



## City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 11, 2024  
Approved Meeting Minutes

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

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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 David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm and announced several upcoming Commission meetings. Co-Chair Goldberg offered the following land acknowledgement:

*'On behalf of the Seattle Planning Commission, we'd like to actively recognize that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional and current territories of the Coast Salish people who have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today. We acknowledge the role that traditional western-centric planning practices have played in harming, displacing, and attempting to erase Native communities. We commit to identifying racist practices and strive to center restorative land stewardship rather than unsustainable and extractive use of the land.'*

Co-Chair Goldberg 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. He 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. He 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 28, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Julio Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.**

## Public Comment

Ms. Murdock read the following public comments, which were submitted by email:

*I listened to the Planning Commission's discussion of the Climate and Environment Element on Thursday, and I was disappointed at the way earthquakes are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. I propose that the Commission recommend a separate Earthquake Preparedness and Response element to gather together the scattered policies on this topic. We know much of the focus has been on climate change and steps needed to mitigate those impacts, which is essential. However, it's also important to focus on earthquakes as they are the highest possible hazard to Seattle. \* We currently have few policies that help build both infrastructure and community-based resilience into the Comprehensive Plan. If we plan and mitigate for the highest level and most impactful risk of earthquakes, then the policies will also be responsive to any of the other risks on the list. We must have policies supporting strong and resilient buildings and communities. I urge you to create an Earthquake Preparedness and Response element for the Comprehensive Plan.*

*Margaret Sanders*

*\*From Seattle Emergency Management*

*<https://www.seattle.gov/emergency-management/hazards/earthquake>*

*Earthquakes are the most serious hazard facing Seattle. Unlike other potentially catastrophic hazards, Seattle has had and will experience powerful earthquakes.*

*Dear Commissioners,*

*As you formulate your letter of recommendations to the City Council for the One Seattle Plan, I would like to encourage you to consider the input you are receiving regarding a stronger stance on policy recommendations for disaster mitigation work, specifically for earthquakes. I know that climate resilience has been a theme for mitigation planning for several years now, but we as a city continue to ignore the more devastating consequences of an earthquake in our policy setting.*

*I have been doing work in the disaster preparedness field since 2009 and we as a city are so under-prepared. I just attended the regional disaster preparedness conference in Tacoma, Partners in Emergency Preparedness, and there is no question in anyone's mind that the occurrence of an earthquake is not a question of if, but when. Christopher Godley, Director of Emergency Management at Stanford University spoke of how we sometimes view potential disasters as Black Swans, something we never could have predicted as happening. But the larger concern is about what he called the "Gray Rhinos", those events that are off in the horizon and very dangerous, but while they are predictable (gray rhinos exist) governments would much rather ignore them because, you know, they are way off in the distance. The earthquake several days ago in Taiwan showed what good mitigation policy can produce: minimal structure damage, resilient infrastructure, very few deaths. If an earthquake hit Seattle today, the results would be the opposite in the extreme.*

*I won't cite the City's own Seattle Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment (SHIVA) to you, I know one of my colleagues has submitted that information already. But I will point out that if you look at the SHIVA appendix of major land use and population concentration and the overlap with liquefaction zones, you can also predict the impacts. I strongly encourage you to recommend a policy action around earthquake preparedness and mitigation. A specific section should be created in the One Seattle Plan for earthquakes, so that hazard can be overlaid with stronger policies than those being created for climate resilience. Those hazards are different and while there is some overlap in resilience policy type statements, they will play out in very different ways. We need to address our known highest hazard in a way that drives action by city departments by setting policies that will focus attention and funding to protect those who live, work, and visit in Seattle.*

*Thank you for your consideration,  
Cindi Barker,*

*West Seattle resident and volunteer with the Seattle Emergency Communication Hubs*

#### **Discussion: Draft One Seattle Plan SPC staff Draft Comment Letter**

##### **DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS:**

**Co-Chair McCaela Daffern works for King County and has recused herself from review of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. She disclosed that her opinions are her own, not her employer's.**

**Commissioner Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson disclosed that their opinions are their own, not their employer's.**

**Commissioner Jamie Stroble disclosed that she worked with one of the community-based organizations funded by the City to provide input on the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan. She disclosed that her opinions are her own, not any present or former employer's.**

**Commissioner Lauren Squires disclosed that her opinions are her own, not of her employer, King County Metro.**

**Commissioner Julio Sanchez disclosed that he does not have any conflicts of interest and his opinions are his own, not any current or former employer's.**

**Commissioner Dhyana Quintanar disclosed that her views are her own, not her employer's.**

Ms. Murdock introduced the Draft One Seattle Plan staff draft comment letter. Commissioners took five minutes to review the staff draft comment letter. Ms. Murdock and Seattle Planning Commission staff provide an overview of the staff draft letter contents.

### Introduction

Reference 2022 Issues Briefs and key Questions/Review lenses:

- How is racial and social equity promoted throughout?
- How are anti-displacement strategies actionable?
- How is climate resilience prioritized?
- How is equitable housing access and choice ensured throughout the city?
- How is a sustainable quality of life is ensured for all residents?

### Overarching Comments applicable throughout the draft Plan

- Racial Equity
- Displacement
- Measurable metrics

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked to clarify the term “exclusionary displacement.” Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, stated that this term referred to exclusionary zoning. Commissioners suggested editing the text to clarify that exclusion is different from displacement.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for how the draft letter emphasizes including performance metrics in the draft Plan and suggested that it would be helpful if the entire Commission agrees on metrics as key indicators for each of the Plan’s elements. Those metrics should be reflected in the City’s various departments’ sub-plans.
- Commissioners stated that the City’s recently published functional plans elevate goals and metrics. Commissioners suggested expressing concern that specific metrics from those plans are not reflected in the Draft One Seattle Plan.
- Commissioners suggested revising the letter to express disappointment with the draft Plan’s anti-displacement policies. Commissioners stated that the recently released anti-displacement framework document reads like a collection of everything that the City is already doing. Many people are still experiencing displacement. Commissioners suggested the City demonstrate how the framework will pair with the Plan, including metrics and accountability to the organizations that helped develop the framework.

### Growth Strategy

- Plan for additional growth.
- Go further to expand access to more housing types in more areas of the city.
- Make Urban Neighborhood zones more effective.
- Connect the growth strategy, housing, and transportation through one vision.
- Add a neighborhood center around the 145th Street Station Area.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners expressed frustration that the growth strategy is not responding to new state requirements to repair past harms. The growth strategy appears to be an incremental approach to moderately change the existing land use patterns, which continue to be exclusionary. The Draft Plan identifies past harms to different populations but falls short of a comprehensive response to housing and homelessness issues, especially for indigenous populations. Commissioners stated that the state and other cities are leading on this, but Seattle is not. The City is not being explicit about what is in their control to do.
- Commissioners suggested providing data-based comments on how the City is meaningfully addressing harms.
- Commissioners suggested that the draft letter recommend adding some of the Neighborhood Centers that were originally studied back into the Plan. Neighborhood Centers should maximize connections to the frequent transit network and existing business areas.

### Land Use

- Overarching Goals and Policies
- Off-Street Parking
- Neighborhood Centers
- Neighborhood Residential Zones
- Living and Work Balance

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners suggested including more specific recommendations on Neighborhood Residential zones. The City is using the state's criteria for middle housing in HB 1110. The Commission recommends using the frequent transit network for broader housing in Neighborhood Residential zones. The existing frequent transit map is currently used to determine whether parking is required. The criteria in HB1110 are a much lower threshold and would allow six units in a much smaller area of the city. Commissioners suggested referencing the long-range transit network including future light rail stops.
- Commissioners recommended repeating language in the Neighborhood Center section of the letter in the Neighborhood Residential section.
- Commissioners stated that denser, more walkable neighborhoods should not only be connected to the frequent transit network but should be citywide.
- Commissioners commented that the frequent transit network is a tool for the City to provide clear policy guidance.

