



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 28, 2021
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Katherine Idziorek, Grace Kim, Patience Malaba, Rick Mohler, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Patti Wilma

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

Guests: Lauren Flemister, 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 & Minutes Approval

Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 7:37 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 asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for any additions or amendments to those norms before stating the expectation that everyone practice those norms.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the January 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

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 8 hours before the start of the Commission meeting. She provided an update on the appointment process for new Commissioners. Eight new members will be referred to the City Council on February 8 and voted on at the Council's February 16 meeting. Murdock stated that the Commission's February 11 meeting will be the last official meeting for Commissioners Michael Austin,

Grace Kim, Amy Shumann and Patti Wilma. That meeting will be held online using the Webex remote meeting platform to accommodate all the existing, outgoing, and new Commissioners.

Update: Office of Planning and Community Development work with Sound Transit
Lauren Flemister, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Ms. Flemister provided an update on Sound Transit's realignment process and the recent news about the agency's revenue shortfall, referencing documents available on Sound Transit's website. She described the City's co-planning process with Sound Transit, including for what both entities are responsible. The City is leading community planning and station access planning efforts. Sound Transit is responsible for station design; the City is responsible for the larger station area; and both are collaborating on station context planning. OPCD is coordinating its Sound Transit work with the City's Industrial and Maritime Strategy, which may relate to future transit-oriented development (TOD), economic development opportunities, and freight issues.

OPCD is leading early planning efforts in Chinatown/International District (C/ID), Jackson Hub (which includes C/ID and Pioneer Square), Westlake, and Delridge. In C/ID and the Jackson Hub, OPCD is coordinating with other projects and building relationships. This has been a challenging process due to COVID-19, as it is difficult to engage with diverse stakeholders. Staff has been working to re-engage and re-frame the planning process, including looking at new initiatives and determining the best way to best move forward with agency partners. The Westlake Hub process is moving forward with securing the Downtown Seattle Association as a partner. Issues in Delridge include the transfer environment for transit users coming from South King County, TOD, and station access.

Ms. Flemister provided an overview of inter-agency co-planning work planned for 2021, including scope concurrence and technical review efforts, agency workshop reconciliation, coordination with the Industrial and Maritime Strategy, and equitable TOD planning. Concurrence involves non-binding agreements between the City and Sound Transit, mostly pertaining to design, and technical review within a regulatory framework to streamline the permitting process. Equitable TOD planning includes looking at opportunities for community-led, community-driven, and community-owned development projects. The project team is thinking holistically about TOD to include cultural placemaking, affordable commercial space, community gardens, and other projects with community benefits.

Additional planning issues in the station area include possible interim controls, a zoning strategy beyond completion of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy, and a joint engagement strategy during and post-COVID-19. Interim controls have previously been used as an overlay. The project team are considering whether to use this approach. OPCD will consider different zoning typologies resulting from the Industrial and Maritime Strategy. The joint engagement strategy will be led by the Department of Neighborhoods with OPCD support.

Ms. Flemister highlighted the innovative Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) work being done as a joint effort with the City and Sound Transit. This approach centers racial equity project-wide to enhance mobility and access, create opportunities for equitable development, avoid disproportionate impacts, meaningfully involve community, and enhance mobility and access. The RET will be applied in C/ID to limit harmful impacts, maximize connections for all users, and establish a 100-year vision for future generations, communities of color, and low-income populations. In Delridge, the RET will be applied to

ensure excellent bus and rail integration and equitable TOD serving the community. Additional RET ideas aim to ensure a sense of belonging for communities of color at all stations; create opportunities for community identity at each station; expand housing and job access in high opportunity areas for communities of color; incorporate design for essential services early in design process; ensure bus re-routing around stations does not make transit service worse for communities of color; ensure community-facing material representing design direction centers race, poses RET questions to community, and authentically shares how the City is involved in the work. Some ideas have come out of work on design guidance from community members and examples from cities around the world.

