



# City of Seattle Seattle Planning Commission

Leslie Miller, Chair  
Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION JANUARY 26, 2012 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Chair – Leslie Miller, Vice-Chair David Cutler, Catherine Benotto, Josh Brower, Colie Hough-Beck, Mark Johnson, Kay Knapton, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton, Chris Persons, Sarah Snider

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Martin Kaplan, Bradley Khouri, Kevin McDonald, Matt Roewe

### **COMMISSION STAFF**

Barbara Wilson-Director, Katie Sheehy-Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil-Administrative Staff Assistant, Diana Canzoneri-Demographer

### **GUESTS**

Tracy Morgenstern, OSE; Patrice Carroll, Geoff Wentlandt, DPD;

*Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.*

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Leslie Miller called the meeting to attention at 7:32 am.

#### ▪ **Chair's Report**

- Chair Leslie Miller

Chair Miller called the Commissioners attention to several upcoming meetings and mentioned the Housing Seattle presentation at City Council.

Commissioner Chris Persons reported on the Seattle Living Event noting that there was a lot of talk about what sustainability means. He added that there were about 30 people there and that they had reached out to community leaders in eight neighborhoods. Commissioner Persons noted that there was a good mix of private developers and community leaders. Executive Director Wilson added that Commissioner Brower, who also attended, had mentioned to her that the meeting started with a mention of the Commissioner two recent

reports. She noted that this shows that not only are the elected officials looking at our work but the broader community as well. Commissioner Persons continued that if there is not a “to do” list there is not much excitement.

- **Briefing: Climate Action Plan Update**
  - Tracy Morgenstern, OSE

Chair Miller welcomed Tracy Morgenstern from the Office of Sustainability & Environment.

Ms. Morgenstern gave a brief introduction of the outline noting that it would embed the land use element within the transportation section of the climate action plan (CAP). She added that all of the key transportation elements really hinge on land use. Ms. Morgenstern stated that they have some consultants and could hire Nelson Nygaard to work with the Commission to facilitate meetings based on the work that the Commission has already done.

Ms. Morgenstern noted that the outline is currently just a rough draft. The outline is linked here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/SeattleCAPTransFinalReport-OUTLINEshort11612.pdf>

Commissioner Johnson asked if they were asking the Commission for our thoughts about where we think the big wins are going to be. Ms. Morgenstern replied that no, it is just a brief conversation about how to move forward. Diana Canzoneri asked about land use regarding buildings and landscaping. Ms. Morgenstern replied that they have a building and energy group and that they will embed them in two different sections.

Ms. Wilson reminded the Commission that Commissioner McDonald represents the Commission on the Transportation TAG and Commissioner Benotto on the Building/Energy TAG. She added that back in November, the Commission had a meeting where they worked on some key concepts. Ms. Wilson noted that Tracy would frame the questions and send those out to the two TAGs.

Ms. Morgenstern reported that the TAGs would continue to meet through March with draft documents in September. She added that they will be getting public input along the way and that they would like a couple more meetings with the Commission. She proposed that Nelson Nygaard facilitate the meetings.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Climate Action Plan will be a stand-alone document but parts will be integrated into the Comp Plan and the Transportation Strategic Plan. She added that there is a lot of alignment with the transit communities policy and that was by design.

Chair Miller asked about how this will integrate with the Comp Plan. Ms. Wilson noted that many of those policies outlined in the CAP would be in both the Comp Plan and the Transportation Strategic Plan. Chair Miller wondered if they would have different degrees of specificity. Ms. Morgenstern answered that they are looking to use the lens of GHG emission goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. She added that it is very ambitious with big picture in the CAP and goals and policies in the Comp Plan. Ms. Morgenstern noted that it is a guiding plan for the city to implement through other plans.

Commissioner Johnson asked if they just wanted the Commission’s thoughts on where the big “wins” would be. He wondered if the approach was going to be spending a lot of time on one topic, which would be a problem since there are seven goals. Ms. Morgenstern replied that they had been thinking that they would take each action and look through different lenses. She added that Nelson Nygaard is fleshing it out further

and that the Commission is directing this process to a large degree. Ms. Wilson added that the Commission should look more over arching and if there are specific questions that need to be drilled down into that can be done but there are other groups addressing those details.

Ms. Morgenstern stated that when they provide these recommendations to the City Council they would like to have one of the Commissioners represent. She added that the TAG recommendations will go to Council in April; the draft for public review in September; and approval by the end of the year.

Ms. Wilson suggested that the Commission agree to it and that they could think about specific topics at the Executive Committee meeting and how this would integrate with other work plan items. Ms. Morgenstern added that they also might make recommendations about pilot projects.

Chair Miller asked if there was general agreement among the Commissioners. The Commissioners agreed that there was. Ms. Morgenstern thanked the Commission and noted that she would work with Barbara Wilson on the details.

- **Briefing: Citywide Transit Communities Policy**
  - Patrice Carroll, Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

Chair Miller called for any disclosures or recusals.

**Disclosures:**

- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa works for The Underhill Company and works on transportation projects in and around Seattle. She added that Sound Transit is one of their current clients and the Transit Communities Policy may impact projects that they work on.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that the firm she works for, HBB Landscape Architecture, has contracts with SDOT, King County Metro and has worked with Sound Transit in the past.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops and operates affordable housing throughout the city of Seattle that may be affected by city-wide transit policies.
- Commissioner Leslie Miller disclosed that she is the Outreach/Membership Chair of the SEDC, and Capital Improvements Chair of Othello Park Alliance, a recipient of a 2012 Large Matching Fund grant in Othello Park and of a funded Bridging the Gap project on S. Othello Street.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, designs projects and advises clients throughout the city of Seattle, which could be affected by policies, related to transit communities.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, is currently providing environmental consulting services to Sound Transit, which has properties that could be affected by changes in transit community policies.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, works on projects throughout the city that may be located in Transit Communities and they are currently working on a TOD project outside the City for King County Metro.

Chair Miller welcomed Patrice Carroll and Geoff Wentlandt from DPD.

Ms. Carroll expressed her excitement at the challenge that the Commission put out to them and noted that they are working to implement some of the Commission's recommendations in a citywide transit communities policy. She added that today, she would be giving an overview and welcomed discussion regarding the more technical details.

Ms. Carroll and Mr. Wentlandt gave a power point presentation, which can be accessed here:

[http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/TC\\_Presentation011212.pptx](http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/TC_Presentation011212.pptx)

Ms. Wilson asked that the Commission think about how they are measuring this, looking at the geographies using the street grid and the topography, how we should consider local conditions. She added that it could become a very long list and that we are not going to have time today to get into a conversation about the typologies or the final products. Ms. Wilson continued that the Commission will focus more on the typologies later and the focus should be on methodology.

Commissioner Johnson asked how the topography is measured. Mr. Wentlandt stated that it is SDOT GIS analysis formula and that it represents the elevation changes. Commissioner Johnson noted that it is gradient and is a complex algorithm, adding that it is not a constant and there is more to do. Commissioner Leighton added that it is probably based on what they did in the pedestrian plan.

Commissioner Johnson stated that when they are talking about a light rail station and adding a second bus stop, the dumbbell shape becomes a little less of a reality because the bus can be caught in the middle too, it ends up being more of a corridor. Mr. Wentlandt noted that the focus on nodes is a key decisions point. He added that, in terms of community building efforts, they needed to select and focus on nodes. Mr. Wentlandt continued that maybe in the second cut they could focus on corridor-based strategies. Commissioner Johnson agreed and encouraged them to think about the local conditions. Ms. Carroll noted that, looking into the future; if it is high capacity transit then it is not going to stop in the middle.

Chair Miller stated that she assumed that the parks and schools are included as institutions in the local conditions. Ms. Carroll replied that once they map the boundaries that they will start looking at that.

