

**Members**

Jeremy C. Doty, Chair  
 Thomas C. O'Connor, Vice-Chair  
 Chris Beale  
 Peter Elswick  
 Donald Erickson  
 Sean Gaffney  
 Scott Morris  
 Ian Morrison  
 Matthew Nutsch



# 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**

Jim Parvey, 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 4-6-11)**

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting

**TIME:** Wednesday, February 2, 2011 4:00 p.m.

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

**Members Present:** Jeremy Doty (Chair), Thomas O'Connor (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Peter Elswick, Donald Erickson, Sean Gaffney, Scott Morris, Ian Morrison, Matthew Nutsch

**Staff and Others Present:** Donna Stenger, Steve Atkinson, Elliott Barnett, Brian Boudet, Ian Munce, Reuben McKnight, Diane Wiatr, Lihuang Wung, Jana Magoon, Barbara Serry, Shirley Schultz, Philip Kao, Noah Yacker, Cheri Gibbons (BLUS); Dana Brown, Josh Diekmann (Public Works); Heather Pennington (Tacoma Water); Kim Van Zwalenburg (DOE)

Chair Doty called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. There were no minutes to approve

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **1. Master Program for Shoreline Development**

Mr. Stephen Atkinson continued to facilitate the Commission's review of public comments on the Preliminary Draft Tacoma Shoreline Master Program (TSMP) released in September 2010. He provided a summary of the vision for the Thea Foss Waterway from the 1992 Foss Plan and a brief overview of projects on both the West and East sides of the Waterway that directly implement that vision. He also highlighted additional project initiatives underway that also demonstrate consistency with the Foss Plan and the continued change in uses on the Waterway. After this discussion, Mr. Atkinson turned the Commission's attention to a number of issues that were raised by public comment with regard to the S-8 Thea Foss Waterway Shoreline District. These issues included:

- (a) The S-8 District Boundary and request of NuStar;
- (b) Restrictions on existing industrial use expansion on the eastside;
- (c) The applicability of draft Design Guidelines for the Thea Foss Waterway; and
- (d) Mixed-use development and interim uses on the West Foss.



The Commission discussed multiple options to address the S-8 Boundary concerns; questioned staff regarding the differences between S-8 and S-10 zoning regulations; and questioned staff and Department of Ecology representative Kim Van Zwalenburg regarding the WAC rules for mixed-use development. After discussion of the issues, the Commission directed staff to make the following revisions to the draft TSMP:

- (a) Include the entirety of the NuStar site in the S-8 Shoreline District and address similar issues of split zoning;
- (b) Maintain the distinction between existing and new industrial uses on the East Foss;
- (c) Revise the Design Guidelines to discourage the use of tree grates; and
- (d) Provide flexibility for the market to drive the transition to water-oriented uses on the West side of the Waterway and to define 10 years as an appropriate time period for “interim use” classification.

## **2. Billboard Regulations**

Ms. Shirley Schultz provided additional information regarding billboards and proposed changes to the sign regulations. She focused on issues relating to the size of billboards, receiving areas, buffering and dispersal standards, and technical specifications. She shared some of the statistics for what other cities are doing in regard to placement of billboards. Ms. Schultz also reported on the community meetings she had attended and feedback received. She asked for direction from the Commission on these issues. After discussion, the Commission directed staff to include in the proposed code that after the first 10 digital billboard faces are permitted, no more digital billboards could locate in the 19 receiving areas unless they met zoning, buffering and dispersal standards. The Commission indicated their preference for a simpler methodology for dispersal using the 500 ft radius. The Commission agreed that the maximum size of digital billboards should be 300 sq ft and that the maximum height would be 30 ft as currently allowed for standard billboards. The size and height limits would apply to digital billboards built after the first 10 identified in the Settlement Agreement. Commissioner Erickson noted that the Commission was not required to support the first 10 digital billboards mentioned in the Settlement Agreement. The Commission discussed lighting and how it will be measured and asked that the digital signs be turned off at 10 pm instead of midnight.

Commissioners suggested that they would like to see some illustrations/examples of digital billboards in terms of their sizes, heights, etc. within the code and to help the public understand the proposal. Ms. Schultz indicated she will incorporate the comments from the public meeting of January 31, 2011 and also the suggestions that were made by the Commissioners.

## **3. 2011 Annual Amendment Package**

Ms. Donna Stenger facilitated the Commissioners’ review of the eight applications for amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code as a package, with the intent of authorizing the release of the entire package of amendments for public distribution and comment. Each application was presented in a summary page describing the proposed amendment and the status of the Commission’s review to date. For those applications that the Commission had not completed their review, the summary pages included additional information as appropriate.

- **Amendment #2011-01: 49<sup>th</sup> & Pine Intensity & Zoning Change** – Commissioner Erickson pointed out that, in the general description of the proposed amendment, the applicant indicates that the proposed changes would allow for the construction of a multifamily

apartment complex of approximately 120 units. He suggested changing “120 units” to what the current zoning allows, i.e., “up to 145 units.” The proposed amendment, as modified, was authorized unanimously for public review and comment.

