



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Approved Meeting Minutes

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- Commissioners Present:** Eileen Canola, Sandra Fried, Veronica Guenther, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Tim Parham, Amy Shumann, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma
- Commissioners Absent:** Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires
- Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant
- Guests:** Aditi Kambuj, Jonathan Lewis and Diane Wiatr, Seattle Department of Transportation; David Driskell, Office of Planning and Community Development; Carrie Avila-Mooney, Sloan Dawson, and Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit; Hal Cooper, Seattle Freight Advisory Board; Monty Dhaliwal and Chris Eaves, Seattle Department of Transportation; Lindsay Wolpa, Port of Seattle; Ben Mitchell, Community Involvement Commission; ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, Seattle Disabilities Commission; David Hancock

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 3:02 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the August 9, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Patti Wilma abstained.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, welcomed Veronica Guenther, the Commission's new Get Engaged member. Veronica introduced herself and briefly described her work as a Land Use Planner at the City of Bellevue. She expressed her enthusiasm at the opportunity to serve on the Commission. Executive Director Murdock announced an Equitable Development Indicators workshop on September 24th. This workshop will be hosted by the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to brainstorm potential indicators. The Planning Commission has a role in assisting with identifying the draft indicators. Other boards and commissions will be invited to the workshop. Lastly, Executive Director Murdock reminded the Commissioners that Sound Transit is hosting a neighborhood forum to address the Ballard/Interbay alternatives on September 17th.

Briefing: Imagine Greater Downtown

Jonathan Lewis, Diane Wiatr, and Aditi Kambuj from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) provided an overview of the Imagine Greater Downtown project and led an interactive exercise with the Commission to get their input. Mr. Lewis stated that this project is intended to create a long-range mobility and public realm ideas for ten central city neighborhoods. He stated that this is not a plan, but a conceptual framework to develop a working relationship between five agencies, including SDOT, OPCD, Sound Transit, King County Metro, and the Downtown Seattle Association. The project hopes to be 90% complete in January and be complete by April.

Ms. Wiatr presented an overview of the project website: <https://imaginegreaterdowntown.org/> She described ongoing engagement efforts to engage stakeholders and community members in this effort. The Imagine Greater Downtown Advisory Committee includes representatives from ten neighborhoods. The team is making a concerted effort to conduct truly equitable engagement. Examples of this include seeking input at English as a Second Language classes and the Department of Neighborhood's Community Liaisons conducting outreach to diverse communities. Questions asked during this outreach attempt to gain insight on what residents and visitors would like to see in the public realm and how they would feel more welcome in the greater downtown neighborhoods. Ms. Wiatr provided the following examples of what the outreach team has heard so far:

- People want green spaces.
- Address homelessness.
- People want visible representation of different cultures.
- Bring arts into downtown.
- Allow music and other performance art without a permit or fear of enforcement.

Mr. Lewis, Ms. Wiatr, and Ms. Kambuj facilitated the Commissioners in an interactive exercise to provide feedback on a series of "big ideas" to improve mobility and the public realm. The Commissioners worked in two groups to discuss and prioritize these ideas. The following themes came out of this exercise:

- Restrooms, grocery stores, schools
- Accessibility for all

- Lid I-5
- Strive to be the most recreational city
- Create “stitch parks” – a legible, enjoyable network connecting all neighborhoods
- Increase the number of public spaces
- Expand the bike network
- Enhance the pedestrian experience with simple amenities and wayfinding

Update: Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Level 2 Evaluation Results

Carrie Avila-Mooney, Sloan Dawson, and Cathal Ridge from Sound Transit provided an update of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Level 2 Evaluation Results. Members of the Planning Commission were joined for this update by members of the City of Seattle’s Freight Advisory Board, Community Involvement Commission, and Disabilities Commission. Ms. Avila-Mooney Carrie provided an overview of the agenda and an update on recent community engagement efforts, including fairs and festivals, community briefings, and meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Group and Elected Leadership Group. She also described ongoing station area charrettes, neighborhood forums, and open houses. Mr. Ridge provided an overview of the project timeline and the planning process. He stated that the project is currently in the Level 2 alternatives evaluation process. Sound Transit recently completed a comprehensive evaluation of the Level 2 alternatives, including preliminary cost assessment to inform comparison between alternatives. Mr. Ridge then reviewed each of the Level 2 alternatives, highlighting specific evaluation results and key differentiators in each sub-segment. Mr. Dawson then provided an overview of the station area charrette results.

