



**MINUTES** (Approved on 10-4-17)

**TIME:** Wednesday, September 6, 2017, 5:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Asia Pacific Cultural Center - Auditorium  
4851 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, WA 98409  
**PRESENT:** Stephen Wamback (Chair), Anna Petersen (Vice-Chair), Jeff McInnis, Brett Santhuff  
Dorian Waller, Jeremy Woolley, Andrew Strobel, Carolyn Edmonds  
**ABSENT:** Chris Beale

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

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was declared.

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF AUGUST 2, 2017 AND AUGUST 16, 2017**

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meetings on August 2, 2017 and August 16, 2017 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment item was skipped as public hearings were the only discussion items on the agenda.

**D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**1. Public Hearing - Marijuana Use Buffers Code Amendment**

At 5:03 p.m., Chair Wamback called the public hearing to order and reviewed the procedures.

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, reviewed that the proposal would amend the TMC 13.06.565 by adding local definitions for playgrounds and recreational facilities, including sites owned the Metropolitan Parks District. He reported that the amendment was necessary to address the gap between the intent and definitions in the State's law, to alleviate permitting problems, and to provide temporary protective measures until the State corrected the definitions. The proposed amendment would have little to no impact on existing or prospective marijuana businesses as it was only clarifying the code language and not changing the buffering requirements.

Chair Wamback called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

(1) Venus Dergan, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council:

Ms. Dergan asked that they adopt the amendment. She reviewed how the issue came to their attention when they received notices in the mail that two businesses were seeking permits to build marijuana processing facilities within 1000 feet of two parks in their area. She reported having contacted Metro Parks, who clarified that the two parks in question were defined by them as public parks. She suggested the amendment would ensure that there was no more confusion.

Seeing no one else coming forward, Chair Wamback closed the public hearing at 5:20 p.m.

**2. Public Hearing - Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and EIS**

At 5:20 p.m., Chair Wamback called the public hearing to order and reviewed the procedures.

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, reviewed that the package of proposals included the Draft Subarea Plan with the vision, goals, and actions for the neighborhood; the Plan Appendices with the

proposed code revisions, and streetscape designs; and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which would take the place of project level SEPA review for future projects. He reviewed that they were two years into the subarea planning process which had included community engagement, technical studies, and discussion of the draft plan document. He noted that the area was a regional growth center, designated for infrastructure investment to facilitate growth in jobs and housing. He commented that their overall objective was to create the opportunities for change through targeted City investment and other actions to encourage significant change including to the block scale of the neighborhood.

Mr. Barnett reviewed that the Urban Form Chapter of the plan included six design ideas: place based districts, focusing density, a loop road, green infrastructure investment, enhancing the neighborhood transitions, a walkable neighborhood, and supporting the transition to a transit ready community. To support the Urban Form vision the Madison and Lincoln Heights districts would be zoned for residential development with multiple height limits and an industrial zoning transition area.

Mr. Barnett discussed design standards for future residential and commercial development to ensure development was oriented towards pedestrians with buildings towards the streets and improved pedestrian access. The transportation and infrastructure package would include a list of City capital projects to improve pedestrian safety, improve transit access, and create a central transit hub. Mr. Barnett noted that the area had several blocks larger than what was recommended for an urban center and the plan included a proposal to create new street connections with major private development.

Mr. Barnett discussed green stormwater and tree proposals including techniques to allow water to better infiltrate the ground and a proposal to increase tree canopy coverage to 25% by 2040. Parks and Open Space proposals would address the need for attractive safe spaces for people in each of the four quadrants. Mr. Barnett noted that they had proposed prioritization of actions including a funding study that would focus on infrastructure investments and the connectivity proposal.

Chair Wamback called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

(1) Valerie Fyalka-Munoz, Michaels Plaza:

Ms. Fyalka-Munoz commented that the plan encumbered Michaels Plaza with new roads in the medium and long term vision maps that restricted businesses, devalued the property, and limited ability for future development. She added that there was a twenty foot slope making the construction of a road costly. She commented that Michaels Plaza currently had eight entrances for ingress and egress and that City planners would be wiser to improve the existing road system. She commented that the plan was an excessive taking of private property rights and that they would defend their constitutional rights and let the courts decide.

(2) John Brekke and Eleanore Brekke, Cedar Plaza:

Ms. Brekke discussed how their parents had developed Cedar Plaza from raw land in the northwest quadrant of the Tacoma Mall area 35 years ago. She reviewed that they had been participating in the subarea planning process for over a year and discussed the things they liked about the plan including the creation of a transit center, bringing identity to the area, and improvements to existing streets. Mr. Brekke commented that the main overriding concern was connectivity, suggesting that they needed a plan that allowed businesses to operate and did not stifle development. Mr. Brekke commented that the 15% trigger for connectivity requirements was far too low and that the requirement would be dividing their 16 acre parcel into 32 half acre chunks. Ms. Brekke commented that they continued to question the costs and benefit of the proposed 37<sup>th</sup> Street when there were viable alternatives. She suggested that if it was deemed necessary, then it should be a Tier 1 street which would be City led, funded, and constructed.

