



Seattle
Planning
Commission

2024

Year in Review

Seattle Planning Commission

Mission

The Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle into the future, and guided by a commitment to racially equitable, community-centered planning for all members of Seattle's communities.

Structure

The Planning Commission was established by Article XIV of the City's Charter in 1946. City ordinance 109155 defines the Commission's structure which is comprised of sixteen members, seven of which are appointed by the Mayor with another seven appointed by City Council and one appointed by the Commission. The sixteenth member is selected through the Get Engaged program run by the YMCA. The members of the Commission are volunteers who bring a wide array of expertise, lived experiences and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Principles

Our work is grounded in putting into practice racial equity principles from the Center for Urban and Racial Equity which you can view [here](#). We see these principles showing up in our work in the following ways:

- Advise the Mayor, City Council, and department staff on the elimination of systemic barriers in planning, and naming policies and practices that have produced historical and contemporary inequities based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, geography, and other characteristics
- Advance equitable planning practices by developing and promoting innovative planning and policy concepts through our independent research and work
- Foster connections, partnerships, and collaborations across departments, agencies, and communities that further racial equity and intersectionality in planning practice
- Advocate for new systems, policies, and practices that institutionalize equity and support sustainable, transformational change, including targeting distribution of resources and access to opportunity to members of groups that have experienced systemic and institutional discrimination and oppression
- Nurture a collaborative culture that builds a community of learning, mutual respect, acknowledgment of power dynamics, and a valuing of diverse experiences and identities
- Conduct meetings using the revised "[Color Brave Space](#)" norms from Equity Matters that promote equitable interpersonal interactions and ensure that commissioners have equity principles at the forefront of their approach to the Commission's work

2024 In Review

Overview

The Commission's focus in 2024 was following the City's major update to the Comprehensive Plan. The City is required to conduct a major update to its comprehensive plan every 10 years by the Washington state Growth Management Act. The plan sets a vision for how the City will accommodate growth and reach goals like increased sustainability and better access to transit citywide. Updating the plan also allows the City the chance to align plans and city code with new state laws and regulations.

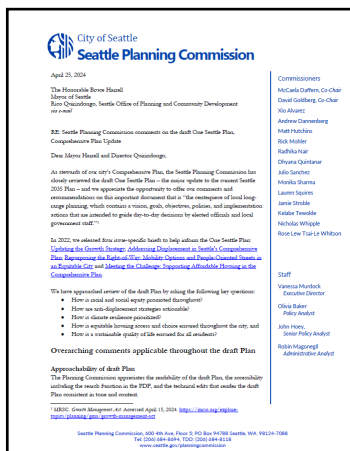
The major update underway in 2024 was particularly influenced by recent changes to state law like House Bill 1110, which requires large cities in Washington to zone for a minimum density of four units per lot in all residential zones and up to six units in areas near major transit stops. Another law, House Bill 1181, added a climate change and resiliency element as one of the required plan elements with specific provisions for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resiliency goals.

Commissioners spent time reviewing elements of the draft Plan in small groups. They also explored draft appendices, received briefings from city staff, and attended open house events about the Plan. The Commission submitted comment letters to inform the draft Plan, the draft Environmental Impact Statement, and the draft zoning changes for Plan implementation.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission heard briefings and held discussions on many topics including the Seattle Transportation Plan, Office to Residential Building Conversion legislation, the Vision Zero Action Plan, Regional Center planning, Anti-Ageism training, and the 2025-2026 City Budget.

