



MINUTES (Approved on 6-21-17)

TIME: Wednesday, June 7, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen, Brett Santhuff,
Dorian Waller, Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley
ABSENT: Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair)

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF MAY 17, 2017

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meeting on May 17, 2017 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Beale invited citizens to provide comments on items related to the agenda. The following citizens provided comments.

- 1) Valerie Fyalka-Munoz, Michaels Plaza:
Ms. Fyalka-Munoz commented that the current Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan would lower property values and destabilize businesses. She commented that Michaels Plaza was opposed to the proposed 37th Street alignment because it would cut their property in half, reducing the value. She commented that Michaels Plaza already had connectivity to all four streets. She hoped that the Planning Commission would recognize the road's effect in reducing property values and destabilizing businesses and jobs in the center.
- 2) Troy Goodman, Targa Sound Terminal:
Mr. Goodman commented that he supported the Tideflats subarea planning process because it was an inclusive process. He expressed concern about potential interim regulations proposed because they might have a negative impact on the subarea planning process.
- 3) Connie Bacon, Port of Tacoma:
Ms. Bacon requested that interim regulations for the Tideflats not be adopted because the City had invited the Port to participate in a public process that would allow input on the options going into the subarea plan. She commented that interim regulations could be considered the basis for a plan and undermine public input and the Port as an equal partner.
- 4) Ann Locsin, Northeast Tacoma Resident:
Ms. Locsin commented that if the Commission decided to consolidate the Northeast Tacoma Buffer Zone application into the Tideflats Subarea Plan, the buffer zone proposal would qualify for interim regulations. She reviewed that the request was based on immediate serious impacts that they were facing including a major expansion planned by Targa Sound Terminal.
- 5) Jennifer Adrien:
Ms. Adrien read a letter from Bruce Kendall, President of the Economic Development Board of Tacoma – Pierce County, who was concerned that the interim regulations to limit growth were a response to isolated complaints without input from business stakeholders. He encouraged the

Commission to instead focus their efforts on the proposed subarea plan process as a balanced alternative that would consider the broad impact to businesses located in the Tideflats.

6) Eleanor Brekke, Brekke Properties:

Ms. Brekke commented that the commercial property owners appreciated changes that had been made to the updated draft of the connectivity plan in the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan. She commented that a core issue remained with the proposed future of 37th Street, which did not make economic sense for the private business center. She commented that if 37th Street was going to be a public/private investment it needed to demonstrate both public and private benefits.

7) John Brekke, Brekke Properties:

Mr. Brekke commented that they had had some progress with addressing connectivity concerns, but concerns remained with 37th Street including that it would have limited use by the public; that limited traffic counts would not provide additional rent benefits; they already had private property connections; it would only slightly reduce congestion on 38th Street; there were significant topography issues; they would have to regrade their property upon redevelopment; and that a connection should be a City funded investment. He reported that there was a pending study to analyze the economic impact of the plan on properties and businesses affected by the proposed 37th Street connection.

8) JJ McCament, McCament and Rogers:

Ms. McCament commented that private property owners appreciated the outreach from city staff regarding the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan and they looked forward to City's capital improvements that would bring better function and image. She noted existing streets where connectivity could be strengthened and candidates for potential extension. She commented that the Public Works Department could provide feedback on the 37th Street proposal by identifying a design option for the best alignment profile cross section.

9) Ryan Cruise, Citizens for a Healthy Bay:

Mr. Cruise commented that the subarea plan process took a long time to complete and the Tideflats area had issues that could not wait that long. He commented that the area was vulnerable to future fossil fuel projects that would harm the area economically and environmentally while contributing to the global problem of climate change. He commented that they needed interim regulations to protect Tacoma now.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and EIS

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, facilitated a discussion to complete the review of key issues and receive direction for compiling the draft plan document for public review. He commented that after taking time to integrate feedback from a preliminary draft of the plan, they felt it was timely to put the full package out and move into the broader public outreach phase that would include focused conversations with commercial stakeholders and conversations with residents. Mr. Barnett reviewed that they had initially created a long term vision map that illustrated significant change for the area and had later created a medium term vision map with the Commission's input that showed improvements that could take place over the next ten years. He noted that they were in the process of creating maps that would show other ways that development could occur with the long term vision. Mr. Barnett reported that there were eight topics that they were seeking decisions on: proposed zoning and height, residential and commercial design, proposed transportation projects, street network and connectivity, green stormwater strategies, parks and open space, character districts, and catalyzing economic development.

