



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, July 26, 2018
Approved Meeting Minutes

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| Commissioners Present: | Michael Austin, Eileen Canola, Sandra Fried, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Tim Parham, Kelly Rider, Amy Shumann, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma |
| Commissioners Absent: | David Goldberg, Ellen Lohe, Marj Press, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, |
| Commission Staff: | Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant |
| Guests: | Nathan Torgelson, Director, Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections; Valerie Kinast, Seattle Design Commission |

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 Tim Parham called the meeting to order at 7:37 am.

ACTION: Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the July 12, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Michael Austin seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Patti Wilma abstained.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Executive Director, announced several upcoming community events.

Update: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)

Nathan Torgelson, Director, SDCI

Director Torgelson provided the Planning Commission with his quarterly update on the work of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). Highlights of the update include:

- Accela: The sever stability issues associated with the new permitting, complaint and inspection system have now been addressed. The Department is taking steps to address the challenges experienced by staff and customers since the launch of the new system. In-person feedback and training sessions will soon begin and be recorded on Skype so those not able to attend will still benefit from the sessions. A new customer service group will be dedicated to real time response – similar to a call center. An Executive leadership team will be convened to better prioritize and address issues that arise with the new system. The timeline for implementing these actions is by the end of the year. While some applicants have asked that the Department return to the old permitting system, such a move is infeasible as that system is over ten years old, was no longer supported by a vendor, crashed often and was difficult to update. In addition, Accela is a City-wide platform and will eventually facilitate better coordination across City departments.
- Permits. Permit volume is down slightly but not significantly.
- Significant projects: The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the Arena is slated to be issued at the end of the summer.
 The Master Use Permit for the Washington State Convention Center expansion was issued earlier this year. The project cost is over \$1.6 billion.
- Policies: The Final EIS on proposed changes to Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations is due to be issued in the fall. The Mayor is excited and supportive of the proposed changes. She is interested in creating standardized, pre-approved plans. SDCI is considering two options: issuing a Request for Proposals and hiring the successful firm to design pre-approved plans for a fee. The second option is to hold a design competition and award the winner a one-time fee. Councilmember Johnson has been leading an effort to revise the City's tree removal permit process; that legislation is expected to go before Council in August.
 A revised Design Review Process took effect on July 1st. It is anticipated that with fewer projects going through full Design Review, the process might go quicker. City Council intentionally gave SDCI and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) some flexibility in how the outreach portion of the revised process would unfold. As the outreach methodology is not fully codified, it can be modified by SDCI and DON as needed.
 Standards for the Living Building Pilot have been updated so as to be consistent with those of the 2030 district.
 A new construction type recommended by the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda task force has been adopted, allowing six floors of timber over two floors. SDCI worked closely with the Seattle Fire Department and Building Code experts to outline this new type of construction which adds an additional allowable floor while staying within a wood frame construction type. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and SDCI have hired the National Development Council to research financial incentives to encourage developers and owners to upgrade Unreinforced masonry buildings (URMs)
- Personnel: Roberta Baker, the current Land Use Division Director, will be retiring in August. Her position is currently being advertised.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Commissioners suggested considering hiring more than one architectural firm to develop pre-approved plans for ADUS, noting the benefits of design variety as well as designs that can respond to a diversity of conditions including lot size and topography. Commissioners also suggested using GIS to identify buildable parcels, taking into consideration lot coverage and significant trees.
- In response to a question regarding what additional Code Amendments might be on the horizon, Mr. Torgelson replied those related to the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Extension Projects and the Major Institution Master Plan process.
- Commissioners expressed concern about the assumption by some that the Mandatory Housing Affordability legislation will be passed in the fall when that timeline is looking less and less realistic.

Briefing: Seattle Design Commission (SDC) Draft Sound Transit 3 Comments

Valerie Kinast, SDC staff

If you would like to view the SDC presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Valerie Kinast, Strategic Advisor to the Seattle Design Commission, briefed the Planning Commission on the Design Commission's current thinking and recommendations regarding the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Extensions projects station location and alignment alternatives. Ms. Kinast noted that the Design Commission recommendations will be provided to the City elected officials as advice prior to their Elected Leadership Group meeting.

Issues Ms. Kinast thought might be of most interest to the Planning Commission were noted as follows:

- Land use patterns post-station location selection and consistency with the City's Urban Village growth strategy.
- Adequacy of modal plans (such as the Bike Master Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan) once station location and alignment decisions are made.
- Transit Oriented Development opportunities and how they may inform station location decisions.

Ms. Kinast then proceeded to highlight comments and recommendations regarding specific geographies within the alignment alternatives:

- Avalon: Explore opportunities for increasing intensity of use of the golf course parks property
- SODO: Diagram how transfers will take place between the two SODO stations – prioritize at grade transfers where possible.
- Chinatown/International District: Station needs to be a cultural, civic hub and would better serve the community if located on 4th Avenue, where there would be greater opportunities for creating a real, multi-modal transit hub. City should carefully study the long-term benefits of all alternatives versus the shorter-term considerations driven by cost and expediency.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners commented that an alignment on the west side of the train tracks in Interbay would warrant consideration of a lower Magnolia Urban Village.
- Commissioners remarked that sea level rise should be a significant factor in station and alignment decisions, noting that previously consulted flood maps may be outdated.
- Commissioners urged early coordination of City capital investments and planning with station location and alignment decisions and clear communication to the public about how that coordination is happening and informing final alignment and station decisions.
- Commissioners suggested taking into account the economic benefit of seamless transfers in terms of time saved by riders transferring to more time working and recreating in the city.
- Commissioners complimented the work of the Design Commission in reaching out to other Boards and Commissions in discussing the alternatives and developing recommendations.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.