



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Rick Mohler and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 28, 2022
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Austin Moreman, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble

Commissioners Absent: Patience Malaba, Alanna Peterson

Commission Staff: John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

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

Co-Chair Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:37 am. Co-Chair Stroble offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to actively recognize that we are on indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people. Land acknowledgement is a traditional custom dating back centuries for many Native communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgement is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgement is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities. We commit to identifying racist practices and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'

Co-Chair Stroble asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms. She reminded the Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

ACTION: Co-Chair Rick Mohler moved to approve the April 14, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner McCaela Daffern seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Matt Hutchins abstained.

Announcements

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission Staff, provided a brief review of the format for the online meeting and noted that due to the online format, public comment must be submitted in writing at least eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting.

Briefing: Seattle Transportation Plan

Radcliffe Dacanay and Jonathan Lewis, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT); Michael Hubner, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS: Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson disclosed that her employer, Jacobs, works with SDOT regularly. Commissioner Radhika Nair disclosed that her firm, Berk Consulting, is leading the environmental review of the Seattle Transportation Plan. She recused herself from the discussion. Commissioner Lauren Squires disclosed that her employer, Nelson Nygaard, is working with SDOT on development of the Seattle Transportation Plan. She recused herself from the discussion. Co-Chair Jamie Stroble disclosed that she is working with one of the community organizations that is supporting community engagement for the Seattle Transportation Plan.

Mr. Dacanay provided an overview of the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP). He stated that Seattle's transportation system includes a lot of right-of-way, buses, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and freight. SDOT is the steward of the City's street right-of-way, accounting for 27% of land in Seattle. Right-of-way is public property in which paved streets, alleys and public stairways are located. Rights-of-way often include sidewalks, medians, landscaped areas, and retaining walls. Mr. Dacanay stated that the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) is the City's commitment to building a transportation system that provides everyone with access to safe, efficient, and affordable options to reach places and opportunities. The STP is the vision for the future of transportation in Seattle. The STP is an opportunity to identify more efficient ways to use the right-of-way. SDOT is working with partners including King County and Sound Transit to identify a system that serves all the needs of different people in Seattle.

Mr. Dacanay stated that the STP will collectively reimagine the City's transportation vision, plan for people first, connecting all who live, work, and play in Seattle to the places that matter most. The STP will serve as an update to previous transportation master plans and initiatives and will incorporate other plans that affect transportation. The Plan will address transportation needs and functions such as Vision Zero, new mobility opportunities including e-scooters, e-bikes, and automated vehicles, people streets and people-only-oriented spaces. Mr. Dacanay stated that the intention for this plan is to not make car travel the default but to emphasize it in the right places and de-emphasize it in others. The Plan will ensure space for all modes of travel including buses, bikes, and pedestrians. The STP will be grounded

in SDOT's values, especially equity and addressing climate change, and will meet the moment with inclusive engagement. SDOT is reaching out to community-based organizations to make sure many voices provide input.

Mr. Dacanay stated that Seattle needs this plan to address urgent and emerging issues including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and population growth; to continue funding transportation as labor and materials costs are increasing and the Levy to Move Seattle expires in 2024; and to align with the Comprehensive Plan Major Update. He stated that SDOT wants to ensure that land use and transportation decisions coordinate with each other. These integrated strategies would examine where land will be intensified and how to make the appropriate transportation investments.

Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT's organizational values will inform the goals and technical elements of the STP. Community engagement will influence all elements of the STP. Development of the STP will be led by SDOT in partnership with City departments, SDOT's Transportation Equity Workgroup, community-based organizations, community liaisons from the Department of Neighborhoods, the SDOT modal advisory boards, agency partners, and the general public. SDOT will be conducting citywide community engagement, will collaborate on new engagement strategies, and will build community capacity to connect with people traditionally left out of the planning process.

Mr. Dacanay described the relationship between the STP and the Comprehensive Plan Major Update. While the Comprehensive Plan establishes the principles that guide the City's overall growth, the STP will define the actions necessary to create the transportation system that is consistent with SDOT's vision and key initiatives. The SDOT team is in constant communication with OPCD staff during the development of both plans.

Mr. Dacanay described the following components to be included in the STP:

- Policy Framework: evaluates current policies, suggests changes to align them with SDOT's values
- Performance Measures: define targets, track progress toward achieving the goals of the plan
- Priority Investment Networks: identifies where to build, improve the transportation system
- Program and Projects Needs: outline needs to implement projects and programs in the plan
- Prioritization Framework: prioritizes transportation investments to address critical needs
- Funding Strategy: identifies actions and strategies to fund and implement the plan

He provided an overview of the project schedule and next steps. The current Phase 1 community engagement activities include reviewing values and confirming priorities, a public workshop, and a joint workshop with advisory board members around transportation investments and tradeoffs. Ongoing technical work includes development of a policy framework and performance measures, network integration, and scenario evaluation.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked whether specific considerations have been given to the physical locations of communities of color and low-income communities when evaluating space for alternative modes of

transportation. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT has done some related work around e-bikes and electric vehicles in the Transportation Electrification Blueprint. An outcome of that work was consideration of the physical location of people of color and addressing the equity aspects of delivering electric vehicle goals.

