



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 08, 2024

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Julio Sanchez, Monika Sharma, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple

Commissioners Absent: Xio Alvarez, Lauren Squires

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 3:03 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Daffern 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 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 January 25, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Julio Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Briefing: Seattle Transportation Plan

Radcliffe Dacanay and Jonathan Lewis, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Mr. Dacanay provided an overview of the timeline and next steps in development of the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) as follows:

- Q4 2023: Seattle Planning Commission letter delivered to SDOT.
- November 20th, 2023: End of final stage of public outreach.
- November to Present: Reviewing all input received and determining STP edits.
- February 2024: Anticipated transmittal of Mayor's recommended STP to City Council.

He described the following organization of the STP:

Part I: overarching plan with vision, goals, key moves, and implementation strategy

Part II

- Introduction: network integration and addressing modal conflicts
- Functional elements:
 - Transit
 - Bicycle and E-Mobility
 - Freight and Urban Goods
 - Pedestrian
 - People Streets and Public Spaces
 - Curbside Management
 - New and Emerging Mobility
 - Vehicle

He stated that SDOT has added a section on how the STP integrates with the draft Comprehensive Plan. He presented a summary of how the STP is aligning performance measures with top tier, middle

tier, and bottom tier priorities. The top tier includes outcomes that are aspirational and publicly accessible. SDOT may or may not control these. The top-tier performance measures are included in Part I of the STP. An example is the City's goal to achieve zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. The middle tier represents a mix of outcomes and outputs that are moderately publicly accessible. SDOT will control these performance measures that are described in the STP elements. An example is the goal of one hundred percent of households live near an AAA bikeway. The bottom tier performance measures will be included with other programs and will be tracked separately as part of an asset management process. Examples include miles of Healthy Street per year; number of bike racks installed per year, and miles of protected bike lanes built per year.

Mr. Dacanay provided a summary of STP Phase 3 outreach themes heard and SDOT's approach to incorporating those themes. The Phase 3 outreach summary included:

- Public review and comments on the Draft STP and lists of project and program activities.
- Over 1,400 draft plan comments.
- Long form letters from industry and advocacy organizations.
- Feedback received from Seattle's modal boards.

Notable themes heard in Phase 3 outreach included:

- STP is headed in the right direction.
- Be bold, be actionable, be fast!
- Elevate safety, equity (including accessibility) and sustainability goals, in particular.
- Elevate freight and economic vitality concerns.
- Unpack implementation in further detail.
- Finalize the performance metrics.

Mr. Dacanay provided the following summary of how SDOT has responded to these comments:

- Developed and expanded the implementation strategy chapter.
- Added two new key moves to address safety and equity comments.
- Increased the number of implementing actions to support all key moves.
- Revised narrative sections to highlight the importance of economic vitality.

Mr. Dacanay provided the following overview of how SDOT has responded to the Planning Commission's draft STP comment letter:

Include more explicit goals, performance measures, targets, and an implementation dashboard.

- Clearly state the prioritization framework and implementation strategy.
- Updates to the performance measures.

Incorporating feedback:

- The Implementation Strategy (Chapter 5) in the updated STP.
- Performance measures are updated.

Integration with the Comprehensive Plan

- Coordinate transportation planning with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Align STP with the final growth strategy selected for the Comprehensive Plan.
- Integrate the STP with the Comprehensive Plan to help create great places.

Incorporating feedback:

- Worked closely with the Comprehensive Plan team throughout the planning processes.
- Aligned concepts with the forthcoming final growth strategy.
- More multi-modal mix of transportation options to complement new growth.

Prioritization Framework

- Recommend equity-based prioritization framework.
- Support reprioritization of the right-of-way for active transportation and transit investments over private vehicles.
- Address multi-modal transportation in underserved, low-income, and BIPOC communities.

Incorporating feedback:

- Equity remains one of our goals and is part of our prioritization process.
- Active transportation and transit investments are key to increasing safety, reducing VMT, curbing emissions, and promoting equity.
- Multi-modal mix of transportation improvements proposed in underserved communities.

Multilane Arterials

- List recommended strategies.
- Concerns about the negative environmental and health consequences of arterials.

Incorporating feedback:

- Prioritize the safety of all people on city streets, including arterials.
- Rebalance street space to support multiple essential functions.
- Promote effective movement of goods and transit that share general purpose space on streets.
- Additional research on impacts.

Safety / Vision Zero

- Include priority projects to meet the urgency of the City's Vision Zero goals.
- Recommend making Vision Zero a standalone chapter.
- Address equity concerns related to safety in low-income and BIPOC communities.

Incorporating feedback:

- Vision Zero tightly woven into the STP.
- Lead with Safety.
- Integrated comments that amplify safety.
- "We will focus on delivering safety interventions with demonstrated effectiveness in locations where they are needed most."

