



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

McCaela Daffern and David Goldberg, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 08, 2023
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:	McCaela Daffern, David Goldberg, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Dalton Owens, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Lauren Squires, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde
Commissioners Absent:	Mark Braseth, Roque Deherrera, Matt Hutchins, Radhika Nair, Alanna Peterson
Commission Staff:	Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Planning Analyst

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 McCaela Daffern called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Daffern 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 Daffern 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.

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. Ms. Murdock stated that full Commission meetings will be recorded and posted to the Planning Commission's website. She noted that these recordings are not in lieu of the Commission's minutes, which are approved at the next full Commission meeting.

ACTION: Co-Chair David Goldberg moved to approve the May 25, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Julio Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Case Study: Community-Based Comprehensive Plan Engagement

Commissioner Jamie Stroble; Stephanie Ung, Co-Director of Khmer Community of Seattle/King County (KCSKC); Kim Yu, Kimyunity Consulting

Commissioner Stroble presented an overview of community-based community engagement with the Khmer Community of Seattle/King County. This engagement included four elder field trips, youth field trips, youth dance workshops, one celebration feedback event, and one report-back event.

The first elder field trip involved riding the bus to the Seattle Monorail to Seattle Center. Commissioner Stroble stated that it was particularly interesting to hear the elders' reflections on experiencing downtown. For many of the elders, it was their first time being downtown. They had a preconceived notion of downtown based on the news, but after the trip, many shared that it was not as bad as they had expected. The second field trip involved taking the light rail trip to the Chinatown/International District neighborhood. The elders were interested to learn about activism in the International District. They walked through the neighborhood and learned about the legacy of neighborhood leaders.

The third elder field trip involved taking the water taxi from West Seattle to the Seattle waterfront. Commissioner Stroble stated that the objective of this field trip was to help the elders understand different forms of public transit. They did not realize that the water taxi service was available and had a great time on this field trip. They observed and offered comments about homelessness and the lack of shade during their walk along the waterfront. Ms. Ung stated that the elders made a lot of comments during this field trip on how beautiful the city is and shared a lot of gratitude.

On their fourth field trip, the elders visited Woodland Park Rose Garden and Green Lake Park. This was the first trip to North Seattle for many of the elders. One of the objectives of this trip was to show them examples of parks and open space. They discussed the history of Woodland Park as indigenous land that was taken over by white settlers, then donated to the City. One of the elders noted that this was an example of stolen land. Other elders made comments about the lack of parks like this near where they live. Commissioner Stroble stated that this trip included real conversations about housing, where we live, the experience of elders, and displacement. Ms. Yu stated that this was the first field trip where the elders spoke up about their experience and the space around us. Ms. Ung stated that immigrants from

Cambodia can relate to native people being displaced from their land. This experience helped to build relationships and opened the elders' eyes to what is possible.

The garden workshops for youth were held at the High Point and Danny Woo gardens. The youth talked about green stormwater infrastructure, the environment, and housing. At the Danny Woo garden, they learned about community gardening and culturally relevant gardening. The youth dance workshops were held at the Rainier Arts Center and Union Cultural Center. The Rainier Arts Center workshop included a scavenger hunt that highlighted what it feels like to have Rainier Ave running through the neighborhood. The Union Cultural Center workshop included a cross-cultural exchange on the role of arts in the community.

Commissioner Stroble, Ms. Ung, and Ms. Yu highlighted several themes that emerged during this community engagement that will inform the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. These include the following:

Housing

- Displacement and housing instability
 - Almost all community members have experienced housing instability and have been forced to move away from their cultural centers, shops, and other community resources due to rising costs and lack of support.
- Access to housing resources
 - Continue to support and expand subsidized senior housing opportunities.
 - Resource in-language housing and financial system navigators.
- Development and disparities
 - Support anti-displacement policies and programs that help low-income and cultural communities stay in place.
 - More support for affordable multi-generational housing and family-size housing of 3+ bedrooms.
- Housing with access to green space
 - Incentivize more housing development that incorporates access to outdoor spaces to garden, such as courtyards, side yards, balconies, rooftop gardens.

Transportation

- More in-language signage and programs to improve accessibility.
- Increase transfer times for elders and mobility impaired community members.
- Improve transit availability for suburbs and edges of Seattle.
 - Addressing consequences of displacement.
- More affordable and discounted ORCA cards.
- Improved safety at bus stops and on public transportation.
- Improved lighting and sidewalks near transit.
- Safer crossings across major roads and intersections.
- Alternate forms of fare enforcement and prioritizing safety besides police.
- Support community-based programs to build comfort with public transit.

Green and Open Space

- More sustainable and edible landscapes.
- Increased transit connections to parks.

- More welcoming park spaces.
- Improved quality of public spaces and amenities to support elders and youth.

Healthy and Connected Communities

- Support healthy communities with lots of resources and gathering spaces.
- More spaces for community to gather and support community wellbeing (building social cohesion).
- More public bathrooms, especially at light rail stations, transit hubs, parks, and major public landmarks.

