



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 13, 2024
Approved Meeting Minutes

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

Chair's Report & Minutes Approval

Co-Chair David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 3:05 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. Co-Chair Goldberg reviewed the format of the meeting. He 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.

ACTION: Co-Chair McCaela Daffern moved to approve the May 23, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rick Mohler seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Public Comment

Thomas Daniels read the following public comment:

Hello members of the Seattle Planning Commission, I am Thomas Daniels, a student of Lincoln High school in north Seattle. For a school project, I looked at Oman and analyzed how traffic safety is addressed and potential lessons that Vision Zero could take from it. In the past 7 years, Oman has reduced crash fatalities by 55%. The main cause of death in accidents in Oman is speeding. One part of the strategy that Oman used to control speeding was by installing radar speed signs effectively. I have found that there are many spots where these signs could be used outside of the ordinance of 15% of people driving 5 mph or over the speed limit. One example is unlighted Burke Gilman intersections near View Ridge, where a several hundred foot hill can cause cars to reach dangerous speeds while approaching a very popular undersigned bike and pedestrian intersection. Effective implementation of radar speed signs in locations such as those in the above example, and not just in areas with 15%, could help reduce Seattle traffic deaths to zero.

Gary Lee read the following public comment:

Thank you for your hard work in reviewing and commenting on the Draft One Seattle Plan.

The Draft One Seattle Plan barely touches homelessness and public safety - which are huge issues in Seattle. The 2035 Comp Plan began to touch on these issues, and included policies for public safety, community well-being, and human service facilities so such facilities are convenient - while not being over-concentrated in areas. Specifically, Policy DT-HSP5 says "Seek to avoid over-concentration of human service facilities in any one area of Downtown". That policy – along with the entire Community Well Being Element are being deleted (without the goals being achieved first) in the current Draft One Seattle Plan, with no replacement of similar polices, anywhere. That policy should be retained and expanded to the entire city, not just certain neighborhoods.

We know the City will continue to address chronic homelessness (which is not caused only by housing affordability, but mainly by drug addiction and mental health issues) by continuing to provide for human service facilities like emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, and treatment facilities – as the City should but not in a fashion that is NOT guided by comprehensive plan policies and regulations. Therefore, I suggest retaining and combining existing Policies CW 7.7 and DT-HSP5 to say something like this: Site new human service facilities in or near Urban Centers, Neighborhoods Centers, and Urban Neighborhoods considering access to frequent transit, and use good-neighbor guidelines that consider the needs of consumers and the community, while avoiding the over-concentration of such facilities in any area of the city.

As stewards of the Comprehensive Plan, you are also responsible for anticipating unintended consequences in land use incompatibility and correcting them when there is clear evidence of a reduction in livability, public safety, and economic vitality caused by the incompatibility (as with the over-concentration of 17 homeless shelters, and facilities, around the CID and Pioneer Square already). Why? Because if it's not addressed, with comprehensive plan policies first, it could get worse, and will occur in other neighborhoods with lots of Commercial zoning around them, like North Seattle and elsewhere.

With that said, please send the Mayor and OPCD an addendum to your letter urging them to address public safety, and community wellbeing and vitality, in a separate element, to address the issues mentioned above, before it comes back to you.

*Gary Lee,
Member of CID Public Safety Council
ISRD Board member
City Redmond Planner (33+ years), retired April 2024*

Grace Norman read the following public comment:

I commend you for the extensive work on the One Seattle Plan to date. It is exciting to see a vision for the future of our city take shape.

The current draft lacks adequate focus on health and human services as it relates to community well-being and public safety. These are crucial issues for the city. While the 2035 Comprehensive Plan started addressing these—including policies for human service facilities distribution—the current draft eliminates such provisions without alternatives.

I propose retaining and broadening Policy DT-HSP5 from the original plan to be adopted citywide (as opposed to each neighborhood having its own policy). For example:

"Consider the needs of target populations in locating human service facilities throughout Seattle ~~Downtown~~. Administer funds available for human services to ensure coordination of housing and human services needs of the ~~Downtown~~ low income population. Seek to avoid over-concentration of human service facilities in any one area of ~~Downtown~~ and encourage the location of needed facilities in areas lacking such facilities."

