



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, May 10, 2018
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Ellen Lohe, Rick Mohler, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires
Commissioners Absent:	Eileen Canola, Sandra Fried, Tim Parham, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Katy Haima, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant
Guests:	Ally Pennucci, City Council Central Staff; Nathan Torgelson, Director, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
In Attendance:	Susie Levy, City Councilmember Mike O'Brien's office; Lyle Bicknell, Ann Sahacharoenwat, Office of Planning and Community Development; Ian Morrison, Richard Zhu

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

Vice-Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

ACTION: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the April 26, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Vice-Chair Austin provided an overview of the meeting agenda and upcoming Commission meetings.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, announced several upcoming community events. She encouraged Commissioners to complete the citywide Boards and Commissions training. She also thanked Commissioners for attending recent Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) and Sound Transit community meetings.

Briefing: Accessory Dwelling Units Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Ally Pennucci, City Council Central Staff

If you would like to view the Accessory Dwelling Units Draft Environmental Impact Statement presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Ally Pennucci, City Council Central Staff, provided an overview of the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). She reviewed a history of the proposed legislation that came out of the 2015 Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) recommendations. The Hearing Examiner ruled in 2016 on an appeal of the Determination on Non-Significance on the proposed legislation and determined that an EIS analyzing potential impacts of the proposal was required. Ms. Pennucci reviewed the objectives of the legislation, which include removing regulatory barriers to building ADUs and increasing the number and variety of housing choices in single-family zones.

The DEIS studied three alternatives, including No Action and two additional alternatives with varying requirements. The two action alternatives consider changes to the owner-occupancy requirement, the off-street parking requirement, the number of ADUs allowed on the same lot, FAR limits for the main house, and development standards (minimum lot size, maximum height, maximum size, etc.). The third alternative was added after the scoping period. Both action alternatives address the regulations that are often cited as barriers to ADUs. Alternative 3 considered more modest adjustments to these regulations as well as adding a Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirement. Ms. Pennucci addressed the main issues of concern addressed in the DEIS. She stated that the DEIS analysis suggests that both Alternatives 2 and 3 would increase the production of ADUs citywide compared to Alternative 1, and would likely reduce the number of teardowns of existing houses.

The Housing and Socioeconomics chapter of the DEIS evaluates the economics of the underlying development and estimates ADU production under the various alternatives. This chapter also considers affordability and displacement impacts.

The DEIS analysis considered the highest and best use of eligible parcels based on market conditions and estimated the most profitable development scenarios. Under Alternative 1, the highest land value was estimated to come from tearing down and replacing an existing single-family house. Under Alternatives 2 and 3, in higher-price neighborhoods, the highest and best use shifts to keeping the house and adding at least one ADU. To estimate overall ADU production, the DEIS looked at historic data and updated variables in the baseline forecast to account for proposed land use code changes to determine the number of parcels that would add ADUs. The big takeaway is that housing affordability and displacement would continue to be a concern under all alternatives. Alternatives 2 and 3 could have a marginal positive impact on affordability. Additional housing supply could reduce pressure on rents, and fewer tear downs could reduce physical displacement.

The Parking and Transportation chapter used parking data from SDOT in four study areas. The analysis determined that increasing the number of ADUs will generally not have significant impacts. This chapter also included proximity to frequent transit in its analysis, as requested by the Planning Commission. The Aesthetics chapter included before and after images and maximum buildout images.

Ms. Pennucci stated that the DEIS is now available and has a 45-day comment period. An open house will be held on May 31 at City Hall. After the close of the comment period, City Council Central Staff and the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) will respond to comments and complete the Final EIS in late August/early September.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for more information about the parking analysis, specifically inquiring how representative the parking results shown from the NE study area are of citywide parking data. Ms. Pennucci replied that citywide parking utilization is 55-85%.
- Commissioners asked for additional clarification between Alternatives 2 and 3. Ms. Pennucci stated that the two alternatives are intended to serve as bookends for the final preferred alternative to be identified.

- Commissioners asked if there are significant cost differences between attached ADUs (AADUs) and detached ADUs (DADUs). Ms. Pennucci replied by stating that DADUs are not affordable for most, as building a DADU is a significant investment that can typically cost between \$150,000-300,000. AADUs can be a more affordable option to develop, depending on the existing conditions of a house.
- Commissioners inquired about access to financing for AADUs and DADUs. Ms. Pennucci stated financing continues to be a challenge. The DEIS authors recognized that land use code changes alone will not benefit all equally. ADUs in general are most affordable to white, wealthy homeowners, but given the lower cost of AADUs, people with less equity could access financing for their projects.
- Commissioners asked which areas of the city might experience the highest production of ADUs. Ms. Pennucci stated that the areas with higher access to opportunity will benefit most. The DEIS estimated that Southeast Seattle will experience smaller change in the number of teardowns of single-family houses and a smaller increase in the number of ADUs built.
- Commissioners expressed support for removing the owner-occupancy requirement and excluding garage and storage space from the overall square footage allowed in an ADU.
- Commissioners had mixed opinions on whether MHA requirements should apply to ADUs.
- Commissioners inquired about the assumptions in the DEIS about ADUs being used as short-term vs. long-term rentals. Ms. Pennucci stated that DEIS did look at the likelihood of short-term rental being the preference. A future policy choice may limit the short-term rental availability of ADUs, but this was not studied in the EIS.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Pennucci for her presentation and indicated an interest in receiving an update as this project moves forward.

Update: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), provided an update on his department's recent permitting and project activities. SDCI's new permit tracking system launched recently with successes and challenges. Building inspectors are adopting mobile technology, making their jobs more efficient. The software transition, however, has not been seamless and SDCI is working to fix bugs in the system. The biggest challenges are to those with permits already in the system.

The City Council recently passed the Convention Center Expansion street vacation with a huge public benefit package that includes \$30 million for affordable housing, funding to implement the bike master plan, and funding to study a lid over I-5. SDCI will most likely issue a Master Use Permit for the project in mid-June. The project will have some significant construction impacts. SDCI issued the Seattle Center Arena DEIS last week. The project is moving forward on a fast timeline. SDCI is working with the 2030 District to incentivize the development of 20 buildings with additional Floor-Area Ratio if they can achieve building energy efficiencies. The District will encourage these projects in urban centers, but not in Chinatown/International District (C/ID). SDCI has been working with the International Living Futures Institute (ILFI) to make sure that the ILFI incentives for new buildings are similar to the 2030 District incentives for additions to existing buildings.

New parking regulations were recently passed by the City Council, including mapping reduced parking requirements in frequent service transit areas and allowing building owners to rent out unused parking spaces. A new Design Review program becomes effective July 1 and will be implemented in conjunction with the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). City Council is considering new tree protection regulations. Councilmember Rob Johnson is hoping to create a one-stop portal for all tree permits. SDCI is proposing a building code change that would allow six stories of wood construction over two stories of concrete in projects that are implementing MHA. SDCI sponsored a Southeast Seattle home fair in late February and is hoping to sponsor another event north of the Ship Canal. SDCI continues to conduct outreach with

tenants and landlords to improve understanding of legislation related to move-in fees, etc. SDCI continues to be involved in all MHA public outreach meetings. SDCI has a new part-time arts coordinator that will serve as a single point of contact for permitting arts and culture uses. Mr. Torgelson handed out copies of SDCI's 2017 annual report and the draft Directors Rule on Early Engagement for Design Review.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if any changes are anticipated on outreach for design review with the transition in leadership at DON. Mr. Torgelson stated that the two departments are in communication regarding that issue.
- Commissioners asked why the C/ID is exempt from the 2030 District program, stating it is unfortunate to exclude a large district that is growing. Mr. Torgelson stated that he did not know exactly why that decision was made, but he will find out and follow up.
- Commissioners asked for more information on tenant protection regulations, including what steps are taken to make sure that those who need the most information are informed. Mr. Torgelson stated that outreach materials are translated into many languages. SDCI is working to create a Renting in Seattle web portal.
- Commissioners asked how the new Directors Rule on Design Review will apply to affordable housing projects. Mr. Torgelson stated that SDCI is in active discussion with OPCD and the Office of Housing (OH) on how that process will work for affordable housing projects.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Torgelson for his update.

Discussion and Agreement on SPC Recommended Level 1 Criteria for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

If you would like to view the SPC Recommended Level 1 Criteria presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Executive Director Vanessa Murdock provided some background on the Level 1 criteria for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions. The Planning Commission is proposing Seattle-based criteria for Seattle elected officials sitting on Sound Transit's Elected Leadership Group (ELG) to use when they are reviewing which alternatives to carry forward into the next phase, or level of analysis. The recommended Level 1 criteria will be sent to the Seattle elected officials serving on the ELG in advance of their meeting on May 17.

Executive Director Murdock introduced the draft Level 1 criteria and facilitated a discussion on each.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners encouraged referencing other policy documents in addition to the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, especially related to environmental justice and/or equity. Director Murdock stated that references to the Comprehensive Plan's focus on race and social equity will be added.

The draft criteria are included below, along with Commissioner comments on each.

1. Advance alternatives that align with Seattle's growth strategy, especially those that offer opportunities for equitable transit-oriented development in existing and future urban centers and urban villages.
 2. Advance alternatives that are consistent with the City's industrial lands policies.
- There were no comments on draft criteria #1 and 2.

3. Advance alternatives that most equitably serve a maximum number of current and future residents, employers and students.
 - Commissioners recommended adding language to ensure service closer to major institutions, including South Seattle College and the medical institutions on First Hill. Commissioners noted the importance of providing access for employees of these institutions.
4. Advance alternatives that serve historically underserved, underrepresented and fragile communities that have experienced underinvestment, including low-income populations and communities of color, while minimizing adverse impacts on these communities, both short term, (i.e. construction) and long term (displacement).
 - Commissioners recommended removing the reference to long-term displacement impacts. Since this language was intended to reflect concern about impacts to businesses in the Chinatown/International District, Commissioners recommended including a more direct reference to this concern in the introduction.
5. Advance alternatives that maximize access and connectivity (including seamless transfers) for pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles, transit and shared mobility service.
 - Commissioners recommended revised language to reference people walking, bicycling, and using other modes of transit.
6. Advance alternatives that benefit more than a single user or user group.
 - Commissioners recommended deleting criteria #6.
7. Advance alternatives that prioritize long-term ridership and community benefits over short-term engineering, cost and construction challenges.
8. Advance alternatives that meet the above criteria but may be considered inconsistent with the ST3 plan.
 - There were no comments on draft criteria #7 and 8.
 - Commissioners recommended adding an additional criterion related to transit-dependent populations.
 - Commissioners agreed by consensus on the final recommended Level 1 criteria as follows:
 1. Advance alternatives that align with Seattle's growth strategy, especially those that offer opportunities for equitable transit-oriented development in existing and future urban centers and urban villages.
 2. Advance alternatives that are consistent with the City's industrial lands policies.
 3. Advance alternatives that equitably serve and provide access to a maximum number of current and future residents, employees and major institutions, including South Seattle College and the health care facilities on First Hill.
 4. Advance alternatives that prioritize service to transit-dependent populations.
 5. Advance alternatives that serve vulnerable communities and businesses, low-income populations and communities of color, while minimizing adverse impacts on these communities and small businesses.
 6. Advance alternatives that maximize access and connectivity (including seamless transfers) for people walking, bicycling, using other modes of transit and shared mobility services.

7. Advance alternatives that prioritize long-term ridership and community benefits over short-term engineering, cost and construction challenges.
8. Advance alternatives that meet the above criteria but may be considered inconsistent with the ST3 plan.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.