



**MINUTES** (Approved on 1-4-17)

**TIME:** Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 4:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402  
**PRESENT:** Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen, Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL**

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was declared.

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2016**

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meeting on November 16, 2016 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

- 1) Troy Goodman:  
Mr. Goodman commented that he wanted to introduce himself and his company, Targa Sound Terminal, which was coming up on its 50 year anniversary. He reported that they provide petroleum fuels including gasoline and diesel, as well as renewable fuels including ethanol and biodiesel. He noted that they were a responsible operator with some of the best emissions control equipment in the state. He commented that they were proud of their environmental accomplishments including acquiring and cleaning up contaminated property.
- 2) Mel Berglund:  
Mr. Berglund commented that he was there to represent people from the northeast Tacoma area who felt disenfranchised by some of the decisions made over the past several years. He commented that they wanted to be much more involved in the discussion and decision process up front. He expressed concern that there was already a plan for the waterfront that did not align with the vision and goals of the community.
- 3) Matt Keough, Metro Parks:  
Mr. Keough reported that he was a new employee with Metro Parks and that he was looking forward to working with them. He noted that he would be working on the planning for Ruston Way and that he would welcome any input on people or organizations that he should be in touch with.
- 4) Andy Jessberger, First Western Properties:  
Mr. Jessberger commented that he had worked in retail real estate in the Tacoma Mall area since 1989 and that he represented a number of clients that were impacted by the proposed plan. He commented that they needed to work together and get some more input. He noted that he worked in a \$4.5 million building that was proposed to be replaced with a park.
- 5) John Brekke:  
Mr. Brekke reviewed that many commercial property owners had expressed concern about the plan, specifically the connectivity requirements. He commented that there was a lack of transparency in the plan with no maps showing the impact of expanded roads and pedestrian pathways, which had been an ongoing request. He noted that property owner concerns, including that the future roads would take portions of their parcels, had not been incorporated into the plan.

He added that divided parcels would limit development options and diminish property values. Mr. Brekke provided a number of requests to the Commission including that they honor the investment of current property owners; uphold their rights; apply the principles of Nexus and Proportionality; distribute connectivity impacts equitably; and identify funding for connectivity.

6) JJ McCament:

Ms. McCament reported that she was a consultant that had been working with property owners that would be impacted by the subarea plan. She requested that when Commissioners review the draft subarea plan they also review the materials that she had provided to them. She noted that the materials would show what their objectives, issues, concerns, and recommendations were.

7) Nanette Reetz:

Ms. Reetz reported that she was a Brown's Point resident. She commented that northeast Tacoma was underrepresented on the Commission, suggesting that they come to some of the meetings to meet some of the residents. She noted that they had very few services in the area with only one grocery store and a small medical center. She felt that there was not adequate infrastructure to support the multifamily zoning and that it would create transportation problems for the community. She suggested having someone from the Puyallup Tribe on the Commission as their input was important. She commented that many residents were concerned about the lack of a buffer zone between the industrial area and the residential area. She commented that the notification process was incredibly flawed and did not cover a large enough area.

## D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 1. Dialogue with the Neighborhood Councils – Northeast Tacoma

John Thurlow, Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council Co-Chair, reviewed the boundaries of the Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council and noted that several years earlier they had petitioned to extend their area to the Blair-Hylebos Peninsula to gain more input on permitting and development proposals. Focal points in the area included the golf course which was now owned by the Puyallup Tribe; the Center at Norpoint; small parks in adjacent jurisdictions; and the privately held open space on the bluffs which was subject to development. Mr. Thurlow discussed the results of a 2013 survey where people reported that the things they liked about the area included the suburban qualities, access to services, recreational amenities, and the schools. In the same survey people reported disliking the lack of services and recreational opportunities. He commented that the lack of shopping availability was resulting in sales tax going to King County and Federal Way instead.

Carolyn Edmonds, Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council Co-Chair, commented that she understood the challenge in balancing community expectations and the future development of the City from having served on the Planning Commission for the City of Shoreline. She commented that managing the community perceptions of the Commission, including that their needs are underserved, is one of the more challenging things for their neighborhood council. She reported that being part of the port is a concern to many of their residents who are very passionate about issues that will impact their quality of life. Ms. Edmonds noted that one of the advantages of the area is that they can go anywhere without having to get on I-5. She commented that the long range desires of the community were for better access to public transportation, job growth, and economic development so that they can stay in Pierce County.

Mr. Thurlow commented that there was disconnect between the future land use in the Comprehensive Plan and the current zoning, which was important as undeveloped property was subject to neighborhood commercial and multifamily use in the plan. He expressed concern that the land use designations may not be supported by the existing transportation networks. Mr. Thurlow commented that they did not see a clear process in the plan for identifying the effects of future land use and what changes in the street network would be necessary to support it. Ms. Edmonds commented that when they allowed development like an apartment on a dead end road, it suggested that land use and transportation were not communicating with each other.

The Tideflats were discussed. Mr. Thurlow commented that with the current notification range, residents would not be informed of any proposed development of the Tideflats. He noted that for the proposed methanol plant, the City had reached out to people on the bluffs above the Tideflats, which had been

effective. He suggested that they consider how to make that kind of outreach normal. Mr. Thurlow reported that many people felt the Tideflats should not be zoned for heavy industrial use, adding that they are zoned for industrial use right up to the edge of the residential areas. Ms. Edmonds commented that some of the housing developments never should have been allowed due to the proximity, but they now had a responsibility to those residents. Mr. Thurlow commented that they were concerned about how a possible subarea plan for the Tideflats would be handled equitably for the parties involved. Ms. Edmonds commented that it was important to the residents of the area to be involved in the development of a subarea plan on an active basis.

A citizen requested to address the commission. She commented that where she lives at Harbor Ridge Estates they can hear the noises at the port and that the pollution affects their community. She expressed concern about the Puget Sound Energy LNG facility, commenting that in 2014 they weren't given the full scope of the project. She commented that they need to look at how they do this in the future to support industry but also keep the residential community safe.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Chair Beale noted that they were going through the Comprehensive Plan map to consider whether to implement or reconsider the zoning in certain areas. He commented that once they determine what zoning makes sense they start looking more at the transportation issues.
- Vice-Chair Wamback asked whether the problems with traffic at the 29th St NE and Norpoint Way NE intersection were local or related to traffic avoiding the Fife Curve. Mr. Thurlow responded that it is mostly due to people avoiding the Fife curve and the traffic through Fife.
- Chair Beale asked if, given the topography, there were any residences at eye level with the port. Mr. Thurlow responded that all of the residences were above the bluff.
- Commissioner Woolley, noting that they had mentioned a lack of recreational services, reported that Metro Parks was working with neighborhoods to see if there were gaps in levels of service. Ms. Edmonds responded that Metro Parks does a good job and had attended meetings.
- Commissioner Neal asked if sidewalks were an issue. Mr. Thurlow responded that they had been working on sidewalks for years, having worked to get a sidewalk on Slayden Road in the past. They were currently trying to get sidewalks completed on parts of Brown's Point Boulevard.
- Commissioner Neal asked if the Puyallup Tribe had attended meetings or communicated with them. Ms. Edmonds responded that developing communication links had been challenging and that they would love for the Tribe to talk to them especially now that they owned the North Shore Golf Course.

Chair Beale recessed the meeting at 5:07 p.m. The meeting resumed at 5:15 p.m.

## **2. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan**

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided a review of the full preliminary draft of the Subarea Plan including the environmental impacts, regulatory revisions, and streetscape design concepts. Mr. Barnett noted that they would return on January 4, 2017 to provide a summary of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), specifics on draft code changes, and some additional work on street design and the three additional corridors. They would also be continuing an active effort to engage with stakeholders. He reviewed a preliminary schedule and noted that he would likely ask for authorization for a public review draft in February 2017.

Mr. Barnett discussed the eleven chapters of the draft Subarea Plan. The Introduction chapter would contain the vision statement, summarize the policy background, and discuss what they hoped to achieve. The Context chapter would provide the background information on how the neighborhood developed; the assessment of opportunities and challenges; the conditions and character of each of the four districts within the study area; information on water quality; and discussion on the consistency with other plans and policies.

Julia Walton, 3 Square Blocks, commented that the Urban Form chapter contained the foundational neighborhood elements including 5 minute Walking Neighborhoods, Place-Based Character Districts, Focused Density and Transitions, Loop Road and Parks System, Green Infrastructure, and Neighborhood

Edges and Transitions. Ms. Walton discussed the contemporary transit ready community concept which focused on attracting residents with transit as a main feature and contemporary architectural design.

The Land Use chapter would lay out the vision for future development patterns, discuss modifying the regional growth center boundary, and discuss code changes that would be presented as part of adoption of the subarea plan. Mr. Barnett commented that connectivity was an important part of achieving the visions of the regional growth center and they would continue to work on details like the threshold for connectivity requirements.

The Housing chapter would include discussion of housing choice and housing affordability. Housing Choice would focus on a complete, compact, and connected housing model and would concentrate the highest densities around transit opportunities, the commercial core, and main arterials. For housing affordability, Mr. Barnett noted that they had a goal of keeping 25% of the housing affordable and were also looking at the concept of no net loss for affordable housing.

The Transportation Choices chapter was discussed. Multimodal network priorities would address connections between transportation and land use, complete street standards, a multimodal system, the street network, transit station location, safety, and transportation demand management. There was also a discussion of what they could achieve in terms of mode shift and internal capture. There would also be a list of key transportation projects including the I-5 ramp, loop road, and internal and external connections.

A citizen requested to address the Commission. Patrick Hughes, CEO of Hughes Group LLC, commented that the plan would take a portion of his property in the northwest section of the map. He reported that he employed about 130 people and that he also rents out office space.

The Environment Chapter would seek to improve environmental quality and solve some basic infrastructure challenges including fixing flooding and broken streets. Mr. Barnett noted that the tree canopy goal for 25% coverage by 2040 could be accomplished mostly with street trees. He also noted that it was a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving area and that they could have regional conservation through that mechanism.

For the Community Vitality chapter, Mr. Barnett reviewed that the plan indicated a significant need for parks and open space. He commented that they had developed a specific parks plan, but were not trying to suggest the exact parks and open space plan that would be created or that it would be tied to development regulations. The chapter would also discuss local culture including identity, arts, services, and neighborhood safety.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments regarding the Community Vitality chapter:

- Chair Beale noted that there seemed to be more land devoted parks on the map than they had seen in previous iterations. Mr. Barnett responded that they had expanded the park in the Mall District to the south. Vice-Chair Wamback commented that the City had just permitted for apartments to be built in the expanded park area and that they need to be careful about how they map out the vision as those details matter to people.
- Chair Beale questioned whether that much park space was needed for the subarea. He expressed concern about seeing parks on central corridors in areas with major intersections where he felt they should have urban form development instead of new roads dedicated to parks.
- Commissioner Santhuff commented that a useful map would be one that shows the metrics for acreage per 1,000 residents and the population goals.
- Commissioner Santhuff commented that there are parks on the periphery of the regional growth center that they could think of as assets for the area.
- Chair Beale questioned whether the Madison School property should be a park long term since there were opportunities for redevelopment while implementing many of the concepts of the plan.
- Commissioner Petersen suggested that a topographic map of the area would be helpful.
- Commissioner Neal noted that the discussion of local culture goes into distinct identities for the four different districts, but there isn't much about a plan for an overall culture.
- Chair Beale suggested that they call out specific areas where they would do projects for placemaking.

The Shared Prosperity chapter was discussed. Mr. Barnett reported that the chapter would articulate the market opportunities they would be positioning the neighborhood for and explore the concept of shared prosperity. Ms. Walton reported that one of the main ideas of the chapter was to broaden and diversify the types of employment in the area. It would also involve some actions from the City including recruitment of jobs, infrastructure development, and continuing to grow the retail sector.

The Utilities and Services chapter was discussed. Mr. Barnett reported that they had asked the service and utility providers to consider the growth targets and whether their infrastructure would be adequate. They were also discussing multiple goals including opportunities to underground power and projects where they can pool resources. There were also several public sites that could be beautified to play a role in the neighborhood's placemaking.

