



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	McCaela Daffern, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Dalton Owens, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde
Commissioners Absent:	Mark Braseth, Roque Deherrera, Patience Malaba, Alanna Peterson
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; 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:

<https://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/meetings>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Rick Mohler called the meeting to order at 7:36 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Mohler 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 who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. 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 Mohler noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with some Commissioners and staff participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. He asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for volunteers to select one or more of the norms to read aloud. He reminded Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the February 9, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Executive Director, reviewed the format of the meeting. She noted that public comment could be submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the start of the meeting or provided in person by members of the public attending the meeting at City Hall. Ms. Murdock stated that the full Commission meetings will be recorded and posted to the Planning Commission's website via You Tube. She noted that these recordings are not in lieu of the Commission's minutes, which are approved at the next full Commission meeting.

Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission elects its leadership annually. She thanked the current Co-Chairs for their service over the past year. Co-Chairs are eligible to serve two consecutive years in their specific leadership position. She stated that she will be sending an email to all Commissioners asking for their nominations for the leadership positions. Commissioners may nominate themselves and may nominate a fellow Commissioner without checking with that Commissioner first. Ms. Murdock will collect the nominations and contact the individuals who receive the top nominations for each of the positions, acting as the nomination committee. Commissioners will take a formal vote on the committee Co-Chair slate (i.e., the top-nominated two commissioners) at the March 23 full Commission meeting. She encouraged Commissioners to contact her with any questions and/or concerns.

Discussion: Industrial and Maritime Strategy Comprehensive Plan Amendments

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Planning Commission's review of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy. He stated that the Commission will be preparing a comment letter on the proposed Industrial and Maritime Strategy Comprehensive Plan amendments, with anticipated action on a final draft letter at the April 13 Commission meeting. The Commission will not be discussing the specifics of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy itself. The Industrial and Maritime Strategy Stakeholder Advisory Group's recommendations were documented in a final report and studied in both a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments are the first step in adopting and implementing the Industrial and Maritime Strategy recommendations.

The text of the proposed amendments can be reviewed on pp. 47-53 of Chapter 6 (Appendices) of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy FEIS. A link to the FEIS and its individual chapters is located here: <https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/ongoing-initiatives/industrial-and-maritime-strategy#projectdocuments>. Mr. Hoey stated that most of the proposed amendments are in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Minor edits are proposed to the Container Port Element Land Use Policies. The Shoreline Areas Element contains land use policies for industrial land adjacent to Seattle's shorelines. He reviewed the proposed amendments and encouraged comments and discussion from the Commissioners.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if a preferred alternative was proposed for the Industrial and Maritime Strategy. Mr. Hoey stated that a preferred alternative was identified in the FEIS.
- Commissioners asked if retail uses would be prevented in container areas. Those areas are unwelcome for walking and biking. If retail uses are allowed, incentives or requirements for safety should be considered. Commissioners stated that retail should be discouraged in all industrial areas.
- Commissioners acknowledged that interested parties have repeatedly requested changes to industrial lands during the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process and expressed concern that the current proposals could be used to the advantage of those who want to expand their property or change the use of industrial land.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the proposed wording “dwellings targeted to workers” in revised policy LU 10.68 related to allowing residential development in urban industrial zones. Commissioners suggested the alternative wording “intended for workers” with restrictions imposed for those who could occupy those residential units in urban industrial zones.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the use of the existing wording “such as caretaker units” in policy LU 10.68. This language could open the policy to interpretation. Commissioners recognized the need for flexibility, but caution should be taken to avoid unintended consequences from unintended loopholes.
- Commissioners noted that the first statement in the existing policy LU 10.58 is “Prohibit new residential development in industrial zones, except for certain types of dwellings, such as caretaker units...” Commissioners encouraged the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to be more explicit in recognizing the legacy of environmental injustice related to locating residential units in or adjacent to industrial areas that has had disproportionate impacts on low-income and BIPOC populations.
- Commissioners expressed support for the positive language in proposed goal LU G12: “Develop transitions between industrial areas and adjacent neighborhoods that support healthy communities, reduce adverse environmental impacts, and minimize land use conflicts.”
- Commissioners acknowledged difficulty in understanding the details of the new zones and the scale of the proposed changes. Commissioners stated that the new designations appear to allow a substantive shift in our industrial lands.
- Commissioners asked if recognition of tribal values has been incorporated into the proposed amendments. Mr. Hoey stated that he would follow up with OPCD staff.
- Commissioners stated that it is important to recognize that high level policy language matters, as policy ultimately guides implementation. We want to ensure that policy guidance clearly reflects the intention behind it. Commissioners stated that it is also important to be mindful of the precedent that the proposed language is setting. Seattle is changing and should adapt in a way that recognizes those who work here.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the choice of “consider” in revised policy LU 10.22: “Consider using the urban industrial or industrial buffer zones to provide an appropriate transition between industrial areas and adjacent residential or pedestrian-oriented commercial zones.”
- Commissioners noted that the proposed residential units will be located in Ballard, Interbay, SODO, and Georgetown. Those places are generally projecting a mix of uses co-located with light rail and will support the proposed employment densities. The evolution of industrial uses will result in fewer impacts to future residents.
- Commissioners expressed concern with how the proposed amendments would affect the unique nature of existing buffer zones between industrial areas and other uses.