Khmer Arts and Culture

- Support for a dedicated Khmer community center.
- More inclusive, accessible, and culturally relevant public spaces that cater to the needs of both elders and youth.
- Access to cultural activities.

Displacement

- Integrate anti-displacement policies, programs, and investments into major capital project plans to preserve social cohesion, cultural anchors, connectivity, and prevent displacement of vulnerable residents.
- Address impact of transportation projects on community.
- Support more affordable arts & commercial spaces: resource programs to prevent displacement of cultural spaces & businesses, and fund relocation support if they are being actively displaced.

Climate Change and Environmental Issues

- More infrastructure that supports staying safe in the heat.
- Support and resource low-income residents impacted by flooding and sea level rise.
- Improve water and air quality, and provide resources for vulnerable community members.

Commissioner Stroble thanked Lizzie Moll at the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Aja Hazelhoff at the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) for their help and support during this community engagement process.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked how the elders were chosen to participate in the field trips. Ms. Ung stated that Khmer Community of Seattle/King County maintains a roster of approximately one hundred elders who either live alone or with their spouse. These elders are some of the most active. Commissioner Stroble stated that word got around after the first field trip that they were fun. There was a core group of elders with a handful of others that cycled in and out. The success of the first four field trips has led to a whole elder field trip program. Elders have commented on being stuck at home, feeling isolated and experiencing depression. Asking them for their opinions has shown them that they matter. This engagement has been very meaningful for the community.
- Commissioners inquired whether a similar engagement process has been conducted in other communities. Commissioner Stroble stated that the idea for this type of community engagement came out of the last Comprehensive Plan update to make the planning process more accessible to a

wider variety of communities. Ms. Ung stated that this process has highlighted the need for relationships between community-based organizations and government.

Introduction to OPCD's first Indigenous Planning Strategist

Tim Lehman, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Mr. Lehman stated that he was recently hired by OPCD as the department's first Indigenous Planning Strategist. He has a background in planning and landscape architecture, has taught classes in landscape architecture at the University of Washington, and has worked with the City as a consultant on indigenous perspectives and Racial Equity Toolkits (RETs). He is now working on the Comprehensive Plan with a focus on making sure that OPCD is accountable to commitments that have been made to include indigenous perspectives in the Plan. Other areas that he is focusing on are showing where indigenous communities exist in Seattle, creating points of contact, and collaborating with other community groups. He is working on completing a Geographic Information Systems map to show where services are available for urban indigenous populations.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked Mr. Lehman to elaborate on the commitments that were made related to including indigenous perspectives in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Lehman stated that it is public knowledge that a commitment was made to include an indigenous element in the Plan, but this element will not be included. He stated that indigeneity should be woven throughout the document. There is no current policy explaining housing preferences for indigenous populations.
- Commissioners stated that the Comprehensive Plan is intended to represent the City's vision for twenty years. The outcomes and tangible benefits for meaningful improvement for indigenous people should be measurable. Mr. Lehman stated that he always leads with things that are actionable. For example, identifying actions that can lead to increasing housing ownership or land ownership. The community has identified the idea of a native neighborhood or native cultural district that would include providing services for urban natives. Mr. Lehman stated that his work involves increasing the amount of involvement from the indigenous community in the Comprehensive Plan and other projects. He recently created an indigenous engagement plan that will hopefully lead to more indigenous involvement in general.
- Commissioners encouraged Mr. Lehman to consider the Planning Commission as allies in his work.
- Commissioners stated the Planning Commission often works to hold the City accountable and asked Mr. Lehman if he has tips or strategies that have worked. He stated that it is important to know an organization's intentions and not allow their commitments to slip. It is important to find out where to be helpful when an organization or individual does not have enough capacity.
- Commissioners highlighted new state and county level policies to identify and repair past discriminatory housing practices. King County recently published guidance for a reparative approach that Seattle could benefit from. The Comprehensive Plan's housing element is an opportunity for the City to make a clear statement. Mr. Lehman thanked the Commissioners for this very helpful information.
- Commissioners suggested that it would be helpful for OPCD to identify additional tools beyond the RET in various planning phases. Mr. Lehman stated that he will be engaging with the indigenous

community from the beginning to increase accountability, get more comments, and develop a deeper understanding among the indigenous population.

- Commissioners asked how to review the Comprehensive Plan and determine if the City has done an adequate job indigenizing. Mr. Lehman stated that there has been indigenous engagement in development of the Plan but there has not been a point person. He stated that he is listening to all ideas on how to indigenize the Plan.
- Commissioners asked Mr. Lehman for guidance on how to navigate tension between federally recognized tribes, not federally recognized tribes, and others in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Lehman stated that he had the privilege to work with the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, and other tribes. Duwamish Tribal Services is a registered 501(c)3 organization. He stated that he will be available to answer any questions and help navigate those relationships.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.