



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

Xio Alvarez and Matt Hutchins, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, Rebecca Brunn, McCaela Daffern, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Julia Jannon-Shields, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple

Commissioners Absent: Andrew Dannenberg, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Monika Sharma

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Olivia Baker, Policy 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 Xio Alvarez called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm. Co-Chair Alvarez 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 Alvarez 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

Ms. Murdock announced several upcoming Commission meetings and reviewed the format of this meeting. She noted that public comment may be provided in person at City Hall, submitted in writing via email at least eight hours before the meeting, or offered on the hybrid meeting platform MS Teams. Public comment must be able to be given in two minutes or less.

ACTION: Commissioner McCaela Daffern moved to approve the August 28, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Nick Whipple seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

Peter Sweo stated that he is concerned about his neighborhood regarding density. He noted the proposed Upper Fremont amendment to the One Seattle Plan and expressed disappointment that there has not been more density proposed around his local transportation hub at 46th and Phinney.

Update: Low Pollution Neighborhoods

Radcliffe Dacanay and Jaya Eyzaguirre, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Mr. Dacanay provided an overview of SDOT's Low-Pollution Neighborhood Approach as follows: "Designated areas or streets where we can deploy or pilot a variety of policy, program, built interventions or incentives to reduce pollution and increase climate resilience." He stated that this language is an umbrella for many interventions the City can make in a neighborhood. This effort started with transportation, then expanded to buildings. The overall objective is to ensure residents can breathe easier in these neighborhoods.

Mr. Dacanay summarized the context for Low-Pollution Neighborhoods:

- C40 commitments
- Executive Order
- Climate Change Response Framework (CCRF)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure and Equity (RAISE) grant
- 2024 Transportation Levy

He cited information from two separate Executive Orders:

December 2022

- Convene a community conversation
- Develop an implementation and funding plan
- Have in place at least three Low-Pollution Neighborhoods by Q1 2028

April 2025

- Continue to develop three Low-Pollution Neighborhoods by 2028
- Partner with the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Office of Economic Development (OED), Seattle City Light (SCL), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), and the Mayor's Office
- Develop implementation plan to inform \$8M investment from the 2024 Transportation Levy

- Focus initial planning in communities that have experienced disproportionate damage from pollution, extreme weather events, the highest concentration of collisions, and areas with high transit dependence

Ms. Eyzaguirre described the approach, goal, and focus of the Low-Pollution Neighborhoods program:

Approach

Toolkit and service delivery philosophy that allows us to meet communities where they are and lean into the things people love about their neighborhoods

Goal

Improve air quality, climate resiliency, mobility, safety, and community health

Focus

On safety (public health and Vision Zero) and equity outcomes in our climate response

She provided some examples of actions and improvements, including:

- Rethinking how we use our right-of-way (ROW) through shared streets, Healthy Streets, increasing people-centered spaces
- Implementing electric vehicle (EV) charging in the ROW
- Working to increasing our street canopy

Mr. Dacanay summarized the RAISE Planning Grant Scope:

- \$1.2 million + \$300,000 local match
- Neighborhood Assessments: Understand needs to meet communities where they are. Plan for three core neighborhoods
- Develop toolkit and define projects/programs: Develop an Implementation Toolkit and match low-pollution tools to community needs
- Create Implementation and Funding Plan: Develop planning-level cost estimates for priorities and funding and implementation plan
- Community Engagement and Storytelling: co-create with community and help tell the neighborhood specific stories
- Freight emissions analysis framework

He described potential candidate areas:

- Areas where there are higher populations of vulnerable communities using the Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index
- Communities that have experienced disproportionate damage due to harmful pollution and extreme events
- Locations with the highest concentrations of serious and fatal collisions
- Areas with high levels of transit dependence or low rates of car ownership

Mr. Dacanay provided the following highlights of progress to date:

Community Conversations in late 2023 /early 2024

- Met with select city Boards and Commissions and community-based organizations
- Have had initial conversations with some stakeholders through C4o technical assistance

Core group from SDOT and OSE meeting since June 2023

- OSE + SDOT (P&P, PDD, PSM, and T&M)

Low-Pollution Neighborhoods Senior Urban Designer hired

- Jaya Eyzaguirre - started mid-July

Consultants selected for RAISE grant work

- Shaping the scope of work to be nimble and manage against potential federal limitations
- Start deeper dive community conversations in Q3 2025

