



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 12, 2018
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Michael Austin, Eileen Canola, David Goldberg, Sandra Fried, Ellen Lohe, Rick Mohler, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires
Commissioners Absent:	Grace Kim, 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:	Tom Hauger, Office of Planning and Community Development
In Attendance:	Roque Deherrera, Office of Economic Development; Colin Drake, Seattle Department of Transportation; Lyle Bicknell and Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development; Erica Barnett, Eric Engmann, Emily Miner

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 3:04pm.

ACTION: Commissioner Julio Sanchez moved to approve the March 22, 2018 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler 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, informed the Commissioners of several upcoming community events, including several Mandatory Housing Affordability public hearings and open houses. Robin Magonegil, Seattle Planning Commission Administrative Assistant, encouraged Commissioners to complete their time logs to keep track of their volunteer hours. These hours are compiled and aggregated to demonstrate the total volunteer effort of the Commission.

Briefing: Historical Retrospective of Industrial Lands Policies

Tom Hauger, Office of Planning and Community Development

If you would like to view the Historical Retrospective of Industrial Lands Policies presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Vice Chair Austin welcomed Mr. Hauger and recognized his years of public service in advance of his upcoming retirement. Mr. Hauger provided a historic overview of Seattle's industrial and manufacturing centers, as well as an overview of the City's Comprehensive Plan policies related to industrial lands. He highlighted the significance of Seattle's industrial lands from a local and regional perspective and emphasized the importance of preserving those lands for industrial uses. He described some of the ongoing environmental concerns related to industrial lands and listed several threats to the City's existing industrial lands, including conversions and encroachments.

Mr. Hauger shared two examples of proposed Comprehensive Plan policies that would strengthen protection of industrial lands and provided an overview of the Industrial Lands Advisory Panel appointed by former Mayor Murray. That advisory panel has discussed a draft concept that would provide an incentive for office space in exchange for providing 1.0 Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) of new industrial space in limited portions of the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center, nearest the existing light rail stations. The panel also discussed a study on the effectiveness of the IB, IC, C1 and C2 zones, as well as area studies in Interbay, East Ballard, and Georgetown. The panel was generally supportive of adopting the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes related to industrial lands. These studies could become part of the Office of Planning and Community Development's work plan, while several other advisory panel concepts would be studied by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and the Office of Economic Development.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if there were any major insights from the last economic downturn related to the low vacancy rates in the industrial sector. Mr. Hauger responded that the last recession emphasized the resilience of industrial businesses and the importance of retaining diverse employment sectors in Seattle. He stated that the resilience of those industries in the future would depend on the nature of any economic downturn.
- Commissioners asked if there are any precedents in other cities for commercial space located over industrial uses. Roque Deherrera from the Office of Economic Development stated that there are some examples from Chicago and Los Angeles. Commissioners asked if these types of development would require different use of the right-of-way than typical industrial or commercial developments. Mr. Deherrera stated that transit access and pedestrian access required for commercial developments are different from the freight mobility needs of industrial developments.
- Commissioners requested more information about the number of legacy industrial businesses compared with newer uses in the industrial zones. Mr. Hauger stated that there has been a recent increase in "maker spaces" dedicated to smaller-scale products used mostly in the local market. These businesses tend to be smaller startups.

- Commissioners inquired about the impact of transient populations and the homeless community in the industrial lands. Mr. Hauger answered noting that several employers have complained about this impact and have expressed concern about potentially moving their operations elsewhere.
- Commissioners asked if the consultant report prepared for the Industrial Lands Task Force included data about commute times and distances for people who work in Seattle’s industrial zones, noting that this data could help inform discussion around providing workforce housing near industrial areas. Mr. Hauger stated that the report did not look at employee commutes.
- Commissioners requested more information on pollution generated by industrial uses and the appropriateness of locating other uses in existing industrial zones, including the health implications of having office workers above industrial spaces. Mr. Hauger responded that many of today’s industrial uses produce far fewer pollutants than in the past. He also noted that many of Seattle’s industrial lands have significant “legacy pollution,” especially in the Duwamish, which has implications on both nearby communities—such as South Park and Georgetown—and potential future uses. Mr. Hauger stated that the building code would help reduce any potential health impacts related to the SODO concept, but this is a good issue to consider in advance of the Environmental Impact Statement.
- Commissioners asked if there have been any trends in displacement of non-industrial businesses that support industrial uses from areas adjacent to the Manufacturing/Industrial Centers (MIC’s). Mr. Hauger replied that he has heard of some displacement of these types of businesses outside of the M/IC’s, but this seems less likely within the industrial zones.
- Noting that Sound Transit’s representative alignment for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions runs through industrial zones, Commissioners asked if Sound Transit was using either population projections or potential development capacity to evaluate potential station locations, and if these projections included any conversion of industrial lands. Executive Director Murdock asked if the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions representative alignment was discussed with the Task Force, specifically the potential for residential uses along the alignment. Mr. Hauger stated that the SODO and Stadium stations demonstrated the potential for additional ridership and jobs in proximity to the station, but housing was not considered a viable option in the industrial zones.
- Commissioners asked Mr. Hauger for his opinion on the potential impact of new light rail stations in SODO. He stated that the existing and proposed light rail lines are constrained, but there is merit in exploring the SODO concept that could result in more modern, stable industrial buildings, more office space, and most workers commuting by rail.
- Commissioners requested more information regarding the regional approach to industrial lands. Mr. Hauger noted that the Puget Sound Regional Council recently completed their Regional Centers Framework Update study, which looked at regional growth centers as well as manufacturing/industrial centers throughout the four-county region.
- Commissioners asked Mr. Hauger his opinion of what parties would most benefit from allowing additional uses in industrial lands. Mr. Hauger responded that landowners would likely reap the most significant benefits. He also noted that projections show there is more than enough capacity outside Seattle’s industrial land to accommodate the next 20 years’ expected housing and commercial growth.

