



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, March 28, 2024  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	Xio Alvarez, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, David Goldberg, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Rick Mohler, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Jamie Stroble, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple
<b>Commissioners Absent:</b>	Julio Sanchez, Monika Sharma, Lauren Squires
<b>Commission Staff:</b>	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 McCaela Daffern called the meeting to order at 7:33 am and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Daffern offered the following land acknowledgement:

*'As we begin our meeting, we respectfully acknowledge that our meeting today is taking place on occupied Coast Salish land. We pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people. To acknowledge this land is to recognize the history of physical and cultural genocide and settler colonialism, which continues to displace Indigenous people today. It is to also recognize these lands, waters, and their significance for the resilient and wise peoples who continue to thrive in this region despite the consequences of displacement and broken treaties. Those who hold settler privilege in this city must work towards supporting the Coast Salish people and all Indigenous people using the various forms of wealth and privilege they reap due to it.'*

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: Commissioner Rick Mohler moved to approve the March 14, 2024 meeting minutes. Co-Chair David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

## Public Comment

Ms. Murdock read the following public comment, which was submitted by email:

*I'm a Capitol Hill resident and midwestern transplant. I left everything I knew behind to be part of an accepting environment. While I found a great queer community, the monumental cost-of-living was sobering. Many in my neighborhood, from doctors to service workers, faced economic displacement at the hands of increasing rents. Each departure slowly broke apart the queer community I traveled so far to experience. The recent failure of helpful state legislation such as rent stabilization, TOD, and housing accountability further underscores the importance of an innovative comp plan.*

*The 2021 Berk Housing Needs Analysis employed two growth scenarios. The higher growth scenario proposed approximately 6,000 new units per year. Alternative 5 of the One Seattle Plan aligns with this high growth scenario. Berk's Housing Needs high growth projection identified a 34,000-unit shortage for households making 80% AMI or less by 2045, worsening the 2020 shortage of 21,000 units for similar household income bands. Even the highest growth recommendations worsen surrenders day conditions for Seattleites.*

*The Draft One Seattle Plan is a massive disappointment. The City needs to implement Alternative 6, which the community resoundingly supported in previous engagement. The City ignored public feedback when crafting their draft and now needs to acknowledge said feedback in open houses, online, and elsewhere to provide accountability. The Housing Element needs to meet the demands of the Missing Middle Housing bill, not only meet but exceed the Commerce recommendations for 1.2 FAR to free up development capacity across all neighborhoods and re-establish high growth centers in future mass transit areas such as West Seattle and 145th. We need land use, bulking, and parking policies which free up land across all neighborhoods for innovative housing such as point access blocks and stacked flats. We need a transportation element which takes seriously the failures and fatalities of Vision Zero. From 2020 to 2022, we averaged 17 pedestrian deaths per year. We need bold commissioners willing to serve as a guardrail for future resident equity and safety. Without your visionary Comment Letter, the future of Seattle will only become more hostile to residents both old and new.*

Nico Faz

## Discussion: Draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan DEIS SPC staff proposed comment letter outline

### DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS:

Co-Chair McCaela Daffern works for King County and has recused herself from review of the draft One Seattle Plan on behalf of her employer.

Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson disclosed that everything they say is their own opinion, not the views of their employer.

Commissioner Dhyana Quintanar disclosed that her views are her own, not those of her employer.

Commissioner Jamie Stroble disclosed that she worked with one of the community-based organizations contracted with the City during the community engagement process for the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. Her views are her own, not those of her employer.

Commissioner Rick Mohler disclosed that his views are his own, not those of his employer.

Commissioner Xio Alvarez disclosed that her views are her own, not those of her employer.

Commissioner Radhika Nair disclosed that her company works on some projects for the City, but not directly on the draft One Seattle Plan.

Oliva Baker and John Hoey, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). They reviewed four sections of the DEIS of particular interest to the Commission as follows:

### Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

#### GHG Emissions Citywide

- Alternative 1 has the highest emissions per capita, Alternative 5 has the lowest emissions per capita.

#### Impacts

- Construction
  - Temporary impacts to air quality across all alternatives.
- Transportation
  - All action alternatives (2-5) result in roughly the same annual GHG emissions.
  - Projected improvements in fuel economy outweigh projected increase in VMT.
  - Studied impacts to sensitive uses near highways (1-5, I-90).

#### Mitigation Measures

- Promote sustainable transportation, congestion pricing, and land use mix and compactness.
- Consider tree canopy, street sweeping, appropriate location of truck routes.
- Consider zoning and development standards that address proximity to pollution sources, enhanced filtration for sensitive uses.

### Land Use Patterns and Urban Form

- No significant unavoidable adverse impacts to land use patterns, compatibility, or urban form are expected under any Alternative.