- Commissioners asked Mr. Hubner how the STP integrates with the work plan to update the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD is closely coordinating with SDOT on drafting the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan, including identifying relevant goals and policies. OPCD is also working with SDOT to identify growth strategy alternatives to study. He stated that the STP is on a somewhat more rapid timeframe than the Comprehensive Plan Major Update. A mutual challenge for OPCD and SDOT is to work together on growth strategies and policies that are reflected in the STP. Mr. Lewis stated that there is a marginal difference among alternatives. SDOT will need to consider different transportation solutions to be responsive to the various growth strategy alternatives.
- Commissioners requested more information on the Transportation Equity Workgroup priorities, stating that a multimodal system should be designed for the most vulnerable populations. Commissioners asked how transportation needs for different populations will be addressed in the growth strategy alternatives. Mr. Hubner stated that the growth strategy will not dictate the number of people in specific neighborhoods. The transportation element will speak to a range of needs and equity prioritization. This will not be geographically specific but will be more inclusive and prioritize safety in all neighborhoods. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT will be identifying where different groups of people are located and considering those in the decision-making process for the next iteration of the transportation system. Outreach to community-based organizations and input from the Transportation Equity Workgroup will help to pinpoint where those needs are.
- Commissioners asked when the STP will be updated. Mr. Dacanay stated that a cycle for updating the Plan has not been determined but there is an opportunity for flexibility. For example, the maps could be adjusted to meet updated conditions in the future.
- Commissioners inquired about engagement and outreach with other commissions, such as the Seattle Disability Commission, Indigenous Advisory Council, and the Green New Deal Oversight Board. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT is reaching out to other commissions. Ten advisory bodies will receive regular updates.
- Commissioners asked how SDOT is incorporating a gender lens and digital access in the STP. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT's Vision Zero manager is a woman. She has been pointing to the need for incorporating a gender lens in the Plan. SDOT has been generating ideas for how to make transportation safer from a gender perspective. SDOT staff recently met with technology partners to discuss digital access as work from home policies will reduce the need for travel. Commissioners asked if digital access will be incorporated into growth strategy scenarios. Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD staff will think about that during the alternatives development process. Telecommuting does not affect growth strategies, but transportation modeling will need to include assumptions or data to consider the consequences of commuting choices.

Public Comment: Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions DEIS Comment Letter

Mr. Hoey read the following public comments, which were received by email.

It's uncontroversial that light rail transit releases less CO₂ per passenger mile than personal vehicles. Public transit also allows for more car-free living, which reduces CO₂ emissions, and allows for greater density and walkability in the future by reducing the need for parking, which will further reduce CO₂ emissions. Similar effects should be seen in air quality, runoff water pollution from oil and vehicle tires, the urban heat island effect, surface permeability, etc. All of this is well-studied. As such, please expedite, or even bypass the need for, environmental impact studies of the light rail expansion. The only question is whether it'll help the environment a lot, or only a little. In the meantime, every delay hurts the environment. In moments of clarity, be decisive!

-Richard Hughes

It's an uncontroversial fact that light rail transit releases less CO₂ per passenger mile than personal vehicles. Public transit also allows for more car-free living, which reduces CO₂ emissions, and allows for greater density and walkability in the future by reducing the need for parking, which will further reduce CO₂ emissions. Similar effects should be seen in air quality, runoff water pollution from oil and vehicle tires, road noise, the urban heat island effect, surface permeability, etc. All of this is well-studied. As such, I think you should expedite or even bypass the need for an environmental impact study of the light rail expansion. The only question is whether it'll help the environment a lot or only a little. In the meantime, every delay hurts the environment.

Thank you.

-Austin Grimsman, Ballard resident

Action: Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions DEIS Comment Letter

DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS: Commissioner Dhyana Quintanar disclosed that her employer, WSP, supports the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project through a general engineering contract with Sound Transit. She recused herself from the discussion. Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson disclosed that her employer, Jacobs Engineering, is part of the team producing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. She recused herself from the discussion.

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's final draft comment letter on Sound Transit's West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). He stated that this letter was previously scheduled for approval at the Commission's April 14 meeting. However, a lack of quorum prevented approval of the letter. Nine of the fourteen Planning Commissioners were present at that meeting. Three Commissioners recused themselves from the discussion and abstained from the vote. The remaining six Commissioners voted to approve the letter. This does not represent a quorum of the Commission required to approve a letter.

Mr. Hoey stated that the Commission's final comment letter will be sent to Sound Transit before the 90-day comment period deadline of April 28. After reviewing the Draft EIS and the comments from agency partners and the public, the Sound Transit Board will confirm or modify the preferred

alternative and station locations. Responses to Draft EIS comments will be included in the Final EIS, scheduled to be published in 2023. The Sound Transit Board will then select the project to be built and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will release a Record of Decision.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions DEIS comment letter. Co-Chair Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the letter passed. Commissioners Dhyana Quintanar and Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson abstained.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 am.