### Transportation

- Prioritize the Transportation Network.
- Establish visionary goals.
- Elevate Safety
- Complete Streets
- Parking Demand Management
- Transportation Demand Management

- Changing Commute Patterns
- Green Infrastructure

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners recommended referring to the priority transportation network as a “transportation system” to demonstrate how it supports and advances a bigger vision that supports our goals. The Plan should include more guidance on how the City allocates space in the right-of-way. Complete Streets are intended to create a system that works for everyone. The Plan should integrate nuance on how we have limited space and need guidance on what’s important on specific corridors. This is consistent with a complete network approach.
- Commissioners expressed support for the section on transportation metrics. This section includes very specific metrics. Other elements could use similar metrics.
- Commissioners noted that Parking Demand Management is a component of Transportation Demand Management and recommended switching the order of these in the draft letter.
- Commissioners suggested alluding to the need for metrics to justify transportation funding.
- Commissioners recommended the Transportation Demand Management section should include references to a Racial Equity Toolkit and anti-displacement strategies. Commissioners noted that King County has implemented the Metro Flex program in communities where it is needed. This is an example of Transportation Demand Management that is helping people get to where they need to go. Commissioners asked how to address the potential harm to those who have already been harmed. Commissioners stated that the road use pricing the City was considering before the pandemic had an equity component.
- Commissioners expressed caution that the City’s transportation policy ideas do not preclude low-income neighborhoods from access to electric charging and other transportation amenities.

### Housing

- Pair strong housing policies with a growth strategy that promotes equity.
- Increase housing supply overall to improve affordability.
- Lean into a growth strategy that promotes better housing choice by allowing more types of homes, for more types of households, everywhere.
- Reduce barriers to building Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in more areas of the city.

### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners suggested getting input from developers to identify the most common barriers.
- Commissioners questioned whether the draft letter is overly narrow on this topic and asked if there are types of housing that are hard to permit because of a stigma attached.
- Commissioners noted that the Housing Appendix includes some very interesting statistics that could be included in the letter.

### Climate and Environment

- Emphasize mode shift over electrification.
- Lessen the impacts of transitioning to zero carbon energy for low-income households.
- Support a food system that equitably distributes access to local and culturally relevant foods.

- Consider a separate subsection that addresses earthquake preparedness and response.
- Acknowledge adequate housing supply and options as a climate strategy.
- Include specific anti-displacement policy language in Part 2 of this element – suggestions?
- Consider more specific language in the policy related to achieving racial and social equity in health outcomes – suggestions?
- Consider stronger language (in conjunction with Land Use policy 17.11) to discourage additional growth in flood-prone areas as opposed to merely regulating development. Move to Land Use?
- Re-emphasize the need to eliminate food deserts and reduce food insecurity by providing options for a diversity of people. Strengthen policy language from ‘support convenient access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally relevant food... (CE 14.2)’ to provide or ensure convenient access.
- Include a policy regarding the monitoring of water bodies likely to be used in times of extreme heat to cool to ensure those bodies are safe.

#### Commission Discussion

- Ms. Murdock stated that the Commission’s letter will include cross-references to other elements. For example, references to sea level rise will also be included in the Land Use element.
- Commissioners recommended that water quality monitoring should include monitoring for chemical and biological hazards.
- Commissioners stated that earthquakes are the biggest hazard. The City should be considering earthquake response and preparedness. The Comprehensive Plan should point to other plans that include these issues.
- Commissioners suggested that low-pollution neighborhoods and other equity strategies should prioritize areas that have the highest cumulative pollution and communities that are carrying the highest burden.