- **Amendment #2011-02: Historic Preservation Plan & Code Revisions** – Mr. Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, highlighted some of the provisions in the summary page and the attached staff report in response to the suggestions and comments brought up by the Commission at previous meetings. The proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.
- **Amendment #2011-04: Water Level of Service Standard** – The Commission had completed the review of the proposed amendment at a previous meeting. The proposed amendment was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.
- **Amendment #2011-05: Transportation Element** – Commissioner Beale was concerned that the proposed wording for Policy T-ES-7 Electric Vehicles might be interpreted as inappropriately allowing low-speed electric vehicles to travel on streets with a 35 MPH speed limit. After brief discussion, the Commissioners did not feel the need to reword the language for public review purposes. The proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.
- **Amendment #2011-06: Regional Centers & Safety-Oriented Design** – Ms. Stenger highlighted some of the modifications made to the proposed amendment since the Commission’s last review, such as modifying the language of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to place less emphasis on the “crime” aspect and more on safety-oriented design; replacing the “Working Definition of Downtown” with the “Downtown Regional Growth Center” boundaries for planning purposes; and boundary refinements for the Port of Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial Center (M/IC), the South Tacoma M/IC and the 34<sup>th</sup> and Pacific Mixed-Use Center. The proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.
- **Amendment #2011-07: Park Zoning & Permitting** – Mr. Elliott Barnett highlighted some of the modifications made to the proposed amendment since the Commission’s last review. The modifications addressed such issues as street trees and parking lot landscaping, 10-foot setback for parking lots, transit support facilities, and signs. The proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.
- **Amendment #2011-08: Regulatory Code Refinements** – Mr. Brian Boudet highlighted some of the modifications made to the proposed amendment since the Commission’s last review. The modifications addressed such issues as pipe stem lots, Planned Residential Development District, and landscaping standards. Commissioner Beale noted that the City’s Urban Forester is working with a stakeholders group on reviewing the Zoning Code requirements for such matters as landscaping and street trees. He was concerned that this proposed amendment (#2011-08) might be a duplication of effort and should probably be held off until the completion of the stakeholders group. Mr. Boudet and Ms. Stenger responded that this amendment is code refinement and clean-up and differs from the Urban Forester’s work in the scope of work, level of alterations and timeline. The Commissioners also felt that this amendment can move forward to the public review process without going against what the Urban Forester intends to accomplish. With an 8-to-1 vote (Commissioner

Beale voting nay), the proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized for public distribution and comment.

- **Amendment #2011-09: SEPA Regulations Amendment** – Ms. Schultz noted that a minor revision was added to the section of “Appeals of non-land use actions” to clarify that “appeals of other actions shall be processed in accordance with the appeal provisions of the underlying action.” The proposed amendment, as submitted, was authorized unanimously for public distribution and comment.

Upon completing the review of the eight applications, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the annual amendment package, as submitted and as modified where applicable, for public distribution and comment, and set March 2, 2011 as the date for a public hearing.

### **COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

Chair Doty acknowledged receipt of the following:

1. “Urban Studies Forum: The Urban University”, February 3, 2011, UWT
2. Letters of Comment concerning the Shoreline Master Program Update:
  - a. John Roller, NuStar Energy, December 1, 2010
  - b. Toby Murray, Chamber of Commerce, December 15, 2010
  - c. Gary Brackett, Chamber of Commerce, December 20, 2010
  - d. Leslie Ann Rose, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, January 15, 2011
  - e. Alexander Mackie, Perkins Coie (to Matthew Parker, Schnitzer Steel), January 19, 2011

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

Ms. Stenger reported that the City Council’s Environment and Public Works Committee and the Economic Development Committee will conduct three joint meetings on February 8, February 23 and March 9, 2011, concerning the Shoreline Master Program Update. They will hear staff presentations and public comments, focusing on such issues as public access, S-7 District and S-8 District. The Commissioners expressed their concerns about the timing of the City Council’s action amidst the Planning Commission’s review of the subject, which is unusual for a legislative process. Ms. Stenger acknowledged that the sequencing is unusual but explained that the members of these Council Committees requested the scheduled meetings mainly in response to constituents’ requests. The meetings will keep the Council members abreast of shoreline issues that are of great community interest and concern.

On a separate topic, Mr. Boudet invited the Commissioners to participate in the planning and organization for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual “Conversations Re: Tacoma” urban design lecture series that will be held this fall.

### **COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Commissioner Gaffney disclosed that he had met with Gary Knudson of Historic Tacoma last week to discuss historic preservation, the City’s vision, and other generic topics. Commissioner Erickson disclosed that he had also met with Mr. Knudson last week over similar issues.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.