



## City of Seattle

### Seattle Planning Commission

McCaela Daffern and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

#### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 10, 2025  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Matt Malloy, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple

**Commissioners Absent:** Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires

**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.*

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Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

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

#### Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair McCaela Daffern called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Daffern 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 Daffern noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with some Commissioners and staff participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in Room 370 at Seattle City Hall. She 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. She suggested to Commissioners that they collectively agree to abide by these norms.

## **Announcements**

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, reviewed the format of the meeting. She noted that public comment may be provided in person at City Hall, submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the meeting, or offered on the hybrid meeting platform MS Teams. Public comment must be able to be given in two minutes or less.

**ACTION: Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson moved to approve the March 27, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Matt Malloy seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

## **Public Comment**

Trish Shanley stated that Seattle traffic is a mess, and the fastest routes are through single family neighborhoods. She stated that she is concerned these routes will clog with the development proposed in the Mayor's One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. She questioned the rationale of proposing dense development along arterials. She stated that some frequent transit routes lose transit service during snow and ice events. When service transit is cancelled, residents can be stranded. She suggested removing frequent transit routes from snow and ice routes.

## **Briefing: Overview of Interim Legislation to Implement House Bill 1110**

Michael Hubner and Brennon Staley, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Mr. Staley provided an overview of the proposed interim legislation to implement House Bill (HB) 1110. He stated that this legislation is intended to be temporary to comply with adopted state laws until permanent legislation can be enacted. In addition to HB 1110, the interim legislation would also implement changes to comply with:

- House Bill 1293: Design Standards
- Senate Bill 6015: Off-street Parking
- House Bill 1287: Electric Vehicle Charging

Mr. Staley summarized the following key provisions of HB 1110:

- On all lots zoned for residential uses, zoning must allow:
  - Six of nine housing types (duplex, triplex, fourplex, fiveplex, sixplex, courtyard apartments, cottage housing, townhouses, stacked flats)
  - At least four units per lot
  - At least six units per lot if within 1/4-mile walking distance of a major transit stop or at if at least two units are affordable
- Design review for middle housing may only be administrative
- Middle housing development standards and permit review may not be more restrictive than those for single-family homes
- Parking may not be required within a half mile of a major transit stop

He stated that if the City does not pass legislation to comply with HB 1110 by June 30, the state's Model Ordinance will go into effect.

Mr. Staley described the general approach taken by the interim legislation as follows:

- Interim legislation only modifies those standards that:
  - Are addressed in the HB 1110 model ordinance; or
  - Are otherwise needed to comply with state law
- Where the State's Model Ordinance and proposed permanent legislation are generally similar, we use the specific standards proposed in the draft permanent legislation.
- Interim legislation is required to include:
  - Context and rationale for interim legislation
  - Length of time interim legislation would be in effect
  - Workplan to prepare permanent legislation

He summarized the proposed changes to Neighborhood Residential (NR) zones, including the differences between the interim legislation and the permanent legislation to implement the zoning changes included in the One Seattle Plan. He also described the proposed changes to Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning. He then reviewed other changes included in the interim legislation as follows:

- Update various LR zone standards to comply with HB 1110 and HB 1293
- Remove residential parking requirements for middle housing within ½ mile of major transit stops as required by HB 1110
- Modify parking space size and tandem parking requirements to comply with SB 6015
- Modify standards for pedestrian access and circulation and access easement requirements consistent with HB 1110
- Exempt middle housing from bike parking requirements consistent with HB 1110
- Update EV charging requirements to meet requirements in HB 1287

Mr. Staley concluded his presentation with the following list of items not included in the interim legislation:

- Consolidation of NR zones
- Rezones from NR to RSL
- Bonuses for stacked flats and low-income housing
- Corner store allowance
- Amenity Area
- Building separation requirements
- Accessory dwelling units
- Tree planting requirements and tree preservation incentives
- Allowances for stormwater features
- Parking location and screening
- Parking requirements outside of major transit areas
- Facade length

- New design standards
- Institutions
- Essential public facilities
- Adult family homes
- Numerous edits to improve clarity and accuracy