#### Parks and Open Space

- Consider a policy that prioritizes the retention and expansion of natural features over the introduction of additional non-permeable surfaces.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners referenced the City’s Outside Citywide program and asked if the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are responsive to that document.
- Commissioners recommended ensuring that the natural features policy recommendation does not contradict the Commission’s Repurposing the Right-of-Way discussion on social spaces.
- Commissioners stated that the City has been criticized for parks with no trees or green space. The Commission’s letter should include language that identifies both as priorities, especially in communities with high heat risk.

#### Public Health

- Public health is not a standalone element, but rather referenced throughout the draft Plan.
- Consider noise pollution in addition to other forms of pollution when considering public health impacts.

- Incentivize use of health-promoting building certification standards for all buildings in the city, such as Fitwell and WELL standards in addition to green building standards.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners noted that the recommendations on minimum parking standards and arterials are well worded. Noise pollution is a concern especially in relation to housing.

#### Questions and Discussion

- Commissioners inquired whether there is consensus around adding a separate section to the letter for references on earthquake preparedness. Ms. Murdock stated that she would put together a summary of where earthquake preparedness is included in City documents. Commissioners cautioned against stating the City is not prepared but to include a cogent section on preparedness.

#### **Discussion: Draft One Seattle Plan DEIS SPC staff Draft Comment Letter**

Ms. Baker and Mr. Hoey provided an overview of the Commission's staff draft letter on the One Seattle Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

#### Introductory remarks

- Positive feedback on inclusion of detailed historical context and displacement.

#### Overall Recommendations

- Provide a detailed explanation for how new place types are defined and selected.
- Provide a more complete exploration of racial equity impacts throughout DEIS.
- Inclusion of the 130th/145th St Station Area as secondary EIS adds confusion.

#### Air Quality & GHG Emissions

- Study the impacts of locating sensitive uses near additional high-volume traffic roadways beyond freeways.

#### Land Use Patterns & Urban Form

- Provide more detail and context on negative land use impacts and the consequences of those impacts.
- Emphasize that negative impacts resulting from urban growth are expected and only temporary.
- Highlight both positive and negative equity impacts.

#### Population, Housing, and Employment

- Provide additional employment analysis related to the changing nature of work location post-pandemic.
- Study how each alternative may support or hinder the implementation of anti-displacement policies in the draft plan beyond just Mandatory Housing Affordability.
- Study the impact of each alternative on housing affordability and supply more deeply.
- Include a discussion of how each alternative impacts housing choice in areas of high opportunity.

#### Transportation

- Transportation impact analysis is overly technical for the public.



- Describe the relationship between transportation analysis for this DEIS and the Seattle Transportation Plan.
- Proposed mitigation measures should be inherent to development of a citywide transportation system.
- Provide more information on significant unavoidable adverse impacts to transit capacity.

#### Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked if the City has provided an estimate of citywide population by 2044. Ms. Baker stated that the City has estimated one million residents.
- Commissioners suggested the letter should say the transportation analysis is comprehensive, but the language and communication of that analysis could be improved to be easily digestible for understanding and comprehension by the public.
- Commissioners expressed appreciation for recognizing the analysis of the anti-displacement strategy of reducing housing density to three units in areas of high risk of displacement.
- Commissioners stated that their discussion of the Comprehensive Plan would be very different if they had answers to the questions identified in this letter. The City is talking about the right things, including anti-displacement, equity, and 15-minute cities, but the analysis seems to be absent from the draft Plan.
- Commissioners noted that the Draft Plan identifies a preferred alternative that is a hybrid of the alternatives that were studied. The Commission would like to see an analysis of the preferred alternative. Commissioners stated that they do not have the information needed to thoroughly understand the proposed alternative.
- Commissioners asked if all the DEIS analyses used the same population estimates when creating per capita indicators. It is necessary to understand the sources of those numbers to make sure the analyses are apples to apples.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.**