Section CW 7.7 gets at this idea, but it does not address the current overconcentration of human services in some areas, and the dearth of services in others.

As stewards of the Comprehensive Plan, please send an addendum urging the Mayor and OPCD to address human services distribution equitably throughout the city. It will usher in better opportunities for individuals and whole communities to thrive.

Respectfully yours,

Grace Norman
Co-Founder, Circle the Square
A citizen project working to help Pioneer Square thrive

Jay Yanamura stated that he is concerned about language in the Draft One Seattle Plan allowing over-concentration of human services facilities in the Chinatown/International District neighborhood. Many of their friends own businesses in the area. When walking around Chinatown, they see many people sitting and laying down, scaring away customers. He stated that there are currently seventeen shelters in the area. The new language in the Draft One Seattle Plan may allow more.

Kalene Yanamura stated that she is married to Jay Yanamura. They live in the Chinatown/International District neighborhood. She stated that the neighborhood has been getting scary. Residents would like the City to spread out the human services facilities more than they are currently.

Briefing: Vision Zero Action Plan

David Burgesser, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Mr. Burgesser stated that the Vision Zero Action Plan was published a few weeks ago. He stated that SDOT staff continuously remind themselves of the human element behind their work, the people impacted by fatal and serious injury accidents. He highlighted the following statement:

"Since Seattle began its Vision Zero efforts in 2015, over 1,720 people have been seriously injured and 236 people have been killed in a traffic crash. Together, we hold space for them. Together, we commit to taking action to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2030."

Mr. Burgesser shared some statistics on how Seattle compares to other nations in traffic fatalities per one million inhabitants and to other cities in five-year average fatalities per 100,000 residents between 2018 and 2022. He featured statistics of collision trends on Seattle's streets, including lives lost and serious injuries. He then highlighted the disproportionate impact on vulnerable users by showing statistics of lives lost on Seattle streets by level of protection. Mr. Burgesser highlighted a map demonstrating the percentages of 2018-2022 fatal and serious injury crashes by City Council district. He stated that the south end is disproportionately affected. Other hotspots include the downtown core and Aurora Avenue North. He stated that sixty percent of fatal crashes happen on the east side of the Duwamish River.

Mr. Burgesser shared the following three prongs of SDOT's Vision Zero program:

- Responsive Safety: Use data from past collisions to inform new safety strategies.
- Proactive Safety: Scale up delivery of effective safety treatments and deploy them where they will have the greatest impact.
- Capital Project Partnerships: Conduct safety evaluations for all capital projects and develop safety improvements in priority locations.

He stated that SDOT uses a data-informed approach to prioritization, incorporating both a Responsive Approach and a Proactive Approach. The Responsive Approach incorporates data sources including collision tracking and the City's High Injury Network. The Proactive Approach incorporates citywide speed data, bike and pedestrian safety analysis, and proven safety countermeasures.

Mr. Burgesser stated that the 2024-2026 Vision Zero Action Plan establishes an aggressive three-year strategy with 2024 targets to reduce the number and severity of crashes; organizes over twenty strategies and eighty actions around the five elements of the Safe System Approach; tracks Vision Zero progress; and includes a toolkit of safety countermeasures. The strategies and actions include highly specific and measurable actions for the entire department and build upon the recommendations of the recent Vision Zero Top-to-Bottom Review. He stated that Seattle is shifting to adopt the Safe System Approach, a new USDOT guiding paradigm to address roadway safety. This approach includes multiple layers of protection to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes and adds redundancy to accommodate both human mistakes and human vulnerability. The Safe System Approach includes the following components:

Safer Streets

Safer streets are those that mitigate human mistakes, are self-enforcing by design, encourage safe travel behaviors, protect the most vulnerable users, and reduce potential for high severity crashes.

