



2025

Year in Review



Seattle
Planning
Commission

2025 Seattle Planning Commissioners



Xio Alvarez, Co-Chair

Xio is a designer at LMN Architects, where she works on projects that bridge between planning and architecture. Xio is interested in finding resilient and sustainable ways for people to live together.



Matt Hutchins, Co-Chair

Matt is a founding Principal of CAST architecture and has spent more than 20 years working to increase the vitality of the city and protect the environment.



Cecelia Black

Cecelia is a community organizer working toward transportation justice with a background in public policy, housing, and transportation access. She works as an ADA and Disability Equity Specialist for King County.



Rebecca Brunn

Rebecca is a Senior Project Manager for Transit Oriented Development at Sound Transit, where she manages the redevelopment of agency-owned surplus property into affordable housing.



McCaela Daffern

McCaela is an urban planner with King County's Department of Community and Human Services where she is lead staff for the King County Affordable Housing Committee.



Andrew Dannenberg

Andrew is a physician who holds faculty appointments in urban planning and in public health at the University of Washington where he teaches courses on Public Health and Built Environment and on Health Impact Assessment.



Dylan Glosecki

Dylan is an architect and urban designer with Perkins Eastman. He has over 17 years of experience working on high and mid-rise mixed use buildings, multi-family projects, and transit-oriented development projects for light rail.



Julia Jannon-Shields

Julia is a community planner committed to building equitable, culturally responsive, and sustainable futures. She is the Regional Planning Equity & Engagement Program Manager for King County.

2025 Seattle Planning Commissioners



Rose Lew Tsai-Le Whitson

Rose is a biologist at Jacobs Engineering where they work on land use policy and environmental investigation. Rose has worked on projects ranging from residential improvements to public transit expansions.



Radhika Nair

Radhika is an urban planner with more than 15 years of experience in the Puget Sound region. As founder and principal planner at Seva Workshop, Radhika leads a variety of people-centered planning and policy projects.



Dhyana Quintanar Solares

Dhyana is WSP's Strategic Solutions Leader. She brings over 17 years of experience to the Commission in infrastructure, public space, land use and environmental planning and project management.



Monika Sharma

Monika works for the King County Play Equity Coalition, where she facilitates cross-sector action groups aimed at improving access to facilities, collaborative racial equity learning, and improving access to outdoor recreation.



Dylan Stevenson

Dylan Stevenson (Prairie Band Potawatomi descent) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington. He researches relationships among Indigenous Planning, Historic Preservation, and Environmental Planning.



Margaret Szeles

The current Get Engaged member, Margaret is a law student at the University of Washington School of Law where she works toward a career in environmental and land use law. She has previous experience as a transportation planner.



Kelabe Tewolde

Kelabe is an Academic Counselor at Rainier Scholars, where he works with 6th-12th grade students. He provides comprehensive support to scholars and families to help them on the path towards college and beyond.



Nicholas Whipple

Nick has worked as a planner in the Puget Sound region for over a decade. As a planner in Bellevue, his work includes community engagement, advising officials on land use and housing policy, and leading a team of land use planners.

Seattle Planning Commission

Mission

The Planning Commission advises the Mayor, City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the City. The Commission's work is framed by the Comprehensive Plan and its vision for Seattle into the future, and guided by a commitment to racially equitable, community-centered planning for all members of Seattle's communities.

Structure

The Planning Commission was established by Article XIV of the City's Charter in 1946. City ordinance 109155 defines the Commission's structure which is comprised of sixteen members, seven of which are appointed by the Mayor with another seven appointed by City Council and one appointed by the Commission. The sixteenth member is selected through the Get Engaged program run by the YMCA. The members of the Commission are volunteers who bring a wide array of expertise, lived experiences and a diversity of perspectives to these roles.

Principles

Our work is grounded in putting into practice [racial equity principles](#) from the Center for Urban and Racial Equity. We see these principles showing up in our work in the following ways:

- Advise the Mayor, City Council, and department staff on the elimination of systemic barriers in planning, and naming policies and practices that have produced historical and contemporary inequities based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, geography, and other characteristics
- Advance equitable planning practices by developing and promoting innovative planning and policy concepts through our independent research and work
- Foster connections, partnerships, and collaborations across departments, agencies, and communities that further racial equity and intersectionality in planning practice
- Advocate for new systems, policies, and practices that institutionalize equity and support sustainable, transformational change, including targeting distribution of resources and access to opportunity to members of groups that have experienced systemic and institutional discrimination and oppression
- Nurture a collaborative culture that builds a community of learning, mutual respect, acknowledgment of power dynamics, and a valuing of diverse experiences and identities
- Conduct meetings using the revised "[Color Brave Space](#)" norms from Equity Matters that promote equitable interpersonal interactions and ensure that commissioners have equity principles at the forefront of their approach to the Commission's work

2025 in Review

One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Commission dedicated a majority of our time in 2025 to following the development of the One Seattle Plan and its supporting components. We began working on the major update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2022 when the city held an early scoping phase and we continued to make sure that the key themes we identified at the start of the process were woven into the plan.

In 2025, the Commission focused on advocating for a strong growth strategy in the final plan. We also worked to ensure the draft zoning changes created to implement the Plan could support the growth strategy and the future Seattle envisioned in the Plan. The Commission encouraged the Executive and City Council to be bold and adopt a growth strategy that could truly make a difference for housing affordability in Seattle.