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that time is of the essence for the City to adopt the permanent legislation, especially because zoning needs to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners asked whether legislation is proposed to update the Comprehensive Plan to be consistent with this interim legislation. Mr. Staley answered there is no such legislation at this time.
- Commissioners noted that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are not included in the interim legislation and requested clarification. Mr. Staley stated that separate ADU legislation that will bring the City into compliance with HB 1337 has been submitted to the City Council.
- Commissioners expressed support for not including Mandatory Housing Affordability in NR zones.
- Commissioners asked how ADUs will be considered in meeting the minimum density requirements. Mr. Staley stated that HB 1337, the ADU compliance legislation, does not specify whether they count toward the minimum unit limit. He stated that ADUs will count toward the density limits in the permanent legislation.
- Commissioners requested an update on the appeals to the One Seattle Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Mr. Staley stated that there were six appeals, four of which have been dismissed. The Hearing Examiner will issue a ruling by the second week of June.
- Commissioners inquired about the upcoming Supplemental EIS for Regional Centers. Mr. Staley stated that OPCD is currently scoping that work.
- Commissioners asked for more information on the timeline for the permanent legislation. Mr. Staley stated that the centers and corridors legislation is moving expeditiously but the timeline is still an open question. OPCD is working with the City Council to determine how they want to handle that legislation.
- Commissioners asked whether HB 1293 will change how design review boards will operate. Mr. Staley stated that separate legislation is being prepared by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) on design review procedures. Commissioners expressed interest in a briefing from SDCI on that topic.
- Commissioners inquired about the possibility of additional outreach related to the permanent legislation. Mr. Staley stated that OPCD will not be conducting another outreach process. The City Council will have their own community engagement, including briefings and hearings. Mr. Hubner stated that additional outreach may not be necessary, as many of the proposed development standards are similar between the interim and permanent legislation, with some key differences.
- Commissioners asked if it would be helpful for the Planning Commission to engage with the City Council to demonstrate support for the permanent legislation. Mr. Hubner stated that the timeline for both the interim and permanent legislation is complicated. He stated that Mr. Staley is helping the City Council navigate this process. There are provisions in the permanent legislation that the City Council has said they are interested in. He stated that the City Council would like to hear from the Planning Commission on this topic.

## Briefing: Lid I-5

Scott Bonjukian and John Feit

Mr. Bonjukian provided an overview of the mission of the Lid I-5 Campaign: "To build the case and constituency for lidding Interstate 5 and building a more connected, sustainable, and equitable Seattle." He stated that the campaign's grassroots civic engagement efforts have included design charrettes, media interviews, walking and biking tours, and community presentations. He summarized key milestones in the Lid I-5 campaign between 2016 and 2024. Mr. Bonjukian presented a map showing potential locations where a I-5 lid could be feasible. He stated that the focus has mostly been on the center city and Yesler area. The University District has recently emerged as a potential location with new funding. He showed several conceptual renderings of the project area with before and after images and highlighted an article by the Congress for the New Urbanism featuring the project.

Mr. Bonjukian reviewed highlights of the recent Lid I-5 Feasibility Study. He stated that the study's consultants decided that lidding would be expensive and challenging but would unlock multiple benefits. He showed a map featuring the study area from Denny Way to Madison Street. He described the test case framework as described below.

*The study looked at the range of feasibility and did not recommend a preferred design.*

- *Test Case 1: Minimum level of public benefit for least cost (public park on the easy sites)*
- *Test Case 2: Maximum private investment (mid-rise and high-rise commercial/residential)*
- *Test Case 3: Mid-density hybrid (balance of civic and private uses)*

*Removing the Olive Way ramps was explored as an additional option in Test Case 2 and 3.*

Mr. Bonjukian highlighted the development potential for each of the three test cases, including public parks and open space, market housing and affordable housing, and commercial or civic space. He stated that this effort would equitably benefit a wide range of stakeholders.

Mr. Bonjukian stated that outlying affluent neighborhoods have been successful in advocating for lids. Lidding I-5 in Central Seattle will help rectify regional highway mitigation inequities and would provide the following environmental benefits:

- *Noise: Freeway noise levels of 70-78 decibels exceed the typical ambient level of 66 decibels. A lid could buffer this.*
- *Air: A lid could reduce direct exposure to air pollutants within the study area.*
- *Heat: A lid with green space could help reduce local air temperature by 3-4 degrees.*
- *Water: 30% of the rainwater runoff of the Capitol Hill basin could be treated or retained on the lids.*

Mr. Bonjukian stated that WSDOT is planning the future of I-5 across the state, studying the risk of I-5 failing during a major earthquake in Seattle and how it might be upgraded, and studying ramp configurations in central Seattle. He stated that the I-5 System Master Planning effort is an opportunity for Seattle to put their vision forward and make WSDOT aware of it. He listed the following programs, plans, and resolutions that provide public policy support for the Lid I-5 effort:

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (2024)
- Downtown Activation Plan (2023)
  - Lidding I-5 is identified as a "Green" initiative that also relates to Safety, Residential, and Tourism actions.
- City Council Resolution 32100 (2023)
  - City endorsement of the Lid I-5 project and intergovernmental cooperation
- Imagine Greater Downtown (2019)
- Seattle Comprehensive Plan
  - Growth Strategy policy 3.13 (2022)
  - Transportation policy 3.12 (2016)
  - Parks policy 1.17 (2016)