2024 Project Highlights

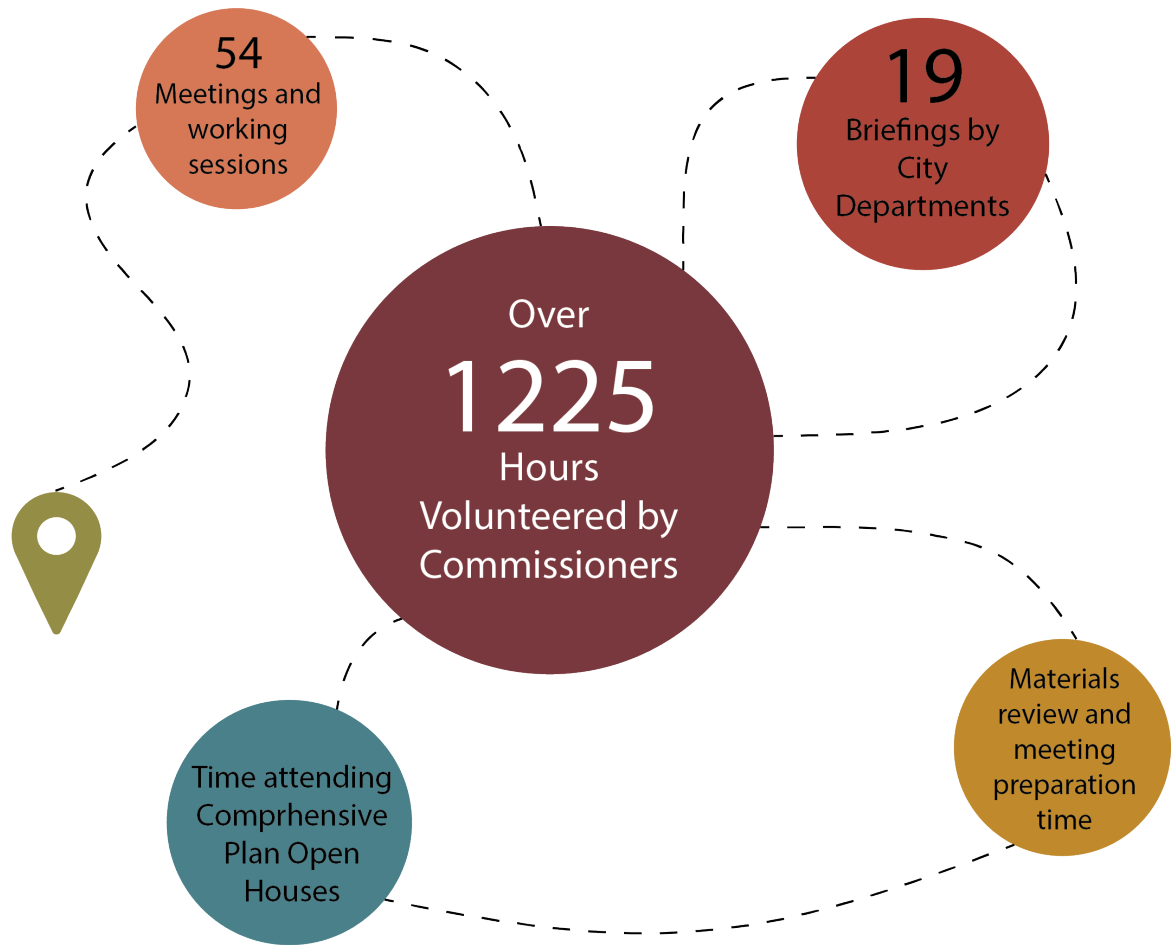
The commission wrote four comment letters in 2024 centered around the Comprehensive Plan major update and supporting implementation of the Plan through the City's budget process.



