

Members

Donald Erickson, Chair
 Sean Gaffney, Vice-Chair
 Tina Lee
 Matthew Nutsch
 Erle Thompson
 Scott Winship
 (vacant)
 (vacant)
 (vacant)



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 Kingsolver, Interim Assistant Director/City Engineer, Public Works Department
 Heather Pennington, Resource Planning Manager, Tacoma Water
 Diane Lachel, Community and Government Relations Manager, Click! Network, Tacoma Power

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(Approved on 4-4-12)

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, March 21, 2012, 4:00 p.m.

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

Members Present: Donald Erickson (Vice-Chair), Tina Lee, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson, Scott Winship (excused at 4:05)

Members Absent: Jeremy Doty (Chair), Sean Gaffney, Ian Morrison

Staff & Others Present: Steve Atkinson, Elliott Barnett, Ian Munce, Lisa Spadoni, Lihuang Wung (BLUS); Josh Diekmann, Mike Carey, Lorna Mauren, John O'Loughlin, Ramie Pierce (Public Works); Kell McAboy (Port of Tacoma)

Vice-Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. He indicated that a letter from the Planning Commission concerning downtown off-street parking regulations as per Commission's discussion at the last meeting on March 7 has been prepared and asked if there was any objection to forwarding the letter to the City Council. There was no objection.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Port of Tacoma Public Access Plan

Stephen Atkinson, Long-Range Planning, introduced Kell McAboy, Port of Tacoma, to provide an update of the Port of Tacoma Public Access Plan. He indicated that this discussion is a follow-up to the Commission's recommendations for the Shoreline Master Program from 2011, which provided an option for public agencies to develop their own public access master plans in-lieu of providing access on a permit by permit basis.

Ms. McAboy provided an overview of the plan, including the definition of "public access", the project's goals, the existing sites with public access, and the results of the public access survey. She also reviewed some of the policy considerations, including partnerships, adequate and



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reasonable provisions, credit for existing sites, maintenance, nuisance/safety issues, appropriate types/sties, compatibility with industry, and compatibility with habitat/restoration.

The Commissioners made a few suggestions such as broadening the public outreach activity to involve and inform more citizens and making cross reference of the public access facilities on the City's website. The Commissioners also requested additional opportunities to review the plan before it is adopted by the Port of Tacoma in summer and by the City Council in the fall of 2012.

2. Urban Forestry Code Revisions

Lorna Mauren, Public Works Environmental Services, Ramie Pierce, Urban Forester, and Lisa Spadoni, Building and Land Use Services, facilitated the Commissioners' review of the draft code amendments to the landscaping provisions of Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code implementing urban forestry policy direction.

The presentation summarized the proposed changes to the landscaping code. It characterized the changes proposed as fitting into the following three categories:

- (1) General Changes – including such provisions as (a) new landscaping type pertaining to Building Frontage, (b) technical standards in the Urban Forest Manual, (c) Landscape Plans and Landscape Management Plans, and (d) installation, maintenance, irrigation, protection and pruning requirements;
- (2) Canopy Cover – including such provisions as (a) requirements for Rights-of-Way, Parking Areas/Lots, and Sites, (b) Self-Managed Agencies flexibility, and (c) Credits and In-lieu fees; and
- (3) Enforcement – including such provisions as enforcement options for landscaping code violations, replacement planting, and cost of replacement value and/or tree value commensurate with tree size.

Lisa Spadoni provided an overview of 2010 residential permit activity. In 2010, 550 remodels occurred. Of those, only 8 triggered Threshold II (50%+ of value). She also provided staff discussion of potential challenges posed by the proposed Building Frontage requirement.

Discussion ensued. The Commissioners expressed general support for the proposed approach, and provided a good deal of policy direction on many aspects of the proposal. Key issues discussed include the following:

- The proposal should be vetted as much as possible in advance with Downtown development community and key stakeholders;
- Proposed exemptions for Landscape Plans and Landscape Management Plans should be expanded;
- Request for an analysis of the cost of complying with the landscaping code, as compared with the current code;
- Potential challenges to implementing the proposed Building Frontage requirement in areas of retail and commercial uses;

- Bus stop consideration in landscape plan review — guidance is needed in the Urban Forest Manual (UFM) to reduce the occurrence of conflicts between bus stops and landscaping;
- Provide guidance in the UFM on drought-tolerant landscaping;
- The proposed canopy cover exemption for industrial parking areas should be removed;
- Discussion of the proposed Parking Lot Interior distribution requirements;
- The proposed Canopy cover requirement for Major Institutions and Developed Parks, particularly Downtown should be increased;
- The importance of setting in-lieu fee amounts at a level which would adequately cover the cost of tree planting and maintenance;
- Specifics related to the flexibility of provisions for Self-Managed Agencies;
- Discussed tree valuation methods (whether the method should be based on canopy coverage at maturity);
- The definition of Low Impact Development should be refined, specifically related to reducing roadway widths;
- The proposed thresholds for Residential Zones – All other uses should be changed from Threshold I to Threshold II;
- Discussed proposed parking lots requirements (specifically whether there is an opportunity to clarify the proposed definition of the applicable off-street parking areas);
- Discussed the appropriateness of fruit bearing trees in the right-of-way; and
- The Commission requested additional historical permit data from 2005 or 2006.

In closing, Ms. Mauren suggested that staff summarize the Commissioners' comments and suggestions and provide appropriate staff responses and recommendations for additional revisions to the proposal, and continue to facilitate the Commission's review and discussion at the next meeting.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Vice-Chair Erickson acknowledged receipt of the following announcements:

1. "On-Premise Flashing Signs" (Letter of Comments from Dale Cope, February 29, 2012)
2. South Downtown Subarea Plan & EIS Working Group Meeting, Wednesday, March 21, 2012
3. MLK Subarea Plan & EIS Community Workshop, Thursday, March 22, 2012
4. Planning Commission Tentative Agendas for April 4 and April 18

COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

Lihuang Wung provided a summary of the public comments received at the public hearing on March 7 and through the comment period ending on March 16 concerning the Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code for 2012, and

indicated that the corresponding staff responses and recommendations will be presented to the Commission at the next meeting on April 4, 2012.

Mr. Wung reported that unfortunately, according to the Legal Department, Commissioner Beale (representing District 3) who has recently moved out of the district and Chair Doty (representing District 5) who will be moving out of the City will no longer be eligible to serve on the Commission. Recruitment efforts will soon begin to fill the two vacant positions as well as Commissioner Gaffney's position (District 2) that is expiring in June 2012. Vice-Chair Erickson added that Commissioner Morrison (representing Environmental Community) might also be moving out of the City to be closer to where his new job is. Vice-Chair Erickson suggested that staff act quickly, perhaps through a request for emergency appointments by the City Council's Appointments Committee, to fill the vacancies in order to maintain the continuity of the Commission's operation in the midst of the 2012 Annual Amendment, Medical Cannabis and many important planning issues being studied.

Mr. Wung requested input from the Commission for the time, location, format and agenda for the Commission's retreat tentatively scheduled for April-May. Commissioner Thompson suggested that the retreat be held at a separate time and in a different location from the regular meeting. Vice-Chair suggested that amid the membership changes, perhaps the retreat should be held in July or later when new Commissioners are seated.

Ian Munce and Lucas Shadduck indicated that staff e-mailed the Commissioners yesterday (March 20) with an update to the current thinking for the regulation of Medical Cannabis within the land use code. This thinking is based on preliminary discussion of the Commission and the preliminary recommendations of the Medical Cannabis Task Force, to date, and includes what has been identified as an emerging zoning scheme comprised of four levels of Cannabis activity. Mr. Munce and Mr. Lucas responded to several requests for clarification from the Commissioners. They also indicated that the Task Force will present their preliminary recommendations to the Council's Public Safety, Human Services and Education Committee on March 22 and to the Commission on April 4, 2102.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

Vice-Chair Erickson reported that he had attended the focus group of the South Downtown Subarea Plan on March 15, 2012, representing the Planning Commission in the "Government" group.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.