



City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

Michael Austin, Chair
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, October 24, 2019
Approved Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: David Goldberg, Grace Kim, Kelly Rider, Julio Sanchez, Amy Shumann, Jamie Stroble, Rian Watt, Patti Wilma

Commissioners Absent: Michael Austin, Sandra Fried, Rick Mohler, Lauren Squires

Commission Staff: Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director; John Hoey, Senior Policy Analyst; Connie Combs, Planning Analyst; Robin Magonegil, Commission Coordinator

Guests: Diane Wiatr, Seattle Department of Transportation; Colleen Horn; Sierra Hansen, Port of Seattle

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:

<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/when-we-meet/minutes-and-agendas>

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Vice Chair Patti Wilma called the meeting to order at 7:37 am and recognized that the meeting was being held on indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people. She announced several upcoming Commission meetings.

ACTION: Commissioner David Goldberg moved to approve the September 12, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Grace Kim seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed. Commissioner Patti Wilma abstained. Commissioner Grace Kim moved to approve the October 10, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner David Goldberg seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Announcements

Vanessa Murdock, Seattle Planning Commission Executive Director, welcomed Rian Watt, the Commission's new Get Engaged member. She asked for two Commissioners to attend the Renter's Commission meeting on November 4th. Commissioners Julio Sanchez and Grace Kim volunteered to attend this meeting.

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Commission Business

Seattle Planning Commission staff John Hoey provided an overview of the Commission's October 10th meeting in the Delridge community. Fourteen representatives of community organizations attended and spoke about their current and ongoing issues, projects, and concerns. Themes included:

- Need for racially/ethnically diverse communities to be involved in community conversations
- Difficulty for non-profits to purchase property for affordable housing
- Frustration with lack of coordination between departments when working with the City
- Not enough infrastructure to keep up with density; drainage is a significant problem
- Transportation, east-west connectivity, and lack of sidewalks are major challenges
- No grocery stores and not enough walkable retail/coffee shops
- Community-led projects include Delridge Wetlands, edible park/food forest, trails, natural drainage
- Concern how the future light rail and Rapid Ride H line will affect the community

Mr. Hoey summarized the lessons learned from the Commission's first meeting outside of City Hall:

- Dedicate more time for planning and community outreach
- Double efforts to reach out to racially/ethnically diverse organizations and communities of color
- Communicate why we are meeting in the community and meeting expectations more clearly

Commissioners offered the following feedback and suggestions:

- Consider scheduling a community-based project briefing in that community
- It is unfortunate to hear how difficult it is for a community to work with multiple City departments
- Invite/involve participation from youth
- Goals of this meeting were to raise awareness of the Commission. Follow-up by sending two or three Commissioners back to discuss how the community's concerns are connected to our work.

Seattle Planning Commission staff Connie Combs provided an update on the Commission's Growth Strategy white paper. She recently circulated a final draft to the Commissioners. The next steps include final review and sharing the white paper with City partners. The primary audience is elected officials and City staff; the secondary audience is the public. Ms. Combs also briefly summarized a Sustaining Communities event that she recently attended at the University of Washington. A few takeaways included:

- Many cities have similar gentrification and displacement challenges to what Seattle's communities are facing.
- Panelists discussed "climate gentrification" where development will seek climate-safe (not susceptible to sea level rise or forest fires, etc.) areas, and potentially displace residents.
- Panelists advised that there should be a structure for community ownership before any project starts.
- They shared the concept of "place-keeping," rather than "placemaking." This concept includes a focus on keeping the community where it is, while ensuring it is a healthy and safe place to live.

Briefing: Ballard-Interbay Regional Transportation System

Diane Wiatr, Seattle Department of Transportation

If you would like to view the Ballard-Interbay Regional Transportation System presentation, it is included in the supporting documents found in the minutes section of our website.

Ms. Wiatr provided an overview of the Ballard-Interbay Regional Transportation System project, which is funded by the Washington State Legislature to improve mobility for people and freight in the area. She stated that this project is a technical study looking at the transportation system in Ballard and Interbay holistically. The project will be coordinated with several other ongoing efforts in the area, including the Interbay Armory project, Ballard Bridge Study, Mayor's Maritime and Industrial Strategy, Sound Transit Ballard Link Extension, and Terminal 91 Uplands Development.

Ms. Wiatr stated this project is not only about transportation, but also about people, including workers who move goods in the Port and the local maritime industries. She reviewed the project partners and the scope of work. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will not be doing any additional community outreach for this project, as the Magnolia Bridge and Ballard Bridge projects have recently done separate outreach. SDOT will analyze previous bridge studies, assess multimodal integration, and complete a costs/benefits analysis for both bridges including an assessment of how the adjacent communities would be affected by the existing bridges not being replaced. A Bridge Replacement Timeline will establish the process steps for both bridges. This will not be a funding plan but will lay out grant funding timelines. The City does not currently have a plan to pay for the bridges and the federal funding situation is unclear. SDOT will complete and submit a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2020.

Commission Discussion:

- Commissioners asked what is considered a one-to-one replacement for the Ballard or Magnolia bridges. Ms. Wiatr clarified that one-to-one replacement includes replacing the existing bridge in exactly the same place, with added bike and pedestrian amenities that are currently lacking.
- Commissioners expressed concern about multimodal and pedestrian connections along this corridor. Ms. Wiatr acknowledged the importance of pedestrian access to transit.
- Commissioners inquired about the potential for Sound Transit light rail crossing on a new Ballard Bridge. Ms. Wiatr stated SDOT is in conversation with Sound Transit about this issue. The two agencies are not creating a plan together on this specific issue but are aware of each other's work. The timing for the SDOT Ballard bridge study was important for holding to SDOT's levy deliverable timing and trying to plan for many other bridges throughout the city as well. SDOT has heard many suggestions about shared funding with Sound Transit for the new bridge. Commissioners stated that although SDOT's and Sound Transit's Ballard bridge costs and schedule may not be the same, it would be disappointing to have two parallel bridges there.
- Commissioners asked for more information about the rationale for a standalone study requested by the Legislature. Ms. Wiatr replied that since the Legislature funded this study, SDOT is obligated to complete it. The report will hopefully produce a useful body of work.
- Commissioners expressed interest in the land use aspects of this study and asked how this work fits into the Comprehensive Plan process. Ms. Wiatr stated the costs/benefits analysis will be important

with regards to land use and industrial jobs. The Mayor's Maritime and Industrial Strategy will provide additional guidance on these topics.

- Commissioners asked for more information about how SDOT is responding to the enabling legislation's language regarding improving mobility for people and freight. Ms. Wiatr emphasized the importance of transportation reliability for freight. SDOT will work to ensure freight is moving while also allowing mobility for people in vehicles. SDOT will use analysis from the University of Washington Freight Lab looking at various forms of freight movement.
- Commissioners stated that the existing Ballard Bridge is unsafe for bikes and walkers. This study should not just be about the throughput of vehicles and goods. Livability should be considered.
- Commissioners asked whether a similar technical analysis is being conducted or considered in the Chinatown/International District neighborhood. Ms. Wiatr stated SDOT is reviewing all fourteen future Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension station sites, including looking at how the alternatives will impact the community. SDOT learned a lot from the Sound Transit 2 process and is looking much more comprehensively at livability. For example, it is important to create public space at the same time as creating new stations. This is a significant body of work for all involved.
- Commissioners stated that bridge replacement projects should not just be about the bridges but should include improvements to challenging access points. Ms. Wiatr suggested the Commission invite Wes Ducey of SDOT to provide more information on the bridge replacement projects.
- Commissioners asked what percentage of freight leaves Terminal 91 using the rail lines vs. freight vehicles. Ms. Wiatr stated that peak hour movement through the Ballard-Interbay system is the most congested. Movement of freight only occurs during certain times. The Ballard Bridge going up creates significant traffic backups. The federal maritime agencies mandate when that can happen.
- Commissioners asked whether vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will be a metric analyzed in this study. Ms. Wiatr replied that the study's intention is to lower the number of single-occupant vehicles in this system. The Sound Transit light rail extensions will provide a great alternative.
- Commissioners stated it is curious that this study is happening now with the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions planning process happening at the same time.
- Commissioners expressed concern that this study does not include public involvement.
- Commissioners encouraged SDOT to ensure equity is involved from the beginning of this study. Ms. Wiatr stated equitable outreach is important to SDOT. The Magnolia and Ballard neighborhoods have made their opinions loud and clear. SDOT is looking at the demographics of people who work in Interbay, but it is very challenging to find this information. They are considering talking to unions and using connections with the Port and local employers to get information. SDOT is also considering holding a series of focus groups to talk to employees about their transportation needs. They are also working with the City demographer on this.
- Commissioners reiterated their historic interest in industrial lands and shared their gratitude to SDOT for talking to industrial employers.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Wiatr for her presentation.

Public Comment

Colleen Horn stated she lives in Magnolia, works in Interbay, and manages property in East Ballard. She commented that one of the frustrations employers in Interbay feel is that they don't have a voice. There

is a strong small business community in this community that would be willing to fill out surveys and provide information. She stated there is only one bus stop on the Fishermen's Terminal side of Interbay. Community members are talking about the future of the Emerson Street Bridge. The Port is planning major capital improvements that could provide opportunities for micro-mobility solutions and additional bus stops. She expressed concern about the difficulty of communicating with the Port.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 am.

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