



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

McCaela Daffern and Jamie Stroble, Co-Chairs  
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, September 26, 2024

Approved Meeting Minutes

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**Commissioners Present:** Cecelia Black, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Matt Malloy, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Lauren Squires, Dylan Stevenson, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple

**Commissioners Absent:** Xio Alvarez, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Monika Sharma

**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.*

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Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

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

#### Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:46 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Stroble 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. 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 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 Stroble noted that this meeting is a hybrid meeting with some Commissioners and staff participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. She 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. She suggested to Commissioners that they collectively agree to abide by these norms.

**ACTION: Co-Chair McCaela Daffern moved to approve the September 12, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Nick Whipple seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

### **Announcements**

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission 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.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Discussion: Seattle Planning Commission budget and housing paper**

Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the most recent staff draft of the Planning Commission's paper on housing affordability and the City budget, titled *Invest in Seattle's Future*. She stated that this paper has been discussed in various Commission meetings starting in July. The Commission reviewed a staff draft of the paper at its September 12th meeting. The Mayor's Proposed Budget was released on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The final paper will be published in the week of September 30<sup>th</sup> during the Council budget deliberations and public comment periods that will continue throughout October and early November.

Ms. Baker stated that the goal of this paper is to help more people understand the importance of the annual budget process in long-range planning outcomes and to encourage people to get involved this year. The target audience for the paper is members of the public who are interested in the Comprehensive Plan or the affordable housing crisis but have not been involved in the budget process in the past.

Ms. Baker reviewed several proposed changes to the draft paper text. She stated that the Mayor's proposed budget does not cut affordable housing or the Equitable Development Initiative as expected. The paper's tone has been shifted to reflect an emphasis on maintaining and protecting these investments. Ms. Baker highlighted specific text that is proposed to be removed. She also suggested removing a pie chart that includes budget numbers from 2024 that could be confusing to readers.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed concern that the title of the paper does not include a reference to housing. Ms. Baker stated that various titles have been discussed in working sessions and Commissioners agreed on a title that focuses on Seattle's future and the budget. Commissioners noted that the title was intentionally broad because the City's investments in equitable development include cultural centers and other projects that help reinforce an equitable future.
- Commissioners suggested maintaining and revising the pie chart showing the percentage of the City's budget dedicated to housing and anti-displacement. Commissioners noted that the City is

using the JumpStart tax to reduce its budget deficit. Ms. Baker stated that a pie chart representing the nuances of this budget could get very complicated.

- Commissioners expressed concern about using specific dollar numbers in a paper related to a budget that the Commission has not yet had the chance to review. The proposed budget has several items such as downtown activation and preparation for the World Cup that are unrelated to the original purpose of the JumpStart tax. Commissioners stated that the City is receiving millions of dollars that it is keeping for other purposes.
- Commissioners stated that it is important for readers of this paper to understand how small the City's investments in housing are relative to the overall budget. The intent of this paper is to highlight safeguarding those resources.
- Commissioners asked if they are expected to approve the paper at this meeting. Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission approves its comment letters but does not take formal action on independent work like this paper.
- Ms. Baker stated that staff will revise the paper and the pie chart to reflect the Commissioners' point that the city should maintain or increase the City's spending on affordable housing and anti-displacement work proportionally to the growing overall budget.

### **Commission Business**

Ms. Murdock stated that the Mayor's proposed budget was released on Tuesday, September 24th. The Central Budget Office provided an overview of the proposed budget at a City Council meeting the next day. She noted that the Planning Commission's Senior Policy Analyst position currently held by John Hoey is proposed to be eliminated in the Mayor's budget. Ms. Murdock stated that there are several opportunities to address this budget cut as well as to address investments in affordable housing. Planning Commission staff will be preparing speaking points for Commissioners to provide public comment during the City Council's budget deliberations. Individual departments will be presenting to the Budget committee. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) will be presenting its budget, including the proposed cut to Planning Commission staff, on Friday, September 27th.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Mr. Hoey's work over many years in support of the Planning Commission.
- Commissioners stated that the budget reflects the city's values. The budget should align with the Planning Commission's long-term vision for a livable, affordable, equitable city. Commissioners stated that the proposed budget is a significant cut to the Planning Commission's capacity, as staff plays a critical role in the Commission's ability to act as an independent advisory body.
- Commissioners asked how the proposed staffing cut will affect the Commission's ability to provide comments and recommendations. Ms. Murdock stated that if the proposed budget is adopted, she will propose a revised approach to the Commission's leadership. The current cadence of Commission meetings may not be sustainable. She stated that staff will need to spend time on how to approach the City Council on this proposed budget.

### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 am.