



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 13, 2022

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	David Goldberg, Rick Mohler, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble
Commissioners Absent:	Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, Roque Deherrera, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Patience Malaba, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator
Guests:	Geoff Wentlandt and Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development

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 3:08 pm. Co-Chair Stroble made 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.'

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.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, 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.

Update: Industrial and Maritime Strategy

Geoff Wentlandt and Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Wentlandt provided an overview of the Industrial and Maritime Strategy planning process to date as well as the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. He stated that due to stakeholder requests, the City is extending the Draft EIS (DEIS) comment period an additional 30 days to March 2. Mr. Holmes reviewed the proposed new land use concepts including Maritime, Manufacturing, and Logistics (MML), Industry and Innovation (II), and Urban Industrial (UI). He showed concept diagrams for each of these land use concepts.

Mr. Wentlandt reviewed the four EIS alternatives – Alternative 1: No Action, Alternative 2: Future of Industry - Limited, Alternative 3: Future of Industry – Targeted, and Alternative 4: Future of Industry – Expanded. He described some of the major differences between the alternatives. Mr. Holmes summarized the elements studied in the DEIS, reviewed the table of contents, and reiterated the EIS process. Mr. Wentlandt offered suggestions for providing effective EIS comments.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested clarification that the levels of industrial land protection are consistent across Alternatives 2-4. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the study area is consistent across all action alternatives and the mix of proposed zoning concepts varies among those alternatives.
- Commissioners asked if the MML zoning designation indicates lower building heights while the II zoning designation explicitly includes multi-story buildings. Mr. Wentlandt stated that there is currently no height limit in the Industrial General zone. This would be the same in the MML zone. He stated that it is currently unusual to see tall buildings in industrial zones.
- Commissioners asked if there is a summary matrix in the DEIS that includes the broader impacts and tradeoffs of each of the alternatives. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the various impacts associated with the alternatives are described in different elements and suggested reviewing the individual chapters of the DEIS for more information. Mr. Holmes stated that Chapter 2 includes a detailed description of the alternatives.
- Commissioners requested confirmation that the DEIS only considered changes within the Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (M/ICs), not expansion of those MICs. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the study area only include land currently in the M/ICs or existing industrial zoned land. He recognized that the Planning Commission has previously expressed interest in applying the UI zone designation in other areas. This was discussed as a mitigation measure for other areas outside industrial areas.
- Commissioners asked if the City's outreach efforts include those with special needs or those who would be impacted by environmental justice issues. Mr. Wentlandt stated that City staff are always trying to do more to engage members of the community. He stated that efforts are currently underway to engage with the South Park and Georgetown communities and the Duwamish and other tribes.

- Commissioners asked whether any alternatives would have greater impacts on environmental health. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the UI zone would have higher standards for landscaping and multi-modal transportation. This designation would create a healthier transition between industrial and residential areas.
- Commissioners encouraged workforce development efforts to build a pipeline to living wage jobs, especially for those living in communities that have been most impacted by industrial activities.
- Commissioners requested additional information on how transportation impacts to logistics and freight mobility would be mitigated. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the Transportation element includes mitigation measures such as freight-priority and freight-only lanes.
- Commissioners addressed concerns with addressing housing affordability issues by placing housing in industrial lands and asked whether Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) regulations would apply to new development in industrial areas. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the II zone would allow dense, tall buildings that would be subject to the MHA regulations.
- Commissioners asked for more information on how use of and demand for industrial land is changing. Mr. Wentlandt stated that a recent report prepared by Community Attributes looked at trends in fifteen industry sectors.
- Commissioners inquired how the Ballard Interbay Regional Transportation study has informed any proposed mitigation for transportation impacts. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the same consultant that drafted this EIS also prepared that analysis.
- Commissioners asked whether transportation mode shift and modal capacity targets were considered. Mr. Wentlandt stated that the DEIS includes an analysis on transit levels of service. He offered to ask for more information from the City's transportation consultant.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Wentlandt and Mr. Holmes for their briefing.

Discussion: Draft Industrial and Maritime Strategy DEIS Letter Outline

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Draft Industrial and Maritime Strategy DEIS Letter Outline. He stated that the Land Use and Transportation Committee will be holding a working session on this outline on January 20. The Commission will then review a draft comment letter at its January 27 meeting. A final draft letter will be presented for Commission action at the February 10 meeting.

Mr. Hoey reviewed the sections of the draft outline as presented below:

- I. Introduction
- II. Proposal & Alternatives
- III. SPC Comments on Overall Proposal & Alternatives
- IV. Environment, Impacts, & Mitigation Measures

Commissioners took five minutes to review the contents of the draft outline before providing comments.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed strong interest in providing comments on the housing and transportation sections of the DEIS.