Climate Change / Resilience

- Include programs and projects that address critical environmental sustainability issues.

- Use an equity lens to focus on the most affected and vulnerable communities.
- Identify policies and projects to mitigate extreme heat across all modes and systems.
- De-emphasize transition to electrification of the citywide transportation network.

Incorporating feedback:

- Climate Action is one of our pillars; SDOT will continue to partner with OSE, SCL, OPCD, SPU, among others to address the totality.
- Equity will continue to be a central practice at SDOT.
- Integrated comments to address resilience against extreme events.
- Balanced our discussion on electrification.

Economic Development

- Include economic development as a goal. Emphasize how the STP can help build wealth and improve quality of life.

Incorporating feedback:

- Have not added an economic development / vitality goal.
- Amplified the importance of economic vitality throughout the document.
- Woven in how each transportation mode contributes to the economy.
- The Freight Element includes a strengthened discussion on supporting the economy.

Freight Mobility

- Include strategies to integrate freight with other modes.
- Prioritize corridors for combined freight and transit and include strategies that allow for innovation in urban freight mobility.

Incorporating feedback:

- Upgraded the freight element to better integrate freight with other modes.
- Spotlight on freight-and-bus lanes.
- Discussion of e-cargo bikes and use of smaller vehicles in appropriate settings for last mile delivery.

Re-purposing the Right-of-Way

- Prioritize repurposing the right-of-way for people-oriented streets.
- Continue to explore the benefits of additional parking management strategies.

Incorporating feedback:

- Incorporated feedback into the Pedestrian and PSPS elements of the plan.
- Exploring low-pollution neighborhoods.
- As part of our VMT strategy, will also continue to explore parking management strategies.

Anti-Displacement

- Include proactive strategies to prevent and mitigate impacts of displacement.

Incorporating feedback:

- Included provision to support low-cost access to transit and affordable travel options.
- Work with our regional partners to expand access transit.
- Work closely with the Comprehensive Plan team to address displacement.

Regional Coordination

- Align with the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 and continue ongoing coordination with regional transit agencies.

Incorporating feedback:

- Dedicated staff to coordinate with our regional partners.
- SDOT continues to work closely with Sound Transit and King County Metro to improve transit experience.
- Dedicated division at SDOT are leading the coordination with Sound Transit on light rail expansion.
- Dedicated staff in Transit & Mobility division regularly work with King County Metro.

Mr. Dacanay provided the following overview of the next steps in development of the STP:

- Continue to finalize plan edits to be responsive to public comment.
- February 2024: anticipated transmittal of the Mayor's recommended STP to City Council and publish SEPA FEIS.
- Thereafter (to be determined): City Council to decide when to bring STP forward for adoption vote with accompanying resolution (includes public hearing).
- Late 2024: more clarity on transportation funding landscape.
- In 2025: develop first of several STP Implementation Plans.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed appreciation to SDOT staff for their regular briefings during the development of the STP and for their transparent responses to the Commission's comments.
- Commissioners asked whether this briefing will be the last chance to provide comments on the STP. Mr. Lewis stated that the next step is to transmit the Mayor's recommended Plan to the City Council. He offered to return to brief the Commission on the Plan's implementation.
- Commissioners requested more information on SDOT's comment about not prioritizing electrification. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT has adjusted the Plan to balance electrification and multimodal investments. Electrification will still be part of the solution, but SDOT will also invest in bicycling, walking, and transit. He stated that there is a need to do both, as we cannot all change our transportation behaviors at once. People will still need to drive, so driving choices should include electric options. He stated that the Plan also includes language about reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Commissioners recognized that SDOT has recognized and incorporated responses to many of the Commission's comments but expressed frustration with the lack of an articulated strategy to address multilane arterials. Mr. Dacanay stated that this plan was not intended to address every single arterial. Each arterial will have different safety issues that require different responses. SDOT will be more focused on those issues at the project development level. He stated that some of the Commission's comments on arterials are included in the final STP at a high level, but probably not at the level that will satisfy the Commission.

- Commissioners asked SDOT staff to highlight specific responses that were made to the Commission’s comments on the draft STP. Mr. Lewis stated that the Transportation Equity Framework has one hundred and forty actionable strategies, eighty of which are actionable in the STP. He stated that a gap in the draft STP was on enforcement, specifically more equitable enforcement. SDOT has added a new key move on that topic. Mr. Dacanay stated that analysis for impacts on health is not included in this plan, but SDOT staff are working with their asset management group to consider those impacts with an equity lens.
- Ms. Murdock asked how the iterative nature of developing the STP will dovetail with the draft Comprehensive Plan, and how SDOT plans to engage with the relatively new City Council on these two new plans. Mr. Lewis stated that SDOT staff have been meeting with City Council central staff for a few years during the development of the STP. SDOT has also been working with Office of Planning and Community Development staff to coordinate with the Comprehensive Plan team on issues including project management and community engagement.
- Commissioners expressed concern about whether the STP supports the upcoming Comprehensive Plan’s vision for how the Commission would like to see the city grow.

Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Review Strategy

Ms. Murdock presented the following proposed strategy for the Commission to review the upcoming draft Comprehensive Plan:

- Small group work outside of standing meetings.
- Review selected elements using a framework/worksheet.
- Each group prepares: a summary of their comments, a brief presentation for the full Commission noting their key takeaways on their assigned elements, and questions/comments that would benefit from a full group discussion.

She highlighted several proposed themes for review of the draft Plan. These themes were identified last spring based on the Commission’s recent issue briefs. She stated that all elements that the Commission reviews will be reviewed through these lenses:

- Racial and Social Equity
- Climate
- Sustainable Quality of Life
- Anti-Displacement
- Housing Access and Choice

The following questions will be used to guide the Commission’s review:

Racial and Social Equity

- Does the element clearly name racist and socially unjust practices and policies, past and present? If not, what is missing?

- Do the goals and policies of the element advance anti-racist outcomes? If not, how might anti-racist outcomes be achieved through goals and policies?

Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Climate change preparedness/adaptation

- Do the goals and policies of the element support the creation of sustainable, adaptive communities? If not, how might such supports be built into the element?
- Do the goals and policies of the element address ways to reduce the impacts of climate change such as reduced air quality, heat island effect, or sea level rise? If not, where might these risks be addressed?

Mitigation

- Do the goals and policies of the element support city goals of emissions reduction? If not, where might emissions be addressed?
- Do the goals and policies of the element promote emergency response preparedness?

Sustainable Quality of Life

Health

- Do the goals and policies work to improve environmental justice outcomes such as reducing exposure to pollution? If not, how might environmental justice be considered in the element?
- Do the goals and policies of the element promote equitable access to open space and/or recreation? If not, how might access to open space and/or recreation be addressed?

Safety

- Do the goals and policies of the element promote a safe and comfortable environment for those who work, live, and play in the city? Consider how the element encourages walkability, repurposing of the right-of-way, and community-specific activation of collaboratively designed spaces.

Resilient Communities

- Do the goals and policies of the element support the creation of resilient communities? Consider aspects such as access to essential daily needs, access to opportunity, and capacity building and technical assistance to support self-sufficient neighborhoods and communities.

Anti-Displacement

- Does the element include proactive strategies to prevent and mitigate the impacts of displacement? Consider housing and commercial displacement in all its forms (physical, economic, and cultural). If not, how might such strategies be included in the element?

Housing Action and Choice

- Do the goals and policies of the element promote more housing choices in more neighborhoods? If not, what is missing?
- Does the element consider the necessary coordination between elements to support successful housing growth, such as a diversity of housing choices supported by transportation/mobility access, and public facilities? If not, what connections are missing?
- Does the element consider the regional nature of housing access and encourage a regional approach to growth? If not, how might regional considerations be included?

Ms. Murdock presented a draft preliminary review schedule. She stated that all the Commission's standing meetings will have a focus on various components of the draft Plan. Planning Commission staff will take the lead on review of the Comprehensive Plan DEIS.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that the timeline for review and comment on the draft Comprehensive Plan will require a lot of work. Commissioners encouraged continuous participation and recommended attending as many meetings as possible. Ms. Murdock encouraged subject matter experts to participate to ensure a smooth review and comment process.
- Commissioners asked about the length of the review and comment period. Ms. Murdock stated that the DEIS comment period is forty-five days, and the draft Plan comment period will likely also be forty-five days. She stated that the Commission will likely be asking for more time.
- Commissioners noted that health is listed as a subset of the sustainable quality of life review theme and asked why it is not proposed as a standalone theme. Ms. Murdock stated that Commission staff wanted to avoid making the themes so dense that they become cumbersome. Commissioners noted that there was a lack of health expertise on the Commission at the time the themes were originally proposed. Health is a priority for the Commission.
- Commissioners inquired about the expected personal time commitment for review of the draft Plan. Ms. Murdock encouraged each small review group to have an initial meeting to review individual interests and commitments. She stated that it would be helpful for each group to meet two times to share takeaways with each other. She stated that Commission staff can help synthesize the small group comments.

Public Comment

Trevor Jones stated that he moved to Seattle recently to work as a software engineer. Urban planning and transportation are his passions. He is interested in getting involved in the planning process. He shared his enthusiasm for hearing the Commission's discussion, saying it gives him hope for the future of Seattle. He stated that reprioritizing bus lanes is very important. The City should move up the timelines for these projects. He stated that the City should be thinking long term and boldly. He expressed concern about urban freeways, stating that he walks across I-5 every day and breathes in pollution that is very significant and noticeable. He stated that the City should lid or remove this freeway.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm.