

**Members**

Jeremy C. Doty, Chair  
 Donald Erickson, Vice-Chair  
 Chris Beale  
 Sean Gaffney  
 Tina Lee  
 Ian Morrison  
 Matthew Nutsch  
 Erle Thompson  
 Scott Winship



# Minutes

## Tacoma Planning Commission

**Community and Economic Development Department**

Ryan Petty, Director  
 Peter Huffman, Assistant Director  
 Charles Solverson, P.E., Building Official

**Public Works and Utilities Representatives**

Kurtis Kingsover, Acting City Engineer/Assistant Director, Public Works Department  
 Heather Pennington, Water Distribution Engineering Manager, Tacoma Water  
 Diane Lachel, Community and Government Relations Manager, Click! Network, Tacoma Power

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**(Approved on 12-7-11)**

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, November 16, 2011, 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Members Present: Jeremy Doty (Chair), Donald Erickson (Vice-Chair), Tina Lee, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson, Scott Winship

Members Excused: Chris Beale, Sean Gaffney, Ian Morrison

Staff Present: Brian Boudet, Liz Kaster, Jana Magoon, Diane Wiatr, Lihuang Wung (CED); Josh Diekmann (Public Works)

Chair Doty called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. The minutes for the regular meeting of October 19, 2011 were reviewed. Commissioner Thompson suggested and the Commission concurred that, in the last paragraph of Downtown Parking Requirements, the statement of “the Commissioners reached a consensus to reduce parking maximum .....” be changed to “the majority of the Commissioners agreed to reduce parking maximum .....”, to more accurately reflect what had been discussed at the meeting. The minutes were approved as amended.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **1. 2012 Annual Amendment: #2012-3 Transportation Element**

The proposed amendments to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes two sets of changes, i.e., updates to the Mobility Master Plan (“MoMaP”) section and updates to the Unfunded Project List.

Diane Wiatr, Mobility Coordinator, provided background information about the MoMaP, which was developed through an extensive public process and adopted into the Transportation Element in June 2010. The MoMaP outlines a network to build bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are connected to transit, parks and all areas of Tacoma. The MoMaP incorporates the



Complete Streets concept and responds to climate change issues. Ms. Wiatr briefly mapped out the implementation of the MoMaP, including the development of the bike network, bike lanes and bike boulevards, trails, storage and the like. The City also works in strategic partnerships with other agencies, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Health Department and Pierce Transit, in an effort to promote the use of alternate forms of transportation.

Ms. Wiatr indicated that the proposed amendments to the MoMaP include text and map changes to keep the information current, and reprioritization of pedestrian and bicycle improvement lists. The amendments are being proposed at the request of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Committee (BPAC), a citizen-based group established to assist the City in implementing the MoMaP.

Liz Kaster, Commute Trip Reduction Coordinator, reviewed the proposed changes to the MoMaP. She briefly reviewed the bicycle priority list and the proposed changes, the general conditions of the City's pedestrian network, the proposed prioritization of sidewalk improvements, and the proposed prioritization of intersection improvements. She also reviewed the criteria used for prioritizing sidewalk and intersection improvements. In general, priorities are given to projects that are near schools, major transit centers and major arterial streets and that are safety warranted and cost effective. The BPAC was instrumental in the development of the criteria, Ms. Kaster indicated.

Josh Diekmann, Acting Assistant Manager of Public Works Engineering, reviewed the list of projects proposed for inclusion in the Unfunded Project List. These projects were generated based on the feedback and requests of various Neighborhood Councils earlier in the year. Public Works staff has reviewed these projects and recommended that they be incorporated in the Transportation Element. Mr. Wung added that the Unfunded Project List reflects the desires of the community and exemplifies the City's intent to maintain the service level of the transportation system citywide and meet the concurrency requirements of the Growth Management Act. Projects contained in the Unfunded Project List are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies, hence eligible for competing for City funds or outside grants. Once funded, projects will be moved to the Six-Year Transportation Program for implementation within a certain timeframe.

The Commissioners raised a number of questions and comments, such as:

- What is a "Road Diet"?
- How are sidewalk improvements paid for?
- Lack of coordination, e.g., newly improved streets being torn up again.
- Sidewalk improvement in coordination with Pierce Transit incorporating accessible boarding areas.
- How is funding determined for the Unfunded projects and were cost estimates done?
- Do Business Districts submit projects directly to the City, or do they go through the Neighborhood Councils?
- To what extent are the projects in the Unfunded List linked to the neighborhood grant program?

Staff responded to some of the questions and will provide additional information at a future meeting regarding others, at which time a complete package of the proposed amendments to the Transportation Element will also be presented for the Commission's consideration.