Zoning and building height was discussed. Mr. Barnett commented that the proposal largely continued the existing zoning in place, but refined it to provide more direction to development as it occurs to get better outcomes. He reviewed a map of the proposed zoning changes and noted that the changes would increase development capacity overall; focus growth according to the neighborhood vision; reflect existing character for certain areas; enable green streets opportunities; manage transitions more effectively; and

maintain significant flexibility. He presented an alternative approach for the Madison district zoning proposal that retained an area which could have a height bonus of up to 65 feet.

Commissioner Neal asked why staff had increased the height allowance for Warner Street in the alternate approach. Mr. Barnett responded that it was a larger street where a taller building could be in scale.

Commissioner Neal asked if both the staff recommendation and alternative approach for zoning in the Madison district would go out with the public review document. Mr. Barnett responded that they could send out both if the Commission preferred.

Commissioner Neal commented that she liked the added flexibility for the Madison school site in the alternative approach.

Commissioner McInnis expressed support for the alternate zoning along Warner Street to allow more height, because it seemed an appropriate location for the additional density that they were seeking.

Chair Beale asked if staff had considered an alternative to increase the zoning capacity in Madison and Lincoln Heights while requiring affordable housing for larger projects. Mr. Barnett responded that the current proposal took an incentive based approach to housing affordability, calling for investment on the part of the City and public housing agencies as the primary tools for affordable housing.

Commissioner Waller requested that they plan for housing to become more costly over time and take a proactive approach. Mr. Barnett responded that they would return with the housing related options and that they could explore using zoning as a tool to promote affordability. Chair Beale concurred with Commissioner Waller, commenting that it was critical to make sure the people were not displaced by the plan as it would be difficult to take action later if gentrification occurs.

Chair Beale asked that they consider what other mixed-use zonings could increase capacity and trigger their ability to look at an affordable housing requirement. Mr. Barnett responded that there was a bonus option available throughout the area and multiple ways to get to the maximum bonus height.

Commissioner Santhuff asked if the boundaries of the residential zone for the Madison District were in the right location, noting that the east border was on an alley. Mr. Barnett responded that they had placed the boundary on the alley so that like was facing like across the street. Commissioner Santhuff commented that he would be okay with it if the development footprint was different on each side of the boundary.

Chair Beale suggested that the proposal be sent out to the public with language stating that they were considering options to increase capacity in some districts and allow a trigger for affordable housing to be a requirement in some scenarios. Mr. Barnett responded that there would be a full package of the policy intent for housing and other issues, so people would get a full picture of what had been considered. Mr. Boudet added that at the current point in the project, making substantial changes to zoning capacity would require substantial work and would make it challenging to finish the project by the grant deadline.

There was concurrence for packaging the two Madison District zoning alternatives for the public draft.

Residential and Commercial design standards were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed changes made since the preliminary draft including addressing front doors facing alleys and pedestrian street designations. He reviewed that they had extended Pine Street to South Tacoma Way to establish the connection as a walking priority. They had also made refinements to drive-through standards and pedestrian access standards for parking areas.

Chair Beale asked why they were extending Pine Street, noting that the topography was very steep for a pedestrian street. Mr. Barnett responded that having development orient itself more substantially to the street it would help establish the front door to the neighborhood from the north.

Proposed transportation projects were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed a map that showed the prioritization of projects in the near term, medium term, and 15+ year term. Projects from near term to the next five years included the loop road, the study of a new off ramp into the mall district, and a bicycle connection along Sprague. The medium term project list included construction of the loop road and Complete Streets retrofits on arterials. In the 15+ year category they had the extension of 35th Street, additional bike corridors, and additional improvements.

Commissioner Waller noted that 35th Street was on a steep slope. Mr. Barnett responded that the slope was the reason it was a longer term project, but it was feasible with some engineering work.

The street network and connectivity were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that they had made substantial changes from the initial proposal and that the current proposal only had the Tier 1 and Tier 2 connections mapped. He reported they had engaged Community Attributes, who would consider the economic impacts of the full package, particularly the connectivity requirements. The Commission would get the drafts of the study during the public review period. They would also work with the Public Works Department on high level feasibility questions for the Tier 2 connections.

Commissioner Neal asked if there had been traffic analysis into the proposed roads in the northeast and northwest quadrants, expressing concern that they seemed be roads to nowhere. Mr. Barnett responded that while the Tier 2 connections were not essential today, they would become critically important if there was substantial redevelopment.

Chair Beale asked if they had done transportation modelling as part of the EIS. Mr. Barnett responded that they had done modeling of the overall package of improvements and concluded that 38th Street would be the pinch point in the future. Commissioner Neal requested that modeling be done on the specific segments.

Commissioner Waller asked how the City would work with Pierce County on development of the northeast connection, as it would go through a structure owned by them. Mr. Barnett responded that many of the Tier 2 connections would only be feasible or necessary if the sites were being substantially redeveloped.

Commissioner McInnis commented that if they were waiting for development to necessitate the Tier 2 connections, he didn't see the value of mapping them in the plan.

Chair Beale commented that if they were going to go down the proposed path, they needed analysis demonstrating that the proposed street network would be a financial boon for commercial property owners and drive more people to businesses.

Commissioner McInnis expressed concern that the connectivity proposal would limit the ability to develop a site the way the market would drive it. He added that Pierce County was planning to put a lot of investment into the building that had a proposed connection going through it. He questioned the reasoning for mapping the roads and expressed concern that they were dictating what everything would look like. Mr. Barnett responded that they would allow for alternative proposals for connectivity that meets the intent and that the lines on the map were a statement that they needed a road connecting the points. He also pointed out that the City's and Vision 2040 policies underlie the need for additional connectivity and in fact require a finer grain, walkable network.

Mr. Barnett noted that the connectivity plans would be required with large actions and that dedication and construction would be required with full redevelopment.

The green stormwater strategy was discussed. Mr. Barnett reported that it was a way to generate funds to get streets built while making the Madison District a unique place. He noted that the residential area of Lincoln Heights was designated as a GSI Priority area, rather than specifically as a green streets area, because of the proposed building heights of up to 65 feet.

Parks and Open space were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that the initial concept was for a park in each quadrant linked by the loop road, but since few people lived in the northwest quadrant they had revised the map to be less directive on the potential location and would revise the plan to reflect that it might not be a traditional park. They would be having conversations with Tacoma Public Utility about joint use of public sites and would also emphasize the importance of private open space.

For Character Districts, Mr. Barnett clarified that they were not proposing different design standards for each of the four quadrants, but wanted to provide a vision for development that built on existing characteristics and assets for each quadrant.

In regards to Catalyzing Economic Development, Mr. Barnett reported that they were proposing changes to reiterate that everything proposed in the plan was meant to address barriers to investment in the area.

He commented that it was an economic plan and that overall they were intending to streamline development in the area.

Mr. Barnett confirmed that the Commission had given adequate direction to prepare the full draft and that staff would return with the full package in July to ask for authorization to distribute it for public review.

Mr. Barnett asked if any Commissioners were interested in participating in a tour of the Mall area, likely in August. There was general concurrence for scheduling the tour.

Chair Beale recessed the meeting at 5:33 p.m. The meeting resumed at 5:39 p.m.

2. 2018 Amendment and 2017-2019 Planning Work Program

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, facilitated a discussion to complete the assessment of private and public applications for the 2018 Amendment, and review the proposed 2017-2019 Planning Work Program. He noted that the assessment phase was the first phase in the process and that they would next go through a more significant analysis process with public outreach and a subsequent public hearing phase. He reviewed the three assessment criteria that were used for assessing each application.

Mr. Boudet reviewed the staff recommendations for the six private applications for the 2018 Amendment. He reported that the Commission had already decided to move forward with the Car Wash Use Allowance application. The Outdoor Tire Storage application was recommended by staff to be moved forward with an expanded scope. The South 80th Street PDB application had been recommended by staff to be moved forward with a modified scope. The Northeast Tacoma Buffer Zone application had direction from the City Council suggesting that it should be consolidated with the upcoming Tideflats Subarea Plan. Mr. Boudet added that the interim regulations had the possibility of looking at the same issues regarding transitions and buffers. The application for design review in mixed-use centers had been recommended for consolidation with the development of the Urban Design Program, Mr. Boudet noting that they could explore administrative options on certain aspects like enhanced engagement. The View Sensitive District (VSD) Height Measurement application was recommended by staff to move forward with a modified scope to consider how the amendment might apply more broadly.

The public applications for the 2018 Amendment were reviewed. Mr. Boudet reported that staff was recommending moving forward with FLUM rezones broken into phases to reduce scope; moving forward with the Commercial Zoning Update broken into phases to reduce scope; moving forward with the Open Space Corridors implementation application with a reduced scope; moving forward with the Transportation Master Plan Amendment application with a limited scope; moving forward with the Code Clean-ups with significantly reduced scope; consolidating the Expanded Notification for Industrial Projects application with the Tideflats Subarea Plan; and deferring the Urban Design Studio to 2019.

The draft 2017-2019 Planning Work Program was discussed. Mr. Boudet reviewed that the considerations for the scope included staff resources, Commission resources, and the Tacoma 2025 core values. Mr. Boudet discussed his personal principles in considering the work program, commenting that he felt that the items put forward should lead to long-term community success; that engagement was critical to the process; that all decisions should be vetted appropriately; and that it was critical to remember how important the decisions were as they affected people's lives. He commented that effective use of public resources and realistic expectations were also important.

Work program options were discussed. Mr. Boudet commented that consolidation was an option considering how much was going on. Prioritization was another consideration with Council requests and the private applications given as much priority as much as possible. Phasing was an option staff was recommending to accommodate as much as they could. Mr. Boudet reviewed the staff resources of the Planning Division commenting that the projected workload was significant. He reported that based on the work program, there would need to be around four items scheduled per Commission's meeting for the next few months.

Commissioner Winship asked if the University of Washington Tacoma's Livable City Year program would affect staff resources. Mr. Boudet responded that it would be similar to the Links to Opportunity Program and it would provide an opportunity to deal with projects that they would not otherwise have time for.

Chair Beale stated that he had another commitment at 6:30 and would need another Commissioner to Chair the remainder of the meeting. Chair Beale motioned for Commissioner Winship to preside over the remainder of the meeting. Commissioner Neal seconded. The motion was approved.

Chair Beale commented that he was concerned about taking on the VSD Height Measurement application due to the work involved and the site specific nature of the application. He also suggested that they attempt to address the steep slopes and geohazard issue in the Critical Areas code instead.

Chair Beale asked if they were removing the rights of the Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council as an applicant by saying they were rolling their item into a City process. Mr. Boudet responded that it was a legislative process and was very flexible. He commented that the scope was up to the Commission, but the presented issues would not be ignored.

Mr. Boudet reported that the draft 2017-2019 Work Program document was organized into four different tracks: Interim Regulations, Subarea Plans, the 2018 Amendment cycle, and the 2019 Amendment cycle. For Track 1, there were Interim Regulations concerning four subjects: Correctional Facilities, Tidelands Uses and Standards, Marijuana Uses and Playground Buffers, and Emergency Temporary Shelters. For Track 2, the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan was scheduled for completion in 2017 while the Tidelands Subarea Plan was likely to begin in Fall/Winter 2017. For Track 3, the 2018 Amendment, Mr. Boudet reviewed that four private and five public applications had been recommended to move forward. For Track 4, the 2019 Amendment, Mr. Boudet briefly reviewed the tentative scope.

Commissioner McInnis commented that if they had to move something to reduce the workload the VSD Height Measurement application could be moved. Mr. Boudet suggested that another option would be to limit the scope to commercial VSDs. Commissioner Santhuff commented that he felt they owed it to the private applications to move their projects forward to the technical analysis phase in a timely manner, though he could see them narrowing the VSD Height Measurement application to just the commercial districts. Following discussion, Commissioners concurred with reducing the View Sensitive District Height Measurement application in scope to commercial districts.

Commissioner Santhuff motioned to accept staff recommendations and the Assessment Report for the 2018 Amendments for the private and public projects listed with the caveat that they were modifying the staff recommended scope for the VSD Height Measurement application to only the commercial zoning. Commissioner McInnis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Woolley motioned to approve the draft 2017-2019 Planning Work Program as presented. Commissioner McInnis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Wung suggested that the Commission consider canceling the July 5th meeting. Commissioner McInnis motioned to cancel the meeting. Commissioner Petersen seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Wung reported that the next Planning Commission meeting would include three of the four interim regulations and the review of the Planning Commission's Annual report.

Mr. Wung reported that the City Clerk would be accepting applications for upcoming Commission vacancies through June 12.

Mr. Boudet reported that the 2017-2019 Work Program and assessment of the 2018 Amendments would be discussed at the next Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability, Committee meeting on June 14, 2017.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:49 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.