#### Impacts

- Increased frequency of areas with mixing of uses and heights.
- Localized adverse compatibility issues as existing, lower-intensity uses transition to higher-intensity development forms.
- Intensity of land use patterns would shift most dramatically under Alternative 5 as activity levels increase over time.
- Building heights, bulk, and/or scale in the new place types would likely increase with new development.

#### Mitigation Measures

- Impacts are likely temporary and will be resolved over time or reduced by the application of existing or new development regulations and design standards.
- Gradual conversion of lower intensity uses to higher intensity development patterns is unavoidable but an expected characteristic of urban population and employment growth.

### Population, Housing and Employment

- Detailed historical context section (redlining, discrimination, underinvestment, displacement).

#### Impacts

- Housing
  - Studied supply, diversity of housing types, affordability, and potential displacement.
- Jobs
  - Majority of job growth expected in Urban Centers. About 5% of job growth expected in Neighborhood Centers and Corridors.

#### Mitigation Measures

- Suggests implementing MHA in neighborhood residential zones.
- Increase funding for anti-displacement programs.
- Strengthen relocation assistance programs.
- Consider density bonuses for income-restricted affordable projects.

### Transportation

#### Impacts

- The action alternatives are expected to result in higher VMT than the No Action Alternative due to increased growth levels.
- All action alternatives are expected to have significant impacts to transit passenger load, Corridor travel time, intersection LOS in the NE 130th/NE 145th Street Subarea, and state facilities.
- Impacts of Alternative 5 are expected to be higher in magnitude due to the increased growth.
- It is possible that the action alternatives—Alternative 5 in particular—could result in additional vehicle emissions near underserved communities along high vehicle emissions roadways.

#### Mitigation Measures

- The City is expected to pursue targeted transportation capacity improvements focused on improved transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight connections.
- Additionally, the City will manage demand using policies, programs, and investments aimed at shifting travel to non-SOV modes.
- A significant unavoidable adverse impact to transit capacity is expected.



Ms. Baker highlighted the following information to help the Commission in their review of the DEIS:

#### Climate and Environment

- Plants and Animals
  - Tree Canopy Cover (page 3.3-3)
- Earth and Water
  - Sea-Level Rise
  - Exposure to flooding and landslides
  - Impervious surfaces
  - Environmental health disparities (Exhibit 3.1-12)
- Utilities
  - Extreme Heat (related to energy use)
  - Stormwater and flooding
- Air Quality & GHG Emissions
  - GHG Emissions (page 3.2-17)
  - Exposure to Air Pollution (page 3.2-25)
  - Highways and rail corridors
- Housing and Population
  - Household Characteristics (page 3.8-9)
  - Housing Supply and Affordability (Page 3.8-14)
  - Displacement (page 3.8-50)
- Transportation
  - Vehicle Miles Traveled
  - Daily Person Trips by Mode (Exhibit 3.10-36)
  - Transit Capacity

Ms. Baker summarized past harms discussed in DEIS, including the following noted harms related to Housing and Land Use:

- Displacement of Native peoples living in the area when white European settlers arrived in 1840s.
- Exclusion and forced relocation of multiple groups through late 19th and early 20th centuries.
  - 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act
  - Forced incarceration of Japanese people and Japanese Americans in WWII
- Physical changes to the land that led to displacement/disruption.
  - Ship Canal and Ballard Locks in 1910s
  - I-5 construction through downtown
- Housing exclusion and discrimination.
  - Zoning used as a tool to segregate with standards like minimum lot size and prohibitions on multifamily housing
  - Racially restrictive covenants
  - Redlining
  - Officially, discrimination in sale or rental of housing was legal until the Fair Housing Act of 1968
- Legacy of these past practices in today's housing market in Seattle.

- Specifically notes neighborhood residential zoning with largely detached single-family homes as a continuation of this legacy. Notes rates of homeownership (lower for households of color) and impacts on household wealth.

Ms. Baker provided an overview of the staff draft outline of the Commission's comment letter on the DEIS and provided five minutes for Commissioners to review the draft outline.

- I. Praise for the DEIS
- II. Areas for Additional Analysis
  - I. Overall Recommendations
  - II. Air Quality & GHG Emissions
  - III. Land Use Patterns & Urban Form
  - IV. Population, Housing, and Employment
  - V. Transportation

