



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 27, 2019
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, Veronica Guenther, Al Levine, Rick Mohler, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Grace Kim, Amy Shumann

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

Guests: Quanlin Hu, 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 7:30 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the May 23, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, announced several upcoming community events. She introduced new Commissioner Al Levine and provided an overview of his background. Commissioner Rick Mohler discussed the recent American Institute of Architects' national conference, where he presented the Commission's Neighborhoods for All report. He proposed the AIA take a position on eliminating single-family zoning, especially in fast-growing cities. AIA members had questions about concurrency, specifically how to keep up with density. Commissioner Mohler will follow up with AIA to keep this proposal moving forward. Executive Director Murdock referenced a

recent New York Times article on single-family zoning, stating this issue is becoming a nationwide conversation.

Executive Director Murdock stated the City and WSDOT are applying for a BUILD grant (formerly TIGER grant) to support planning for the future of I-5. She read a draft statement of support from the Planning Commission for this grant proposal. Commissioners asked if the grant was specifically for the Lid I -5 project. Executive Director Murdock stated the \$4.2 million grant is intended for a study of mobility issues on I-5 from Tumwater to Marysville. Commissioner Al Levine stated the Washington legislature did not fund this study during its most recent session. Commissioners expressed concern that this grant may fund capacity building for expansion of I-5. Executive Director Murdock stated she would find out more information on the grant proposal and follow up with the Commissioners.

Briefing: 2019-2020 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket Setting

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, reviewed the staff draft recommendations on the proposed 2019-2020 Comprehensive Plan amendments. He provided an overview of the annual amendment cycle and the process by which proposed amendments are reviewed for inclusion on the docket for further analysis. The staff draft recommendations include direction whether the Commission recommends docketing four proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), nine proposed amendments to the text of the Plan, and one FLUM and text amendment. The Commission will take action on its final recommendations on July 11.

If you would like to view the 2019-2020 Comprehensive Plan Amendments presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for clarification on docketing criterion G. Mr. Hoey stated this criterion establishes guidance for docketing when a proposal would change the boundary of an urban center, urban village, or manufacturing/industrial center. These proposals require an amendment to the FLUM, regardless of the area's size. An amendment that proposes to change the FLUM is not necessary and will not be considered when it would affect an area that is less than a full block in size and is located adjacent to other land designated on the FLUM for a use that is the same as – or is compatible with – the proposed designation.
- Commissioners requested clarification on criterion D, specifically the process that is applied when a proposal is not docketed because it was submitted in the past. Mr. Hoey stated if an amendment has previously been proposed and rejected, either during the docketing process or by the City Council after docketing, an applicant must provide evidence that relevant circumstances have changed significantly so that there is sufficient cause for reconsidering the proposal.
- Commissioners asked what happens to any proposals that are not docketed. Executive Director Murdock stated applications that are not recommended to move forward through the docketing process may have other options. For example, proposed FLUM amendments that are not docketed may pursue a rezone through another process.

- Commissioners requested clarification on how criterion C3 is used, stating it is very vague as written. Executive Director Murdock stated that the Planning Commission, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and City Council Central Staff all review the proposed amendment applications. Each are tasked with looking at the applications to determine if they are consistent with the policies included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the proposed zoning in Amendment #12. Lish Whitson, City Council Central Staff, stated the existing zoning is Lowrise 3. The proposed amendment is requesting to expand the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village boundary. The urban village allows higher height limits. If the boundary were amended, the property owner would be allowed to redevelop at higher densities under the same zoning.

Update: Mount Baker Station Area Transit Oriented Development

Quanlin Hu, Office of Planning and Community Development

If you would like to view the Mount Baker Station Area Transit Oriented Development presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Ms. Hu provided an overview of opportunities for transit-oriented development in the vicinity of the Mt. Baker Station Area. This station area was recently the subject of a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) convened by the Urban Land Institute. Even though the station has been there for ten years, there have been almost no development investments in the vicinity. The purpose of the TAP was to provide recommendations on how to achieve the community's vision for a town center. Ms. Hu stated the key challenges for this area include a significant number of publicly owned properties, poor soil conditions, current zoning, and streets around the station that are not safe for pedestrians. She shared the results of a recent community priority online survey, updated from ten years ago. She stated that the TAP is different from the recent Accessible Mt. Baker project completed by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). This distinction has been confusing to many residents. Transit-oriented development in this area will require collaboration with different agencies. More than one partner will be needed to achieve the community vision.

Ms. Hu shared the preliminary TAP recommendations, including such high-level actions as improving transit services, improving connectivity, and placemaking. Site-specific recommendations include redevelopment of the University of Washington Laundry site and new bus circulation to serve the Mt. Baker light rail station. The Laundry site is in the process of transferring to the City and may be complete next year. This site could be an opportunity catalyst for new development. Commissioner Al Levine, who was chair of the TAP, stated the existing transit center may become a park, or this property may be more appropriate for development, which would mean that a new park may be located to the south of the existing station.

Ms. Hu stated the draft TAP report will be published soon and the final recommendations will be made in August. The project team wants to ensure the TAP recommendations can create projects that are realistic opportunities for implementation. This project will be a multi-year effort.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed concern about displacement of existing small businesses in the Mt. Baker station area as new development happens. Ms. Hu stated the community's desire for more housing, especially development of affordable housing. The community also has a desire for both creating new businesses and retaining existing businesses.
- Commissioners inquired about the status of plans to re-orient the intersection of Rainier Avenue South and Martin Luther King Jr. Way South adjacent to the Mt. Baker station. Ms. Hu stated that project is not currently funded and needs further study. SDOT is in the process of hiring a consultant for that project.
- Commissioners asked for more information on other potential redevelopment sites, including those currently occupied by Starbucks, Chevron and Arco. Ms. Hu stated those properties are not currently on the market. The Mt. Baker Community Association has been talking to property owners. The community wants a real commitment to improvements.
- Commissioners asked about any current assets and positive benefits in the community that can be used in achieving the community's desired future vision. Ms. Hu stated that the light rail station, Franklin High School, small businesses, restaurants, and small parks need to be better connected. Publicly owned land can be part of the future vision. The project team has a good relationship with private business owners who don't necessarily agree with the vision but want to work together.
- Commissioners recommended including the high school as an important stakeholder/advocate. The campus is open at lunch and students spill out into the neighborhood. Ms. Hu stated the principal of the school is already engaged in the planning process. The pedestrian bridge over Martin Luther King Jr. Way South is not safe or convenient. A project focus is on at-grade pedestrian crossings and traffic safety.
- Commissioners expressed concern that the online survey responses were primarily from white community members. Ms. Hu stated the project team has been reaching out to non-white communities. The team is interested in moving from planning to implementation that responds to what people have already said.

Public Comment

Megan Kruse stated that she submitted Comprehensive Plan amendment proposal #5. She stated this issue is important to be included in the Plan, as it would address the impacts of transportation network companies (TNCs) and the increasing number of delivery trucks that come with growth. She stated the Plan currently only counts single-occupancy vehicles. TNCs and e-commerce deliveries are a growing share of traffic on the City's streets.

Lisanne Lyons spoke representing the Public Facilities District and Public Stadium Authority. She stated that changes have been made around the proposed Stadium District in the past 6 years, including removal of the viaduct and redevelopment of the waterfront. She stated there is very little industrial land left in the District. This land could be utilized for innovative uses, such as a makers' district.

Charles Royer reiterated Lisanne Lyons' comments that things have changed around the stadiums. He is working with the sports teams and the public entities that own the stadiums. They are ready to go to work on the Stadium District proposal.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 am.