Commission Discussion

- Hal Cooper, member of the Seattle Freight Advisory Board, asked about future expansion of the alternatives in West Seattle and Ballard. Mr. Ridge stated that future extensions are currently being considered in the planning of the West Seattle and Ballard projects.
- Commissioners asked if Sound Transit’s evaluation criteria are ranked. Mr. Ridge stated that all criteria are ranked equally.
- Commissioners asked whether sea level rise has been considered in the planning process, especially around the Smith Cove station area. Mr. Ridge stated that Sound Transit is looking at the potential impacts of sea level rise in their analysis.
- Commissioners requested clarification about the use of “property effects” as a criterion, asking whether this always signifies demolition. Mr. Ridge stated that property effects do not always include demolition but can include a range of partial to complete impacts to existing buildings.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the process for selecting a preferred alternative. Mr. Ridge emphasized the importance of screening down the number of alternatives to select end-to-end alternatives for consideration in Level 3. A preferred alternative will be identified at the end of the Level 3 process.
- Commissioners questioned the need for stations at both SODO and Stadium and suggested the interim transfer point be at the Chinatown/International District (C/ID) station.
- Mr. Cooper of the Freight Advisory Board asked for more information on the cost ranges for the whole project. Mr. Ridge stated that only very preliminary cost estimates are available at this point. More detailed cost information will be compiled during the Level 3 evaluation process.

- ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, member of the Seattle Disabilities Commission, expressed concern about the impacts of this project to disabled populations and asked whether Sound Transit would be open to feedback from their commission. Ms. Avila-Mooney offered to connect with that Commission.
- Executive Director Murdock asked whether the cost estimates are compared to Representative Project costs in 2017 dollars. Mr. Ridge answered yes, that is correct.
- Commissioners requested more information about the proposed mitigation strategies, especially for displacement of residents. Mr. Ridge stated that the project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will identify impacts and mitigation commitments. He stated that Sound Transit's standard process for displacement is to pay fair market costs and offer relocation services.
- Commissioners stated a preference for the 4th Avenue C/ID cut-and-cover station, expressing the opinion that the 5th Avenue station alternative is short-sighted. If Sound Transit were to construct a 5th Avenue cut-and-cover, then SDOT needed to re-build the 4th Avenue viaduct later, that would result in two separate periods of disruption to the C/ID community.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the likelihood of third party funding. Ms. Avila-Mooney stated that the elected officials are now starting that conversation.
- Commissioners stated that it is difficult to put a price on impacts to freight mobility and maritime businesses.
- Commissioners suggested a way to mitigate high costs of the project might be to consider taking stations off the table (e.g. SODO/Stadium) to make funds available for other stations (e.g., C/ID).
- Commissioners stated a preference for a SODO alternative that only has one SODO station. Mr. Ridge stated that various people have suggested removing stations, but others are in favor of keeping all the proposed stations.
- Commissioners expressed frustration with the difficulty to visualize the various alternatives. Ms. Avila-Mooney stated that Sound Transit's Online Open House now has visualizations. Mr. Ridge stated that the Evaluation Criteria are also available online.

The Commissioners thanked the Sound Transit staff for their update.

Public Comment

David Hancock stated that the Lid I-5 group has held several charrettes. The final design results of these charrettes will be presented on October 3rd from 5:30-9 pm at Melrose Market Studios.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 pm.