Sean Gaffney, Chair
Scott Winship, Vice-Chair
Chris Beale
Donald Erickson
Benjamin Fields
Tina Lee
Alexandria Teague
Erle Thompson
Stephen Wamback

HANDOUTS and PRESENTATIONS

Meeting of April 2, 2014

1. **Amtrak Station Relocation**
   (PowerPoint; for Discussion Item D-1)

2. **2014 Annual Amendment – Public Comments and Staff Responses**
   (PowerPoint; for Discussion Item D-2)

The City of Tacoma does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at (253) 591-5056 (voice) or (253) 591-5820 (TTY).

AMTRAK STATION RELOCATION

A Key Component of the Point Defiance By-pass Project

Presentation to the Tacoma Planning Commission, April 2, 2014

By Donald K. Erickson, AICP

Member of the Planning Commission

Chair, Amtrak Station Relocation Citizens Advisory Committee

Point Defiance Bypass Project Objectives:

- More frequent and reliable intercity passenger service between Tacoma and Nisqually
- Reduced travel times to accommodate growing intercity rail service including :
  - Two additional round trips of the Amtrak Cascades service to Eugene
  - Support longer distance Coastal Starlight service to LA
- Make improvements along 26 mile-long route including 8 miles of new track and re-aligning 15 miles of existing track
- Relocate and replace existing Amtrak Station on Puyallup Avenue to Freighthouse Square, and replace existing heavy timber trestle north of FH.

Earlier Components

Upgrades to “Sounder” commuter rail including:

- Pacific Avenue rail overpass
- Final link extension of Sounder rail service to South Tacoma and Lakewood Stations
- 1.4 miles of new track and signal systems between East “D” and South “M” Streets
- Preliminary needs analysis for station design including size, off-street parking, short-term parking, etc.

Timetable for Next Phases in Tacoma

- Decision on relocation of Amtrak Station to Freighthouse Square
- WSDOT outreach to advisory groups and stakeholders
- Station design advances in 2014
- Construction beginning in Spring 2015
- Amtrak rail service on the new bypass beginning in 2017

Amtrak Station Relocation Citizens Advisory Committee

- 15 members appointed by City in early 2013
- Committee represents broad array of stakeholders including:
  - Dome Business District
  - Brown & Haley Candies
  - Pierce Transit
  - Cross Cultural Collaborative
  - Puyallup Tribe
  - Huitt-Zollars
  - New Tacoma Neighborhood Council
  - Foss Waterfront Development Authority
  - Tacoma Planning Commission
  - Tacoma/Pierce County Chamber
  - UW-Tacoma
  - KPG
- 7 CAC meetings in 2013 and 3 CAC meetings already in 2014

Citizen Advisory Committee 2013 Recommendations

Initial focus on Dome District related to the following issues:

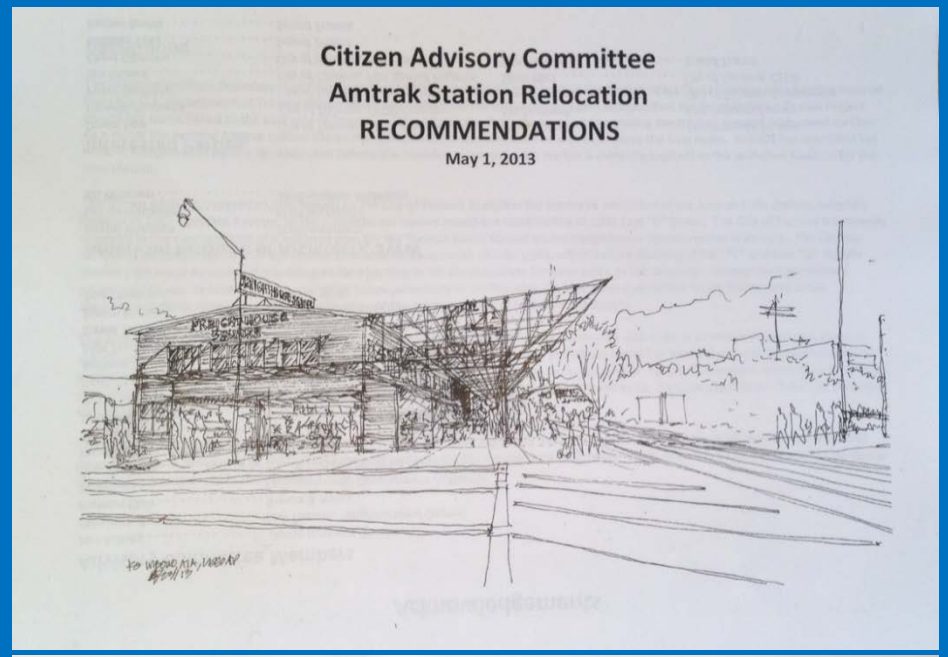
- Unnecessary blockage of East "C" and "D" Streets by trains and signaling devices;
- Excessive noise from train horns in proposed mixed-use district;
- Preference for relocating station to FHS;
- Calming devices were suggested for Puyallup Avenue;
- All day surface employee parking should be located outside the pedestrian "core" on East "D" and East 25th Streets;
- The future Amtrak Station should be designed to be integral to FHS with its primary ingress and egress through the buildings central concourse;
- Any short-term parking lost should be replaced by WSDOT; and
- Waiting areas in the new station should be informative not only regarding train scheduling and destinations but also regarding Tacoma's multiple assets.

