwamish M/IC. The Duwamish Valley has far more network gaps and is already shouldering disproportionate traffic impacts including historic disinvestment and the West Seattle Bridge closure.
- We should emphasize the magnitude of the difference between the M/ICs as an overarching theme.
- The EIS should include an analysis of where multi-modal transportation network pinch points and access gaps are, including gaps in the future light rail station areas.

### *Environmental Justice and Equity*

- The last sentence of the first paragraph currently states "repair the harms of the past and benefit affected communities through both public and private investment." That may be an unreasonable expectation for a zoning ordinance to fix everything at once. Perhaps change this sentence to "move to repair" or "help to repair..."
- Our M/ICs are very different places and will need very different solutions. The EIS should separate its findings and identify specific strategies for each M/IC. The approaches will be very different.
- The EIS overall does thoroughly address the different impacts in each zone. The Summary chapter and introductions to each major chapter fall short in addressing that differential analysis. The

Introduction is not as strong with regards to equity. The EIS authors should make sure the Summary is consistent with each chapter.

- We should include a statement about the legacy of zoning and redlining in neighborhoods such as Georgetown and South Park that has created the environmental justice situation we see today.
- Our letter should acknowledge where heavy industry was located before creation of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Environmental Protection Agency.

#### *Biological Resources and Environmental Health*

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas: The State is considering doing more air quality monitoring. We do not mention greenhouse gases in this section. We should mention the cumulative impacts of all types of air pollution and greenhouse gases.
- Water Resources: Encourage the EIS authors to incorporate future projections of rainfall and flow. Climate change will result in heavier precipitation that needs to be accounted for, especially because we already have drainage issues in industrial areas.
- Contamination: Recognize the historic legacy of the Greater Duwamish M/IC vs. the BINMIC. People fish in the Duwamish River. Most subsistence fishers in the Duwamish are people of color including Native communities. The EIS should include these in the list of stakeholders.
- Historic Resources: The EIS authors should consult with the tribes and recognize industrial land as the traditional and customary cultural land of the Duwamish Tribe and other tribes.
- Open Space and Recreation: Incorporate use of recreational and green space as mitigation, especially in the Duwamish Valley.

#### **Public Comment**

The following public comment was read by Ms. Murdock:

*Thank you for the work that the Commission has been doing to weigh in on proposed industrial land use changes. We especially appreciate your advocacy for improvements to environmental health impacts, your focus on centering workforce development programs on equity, and your shaping of the question: How do we create density around our new light rail system without dislocating industry?*

*Of primary concern to our two organizations, the City's current industrial lands proposals, which cover all of Seattle, obscure the characteristics unique to the Stadium Transition Area Overlay District (STAO). Two examples of this are:*

- *The DEIS fails to assess the transportation impacts of a full office buildout around the stadiums, which is allowed under the current IC zoning. As a result, the transportation impacts of any proposed land use changes cannot be meaningfully analyzed.*
- *In their broad analysis, the City focuses on the incompatibility of housing with land that is zoned primarily Industrial General. This approach does not make clear how housing around the stadiums is out of character, given the significant housing that already exists, i.e., the 240-foot-tall towers on the North Lot and the Gridiron Condos next to Lumen Field.*

*Additionally, we are concerned that the City is proposing to use restrictions on housing that were developed for land zoned Industrial General decades ago on what will be new construction on land zoned Industrial Commercial, i.e., the Caretaker/Artist Exception. We strongly believe that this is a fundamental flaw in the City's proposal.*

*We contend that housing is the economic engine that will fund affordable maker spaces in the proposed Urban Industrial Zone and it will be important to understand how much housing is needed to subsidize these maker spaces and whether it is also possible to create a public benefit by requiring some level of affordability for the housing. To that end, we have engaged Heartland LLC to analyze the financial feasibility of a range of development concepts that may result from changes in land use policy. We see this analysis as central to answering your question about creating density around the light rail system without dislocating industry.*

*Thank you for your consideration of these issues and their impact on the City's analysis.*

*Sincerely,*

*Joshua Curtis  
Executive Director, Washington State Ballpark Public Facilities District*

*John Marchione  
Executive Director, Washington State Public Stadium Authority*

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 am.**