First set of deliverables expected Q1/Q2 2026

- Streamlined scope of work will enable initial deliverables by end of Q1 2026

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for more information on the Office of Housing's interest in Low-Pollution Neighborhoods. Mr. Dacanay stated that the project started with OSE and SDOT. Initial conversations led to other departments wanting to reduce pollution. The Office of Housing has a commitment to reducing pollution through energy efficiency in their buildings. The project partners are making sure all departments are aligned.
- Commissioners asked about the schedule when the neighborhoods will be identified. Mr. Dacanay stated that SDOT is not trying to model what a Low-Pollution Neighborhood looks like. Most examples are European; not all are appropriate for Seattle. Some solutions work in some neighborhoods, but not others.
- Commissioners inquired about how the list of candidate neighborhoods will be narrowed down from six to three. Mr. Dacanay stated that will be an initial topic of discussion when the consultant is on board. The project team will use the available data to narrow down the list of candidate neighborhoods. The final list could be more than three, but the team is committed to delivering three by 2028. The project team intends to co-create with communities; if a neighborhood does not want to be selected, they will not be included.
- Commissioners requested more information about the project team's approach to community conversations. Mr. Dacanay stated that a lot of communities have been reaching out to them. The project team is working with these communities to determine what their desired outcomes are.
- Commissioners asked how the project team is ensuring that partners have dedicated the necessary resources. Mr. Dacanay stated that many departments want to get involved. In addition to those mentioned earlier, SPU has an interest in reducing pollution through water quality programs and OED is committed to jobs and vitality.
- Commissioners asked how the car-free Pike Place demonstration pilot will be incorporated into this effort. Mr. Dacanay stated that the project team is taking a "test and learn" approach by trying out different ideas to determine what works for individual communities. The project team will customize its approach based on local needs. They are working with the University of Washington's Urban Freight Lab. Recent developments include a conversation about e-cargo bikes at City Council this week. There are many overlapping efforts.

- Commissioners stated that it would be interesting to screen six pilot neighborhoods to determine if they are trip emitters or attractors. There are different criteria for considering either dense neighborhoods or residential districts.
- Commissioners stated that cars are the number one source of pollution. Every time cars are removed from the public realm, such as at Pike Place, it has been incredibly successful. Eliminating cars was not mentioned in the presentation. The City is three years into this process, and it will be another three years before implementation. We are looking forward to seeing specific implementations and more bold actions.
- Commissioners stated that we are in a climate crisis. We have decades of community planning work that can be drawn from. It can be predicted that some residents will not like the neighborhoods selected. Elected officials tend to cave to pressure from residents who vocally oppose something. We encourage setting specific objectives for success. When residents are opposed, those can be used objectively. Mr. Dacanay stated that the project team is currently building relationships with various communities to identify what they want. When leaders in the community can identify what they want, SDOT will work with them.

Update: Outside Citywide

Cayce James and Phillip Carnell, OPCD

Cayce James provided an overview of the Outside Citywide project. During the last Comprehensive Plan update, OPCD noticed that the City had many different maps of open spaces and equity priority areas. Outside Citywide was created as a new way to integrate the maps and visualize equitable distribution of parks and open space.

Cayce described components of the project, including a public space inventory, spatial analysis, and a prioritization map. A tier system was developed to classify sites. Tiers were used to develop the spatial analysis meant to reflect actual complexity of accessing public spaces in neighborhoods.

Phillip Carnell described how Outside Citywide is used:

- Trust for Public Land ParkScore
 - Uses inventory alongside investment data from City, Port, and State and demographic data to rank cities nationwide
- Seattle Parks Foundation
 - Incorporates Outside Citywide into their decision framework
- Considered by departments when strategic planning
 - SDOT's Public Space Management team
 - SPU
 - SPR
 - OPCD
- Used by organizations and members of the public to advocate for public space enhancements

Phillip described some updates to Outside Citywide in 2025:

Population Estimates & Equity Data

Updated population estimates using Washington Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates

Move from using the Tract Racial and Social Equity Index to the Block-Group RSE Index