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners noted that the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) recently released the anti-displacement framework and appendix. Ms. Baker stated that the appendix has a useful overview of anti-displacement policies in the Draft Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioners asked whether the DEIS transportation analysis considers full buildout of the city. Jim Holmes, OPCD staff, noted that the City is only planning for a twenty-year timeline and not for the full buildout scenario. He stated that the City regularly plans and updates zoning and capacity every ten years, so there is sufficient time to adapt and adjust as necessary to changing conditions.
- Commissioners asked if the housing analysis covers the economic feasibility and impacts of the alternatives meeting stated affordability needs. Ms. Baker stated that the DEIS does cover affordability of housing and housing supply as existing conditions and does study the number of units that would be produced under Mandatory Housing Affordability in each alternative. She stated that the DEIS does not address the economic feasibility of producing new units under the potential zoning introduced by each alternative, nor does it estimate what the costs would be or what the affordability levels would be of new housing produced under the alternatives. She stated that the DEIS mostly studies existing conditions of affordability.
- Commissioners stated that all the DEIS alternatives should include modeling of fourplexes and sixplexes as a baseline because that is the new legal requirement according to Washington State House Bill 1110. Commissioners noted a disconnect between the amount of affordable housing needed and the proposed housing production identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The graphic 3.7-4 in the DEIS shows housing needed for each income band, including more than 60,000 housing units at 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and under. The Comprehensive Plan is only planning for a baseline of 80,000 units total (referring to Alternative 1), so it seems unlikely that the plan will be planning for all but 20,000 units to be meeting below market-rate needs. Commissioners expressed interest in seeing a better accounting of this balance studied in the EIS.
- Commissioners stated that the significant unavoidable adverse impact on transit capacity noted in the DEIS could also be an opportunity to expand transit service as demand increases.

- Commissioners noted that a comment in the draft outline on sensitive uses near high-capacity arterials specifically identifies affordable housing alongside other uses like daycare and schools. Commissioners suggested that affordable housing is much harder to site and move than schools and daycare facilities. Commissioners stated it is very difficult to find locations for schools and hard to move them.
- Commissioners inquired whether earthquake preparedness and resilience are addressed in the DEIS. Mr. Holmes stated that he was not certain if seismic risk is included but other major climate events like flooding and sea level rise are covered. Commissioners suggested that if earthquake preparedness and other emergency preparedness topics are not covered, the Commission should include that in the DEIS comment letter.
- Commissioners stated that the Land Use chapter of the DEIS repeatedly describes the negative impacts of height, bulk, and scale in existing low-density neighborhoods. The DEIS does not adequately provide a rationale for why the impacts described are negative. The impacts also contradict many comments heard by the City during the public engagement process. Commissioners stated that bulk and scale impacts are already an issue, especially in Neighborhood Residential zones where a three-story single-family detached home allowed under current zoning creates discontinuity in bulk in scale to older, more modest homes in these neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units have also created contrast with single-story single-family residences. Commissioners noted that the proposed Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) is the same as the existing FAR. Therefore, the scale of new housing units will not be changing significantly in these areas. Mr. Holmes stated that the DEIS identifies a range of impacts to assist decision makers in reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioners asked if the DEIS identifies a projected population estimate by 2044. Mr. Holmes stated that he will look for that information. Commissioners noted that the DEIS transportation analysis includes per capita data but does not identify the anticipated population. Ms. Baker stated that the Draft Comprehensive Plan includes a population estimate of approximately 737,000 people as of 2020 and the alternatives are planning for 80,000 to 120,000 new housing units respectively. That population number could be extrapolated to the number of people the City is planning for based on the average household size.
- Commissioners stated that the DEIS includes estimates of the projected total number of cars and buses but not a total number of vehicles. It would be helpful to show how the DEIS assumptions are connected to projections such as anticipated levels of car ownership at different income levels.
- Commissioners noted that an analysis of past harms of housing and land use policy was unexpected in the DEIS and asked if the document also includes mitigation strategies for these harms. Ms. Baker stated that the DEIS does not discuss mitigation strategies for the harms directly but does do so indirectly by identifying ways the Comprehensive Plan will address housing affordability challenges and displacement that have impacted people of color as outcomes of past policies.
- Commissioners suggested including a comment related to how the City should have a more nuanced description of where housing choices will be increased and to what extent the Draft Comprehensive Plan is addressing that legacy of harm. Commissioners stated the City is not doing enough to bring more housing choices to high-opportunity areas.



## **Discussion: Draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan SPC staff proposed comment letter outline**

Ms. Murdock introduced the following proposed staff draft outline for the Commission's comment letter on the Draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

- Introduction
- Overarching themes from issue briefs:
  - Growth strategy
  - Affordable housing
  - Anti-displacement
  - Repurposing the right-of-way
- Review lenses:
  - Racial and Social Equity
  - Climate
  - Sustainable Quality of Life
  - Anti-Displacement
  - Housing Access and Choice
- Overarching comments (not a definitive list)
  - Needed data points to analyze adequacy of policies to achieve desired outcomes (goals)
  - Housing/Land Use/Transportation necessary coordination and synergy
  - Public health
- Element-specific comments (not a definitive list)
  - Growth strategy
  - Land Use
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Climate and Environment
- Conclusion

### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 am.**