



**City of Seattle  
Seattle Planning Commission**

Amalia Leighton, Chair  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 8, 2015  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Michael Austin, Luis Borrero, Molly Esteve, Yolanda Ho, Grace Kim, Kara Martin, Marj Press, David Shelton, Spencer Williams, Patti Wilma

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Lauren Craig, Sandra Fried, Amalia Leighton, Jake McKinstry, Tim Parham

**COMMISSION STAFF**

Diana Canzoneri - Demographer, Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant, Vanessa Murdock – Executive Director, Katie Sheehy - Policy Analyst (on loan from DPD)

**GUESTS**

Ian Macek, Michelle Marx, Kevin O'Neill, Gabriela Vega, SDOT; Nathan Torgelson, DPD

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Vicky Clarke

*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's Report & Minutes Approval**

- Vice-Chair Marj Press

Vice-Chair Press called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm

Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the September 24, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Spencer Williams seconded the motion. The minutes were approved. Commissioners Kara Martin and Yolanda Ho abstained.

Vice-Chair Press reviewed the upcoming meetings and events with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Michael Austin reported on his work serving on the Design Review Evaluation Advisory Committee. He noted that the Advisory group is looking to make overall recommendations to improve the

process and therefore the design. Executive Director Vanessa Murdock stated that she has invited DPD staff to update the Commission on the recommendations to improve the Design Review process before those recommendations are sent to City Council.

### **Update: Freight Master Plan**

- Gabriela Vega, SDOT

Vice-Chair Press welcomed Gabriela Vega from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).

If you would like to view the document presented on the Freight Master Plan, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minute's section of our website.

### **Presentation overview**

- Existing Conditions
- Plan framework
- Supply chain
- Future conditions analysis
- Freight network
- Next steps

### **Commission Discussion:**

The Commissioners questioned the use of Denny Way as a truck corridor. SDOT staff agreed that Denny Way was already a challenging environment for pedestrians and noted that they looked at the average daily volume as well as the interface with other modal plans. Staff added that truck dispatchers monitor the traffic and know how to avoid major congestion points. They continued that smaller delivery trucks are included in the anticipated freight volumes and that the prioritization methodology will be a little more clear in the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP), especially for pedestrian safety.

The Commissioners inquired about the design guidelines and what they would address in terms of freight movement. Ms. Vega responded that turning radius, interactions with various modes and other details will be included in the Right of Way Improvement Manual.

The Commission stated that they look forward to hearing how this will influence the next iteration of the major update to the Comprehensive Plan as the current draft is silent regarding freight movement. Ms. Vega stated that themes within the Freight Master Plan (FMP) are consistent the draft transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that some aspects of the FMP are from the State Freight Master Plan. She added that as both the Comp Plan and the FMP are developed they will have to make sure that the policy frameworks are consistent. She continued that most projects go before the Freight Advisory Board and that Board will help determine what freight needs need to be accommodated.

Commissioners noted appreciation for both the infographic and the maps noting that these help illustrate the work.

Commissioners asked if there was consideration of the consolidation of the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma in the development of the FMP. Ms. Vega replied that they did take their projected volume and container volumes into account but that staff are currently not sure how shipping functions will be broken down between the two ports. She added that SDOT sits on the Port's advisory committee.

Commissioners asked for clarification on how the freight network interfaces with other modal plans. Ms. Vega stated that SDOT is always interested in discussions to find the best solutions. She added that they are developing Right of Way allocation depending on the corridor and this will set the standard. Ms. Vega continued that modal integration and allocation work at multiple levels and that staff are considering each as plans are developed. She continued that they have identified the locations where multiple modes overlap.

Vice-Chair Press thanked Ms. Vega and the rest of the SDOT staff for coming.

#### **Update: Pedestrian Master Plan**

- **Michelle Marx, SDOT**

Vice-Chair Press welcomed Michelle Marx from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).

If you would like to view the document presented on the Pedestrian Master Plan, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minute's section of our website.

#### **Presentation Overview**

- PMP update scope-of-work
- Existing PMP structure
- Ongoing prioritization update
- Public outreach strategy

#### **Commission Discussion:**

Commissioners asked if SDOT staff were using the Office of Housing data for low income housing. Ms. Marx replied that they were looking into that.

Commissioners expressed their opinion that renter occupied housing should be included within the equity analysis; home ownership has been taken out of the Comp Plan but people are building capital and that makes a difference. Commissioners added that the perception is that most new housing is rental housing.

Commissioners wondered if the requirement to have retail at the ground level of Neighborhood Commercially zoned parcels is actually resulting in active spaces. Ms. Marx responded that it is a forward 20 year plan and they would love to see those storefronts be leased later, acknowledging that they may not be currently.

Commissioners asked if SDOT was looking at the existing urban village boundaries or the proposed expanded boundaries. Ms. Marx answered that staff were looking at the existing boundaries at this point but would like to factor in the proposed boundaries when they have them.

Commissioners suggested adding trails and major open space to underscore health and physical activity.

Commissioners wondered about grocery stores and if they were factored in as an important pedestrian neighborhood destination. Ms. Marx stated while it is all important, if all destinations are included in the analysis, priority locations can become obscured. She added that vibrancy used to be 40% of the weighting in order to prioritize investments but staff have heard schools and fundamental improvements need to be more

heavily weighted. She continued that the previous plan guided pedestrian investments quite well but left some areas out so staff are trying to think about key destinations that everyone uses.

The Commission expressed their support for transit communities and that they are thinking about future development/potential for growth.

The Commission discussed looking at land use tools and how and where they are applied.

Commissioners and SDOT staff discussed traditional sidewalks and low-cost sidewalks with Ms. Marx stating that the survey will help identify what low-cost options people would like. Commissioners suggested that, in reference to the survey, SDOT try to make the text easier for people to understand and expressed their excitement that it would be translated into several languages. Ms. Marx noted that staff will collect demographic data so that they can target some of the communities that they have not previously heard from.

Vice-Chair Press thanked Ms. Marx.

**Seattle Planning Commission Budget Update:**

- **Vanessa Murdock, SPC Executive Director**

Ms. Murdock reported on the Mayor's proposed budget and the proposal to move the Demographer position out of the Planning Commission and into the new City Planning Department.

**Quarterly Update: Department of Planning & Development**

- **Nathan Torgelson, Deputy Director, DPD**

Vice-Chair Press welcomed Nathan Torgelson from the Department of Planning & Development (DPD)

Mr. Torgelson thanked the Commission for all the work they do and noted that this was his last quarterly update for the year. Mr. Torgelson reported on the and the Mayor's exciting vision for the new Office of Planning and Community Development and noted that it will be important for the Planning Commission to continue working with the Department of Construction and Inspections to provide feedback on their work as well.

Mr. Torgelson reported on the work of DPD including the Comp Plan, Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), Seattle 2035 and planning efforts in North Delridge, Uptown, Georgetown, Central Area and Uptown. He also noted that the Roosevelt design guidelines legislation had passed and that DPD staff are working on the draft recommendation for the design review update.

**Commission Discussion:**

The Commission shared their appreciation of the equity related to the Comp Plan and HALA and noted that Seattle was mentioned a great deal at the state conference on affordable housing (Housing WA). Commissioners noted their appreciation that DPD was considering design review reforms and expressed their interest in having a briefing on those recommendations.

Commissioners expressed their concern with how long it takes to get permits noting that it impacts affordability. Mr. Torgelson replied that the Mayor's budget does allocate new resources to hire staff in

different divisions to help meet the increased need but added that it will take a few months to get those staff on board.

The Commission shared their concern with losing a third of their staff noting that it could impede their ability to do independent, objective and in depth analysis that informs relevant recommendations.

Vice-Chair Press thanked Mr. Torgelson.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Vice-Chair Press adjourned the meeting at 5:32 pm.