



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Xio Alvarez and Matt Hutchins, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, May 14, 2026
Approved Meeting Minutes

- Commissioners Present:** Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, Rebecca Brunn, McCaela Daffern, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Margaret Szeles, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple
- Commissioners Absent:** Andrew Dannenberg, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson
- 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.

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Xio Alvarez called the meeting to order at 3:49 pm. Co-Chair Alvarez offered the following land acknowledgement:

'As we begin our meeting, we respectfully acknowledge that our meeting today is taking place on occupied Coast Salish land. We pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people. To acknowledge this land is to recognize the history of physical and cultural genocide and settler colonialism, which continues to displace Indigenous people today. It is to also recognize these lands, waters, and their significance for the resilient and wise peoples who continue to thrive in this region despite the consequences of displacement and broken treaties. Those who hold settler privilege in this city must work towards supporting the Coast Salish people and all Indigenous people using the various forms of wealth and privilege they reap due to it.'

Co-Chair Alvarez 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. 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, announced several upcoming Commission meetings and reviewed the format of this meeting.

ACTION: Commissioner McCaela Daffern moved to approve the April 23, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Dylan Glosecki seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

Ms. Murdock 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.

There was no public comment.

Briefing: One Seattle Plan implementation timing and strategy

Michael Hubner and Jonathan Morales, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Hubner stated that Mayor Wilson has provided direction to the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to develop a work plan and timeline for her “Taller, Denser, Faster” strategy for implementation of the One Seattle Plan. Mr. Morales provided background on the One Seattle Plan’s Growth Strategy for how the City will grow over the next twenty years. He highlighted the initial approach to implementation phasing as follows:

Phase 1: HB 1110 Implementation/Neighborhood Residential (NR) (complete – adopted in Dec. 2025)

Phase 2: Centers and Corridors (transmitted to Council in January 2026)

Phase 3: Select Regional & Urban Centers + New and Expanded Neighborhood Centers

- Rezone adoption in late 2026/early 2027

Phase 4: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Station Area Focus

- HB 1491 (TOD Bill) implementation
- Rezone adoption in mid/late 2028

He then introduced the Mayor’s vision for Taller, Denser, Faster, combining Phases 3 and 4 and emphasizing the following guiding vision:

- **Affordable, abundant housing.** Address housing affordability challenges by significantly expanding housing supply. Add zoning capacity for all kinds of new housing.
- **Do not wait.** Deliver zoning changes as soon as possible, including implementing HB 1491(TOD Bill) sooner than required.
- **Thriving complete neighborhoods.** Increase housing options near transit and community amenities (parks, schools, shops, etc.)
- **Environmental justice.** Add healthy and safe housing options on quiet streets off roads with heavy traffic.

Mr. Morales stated the One Seattle Plan and phases 1 and 2 were studied in a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to fulfill State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review

requirements. Additional environmental review is required to consider a broader range of potential changes and OPCD will perform a Supplemental EIS (SEIS). A joint resolution is proposed that provides guidance from the Mayor and Council to OPCD about the range of potential changes to consider in the SEIS. Mr. Hubner noted that a range of alternatives will be studied.

Mr. Morales stated OPCD expects to study a range of options in the scale and geographic extent of potential zoning changes in three types of places that are identified and described in the Comprehensive Plan:

Neighborhood Centers

The updated Growth Strategy in the Comprehensive Plan includes 30 Neighborhood Centers that:

- add housing options within an easy walk to frequent transit and/or neighborhood business districts and amenities
- increase housing diversity in more neighborhoods across the city
- generally, reflect a 3- to 4-minute (800 feet) walk from the central intersection
- generally, allow 4- to 6-story buildings

Council Resolution 32183 calls for environmental review of 9 new and 6 expanded Neighborhood Centers:

New Neighborhood Centers (9)

- Alki
- Broadview
- Dawson
- Gasworks
- Loyal Heights
- Roanoke
- S. Wedgwood
- Nickerson
- Phinney Ridge

Neighborhood Center expansions (6)

- Tangletown
- Upper Fremont
- Magnolia Village
- North Magnolia
- East Ballard
- Northwest Green Lake

OPCD expects to review these and potentially more Neighborhood Centers in the SEIS.

Regional and Urban Centers

- Seattle's highest-density housing and job centers with strong access to transit.
- Six centers were expanded in Comprehensive Plan, plus a new center at Pinehurst Station (NE 130th St), with zoning changes for these areas in centers included in Centers & Corridors (Phase 2).
- By the end of 2027, Regional Centers must have subarea plans adopted that will guide zoning changes.

- OPCD expects to review potential zoning changes within existing center boundaries in the SEIS.

HB 1491 Station Areas and Frequent Transit Corridors

OPCD will study zoning to meet or exceed HB 1491 requirements plus wider areas around frequent transit.

HB 1491 requires zoning for minimum average floor area ratio (FAR) in transit station areas:

- FAR of 2.5 within ¼ mile (5-min walk) of bus rapid transit (BRT) stops
- FAR of 3.5 within ½ mile (10-min walk) of rail stations

Frequent Transit Corridors:

- Run to and between designated centers and include both BRT and non-BRT routes
- Are generally rezoned within a half-block in the Centers and Corridors legislation

Rail Station Areas

- HB 1491 requires a minimum average floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.5 within a half-mile of rail station areas (light rail, Monorail, and streetcar).
- Seattle's rail stations in Downtown and other Regional Centers generally meet the minimum FAR.
- Other light rail stations are below the required FAR, especially in southeast Seattle.