Working Session: West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Alternatives Screening Criteria

If you would like to view the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Alternatives Screening Criteria presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, introduced the objective of the working session: to identify Seattle-specific guiding principles to accompany the Sound Transit screening criteria as the agency moves towards identifying a locally preferred alternative for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLINK) project. These principles will be shared with the Seattle elected officials who serve on the Sound Transit Elected Leadership Group. Mr. Hoey provided an overview of Sound Transit's planning process, Sound Transit's Purpose and Need statement for the West Seattle and Ballard Extensions project, and the alternatives evaluation framework. He reviewed the following goals and policies from the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan considered to be particularly relevant to the WSBLINK project:

Growth Strategy Element

- GS G1 Keep Seattle as a city of unique, vibrant, and livable urban neighborhoods, with concentrations of development where all residents can have access to employment, transit, and retail services that can meet their daily needs.
- GS 1.12 Include the area that is generally within a ten-minute walk of light rail stations or very good bus service in urban village boundaries, except in manufacturing/ industrial centers.
- GS 1.16 Use zoning and other tools to maintain and expand existing industrial activities within the manufacturing/industrial centers.
- GS 1.18 Promote the use of industrial land for industrial purposes.
- GS 1.19 Encourage economic activity and development in Seattle's industrial areas by supporting the retention and expansion of existing industrial businesses and by providing opportunities for the creation of new businesses consistent with the character of industrial areas.

Land Use Element

- LU G10 Provide sufficient land with the necessary characteristics to allow industrial activity to thrive in Seattle and protect the preferred industrial function of these areas from activities that could disrupt or displace them.
- LU 10.2 Preserve industrial land for industrial uses, especially where industrial land is near rail- or water-transportation facilities, in order to allow marine- and rail-related industries that rely on that transportation infrastructure to continue to function in the city.
- LU 10.28 Permit commercial uses in industrial areas to the extent that they reinforce the industrial character, and limit specified non-industrial uses, including office and retail development, in order to preserve these areas for industrial development.

Transportation Element

- TG 1 Ensure that transportation decisions, strategies, and investments support the City's overall growth strategy and are coordinated with this Plan's land use goals.
- T 1.2 Improve transportation connections to urban centers and villages from all Seattle neighborhoods, particularly by providing a variety of affordable travel options (pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities) and by being attentive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities.

- T 1.3 Design transportation infrastructure in urban centers and villages to support compact, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods for all ages and abilities.
- T 1.4 Design transportation facilities to be compatible with planned land uses and consider the planned scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- T 7.7 Work with regional transit agencies to encourage them to provide service that is consistent with this Plan's growth goals and strategy.

Mr. Hoey then introduced the following potential themes for the Commissioners to consider as they discuss and develop guiding principles:

- Access to opportunity
- Community cohesion and cultural identify
- Maximize ridership potential
- Non-motorized mobility options
- Placemaking
- Plan for transit-oriented development
- Proactive, integrated planning
- Protection of industrial lands
- Race and social justice/equity and inclusion
- Resilience

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners agreed that a guiding principle should prioritize Seattle's growth strategy, especially regarding growth in transit-centric urban villages and transit-oriented development.
- Commissioners noted that while some station locations may require less investment from a construction and engineering standpoint, they may require more investment from other agencies to align with Seattle's growth strategy and to realize equitable transit-oriented-development.
- Commissioners added that a guiding principle should balance leveraging existing infrastructure investment to maximize ridership with equity concerns to ensure that areas which have historically experienced underinvestment do not continue to be overlooked. Commissioners suggested a principle that prioritizes alternatives with potential to serve low-income populations and communities of color.
- Commissioners advised that Sound Transit and the City should consider the lessons learned related to transit-oriented development and station area planning from development of the existing light rail lines.
- Commissioners suggested a guiding principle that considers public health and safety, including access to stations for non-motorized vehicles and specific consideration of environmental concerns in areas with a history of pollution.
- Commissioners discussed how to include race and social justice in the criteria, noting that meaningful community engagement should be robust throughout the process. Commissioners suggested Sound Transit use modeling to show potential outcomes of the various alternatives.
- Commissioners discussed the need to balance results of community engagement with effective station area planning, technical analysis, and placemaking strategies. Screening criteria should be

responsive to conditions at each proposed station location and guideway configuration and weighted differently to address location specific conditions and concerns.

- Commissioners agreed that a guiding principle should include consistency with the City's industrial lands policies and consideration of implications to industrial lands, such as whether light rail development will impede or promote economic development.
- Commissioners suggested a guiding principle should focus on equitable, sustainable development that address the potential for displacement and recognizes that the urban villages and urban centers are intended for capturing Seattle's growth.
- Commissioners suggested a guiding principle related to locations that have a greater opportunity for placemaking and supporting the needs of a community.
- Commissioners suggested a guiding principle that considers how station locations can support major institutions that do not currently have frequent and reliable transit.
- Commissioners recommended a principle to consider the longevity and resilience of major employers, as well as the potential for a diversity of employment near station locations.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 pm.