



**City of Seattle  
Seattle Planning Commission**

Amalia Leighton, Chair  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
APRIL 9, 2015  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Michael Austin, Catherine Benotto, David Cutler, Brad Khouri, Grace Kim, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton, Tim Parham, Marj Press, Lauren Squires, Patti Wilma

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Luis Borrero, Kara Martin, Matt Roewe, David Shelton

**COMMISSION STAFF**

Jessica Brand - Policy Analyst, Diana Canzoneri - Demographer, Robin Magonegil, - Administrative Assistant,

**GUESTS**

Jon Layzer, Dori Costa SDOT, Evan Clifthorne, Councilmember Rasmussen's Office Staff, Lish Whitson, Council Central Staff

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Deb Barker

*Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Chair's Report & Minutes Approval**

Chair Amalia Leighton

Chair Leighton called the meeting to order at 3:09 pm.

Commissioner Marj Press moved to approve the March 26, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Michael Austin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Commissioners Brad Khouri and Tim Parham abstaining.

**Briefing: City of Seattle Transportation Levy**

Jon Layzer, Deputy Director of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

If you would like to view the power point presentation on the City of Seattle Transportation Levy, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minute's section of our website.

- Bridging the Gap levy will be replaced by the Transportation Levy to Move Seattle.
- Bridging the Gap has historically provided a quarter of the dollars spent by SDOT.
- Transportation Levy to Move Seattle will be a 9 year levy that would generate \$900 Million in total, at an annual cost of \$275 for a median home.

#### **Commission Comments and Questions:**

Commissioners discussed specific projects that could be included in the transportation levy. They asked why the Mount Baker station and the Center City street car were not included. The Commissioners shared that they were supportive of the good work in Mount Baker and were interested in adding this project to the levy list. Staff responded that projects as big as the street car are not funded by the local Transportation Levy because the projects are too expensive and would require too large a share of the levy.

Commissioners expressed interest in tree canopy preservation, asking specifically whether the new number was a reflection of past performance and whether the City should be more ambitious.

Commissioners discussed parking and particularly whether SDOT would be paying for new parking as part of this levy. They noted that parking is often cited as an impediment to new increased development and they wondered if more and better use of street parking would assist in this discussion. Staff responded that parking was not part of the Transportation Levy.

Commissioners questioned the amount of financial resources dedicated to freight spot improvements. They shared their concern that it may not be enough.

#### **Letter: Comprehensive Plan Major Update, Draft #4**

Commission and staff discussion

#### **Commissioner Comments and Questions:**

Redrafting suggestions included:

- Highlight key suggestions in the heading, make declarative statements.
- Remove Single Family flexibility from Future Land Use Map changes for better readability.
- State more clearly SPC concerns with the removal of Transit Communities.
- Remove context setting to make the letter more focused as the internal audience has the adequate context.

#### **Briefing: Conservation Districts**

Evan Clifthorne, Office of Councilmember Rasmussen  
Lish Whitson Council Central Staff

If you would like to view the power point presentation on the Conservation Districts, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minute's section of our website

- Neighborhood Conservation Districts are being discussed in order to honor design and creativity from past generations and maintain Seattle's neighborhood character.

- This program will allow neighbors with a distinctive character to engage in the discussion of future growth and development of their neighborhoods.

### **Commission Comments and Questions:**

Commissioners discussed the slideshow examples. There was some clarification from Mr. Clifthorne on whether the examples existed in cities that also had Design Review programs. The Commissioners expressed concern that the new program may be introduced while the Design Review Program was being evaluated and that the two processes may not be in alignment. Mr. Clifthorne responded that the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) would supersede any other Design Review or adopted Design Guidelines.

Commissioners discussed the Council outreach on this program thus far, particularly in response to the presentation on how the NCD would address equity. The Commission expressed concerns that changes to existing structures could be cost prohibitive in areas of low-to-middle income home ownership.

The Commissioners asked a clarifying question regarding how many units with an NCD are allowed to be non-conforming. The response was 1/3 of the units.

Commissioners struggled to understand the problem this new program was trying to address. They discussed their experiences in other cities and expressed concern that this program may impede development in a time of a housing affordability crisis.

Commissioners discussed the Housing Affordability and Livability Advisory group (HALA) work plan and how this program seems to be running parallel but not intersecting with that work, noting that a sub group of HALA, Construction Timelines and Costs, has expressed real concern with the addition of still more guidelines and requirements for new development. They expressed concern that this program would likely increase the costs of development.

Commissioners questioned how this program will help us achieve our Comprehensive Plan goals.

Commissioners discussed the perceived work load for applications and processing. They requested more information on how the staff person at the Department of Neighborhoods would process the applications and how many might be approved over a year.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deb Barker is a member of the Morgan Junction Neighborhood Association and a former City Planner. She shared her concern regarding the Neighborhood Conservation District proposal. She asked the Commission to request that the process be slowed down and that there be much more public process. She noted that she had attended the West Seattle public meeting and of the 30 people that attended everyone expressed concern with the proposal. She also expressed concern with the addition of commercial uses in the proposal and asked that the Commission consider advising to at a minimum remove this part of the proposal.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Leighton adjourned the meeting at 5:32 pm.