- Block groups are subdivisions of census tracts, usually 2-3 per census tract in Seattle
- Impact:
 - Shows greater variation than Tract version
 - Helps separate neighborhoods where RSJI Equity Priority Populations may be masked (i.e., waterfront tracts)
- Tradeoff:
 - There are greater margins of error within the data used to create the RSE Index

Public space additions

- Downtown Waterfront (Multiple: SDOT, SPR, etc.)
- Seattle Center Skate Park (Seattle Center)
- Montlake Lid (WSDOT)
- SDOT Plazas (SDOT)
- Duwamish River People's Park and Shoreline Habitat (Port of Seattle)
- Det. Cookie Chess Park (Seattle Housing Authority, Seattle Police Foundation)
- Taylor at Denny Pickleball Courts (SDOT, Seattle Parks Foundation)
- South Park Pump Station Open Area (SPU)

Phillip highlighted the Public Space Explorer mapping tool, showing the differences between 2022 and 2025 data. They stated that this tool shows the highest priority areas. Shifts with the different data include the University District (increased population), West Seattle, and South Seattle.

Phillip described the next steps for Outside Citywide:

- Annual update cadence to review and add public spaces
 - Next major review: Fall/Winter 2025-2026
 - A review of open and existing amenities
- Working alongside departments on implementing Outside Citywide
 - Further incorporation into planning, policies, and programs
 - Collaborating on annual updates
- Incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan monitoring program

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked how golf courses are treated in the mapping process. Cayce stated that they considered criteria such as fees, limited hours, private ownership in deciding what to include.
- Commissioners stated that there are a lot of secret open spaces in Downtown and asked whether those are included. Cayce stated that they collected data on Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). Commissioners stated that there is value in mapping POPS to develop awareness of these.
- Commissioners asked if Outside Citywide differentiates between active and passive recreation. Cayce stated that is not a category that they track. The project uses proxies such as sports facilities, greenbelts, and natural areas. They are trying to find ways to capture that data in a useable way while acknowledging complexity in the system.

- Commissioners asked if Outside Citywide has an API. Phillip stated that they will need to check if Outside Citywide is available through the City's open data portal, but it is available in ARC GIS for those who hold an account.
- Commissioners complimented Cayce and Phillip on the Outside Citywide project, stating that the platform is very accessible and impressive.
- Commissioners inquired about which Comprehensive Plan elements leveraged the Outside Citywide information. Cayce stated that they reviewed past conversations about how to improve the system while developing the project. Cayce authored the Parks element of the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan and incorporated information from Outside Citywide.
- Commissioners asked about the role of linkages to parks and open spaces in the context of the Comprehensive Plan. Cayce stated that greenbelts are included as a lower tier in the data (especially those without trails). The analysis is not meant to map out how to access parks and open spaces, but rather to show where people can hang out.
- Commissioners stated that it would be helpful to see specific types of sports areas, play areas with spray parks, etc. Cayce stated that they are trying to work on this with the limitations.
- Commissioners asked whether Outside Citywide will include point data rather than polygons in the future. That would be especially useful to locate restrooms. Cayce stated that it would be great if they had the time and resources to develop mapping data at that level.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the potential goal for Outside Citywide twenty years from now. Cayce stated that this is a policy conversation about the future vision for open space and how can we improve connectivity. Phillip stated that they are balancing Outside Citywide with other critical issues, such as housing and public space management.

Commission Business

Ms. Murdock reminded Commissioners that the final public hearing on the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan is on Friday, September 12. She stated that Co-Chairs Xio Alvarez and Matt Hutchins and Commissioner McCaella Daffern will be providing testimony on behalf of the Planning Commission. She stated that the City Council Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan will hold its final three meetings next week. If the Select Committee adopts any amendments that require additional environmental review, that will be done before the final full City Council vote on the One Seattle Plan. She stated that any additional environmental review may delay adoption of the Plan until the end of this year or next year. Any delays may have implications for funding from the Puget Sound Regional Council and/or new City Council members. Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission has a new Get Engaged member, Margaret Szeles, who is currently a law student at the University of Washington, studying land use law.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.

Resources

[One Seattle Plan proposed zoning map](#)

[Select Committee on the Comprehensive Plan September 12, 2025 Agenda](#)

[Seattle City Council Proposed Amendments to Council Bills 120985 and 120993](#)

[Outside Citywide Public Space Explorer](#)