- [Draft One Seattle Plan Comment Letter](#) (April 2024)
- [One Seattle Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\) Comment Letter](#) (April 2024)
- [Invest in Seattle's Future Budget Paper](#) (October 2024)
- [One Seattle Plan Draft Zoning Changes Comment Letter](#) (December 2024)

2024 By the Numbers

Each year, Commissioners devote hundreds of volunteer hours to reviewing and tracking long-range planning in Seattle. Commissioners spend time in Commission meetings listening to briefings from City staff and discussing policy changes. They also give time outside of meetings to review materials, prepare for meetings, and attend community meetings. See below for how Commissioners gave their time in 2024:



2024 Commission Retreat

The commission gathered in January 2024 for an in-person retreat. The retreat was a chance for Commissioners to reflect on work from the past year and share ideas for how to approach their review of the Comprehensive plan in 2024. Commissioners strategized on how to connect with other Commissions and City leadership. They also had a chance for some fun with a mapping game of Seattle's Urban Centers. The Commission gathered at the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture (ARTs) for the retreat, where they also had the chance to hear from ARTs staff about their work and programming at the gallery space in the King Street Station building.

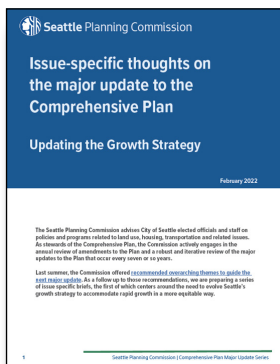


Planning Commissioners and Executive Director Vanessa Murdock at the 2024 Retreat.

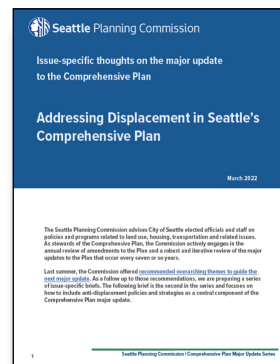
Helpful References from the SPC

Below are several reports and issue briefs written by the Commission in the past few years that are relevant to the City's Comprehensive Plan major update. **Each of the documents below and other past work can be found on our website at www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/our-work.**

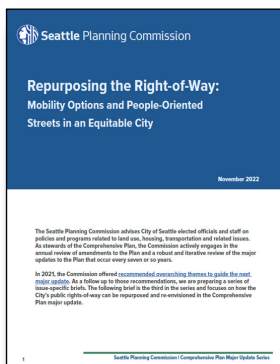
The Commission wrote a series of four issue briefs on the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan major update. Each brief focuses on a different topic the Commission would like to see addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.



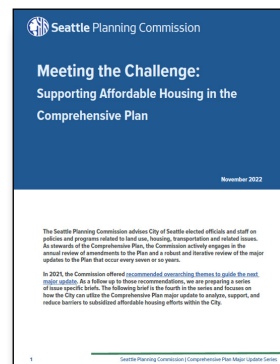
Updating the Growth Strategy
The brief argues that the Comprehensive Plan EIS should study three key strategies: tools to address displacement, the 15-minute city concept, and expansion of the Urban Villages to embrace a network of complete and connected neighborhoods.



Addressing Displacement
The brief focuses on how to include anti-displacement policies and strategies as a central component of the major update. The brief recommends strategies such as including anti-displacement policies across multiple elements and advancing existing community-led policies and investments.

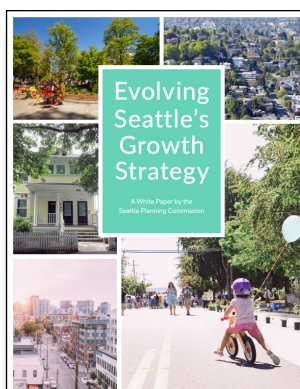


Repurposing the Right-of-Way
The brief discusses how the City's public rights-of-way can be repurposed and re-envisioned in the major update. It recommends evolving the right-of-way toward a more balanced use for access, transportation, social connection, and green infrastructure.



Supporting Affordable Housing
The brief describes how the City can leverage the major update to analyze, support, and reduce barriers to subsidized affordable housing efforts within the city. It lists opportunities and actions to support improved access to affordable housing.

Over the years, the Commission has written a number of reports and comment letters related to improving Seattle's growth strategy. Below are two of the Commission's key reports on the topic.



Evolving Seattle's Growth Strategy
This report describes how Seattle's current Urban Village growth strategy has impacted housing affordability, equitable growth, livability, and the city's climate impact. It offers ideas for better outcomes in each of these topic areas.