## 2. Large Scale Retail Moratorium

Chair Doty declared that since Walmart is no longer a concern of this moratorium and there is no conflict of interest per se, he would no longer be recusing himself from the discussion.

Brian Boudet, Long-Range Planning, presented the proposed changes to the zoning regulations relative to large scale retail uses. Based on the Commission's direction provided at the last meeting, the proposal would amend the code to require a discretionary land use review, or Conditional Use Permit (CUP), for all retail businesses located within specific zoning districts that exceed a specific size threshold. The proposed process would provide an opportunity to conduct community outreach and review of new large scale retail projects and better ensure that they are developed consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies. Specifically, the proposed code amendments would:

- Require a CUP for retail uses exceeding 45,000 sq. ft. in C-2, CCX, UCX, UCX-TD, CIX and RCX zoning districts;
- Require a CUP for retail uses exceeding 65,000 sq. ft. in the portions of M-1 and M-2 where these uses are allowed;
- Create CUP decision criteria for large scale retail uses to ensure they are compatible with Comprehensive Plan policies and their impacts properly mitigated, and to ensure the feasibility of future building reuse; and
- The CUP for large scale retail uses would require a pre-application community meeting, a public hearing, and be subject to approval by the Hearing Examiner.

Mr. Boudet elaborated on these key points. He noted that there were exceptions, in that a CUP process is not proposed for the Downtown or the shorelines. The shorelines are exempted because there is already an extensive permit review process in place for development proposals. For Downtown, the current design requirements, general street and block layout, and parking restrictions are also prohibitive for the kind of large sale retail development that is of concern – a sprawling one-story building surrounded by a sea of parking. Mr. Boudet also explained that the proposed code amendments would enhance the public involvement by adding a public hearing to this CUP process, which is commonly a Land Use Administrative type review, by requiring a pre-application meeting to allow adequate opportunity for citizen feedback, and by providing additional criteria for the Hearing Examiner to use in reviewing the application. Mr. Boudet mentioned that the draft code amendments also addressed many other issues, such as vacant large buildings, parking, hours of use for business, and traffic concerns.

The Commissioners were in favor of the concept of thresholds/trigger points. After further discussion, the Commissioners provided several suggestions for modifying the proposed code amendments, including:

- Revise the provisions in RCX to limit large scale retail development to 30,000 sq. ft. in size per business and 45,000 sq. ft. in size for full service grocery stores
- Expand the notice distance for the pre-application community meeting from the proposed 400 ft to 1,000 ft., and specify that the pre-application meetings be held at hours and location of convenience to the general public.
- Add a note clarifying that the Hearing Examiner's decision is appealable.
- Add to the CUP decision criteria a provision that further emphasizes and encourages pedestrian-orientation for the site and building design when projects are located along designated pedestrian streets.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the proposed code changes, as amended, for public distribution and review and set the date for the public hearing on December 7, 2011.

### **COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

None.

### **COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION**

Mr. Wung reported that last night (November 15) the City Council conducted the first reading of ordinance adopting the proposed update to the Shoreline Master Program. The ordinance would adopt the Planning Commission's recommendations with various modifications brought forward by the Council's Environment and Public Works and Economic Development Committees. Those modifications had been reported to the Commission at previous meetings, Mr. Wung indicated. In addition, 8 amendments were introduced last night to amend the ordinance. The amendments would, respectively, (1) set the maximum number of townhouses permitted in S-15; (2) evaluate the feasibility of trail improvements in S-6 and S-7; (3) give priority to walkway projects between Foss Waterway and Pt. Defiance; (4) recognize the City's intent to support and retain TEMCO; (5) create a new S-6/7 Schuster Parkway Transition Shoreline District that includes the Tahoma Salt Marsh and the Sperry Ocean Dock; (6) extend the S-10 boundary to either E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street or E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street; (7) require a 15-ft esplanade from new development on the eastside of the Foss Waterway; and (8) require residential development on the eastside of the Foss Waterway south of Murray Morgan Bridge to be built in such a way as not to adversely affect the adjacent industrial use. Mr. Wung indicated that these proposed amendments have been posted on line at [www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning) (and click on "Shoreline Master Program Update"), and that the Council is scheduled to conduct the final reading of the ordinance, as may be amended, on November 29, 2011.

Mr. Wung informed the Commission that the City Council has scheduled its public hearing for January 17, 2012 on the Downtown Parking Requirements as recommended by the Commission on November 2, 2011.

Mr. Wung announced that a community meeting has been scheduled for December 1, 2011, at 4:00-7:00 p.m., in the Carwein Auditorium at the University of Washington Tacoma, concerning the South Downtown (Dome/Brewery District) Subarea Plan.

### **COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.