



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 12, 2023

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Dalton Owens, Dhyana Quintanar, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde

Commissioners Absent: Roque Deherrera, Patience Malaba, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires

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

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:

<https://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/meetings>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Rick Mohler called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Mohler offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, I'd like to humbly recognize that we are gathered on Indigenous land, the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples including the Duwamish, Suquamish, and Muckleshoot. We thank these caretakers of this land who have lived and continue to live here since time immemorial. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities and we respect Indigenous rights to sovereignty and self-determination. We commit to being better listeners, learners and to lifting indigenous voices. We also commit to identifying racist practices, to practice allyship and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'

Co-Chair Mohler noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with Commissioners participating remotely while staff are participating in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. He asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for volunteers to select

one or more of the norms to read aloud. He reminded Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Matt Hutchins seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Executive Director, reviewed the format of the meeting. She noted that public comment could be submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the start of the meeting or provided in person by members of the public attending the meeting at City Hall.

Commission Business

Ms. Murdock invited the Commissioners to share their impressions of the recent One Seattle Comprehensive Plan community engagement meetings.

- Commissioner Matt Hutchins attended the West Seattle meeting. He stated that his overall sense was that there is a strong appetite for a more ambitious growth strategy than the five alternatives proposed. He also noted that a wide diversity of participants attended the meeting.
- Commissioner David Goldberg noted that the Meadowbrook meeting was very well attended. He stated that it was very gratifying to hear so many different opinions from participants of various ages. Young people spoke up for the need for more housing and were joined in that opinion by older residents. Participants commented on the need for diversity of housing types, more than just townhouses, in more places.
- Commissioner Kelabe Tewelde stated that he was surprised by consensus between different generations. Residents expressed a strong desire for mixed housing types and new opportunities for home ownership. He noted that it is becoming very difficult for young people to own homes. As older residents are thinking about downsizing, they are looking for housing that meets their needs.
- Co-Chair Rick Mohler stated that the conversations related to this Comprehensive Plan are very different than six years ago when the City was discussing Mandatory Housing Affordability.

Update: Seattle Department of Transportation

Greg Spotts, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Mr. Spotts introduced himself and expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunity to talk with the Planning Commission. He recently moved to Seattle from Los Angeles and has challenged himself to learn more about his new city by living car-free and being transit-dependent. He stated that he wants to focus on co-creating policy, plans, and infrastructure in partnership with community groups, especially in underserved and BIPOC communities. He has committed a significant amount of time to a "listening tour" by biking, walking, or taking transit in Seattle's various communities. More than 150 different groups have requested to participate in these tours. He begins each weekday (Monday – Thursday) by meeting with a new group. Mr. Spotts stated that he has commissioned an internal top-to-bottom review of SDOT's Vision Zero traffic safety program as one of his first priorities at SDOT. The goal of

this review is to identify changes that will make the program more effective. The report will be released to the public by the end of January.

Mr. Spotts stated that SDOT has a \$700 million annual budget that includes a multi-year capital program and an annual operations and maintenance budget. Due to citywide decreases in revenue, SDOT needed to reduce its budget during the City's recent annual budget process. He challenged staff to maintain the service standards that the public is expecting. Although there will be very few new projects and programs launching in 2023, he wants staff to focus on delivering funded projects consistent with the department's values - on time or early, at or above standards, and with all of the safety, multi-modal, and sustainability features. He noted an example of how SDOT worked to make the streateries program permanent and added provisions for food trucks to also be able to use space within the right-of-way for micro-entrepreneurs.

Mr. Spotts stated that he has enjoyed meeting and getting to know Rico Quirindongo, Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development, and Maiko Winkler-Chin, Director of the Office of Housing. By living in West Coast cities over the last twenty-five years, he has realized that we need a lot more housing. He has been impressed that Seattle has built more housing per capita over the past twenty years than any other major West Coast city. He has committed to being a "housing forward" Director of SDOT. He expressed enthusiasm for the work of the Planning Commission and hopes to be a meaningful partner as Seattle pursues its plans to accommodate more people in a way that lowers its carbon emissions per capita.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked about the intersection of land use and housing issues with the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP). Mr. Spotts stated that he is confident that is an important point of collaboration between SDOT and the Office of Planning and Community Development.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for Mr. Spotts' efforts to meet different community groups and highlighted Sound Transit's ongoing planning process to select a new light rail station location in the Chinatown/International District (C/ID) neighborhood. This is a significant opportunity to build a transit hub for the next one hundred years. People of color in the neighborhood have experienced past trauma from transportation infrastructure projects. Sound Transit has not yet selected a preferred alternative. Commissioners asked if Mr. Spotts has engaged in any conversations about how SDOT can help Sound Transit make an equitable decision to support the neighborhoods around that station. He stated that SDOT has been very involved in that process. Staff is currently supporting the outreach process. He recently participated in a walking tour with various C/ID stakeholders. He learned that community members love the streetcar but still feel pain from its construction. He has proposed a new concept for the streetcar called the Cultural Connector. Mr. Spotts stated that he is committed to reorienting SDOT to serve underserved and BIPOC communities. He has created a portfolio of Director's significant projects that will include a commitment to deep and meaningful engagement.
- Commissioners expressed concern that previous presentations from SDOT staff on the Seattle Transportation Plan did not focus enough on how to reinforce the City's growth strategy in the Comprehensive Plan update. Accommodating the amount of growth that Seattle is planning for will require coordination between SDOT and OPCD to create communities for people that support their diverse needs.
- Commissioners encouraged Mr. Spotts to consider regional issues, including transportation solutions for people who work in Seattle but don't live in the city.

- Commissioners recommended that the STP should prioritize mode shift over electrification of the transportation network.
- Commissioners asked Mr. Spotts to articulate his vision for a network of public streets and rights-of-way not dominated by cars. He highlighted the Rapid Ride G project which will completely change the geometry of intersections to be safer for pedestrians and bikes. He stated that there are many ways to refresh Seattle's aging street infrastructure. SDOT will be pursuing millions of dollars in federal funding for these types of projects.
- Commissioners stated that they have not seen a focus on Vision Zero or the legacy of Seattle's urban village strategy in the STP to date. Traffic safety issues make the City's commitment to livable communities very challenging. Mr. Spotts highlighted the transformation of Dexter Avenue North at Aloha Street into a complete street with one travel lane in each direction, bus boarding platforms, and bike lanes. This was a very different street before its transformation. Now there are buses, bikes, pedestrians, and placemaking instead of a stream of cars.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Spotts for his briefing and stated that they look forward to additional updates in the future.

Update: Industrial and Maritime Strategy

Jim Holmes, Office of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Holmes provided an overview of the proposed Industrial and Maritime Strategy legislation and Comprehensive Plan amendments. The proposal's key features include:

- Strengthening land use protections for core industrial areas:
 - 85%+ of the study area would be in the protective Maritime, Manufacturing and Logistics (MML) zone
 - Limit future removal of land from industrial zoning
 - Close zoning loopholes
- Upzoning for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near light rail:
 - Allow dense office and tech development near light rail in SODO and Ballard (future), mixed with light industry
- Adding capacity for 3,000+ units of new housing, focusing on workforce/middle-income housing:
 - About half in new mixed-use areas like Judkins Park, Ballard and Georgetown
 - About half in industrial areas with a workforce housing requirement
- Addressing livability and environmental justice in edge neighborhoods
 - Better landscaping/trees, new housing areas, and streetscape improvements

This action would:

- Protect and grow the 95,000+ workforce jobs that are on industrial land.
 - Two-thirds are accessible without a 4-year degree
 - Many remain unionized with quality benefits
 - Starting salaries exceed \$70,000 in key fields
- Maintain stable economic sectors that are insulated from major ups-and-downs.
- Preserve the function of infrastructure of regional and Statewide significance.

- Build on the May 2021 consensus of a 60+ member stakeholder advisory council to pursue this action.

This action would update land use policies and zoning for:

- Seattle’s two regionally designated Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs):
 - Ballard InterbayNorthend(BINMIC)
 - Greater Duwamish (Duwamish MIC)
- Edges of industrial areas near neighborhoods:
 - Ballard
 - Interbay
 - SODO / Stadium Area
 - Georgetown / South Park
 - Judkins Park

The City’s Comprehensive Plan and zoning code would be updated to reflect these three new zones:

- Maritime, Manufacturing, and Logistics (MML)
 - Strengthen established economic clusters to protect economic diversity and opportunity
 - These are areas that are active and vital
 - The City wants to protect these areas and provide predictability
- Industry and Innovation
 - Support modern industrial innovation and capitalize on major transit investments
 - This is the proposed approach to encourage TOD around transit stations
 - Encourages employment density in compact walkable areas with streetscapes to provide movement through the area
- Urban Industrial
 - Foster vibrant districts that support local manufacturing and entrepreneurship
 - This is the transition zone between industrial and non-industrial uses
 - Examples include the Ballard brewery district that includes both brewing and tap rooms
 - Would allow workforce housing by conditional use

Mr. Holmes shared details of the Preferred Alternative as follows:

- Responds to DEIS comments and additional input
 - Georgetown unique development standards and larger contiguous neighborhood area
 - More new housing outside of MICs
 - Expanded mitigation measures evaluation and identification
- Increased incentives for TOD investment in Industry and Innovation zones
- Stadium district – unique features to support stadium district goals
- Limited industry-supporting housing in Urban Industrial zones (less than Draft EIS Alternative 4)
- Outside of Manufacturing Industrial Centers: More new housing and keeps existing industrial Commercial zones

He provided details of the proposed Industrial and Innovation zoning in the SODO neighborhood:

- New definition of Information Computer Technology (ICT) use. Allowed as an industrial use in this zone.
- Bonus Development Structure
 - Tier I
 - First 0.5 FAR must be industrial use and bona fide light industrial space
 - 5 sq. ft. of bonus development for each 1 sq. ft. of industrial space sq. ft. (including the first 0.5 FAR)
 - Maximum FAR 6.0
 - Tier II
 - Additional 0.5 FAR up to 6.5 if development is at least half mass timber, or if a URM is upgraded on or off-site
 - Other FAR Exemptions
 - Workforce development training space (also qualifies as industrial space)
 - Childcare
 - Off-site performance option to build bona fide industrial space elsewhere within the same MIC
- Height limit: 160'

Mr. Holmes described the proposed changes in the Stadium District that would provide special consideration for new development in the Stadium Transition Area Overlay District.

- Allow lodging outright (prohibited in STAOD today)
- Increased FAR Limit to 4.5 (3.25 Today)
- Large maximum size of use limits for restaurants, retail, office etc.
- Maximum size of use limit waived if 0.4 FAR of light industrial space is provided
- Height Limit 85' (except possibly 65' on portion of Mariners' block)
- Removes requirement for design review
- Allows some new housing
 - About 650 housing units estimated in stadium area / SODO
 - Up to 50 dwelling units per acre
 - Option for either: a.) workers quarters & live/work studios, or b.) 50% workforce affordable at 90% Area Median Income (AMI)

He described proposed changes to zoning in Georgetown to increase neighborhood cohesiveness. The City will work with the community to craft development standards.

Mr. Holmes provided an overview of the following proposed Comprehensive Plan policies:

- New policies establishing new land use framework for industrial areas.
- New policies that limit changes to MIC boundaries to major updates of the Comprehensive Plan or following a City-led study of Seattle's industrial lands.
- A new policy establishing the City's intent to work with the owners (currently the State of Washington) on a master planning process prior to any future redevelopment of the WOSCA and Interbay Armory sites.

He described the timeline and next steps for the project as follows:

Spring 2023:

- Transmit Comprehensive Plan policy text amendments to City Council
- Transmit first phase of proposed zoning code changes to City Council
- Begin update of Centers Plans for Duwamish MIC and BINMIC

Spring 2024:

- Complete Centers Plans
- Transmit final zoning Changes to Council

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that previous zoning standards required applications for artist housing in industrial zones to establish a bonafide industrial use and applicants to sign a waiver. Mr. Holmes stated that housing in industrial zones will require a similar agreement. The City will establish development standards to define bonafide industrial uses.
- Commissioners expressed concern about the amount of housing in this proposal, stating that housing could degrade the intent of our industrial lands. Mr. Holmes stated that the current housing provisions in this proposal is a reduction from the two most extreme alternatives studied in the EIS and is responsive to comments received. Half of the proposed housing is outside of the MICs in Neighborhood Commercial zones. The other half, approximately 1500 units, would be in the Urban Industrial zones, which will also accommodate makers spaces. Commissioners asked if the amount of housing in this proposal is consistent with the stakeholder advisory group's recommendation. Mr. Holmes answered yes, it is.
- Commissioners expressed concern about the proposed ability to transfer development rights if industrial uses are built elsewhere in SODO, stating that this could result in development of large buildings around the Stadium District. Mr. Holmes clarified that this transfer of development rights would only be allowed in the Industrial and Innovation zone to provide development density around the transit station.
- Commissioners reiterated concerns about housing in industrial areas, stating that it would be difficult to transition land back to industrial uses once it has been converted to housing.
- Commissioners noted that the proposed changes to the Stadium District seem analogous to the Pike/Pine neighborhood and could result in conversion of many buildings to restaurants.
- Ms. Murdock stated that staff will provide Commissioners with their 2022 Draft EIS comment letter to remind them of previous comments on the Industrial and Maritime Strategy.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.