BRT Station Areas

- HB 1491 requires a minimum average FAR of 2.5 in bus rapid transit (BRT) station areas within a quarter-mile of stops.
- Most BRT station areas in Downtown and north of the Ship Canal meet or exceed the minimum FAR.
- Nearly all in West Seattle are below the minimum FAR.

Frequent Transit Corridors

- The Centers and Corridors legislation generally includes rezones to Lowrise 3 for the half-block facing frequent transit routes.
- OPCD expects to study varied approaches to wider upzones near frequent transit.

Mr. Morales presented the following questions for discussion:

Growth Centers (Regional, Urban, and Neighborhood Centers)

- How many centers?
- Expansions – which ones? How big?
- Zoning and scale?

Frequent Transit Corridors

- Zoning and scale?
- Geographic extent – how big?
- Routes vs. stops

Transit Oriented Development (HB 1491)

- Zoning and scale in relation to minimum average FAR for station areas?
- Should center expansions be considered, where appropriate?

Mr. Morales presented an overview of the draft timeline and ended with the following questions for discussion:

- What are your overall impressions of the general direction?
- Are there other factors we should be considering?
- Any feedback on the questions we are considering?

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners inquired about the current average FAR around the mapped Frequent Transit Routes. Mr. Hubner stated that varies considerably, depending on the station area. Some can be as low as 1.5 to 2.5. OPCD needs to conduct more definitive analysis. The map shows a preliminary scan based on available data. He stated that the State is preparing guidance for local jurisdictions on HB 1491. OPCD does not have that yet, so they do not have definitive analysis.
- Commissioners expressed support for the thirty proposed Neighborhood Centers and suggested that the City needs to go further. Approximately eighty existing commercial districts could meet the criteria for a Neighborhood Center. The City Council is proposing another 10. Commissioners stated that they would like to see that number get closer to fifty Neighborhood Centers forming a network connecting all parts of the city. It would be ideal for areas that currently only have a few businesses to have the potential to grow. Commissioners expressed support for Neighborhood Center boundaries based on a five minute walk (or a one-quarter mile radius). The boundaries should not be based on the center, but from the perimeter.
- Commissioners stated that they understand that current effort is on identifying bookends. They expressed support for maximizing the possibilities of what is studied in the EIS. This should include as many Centers as possible, as large as possible, and as fast as possible. Everyone needs to understand the impacts of the alternatives and displacement should be included.
- Commissioners stated that small business displacement should be considered by expanding commercial zoning in Neighborhood Centers. This would allow space for businesses to move as the existing core is redeveloped. Lowrise 3 (LR3) should be the lowest zone in the centers.
- Commissioners expressed interest in studying one-quarter mile off the corridor (or up to one-half mile) to allow space for transitions. One-half mile is not a significant walk, especially in areas with flat terrain. The highest densities should be located off the corridors, rather than directly on the corridor. Some of the areas off corridors may already have amenities.
- Commissioners stated that this effort should be coordinated with the update of Streets Illustrated.
- Mr. Hubner stated that OPCD is actively looking at options for a zoning treatment similar to corridors. The City has an entirely new baseline because of the One Seattle Plan. Neighborhood Residential (NR) is effectively a four-story apartment zone. LR 3 is the next step up.
- Commissioners stated that HB 1491 should enable creation of a network of bike and pedestrian corridors.
- Commissioners noted the difference between frequent transit routes and transit stops. It makes sense to build more adjacent to transit stops. OPCD should consider topography, as some areas are more accessible.

- Commissioners inquired whether the one-quarter and one-half mile standards will be implemented citywide. Mr. Hubner clarified that these will be applied around individual light rail and BRT stations.
- Commissioners highlighted areas of strong displacement risk throughout the city and especially in South Seattle. Bookends of zoning strategies need to be studied.
- Commissioners inquired about how HB 1491 will apply to future light rail station areas. Mr. Morales stated that there are ongoing planning efforts in those station areas that will result in land use recommendations. OPCD will fold the results of those planning processes into the SEIS scoping.
- Commissioners asked how the light rail station areas within Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs) will be affected. Mr. Hubner stated that HB 1491 does not apply to MICs. Commissioners asked how the City can increase access to jobs if not adding residential density in those areas. Mr. Hubner stated that the Industrial and Maritime Strategy created the Industry and Innovation zone for future light rail station areas. This zone provides an incentive structure for more vertical structures that include traditional industrial uses on the ground floor and office/research and development uses above.
- Commissioners inquired about the guidance provided by the State's Department of Commerce on implementing HB 1491. Mr. Hubner stated that OPC will be following that guidance but expressed doubt that it will provide the coverage Seattle needs to meet its growth targets. He stated that OPCD is studying options to go above and beyond HB 1491.
- Commissioners recommended clarifying the difference between capacity and what can be built when identifying alternatives. This would make it clear to the public what is likely to be built.
- Commissioners suggested that the EIS explicitly study allowing zero side yard setbacks to encourage more backyards and private internal courtyards.
- Commissioners recommended that the EIS study increasing the number of areas with parking maximums.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.