

Members

Jeremy C. Doty, Chair
 Donald Erickson, Vice-Chair
 Chris Beale
 Peter Elswick
 Thomas C. O'Connor
 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

747 Market Street, Room 1036
 Tacoma, WA 98402-3793
 253-591-5365 (phone) / 253-591-2002 (fax)
www.cityoftacoma.org/planning

(Approved on 8-17-11)

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, August 3, 2011, 4:00 p.m.

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

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

Members Absent: Peter Elswick

Staff Present: Donna Stenger, Steve Atkinson, Brian Boudet, Shanta Frantz, Karla Kluge,
Chelsea Levy, Lisa Spadoni, Lihuang Wung, Noah Yacker (Building and Land
Use Services); Josh Diekmann (Public Works)

Chair Doty called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. The minutes for the July 6, 2011 meeting were approved as submitted.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Downtown Parking Requirements

Ms. Chelsea Levy, Long-Range Planning, presented the staff report and draft code on the proposed changes to the downtown off-street parking regulations for the Commission's review, discussion and authorization for public review. She reviewed the policy analysis in the staff report, concluding that the proposed changes to the Regulatory Code are generally supported by the parking-related goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, which strive to balance strategies that support economic development with planning strategies that limit the amount of land dedicated to parking and encourage alternative types of transportation.

Ms. Levy reviewed the specific proposed changes to the Regulatory Code. Significant changes to the code include: reorganizing and creating a new section 13.06A.065 Parking Standards, which contains all downtown-specific parking regulations; establishing a Reduced Parking Area (RPA) in downtown and within this boundary eliminating the existing minimum parking



requirements for new development, while requiring accessible parking; reintroducing a parking maximum in the International Financial Services Area and reducing the existing parking maximum in the RPA; and reducing the existing minimum and maximum parking quantity requirements in the Downtown Mixed Used (DMU), Downtown Residential (DR) and Warehouse/Residential (WR) zones. Ms. Levy also described the proposal to prohibit new standalone surface parking lots and the expansion of surface parking lots along Primary Pedestrian Streets within the RPA. Expansions and new lots are allowed if they are set back 60 feet from a Primary Pedestrian Street. Commissioners discussed what temporary use amenities could be designed into the “hole” created between the street and a potential parking lot. Staff will return with a menu of design options to address this concern.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the proposed code revisions for public distribution and set the public hearing for September 21, 2011.

2. Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance (CAPO) Update

Ms. Karla Kluge, Building and Land Use Services, discussed the 2nd half of the proposed draft code including changes to the Wetland Buffer determination methodology, mitigation revisions and general Code cleanup issues which include the frequently flooded area changes and the Allowed Activities changes for storm-water holding basins. Ms. Kluge led off discussion with a “before picture” of how these topics were covered in the Code. She then went over the specific changes that are now a part of the new proposed Code and the reasons for these changes, including reverting back to the original Holding Basin provision in the current code. The Commissioners had questions for Ms. Kluge on holding basins and detention ponds. Ms. Kluge replied that the changes to the Holding Basin provision are minor and that staff will continue to discuss and clarify this provision and should future changes be necessary, they will be completed as part of a future Annual Amendment.

Ms. Kluge next reviewed the language and rationale for the standards that are established under general mitigation. These standards were moved from the condition section and are more appropriately considered by the Land Use Administrator in her decision. Including them under General Mitigation Standards provides customers a clearer understanding of what they must address in the permit process. She also talked about new guidance documents that the Department of Ecology has completed on “mitigation that works”. These documents provide guidance on mitigation banks and fee-in-lieu programs and how these types of mitigation may offer the best potential for success. She also indicated that the code was clarified regarding the types of sureties or bonds that customers and contractors must be bonded for when developing on properties under the development permit process.

Ms. Kluge went on to explain the standards for buffering of wetlands that are unique to an urban area. She noted that the language had been clarified in this section of the Code and in some cases shortened, eliminated and/or changed. Ms. Kluge summarized and made the points that the goal in developing this Code is to be customer assistance oriented and provide incentives and streamlined processes for voluntary restoration projects, and be less regulatory where possible. Staff would interact with environmental stewards and all customers on public and private land. Also, Ms. Kluge sees the development of the current proposal as a means to streamline the whole permitting process and create a healthy sustainable environment in Tacoma and meet the “best available science” requirements. The Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the proposed code revisions for public distribution and set the public hearing for September 21, 2011.