Mr. Bonjukian stated that the Lid I-5 campaign secured \$200,000 in state funding in 2023 for OPCD to update and add to the 2020 Lid Feasibility Study. He provided an overview of Seattle City Council Resolution 32100, which:

- Formally establishes support for lidding I-5 where feasible citywide
- Directs the City to continue to collaborate with WSDOT and FHWA
- Directs the City to add supporting policies into land use, transportation, and subarea plans
- Directs the City to study a public development authority option
- Directs the City to apply for federal Reconnecting Communities grant

He highlighted recent federal funding for freeway mitigation, including \$2 million for Lid I-5 Downtown in 2024 and \$1.5 million for Lid I-5 University District in 2025. The \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2024 will allow OPCD to:

- Build project leadership via a stakeholders group
- Establish an Urban Design Vision
- Complete technical products for advanced planning:
  - Feasibility analysis of the expanded study sites
  - Updated feasibility study assumptions and cost estimates
  - Mobility opportunities study
  - Prepare for the master planning process

Mr. Feit summarized the next steps for the project as follows:

- Scope and perform the federal and state grant work over the next 2-3 years
- Continue building public awareness and engagement
- Integrate lidding I-5 into:
  - Seattle's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
  - Seattle Downtown Subarea Plan
  - PSRC Regional Transportation Plan
  - WSDOT I-5 Planning and Environmental Linkage Study
  - WSDOT I-5 Causeway Seismic Study

He stated that the work will be done by consultants; no work will be done by the City. He stated that WSDOT sees the Lid I-5 work as an evolution of the I-5 Master Plan, including creation of an urban design vision and an aspirational list of what the community would like to see in the study area. He noted that a stakeholder group will be modeled on the Central Waterfront project representing a wide range of constituencies. The Lid I-5 campaign has been hosting a series of Beer and Culture events, following a long history of similar events on the Seattle Waterfront and Pike Place Market.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed concern about expansion of the Lid I-5 project to the Chinatown/International District (C/ID), saying that there is a long, complicated history of I-5 in that neighborhood. Relationship building is so critical in community engagement. Many projects come into that neighborhood with an agenda and are not received well, even if the project is intended to be beneficial. There is deep distrust among residents based on a history of being brought into outside projects with negative results. Commissioners suggested that Lid I-5 consider the pros and cons of an elevated vs. not elevated approach and potential benefits for addressing existing connectivity issues in the neighborhood. Mr. Feit stated that the Lid I-5 team has had discussions about re-branding the campaign and not focusing on the lid or similar solutions but more on reconnecting communities. Areas of the project study area with elevated or sunken existing conditions will require different solutions. They have tried to engage more stakeholders in the C/ID. He stated that they are trying not to bring an agenda or a solution to the neighborhood but rather present a goal of reconnecting communities. Key to achieving that goal is formation of an advisory committee. They are hoping to have at least one or more members of the C/ID community on that committee.
- Commissioners stated that investments in this area should benefit those who were most affected. The most durable and beneficial investments come from community. If the C/ID community is not asking for this effort, the I-5 team may need much deeper engagement to build their trust.
- Commissioners stated that the First Hill neighborhood has Freeway Park but not a lot of other parks and open space.
- Commissioners stated that they would like to see more housing when reconnecting communities.
- Commissioners stated that the biggest challenge and opportunity is understanding that megaprojects come to life when something catalyzes them. What would truly catalyze investment in I-5 would be the WSDOT Master Plan. Everything would change immediately if there was an earthquake and I-5 would be a rebuilding and resilience project. That would involve rebuilding back from past harms and looking to the future to address transportation, connectivity, and community needs. Mr. Feit stated that the I-5 Master Plan is the catalyst. A lot of major investments need to be made to bring I-5 up to the level of resilience that Commissioners addressed. Mr. Feit stated that community groups have expressed concern in a lack of specificity on environmental justice and other issue relevant to certain stakeholders. The Lid I-5 rebranding effort may lead to different priorities. The team will be looking for consultants who are good listeners and can understand the campaign's aspirational goals.
- Commissioners stated that consultant contracts should require that a certain percentage of the work involve listening to the community. Mr. Feit stated that about one-third of their grant money is dedicated to outreach and community partnership building. Commissioners noted that

consultant contracts can create difficult power dynamics and asked if Lid I-5 could work directly with community without going through a consultant. Commissioners suggested taking a cautious approach to working with communities of color and asked if they would consider removing part of the project if the community does not want it. Mr. Feit sated that they would consider it, but WSDOT is developing the I-5 Master Plan. There is money for capacity building with affected communities.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.**

#### **Resources**

[Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan, March 28 presentation](#)

[Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan agendas and associated materials](#)

[Seattle Planning Commission comments on proposed zoning changes for the One Seattle Plan](#)

[Lid I-5 website](#)