Initial CAC Recommendations

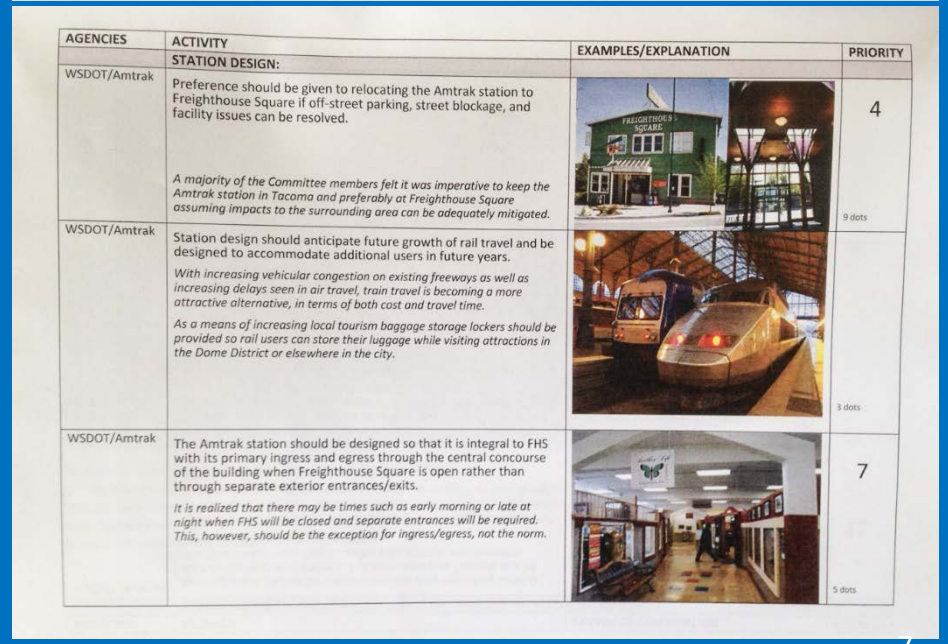
May 1, 2013

Initial Committee report included multiple recommendations grouped around four main categories:

- Parking
- Traffic Circulation
- Urban Design
- Station Design at FHS



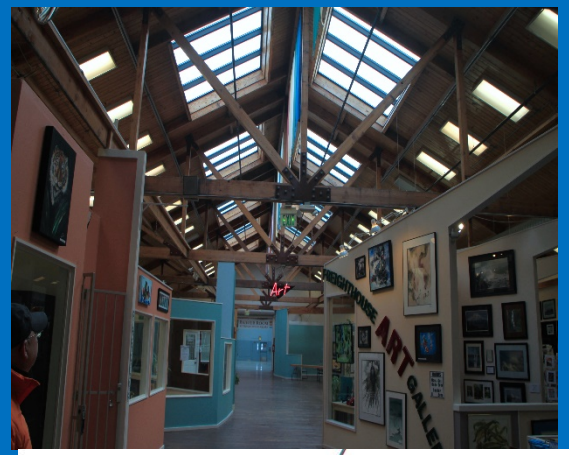
Citizen Advisory Committee
Amtrak Station Relocation
RECOMMENDATIONS
May 1, 2013



AGENCIES	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES/EXPLANATION	PRIORITY
	STATION DESIGN:		
WSDOT/Amtrak	Preference should be given to relocating the Amtrak station to Freighthouse Square if off-street parking, street blockage, and facility issues can be resolved. *A majority of the Committee members felt it was imperative to keep the Amtrak station in Tacoma and preferably at Freighthouse Square assuming impacts to the surrounding area can be adequately mitigated.*		4 9 dots
WSDOT/Amtrak	Station design should anticipate future growth of rail travel and be designed to accommodate additional users in future years. *With increasing vehicular congestion on existing freeways as well as increasing delays seen in air travel, train travel is becoming a more attractive alternative, in terms of both cost and travel time.* *As a means of increasing local tourism baggage storage lockers should be provided so rail users can store their luggage while visiting attractions in the Dome District or elsewhere in the city.*		3 dots
WSDOT/Amtrak	The Amtrak station should be designed so that it is integral to FHS with its primary ingress and egress through the central concourse of the building when Freighthouse Square is open rather than through separate exterior entrances/exits. *It is realized that there may be times such as early morning or late at night when FHS will be closed and separate entrances will be required. This, however, should be the exception for ingress/egress, not the norm.*		7 5 dots

What is unique about Freighthouse Square?

- Tacoma landmark for over 100 years
- Once the most western point and freight terminus for the Milwaukee Railroad
- Over 110,000 square feet of urban indoor shopping and food court
- Considered epicenter of Dome Business District
- Houses “Sounder Station”
- Adjacent to “Link” terminus



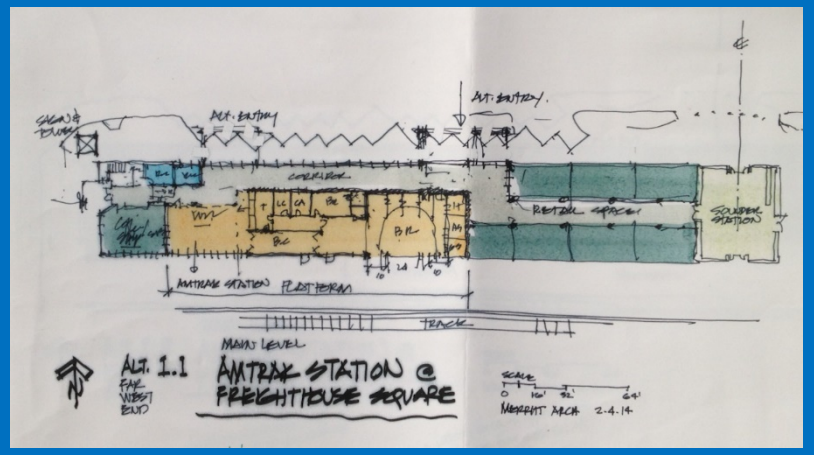
Initial WSDOT response, Dec. 2013

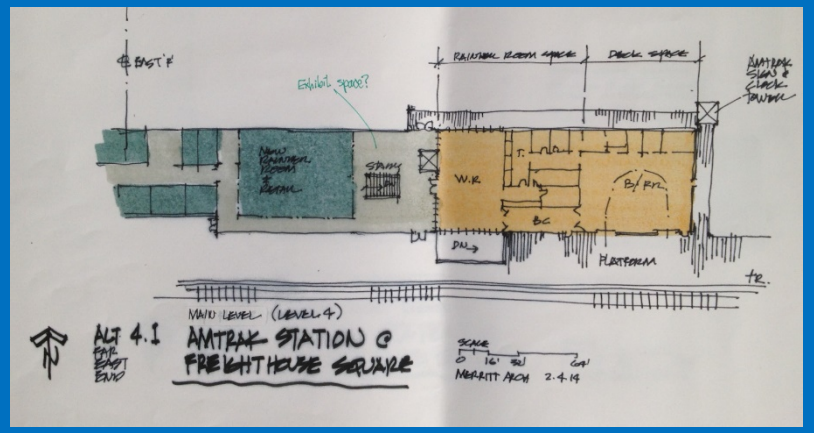
- Removed nearly 1/3 of Freighthouse Square threating its economic viability as a retail mall
- Did not reflect historic character of FHS as a recognized community landmark
- Relied on exterior access with no pedestrian continuity with FHS's interior concourse
- Reminded many people of a prefabricated storage building
- Disregarded many South Downtown Plan recommendations re: TOD, FHS, and community character

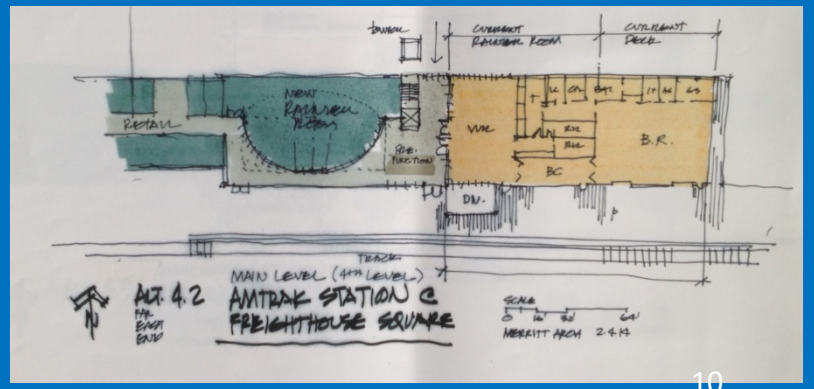
Photo courtesy of Tacoma News Tribune/WSDOT

Back to the Drawing Board!

