



City of Tacoma City Council Minutes

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/89496171192 Passcode: 896569

December 01, 2021

1:30 PM

SPECIAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Woodards called the special meeting to order at 1:38 p.m.

Mayor Woodards stated that we gratefully honor and acknowledge that we rest on the Traditional lands of the Puyallup People where they make their home and speak the Lushootseed language.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Blocker, Hines, Hunter, McCarthy, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 2 - Beale and Thoms

Council Member Thoms arrived at 1:42 p.m.

All Council Members participated virtually.

BRIEFING ITEM

1. [21-1189](#) Consideration of amendments to the Home in Tacoma Project.

At approximately 1:38 p.m., Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager, Planning and Development Services (PDS), provided opening remarks and introduced Peter Huffman, Director, and Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, PDS, and Steve Victor, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney's Office. Mr. Boudet presented the City Council's proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 28793, related to Phase 1 of the Home in Tacoma Project, including the purpose of the discussion, and the policy goals.

Council Member Thoms arrived here, at 1:42 p.m.

Mr. Boudet continued with review of the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee's recommendations; the concept of mid-scale residential land use; the mid-scale map recommended by

the IPS Committee; the 16 proposed amendments brought forward by Council Members; the types of amendments; and the proposed amendments by type, noting which Council Member proposed each amendment, and the impact of each on the proposed ordinance language and maps:

1. Reduction and addition amendments not previously considered:
 - A. Expand mid-scale along the South 84th Street corridor, including areas around the Fern Hill Business District. (Beale)
 - H. Designate all properties in the North Slope Historic District as low-scale. (Thoms)
2. Text clarifications:
 - J. Clarify the policy intent that zoning should be structured to encourage development in areas that do not already meet the vision in terms of density targets. (Thoms)
 - M. Add policy language in the Comprehensive Plan to clarify that single-family detached housing is not non-conforming in both low-scale and mid-scale areas. (Ushka)
 - N. Add language in the Ordinance that as part of Phase 2, a view study shall be done, in particular to examine areas that have not previously received view analysis and/or protections in the Eastside and South End. (Ushka)
 - O. Add language in the Ordinance to clarify that, as part of Phase 2, map adjustments may be appropriate after additional analysis. (Ushka)
 - P. Add policy language in the Comprehensive Plan regarding Historic Districts, and discouraging demolition in low-scale. (Walker)
3. Specific map changes related to shifts that have roughly a net zero impact to the amount of mid-scale on the map:
 - C. Switch the mid-scale corridor from North Union Avenue (from North 21st Street to North 26th Street) to North 21st Street and North Proctor Street. (Hines)
 - K. Switch the mid-scale corridor from South Yakima Avenue to South Thompson Avenue (from South 40th Street to South 48th Street). (Ushka)
4. Specific map changes related to transition reductions:
 - D. Change from mid-scale west of South Jackson Avenue to low-scale. (Hines)
 - L. Change from mid-scale to low-scale along the eastern boundary of the Lower Pacific Mixed-Use Center. (Ushka)
5. Specific map changes related to corridor removal:
 - E. Change from mid-scale along North 26th Street between the Proctor and Westgate Centers to low-scale. (McCarthy)

- 6. Citywide Comprehensive Plan text changes that result in density reduction:
 - I. Reduce the allowed maximum density for low-scale residential land use from 25 dwelling units per acre to 20 dwelling units per acre. (Thoms)

- 7. Citywide map changes that result in reductions or additions to the amount of mid-scale:
 - B. Expand mid-scale along high capacity transit corridors from one-half block to one block. (Blocker)
 - F. Remove mid-scale transitions around Mixed-Use Centers. (McCarthy)
 - G. Remove mid-scale transitions around Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. (McCarthy)

Mr. Boudet concluded by outlining next steps to prepare a consolidated package of proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 28793 when it comes before the City Council for final reading at the December 7, 2021, meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding steps to address the proposed amendments in groups by type.

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the first group of proposed amendments, related to reduction and addition amendments not previously considered, noted as Items A. and H. in the special meeting materials.

Discussion ensued regarding concerns that the proposed amendments were not previously discussed in public meetings to allow for discussion and feedback from the community, the option to delay action on the Phase 1 ordinance until 2022, the intent and possible impacts, and the suggestion to incorporate wording for the proposed amendments into the “WHEREAS” clauses of the final ordinance so they can be considered in Phase 2 of the project.

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to incorporate language as new “WHEREAS” clauses in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793, to include a study of Items A. and H. as part of the Phase 2 work on the Home in Tacoma Project.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Thoms.

Item A. would expand mid-scale along the South 84th Street corridor, one-half block deep along the north and south sides of South 84th Street, between McKinley Avenue East and I-5, including additional areas around the Fern Hill Business District.

Item H. would remove proposed mid-scale areas and re-designate existing multi-family high-density and neighborhood commercial areas to low-scale residential within the North Slope Historic District.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

Discussion continued regarding non-conforming uses in the North Slope neighborhood, and impacts of zoning classifications on existing buildings.

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the second group of proposed amendments, related to text clarifications, noted as Items J., M., N., O., and P. in the special meeting materials, and requested that Council Members provide feedback and note any items they wished to be considered separately.

Discussion ensued regarding combining the proposed amendments into a single consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793; how policy goals from Phase 1 will be implemented in Phase 2 of the Project; density goals, noting measurements, and the need for further analysis and data; infill development, noting possible removal of existing homes; and Council Member consensus to consider Item J. separately.

Mayor Woodards reviewed Item J., regarding clarifying the policy intent that zoning should be structured to encourage development in areas that do not already meet the vision in terms of density targets.

Discussion continued regarding the request from stakeholders; acknowledging community concerns; significance and possible unintended consequences of the amendment, noting concerns that it could limit options in Phase 2, or lock in a specific amount of density in certain areas; and the difference between Item J. and Item I.

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to include the text clarifications per Items M., N., O., and P. as amendments in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Ushka.

Item M. would add policy language in the Urban Form chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to clarify that existing houses shall not be

considered non-conforming under the zoning code (single-family detached housing is not non-conforming, in both low-scale and mid-scale areas).

Item N. would add language in the Ordinance that, as part of Phase 2, a view study shall be done, in particular to examine areas that have not previously received view analysis and/or protections in the Eastside and South End (such as the areas around South 35th Street and South Ainsworth Avenue, East 29th Street and South "M" Street, Fawcett Avenue and South Wright Avenue, and East 32nd Street and East "E" Street.

Item O. would add language in the Ordinance to clarify that, as part of Phase 2, map adjustments may be made as appropriate after additional analysis that identifies that map changes could better meet the policy intent.

Item P. would add policy language in the Urban Form chapter of the Comprehensive Plan regarding Historic Districts, and discouraging demolition in low-scale.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

MOTION: Council Member Thoms moved to include the text clarification per Item J. as an amendment in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Ushka.

Item J. would clarify the policy intent that zoning should be structured to encourage infill in areas that are not currently meeting the density targets that represent a desired neighborhood vision, while not facilitating significant additional development in areas already meeting the vision.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 6 - Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

Nays: 2 - Blocker and Walker

Absent: 1 - Beale

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the third group of proposed amendments, related to specific map changes that shift mid-scale corridors, but which have a roughly net zero impact to the amount of mid-scale on the map, noted as Items C. and K. in the special meeting materials.

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to include the specific map changes per Items C. and K. as amendments in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Deputy Mayor Blocker.

Item C. would shift a segment of the mid-scale residential corridor near the Proctor Mixed-Use Center from North Union Avenue, between North 21st Street and North 26th Street, to North 21st Street and North Proctor Street.

Item K. would shift a segment of the mid-scale residential corridor south of the Lincoln Mixed-Use Center from South Yakima Avenue to South Thompson Avenue, between South 40th Street and South 48th Street.

Discussion ensued regarding clarification about the purpose of the motion.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the fourth group of proposed amendments, related to specific map changes that reduce transition areas, noted as Items D. and L. in the special meeting materials.

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to include the specific map changes per Items D. and L. as amendments in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Ushka.

Item D. would change the mid-scale residential areas west of South Jackson Avenue to low-scale residential.

Item L. would change the mid-scale residential area along the eastern boundary of the Lower Pacific Mixed-Use Center, between East 35th Street and East 38th Street, to low-scale residential.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the fifth group of proposed amendments, related to a specific map change that removes the North 26th Street corridor from the map, noted as Item E. in the special meeting materials.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the item was reviewed by the IPS Committee on the maps that were presented, and the opinion that this small section of the map was inappropriate for mid-scale.

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to include the specific map change per Item E. as an amendment in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Hines.

Item E. would change the mid-scale residential designation along the North 26th Street corridor, between the Proctor Center and the Westgate Center, to low-scale residential.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 7 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

Nays: 1 - Walker

Absent: 1 - Beale

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the sixth group of proposed amendments, related to Citywide Comprehensive Plan text changes to reduce density, noted as

Item I. in the special meeting materials.

Discussion ensued regarding the concern about allowing up to 25 dwelling units per acre, noting possible removal of existing structures to meet density goals; the intent of the amendment; a visual example of compatible densities at 15 and 18 dwelling units per acre; neighborhoods that are already built out to desired density levels; housing size and scale versus neighborhood density; allowed uses in low-scale; clarification that homes would not necessarily be demolished if the allowed density was higher; possible unintended consequences of the proposed amendment, noting the need for more information, impacts to individual homeowners, limitations going into Phase 2, and whether the amendment is necessary to protect existing homes; a suggestion to consider this topic as part of Phase 2; activities in Phase 2, noting review of specific areas of the City, density analyses, allowed housing types, and design considerations; and a suggestion to insert language as a new “WHEREAS” clause, to consider maximum density as part of the Home in Tacoma Project Phase 2, rather than as an amendment to the Phase 1 ordinance.

MOTION: Council Member Thoms moved to include the Citywide text changes per Item I., related to maximum density, as a new “WHEREAS” clause for review in Phase 2, in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Hines.

Item I. would reduce the density range target for low-scale in the Urban Form chapter of the Comprehensive Plan from 10 to 25 dwelling units per acre to 10 to 20 dwelling units per acre.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 6 - Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

Nays: 2 - Blocker and Walker

Absent: 1 - Beale

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Mayor Woodards reviewed the seventh and final group of amendments, related to Citywide map changes, noted as Items B., F., and G. in the special meeting materials.

Discussion ensued regarding expanding mid-scale around high capacity corridors; touring neighborhoods to see where different types of housing makes sense; the possible impacts of each amendment; expanding density

around Mixed-Use Centers (MUCs), noting that many of the City’s existing MUCs are not built out; whether mid-scale is appropriate near MUCs, commercial nodes, corridors, and corners; community concerns and distrust, noting proposals that acknowledge those concerns, and building on what the community supports; a suggestion to consider each item under separate motions; and the difference between policy and code changes being considered today versus eventual changes to the City over the coming decades.

MOTION: Deputy Mayor Blocker moved to include the Citywide map change per Item B. as an amendment in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Walker.

Item B. would increase the areas designated as mid-scale by expanding the mid-scale along high capacity transit corridors (Pierce Transit Routes 1, 2, and 3) from one-half block to one block.

ACTION: Roll call vote was requested and taken. The motion was declared failed.

Ayes: 3 - Blocker, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Nays: 5 - Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms and Ushka

Absent: 1 - Beale

MOTION: Council Member McCarthy moved to include the Citywide map change per Item F. as an amendment in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Walker.

Item F. would remove the mid-scale residential transitions located around Mixed-Use Centers and instead designate those areas as low-scale residential.

ACTION: Roll call vote was requested and taken. The motion was declared failed.

Ayes: 3 - Hunter, McCarthy and Thoms

Nays: 5 - Blocker, Hines, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

MOTION: Council Member Hunter moved to include the Citywide map change per Item G. as an amendment in the consolidated amendment to Ordinance No. 28793.

SECONDED BY: Council Member McCarthy.

Item G. would remove the mid-scale residential transitions located around Neighborhood Commercial Nodes on transit lines, and instead designate those areas as low-scale residential.

ACTION: Roll call vote was requested and taken. The motion was declared failed.

Ayes: 3 - Hunter, McCarthy and Thoms

Nays: 5 - Blocker, Hines, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

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MOTION: Deputy Mayor Blocker moved to incorporate all of the approved amendments into one amendment, to be considered at the December 7, 2021, City Council meeting. Public Comment will be taken at that meeting on all of these amendments at one time.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Hunter.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, McCarthy, Thoms, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Beale

Discussion concluded regarding appreciation for staff; upcoming discussions and community feedback; the purpose of Phase 1 to set the Home in Tacoma Project vision and policy; future adjustments and code revisions that will be considered during Phase 2, noting the clauses added today, design review, and considerations for different neighborhoods; recognition that changes will not happen overnight; acknowledging that the City must prepare for people who want to move to the area; and the affordable housing crisis and importance of adding housing.

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MOTION: Deputy Mayor Blocker moved to excuse Council Member Beale from the special meeting.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Walker.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 6 - Blocker, Hunter, Hines, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 3 - Beale, McCarthy and Thoms

ADJOURNMENT

On proper motion, the special meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk