



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, July 23, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: David Goldberg, Kelly Rider

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

Guests: Patience Malaba, Katherine Idziorek

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

Chair Michael Austin called the meeting to order at 7:35 am and recognized 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. Chair Austin asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for any additions or amendments to those norms before stating the expectation that everyone practice those norms.

ACTION: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the July 9 meeting minutes. Commissioner Patti Wilma seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

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 8 hours before the start of the Commission meeting. She announced that

Katherine Idziorek, Patience Malaba, and Lauren Squires will be appointed to the Commission at the July 27 City Council meeting.

Discussion: Draft 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Docketing

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, introduced the staff draft docketing recommendations on the proposed 2020-2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. The City Council received eleven proposed amendments from members of the public this spring. Mr. Hoey stated that these proposed amendments are reviewed against a series of criteria to determine which should move forward for further analysis (a process known as docketing). The amendments are not reviewed on their merits at this point in the process. The staff draft docketing recommendations are as follows:

#1: Extend the University District Urban Center (Recommended to docket)

- Extend the University District Urban Center boundary to include eight lots along the western side of 15th Ave NE between NE 56th St and NE Ravenna Blvd and change the FLUM designation from Multi-Family Residential to University District Urban Center
- Not previously submitted
- Meets the criteria and warrants further study
- In particular, this application meets the intent of criterion G, which requires an amendment to the FLUM for any proposal that would change the boundary of an urban center, urban village, or manufacturing/industrial center, regardless of the area's size

#2: West Seattle High Bridge emergency closure (Not recommended to docket)

- Amend City policies to assist in mitigating the emergency closure of the West Seattle High Bridge
- Not previously submitted
- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion B₄ and B₅
- This proposal would be better addressed through a budgetary or programmatic decision or another process, such as activities identified in departmental work programs under way or expected soon, within which the suggested amendment can be considered alongside other related issues

#3: Potential Landslide Area Covenants (Not recommended to docket)

- Cease the practice of issuing 'Potential Landslide Area Covenants' to properties in Seattle's Environmental Critical Areas
- Not previously submitted
- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion B₃
- The intent of this proposal can be accomplished by a change in regulations
- Potential Landslide Area Covenants are addressed in the Seattle Municipal Code and those regulations are consistent with the general policy intent of the Comprehensive Plan regarding Environmental Critical Areas

#4: Pedestrian Grade Separations (Not recommended to docket)

- Amend the Transportation Element to discourage pedestrian grade separations such as skybridges, aerial trams or tunnels to maintain an active pedestrian environment at street level
- Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
- Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D

- Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #5: Yards and Trees (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend the Land Use Element to clarify policies related to yards and trees
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #6: Open and Participatory Government (Not recommended to docket)
- Add an Open and Participatory Government element or appendix
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #7: Demolition and Displacement (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend the Land Use Element to discourage demolition of residences and displacement of residents
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #8: Heavy Vehicles (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend the Transportation Element to minimize damage to streets from heavy vehicles
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #9: Development Monitoring (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend the Plan to require monitoring of development and a special review procedure related to development
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #10: Rezones and Conditional Uses (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend the Land Use Element to require zone and rezone criteria and public notice, outreach and inclusiveness
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected
- #11: Tree Canopy and Urban Forest (Not recommended to docket)
- Amend various sections of the Comprehensive Plan to support the protection and expansion of the urban forest and tree canopy cover
 - Previously submitted, most recently in 2019-2020 cycle (not docketed)
 - Not recommended for docketing citing criterion D
 - Proposal has been previously submitted and rejected

Mr. Hoey stated that of the eight proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments that were docketed by the City Council in Resolution 31896 for further analysis, five were not analyzed in the 2019-2020 annual

amendment cycle. The Planning Commission would like to draw attention to their specific comments on one of those proposed amendments. The City Council proposed an amendment that would recommend an alternative name for single family zones, such as Neighborhood Residential, and amend the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan to implement this change. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) stated this amendment could be more appropriately addressed through the next Major Update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission recommends moving the effort to rename single family zoning forward sooner than the Major Update. This change could serve to inform the policy process considering alternatives to single family zoning.

The Commission will take action on the final draft recommendations letter at the August 13 meeting.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners recommended that it would be helpful to include in the letter the other proposed amendments that were docketed but not analyzed in the 2019-2020 cycle, in addition to the proposed amendment related to alternative name for single family zones.
- Commissioners suggested a minor edit to the draft letter to clarify the rationale for recommending proposed amendment #1 to be docketed.
- Commissioners requested more information on the intent of proposed amendment #6 related to open and participatory government.

Discussion: Equitable Recovery and Resilience Paper (Working Title)

Connie Combs provided an overview of the Commission's new paper, "A Racially Equitable and Resilient Recovery." This paper has been in development since April and has evolved during the drafting process due to current events. The central message of the paper is that the Planning Commission urges to the City to heal, build resilience, and prepare for the current and future impacts of climate change by acting boldly to further racial equity.

Ms. Combs described the layout of the paper, including the introduction, a section on framing issues and categories to be considered, recommendations, and a brief conclusion. She stated that rather than frame categories in classic planning language, Commissioners chose to frame the issues with actions that they are advocating for. Titles in the paper used the action described for each category. She noted that some titles of the recommendations are self-evident, and some are less obvious. Below are some highlights of the recommendations.

- Engagement: an OPCD intern talked to the Commission earlier this year about how to indigenize the Comprehensive Plan.
- Housing: this topic includes consideration of housing for workers, especially essential workers, and the general need for more housing. Multi-family housing on arterials has much less access to open space. This presents some serious inequities.
- Threat of evictions: the paper recognizes the Mayor's moratorium on eviction, coordination between City departments regarding evictions, and the need for state and federal action.
- Advocating for different land ownership models.
- Maintain and expand transit: pay attention to promoting connections to transit.

- Moving beyond Stay Healthy Streets.
- Encouraging and reimagining how the right of way is managed.
- Public spaces for everyone: looking at alternative practices for designing open spaces.
- Safety principles for planning and public space: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards were designed in the 1960s without input from communities of color.
- Need to fund climate change education to include public health impacts.
- Green buildings and code changes to more include green open spaces in dense areas
- Prevent gentrification after greening efforts.
- Racially equitable green jobs and climate-ready infrastructure.

Ms. Combs stated that the paper's conclusion serves as a call to action. The next steps include finishing the layout and graphics. The final paper will be shared elected officials and departments, and posted on the Commission's website.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested clarification on a heading in the draft paper related to housing. Ms. Combs stated that the headers have changed as the paper has received many rounds of edits.
- Commissioners recognized the paper's emphasis on ensuring opportunities for communities of color. Executive Director Murdock noted that expanding opportunities for communities of color is consistent with recommendations in the Commission's Neighborhoods For All report.
- Commissioners commented on the recommendation related to housing for workers, recognizing the importance of housing for essential workers. Commissioners suggested revising the language to emphasize strategies to reduce displacement.
- Executive Director Murdock offered thanks to the Commissioners who contributed to this paper and to Ms. Combs for coordinating and editing the content.
- Commissioners noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis has brought heightened attention to homeownership inequity. Commissioners expressed concern the levels of inequity related to renters who are unable to pay rent. The focus should be on not only building wealth but keeping people in Seattle. This issue could be a starting point for future work.
- Commissioners thanked Ms. Combs for her work and expressed excitement for the launch of the final paper.

Public Comment

Executive Director Murdock read the following public comment, which was submitted via email:

My name is Katie Kendall, commenting on behalf of William Budigan. Mr. Budigan has applied for his property at 5615 15th Ave NE, along with the other seven lots on the east side of that block, to be included in the University District Urban Center. Like similar amendments that the Committee has recommended for approval in the past, this amendment meets the criteria for inclusion on the docket because a change to the Future Land Use Map is the only way the Urban Center boundary can be expanded. Inclusion in the Urban Center would better reflect these eight lots' LR3 zoning and the diverse mix of multifamily housing that they currently provide. It would also make a material difference in future housing capacity because of the increased density available to LR3 properties in the urban center. The designation would thus serve the

purposes of increased housing supply, pedestrian-friendly density, and transit-accessible development – goals that feature prominently in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, the Countywide Planning Policies, and Vision 2040 (please see our written application, particularly pages 11-13, for specific policies). We request that the Committee include this amendment on the docket so that the specifics of the application can be fully considered. Thank you for your consideration.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 am.