



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

McCaela Daffern and David Goldberg, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, July 11, 2024
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	Xio Alvarez, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Jamie Stroble, Nick Whipple
Commissioners Absent:	Radhika Nair, Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires, Kelabe Tewolde
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 David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Goldberg 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 Goldberg 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 suggested to Commissioners that they collectively agree to abide by these norms. Co-Chair Goldberg reviewed the format of the meeting. He 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.

ACTION: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the June 13, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Nick Whipple seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, recognized outgoing Commissioners David Goldberg, Julio Sanchez, and Rick Mohler. These Commissioners are each at the end of their second full three-year term and together represent twenty-two years of service to the people of Seattle and our City elected officials. Ms. Murdock stated that the value and legacy of the Seattle Planning Commission lies within its membership. She thanked Commissioners Goldberg, Sanchez, and Mohler for their committed and passionate service.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Briefing: Accessory Dwelling Unit/Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Report

Rico Quirindongo, Director, Rawan Hasan, and Phillip Carnell, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Ms. Hasan began the presentation by providing an overview of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). She stated that ADUs are residential living units providing independent living facilities and permanent provisions for sleeping, cooking, sanitation, and living on the same lot as a single-family home, duplex, triplex, townhome, or other housing unit. They include:

- Attached ADUs (AADUs): A dwelling unit located within or attached to another housing unit.
- Detached ADUs (DADUs): A separate and detached from another housing unit.

She stated that ADUs are used as:

Condominiums

- A growing number of new ADUs are condominiums; forty-four percent of those permitted in 2022.
- Median sales price of \$757,500, compared to \$1.18 million for principal dwelling units and \$1.61 million for new detached homes.

Long-Term Rentals

- A 2022 Survey of ADU Owners and Occupants found:
 - Approximately 1/3rd of owners rent their ADU(s) out long-term
 - One in eight are made available to friends or family for free

Short-Term Rentals

- ADUs can receive a Short-Term Rental (STR) business license through the City:
 - Around ten percent of ADUs have an STR license

- Approximately fifteen percent of the overall STR licenses in the City

Ms. Hasan provided an overview of progress in ADUs regulation. Since the mid-1990s, ADUs have been allowed citywide. In 2015, the City Council adopted Resolution 31547 to boost ADU production. In 2019, Seattle reformed ADU rules through Ordinance 125984 and introduced the idea of preapproved ADU plans. In 2020, Seattle launched the website [ADUniverse](#). Ms. Hasan stated that all the City's regulatory reforms have resulted in a significant increase in ADU production. She stated that annual ADU reports are required by Ordinance 125854.

Phillip Carnell provided an overview of the current planning context related to ADUs as follows:

- New State laws from the 2023/24 legislative session promote ADU and middle housing development.
 - HB 1110
 - HB 1337
- King County Countywide Planning Policies call to further incorporate ADUs into planning for housing.
- After the One Seattle Plan update, City of Seattle regulations will allow for 4-6 units on all residential lots.

Phillip highlighted the following ADU development trends through 2023:

- Permits issued remain around four times higher than before 2019 regulation reforms.
- New applications for ADU permits declined slightly from 2022 (1,004) to 2023 (780).
- Forty-seven percent of ADUs are permitted with 2 ADUs on site.
- Sixty-seven DADUs (thirteen percent) utilizing pre-approved plans were permitted in 2023.
 - Permitting time remains around 50 days lower than custom DADU plans.

They provided a summary of the geography of ADUs as follows:

- ADUs provide new housing opportunities across most Neighborhood Residential (NR) zones.
- Eighty-seven percent permitted in Neighborhood Residential zones in 2023.
- ADU permits outnumber single-family residential permits two to one.
- Seventy percent of new single-family residences permitted are permitted with one or more ADUs on site.
- The median lot with an ADU permitted is slightly larger than the median NR or Residential Small Lot (RSL) lot.
- ADUs are more common in neighborhoods with lower displacement risk.

Phillip shared the following future considerations for ADUs:

- Updating Pre-Approved DADU Plans
 - Necessary for plans to be updated to meet the new building code.