- Commissioners stated that caretaker units are not defined in the industrial land use section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioners asked for clarification of the role of the Planning Commission in reviewing and commenting on these Comprehensive Plan amendments. Ms. Murdock stated that the primary purpose of the Planning Commission's comment letter is to offer suggestions on the language of the proposed amendments. Comments can be included such as "we understand that these policies are high-level..." The Commission is not revisiting the FEIS or the preferred alternative. We can include concerns about how the policies will be interpreted.
- Commissioners asked if any regulatory changes are being proposed. Ms. Murdock stated that regulatory requirements will be considered by the City Council following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Resources

Industrial and Maritime Strategy Final Environmental Impact Statement

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/IndustrialMaritimeStrategy/IndustrialMaritimeStrategyFinalEIS.pdf>

Industrial and Maritime Strategy Preferred Alternative (summary: p. 4; details pp. 29-31)

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/IndustrialMaritimeStrategy/SeattleIndustrialFEISChapter1.pdf>

Industrial and Maritime Strategy Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments

<https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/ongoing-initiatives/industrial-and-maritime-strategy#projectdocuments>

Public Comment

The following public comment was submitted via e-mail and read by Ms. Murdock:

Attached please find a deck that we have sent to Tim Burgess and the staff at OPCD asking for some minor changes in the proposed rezoning efforts. For a variety of reasons detailed in this deck, we feel there are incremental changes to the boundaries and some small clarification in coding language that will make the overall venture much more successful.

The property owners in the SODO are committed to working with the City on sensible new zoning improvements and appreciate the positive steps forward in the final EIS. After careful review, we have minor boundary changes that would make redevelopment more feasible and are all within a ½ mile walkshed of the SODO Station, thus improving TOD. We've identified two recommended changes in the Industrial FAR building code that will lower cost, better meet market demand, and reduce the Carbon Footprint of new development. We look forward to continuing the dialogue.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 am.