- Commissioners stated that the DEIS should document and analyze tradeoffs between industrial and residential uses, as well as analyze how to leverage the region's massive investment in transit while also keeping industrial rents affordable.
- Commissioners stated that the DEIS should include an analysis of how much industrial land the City needs for its growth projections.
- Commissioners recommended that it would be useful to hear from industrial stakeholders in addition to City staff.
- Commissioners expressed strong support for resilient industrial lands with open space and infrastructure investments.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the lack of available housing for future industrial workers.

Discussion: Draft Growth Strategy Issue Brief

Mr. Hoey introduced the Draft Growth Strategy issue brief. The content of this issue brief was discussed during working sessions at both the Land Use and Transportation and Housing and Neighborhoods Committees and at full Commission meetings in October and November. He thanked Commissioner David Goldberg for offering to review and edit the latest draft of the issue brief.

Mr. Hoey presented the following summary of recommendations included in the issue brief:

- Embrace the 15-Minute City
- Expand the Urban Villages concept to embrace a network of complete neighborhoods
- Actively address displacement

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners recommended changing the draft text to "Become the 15-minute city".
- Commissioners recommended acknowledging displacement related to both housing and commercial affordability, especially for BIPOC communities.
- Commissioners recommended changing the draft text to include a "network of complete and connected neighborhoods."
- Commissioners informally agreed that the draft text was ready to move forward with production of the issue brief including graphics, maps, etc.

Public Comment

The following public comment was read by Ms. Murdock:

In the fall of 2019, a working group of the Mayor's Citywide Industrial & Maritime Lands Advisory Group presented a vision for land use reform in the city's industrial lands which is directly relevant to the Industrial and Maritime DEIS process currently underway. The presentation, which we have attached for inclusion in the public record, highlights the following themes:

- *Seattle's current industrial lands zoning does not meet the needs of existing manufacturing and new makers;*
- *To stay economically competitive, attract the jobs of tomorrow, and achieve equity Seattle's neighborhoods need to embody a live, learn, work, play approach to growth;*

- *Industrial lands are perfectly aligned to bring new union jobs to the area due to ongoing infrastructure and transportation investment;*
- *Industrial lands cannot meaningfully help to achieve Seattle’s environmental and equity goals of reducing single-occupancy cars, promoting the proximity of home and work, making housing affordable, and providing youth job training unless mixed-use zoning is adopted.*

To put these themes into a broader context, we would like to point out the following four critical considerations:

1. *We fully support retaining industrial zoning, whether it be the existing IG-1 and IG-2 or the new MM&L land use concept, in those areas where traditional industrial and maritime businesses continue to thrive - specifically in close proximity to waterways and rail lines; at present and as proposed, however, the restrictions associated with these designations would apply to between 85% to 90% of the approximately 5,000 acres of land in the MICs extending well east of the Sound and rail lines, where little industrial activity remains. These restrictions have led to underutilized and abandoned buildings and a shrinking employment base as manufacturing has migrated south, but alternate uses are barred;*
2. *The City is investing billions of dollars into its Light Rail public transit system including (4) new stations in the industrial areas; it continues to face a persistent and acute shortage of housing (particularly affordable, workforce housing); it has prioritized mixed-use transit-oriented development around its new transit infrastructure; and yet, under the proposed new land use concepts no new residential development would be permitted around these stations. This would squander the opportunity to attract significant investment in true, vibrant mixed-use communities with a combination of workforce housing, retail, commercial, AND industrial uses, as described in the attachment;*
3. *The term “industrial use” remains too ambiguous, and needs to be further refined in light of the transformative changes in manufacturing technologies to accommodate a broader range of businesses that are well suited to operate with the smaller structures, narrower throughways, and limited access to freight lines that are found in the historic industrial areas;*
4. *Finally, the changes we are proposing to the current new land use concepts - specifically, permitting workforce housing and broadening the definition of permitted industrial use - would only apply to 10% to 15% of the total land area and be concentrated around transit, major commercial corridors, and in the peripheral buffer zones, as shown in the maps for the new proposed Industry and Innovation and Urban Industrial zones.*

We have been and are in productive dialog with Geoff Wentlandt and Jim Holmes regarding these land use and density considerations and felt it important to share this portion of our work given the Commission’s ongoing review and planned comments being developed.

*Sincerely,
Peter Nitze
On behalf of SODO Stakeholder Representatives*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.