- SDCI conducts designer outreach.
- Approved updates will be pre-approved until the next building code update (3 years).
- Comprehensive Plan and Zoning
 - ADU permits may decrease due to market shifts and anticipated zoning changes.
 - OPCD has an intention to preserve the option to construct ADUs even as more options become available in NR zones.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for clarification about the forty-four percent of ADUs that are condominiums. Phillip stated that percentage is of the total number of ADUs permitted. Commissioners stated that statistic demonstrates that residents want homeownership opportunities at a lower price point.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for OPCD's commitment to data transparency and monitoring. Regulatory changes and market conditions working together can drive a significant result in affordable homeownership opportunities.
- Commissioners asked about the distribution of the three categories (condominiums, long-term rentals, and short-term rentals) across the city. Phillip stated that OPCD will soon have a map showing the percentage of condominiums across the city, but they have not yet completed a similar analysis for the other types.
- Commissioners noted that ADU owners are predominantly white with incomes over \$200,000 and asked if there are any considerations for lower-income households to afford building ADUs. Director Quirindongo stated that OPCD is working on that as part of their anti-displacement work. They need to update the ADUniverse website to include information from current state legislation.
- Commissioners noted the success of the preapproved ADU plans and asked if there are preapproved AADU plans. Director Quirindongo stated that AADUs are too variable for preapproved plans.
- Commissioners inquired whether there is guidance for landowners to determine what rents to charge for ADUs. Director Quirindongo stated there used to be a database that could provide useful information for landlords. Commissioners noted that inexperienced landlords do not know what to charge to keep ADUs are relatively affordable.
- Commissioners requested more information on the anti-displacement work mentioned by Director Quirindongo. He stated that OPCD received direction from the Mayor's office to do a more comprehensive audit of anti-displacement programs. This will include discussion of new anti-displacement tools OPCD is working on.

Staff Update: Seattle Transportation Levy Proposal

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an update on the Seattle Transportation Levy proposal. He provided the following answers to questions from the Commission's June Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting.

What percentage of annual property tax for the median household would the levy represent?

- The average assessed value (AV) (\$804,000 in 2024) property tax bill is \$7,278, including all State, County, City, School, Port levies. The City's portion of this is \$2,236.
- The expiring Move Seattle Levy median AV property tax bill in 2024 is \$300.

- The Mayor’s \$1.45 billion levy proposal would result in a median AV property tax bill of \$469.
- The Chair’s Amendment increased the size of the proposed levy by \$100 million to \$1.55 billion over an eight-year term. The anticipated annual property tax bill for the Seattle median assessed value home would be \$499, or approximately seven percent of annual taxes.

What percentage of the levy is for sidewalks and other multi-modal infrastructure rather than cars?

- As proposed by the Mayor, \$423 million out of \$1.45 billion is proposed for Street Maintenance and Modernization. This category includes paving programs. There is also \$221 million for Bridges and Structures—which support all modes.

Has the levy ever failed? If not, has the ballot measure been a close vote?

- The first City transportation levy (Bridging the Gap) passed in 2006 with 53%.
- The second transportation levy (Move Seattle) passed in 2015 with 59%.

Mr. Hoey stated that the Mayor’s levy proposal has been reviewed and amended by a City Council Select Committee. Below is a summary of the key amendments passed at the July 2 Select Committee meeting:

Chair’s Revised Package (Councilmember Saka)

- Add \$7 million for Safe Routes to Schools
- Add \$7 million for new Neighborhood Scale Traffic Safety Programs
- Reduce the new Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program from \$41 million to \$25.5 million
- Increase Transit Passenger Safety from \$3 to \$9 million
- Add \$48 million for New Sidewalks; prioritize locations within 1-mile of schools and transit stops
- Add \$15 million for Sidewalk Safety Repair
- Add \$10 million for additional electric vehicle charging stations
- Add \$20 million in Freight and Goods Movement
- Revise the Vision Zero, School and Neighborhood Safety element to include Rainier Ave S
- Revise the Transit Corridors and Connections element to add access improvements to future Sound Transit light rail stations and include community-based planning and improvements around the future Graham and Chinatown/International District light rail stations

Amendment 6 – Restore Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program Funding (Councilmember Morales)

- Add \$14 million to the Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program; build up to 16 neighborhood-initiated and co-created projects, focusing on community priorities across all Council Districts with an emphasis on equity; could include safety and mobility enhancements like new sidewalks, crossings, and transit access

Below is one additional amendment passed at the July 9 City Council meeting:

Amendment A – Complete the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link (Councilmember Strauss)

- Add \$20 million for completing the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link along NW Market St and NW Leary Ave

The final Seattle Transportation Levy package (\$1.55 billion) was passed by the City Council and will appear on the November ballot. Highlights of the final transportation levy include:

- 350 new blocks of sidewalks and 34,000 repairs to existing sidewalks
- 160 projects to improve bus trip reliability and connect people to light rail stations while prioritizing safety, reliability, and accessibility
- New preventative bridge maintenance program and planning for longer-term replacements
- 15 paving projects to maintain and modernize Seattle's streets and get people and goods where they need to go
- Improvements to Seattle's bicycle network with new protected bike lanes, added bike lane barriers, regular bike lane sweeping, completing the gap in the Burke-Gilman Trail, and more bike facilities in south Seattle

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.