SODO Zoning Refinements



SODO Property Owners Recommendations

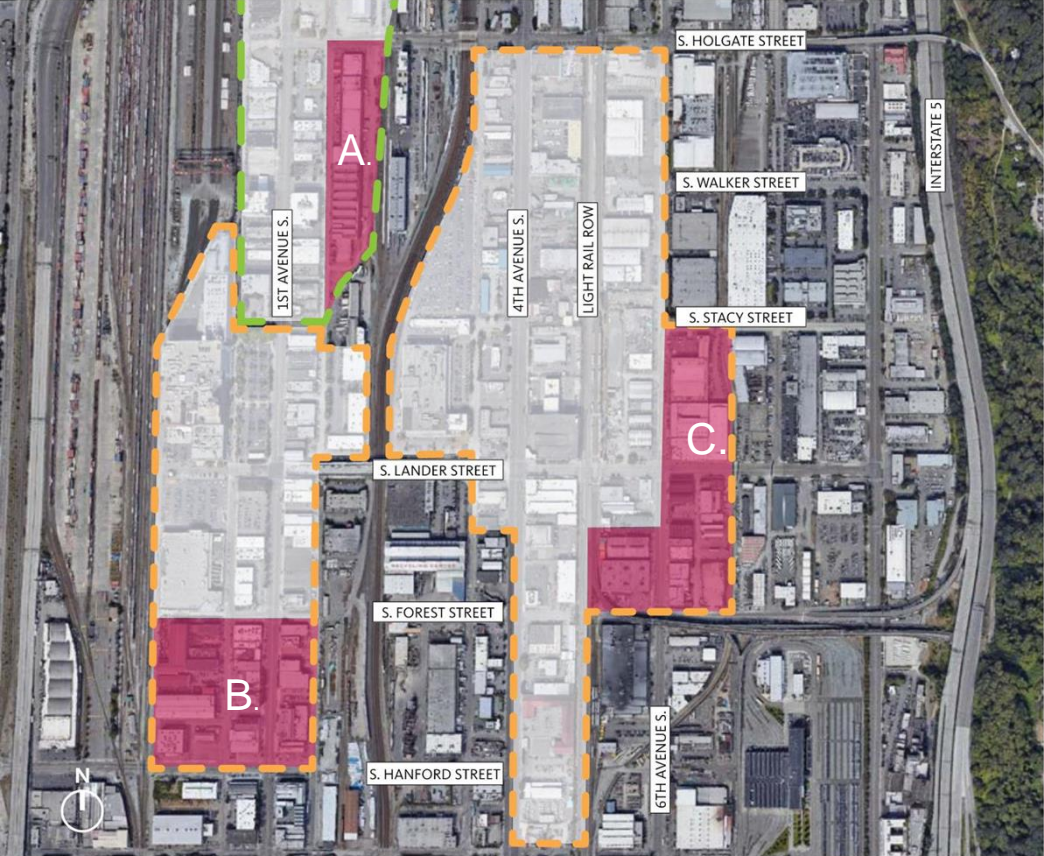
- The property owners in the SODO are committed to working with the City on sensible new zoning improvements and appreciate the positive steps forward in the final EIS
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Map of proposed Rezone in SODO



- Suggested Boundary Expansions identified in red (Specifically A, B, and C)

SODO // PROPOSED RE-ZONE SCOPE



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INDEX

-  Industry and Innovation
-  Urban Industrial

SODO | STACK | Gensler 2



Urban Industrial Area Expansion (Section A.)

- **Current plans on the 1st Ave. corridor do not include the small section of land west of the BNSF rail tracks and east of proposed Urban Industrial rezone**
 - Specific Properties include 1900-2228 1st Ave S. (Parcels 7666206125, 7666206115)
 - Total land estimate is only 212,000 sq. ft. of land
 - Including this small section of land provides a better development footprint by not stranding those two parcels between the railroad tracks and new UI Zone
 - The land is adjacent to the Stadium District and is currently an eyesore in the area



Industry and Innovation – (Section B.)

- **The total area is roughly 1 sq. mile and over half is taken by the Port and other governmental uses**
 - The remaining private land is largely surface parking today and one industrial tenant
 - The Industrial tenant is Washington Chain and we expect them to get a ten-year lease, to protect their business and existing jobs
 - Including Section B. in the Industry and Innovation zone will incentivize projects like Tract 6 and Ryan Company's project on Horton St, which are true industrial projects
 - At very least increase the FAR in this area to 6
 - This area is still within a ½ mile walkshed of the SODO Station, and new development will help increase Transit Oriented Density
 - These tracts of land have views towards the Olympics, increasing their appeal to developers



Industry and Innovation – (Section C.)

- **Activate all four corners of 6th Ave. S. and Lander**
 - The west side of 6th Avenue S. is included in the recommendation, while the east side is not
 - Having one side of the street in and one side out makes it hard to create a well-planned neighborhood and connectivity
 - The up-zoned side of the street will simply overlook dilapidated buildings on the other side of the street
 - There are no current industrial uses in the suggested expansion area
 - Current tenants include a trapeze school along with various offices and storage uses
 - Expanding the zoning changes to all four corners better justifies City expenditures on street and safety improvements
 - This area is in the heart of a Light Rail Station that demands TOD
 - The area will not impede Port Transportation
 - In aggregate, it represents a small fraction of the East side of 6th Ave. S.



Specific Industrial Zoning Requirements

- **Current Language in Section G of the DEIS Appendix specifies the following for the 1st FAR of Industrial**
 - Load bearing floors with 250 lbs/sq ft minimum capacity
 - Light Industrial only requires 125 lbs/sq ft minimum capacity, which will reduce costs and environmental impact of new construction and recommend adjusting the minimum down accordingly
 - High floor-to ceiling clearance of at least 20'
 - Light Industrial will be able to handle a minimum clearance of 15' and we recommend lowering the minimum accordingly