The Design Guidance process has been running concurrently with the planning process and includes both ongoing co-planning and internal coordination. A series of ongoing co-planning meetings have focused on sharing information and the development of design tools that include design guidelines, development standards, and updates to Streets Illustrated. Internal coordination has focused on developing Design Guidelines to help implement the City's Sound Transit 3 vision, including guiding principles and objectives. OPCD is leading this process in close coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. This process strives to meet the following Design Goals:

- Advance Equity
- Put People First
- Strengthen Community
- Harness Economic Benefit
- Enhance Neighborhood Identity
- Optimize the Mobility Network

The Design Guidelines are organized into the following four categories:

- Design Fundamentals
- Station Design
- Public Realm
- Special Structures

The next steps for the Design Guidance process include online workshops with Boards and Commissions; working with the Seattle Design Commission on guidelines and prompts; and continuing coordination with Sound Transit on community engagement, discussions about design guideline and development standard content and specifics, resolving conflicts, and communicating the City's design expectations.

Ms. Flemister provided an update on the Equitable TOD (ETOD) grant that OPCD received from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). OPCD is using a Race and Social Justice approach to this grant for accountability to communities of color to bolster decision-making. This includes framing the deployment of resources towards Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, thinking of community needs, and creating processes and tracking to increase accountability.

One component of the ETOD grant is a Remnant Parcel Utilization Framework, which aims to determine a strategy for use and development of parcels of land leftover from Sound Transit development projects. The project team aims to incorporate community imperatives in this work. Other grant components are the ETOD Strategy and Implementation Plan and the Station Access and

Public Realm Coordination. The organizational structure of this work includes a core steering committee and strong integration with the Remnant Parcels strategy and the Community Involvement Task Forces. These task forces will focus on capacity building with the Department of Neighborhoods' Community Liaisons to elevate a community focus and will include a heavy focus on recruitment of young and diverse members. Ms. Flemister provided an overview of the schedule and next steps for the ETOD grant, including:

- A Memorandum of Agreement with the FTA and allocation of grant funds
- Coordination with Sound Transit
- Further program development and scoping
- Request for Proposals (RFP) process and consultant/contractor procurement

Ms. Flemister provided an update on the 130th Street and Graham Street station planning efforts. The 130th Street project team is working on a draft plan and is in the final stages of plan development. OPCD is weighing options on a potential rezone immediately across the street from the 130th Street station. Sound Transit is expected to make their final realignment decision in July 2021 and a specific decision on the timing for the 130th Street station is anticipated in October 2021. OPCD is initiating internal conversations on Graham Street station area planning with the intent to address the community's readiness to engage in a planning process. OPCD is conferring with members of the community and staff involved in Graham Street visioning and will be working with the Mayor's Office. This project is subject to Sound Transit's realignment decision.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested more information on upcoming steps in the Sound Transit project and asked how the next major Comprehensive Plan update can amplify and codify this work. Ms. Flemister stated that the next Sound Transit milestone is release of the Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2021. The Administrative Draft is not a public document, but City staff will provide comments. Sound Transit will synthesize and incorporate those comments. The Sound Transit Board is expected to make a decision on project realignment in July. There are opportunities in the Comprehensive Plan Major Update to articulate the City's vision for neighborhoods that have high capacity transit. OPCD will be looking to communities for input in the update process.
- Commissioners stated that it is unfortunate that Sound Transit chose the term "realignment" for its process to consider future long-range capital program adjustments in response to revenue impacts and cost pressures.
- Commissioners stated that significant resources will be necessary to fund infrastructure investments around the future station areas and inquired about the best way to keep the Mayor and City Council connected into this process. Ms. Flemister stated that the City has a designated representative in the Mayor's Office and a leadership team has been put together specifically for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) project. OPCD's technical work includes thinking of this project from a policy standpoint to understand that integrating future light rail investments with neighborhoods will require City government, the private sector, and others to work together.
- Commissioners expressed gratitude for the inclusion of Racial Equity Outcomes in the planning process and suggested that it may be helpful to consolidate some of the outcomes to measure and track existing inequities. One example would be to measure how many businesses have been impacted in the past and how to prevent additional businesses from being displaced.

- Commissioners requested more information on the scope of the Design Guidelines process and asked whether this process is inclusive of the individual station areas. Ms. Flemister stated that the Design Guidelines will apply to individual stations and any public realm improvements associated with the stations. Private development adjacent to the stations are subject to existing design guidelines. She stated that the City will work to ensure a smooth transition between the individual stations and the adjacent areas including street use and other public realm improvements.
- Commissioners asked how OPCD is coordinating this Sound Transit project work with the Industrial and Maritime Strategy planning process. Ms. Flemister stated that the project team is reviewing potential opportunities to coordinate with any draft recommendations from the Industrial and Maritime Strategy, especially in areas immediately around stations. The City will work with the Port of Seattle, property owners, and other stakeholders related to the future of the Armory site.
- Commissioners inquired about the future of golf courses adjacent to the future light rail alignment. Ms. Flemister stated that she does not have a specific answer at this time. She acknowledged that having access to that land could provide future options. Seattle Parks and Recreation is involved in project discussions, especially regarding the 130th station area planning work. Any related issues, concerns, and challenges identified in the environmental review process will be addressed at the Director and Mayoral level.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the Design Guidelines incorporating the public realm and looking at how people will arrive at the stations. Commissioners also acknowledged that the guideways have tremendous visual impacts.
- Commissioners asked how to ensure that the Graham Street community gets some attention, so they are ready and able to participate in a planning process when the time is right. Ms. Flemister stated that Graham Street is a priority OPCD workplan item. The community has taken a leadership role and is ready to engage with the City. OPCD will work to get approval to engage with them.
- Commissioners recommended partnering with and advocating for communities that have been left out of the planning process and suggested including young and diverse populations in the Community Involvement Task Forces. Ms. Flemister stated that the ETOD grant scope has been designed so the Community Involvement Task Forces would be integrated into all components of the program. Community members in each station area will be able to set their own agenda and constantly act as an advisory body.
- Commissioners requested additional information on the process for identifying uses for remnant parcels, especially along the Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor. Ms. Flemister stated it is an exciting opportunity to finally activate those parcels for the community. She acknowledged that the FTA grant is intended to apply to all station areas along the WSBLE alignment, but the City needs to invest more and focus energy in communities of color.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the name Jackson Hub, stating this name does not serve as a reflection of the adjacent community, especially in C/IID.
- Commissioners requested more information on how Design Guideline ideas generated by the community are considered. Ms. Flemister stated this is an opportunity for OPCD and the inter-agency team to acknowledge feedback from communities.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Flemister for her update and opportunity to collaborate on this process. She stated that she appreciated ongoing feedback and input from the Planning Commission.

Public Comment

The following public comment was received by email in advance of the meeting and read to the Commissioners by Executive Director Murdock.

The minimal zoning change suggested for land use in SODO (SODO Station and First Avenue areas) coming forward from City staff essentially preserves the status quo, with a cursory nod to innovation, and is inconsistent with the community's vision for Transit Oriented Development in the City. The majority of the neighborhood believes mixed-use density allowing for office, residential, tech/med tech, maker space and other commercial uses - complementary to adjacent maritime/industrial support services - will produce revitalization, new employment and security. This mixed-use focus will help produce thousands of living wage jobs and affordable housing for the community all within the community.

High density mixed-use zoning recognizes the City's evolving economic base, maximizes Sound Transit's investment in SODO, and capitalizes on the existing commercial business activity along First Avenue. Without meaningful expansion in allowable uses, the problems that have plagued SODO for decades (higher taxes due to rising land prices, aging infrastructure, environmental hazards, congestion, lack of parking) will only continue to worsen. Please consider these thoughts when reviewing recommendations for the evolving industrial lands and uses in the City.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our thoughts. We are available to discuss our vision for SODO in more detail at your convenience. I hope to attend the meeting virtually as well.

*Mark Weed
SODO Property Representative*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 am.