



MINUTES (Approved on 6-18-14)

TIME: Wednesday, May 21, 2014, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Donald Erickson, Tina Lee, Alexandria Teague,
Erle Thompson, Stephen Wamback
ABSENT: Sean Gaffney (Chair), Benjamin Fields

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m. Commissioner Lee was elected the Chair Pro Tem to preside over the meeting until Vice-Chair Winship arrived at approximately 4:50 p.m.

B. QUORUM CALL

A quorum was declared.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on May 7, 2014 were approved as submitted.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. North Downtown Subarea Plan

Ian Munce and Cheri Gibbons, Planning Services Division, provided an update on the process and status of the North Downtown Subarea Plan and an update on the Sound Transit Tacoma Link Expansion project which will extend through the North Downtown Subarea. Subarea plans are necessary in order to maintain eligibility for transportation funding, such as the Link expansion. Key issues identified during the planning process of the Plan include: the expansion of the Stadium Business District boundaries; the Schuster Slope Design Standards; policies to maintain the current number of parking spaces in the Stadium Business District; expansion of the Reduced Parking Area to include all of the Downtown Zoning Districts and to exclude the Stadium Mixed-Use zoning districts; and the support of the Bates Technical College Master Plan and downtown campus expansion.

Ms. Gibbons also reported that the Draft EIS and draft Plan were released for public review and comment on May 15, 2014, for a 30 day public comment period and there will be a staff-organized public hearing on May 29 at Bates Technical College to solicit public input.

Discussion ensued. The Commission provided the following comments, questions, and feedback:

- The boundaries on the North Downtown Subarea Plan map need to be clarified and cleaned up.
- The Commission asked for clarification on the expansion of the Stadium Business District. Staff explained that the Stadium District is located within the North Downtown Plan subarea boundaries, and that the expansion of the business district boundaries is an expansion of membership boundaries because some members have expressed interest in expanding it during the outreach process.

- The Commission asked whether the Schuster Slope was part of the North Downtown Boundary and if trees are going to be cleared out to create view points and whether this will destabilize the slope. Staff responded that it is adjacent to the North Downtown area and it is being included as part of the project because it is a major connection area to Commencement Bay and Schuster Parkway. Critical area protection, removal of invasive species, restoring visual shoreline access, actively managing slope safety, tree and shrub height, reestablishment of a pedestrian path are all part of the design guidelines, so vegetation and slope stability will be addressed.
- The Commission asked if the LINK expansion routes will be included as part of the Plan. Mr. Munce explained that the LINK route expansion is being chosen separately, as of now it has not been chosen.
- The Commission asked if the County has been involved in the reduced parking area within the Plan. Mr. Munce explained that there have been informal discussions, which will create good context for future work. The Commission further commented that some neighborhoods are very concerned about the possible relocation of the Pierce County Building to Downtown, and the potential of having new big buildings without parking. Mr. Munce said he was not aware of this concern and will look into it in the coming months.

2. Planning Work Program Progress Report

Staff from the Planning Services Division provided a progress report on the Planning Work Program that includes planning and implementation projects and activities to be accomplished in the next 18-24 months. The projects are categorized into 5 groups: (a) 2014 Annual Amendment, (b) 2015 Annual Amendment, (c) 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, (d) Subarea Plans, and (e) Other Planning and Implementation Projects.

Concerning the 2014 Annual Amendment, Lihuang Wung reported that the City Council will conduct a study session and a public hearing on June 3, 2014, to review and solicit public comments on the proposed package as recommended by the Planning Commission. The Council is scheduled to adopt the proposed amendments in late June, with the effective date set as August 1, 2014.

Concerning the 2015 Annual Amendment, Mr. Wung clarified that this process is separate from but will eventually be integrated with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update. Some items being considered for the 2015 Annual Amendment include the Affordable Housing Amendment (Phase 3), Development Intensity Designations (Phase 2), Transportation Master Plan, and Plan and Code Clean Up efforts. Planning staff is planning on opening up private applications to be accepted through August 1, 2014.

Concerning the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, Stephen Atkinson noted that the City Council and the City Manager's Office have recently initiated the development process for the City of Tacoma Strategic Visioning Plan, which when completed in the fall will help with the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Budget Process, and other planning efforts as well. The Comprehensive Plan Update will provide an opportunity to incorporate sustainability, actively living, public health principals and best available science applicable for critical areas, in addition to updating the existing elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Erickson indicated that Historic Tacoma has expressed interest in design review in new development adjacent to historic landmarks.

Concerning the Subarea Plans, Ian Munce reiterated the significance of the South Downtown, Hilltop and North Downtown Subarea Plans. He also reported that the City has received a grant from the National Estuary Program for the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan. As to the Port/Tideflats Subarea Plan, Mr. Munce indicated that City is cautiously taking steps for the potential development of it, since the Container Port Element is being considered for adoption by the City Council and the Port of Tacoma has a Land Use and Transportation Plan for their property. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners inquired about the public involvement process for the upcoming Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan and wanted to ensure that key stakeholders are actively engaged.

Concerning Other Planning and Implementation Projects, Brian Boudet provided the status, progress, or outlook for such projects as marijuana regulations, agreement on billboards between Clear Channel and the City, Buildable Lands, Sustainability as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, Mixed-Use Centers Review, West Slope Conservation District Application, Transportation Master Plan, LINK Expansion, Amtrak Station Relocation, Prairie Line Trail and Schuster Parkway Trail, Capital Facilities Program, Subarea Plan Implementation, Unified Development Code, TDR and Open Space Program, Grant Applications, the Chinese Reconciliation Park, Public Works Design Manual, Joint Land Use Study with Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and the internship program in collaboration with the University of Washington Tacoma.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission canceled the meetings on June 4 and July 2, 2014.

Commissioner Beale requested that staff provide briefings on (a) current development regulations and Growth Management Act requirements concerning the protection of steep slope and erosion hazardous areas and potential amendments to the regulations if needed, and (b) the land use and zoning designations along S. Puget Sound Avenue approximately between S. 50th and the City limits, the compatibility of the corridor with the adjacent neighborhoods, and potential amendments to the land use designations if appropriate.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.