



City of Tacoma

City Council Study Session Minutes

747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Council Chambers

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

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

April 25, 2023

12:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the study session to order at 12:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 8 - Blocker, Bushnell, Daniels, Diaz, Hines, Rumbaugh, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Ushka

Briefing Items

1. [23-0425](#) Wastewater Service Affordability Analysis

At approximately 12:01 p.m., Theresa Peterson, Civil Engineer, Environmental Services, provided opening remarks on the wastewater service affordability analysis study and introduced Aimee Kinney, Policy Lead, Puget Sound Institute and Doctor Susan Burke, Consultant, ECO Resource Group and Adjunct Professor, Western Washington University. Kinney presented a brief background on the study, including how it was funded and developed; concerns, noting affordability challenges, local funding sources, regulatory requirements for the Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit (PSNGP), equity, and keeping rates affordable; and an example from elsewhere in the region. She continued by outlining the study questions, noting affordability of current sewer service costs, and whether upgrades required by the PSNGP will lead to rate increases that exceed affordability thresholds; study methods, noting data and resources used, assumptions, and calculations; and the estimated PSNGP-adjusted cost, noting that their estimates are conservatively low. Dr. Burke continued by reviewing the study results, including estimated monthly wastewater service costs for residents with PSNGP; affordability; adjusted costs as a percent of median household income, noting Washington State Department of Ecology categories for hardship based on the percent of household income goes to utility costs; conclusions; and recommendations. Peterson concluded by summarizing estimated costs for treatment plant upgrades in Tacoma, noting a comparison to King County estimates.

Discussion ensued regarding appreciation for the work being done; the challenges of improving facilities without the burden disproportionately falling on low income households and people of color; how many treatment plants are under the PSNGP requirements; how the City, region, and State can approach paying for water quality goals; federal assistance and other funding programs; options for utilities to offer reduced rates and assistance to rate payers; prioritizing projects; the financial resilience model and financial burdens, noting the number of households in Tacoma that could be impacted; and strategies to prevent increased burdens on residents.

2. [23-0426](#) Equity Index

At approximately 12:56 p.m., Jacques Colon, Chief Strategy Officer, Office of Strategy, provided opening remarks on Equity Index updates; and introduced Christina Chelf, Geographic Information System (GIS) Manager, Information Technology; Lisa Woods, Director, Office of Equity and Human Rights; and Julie Demuth, Assistant Director for Budget and Performance, Pierce County. He continued with an overview; Equity Index definitions, noting low and high opportunity areas; purpose; indicators; and updates. Demuth continued by reviewing the Pierce County Equity Index, including the implementation timeline; and process, noting the formation of the Pierce County Equity Work Group, and its guiding principles and recommendations. Woods outlined the integration of the City's Equity Index into operations, including the process, relationship to City Council priorities, and implementation steps. Chelf presented examples of how departments are using GIS data related to the Equity Index, including Tacoma Public Utilities, noting the Advanced Meter Infrastructure project; Planning and Development Services; Tacoma Creates Advisory Board; Environmental Services Solid Waste division; the Office of Equity and Human Rights; the Tacoma Fire Department; and Economic Development. Colon concluded by reviewing next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding the City's leadership; developing workshops to share with other organizations; appreciation for the level of detail and examples provided; using the Equity Index in the City's committees, boards, and commissions, noting the interview process; the development and potential future uses of the Equity Index; and appreciation for City and Pierce County staff and their efforts.

3. [23-0427](#) Pacific Avenue Project Engagement Plan

At approximately 1:45 p.m., Wesley Rhodes, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services, presented the subarea planning project known as Picture Pacific Avenue, including an overview; the subarea planning

process; key project goals; major elements; engagement, noting the soft launch in 2022, major themes from community feedback, and engagement goals, tools, and audiences; and concluded by reviewing project timelines and milestones.

Discussion ensued regarding appreciation for the coordination with Pierce Transit, challenges in how to break up the Pacific Avenue corridor into smaller segmented areas, and excitement about engagement thus far.

Other Items of Interest

There were no other items of interest.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

4. [23-0428](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, April 20, 2023

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli stated there is one ceremonial on tonight's meeting agenda, proclaiming Sunday, April 22, 2023 as Earth Day. She concluded by stating that no changes are expected to tonight's agenda; and in addition to public comment, the agenda includes a public hearing on the 2023 Annual Action Plan, and Community Forum. She concluded by reminding Council Members of the requirement to disclose financial, personal interest, or connection to the properties listed on the assessment roll for Local Improvement District No. 8640, which is on tonight's meeting agenda for consideration.

Executive Session - Pending and Potential Litigation

MOTION: Mayor Woodards moved to convene to an Executive Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss pending and potential litigation, not to exceed 20 minutes.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Blocker.

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

Ayes: 8 - Blocker, Bushnell, Daniels, Diaz, Hines, Rumbaugh, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 1 - Ushka

The City Council convened to Executive Session at 2:27 p.m.
City Attorney Bill Fosbre was present.

The Executive Session was extended by 15 minutes at 2:46 p.m.

The Executive Session concluded, and the study session reconvened,
at 2:59 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the study session was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk