



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, May 27, 2021
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson, Julio Sanchez, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde
Commissioners Absent:	Patience Malaba, Dhyana Quintanar, Lauren Squires
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, 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.

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 7:34 am. She read the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning commission, I would like to actively recognize that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities. We commit to identifying racist practices and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'

Co-Chair Stroble 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: Co-Chair Rick Mohler moved to approve the May 13, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg 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.

Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Overarching Themes Letter

Connie Combs, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's draft recommendations on overarching themes for the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the Commission will review a draft recommendations letter on June 10 and take action on the final draft letter on June 24. This letter is intended to present high-level themes and early guidance at the beginning of the Major Update process and will be followed by a series of short, more specific issue papers. Ms. Combs presented a summary of the contents as follows:

- Introduction
- Pursue reparations and racial equity outcomes
- Reevaluate the Growth Strategy and revise land use policies
- Ensure further accessibility in the built environment
- Explore adding density while employing strong anti-displacement strategies
- Embed climate actions
- Make code changes to improve public health
- Embrace and explore alternative frameworks and practices
- Repurpose the right-of-way
- Invest in graphic design that increases the accessibility and utility of the Plan

Ms. Combs reviewed a series of edits that have been suggested since the last Commission meeting. These included the following:

- A suggestion to revise the summary of recommendations to keep the information at a high level and remove specific code changes included in the public health recommendation
- Small text edits to the reparations recommendation and suggested additional content with more specificity for inclusion in the forthcoming issue papers
- Several edits to the Growth Strategy recommendations including suggestions to revise the existing urban village strategy, increase flexibility in single family zones, and remove outdated protectionist language
- Consulting with the Disability Commission on specific language for the Comprehensive Plan
- A suggestion to study code changes to equitably improve public health

Lastly, Ms. Combs summarized a series of topics still needing input from the Commissioners, including:

- Case studies or more specific information related to anti-displacement strategies
- Additional recommendation language to expand transit and prioritize other transportation modes
- Examples of good graphic design for the Comprehensive Plan

Executive Director Murdock reiterated that this paper is intended to be a high-level summary of recommendations from the Planning Commission. The future issue papers will align with the elements included in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the Commission is not limited to providing input on topics represented by the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Combs stated that she will send a revised draft of the letter before the June 10 Commission meeting. Co-Chair Stroble encouraged the Commissioners to review the draft letter and come prepared to the next meeting with any suggested edits. Ms. Murdock noted that the timing of this letter is

important as it will be sent to City staff, the Mayor's Office, and City Council members. This letter will elevate comments that have been made previously by the Commission regarding appropriate resourcing for the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan in terms of staff allocation, diversity that represents the demographics of Seattle, and good graphic design. She stated that City staff advocating for more resources will be able to reference this letter.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners inquired about whether anti-displacement should be considered as a topic for a separate issue paper. Ms. Combs stated that anti-displacement could be the subject of an issue paper but should also be woven into the overall recommendations.
- Commissioners stated that the Comprehensive Plan should be a graphically rich document and referenced the recently released Imagine Greater Downtown report as an example.
- Commissioners expressed support for engaging in a discussion about resilience that provides space for community-led solutions. Ms. Combs stated that the theme of community resilience can be both articulated in this letter and woven into the future issue papers. Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission has noted other topics for another letter before the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. Resilience is one of several topics that the Commission would like to see the City take action on before the Major Update is completed in 2024.

Briefing: Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan can only be amended once per year, while the Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan happens approximately every seven years. Procedures and criteria for consideration of proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the annual "docket" are established in City Council Resolution 31807. The annual process is designed for the Planning Commission to provide recommendations on the previous year's docketed amendments before reviewing the next group of proposed amendments. However, Mr. Hoey stated that circumstances in recent years have required the Commission to review and make docketing recommendations on proposed amendments before taking action on the previous year's docketed amendments.

Mr. Hoey reviewed the criteria for selecting proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments to be placed on the annual docket for analysis and possible adoption. He stated that the Planning Commission, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and City Council Central Staff each conduct an objective review of all proposed amendments and determine whether they meet all the criteria for further review. The amendments are reviewed only against these criteria, not on the merits of their substance, during this phase of the process.

Mr. Hoey stated that the Commission will review the proposed 2021/2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments at the June 10 meeting along with preliminary staff recommendations. The docketing recommendations on those proposed amendments will be revised per the June 10 discussion and presented for Commission discussion at the June 24 meeting. The Commission will take action on its final docketing recommendations at the July 8 meeting. At that same meeting, the Commission will also receive a briefing from OPCD on their 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendment recommendations. The Commission's staff draft recommendations on those amendments will be

presented at the July 22 meeting. The final 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendment recommendations will be presented for Commission action at its August 12 meeting.

Commission Discussion

- Ms. Murdock reiterated that the docketing process is only the first step in the annual amendment process. She stated that it is important at this step in the process to review the proposed amendments against the criteria, not on the substantive merits of the amendments.
- Co-Chair Stroble emphasized the importance of citing specific criteria if the Commission does not recommend an amendment for docketing.
- Commissioners inquired about the status of the proposed amendment to change the name of single family to neighborhood residential. Ms. Murdock stated that this amendment was introduced by City Councilmember Mosqueda and docketed for further analysis.
- Commissioners asked whether the annual amendment process is any different in years leading up to a Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Murdock stated that proposed amendments in any given year may be determined to be better addressed through another process, including the Major Update. The Planning Commission recommended that some amendments proposed in 2020 not be docketed for this reason. She offered to send out the Planning Commission's 2020 docketing recommendations letter for review.
- Commissioners requested more information on the intent of docketing criterion C2, which requires that "City staff will be able to develop within the time available the text for the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, amendments to the Municipal Code, and to conduct sufficient analysis and public review." Commissioners noted that the Planning Commission is proposing several major changes to the Comprehensive Plan and asked whether this criterion could be applicable. Mr. Hoey clarified that the docketing criteria only apply to any proposed annual amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, not to any suggested changes to be included in the Major Update.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 am.