Key Strategies:

- Integrate safety improvements into all capital projects and in coordination with agency partners.
- Advance responsive safety treatments at crash-prone locations.
- Accelerate and proactively implement proven safety treatments (LPIs, NTOR, road reconfiguration, protected turns, enhanced crossings, bike lanes, etc.).
- Deliver Safer Streets for All projects.
- Develop an industrial-focused Vision Zero initiative.
- Improve dedicated facilities for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.

Safer Speeds

Speed is a leading determinant of the severity of crashes. A pedestrian's chance of surviving a crash decreases significantly with faster vehicle speeds.

Key Strategies:

- Continue to apply context-sensitive speed limit reductions on City and State-operated arterials.
- Encourage slower speeds using traffic calming treatments and road reconfigurations.
- Equitably expand traffic safety cameras on high-speed and crash-prone corridors.

Safer People

Encourage people who use our transportation system to practice safe and responsible travel behaviors and empower people to engage with us on how we can advance safety on their streets.

Key Strategies:

- Expand and evaluate focused safety education and encouragement campaigns.
- Engage vulnerable users in the planning of safety improvements.

- Improve safety data transparency and use community suggestions to inform the prioritization of projects.

Safer Vehicles

The size and weight of vehicles, as well as availability of vehicle safety systems, plays a major role in the likelihood and severity of crashes.

Key Strategies:

- Pilot new safety features on City fleet vehicles, such as vulnerable road user detection, truck sideguards, and intelligent speed assistance.
- Explore opportunities to influence regulations around vehicle size, weight, and safety standards as well as autonomous vehicles.

Post-Crash Care

Post-crash care focuses on improving the survivability of people involved in crashes with timely access to medical services as well as implementing effective traffic incident management, data collection at the crash site, and effective follow-up responses.

Key Strategies:

- Implement signal technology upgrades for emergency vehicles to improve response times.
- Partner with the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and Seattle Fire Department (SFD) to improve data collection at crash sites and around emergency vehicle response times.

Mr. Burgess described the following next steps in implementing the Vision Zero Action Plan:

- Launch of Vision Zero data dashboard with key metrics.
- Tracking and implementation of 2024 action items.
- Development of responsive and proactive safety projects.
- Vision Zero policy updates.
- Integration of Safe System principles throughout SDOT's projects and operations.

Commission Discussion

- Commissioners asked for more information about the Vision Zero data dashboard. Mr. Burgess stated that SDOT will be looking at data and trends for bikes and other modes. SDOT has not had that level of data transparency in the past. SDOT will report where they are investing and the outcomes of those projects.
- Commissioners asked if there is a proactive approach to implement No Turn On Red signage on a broader scale. Mr. Burgess stated that SDOT wants to scale up and is looking at how to prioritize those. Most are Downtown and along the Aurora Avenue North corridor. SDOT wants to roll out that treatment more broadly and can incorporate this signage into capital projects.
- Commissioners inquired about SDOT's engagement with SPD related to enforcement of ongoing problems for bicyclists including tinted windows and use of turn signals. Mr. Burgess stated that SDOT has regular coordination meetings with SPD. They are looking at new tools to deploy, such as automated safety cameras that do not require in-person police involvement.

- Commissioners asked how SDOT collects data when no vehicles are involved. Mr. Burgesser stated that SDOT is working on that. They only get a live stream of data from incidents with police involvement. Data from insurance reports is also included in their system. SDOT does not get any information if SFD aid cars are involved.
- Commissioners noted that the past week was particularly difficult with several fatal accidents. Mr. Burgesser stated that SDOT conducts a review of all fatal collisions and looks for opportunities to improve safety. They are now doing that in a much more rigorous way. He stated that SDOT can apply a safety lens and more aggressively apply safety improvements to capital projects.
- Commissioners stated that we are all impacted by SDOT decisions and complemented Mr. Burgesser for prioritizing leading with heart on safety in this presentation. Commissioners encouraged SDOT to remember that there are a lot of people who do not show up in meetings who are affected by transportation safety. SDOT should prioritize those who are most affected.
- Commissioners expressed enthusiasm for the analysis and approach shown in terms of the evidence -based approach the City is taking.

Public Comment

Julie Ralls stated that moving to Seattle was a shock due to the lack of a public health presence. She expressed frustration with the public's ability to communicate with the City and County. She is disappointed with the lack of a mental health framework. A comprehensive behavioral health approach and system requires the involvement of multiple levels of government.

Maria Ho expressed frustration with public safety, citing people lying on the sidewalk and people driving too fast. She is Chinese American and has experienced language barriers in trying to communicate her concerns.

Mr. Hoey and Olivia Baker, Seattle Planning Commission staff, read the following public comments, which were submitted by email:

Dear Seattle Planning Commission,

My name is Tija (Tia) Petrovich and I chair the Pioneer Square Residents' Council. I write to ask that you consider stronger recommendations regarding public safety and community well-being in your recommendation to the Mayor's One Seattle Plan (update to the 2035 Comp Plan).

The existing language in the 2035 Comp Plan includes language on the effects and impacts of homelessness, mental illness, etc. as it states where to place human services facilities. The existing Downtown Policy DT-HSp5 reads "seek to avoid over-concentration of human services in any one area of Downtown."

Our current draft has deleted these community well-being elements. We need to refine our policies regarding human services and the location of human services, not delete language that addresses the issues.

As we strive to work together as One Seattle and share in the solutions to those un-housed and in need of services, we also need to keep our focus on healthy and safe communities. We can have a balance that works for everyone. We need to understand our community plans, help our neighbors in need and not overburden any one community with any part of our One Seattle Plan. Without built in language addressing issues, we have no roadmap for our future. We need to build what we have already learned into our One Seattle plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tija (Tia) Petrovich

Dear Seattle Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern that the draft recommendations for the Mayor's One Seattle Plan lack guidance on the placement of social services. The current Downtown Policy DT-HSp5, which advises avoiding the over-concentration of human services in any one area of Downtown, is a crucial urban planning consideration.

Rather than removing this important guideline, we should enhance it by addressing the impacts of both oversaturation and undersaturation of social services in our communities. I urge the commission to prioritize balanced development in Seattle by incorporating clear directives on social services placement into city planning. This approach will ensure that all areas of the city are equipped with the necessary infrastructure to support residents' well-being, fostering more sustainable and livable urban environments.

By providing this guidance, you will significantly advance our city's growth, promoting equitable access, resource optimization, economic benefits, and an improved quality of life for all residents.

Sincerely,

RaNae Vodder

Pioneer Square Resident and Co-Founder of Circle the Square

Dear Seattle Planning Commission,

I am joining others in asking you to make stronger recommendations to the Mayor and the Office of Planning & Community Development to better address community well-being and public safety in the One Seattle Plan.

The current draft recommendations lack crucial guidance on the placement of social services. The existing 2035 Comp Plan policy DT-HSP5, which advises against the over-concentration of human services in any

one area of Downtown, is essential for balanced urban planning. Removing this guideline would be detrimental to our city's development and efforts across Seattle to build healthy and safe communities.

Instead of eliminating this policy, it should be expanded to address both oversaturation and undersaturation of social services across all areas of Seattle. Clear directives on placement of social services would ensure more equitable access and foster more sustainable and livable environments for all.

My family has lived in Pioneer Square since my son was six months old, and he is now a junior at our neighborhood school, Garfield High School. Just last week, one of my son's classmates, Amarr Murphy-Paine, was tragically killed at his school, and I couldn't help but think of another failure in the way we've planned our city, with a lack of adequate youth and trauma-informed services in the Central District.

How many more grim reminders are required to underscore the urgent need for thoughtful, forward-looking city planning that protects our neighborhoods and our children? The city must demonstrate great care and gravity in considering the impact of the One Seattle Plan on the safety and well-being of neighborhoods across the city.

Thank you for your dedication to improving our city, our One Seattle.

Sincerely,

*Paul Hughes
Pioneer Square Resident and Co-Founder of Circle the Square*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.