



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 25, 2020

Online Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Michael Austin, David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Rick Mohler, Julio Sanchez, Jamie Stroble, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Sandra Fried, Kelly Rider, Amy Shumann, Lauren Squires

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

Guests: Katherine Idziorek, Patience Malaba

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 7:40 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 shared the Commission's Color Brave Space norms and suggested that the Commissioners agree to these norms.

Put Relationships First

Work to build community and trust (with an awareness of power dynamics).

Keep Focused on Our Common Goal

Advance equitable planning of socially and environmentally just communities.

Notice Power Dynamics in the Room

Be aware of how you use your privilege: From taking up too much emotional and airtime space or disengaging.

Create a Space for Multiple Truths & Norms *Speak your truth and seek understanding of truths that differ from yours (with awareness of power dynamics).*

Be Kind and Brave (Lean Into Discomfort)

Remember relationships first, and work to be explicit with your language about race, class, gender, immigration, etc.

Practice Examining Racially Biased Systems & Processes

Individual actions are important, and systems are what are left after all the people in this room leave.

Look for Learning

Show what you're learning (not what you already know). Avoid playing devil's advocate (the devil has enough advocates).

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Chair Austin provided a preview of the agenda and announced that the next meeting will be held on July 9. This meeting will also be held online.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the May 28, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Grace Kim seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Patti Wilma moved to approve the June 11, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director Vanessa Murdock reviewed the format of the meeting and noted that in-person public comment cannot be accommodated at this time, rather public comment may be submitted in advance of the meeting and will be read aloud during the public comment portion of the agenda . This meeting format is in accordance with rules laid out by the Attorney General in terms of Open Public Meetings Act compliance in this time of the COVID-19 crisis. Executive Director Murdock noted that the YMCA has begun the recruitment process for the Get Engaged program, which encourages younger people to join Boards and Commissions. Applications are due June 30 and can be found on the YMCA Seattle website. Commissioner Rian Watt, the current Get Engaged member, provided a brief overview of the program.

Discussion: Equitable Recovery and Resilience Paper (Working Title)

Connie Combs, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the working draft Equitable Recovery and Resilience Paper. She stated that as the City works on recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus needs to be on ending systemic racism. Planning Commission staff is still working on the paper's draft content and will incorporate any content from today's update from Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) Director Sam Assefa. The Commissioners will discuss the draft paper at the next Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Combs asked the Commissioners for input.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that this document represents not only a mandate but an opportunity and should have an aspirational tone.
- Commissioners stated that this paper should focus on the big picture and the key principles and objectives that we aspire to, especially around addressing racial inequities in our community. City Councilmembers and other audiences should be able to understand the key points.
- Commissioners suggested that the planning process section of the paper could use additional review. Other sections include specific statements about actions that can be taken. The planning process section should include similar content related to implementation and action. This section should also consider new approaches to community involvement, inclusion and decision making.
- Commissioners suggested including a section on safety in public spaces that addresses the need for all people of color to feel safe. This can be connected to our recent statement on police violence.
- Commissioners suggested including content related to education, especially how access to technology is an equity issue.

Briefing: 2020/2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, introduced the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan submitted this spring for consideration. He described the annual amendment review process and stated that this was the first step in determining which amendments will be recommended for further analysis, a process referred to as docketing. The City Council received eleven proposals from members of the public to consider for the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Plan docket. These included one proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment and ten proposed text amendments. These proposed amendments are as follows:

#1: Extend the University District Urban Center

- 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

#2: West Seattle High Bridge emergency closure

- Amend City policies to assist in mitigating the emergency closure of the West Seattle High Bridge

#3: Potential Landslide Area Covenants

- Cease the practice of issuing 'Potential Landslide Area Covenants' to properties in Seattle's Environmental Critical Areas

#4: Pedestrian Grade Separations

- 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

#5: Yards and Trees

- Amend the Land Use Element to clarify policies related to yards and trees

#6: Open and Participatory Government

- Add an Open and Participatory Government element or appendix

#7: Demolition and Displacement

- Amend the Land Use Element to discourage demolition of residences and displacement of residents

#8: Heavy Vehicles

- Amend the Transportation Element to minimize damage to streets from heavy vehicles

#9: Development Monitoring

- Amend the Plan to require monitoring of development and a special review procedure related to development

#10: Rezones and Conditional Uses

- Amend the Land Use Element to require zone and rezone criteria and public notice, outreach and inclusiveness

#11: Tree Canopy and Urban Forest

- Amend various sections of the Comprehensive Plan to support the protection and expansion of the urban forest and tree canopy cover

Mr. Hoey reiterated that the Commission will review these proposed amendments against a series of criteria to determine which should review further analysis. The amendments are not reviewed on their merits at this point in the process. A staff draft recommendations letter will be reviewed at the July 23 Commission meeting, and the Commission will take action on the final recommendations letter at the August 13 meeting.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners requested clarification on several of the docketing criteria, including the intent and how they are typically applied in reviewing the proposed amendments.
- Commissioners asked for more information on potential landslide area covenants. Mr. Hoey and Ms. Murdock stated that these covenants are included in permitting documents to ensure that landowners are aware of potential landslide hazards in Seattle's Environmentally Critical Areas.

Update: Office of Planning and Community Development

Sam Assefa, Director, Office of Planning and Community Development

Director Assefa provided an overview of recent OPCD work. Since March, during the COVID-19 emergency, many OPCD staff have been contributing to City disaster response efforts. These efforts have included supporting the Office of Economic Development processing small business stabilization grants, providing Geographic Information Systems mapping support for citywide response efforts and support for restaurants, data collection on equity issues for the Outside Citywide planning process and the Stay Healthy Streets initiative. OPCD staff has also provided communications and outreach support to multiple City departments.

OPCD staff has been working on background work for the next Major Update to the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. The State has extended the deadline for completion of this Plan to 2024. Current work efforts include identifying staffing and budget, developing a framework for racial equity analysis, exploring community engagement strategies, and evaluating potential approaches to environmental analysis. OPCD staff has been coordinating with Sound Transit staff and other agencies on Station Area

Current efforts include public realm planning at Jackson Hub and Westlake. Public engagement is a challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other planning efforts include design standards around stations, opportunities for equitable transit-oriented development, and community planning for housing and City investments near future stations.

130th/145th Station Area Planning work includes robust engagement with the Seattle Department of Transportation, land use and station access planning within the area, mobility planning, identification of transportation networks, and transportation infrastructure improvements. OPCD is considering potential zoning changes, including an early action in a small focused area of six acres near the future 130th Street station. Broader rezones may come later.

OPCD staff have continued to engage with organizations funded by the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI). This engagement aims to understand how COVID-19 has impacted those organizations. The City is anticipating a 40-50% reduction in EDI revenue from the short-term rental tax and is thinking about immediate needs, such as addressing racial disparities. Conversations are ongoing through the budget process to determine what funds are available; \$15 million is available from the Mercer Megablock sale. The Mayor recently agreed to transfer the Fire Station 6 property to the Africatown Community Land Trust. OPCD is coordinating the transfer process along with FAS and DON.

The Industrial Maritime Strategy work has been paused due to the pandemic. A citywide advisory group and area-specific groups have been meeting with an initial timeline for recommendations by late summer. OPCD staff have been completing a summary of this work to date. Conversations have been shifted to thinking from a COVID-19 response perspective (focus on supply and manufacturing) and access to communities of color (jobs and training). Staff is working on determining priorities for when the process starts again. Key principles from the process have been deliberately re-framed to address jobs and entrepreneurship for communities of color. A recent meeting with stakeholders demonstrated enthusiasm for being bold and thinking differently in the context of a major economic crisis.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed appreciation for reframing the industrial lands discussion and expressed concern about development pressure to incorporate residential uses into industrial lands. Commissioners encouraged considering how light industrial uses and makerspace could be incorporated into commercial and mixed-use zones. The cost of land is pushing makerspaces into industrial areas, but they would prefer to be in commercial zones.
- Commissioners stated that the pandemic responses should include street closures to allow restaurants to provide adequate space for social distancing.
- Commissioners encouraged the City to reconsider the name of "Jackson Hub."
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for EDI land acquisition and capacity building efforts.
- Commissioners recognized that "recovery" is not necessarily an ideal term to use in long-term planning. Not all citizens have always benefitted from City of Seattle policies. Perhaps the term "restitution" should be included.

The Commissioners thanked Director Assefa for his briefing and encouraged him to return with additional updates soon.

Public Comment

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

Last year I proposed a Comp Plan amendment that the Seattle Planning Commission recommended be part of the Plan's major update underway now. The proposal is to include trucks and rideshare vehicles (TNCs) as mode shares in the Transportation element. These are the fastest growing segments of urban congestion and if we don't count them, we can't adequately plan for them.

Despite a decrease in overall traffic since COVID-19, the attached Apple Mobility tracker snapshot for Seattle shows a 38% increase in automobile use. And we know not all vehicle trips are the same. For every Single Occupancy Vehicle putting one mile on the road, a rideshare vehicle puts 2.8 miles. Likewise the pandemic has caused a surge in trucks and delivery vehicles. Formerly we had no idea of their numbers. Now, thanks to a University of Washington Urban Freight Lab cordon study we've got a starting point for the number and types of vehicles that enter Greater Downtown Seattle every day.

As Seattle works to rebuild its economy and downtown core, now is the time to start tracking these two mode shares to better plan use of the City's congested streets and shrinking curb space. Thanks for your consideration. I've attached some supporting documentation for your reference. I hope to hear from you.

*Sincerely,
Megan Kruse*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.