3. Master Program for Shoreline Development

Mr. Stephen Atkinson, Long-Range Planning, presented a summary of a complete responsiveness table that identifies specific public comments submitted on the public hearing draft of the SMP and organizes the comments according to the Chapter of the draft SMP. Mr. Atkinson pointed out that the table summarizes both staff responses to comments as well as Planning Commission direction on specific policy issues. This table will be submitted to the Department of Ecology in fulfillment of the participation requirements in the WAC. Mr. Atkinson stated that there were several staff initiated modifications to the draft that would be summarized for the Commission for concurrence. In addition, Mr. Atkinson presented the Commission with a draft of the Commission's Findings and Recommendations for their review prior to their final vote and recommendation on August 17th. The Commission did not have any questions or suggested revisions for the draft Findings and Recommendations.

Prior to discussing the modifications to the draft SMP, Mr. Atkinson provided an update to the Commission on the Port of the Tacoma efforts to initiate a Port Public Access Plan in collaboration with City staff. Mr. Atkinson and other City staff will be working with Port staff to identify how the document will be adopted and used in the permit process as well as how to meet State guidelines. Due to this initiative, staff recommends that the Commission not forward the Public Access Alternatives Plan for Council adoption at this time, but hold back the document and continue to refine the plan concurrent with the Port of Tacoma's access plan process. Ms Stenger noted that a delay would enable staff to develop a more detailed framework for the fee-in-lieu option as well as address the Commission's concerns about the feasibility of potential access projects along Schuster Parkway. The expectation is that the final Public Access Alternative Plan would be completed by June 2012 and coincide with the expected approval by DOE of the SMP.

The Commission had questions and concerns about how a delay might impact the ability to implement the code if the companion PAAL is not adopted and in effect. The Commission also questioned whether the Port Public Access Plan could be incorporated into the Container Port Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Stenger replied that the Container Port Element covers a broader area than shoreline jurisdiction and although development of the plan is in process, the State deadline for adoption is June 2015. After additional discussion, the Commission determined that the best course of action was to recommend adoption of the City's Public Access Alternatives Plan as currently drafted so that a framework was in place. The Commission noted that upon adoption of the PAAL, work could continue on refinement to provide more detail and clarity and the document could be amended including revisions that are needed as a result of the Port's planning process.

Mr. Atkinson went over some new language on the flood hazard section of the draft SMP where staff was recommending additional standards for compensatory mitigation consistent with proposed changes to TMC 13.11. Mr. Atkinson also reviewed some staff recommended changes to the water quality and quantity chapter, primarily revising language consistent with the Surface Water Management Manual and consolidating references and standards for surface water and low impact development into one chapter, rather than dispersed throughout the draft. He also explained that there were some additional landscaping standards for surface parking that had been inadvertently omitted from the public hearing draft as well as additional "narrative" that has been added to introduce sections of the SMP and provide a more user-friendly document. Mr. Atkinson closed the presentation by stating that he would have all the draft changes available for the next meeting for the Commission's review and recommendation to the City Council.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Chair Doty acknowledged receipt of the following announcements:

1. Planning Commission Opening – The City Council is seeking interested and qualified citizens to fill a vacant position on the Planning Commission, representing Council District No. 1 (West End and North End), for a term to expire June 30, 2014. Applications must be submitted to the Mayor’s Office by Friday, August 19, 2011.
2. 2011 Annual Amendment – The Planning Commission’s recommendations for the 2011 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code were adopted by the City Council on June 14, 2011. The Comprehensive Plan and the Tacoma Municipal Code have been updated accordingly, and are available for review online at: www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning > “Comprehensive Plan” or “Zoning Code”.

COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

Ms. Stenger distributed a revised adoption schedule for the Shoreline Master Program Update, and highlighted several important dates including September 20 for a joint study session of the City Council and the Planning Commission, and October 12 and 26 for joint meetings of the Council’s Environment & Public Works and Economic Development Committees.

Ms. Stenger also distributed copies of Ordinance No. 28010, adopted by the City Council on August 2, 2011, declaring an emergency moratorium on the establishment of medical marijuana collective gardens or medical marijuana dispensaries. The Ordinance referred the matter to the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and to develop findings on the need for and the duration of the moratorium and to provide a recommendation by September 7. Ms. Stenger stated that staff will provide more information at the next meeting on August 17. The Commissioners suggested that legal counsel be present to facilitate the Commission’s review and discussion.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.