



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 09, 2026
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Xio Alvarez, Cecelia Black, McCaela Daffern, Andrew Dannenberg, Dylan Glosecki, Matt Hutchins, Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson, Radhika Nair, Dhyana Quintanar, Dylan Stevenson, Margaret Szeles, Kelabe Tewolde, Nick Whipple

Commissioners Absent: Rebecca Brunn, Monika Sharma

Commission Staff: 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.

Referenced Documents discussed at the meeting can be viewed here:

<https://www.seattle.gov/seattle-planning-commission/meeting-agendas-and-minutes>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair Xio Alvarez called the meeting to order at 3:04 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

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, announced several upcoming Commission meetings and reviewed the format of this meeting.

ACTION: Commissioner McCaela Daffern moved to approve the March 26, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Kelabe Tewolde seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

Ms. Murdock 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.

There was no public comment.

Discussion: SPC comments on the Draft Northgate Regional Center Plan

Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, provided an overview of the Commission's comments letter on the Draft Northgate Regional Center Plan. The comments were included in the following categories:

- Appreciation for the Plan
- Housing Feasibility
- I-5 Mitigation
- Open Space
- Parking and Transportation Demand Management
- Small Business Displacement

Ms. Baker noted that the final comments would be submitted prior to the Draft Northgate Regional Center Plan's comment period closing on April 10.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners noted that the Master Use Permit for the former mall site is currently scheduled to expire in 2034. The City is probably getting pressure from the developer to eliminate features such as pedestrian crossings. Commissioners recommended that the City should not miss any opportunities for futureproofing the site in any potential amendments to the MUP.
- Commissioners commended the plan's explicit acknowledgement of gathering input from indigenous communities.
- Commissioners recommended prioritizing comments on travel demand management. A comprehensive travel demand strategy should include a regional parking strategy consisting of both on-street and off-street parking.
- Commissioners stated that the implementation of this plan should include partnerships with private developers.

Update: Low Pollution Neighborhoods

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

Ms. Eyzaguirre provided an overview of the Low Pollution Neighborhoods (LPN) program. She shared the program's challenge and approach as follows:

Challenge: Transportation emissions, uneven impacts, fragmented program

Low Pollution Neighborhoods Approach:

- Coordinate departments around shared neighborhood priorities to reduce pollution and build resilience
- Develop solutions in partnership with communities
- Use a toolbox of policies, programs, incentives, and projects to scale impact

She highlighted the program's planning and project timeline:

Phase 1: 2026-2027: Plan & Partner

- Engage key stakeholders in pilot areas
- Identify goals and secure buy in
- Storytelling and co-creation
- Identify projects and programs
- Establish LPN toolbox and evaluation metrics

Phase 2: 2027+: Design & Deliver Pilots

- Design projects and align citywide programs
- Complete design and deliver projects
- Implement prioritized programs

Phase 3: 2028+: Evaluate & Scale

- Track outcomes; establish tools for community-based tracking
- Compile lessons learned and continue engagement
- Refine service delivery approach

Ms. Eyzaguirre described collaboration and coordination across departments including Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), Seattle City Light (SCL), the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and the Office of Economic Development (OED). She stated that the Low Pollution Neighborhoods program includes layered projects and strategies in one place, and a tailored approach to fit local priorities and conditions. She highlighted the following:

Mobility and safety

- Safer walking and biking connections
- Traffic calming on neighborhood streets
- Improved crossings near schools and parks

Clean transportation

- Electric vehicle charging
- Support for cleaner freight and deliveries
- Expanded mobility options

Climate and neighborhood resilience

- Greening and tree canopy
- GSI and cooling strategies
- Coordination with resilience hubs and community infrastructure

Access to programs and coordinated investment

- Connecting residents and businesses to existing City programs and resources
- Aligning transportation, climate, and neighborhood investments in the same areas
- Reducing barriers to participation in mobility, electrification, and resilience programs

Ms. Eyzaguirre featured the following Low Pollution Neighborhood Pilots:

South Park & Georgetown

- High pollution burden
- Freight/industry along residential edge
- Pedestrian and bike safety
- Heat and flooding risk
- Strong environmental justice advocacy

Lake City

- Diverse, growing
- High transit use
- Heat and stormwater risks
- Strong environmental justice advocacy

Capitol Hill

- Dense, transit-rich
- Freight delivery complexity

- Pedestrian and bike safety
- Strong environmental justice advocacy

LPN Pilots

South Park/Georgetown, Lake City, Capitol Hill

Different neighborhoods reflect different challenges and conditions

She described the next steps for the Low Pollution Neighborhoods program:

- Kick off LPN planning in pilot areas
- Begin neighborhood assessments in three pilot areas
- Coordinate early engagement with community partners
- Identify and organize existing City tools, programs, and projects
- Advance design of LPN strategies for each pilot neighborhood

