



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Tim Parham, Chair

Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 28, 2019

Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, Veronica Guenther, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler (by phone), Tim Parham, Marj Press, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Patti Wilma

**Commissioners Absent:** Eileen Canola

**Commission Staff:** Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Policy Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Analyst

*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:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

#### Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Chair Tim Parham called the meeting to order at 7:36 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

**ACTION: Commissioner Patti Wilma moved to approve the February 14, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

#### Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, recognized Robin Magonegil's birthday. She announced several upcoming community events, including three Sound Transit open houses, a Fort Lawton public meeting, an Imagine Greater Downtown open house, a Crown Hill community planning open house, a 130<sup>th</sup>/145<sup>th</sup> Street community planning open house, and an Equitable Development Initiative advisory board meeting. She reminded the Commissioners of the last Joint Commission/Board Race and Social Justice Initiative training on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Over twenty-five applications were received for the open Planning Commission positions. The next steps will be to screen the applications and identify candidates to interview.

Connie Combs, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an update on the citywide Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) legislation. She thanked Commissioner Veronica Guenther and Chair Tim Parham for their roles in providing testimony at the public hearing. The City Council Select MHA Committee voted 8-0 to pass the legislation with amendments. City Councilmembers Mosqueda and Johnson made several references to the Commission's recommendations. The City Council final vote on the legislation will be held on March 18.

**Action: Seattle Planning Commission Leadership Slate**

Executive Director Murdock announced the 2019 leadership slate that was introduced at the February 14th Commission meeting:

- Chair: Michael Austin
- Vice-Chair: Patti Wilma
- Housing and Neighborhoods Committee Co-Chairs: Jamie Stroble and Amy Shumann
- Land Use and Transportation Committee Chair: David Goldberg

Commissioner Wilma asked if the slate can be amended at a later date to add a Land Use and Transportation Committee Co-Chair. Executive Director Murdock stated that is possible. Commissioner Marj Press asked whether any of the Commissioners on the slate are up for reappointment. Executive Director Murdock stated Commissioner Jamie Stroble is up for reappointment and an alternative appointment strategy had been developed.

**ACTION: Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the 2019 leadership slate. Chair Tim Parham seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

**Discussion: Debrief of Joint Commission Meeting**

Commissioners Michael Austin, Grace Kim, and Jamie Stroble attended a recent Joint Commission meeting with members of the Arts and Design Commissions. The subject of this meeting was urban design and placemaking opportunities and challenges associated with Sound Transit's plans for a new Chinatown/International District (C/ID) station and associated alignment. Participating Commissioners shared some highlights:

- The meeting began with presentations from Sound Transit and the Office of Planning and Community Development. Representatives from Historic South Downtown and other C/ID and Pioneer Square community groups provided public comment.
- There was a discussion about racial equity and how investment in transit infrastructure can be a catalyst for those neighborhoods.
- Attendees agreed that the C/ID will be a very important station in the regional transit system and needs a community-led vision. We should be planning for the next 100 years, while also working to repair what happened to the C/ID and Pioneer Square communities in the last 100 years.
- There was general interest in developing a new C/ID station closer to the surface, as opposed to the deep mined station alternatives that are still being considered. Easy transfers and connections between Sound Transit lines and other modes will be important.

- Attendees agreed there is significant potential for displacement of fragile businesses. A priority concern should be helping local businesses to survive the period of construction. If local businesses were to be displaced, they could be re-located in Union Station with affordable rents was one small business retention strategy raised.
- The two historic train stations in the vicinity of the C/ID station presents a unique opportunity for placemaking. Union Station in Denver is an example of a broader revitalization and economic development project. Attendees agreed that the new C/ID station should not resemble an airport or shopping mall with only higher-end stores aimed at tourists. The station should include local businesses in a culturally-appropriate environment.
- There was discussion on the best way to influence the outcomes, including discussions with the City about the future of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue viaduct.

#### *Commission Discussion*

- Commissioners stated the new C/ID station is a catalytic project. The City is a critical partner and should coordinate with Sound Transit to make this a regional transit hub. The City should prioritize the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue viaduct replacement project to coordinate with construction of a new C/ID station.
- Commissioners compared the new C/ID station with the proposed transit investments at the other ends of the alignments (West Seattle and Ballard). Commissioners recommended looking at how Sound Transit proposes to spread new infrastructure investments across the city.
- Commissioners recognized that the Imagine Greater Downtown project includes a vision for the C/ID and Westlake as regional transit hubs.
- Commissioners suggested building a coalition to create a community led vision. Commissioners requested a briefing from the Jackson Hub community group.
- Commissioners emphasized the importance of sending recommendations to the Seattle elected officials. The City has the opportunity to apply lessons learned from past Sound Transit projects to make informed decisions on this round of investments.
- Commissioners stated that the City has significant leverage, as Sound Transit needs numerous permits from the City to build this project.
- Commissioners highlighted the Seattle waterfront vision as a project that generated a lot of excitement and support. Commissioners recommended engaging other Commissions in a charrette format to generate visual concepts and a grand vision for the larger station area.

#### **Discussion: Draft Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Scoping Letter**

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, introduced the draft scoping letter and provided an overview of its contents.

***If you would like to view the Draft Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Scoping Letter presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.***

#### *Commission Discussion*

- Commissioners suggested the letter emphasize what we want to be studied in the EIS and what data should be included in the analyses.

- Commissioners requested to review Sound Transit’s transit-oriented development methodology in advance of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Commissioners recommended revising the draft language on industrial lands to reflect the potential for transit-oriented development around future light rail stations in industrial areas.
- Commissioners encouraged the use of stronger language regarding the need for visualizations.
- Commissioners highlighted the significance of the new C/ID station and recommended Sound Transit study the cost and engineering effects of elevated stations in Ballard and West Seattle to leverage a larger investment in the C/ID tunnel station.
- Commissioners recommended more specific language about the need for third-party funding.
- Commissioners suggested the letter be more specific about which alternatives should be studied in the EIS, including potential mix-and-match alternatives.
- Commissioners recommended requesting analysis of how topography and land use might affect access and ridership at each of the future stations. Commissioners suggested requesting specific data for the ridership catchment areas at the South Lake Union and Smith Cove stations.
- Commissioners suggested Sound Transit use the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative equity analysis methodology as well as information from the draft Equitable Development Indicators currently under development.
- Commissioners recommended organizing the draft letter by topic to be studied in the EIS (e.g., land use, aesthetics, etc.)
- Commissioners highlighted the need for Sound Transit to analyze the short- and long-term impacts to local businesses on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue S from cut-and-cover construction of a station in the vicinity.

Commissioners Sandra Fried, David Goldberg, and Julio Sanchez volunteered to review the draft letter and provide additional edits. The Commission will take action on the scoping letter at its March 14 meeting.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.**