Chair Miller asked about public safety, noting that there have been several acts of violence recently at the Othello station and wondered how they might change the shape to affect that. Ms. Carroll noted that they need to decide if the boundaries are aspirational or the existing conditions.

Commissioner Leighton shared her concern that the timeline in regards to the Comp Plan update and noted that as it moves forward, the branding of 'complete communities' could be confusing for folks who are not really understanding of transit. She added that it needs to happen soon and although she likes 'transit communities' she is not sure that it should be called that moving forward. Mr. Wentlandt stated that this gets to the question of how this relates to our urban village strategy; it is intentionally transit-centric. He added that they are not reshaping urban villages and their thinking so far has been transit-centric. Commissioner Leighton agreed that this might be the best route to take but suggested the need to define these different terms. Ms. Carroll noted that they might have held back on defining that because they wanted to draw the boundaries and see what they look like. She added that the 'Transit Communities' has been embraced by City Council but not how it is defined.

Ms. Wilson stated that when they started this project it was about maximizing investment and they intentionally focused on transit. She added that it would be useful to do that as part of our Comp Plan phase 1; that defining it in the Comp Plan is important.

Commissioner Persons asked on each of the maps, where people live now and added that an overlay of existing density would be helpful.

Commissioner Krikawa noted that she assumed that the sidewalk conditions are not a variable and wondered how they reconciled walk time for an elevated station. She added that when you are on that platform, just getting to the street could take 3-4 minutes, and that as well as barriers, signal crossing and such might make it too detailed. Ms. Carroll stated that it is not going to be perfect and they need to pick the key ones. Ms. Wilson noted that when former commissioner, Radhika Nair did this for Bellevue that was factored in. Katie Sheehy noted that the Bellevue stations were very deep. Mr. Wentlandt stated that this is the 'indifferent zone.'

Commissioner Hough Beck stated that she did not see the Pedestrian Master Plan used as a tool and would like to see that as it is great. She added that 80% of her work is in transportation and that there is a lot of money there for transit-focused work. Commissioner Hough Beck continued that communications and the necessary and essential components are very important and she did not see those. Ms. Carroll responded that implementation would be the key and that they are going to take this as far as they can. She added that they are thinking about how to cobble together the funding resources.

Commissioner Cutler stated that it would be interesting to know the walkshed for some of the schools and where gaps are in housing and jobs. He suggested creating climate friendly communities and reducing the spatial mismatch so that people living in those communities may not need to get on transit for jobs, etc. Commissioner Cutler noted that they need to be very careful about drawing boundaries and that they need to think about the space that streets create.

Commissioner Snider noted that in reference to safety, night reduces the walkshed. She added that in Denver they have a map that shows current housing density, employment density, and future; she suggested that this would be an interesting overlay to have. Ms. Carroll replied that is what they are aiming for in the atlas.

Ms. Wilson stated that, in her personal viewpoint, based on making this data-driven, the two metric heavy (street grid & typography) local conditions would only increase the boundary. She wondered if the typology might influence whether they are looking at a 5 or 10-minute walkshed. Ms. Wilson stated that there might be some usefulness to having a smaller boundary to focus on gaps. Ms. Carroll agreed and encouraged flexibility regarding the boundaries.

Commissioner Benotto stated that she came across a series of checklists for preparing cities for an aging population. She added that it has many criteria regarding land use and thinking about how seniors get around, she noted that she would forward the information.

Commissioner Brower stated that this signifies a maturing step between vision-based and data-driven planning. He added that we have access to the information and the technology that will assist us in making these decisions. Commissioner Brower suggested that they start thinking about the 15-20 minute walkshed, as some places are conducive to that. He noted that he currently lives in an area with a 9 minute walkshed and some days he is willing to walk and others not. Commissioner Brower wondered what we could do to get more people to transit.

Commissioner Leighton stated that they are ready to start implementing the street network, as they already know what improvements need to be made.

Chair Miller thanked Patrice and Geoff for their time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.