



**City of Tacoma
Planning Commission**

Stephen Wamback, Chair
Anna Petersen, Vice-Chair
Carolyn Edmonds
Ryan Givens
Jeff McInnis
Brett Santhuff
Andrew Strobel
Dorian Waller
(vacant)

MINUTES (Approved as Amended)

TIME: Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Stephen Wamback (Chair), Anna Petersen (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Jeff McInnis, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel, Dorian Waller
ABSENT: Ryan Givens

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda was approved. There were no minutes for approval.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2019-2024 Capital Facilities Program (CFP) Process

Christina Curran, from the Office of Management and Budget, provided an overview of the development process for the 2019-2024 Capital Facilities Program (CFP). She addressed what CFP is and is not, the legislative requirements for the CFP, and the relationships between the CFP and VISION 2040, the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Tacoma 2025, and the City's biennial budget. She also indicated that the CFP development process had been significantly improved during the last update cycle for the 2017-2022 CFP, and that the upcoming update for the 2019-2024 CFP would be expected to have no substantive change to the document or the process but have greater consistency in project prioritization. Ms. Curran laid out the proposed timeline for the development of the 2019-2024 CFP, whereby the Planning Commission would be asked to review the proposed amendments to capital projects on May 16, conduct a public hearing on June 20, and make a recommendation to the City Council on July 18. The Commission concurred.

2. 2018 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, facilitated the Commission's review of public comment received at the Commission's public hearing on April 4, 2018 and through the closure of the hearing record on April 6, 2018. He stated that staff was seeking direction from the Commission on potential modifications to the 2018 Amendments package in response to public comment and on the draft Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report to be compiled for the Commission's review at the next meeting. Mr. Atkinson reviewed the seven applications included in the 2018 Amendments package, recaptured the public hearing process, and asked individual staff to speak to the respective applications they were responsible for.

Concerning the Car Wash Uses in NCX, Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, summarized the proposal. He indicated that while the applicant was supportive of the proposal, many who had testified

expressed great concerns about the impacts of car washing facilities and the incompatibility of such uses in residential neighborhoods.

Discussion ensued and the Commissioners generally felt that car washing facilities are outside of the character of neighborhood centers and not an appropriate use for the NCX zoning districts, that the original application was in fact inconsistent with the intent for NCXs as prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan, and that the proposal (which is a revised version of the application) is not much of an improvement over the existing code where some provisions (such as "no windows or openings allowed to face a residential district") are hard to comply with. The Commissioners reached a consensus that the proposal should be forwarded to the City Council with a note of "Not Recommended for Approval."

Concerning the Vehicle Service and Repair: Outdoor Tire Storage proposal, Mr. Atkinson summarized the proposed amendments and public comments received. Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Vice-Chair Petersen commented that she is concerned about the aesthetics of the fencing from the perspective of the abutting residential property, if the buffer of landscaping is not required.
- Commissioner McInnis expressed his general support of this proposal.
- Chair Wamback noted that the original application was an attempt to make some of these outdoor tire storage uses allowed by right, that none of these proposed code amendments would make or change any business from being non-conforming to being allowed by right, and that applications would still have to go through the permitting process. He acknowledged that the original proposal has been significantly modified by the Commission, and that there is still a pathway towards conformity with the code, although it's not as speedy as a pathway that the applicants were hoping for.
- Commissioner Edmonds asked what kind of fencing material is required. Mr. Atkinson answered the fencing would need to be 6-ft tall and opaque.
- Commissioner Santhuff shared his concerns alongside Vice-Chair Petersen regarding not requiring a buffer of landscaping between the fence and the abutting property.

Further discussion ensued. Concerning the screening and landscaping standards, Mr. Atkinson clarified that with the proposal when screening is provided, required landscaping shall be located between the screen and the abutting properties and rights-of-way. The Commission reached a consensus to forward the proposal to the City Council.

Concerning the C-2 VSD Height Methodology proposal, Lauren Flemister, Planning Services Division, summarized the proposed amendments and public comments received. She also reviewed the three options, with graphic illustrations, that were currently under consideration by the Commission, i.e., Status Quo ("Existing Limitations"), Option 1 ("Consistent Height in Zone"), and Option 2 ("Hybrid").

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner McInnis commented that changing the rules for the subject areas might be "playing with fire" and he would prefer no change.
- Commissioner Strobel felt that, with the Status Quo, an applicant would not be able to utilize the slanted building envelope very well, whereas Option 2 would provide better certainty and expected outcome of building utilization and should be considered.
- Commissioner Santhuff wondered if Option 2 has benefits that relates to views beyond offering some development potential on the downhill side. He asked for clarification about proposed changes to what's allowed in regards to roof top structures. Ms. Flemister explained that existing regulations pose no limitation on roof-top structures, while both Options 1 and 2 provide an improvement by proposing a 5-ft maximum for parapet.
- Chair Wamback asked if there would be less development potential for the uphill side. He further commented that the proposal varies greatly on the context and wondered why there wasn't a

regulation for these types of situations. He wondered about having a design review board where the residents living uphill can come and comment.

- Vice-Chair Petersen asked if any of the options allow for a rooftop patio. Ms. Flemister answered yes.
- Commissioner Edmonds commented that, based on her understanding of the subject and her review of the public comment, she would support Option 2.
- Commissioner McInnis commented that he used to work in Old Town and had seen development done suitably with the existing code. He believed that a developer in a view area would come in with the understanding of the fabrics ([or the status quo of the development requirements](#)) of the area. He wasn't sure if there would be anything to gain from changing the code. He was concerned about the City not realizing the consequences until it's too late.
- Commissioner Strobel asked if the grade could be adjusted for any uphill project and how it would affect downhill development per Option 2 versus the Status Quo. Ms. Flemister responded that it has to be the existing grade that's used for the measurement.

Mr. David Boe, of Boe Architects, consultant for the project, commented that both Option 1 and Option 2 provide greater certainty than the Status Quo. He provided two additional aspects, i.e., that in commercial zones, due to the zero setback, the views people are concerned about are not the views over but the views between the buildings, and in Old Town the slope is steeper farther away from the commercial zone, therefore the commercial development's impact of views is really to the adjacent building uphill, not to those areas further away. Mr. Boe added that Option 2 would provide greater views for property on the adjacent side.

Further discussion ensued. Commissioner Strobel reiterated his support for Option 2, believing it is more in character with Old Town. Chair Wamback acknowledged that, with Commissioners Strobel and Edmonds supporting Option 2, Commissioner McInnis supporting Status Quo, and no Commissioner arguing for Option 1, there was no consensus among the Commissioners. Following Mr. Atkinson's suggestion, Chair Wamback determined that staff would tentatively proceed with Option 2 for drafting the Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting, at which time the Commission would make a decision between Option 2 and Status Quo.

Concerning the S. 80th Street PDB Rezone proposal, Ms. Flemister summarized the proposal and commented that this project was very well received, and land owners were happy with the proposed rezones. The Commission decided to move the proposal forward for the City Council's consideration.

Concerning the Transportation Master Plan Amendments, Mr. Atkinson summarized the proposal and indicated that the two comments received were not related to the proposal but about some other traffic issues. The Commission decided to move the proposal forward for the City Council's consideration.

(Chair Wamback recessed the meeting at 6:43 p.m. The meeting proceeded again at 6:50 p.m.)

Concerning the Open Space Corridors proposal, Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the project, which included three general issues, i.e., biodiversity areas/corridors, steep slopes standards, and updates for consistency to other sections. Mr. Barnett proceeded to review the public comments received, including letters of support from Fish and Wildlife and Metro Parks. Mr. Barnett reviewed the potential modifications to the proposal that were intended to improve clarity and predictability, improve awareness of incentives, increase what's allowed for existing small lots, and increase allowed vegetation restoration area for public agencies.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner Edmonds, understanding that the size of a small lot will be defined in code, commented that it's important for someone to have enough space to build a house on a small lot.
- Chair Wamback wondered if the simple changes made in Title 9 of the Tacoma Municipal Code relating to trees for the right of way could be moved to the Code Cleanups. He also offered that it could've been easier to explain to the public if some of the Comprehensive Plan policies were more specifically related to the proposal – there could've been a stronger foundation.

- Commissioner Strobel commented that he would be interested to see if this is adopted, how that synergy between the departments will work for any project, as ultimately it can be difficult because there is no clear path forward.

Chair Wamback acknowledged receipt of the memo from Steve Victor, Deputy City Attorney, regarding the review of proposed fish and wildlife conservation areas for takings. The Commission decided to move the proposal with staff recommended modifications to the City Council for consideration.

Concerning the Code Cleanups proposal, Mr. Wung indicated that there were no public comments, but staff is proposing three changes, i.e., amending TMC 13.02.010 concerning absences of Planning Commissioners to make the implementation of said provisions more effective; amending TMC 13.06.645.B.6 concerning applicability of variance to parking lot development standards to clarify that said variance also applies to electric vehicle parking lots; and adding a policy to the Urban Form Element of the Comprehensive Plan, Section 1, and the Design and Development Element, Section 4, relating to the accommodation of more flexible uses for unique sites within areas designated for Single-Family and Multi-Family zoning in the Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Wung explained that the proposed amendment regarding “absences” was in response to a previous discussion of the Commission and if adopted would be followed by similar revisions to the Commission’s bylaws. About the proposed amendment regarding applicability of variance, Mr. Wung explained that it was a correction of an oversight, and Commissioner Strobel suggested further streamlining the language. Concerning the “unique sites” policy, Mr. Atkinson explained that the intent is to provide some flexibility for unique circumstances on specific sites, where a rezone that might make sense may be accommodated without changing the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan.

Upon making a few points of clarification, the Commission decided to move the Code Cleanups with staff recommended modifications to the City Council for consideration.

E. Communication Items

Mr. Wung introduced the new Office Assistant, Amy Figueroa.

The Commission acknowledge receipt of the communication items in the agenda packet. Concerning the Sound Transit’s open house on the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project on April 17, 2018, Mr. Wung reported that it was well attended and that Commissioners Santhuff, Edmonds, Strobel and McInnis were in attendance. Commissioner Santhuff indicated that per Sound Transit’s early scoping process, comments are accepted through May 3, 2018. He encouraged Commissioners to visit the project’s website at www.soundtransit.org/talink.

Concerning the Districts 2, 3 and 5 positions becoming available, Mr. Wung encouraged incumbent Commissioners to re-apply and asked all Commissioners to assist the City Council in the recruitment process by encouraging qualified affiliates of theirs to apply.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

**These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit: www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/*