



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, July 28, 2022
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Roque Deherrera, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson, Dhyana Quintanar, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde

Commissioners Absent: Mark Braseth, McCaela Daffern, David Goldberg, Patience Malaba, Austin Moreman, Julio Sanchez,

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Administrative Assistant

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 Jamie Stroble called the meeting to order at 7:35 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Stroble offered the following land acknowledgement:

'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to actively recognize that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We offer land acknowledgement because Native land was taken by force and colonized to form the United States as we know it today. Through this process, which is ongoing through systematic oppression, Native identity, history, and land ownership has been ignored by colonizers and attempted to be erased. Land Acknowledgement is the first step in opposing the systematic oppression and historic erasure of Native people and Native Land ownership.'

Co-Chair Stroble asked fellow Commissioners to review the Color Brave Space norms and asked for two volunteers to select a norm to read aloud. She reminded Commissioners that they have collectively agreed to abide by these norms.

ACTION: Commissioner Matt Hutchins moved to approve the July 14, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Alanna Peterson seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, noted that this meeting is one of the Planning Commission's first hybrid meetings where some Commissioners are participating remotely while other Commissioners and staff are participating in person in the Boards and Commissions Room at Seattle City Hall. She noted that public comment could be submitted in writing at least eight hours before the start of the Commission meeting or provided in person by any members of the public attending the meeting at City Hall.

Public Comment: Comprehensive Plan Major Update EIS Scoping Comment Letter

Ms. Murdock read the following public comment, which was received by e-mail.

Good morning,

The Commission has produced an excellent letter to improve the EIS scope for the major Comp Plan update. I would like to add two comments for your consideration and follow up.

1) Under point IV, the Commission requests the EIS to include a range of housing growth targets in the alternatives to prepare for a variety of population growth scenarios. It also cautions against underestimating the actual number of housing units required, as previously occurred.

Unfortunately, the EIS does not consider these aspects. At a public comment session on July 18th OPCD staff confirmed that the housing unit target in the alternatives are all for market rate housing. They do not include housing for those with low and moderate incomes, or people transitioning from homelessness, or those in need of permanent supportive housing. Staff clarified that the state does require that each municipality collect data on those group's housing needs, but they are not reflected in the alternatives.

The question is, 'why not'? Seattle is in a prolonged homelessness and affordable housing crisis. Not including affordable, low, and special housing projections sets them apart, further delaying their creation. Creating a comp plan focused on density for market rate housing, ensures that affordable housing won't be a part of all communities and the inequity and disparities will continue. I urge you to stress this issue in your final draft.

2) Under the Commission's draft letter point II: Balance housing growth with commercial and essential services growth needs more definition.

The 15-minute walkable neighborhood is a great idea, but it will introduce more features present in the center city and urban villages that have not been good for the environment or people's health, i.e., transportation-related congestion, pollution, heat islands and pedestrian and cyclist safety threats.

For that reason, in its final draft, I encourage the commission to request the City establish and encode best land use and transportation practices that encompasses the built environment and transportation design. These practices should address the need for urban tree cover, open space, access to daylight and of course, accommodating urban freight.

Thank you for your consideration,

Megan Kruse

Action: Comprehensive Plan Major Update EIS Scoping Comment Letter

Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, reviewed the Commission's final draft comments on the Comprehensive Plan Major Update Environmental Impact Study (EIS) scoping alternatives. She noted that the Commission had discussed the draft at two previous meetings and intended to take action to approve the final draft at this meeting.

Ms. Baker reviewed the five draft EIS alternatives proposed by the City and the outline of the letter, noting the following four main sections:

- I. Criteria for Shaping the Alternatives
- II. Environmental Analysis Considerations
- III. Communication Plan & Methods
- IV. 130th and 145th Street Station Areas

She then noted the following revisions to the letter made since the last time the letter was discussed at the July 14th meeting.

Under the section heading: Criteria for shaping the alternatives

- In the section on displacement risk, the letter was edited to acknowledge the need for balance between directing growth to areas of lower displacement risk while increasing investments in high displacement risk areas to stabilize vulnerable communities. The letter also directly references the Commission's Anti-Displacement Issue Brief released earlier this year.
- In the section on balancing housing growth with commercial and essential services growth, the letter was revised to include a reference and citation for the Essential Daily Needs Comprehensive Plan Amendment proposal.
- In the section that discusses housing growth targets, the letter was revised to suggest that the City of Seattle study the following three factors in the housing needs analysis:
 - Study the types and sizes of buildings that could be produced.
 - Study the range of affordability needs met under each alternative.
 - Study housing choices such as Community Land Trusts and Limited Equity Co-ops.

Under the section heading: Environmental Analysis Considerations

- In the section that notes the study of public health outcomes, the letter was revised to request that in a supplemental document to the EIS Scoping process titled *Draft Equity and Climate Change Performance Metrics*, Objective 6 be updated to consider pollution exposure risks for those both living *and working* in high exposure areas.

Under the section heading: Communication Plan and Methods

- A note was added that the Commission is concerned with how some housing types are portrayed in the scoping documents, particularly the images chosen to represent duplexes in the Place Types graphic. An attachment was added to the letter to include some examples of duplexes with designs that have a better relationship to the street and their surroundings.

Commissioners were then given five minutes of individual review time to go over the latest draft of the letter before the discussion.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners recommended considering a change in section 1, part 3 in response to the public comment to address the tensions between increasing access to transportation while maintaining a high quality of pedestrian experience and livability in the built environment of those areas. The following text was proposed as an edit to the end of the last paragraph in that section:
 - “In addition, the EIS should study whether each alternative promotes increased access using integrated built environment and transportation best practices to increase or retain street trees, reduce congestion, and avoid creating areas prone to heat islands.”
- Commissioners suggested another potential edit under section 1, part five, to increase the ceiling on the number of units considered in the broad and combined alternatives for neighborhood residential zones. Instead of limiting the study to “up to sixplexes” the number should be up to ten. The market is already at a point where sixplexes may be unfeasible and because this is the scoping period, Commissioners want the upper limit to be high enough to really study a broad range of options.
 - Commissioners noted that they question the use of the term “plexes” because it gives the idea of one specific building form, but the City should encourage more flexibility in how lots are developed. They recommended that the terminology be changed to “units” instead.
 - Commissioners generally agreed with this recommendation.
- Commissioners also suggested an edit under section 1, part 2 that would clarify how communities of color have been impacted by previous growth strategies. The following text was proposed as an edit to that paragraph:
 - “The Focused and Corridors alternatives base growth around existing transportation investments which have a long history of harm for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and contributed to displacement and negative environmental health impacts.”
 - Commissioners generally agreed with this edit.

- Commissioners circled back to note some disagreement with the first recommended edit, feeling that the text was unclear and asking for further explanation of what “integrated built environment and transportation best practices” means.
- Commissioners clarified that the goal of the suggested edit was to address the long-standing tension between the built environment and new transportation hubs. They want to ensure the City considers how transportation access can be integrated into the urban form in a way that does not impact quality of life in those areas.
- Commissioners suggested perhaps some examples would clarify the point. Others voiced concern that the comment could be turned around to prioritize a car-centric environment or be used as a reason to prevent development.
- Commissioners noted that the edit may be too granular for this stage of the project and may be better addressed at a later date, rather than in the EIS Scoping comments. There was general agreement that the point could be reserved until the Draft EIS is published to see if the issue is addressed properly by the City.
- Co-Chair Stroble called for a motion to approve the letter with the following edits:
 - Section 1, part 5 – adjust language to use units instead of plexes and to study up to ten units per project.
 - Section 1, part 2 – edit the text in the paragraph to say: “The Focused and Corridors alternatives base growth around existing transportation investments which have a long history of harm for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and contributed to displacement and negative environmental health impacts.”

ACTION: Commissioner Matt Hutchins moved to approve the Comprehensive Plan Major Update EIS Scoping Comment Letter with the suggested revisions. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the letter passed.

Public Comment

There was no general public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 am.