Neighborhoods For All
The NFA report focuses on a broad range of policies, tools, and strategies that could increase the availability of housing for more people throughout the city. The report aims to encourage the mix of housing and development patterns found in most of Seattle's older and more walkable neighborhoods.

2024 Seattle Planning Commissioners



McCaela Daffern, Co-Chair

McCaela is an urban planner with King County's Department of Community and Human Services where she is lead staff for the King County Affordable Housing Committee.



Jamie Stroble, Co-Chair

Jamie works for The Nature Conservancy as Climate Director and is charged with developing a new climate program and centering racial equity and climate resilience.



Xio Alvarez

Xio is a designer at LMN Architects, where she works on projects that bridge between planning and architecture. Xio is interested in finding resilient and sustainable ways for people to live together.



Cecelia Black

Cecelia is a community organizer with a background in public policy, housing, and transportation. She works as an organizer for Disability Mobility Initiative at Disability Rights Washington.



Andrew Dannenberg

Andrew is a physician who holds faculty appointments in urban planning and in public health at the University of Washington where he teaches courses on Public Health and Built Environment and on Health Impact Assessment.



Dylan Glosecki

Dylan is an architect and urban designer with Perkins Eastman. He has over 17 years of experience working on high and mid-rise mixed use buildings, multi-family projects, and transit-oriented development projects for light rail.



Matt Hutchins

Matt is a founding Principal of CAST architecture and has spent more than 20 years working to increase the vitality of the city and protect the environment.



Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson

Rose is a biologist at Jacobs Engineering where they work on land use policy and environmental investigation. Rose has worked on projects ranging from residential improvements to public transit expansions.

2024 Seattle Planning Commissioners



Matthew Malloy

The current Get Engaged member, Matthew hopes to become a full-time math teacher once he completes his Master's in Teaching. He currently works as a substitute teacher and as a server at a local restaurant.



Radhika Nair

Radhika is an urban planner with more than 15 years of experience in the Puget Sound region. As founder and principal planner at Seva Workshop, Radhika leads a variety of people-centered planning and policy projects.



Dhyana Quintanar Solares

Dhyana is WSP's Strategic Solutions Leader. She brings over 17 years of experience to the Commission in infrastructure, public space, land use and environmental planning and project management.



Monika Sharma

Monika works for the King County Play Equity Coalition, where she facilitates cross-sector action groups aimed at improving access to facilities, collaborative racial equity learning, and improving access to outdoor recreation.



Lauren Squires

Lauren is a multimodal transportation planner at Nelson/Nygaard with an emphasis on active transportation, health, and social equity. She has a background in sustainable design and planning.



Dylan Stevenson

Dylan Stevenson (Prairie Band Potawatomi descent) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington. He researches relationships among Indigenous Planning, Historic Preservation, and Environmental Planning.



Kelabe Tewolde

Kelabe is an Academic Counselor at Rainier Scholars, where he works with 6th-12th grade students. He provides comprehensive support to scholars and families to help them on the path towards college and beyond.



Nicholas Whipple

Nick has worked as a planner in the Puget Sound region for over a decade. As a planner in Bellevue, his work includes community engagement, advising officials on land use and housing policy, and leading a team of land use planners.

About the Commission

The Seattle Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council, and City departments on broad planning goals, policies, and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle in the 21st Century, and by a commitment to engaging citizens in the work of planning for and working to reach these goals.

The Seattle Planning Commission is an independent, 16-member advisory body appointed by the Mayor, City Council, and the Commission itself. The members of the Commission are residents of Seattle who volunteer their time, and bring a wide array of expertise and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Commissioners

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Kelabe Tewolde

Nicholas Whipple

SPC Staff

Olivia Baker, Policy Analyst

John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst

Robin Magonegil, Administrative Analyst

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director