(3) Nikki Rohloff:

Ms. Rohloff reported that she lived in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood one block from the mall, but walking there was impossible. She expressed support for the new I-5 ramp going directly to the Mall and bypassing the 38<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. She commented that a dog park would be a good idea with all of the apartments going in. She encouraged them to require more parking for multifamily to accommodate everyone who lives there.

- (4) Jeffrey Mann, Pierce County Planning and Public Works:  
Mr. Mann commented that they had been supportive of key concepts including the loop road, stormwater management approaches, green streets program, increased parks, and zoning changes. They had recommended a transit connection from the Tacoma Dome to the mall area and additional park land closer to the campus. Their primary concern was the connectivity proposal, specifically the bike boulevard that bisected the campus which would impact their ability to develop the site in the future as a significant County facility. Their request was that the road crossing their campus be deleted from the plan.
- (5) Angelia Alexander, Tacoma Friends Meeting:  
Ms. Alexander noted that their meeting house location had a proposed bike path going through their building on one of the original maps, but it was not in subsequent drafts. She commented that the area lacked a sense of place or neighborhood.
- (6) Amy Pow, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department:  
Ms. Pow noted that residents in the area had a very high health disparity and a shorter life expectancy than the City average. She reviewed that the Health board of directors had adopted a resolution calling for health to be considered in all decision making. She noted several health issues that they were concerned about including displacement of low income residents. They felt that maintaining the current level of affordable housing was critical for the existing residents and new residents as well. She commented that there were many good policies in the plan to encourage walkable urbanism including the loop road and green infrastructure. The Health Department was also concerned that the current targets for the performance measures in the health chapter were too low.
- (7) Venus Dergan, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council:  
Ms. Dergan commented that many of the residents in South Tacoma are of median to low income and that when the Area Median Income (AMI) is too high the apartments are not affordable. She noted quality of life issues including front doors on alleys, no open space, no large vehicle parking, and that the height limit was too high. She suggested that they needed a transit station stop at the mall.
- (8) Christian Konopaski:  
Mr. Konopaski commented that they owned a multifamily dwelling in the area and that while he liked some concepts in the plan, the City had failed to implement many existing concepts like paving streets and sidewalks. He objected to funding for any new projects until the streets were brought up to modern standards.
- (9) Beverly Bowen-Bennett:  
Ms. Bowen-Bennett noting that in the draft subarea plan front doors on alleys would be allowed if the alley looked like a street, which would not make it an alley. She reiterated that not allowing front doors on alleys should be written in clear terms. She expressed concern that the matrix used by Metro Parks Tacoma to decide where to put parks had to do with the geography and not the population of the area. She commented that there were people of all ages who walk in the mall and asked that they be considered.
- (10) Bob Bearden:  
Mr. Bearden commented that in the EIS there were concerning issues that the public did not get a chance to provide input on including the tree canopy goals. He commented that deciduous trees won't help air quality while evergreen trees would. He commented that the designers had referred to people spending their afternoons on "stoops" which did not have yards and were right next to the sidewalk. He commented that they needed to make the developers responsible for things like groundwater recycling.
- (11) John Burkhalter, Michaels Plaza:  
Mr. Burkhalter commented that some of the things in the plan did not promote growth such as the connectivity requirements. He noted that they were not building to the current height limits for the conceivable future and discussed the costs associated with new roads. He suggested providing

language about who would need to provide consultants and information on how the connectivity would benefit the project and the neighborhood. He commented that in the interim, the triggers shouldn't be too onerous.

(12) JJ McCament, McCament & Rogers:

Ms. McCament commented that her vision for the northwest quadrant included City led improvements that help create a strong neighborhood economy; an overall cool physical setting that encourages property owners to invest in their property; newly surfaced streets with underground utilities, street trees, and sidewalks; landscaped commercial frontages; tasteful signage; South Cedar and 35<sup>th</sup> extended westerly; expanded bus services and a new station; and a medical campus, restaurants, and entertainment that make it a popular place day or night.

(13) Justin Leighton, Transportation Commission:

Mr. Leighton reported that the Transportation Commission would be discussing the proposed 37<sup>th</sup> street alignment at a future meeting and be sending a letter to the Planning Commission regarding the overall plan. As a citizen, he felt that they all wanted a shared community that was vibrant and not completely reliant on vehicles. Regarding walkability, he commented that the large parking lots had no sidewalks connecting cars to the front doors of businesses. He commented that it was their jobs to not just hear what was said at the public hearing, but also to represent the people who did not have the privilege to be there today.

Seeing no one else coming forward, Chair Wambach closed the public hearing at 6:31 p.m.

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

Mr. Wung reviewed that the Commission would be conducting a special meeting Wednesday, September 13 at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center for a public hearing regarding interim regulations proposed for the Tideflats.

Mr. Barnett noted that the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee would be conducting a tour of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Area on September 13.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:36 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.