- WSDOT holds two additional community input meetings
- WSDOT and City jointly hire Tacoma architect, Jim Merritt, FAIA to develop multiple station layout alternatives within FHS
- Merritt develops 14 siting alternatives
- Majority of participants push for siting station at the multi-story east end of FHS.







Amtrak Relocation CAC Siting Recommendation

"That the new greater Tacoma Amtrak station be sited at the east end of Freighthouse Square for the following reasons:"

- It would consolidate construction activity and coordination between the trestle replacement and platform with that of the new station (key Owner concern!)
- It would leave the more iconic west end of FHS free to function as a gateway entrance into its interior mall or possibly retain this 100% corner for a major retail use
- It would facilitate pedestrian flow thru the building, critical to the viability of FHS as a pedestrian mall
- It would move station-related traffic, e.g. drop-off, pick-up, taxis, vans, etc. to a portion of FHS where it would impact pedestrian designated streets less
- It would accommodate, in a vertical format, a clearer separation between different station functions while potentially taking advantage of the open trussed sky-lit ceilings at this end of FHS
- It would allow the new station to function independently from the rest of FHS when the latter is closed, as well as assume chief responsibility for its own security (key WSDOT/Amtrak concern!)

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Citizens Advisory Committee a special thanks must go to the following City staff who assisted us along the way:

- *Ian Munce, Special Assistant to the Director*
- *Cheri Gibbons, Urban Planner*

Others who contributed to the CAC include members of AIA SWW who help facilitate early committee meetings:

- *Arron Winston, Les Geerstmann, and Ko Wiboro*

2014 Annual Amendment – Comments and Responses

City of Tacoma

Planning & Development Services Department

Planning Commission Meeting
April 2, 2014

Schedule

- **March 19:** **Public Hearing**
  (10 testified)
- **March 21:** **Hearing Record Closed**
  (23 written comments)
- **April 2:** **Review Comments / Modify Proposals**
- **April 16:** **Commission Recommendation**
- **May-June:** **City Council Review / Adoption**

2014 Annual Amendment

Applications (Proposals)	Amending:		# of Comments Received
	Plan	Code	
1. Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center	x	x	6
2. Point Defiance Park Land Use Policies	x	x	2
3. Mixed-Use Centers Code Review		x	0
4. Affordable Housing	x	x	4
5. Container Port Element	x		1
6. Open Space Habitat & Recreation Element	x	x	5
7. Sustainability Code Amendment		x	10
8. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update		x	8
9. Plan and Code Clean-up	x	x	2
SEPA Environmental Checklist			2

2. Point Defiance Park Land Use Policies

- Support comment

3. Mixed-Use Centers Code Review

- No comment received

5. Container Port Element

- No comment received

1. Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center

- Consistent support for designation
- Issues raised:
  - Transit
  - Affordable housing
  - Consistency w/ approvals
- Recommendation:
  - Approve MUC designation, with development of an Affordable Housing agreement

4. Affordable Housing

- Consistent support.
- Issues raised:
  - Street tree w/ small lots

- Responses / Recommendation:
  - Approval w/ no change
  - Landscaping Code Update allows flexibility

6. Open Space Element

- Support (with refinements)

RECOMMENDED CHANGES (MPT comments):	
Open space system	Canopy goal
Community gardens	Habitat stewardship
Implementation and funding	Transfer of properties
Views	
COMMENTS NOTED (no changes proposed):	
Plans for specific areas	Measuring progress
Invasive's removal	Encroachments

7. Sustainability Code

- LID/Setback Exceptions: No Comments!
- Bicycle amendments: General support
- General comment:
  - Provide flexibility for campus wide approaches
- Electric vehicles:
  - Adds complexity to multifamily housing and potential cost impacts
  - Uncertainty over market
  - ADA parking

8. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update

- Support (with refinements)
- Issues - Utilities (recommendations in green):
  - Exempt utilities from street trees
  - Reasonable thresholds
  - Note resource demands

8. Landscaping Code (continued)

RECOMMENDED CHANGES (MPT):	
Plant selection – avoid overhead utilities	Tree retention – minimum size reduced
Self-managed agencies	Overall site requirement – exempt parks/open space
Buffers – add intent-based option	
COMMENTS NOTED (no changes proposed):	
Plant selection - variety	No tree cutting
No non-natives near habitat	

9. Plan and Code Cleanup

Comments – Pipestem Lots:

- Setback requirements limiting building size
- Height restrictions discriminatory

Responses:

- Larger footprint
- Same rights as abutting properties
- Neighborhood cohesiveness

SEPA Environmental Checklist

Comments:

- Contact Ecology re: Contamination
- Adopt Policies re: Smelter Plume
- Include MTCA as Conditions of Approval

Responses:

- 2014 Amendment a non-project action
- In practice / future consideration / on-going discussion