



MINUTES (Approved on 5-18-2016)

TIME: Wednesday, May 4, 2016, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building, 1st Floor
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Donald Erickson, Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen, Brett Santhuff, Scott Winship, Dorian Waller

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF APRIL 20, 2016

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the regular meeting on April 20, 2016 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Beale opened the floor for public comments. The following citizens provided comments:

(1) **Amy Pow, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department:**

Ms. Pow expressed appreciation for the work of city staff and stakeholders on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan. She commented that it was great that each element of the plan was trying to incorporate consideration for health. She commented that it was a great opportunity to implement the Comprehensive Plan into a smaller scale growth center and to make sure the elements of the plan are being translated at that local level. Ms. Pow reported that the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department had just announced the Healthy Communities Award Program to recognize jurisdictions in Pierce County that had completed a Comprehensive Plan with health in mind. She encouraged staff to consider responding to the call.

(2) **Karol Barkley:**

Ms. Barkley reported that she and her husband had been Tacoma residents for the past 40 years. She commented that they lived in an area with many apartment buildings and they were hoping to add a detached accessory dwelling unit to the back of their property. She noted that for 16 years they had been hosting people including local students for little to no rent and were hoping to expand on it a little bit. She commented that they hadn't received any negative comments from neighbors and that they carefully screen people.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan & EIS

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided a review of the project status and discussed the remaining policy issues pursuant to drafting the plan. He reviewed that the Commission had expressed interest in how the proposals were consistent with the requirements of Vision 2040 and Countywide Planning Policies and noted that the proposal exceeds the required minimums for jobs per acre, households per acre, employees, and overall activity units. Mr. Barnett reviewed transportation issues including an auto oriented pattern of development, safety issues, gaps in the sidewalk network, low mode share, and bad streets. In response to the issues the plan proposes a new street network, breaking up larger parcels with new roadways, pedestrian oriented land use, and complete streets. He reviewed the

proposal for an I-5 HOV ramp that could get some of the traffic out of the South Steele and 38th Street intersection. He noted that they had developed a bike and pedestrian network proposal with a loop road. The next steps would be prioritizing projects into short, medium, and long term. For transit they would continue to plan for high capacity, quality, and frequency of transit service. They were also proposing a consolidated transit hub closer to the middle of the neighborhood.

Jessica Knickerbocker, Environmental Services, discussed how stormwater would be integrated into the plan. She noted that the watershed in the study area was split between the Foss watershed and the Flett Creek watershed. She reviewed that they had done an extensive subsurface investigation including a paper study and borings to identify areas that were good for infiltration. They also took a look at the existing stormwater system, Ms. Knickerbocker noting on a map which systems would be over capacity in a 25 year storm event. They focused on areas that would be lower density residential, and targeted them for green stormwater infrastructure, taking them offline from the stormwater system. She presented a stormwater opportunities map showing the areas targeted for pervious pavement, infiltration, regional stormwater facilities, and emergency floodway routes. Images of regional stormwater treatment facilities, permeable roadways and bioretention rain gardens were discussed.

Mr. Barnett discussed trees and green space. He reviewed the City had a goal of 30% tree canopy coverage by 2030, which was currently at 19% citywide. He reported that pursuant to developing a canopy recommendation for the Tacoma Mall neighborhood they had done an analysis of the existing tree canopy coverage in the area and found that it was less than 10%. To reach the 2030 goal they were proposing street trees, planting in parks, and a modest assumption of how much canopy coverage they would get from sites. The plan would set canopy goals for each quadrant and an 25% canopy goal for the Subarea as a whole. Mr. Barnett reported that they had developed a park network that would be connected by the loop road. He reported that they were going to propose a different level of service for parks in the neighborhood as it was a high density area and a center.

Mr. Barnett commented that the overall goal for housing was a mixed-income community with a broad range of different housing types. He reported that while housing costs are low, nonetheless many people in the area are cost burdened. The plan will highlight the need to monitor the supply of affordable housing in the area to identify if actions are needed to promote housing affordability. For economic development, the project team will focus their efforts on engaging with the business community to gather input and hopefully gain support the plan. Mr. Barnett reported that they would be providing a full draft to the Commission to start the review process in July.

Commissioner Santhuff commented that he saw an opportunity to be more direct in creating a street grid around the mall including looking to more completely align new streets with what exists near the Apex. He noted that south of the Madison neighborhood there is an area that has streets that don't continue through and there might be an opportunity to provide a connection. For trees and tree canopy, he commented that he didn't see mention of heritage trees or the existing mix of native trees which could be one of the signature elements in developing around the mall. He commented that the HOV direct access ramp might be better located at 48th Street.

Commissioner Erickson commented on tree canopy, noting that a long standing issue has been that maintenance on trees can lead to trees being trimmed back to the point at which they do not provide significant canopy. He commented that the area between South Cedar Street and Pine had some opportunities for higher density housing and that structured parking garages will be important in the area.

Vice-Chair Wamback commented that there is a clear need for more green space in the area and he appreciated the effort that was going into it. He expressed support for the relocation of the transit center and the focus on transit connecting to the mall, the neighborhood, and regional transit connections.

Chair Beale commented that they needed to consider what the policy framework would look like in terms of how they create the street grid particularly for large parking areas. He commented that he would also like to see more on the pedestrian features, planted medians and mid-block crossings. Chair Beale noted that for the implementation phase he could see a design manual similar to the Thea Foss design manual for things that make it a place and help people realize that they are in a subarea. Mr. Barnett responded

that they were going to do a Complete Streets plan for the neighborhood and figure out what the basic design elements are throughout the area.

Vice-Chair Wamback commented on streetscapes noting that he would prefer keeping the door open to potential trades. He added that there might be opportunities for vacation of some of the public streets for more intense commercial development closer to the freeway in exchange for private donation of a more complete street further from the freeway.

Chair Beale recessed the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

2. Urban Design Studio & Infill Pilot Program Implementation

Stephen Atkinson reviewed that the pilot infill program had been adopted as part of the 2015 Annual Amendments along with the One Tacoma Plan. He reviewed that there were three tasks that consultants would be helping them with: the Urban Design Studio where they would be creating guidelines, a proposal outline, and budget request; the Infill Pilot Program where they would be providing support in creating the application, selection process, and design manual; and the Multi-Family Residential Design Standards which would include illustrations to provide examples and also look at some site review scenarios that would help inform the pilot infill program and the design review program more broadly.

Commissioner Neal asked if the consultant team would be working on the process to assess the impacts of the pilot infill program. Mr. Barnett responded that they didn't think that they would need the consultant's expertise, but they would reach out to them if they identified a need.

Commissioner Erickson expressed concern that the language "design studio" sounds like there would be a group of people designing projects, which he did not think was the intent. Mr. Atkinson responded they could change the terminology.

Chair Beale asked if having a public design review board for certain kinds of projects would be part of the discussion or scope. Mr. Atkinson responded that they would look at possible first steps to show that it could be effective, then look at which type of projects are significant enough to have a citizen design review component.

Vice-Chair Wamback suggested that there might be an opportunity for joint meeting between the Commission and the Community Council about the topic at an appropriate point in the process.

3. Public Hearing – 2016 Annual Amendment

At 5:02 p.m., Chair Beale called the public hearing to order and reviewed the procedures, noting that written comments would be accepted through May 25th. He reported that there would also be a second public hearing on May 18th.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, reviewed that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive input on the proposed 2016 Annual Amendment package. Mr. Atkinson discussed the annual amendment process, which was done in compliance with the Growth Management Act and Tacoma Municipal Code 13.02. He reviewed that public outreach had included the Planning Manager's letter; notice provided to taxpayers and stakeholder groups regarding study areas for proposed rezones; and two notices regarding public hearings. He discussed the next steps in the process with the Planning Commission recommendation scheduled for June 15th.

The five applications for the 2016 Annual Amendments were discussed. Mr. Atkinson reviewed that Future Land Use implementation would include area-wide rezones and land use designation amendments that would help implement goals and policies of the One Tacoma Plan, rectify inconsistencies between the plan and code, and promote compact, connected neighborhoods. Multi-Family Design Standards would implement design and development policies of the One Tacoma Plan. Wireless Communication Facilities amendments would incorporate FCC rule changes, clarify code language, and provide additional measures to reduce visual impacts. Short-Term Rental amendments would define "short term rental" in the zoning code, determine zoning allowances, require a conditional use permit for accessory activities, require registration and inspections, and address nonconformities. Code Cleanup included minor amendments identified by planning staff including updates to terminology,

fixing outdated references, updating definitions, a new conditional use permit for expansion of non-conforming uses, and an update to the wetland rating system of the Shoreline Master Program.

Chair Beale called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

(1) **Lori Kalac:**

Ms. Kalac reported that she was a resident of Study Area Number 6, South 72nd and Alaska. She asked that before a rezone is considered the City ensure that critical studies have been performed, results have been analyzed, and all aspects had been considered so the decision could be made. She commented that it was an already congested intersection and encouraged an extensive traffic study before any decision was made. She commented that the additional traffic from shoppers and new multifamily would also increase the already polluted air quality. She commented that added congestion would delay rescue vehicles. She commented that they also needed a study on light pollution and noise pollution. She also requested a study on the pollution from garbage created. She commented that the rezone would also risk continued damage to Wapato and its abundant wildlife and plant life. She noted that there was already ample available commercial space in the neighboring commercial zones.

(2) **Troy Christensen:**

Mr. Christensen commented on the Alaska Street area between 72nd and 56th Street. He commented that the air quality at the intersection is the worst in Pierce County and increasing the number of cars by adding additional units would make it worse. He commented that the city should have a goal to decrease the air pollution in the neighborhood, not increase it. He commented that the homeowners on the street are a very diverse group and that it was a very affordable water view property. He added that if they rezoned it to commercial or multifamily, they would be removing the ability for people to afford water view property. He commented that removing the opportunity for future home owners to afford a view was a social justice issue.

(3) **John Landy:**

Mr. Landy reported that he currently lives on North 35th Street and that his neighborhood is tranquil and they often see wildlife in the greenery in front of their house. He commented on traffic congestion, reporting that there were a large number of apartment buildings to the north and south providing high density. He expressed concern that they might reach a tipping point with so many apartments that it will put an undue burden on congestion. He asked them to study it and also expressed concern about the air quality and lack of trees. He commented that they should notify more than residents within 400 feet.

(4) **Bruce Arneklev:**

Mr. Arneklev reported that he had purchased 3 acres behind his home 40 years ago and had enjoyed the ambience of it. He noted that the land was now part of study area 4. Mr. Arneklev commented that though he is one person, he should have equal standing with Bates Technical College, the City of Tacoma, and the US Supreme Court. He commented on having accommodated Bates for 20 years and a proposal to collocate on a tower which he had opposed. He commented that Bates was violating health standards and creating noise. He expressed concern that he had not seen anything in the 2016 Annual Amendment on whether people were being treated according to their civil rights.

(5) **John Kloster:**

Mr. Kloster reported he owned a home on North 35 Street, to the north of one of the proposed zoning changes. He commented that it was disturbing that a person can spend money on a home in a stable, tranquil area and then the zoning changes allow apartments to be built close by. He commented that it did not seem right that they could not count on some stability in housing.

(6) **Susan Ryan:**

Ms. Ryan commented that for the area near South Alaska, it seemed like a developer wanted to build in the area but couldn't get approval. She commented that it seemed too easy for someone to request a zoning change and too hard for the change to be denied by the residents impacted.

(7) **Rodger Carle:**

Mr. Carle reported that he lived on North 35th Street near 33rd and Pearl. He noted concerns on the environment, traffic density, and that there weren't enough trees in Tacoma. He commented that he was in favor of a green belt or a park and that there was a lot of wildlife in the area. He commented that children walk up and down that street to Truman Middle School. He stated that he wanted to know the crime rates and vacancy rates were for high density vs single family. He expressed concern about children's safety. He commented that they would have to provide additional traffic measures that would add to congestion. He reiterated that he wanted to know the crime rate, vacancy rates, and whether there has been a traffic study.

(8) **Judith Hinderer:**

Ms. Hinderer commented on Franke Tobey Jones, asking that they not be granted an upzone until their entire vision had been reviewed. She noted that on their website they provided an ambitious plan that would increase their number of residents significantly, including a new building that she felt was out of scale with the neighborhood. She expressed concern about traffic impacts and increased presence of emergency vehicles. She commented that new signage posted on the property that was not clear. She commented that if the upzone was allowed they would return to ask for an additional 300 units.

(9) **John Kloster:**

Mr. Kloster commented regarding the proposed rezone at North 35th Street. He reported that the previous year he had applied for a permit to build a garage and had been told that there was a possible wetland on the base property. He felt that the possible presence of a wetland should be taken into consideration before the zoning was changed to a higher use.

Seeing no one else coming forward, Chair Beale closed the public hearing at 5:51 p.m. and recessed the meeting. The meeting resumed at 5:59 p.m.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, noted that three positions on the Commission would become vacant on June 30th. The City Clerk's office would be accepting applications through May 23rd.

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, reported that the City Council had held its public hearing on marijuana regulations. The intent would be for the Council to hold the final reading and passage on May 24th.

Mr. Boudet reviewed that included in the meeting packet was a letter from the Transportation Commission to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee regarding Sound Transit 3. He reported that Council had adopted a resolution at their last meeting providing additional policy direction regarding some changes that the Council would like to see as the Sound Transit package moves forward.

Mr. Boudet reported that at the next meeting of the IPS Committee they would be discussing the 2016 Annual Amendment and the possibility of moving to a 2-year amendment cycle for the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Boudet noted the T-Town City Services Expo would be held on Saturday, May 7th at the Tacoma Dome.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:20 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.