Mr. Barnett reported that the Implementation chapter would prioritize which actions the City should pursue in the first 5 years. They had proposed a system for what should be prioritized and listed out the high priority actions and the reasons for selecting those priorities. The chapter would also talk about funding strategies, City partnerships with other public agencies, and performance measures to report back on whether progress was being made.

The draft EIS was discussed. Mr. Barnett commented that it would confirm that the subarea plan had significant benefits in terms of transportation, land use, and environment. He reviewed that they were considering up front review, so project level review would not be taking place and there would not be the same appeal opportunity. They would also list out the required mitigating measures.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Chair Beale asked for more information on how they would implement planned catalyst sites in terms of economic development and what City resources would go towards it. Mr. Barnett responded that they could use business recruitment, outreach to property owners, and a toolkit for business retention and attraction.
- Chair Beale asked if they had looked at the concept of a business incubator as part of a redevelopment strategy. Mr. Barnett responded that they could discuss it with Community and Economic Development.
- Commissioner McInnis asked if the post office was there to stay. Mr. Barnett responded that he had reached out to the post office but hadn't heard much back.
- Vice-Chair Wamback asked if the document included discussion of the challenge of segmented ownership, with smaller parcels and more owners compared to other regional centers. Mr. Barnett responded that in the community attributes report there was a discussion of how land assembly might be important and tools offered to try and support that.
- Vice-Chair Wamback asked if there were any concerns that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) seemed to be behind on their report release schedule.
- Chair Beale suggested that for the connectivity proposal staff continue to work on improved transparency with the property owners with more discussion of the potential thresholds and requirements. He commented that they needed to study the issue of dedicated public roads versus performance standards that required streets that function like public roads but were not a required dedication of a property owner. Mr. Barnett responded that they would be analyzing a range of alternatives for the connectivity, including discussion of public versus private facilities.
- Chair Beale commented that they should make sure to use photos to define design and development, specifically uncoordinated non-pedestrian friendly development.

### **3. 2016 Year-End Review**

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, provided a review of the Planning Commission's work and accomplishments for 2016 and the outlook for 2017. He reviewed that the new One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan had moved the City forward in a positive way. The components of the update had included Work-Live/Live-Work code amendments, the Mixed-Use Centers Review, and affordable and infill housing regulations which were currently in the implementation phase. The first phase of future land use implementation rezones would also be a component of the update that they would see more of moving forward. Mr. Boudet reported that with the short term rentals component they were starting to get some positive feedback from the community and had already issued some business licenses.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, reported that feedback from lunch meetings with Commissioners had indicated that with the Commission there seemed to be a general positive job satisfaction, that they were getting good contributions from everyone, that there was a great diversity of background, and appreciation for what they all bring to the table. They would continue to work on structuring materials and packets to include everything they need to know, so that the meetings could focus on the directions from the Commission.

The Planning Commission Work Program for 2016-2018 was discussed. Mr. Boudet commented that the Tacoma Mall subarea plan was likely to be the most significant community issue that they work through in the coming months. The implementation phase of the proactive rezones would be part of the work program over the next twelve to eighteen months. The Urban Design program would be another major item, Mr. Boudet noting that they were considering delaying the kickoff of the program to the end of 2017. The Unified Development Code would come back more significantly in the spring with discussion of the proposed changes possibly in March. Joint meetings with other groups had been generally successful and were something that staff was interested in continuing to do. Citizen participation, community engagement, and outreach efforts would continue with Planning and Development forums planned for early in the year, which would focus on basic questions about long range planning and permitting.

Mr. Boudet discussed the draft handout that provided an overview of what the Planning Commission does. He commented that it was one of the documents that they were working on in preparation for the Planning and Development forums.

Mr. Boudet discussed upcoming items at the regional or statewide level. Vision 2040 was considering how to structure centers which related to the transportation funding that the PSRC was responsible for. At the State level, there were discussions of Growth Management Act (GMA) review and whether it was working as it approaches what some of the growth projections were.

In the next few months they would send out the Planning Manager's letter to the community which would discuss the work program as well as a large postcard notification regarding the proactive rezones.

Chair Beale suggested that as they go into 2017 he'd like them to think more about using subcommittees to consider issues at a more detailed level.

#### **E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no communication items.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:51 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.