In neighborhood residential zones we made a strong case for the City to incentivize more types of housing in more neighborhoods by expanding the areas considered to be near frequent transit, improving density bonuses for stacked flats and affordable housing, and reducing development barriers for multiplexes.



Planning Commissioners gather to celebrate the One Seattle Plan at an event held by the Office of Planning and Community Development. Photo Credit: Vanessa Murdock, 2026

Neighborhood Centers are a new place type in the One Seattle Plan and we spent time as a group discussing the best size and built form for these new models of neighborhood growth. The Commission supports neighborhood centers as an important step toward making Seattle a more livable and sustainable city, with easy access to daily needs in more neighborhoods without the need for a car. We advocated for more neighborhood centers to be added to the plan. We also recommended the City increase the amount of Midrise 1 and Lowrise 3 zones in neighborhood centers, which are more likely to achieve affordable, multi-family apartment buildings. Opening up more areas of the city to allow these building types means that more households that cannot afford single family homes or townhomes will be able to live in more neighborhoods across the city.

Another important place type included in the One Seattle Plan is frequent transit corridors. As the connecting pathways between centers, these corridors have the potential to provide additional housing that is both close to key amenities and close to transit. The Commission recommended that the City make these corridors more effective by increasing their width an additional block away from the main arterial and placing zoning with the greatest residential density at least a half block away from the main road. The original proposal for the corridors limits additional density to a half block on either side of the arterial and masses multi-family housing along streets with high noise and air pollution. Extending the zone a bit further into the surrounding neighborhood would allow more households to enjoy the quiet of low traffic streets while still building additional housing with easy access to high frequency transit routes.

As the One Seattle Plan and Neighborhood Residential zone legislation progressed through the Council approval process, the Commission offered comments on Council's proposed amendments. Now that the One Seattle Plan has passed, the Commission looks forward to weighing in on the proposed zoning updates and subsequent phases of work to implement the plan.

*Located near Jefferson Park and the Veterans Hospital, this street is part of the new Mid-Beacon Hill Neighborhood Center.
Photo Credit: SDOT, 2023*



Programs and Projects the Commission Followed in 2025

Downtown Activation Plan

The Commission heard multiple updates from OPCD staff in their work to support the Mayor's Downtown Activation Plan including the downtown retail core zoning amendment and Belltown lodging use flexibility legislation. City staff also highlighted their work on long range projects such as the South Downtown Hub plan, Lid I-5, and redevelopment of the Washington and Oregon Shippers Cooperative Association (WOSCA) site.

Equitable Development Initiative (EDI)

We had an update from EDI staff to hear about the progress they've made in providing support and technical assistance to EDI grantees and to see some examples of the awesome projects their grantees have built using EDI funds.

Interdepartmental Anti-Displacement Work Group

We were briefed by staff from OPCD and the Office of Innovation and Performance on the Anti-Displacement Work Group and their development of the City's internal plan to address displacement.

Lid I-5

The Commission was briefed by the co-chairs of the Lid I-5 Coalition about their work with the City of Seattle and other partners to move forward the vision of lidding a portion of I-5 through Downtown Seattle.

Low Pollution Neighborhoods

We received an update from SDOT on the Low Pollution Neighborhoods pilot project. The Commission has been following this project closely and is interested in both the parameters used to define a low pollution neighborhood as well as the selection criteria used by the City to quickly determine the neighborhoods that will pilot the projects and promptly begin implementation.

Outside Citywide

The Commission received an update on the City's Outside Citywide program and offered feedback on updates to the City's Public Space Explorer tool.

Small Business Development and Food Deserts SLIs

The Commission was briefed on the City's response to City Council Statements of Legislative Intent (SLIs) for small business development and food deserts. OPCD coordinated with other key departments to conduct research for how the City might utilize policy and build new partnerships to address small business displacement and attract food retailers to food deserts.

Using Data to Prioritize RSJI Communities for Place-Based City Investments

We heard from the City Demographer about the city's Race and Social Equity (RSE) Index and the work OPCD does to maintain and update that resource with recent data. We also heard from staff at SDOT and SPU about how they use the RSE Index to prioritize their work for a more equitable distribution of City funds and resources.

2025 Retreat

For our 2025 retreat, we gathered at the Seattle Central Library for an afternoon of relationship building, training, and work planning. Commissioner Jamie Stroble led the group in a training exercise on power mapping. We then applied those concepts to our work planning for the year where we discussed how best to engage elected leaders around implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Fall Neighborhood Center Walking Tour

In October, the Commission held a walking tour around the proposed neighborhood center in Madrona. We took the opportunity to consider how concepts we discussed throughout the year such as building heights, neighborhood center size, and preservation of existing commercial space and small businesses held up when compared to on the ground conditions in the neighborhood. The exercise added a new layer of insight to our recommendations to City leaders.

Looking Ahead

One Seattle Plan Implementation

The Commission looks forward to working on the implementation of the One Seattle Plan in partnership and collaboration with community members, OPCD staff, and elected officials. We hope to see zoning legislation for frequent transit corridors and centers that promotes widespread affordable housing options for a variety of households. We also hope to see provisions in the legislation that encourage improved access to amenities in more neighborhoods so residents can meet their everyday needs sustainably by walking, rolling, or using transit. The Commission will be on the lookout for supporting policies and programs that can prevent displacement of both residents and small businesses as the City rolls out zoning changes.

Other Projects the Commission will be Tracking in 2026

- Regional Centers Subarea Plans
- Centers and Corridors implementing legislation
- Low Pollution Neighborhoods
- Seattle Transportation Plan implementation
- Community Indicators Dashboard