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners stated that Capitol Hill is not an obvious choice for a pilot neighborhood and asked for more information. Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that the project team reviewed several neighborhoods that had a pollution burden. They decided that it was important to select neighborhoods with a variety of conditions to reflect the framework for the program. Commissioners stated that there are many low-income people in that neighborhood that experience high exposure to pollution. The key to success is working directly with the community.
- Commissioners asked why the project team's internal coordination did not include the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) or the Office of Housing (OH). Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that they are planning on meeting with DON. The project team is making sure they are including all stakeholders at the City and community level.
- Commissioners inquired how this program will measure success and when an evaluation framework will be published. Commissioners recommended measuring changes in mode shift and travel demand. Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that the project team will be working with a consultant and community stakeholders to align the program goals with the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) evaluation metrics. Commissioners stated that it would be helpful for the Commission to understand those metrics before they are finalized.
- Commissioners asked how the project team is considering types of pollution other than air pollution that might be mitigated. Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that SDOT is limited on the types of pollution that they can address and is working with SPU to address other types. The project team will work with community to identify which types they should be focusing on.
- Commissioners expressed disappointment that the project grant presents a much bolder project than what is presented. The program does not appear to target reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The program includes actions that SDOT should already be trying to achieve in every neighborhood. Ms. Kambuj stated that SDOT will be using the tools identified in the STP for the whole transportation system but is working to identify innovative tools with community stakeholders in the pilot neighborhoods. This program will utilize another set of funding and

investments. The project team picked a variety of land use conditions because these neighborhoods have different transit and non-motorized conditions.

- Commissioners asked how the project team is thinking about engaging communities outside of the city limits of Seattle. For example, the 1st Avenue bridge was stuck open for hours, impacting people coming into the city from other areas. Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that they are working on developing a stakeholder list and working groups; some of these may be outside of the city. SDOT may be engaging these in different ways. Ms. Kambuj stated that they are interested in hearing what communities want to prioritize.
- Commissioners stated that this program can emulate low traffic neighborhoods similar to those in European cities. Commissioners asked to what degree parking reduction is a core component of the LPN strategy. Ms. Kambuj stated that this is very much part of the strategy they want to engage with community on. Seattle Neighborhood Greenways has been working on this for a long time.
- Commissioners requested clarification on the project team's process for developing metrics in 2026. What if the community does not want to reduce their driving? How do SDOT anticipate working with community to ensure that the project aspirations are not watered down? Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that this is a new concept in Seattle. SDOT may have to try some ideas that have not been done here and focus on community education to develop understanding why these solutions are important. SDOT has identified some aspirational metrics to be impactful in reducing pollution and improving quality of life. Ms. Kambuj highlighted big transit investments in the region. The LPN program has a multi-departmental collaboration focus. SDOT is working with other departments, local businesses, and other stakeholders to explore all of the possibilities in a new way. Mr. Dacanay stated that there needs to be a demand side focus to determine if that is what the community wants.
- Commissioners stated that the scope of this program as presented should be business as usual for SDOT. These actions need to happen at scale across the city. Commissioners expressed disappointment that SDOT is only piloting this work in four communities. The climate crisis does not seem to be a top priority for voters anymore, but it is still important.
- Commissioners stated that the LPN program should be pushing the baseline higher. The pilot projects should challenge the status quo. For example, closing a street to car traffic and transitioning to other modes. Commissioners expressed concern that this program will not lead to a significant reduction in pollution. Ms. Kambuj stated that LPN is just one program. SDOT has the resources available from the recently passed Seattle Transportation Levy. The People and Public Spaces program has multiple benefits. Healthy Streets will also contribute to some big goals.
- Commissioners stated that having cars or not is not the problem; it is how often they are driven. SDOT should identify VMT as a goal of this program by reducing the number of trips by car and replacing those with trips by walking, bus, or bike. Not having a goal focused on reducing VMT is incongruous with the concept of a Low Pollution Neighborhood.
- Commissioners stated that pilot projects can be tricky, as conditions may return to the way they originally were. Commissioners asked if SDOT is actively partnering with communities to remove pavement and put in greenery to achieve stormwater goals. There is a lot of value in pilots like these to make bold challenges informed by community. Ms. Eyzaguirre stated that the implementation timelines for the LPN pilots are short, but there should be long-term outcomes.

Mr. Dacanay stated that this program will likely be LPN 1.0. There is strong interest in this concept from other parts of Seattle. There are likely further opportunities beyond 2028.

- Commissioners asked how much of the project implementation will need to be funded by other sources than the transportation levy. Ms. Kambuj stated that they do not have a specific number at this point. The project team will be exploring this in their work with other departments.
- Commissioners stated that it is difficult for small business employers in Capitol Hill to retain employees because of the lack of convenient and safe transit options. This program could be a way to bring the business community along and identify what matters to them.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 pm.