



MINUTES (Approved on 2-18-15)

TIME: Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Benjamin Fields, Sean Gaffney, Anna Petersen, Stephen Wamback
ABSENT: Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Donald Erickson, Meredith Neal, Erle Thompson

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Beale called the regular meeting and retreat to order at 4:10 p.m.

B. QUORUM CALL

A quorum was declared.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on January 21, 2015 were reviewed. Chair Beale noted that on page 3, the 7th bullet point statement should have been regarding traffic impact fees and not simply traffic impact. The minutes were approved as amended.

D. RETREAT DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2015 GMA Update and Comprehensive Plan

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, and two consultants from 3 Square Blocks, Deborah Munkberg and Marcia Wagoner, provided an overview and facilitated the Commission's discussion of the "Tacoma 2040 – Comprehensive Plan Update" effort.

Ms. Munkberg reviewed the goals and planning framework for the Comprehensive Plan Update, as set forth in the State Growth Management Act (GMA), the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040 and the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies. She indicated that the project will be coordinating with some of the ongoing planning initiatives such as the Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the Mixed-Use Centers Review, and the Environmental Action Strategy. Ms. Munkberg stated that the project will also streamline and simplify the Comprehensive Plan by removing policies that were redundant, improving clarity, and utilizing color and formatting to make it more functional for the Commission, more relatable for other city departments and more user friendly for the public. Regarding the project schedule, Ms. Munkberg commented that they plan to start immediately and hopefully complete by the end of 2015, and will seek the Commission's feedback along the way.

Mr. Atkinson discussed the preliminary structure for the revised Comprehensive Plan, which would include three sets of documents, i.e., (1) the core policy elements that are most in alignment with GMA and Vision 2040; (2) the stand alone elements such as the Shoreline Master Program and various subarea plans; and (3) related plans that are not part of the Comprehensive Plan but still support its goals and policies, such as Utilities System Plans and the Urban Forest Manual. Mr. Atkinson also displayed a chart illustrating how some of the current elements of the Comprehensive Plan would be updated, consolidated, combined and transformed into the proposed core policy elements.

Ms. Munkberg reviewed the approach for policy development. She indicated that for each of the plan elements staff will conduct data review, policy audits and assessment of preliminary policy issues and priorities, and subsequently present draft goals and policies for the Commission's review and feedback. Goals would describe desired outcomes and provide broad direction, while policies would support goals and provide guidance for steps to achieve goals. Ms. Munkberg emphasized that key features for goals and policies would include being measurable, allowing options for future implementation, and avoiding regulatory language.

Concerning the Public Engagement aspect of the project, Ms. Wagoner discussed methods starting with community workshops and larger public meetings hosted in each of the five Council districts with interactive exercises to begin explaining the Comprehensive Plan update. The ending workshop would be a community-wide event to help people understand and provide feedback on the proposed changes. Ms. Wagoner proposed having a speaker's bureau in between meetings to speak with smaller groups throughout the city. She also suggested establishing a Boards and Commissions Forum involving certain Council-appointed citizen groups to gather further insight on what their views would be on the update.

Commissioners brought up some concerns and suggestions, such as: concerning the pairing down of elements and the removing of specific elements and grouping them into innocuous terms like "Urban Form", there needs to be consideration on whether it would be best to keep elements like Downtown and Neighborhoods as standalone elements; consider more integration of transportation and housing issues into both the Urban Form and the Design & Development elements; consider hosting the community workshops in Neighborhood Council districts instead of City Council districts, as neighborhood council meetings are typically well attended and would be a good place to introduce the topic; and it is important to make it clear to the public that this is a review and update, not an undoing of the work that has been done.

2. Transportation Master Plan

Joshua Diekmann and Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works Department, provided information relating to the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). They acknowledged that Justin Leighton and Jane Moore, Co-Chairs of the Transportation Commission, were present.

Mr. Diekmann, in response to the Commission's concerns raised at the previous meeting on January 21, provided clarification on the project timeline for the TMP. He indicated that the draft goals and policies reviewed by the Planning Commission on January 21 are still under review by the Transportation Commission, and that the Transportation Commission is scheduled to receive the first draft TMP in mid-February, release it for public review in March, review public comments in early April, and forward the TMP to the Planning Commission in mid-April for consideration as part of the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the public outreach efforts during March-April will be coordinated with those for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Kammerzell discussed the relationship between the Transportation Commission and the Planning Commission. She indicated that both Commissions had commented on a lack of clarity on how they relate to each other and what their specific roles and responsibilities include. She presented a Venn diagram highlighting the respective responsibilities of the Commissions, with items such as the TMP and the 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program in the overlapping area, where both groups had a stake in participation and both of the examples related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kammerzell suggested that on both items the Transportation Commission could take the initial lead and then send its recommendations on to the Planning Commission or the City Council's Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee (IPS), which would carry it forward to the City Council for adoption. Meeting with the Co-Chairs from each Commission to examine the work plans and looking at opportunities for joint meetings was recommended as a next step.

Chair Beale commented that meeting with the Co-Chairs made sense as a next step. He noted that there had been some confusion, but he wasn't overly concerned about the crossover of roles and

responsibilities. Additional information on staff's upcoming discussion with IPS on February 25 was requested. Ms. Kammerzell responded that they would mainly be presenting the status of the TMP, but could also incorporate discussion on the roles of the Commissions.

3. Capital Facilities Program

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, and Tadd Wille, Finance Department, provided information on the Capital Facilities Program (CFP) in response to some of the concerns raised by the Commission in October 2014, when reviewing the draft CFP for 2015-2020. Mr. Wung introduced Mark Lauzier, Assistant City Manager, who acknowledged the Commission's input and concerns on the CFP during the last biennial budget process, staff's effort to improve and streamline the process for preparing the CFP, and the expected outcomes of today's discussion.

Mr. Wung provided that the GMA requires that the capital facilities element of a comprehensive plan should contain an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, a forecast of the future needs, and proposed locations and capacities for all the future capital facilities. It must also have a six-year financing plan. He clarified that although the CFP is a six-year document, it represents a 20-year long-range plan to accommodate the projected growth.

Mr. Wille noted the difference between the CFP and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), two closely related documents. . The CFP includes project descriptions, policy tie-in questions, prioritization criteria, and cost estimates, and is more of a wish list with some secured funding. The CIP includes funding sources, represents secured funding for projects, and focuses on the 2-year capital budget cycle. Mr. Wille reviewed the current process that leads to the CIP and CFP being approved and adopted over the course of a single year starting in May and running through December. He acknowledged that there are some issues about the current process as raised by the Commission, such as the limited time for review, the lack of criteria for selection and prioritization of projects, and the lack of in-depth analysis on how new projects are consistent with and advance relevant goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Wille proposed an alternative process to be carried out in the next two years. In this recommended process, the Budget Office and PDS would work in 2015 to research best practices in development of the CFP document, develop a new system for gathering CFP project information, and work with the Planning Commission to develop prioritization criteria and guidelines. Starting in spring of 2016, staff would identify added and deleted projects and recommend prioritization of projects; in May-June, the Planning Commission would review projects based on approved prioritization criteria and guidelines and forward the draft CFP to the City Manager; in July-September, the Budget Office and the City Manager would validate the CFP for secured funding vs. unsecured, modify projects as appropriate, and create the CIP; in October-November, the updated CFP, the CIP and the proposed budget would be presented to the City Council for review and adoption, and the Planning Commission would be kept abreast of the Council's actions. Mr. Wille emphasized that this is only a proposed process and staff will work with the Planning Commission to fine-tune it, including developing a framework for analyzing adherence to the Comprehensive Plan, developing prioritization criteria, and reformatting the CFP to make it more user friendly.

The Commission concurred with the general approach. Chair Beale suggested an opportunity for public interest be included somewhere in the recommended process calendar. Mr. Wille recognized that public hearings would be necessary in the process. Commissioner Wamback suggested that if the Chair and the Budget Office were interested, the Commission could form a task force or small group to work with staff on the project. Chair Beale responded that he liked the concept, but they should wait until more Commission members are present before discussing it further. Mr. Wung provided that the formation and operation of a task force through a public meetings process may be challenging, given limited staffing resources; he suggested that staff could contact one or two commissioners and seek their advice as needed.

4. Planning Commission Responsibilities and Operating Procedures

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, facilitated a discussion regarding TMC 13.02 and the Planning Commission's Bylaws to see if there were any opportunities to make changes. He suggested that they may wish to discuss changes to reflect what they might want to do with regard to the TMP and the CFP, and secondly to improve their operations and procedures. He suggested three potential changes to TMC 13.02: a simple majority of filled positions for a quorum, members abiding by code of ethics, and allowing each member to serve until a successor is appointed.

Commissioner Wamback suggested making a change that would allow a Commissioner to represent both a district and specialized position, allowing more at large positions. He also suggested no more than 3 Commissioners be allowed from any one Council District to ensure citywide representation. Discussion ensued. Mr. Wung commented that the language in 13.02 is the same as the Charter, which can't be changed for ten years, but could be expanded though it would present technical challenges. Commissioner Petersen commented that a member filling more than one position would create issues if that member were to resign.

Chair Beale asked if the third potential change, allowing each member to serve until appointment of a successor, could be expanded to allow a Commission Member to continue serving should they move outside of their current district. Mr. Wung responded that there could be issues with that as moving outside of the district would disqualify the member from that position. Commissioner Wamback noted that the Council has a provision allowing a member to serve out their term should redistricting move them outside of their current district and commented that the Planning Commission should have a similar provision.

On the topic of a potential change to the Commission's Bylaws, i.e., adding public comments to the agenda, Mr. Wung noted that the current Bylaws accommodate public comments at the discretion of the chair. Chair Beale clarified that his concept was to place it as a permanent fixture to the agenda with an option to move the comment period to earlier or later in the agenda. Discussion ensued on the length and nature of the proposed public comment period. Commissioner Wamback suggested an alternative approach where comments are limited to items relevant to the Commission, but not on the agenda. The Commission decided to continue the discussion at a later meeting.

5. Other Issues of Interest

Commissioner Wamback suggested that the Commission revisit whether or not they should ask questions of people providing testimony at public hearings. Chair Beale responded that his concern is that it would create an expectation that they could ask questions of the Commissioners. Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, commented that while at Council's public hearings they will occasional direct questions from the public to staff for clarification, it carries the potential of turning into a debate. He noted that it remains the discretion of the Chair to allow questions.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINES:

Mr. Boudet updated the Commission on the following items:

- a) The Billboards Community Work Group had completed its final meeting, was in the process of finalizing its report, and is scheduled to make a presentation to the Council study session on March 3, 2015.
- b) The City Council conducted a public hearing on February 3, 2015, regarding recreational marijuana regulations and received some testimony about buffering from churches and separation requirements. The Council did not indicate any intent to make any changes to the regulations as recommended by the Planning Commission.

- c) The Point Ruston annexation petition was another topic of discussion at the City Council meeting on February 3rd and would be a complicated process if it were to proceed.
- d) The City Council adopted the Strategic Plan – Tacoma 2025 on January 27, 2015.
- e) Sound Transit had been working with the City to put forward an application for a Small Starts grant for the Link Light Rail Extension, which had been included in the President's budget and forwarded to Congress.

Chair Beale noted the upcoming IPS meeting on February 11th and the Planning Commission meeting on February 18th.

Commissioner Fields encouraged Commissioners to attend the annual dinner of the Southwest Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) on February 17, 2015, featuring Stephen Murakami, Tacoma Public Schools, discussing "A Vision for the Elementary Learning Environment."

F. ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:30 p.m., the meeting and retreat of the Planning Commission was concluded.