



MINUTES (Approved on 7-16-14)

TIME: Wednesday, June 18, 2014, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 248, Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Tina Lee, Alexandria Teague, Erle Thompson,
Stephen Wamback
ABSENT: Sean Gaffney (Chair), Donald Erickson, Benjamin Fields

A. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Winship called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

B. QUORUM CALL

A quorum was declared.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on May 21, 2014 were approved as submitted.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Transportation Master Plan Update

Josh Diekmann, Public Works Department, accompanied by Jane Moore, Co-Chair of the Transportation Commission and Dan Grayuski, project consultant, provided an update of the development of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Mr. Diekmann reviewed the project's scope of work, schedule, public outreach plan, mission statement, guiding principles, goals, and the multimodal transportation modeling efforts. He also elaborated on the future integration of the TMP with the City's current Strategic Visioning Process (i.e., "Tacoma 2050") and the upcoming 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Discussion ensued. The Commissioners brought up the following comments and suggestions:

- The working relationship between the Transportation Commission and the Planning Commission, the coordination of reviewing transportation related issues, and the integration of the TMP into the Comprehensive Plan need to be better defined and further clarified. It was acknowledged that the two commissions have common goals pertaining to transportation but are entitled to different opinions and perspectives, that staff for either commission have been working closely together, and that the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, with the TMP incorporated, must be certified by the Puget Sound Regional Council in order for Tacoma to maintain the eligibility for future transportation funding.
- It is understood and expected that the outreach efforts that currently focus on the Community Council, community events and various public agencies will later be expanded to cover the Neighborhood Councils and additional stakeholders. Pierce Transit's Citizens Advisory Group should also be outreached.
- The "How would you prioritize transit investment in Tacoma?" survey should incorporate transit agencies' concerns and interests, such as the (perceived) safety at transit facilities or on the service. Also, consider making the survey available online.

- It is understood that the “Green Transportation Hierarchy” upside-down triangle is carried over from the existing Mobility Master Plan and represents a sustainable transportation system. However, putting “vehicles” at the bottom of the hierarchy may not be taking into account the needs of small businesses, e.g., ensuring adequate parking for their customers and enabling their employees to drive around to provide customer service. We should be mindful that making the transportation system sustainable is one piece of making the community sustainable. There should be continued dialogue on this issue.

2. North Downtown Subarea Plan

Ian Munce and Cheri Gibbons, Planning Services Division, provided an update of the North Downtown Subarea Plan. Ms. Gibbons reviewed the scope of work, funding source, schedule, and public outreach efforts for the subarea plan, as well as the associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Draft EIS and the first Draft Subarea Plan were issued in mid-May 2014 and a staff-coordinated public hearing was conducted on May 29. Key issues reflected in the comments received included parking concerns in the Stadium District, transportation issues and the LINK Light Rail expansion, and the safety and public/private view issues on the hillside below Stadium Way. Ms. Gibbons indicated that the comments are being incorporated and that the Final EIS is anticipated to be issued by June 30 and the revised Draft Subarea Plan is ready for the Planning Commission’s release for public review in preparation for a public hearing to be set on July 16, 2014. Mr. Munce noted that through the public outreach process, staff has received support from downtown commercial core property owners and businesses for the SEPA expedited review process, and received no requests to change zoning, height, or other regulatory requirements.

Discussion ensued. Staff responded to Commissioners’ inquiries about the view and safety issues on the Stadium Way hillside, about the SEPA process, about having a staff report at the upcoming public hearing that documents the comments on and changes to the draft Subarea Plan thus far. Commissioner Thompson suggested that the Reduced Parking Area (RPA) be expanded to encompass the St. Helens and Stadium districts, in order to be consistent with the expansion of the RPA to the Dome District through the South Downtown Subarea Plan effort, to make the parking requirements in the St. Helens neighborhood more compatible with the surrounding areas, and to address the confusion about the RPA’s boundaries that he had heard from some stakeholders. Some Commissioners were concerned about introducing this policy-level change before the public hearing without adequate public outreach. Staff also indicated that stakeholders in the Stadium District have not reached a consensus about changing parking requirements.

Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wambach, to release the revised Draft North Downtown Subarea Plan for public review and set July 16, 2014, as the date for a public hearing. Commissioner Thompson proposed a friendly amendment that would revise the draft subarea plan to include the proposed expansion of the RPA boundaries. He reiterated his rationale and intent and, acknowledging the Stadium District’s concerns about parking, would limit the proposed expansion only up the Stadium Mixed-Use Center, i.e., from 6th Avenue to Division Avenue. Other Commissioners responded with comments and concerns, such as: this major amendment would necessitate additional outreach to targeted stakeholders; it is appropriate to have different parking requirements for Stadium, St. Helens and the Commercial Core where the underlying zonings are different; and the issue of RPA expansion has not been raised during the staff-coordinated public hearing process.

Commissioner Thompson’s proposal was not considered a friendly amendment; Commissioner Lee decided to withdraw her motion. Commissioner Thompson moved to extend the northern boundaries of the RPA from 6th Avenue to Division Avenue, but the motion died for lack of a second. Commissioner Lee reintroduced her original motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Wambach, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Planning Commission Annual Report for 2013-2014

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, presented the draft Planning Commission Annual Report for 2013-2014, prepared pursuant to the Tacoma Municipal Code Section 13.02.040.L, which requires that the Planning Commission “provide an annual report to the City Council regarding accomplishments and the status of planning efforts undertaken in the previous year.” The report highlighted the Commission’s accomplishments between July 2013 and June 2014 and outlined the planning work program for 2014-2016. The report was approved by the Commission and will be forwarded to the City Council for review.

4. Election of Officers for 2014-2015

According to the Commission’s Rules and Regulations (i.e., Bylaws), officers shall be nominated at the first meeting in June of each year and elections held at the following meeting. Since the Commission had canceled the previous meeting on June 4 and the next meeting on July 2, Mr. Wung suggested a few options for the Commission’s consideration, i.e., conducting the nomination and election today, conducting the nomination today and election on July 16, or deferring the nomination and election until July 16. He also brought to the Commission’s attention that (a) Chair Gaffney and Commissioners Erickson and Fields are absent, (b) Commissioners Lee’s and Thompson’s terms expire on June 30 and Vice-Chair Winship’s term expires on August 31, (c) the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee is scheduled to interview candidates for the three vacant positions in mid-August, leading to the City Council’s appointments taking place in late August or early September, and (d) it is not clear if those term-expired Commissioners may continue to serve until their replacements are appointed. Commissioner Teague also announced that she may be resigning within a few months upon moving out of town.

Given the information provided and after further discussions, Commissioner Wamback made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Beale, to defer the nomination and election of officers for 2014-2015 until the Commission’s membership transition situation settles and a full complement exists and to consider amending the Bylaws to provide flexibility in the timing for the nomination and election of officers (since the current process is always complicated by the membership change that occurs in June of each year). The motion passed unanimously. The Commissioners also requested staff to clarify with the Legal Department and the City Clerk’s Office on whether term-expired Commissioners may continue to serve until their replacements are appointed.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Mr. Wung provided the following information:

- (a) Agenda of the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee’s meeting on June 25, 2014.
- (b) Planning Commission’s meeting on July 2, 2014 has been canceled.
- (c) The Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee reviewed the Planning Commission’s recommendations on the 2014 Annual Amendment on June 11, 2014, and made a recommendation to the City Council that the Commission’s recommendations be adopted with the addition that the proposed amendments concerning electric vehicle parking be amended to require new multifamily development to include conduit for the future installation of electric vehicle charging stations. The City Council is scheduled to conduct the first reading of adopting ordinances on June 24, 2014.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.