



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

October 11, 2022

12:00 PM

JOINT MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD

Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the study session to order at 12:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 5 - Diaz, Hines, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 4 - Blocker, Bushnell, Daniels and Rumbaugh

Council Member Blocker arrived at 12:03 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Ushka participated virtually.

City Council Briefing Items

1. [22-1103](#) Affordable Housing Action Strategy Plan Update

Council Member Blocker arrived here, at 12:03 p.m.

At approximately 12:03 p.m., Jacques Colon, Tacoma 2025 Strategic Manager, Media and Communications Office (MCO), provided opening remarks regarding the Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS), noting the City's interdepartmental team; objectives; and connections to the biennial budget process, the Home in Tacoma Project, and homelessness. Ted Richardson, AHAS Coordinator, MCO, presented the AHAS plan update, including an agenda, action teams, and highlights for 2022 so far. Together, Richardson and Felicia Medlen, Housing Division Manager, Community and Economic Development, presented updates, objectives, and next steps for AHAS action items related to inclusionary zoning and diverse housing types, noting that the Home in Tacoma (HIT) Project is part of the larger strategy; the Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program; the surplus land policy; off-site infrastructure support; increased participation and resources for new home buyers; the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund; streamlining the permit review process;

owner-occupied housing repair; improving tracking of existing affordable housing properties; tenant protections; resources for housing and rental assistance; low-income homeowner relief; and new or expanded funding for support services. Richardson concluded by reviewing the City's anti-displacement strategy, including data, action areas, current work, possible new policies, and timing.

Discussion ensued regarding affordable housing units, noting new units in the pipeline, percentage of area median income, timelines, impacts on homelessness, and the types and sizes of units; appreciation for staff; progress; improving permit time frames and services; resources for data and tracking; privately- versus corporate-owned rental properties; a request for analysis of the MFTE Program, noting what happens when the 12-year period ends, 20-year exemptions, and the number of approved units; new policy approval process and timelines; equity, noting impacts on Black families; the surplus land policy; streamlining the permit process for sustainable and green housing; incentives for Accessory Dwelling Units; and alignment between the City's housing and homelessness strategies.

2. [22-1104](#) Proposed Budget Updates - Public Works and Environmental Services

At approximately 12:57 p.m., Mayor Woodards provided opening remarks on the proposed budget updates for Public Works (PW) and Environmental Services (ES). Josh Diekmann, Interim Director, PW, presented the PW proposed budget, including an agenda; a departmental overview; major accomplishments in 2021-2022; issues and considerations, noting results of the 2022 community survey; strategy and goals for 2023-2024; and major initiatives for 2023-2024, noting the Streets Initiative, capital project delivery, maintenance enhancements, pedestrian and Vision Zero improvements, capital projects and grants, and facilities and fleet. He concluded by reviewing PW financials and personnel, including department funding and expenditures.

Discussion ensued regarding grants, noting the proposal for a new position to coordinate grants, and leveraging matching grant funds; pavement repair; multimodal transportation and pedestrian crossings, noting trail maintenance, upgrades, and painting crosswalks; the proposal for a new pedestrian coordinator position; status of Streets Initiative projects; the McKinley Hill streetscape project timeline and scope; the Tidy-Up Tacoma initiative; funding to complete larger projects, noting the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge; facilities, noting upgrades, deferred maintenance, and replacement funding; and vehicle funding and management.

Mike Slevin, Director, ES, presented the ES proposed budget, including an

agenda; a departmental overview; major accomplishments and projects in 2021-2022; financial status; department funding and expenditures; solid waste, wastewater, and stormwater rates for the 2022 six-year revenue plan; an average residential customer bill, noting amount and percentage increases from 2022 to 2024; a residential bill comparison to other cities; and proposals for 2023-2024 budget development, noting issues and considerations, and strategy and goals. He further outlined major initiatives and proposals, including equity; environment; customer support; health, safety, and growth; health and community clean up services; and business needs. Slevin concluded by providing a summary, noting that ES is still recovering from the pandemic, and the focus areas for the department’s 2023-2024 strategy.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed solid waste excise tax, noting impacts for customers; Bill Credit Assistance Plan (BCAP) expansion and outreach, noting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a request to track progress; grant funding, applications, and staff expertise; projects that cross multiple utilities; employee resources and expertise; community tree planting; the Climate Action Plan; and impacts of rate changes on utility customers.

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The regular study session recessed at 2:32 p.m.

The joint study session convened at 2:42 p.m.

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Public Utility Board Members:

Present: 5 - Bridges, Claus-McGahan, Cohen, O’Loughlin, and Watson

Joint City Council / Tacoma Public Utility Board Briefing Item

3. [22-1105](#) Proposed Budget - Tacoma Public Utilities

At approximately 2:43 p.m., Chair Watson provided opening remarks on the proposed Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) budget, and introduced the Public Utility Board (PUB) Members. Jackie Flowers, Director, TPU, presented the TPU proposed budget, including an agenda; recognition that TPU provides services that are vital to our quality of life; major accomplishments in 2021-2022; TPU’s strategy for budget and rates; challenges and considerations; goals for 2023-2024; a comparison of the 2021-2022 and 2023-2024 biennial budgets; proposed rate adjustments for Tacoma Power, Water, and Rail, noting they will be held below inflation rates; a comparison of residential power, water, and rail rates

with other utilities in the region; Tacoma Power’s commercial and industrial rate design; Tacoma Power's special rates, noting new rates and amendments related to electric vehicles, small commercial prepay, high voltage general service, and electrical service fees; communications and outreach, noting information available online at MyTPU.org/Rates; extensive outreach efforts; enhanced customer assistance through BCAP, noting service credits available through BCAP Plus, and a comparison of an average monthly bill with and without BCAP Plus; additional customer assistance opportunities; next steps; and a summary.

Discussion ensued regarding the BCAP, noting enhancements, participation goals, program qualifications, definitions, and coordination with federal assistance programs; decarbonization, noting transportation electrification and e-bikes; information provided to the public; comparisons to other public utilities; a request for the number of full-time equivalent positions being added or reduced for each section; and appreciation for TPU staff and the PUB Members.

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The joint study session concluded at 3:47 p.m.

The regular study session reconvened at 3:47 p.m.

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Other Items of Interest

- 4. [22-1106](#) Council Consideration Request - Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma Travel to National League of Cities Conference.

This item was not addressed.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

- 5. [22-1107](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, October 6, 2022

Interim Deputy City Manager Kurtis Kingsolver stated there are two ceremonials on tonight’s meeting agenda, proclaiming October 15-20, 2022, as Moorish American Convention Week, and a Compassionate Tacoma recognition for Georgette Watje.

He further stated that several changes are expected to tonight's agenda regarding Amended Substitute Ordinance No. 28831 related to the use of public property, including a proposed substitute ordinance to add language about waterways; amendments regarding the buffer area the City Manager's duties, penalties, enforcement, and changing the effective date to November 14, 2022. He concluded by reminding everyone that Community Forum will be held during tonight's meeting, and the next systems transformation update will be presented at the November 8, 2022, City Council meeting.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk