



MINUTES (Approved on 8-6-14)

TIME: Wednesday, July 16, 2014, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Sean Gaffney (Chair), Chris Beale, Donald Erickson, Tina Lee, Alexandria Teague,
Erle Thompson, Stephen Wamback
ABSENT: Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Benjamin Fields

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gaffney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

B. QUORUM CALL

A quorum was declared.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on June 18, 2014 were approved as submitted.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. City of Tacoma Strategic Plan – “Tacoma 2025”

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, provided an overview of the “Tacoma 2025” Strategic Visioning Process currently underway for the development of the Citywide Strategic Plan and indicated that part of the results of the process will be integrated into the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update. Morgan Shook, project consultant from ECONorthwest, presented the scope of work, the schedule, the key focus areas, the expected outcomes, and the public engagement process associated with the project. The Citywide Strategic Plan will identify a shared vision for Tacoma’s future and the steps needed to achieve it by 2025. Mr. Shook elaborated on the seven focus key areas for the plan, i.e., Health and Safety; Human and Social Services; Economic Vibrancy; Arts, Culture and Neighborhood Vitality; Education and Learning; Government Performance; and Built and Natural Environment. He also invited the Commissioners to be actively involved in the visioning process by participating in various outreach functions, especially the Community Visioning Workshop scheduled for July 30, 2014. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners suggested that how the focus key areas were arrived at and how they relate to the City’s Comprehensive Plan should be clarified, that local transit services are critical to providing access to social services and employment and should be clearly referenced, and that appropriate reference should be made to comprehensive planning, zoning and land use, density, and other urban planning disciplines.

2. 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

Chair Gaffney and Commissioner Teague disclosed that they are colleagues of one of the presenters, Dan Cardwell, Pierce County Planning and Land Services, and would not be involved in the discussion of the matter. Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, presented the planning context, the scope of work, the schedule, and the outreach approach for the upcoming 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update mandated by the Growth Management Act (GMA). The 2015 Update requires certain foundational studies on such matters as best available sciences, critical areas, housing, transportation modeling,

mixed-use centers review, and buildable lands. Mr. Atkinson introduced Mr. Cardwell, who provided an overview of the 2014 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report. As required by the 1997 amendments to the GMA, the buildable lands program is a monitoring and evaluation tool used to determine if the County and its cities and towns have adequate urban residential, commercial and industrial land to accommodate their 20-year housing and employment growth targets. Mr. Cardwell elaborated on the data collection and inventory, assumptions and methodology, and calculations and analyses associated with the 2014 Buildable Lands Report. The report concludes that there continues to be an abundant amount of vacant and underutilized land to accommodate the adopted urban housing and employment targets for the County and its cities and towns. Following Mr. Cardwell's presentation, Mr. Atkinson noted that Tacoma's approach is to concentrate growth in downtown core and mixed-use centers, specifically by way of conducting the following tasks during the 2015 Update: reconfiguring the Traffic Analysis Zones to align with Tacoma's planning boundaries; performing development capacity estimates for the Regional Growth Centers (RGCs), Manufacturing/Industrial Centers (MICs), and Mixed-Use Centers (MUCs); and distributing the total population and employment allocations for 2030 and 2040 to the RGCs, MICs, and MUCs.

3. Public Hearing – North Downtown Subarea Plan

At 5:00 p.m., Chair Gaffney called the public hearing to order and reviewed the procedures. Ian Munce, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the draft North Downtown Subarea Plan, including the scope, the funding sources, the outreach efforts, the community vision, the role of the Bates Technical College and other stakeholders, and comments and concerns received to date. Chair Gaffney called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

(1) **Justin Leighton, Co-Chair, Transportation Commission:**

Mr. Leighton spoke against Recommendation LU-5 in the subarea plan which is to maintain the current number of on-street parking spaces in the Stadium District with a target total of 420 spaces. He believed this is an unrealistic goal in our community – talking about parking as static is unrealistic – and desired to see more emphasis on multimodal transportation. Mr. Leighton recommended considering a parking management system for the area.

(2) **Bill Abbot, North Downtown Resident:**

Mr. Abbot was concerned about the bank between Schuster Parkway and Stadium Way. He supported the Tacoma Link Light Rail extension up Stadium Way, but was concerned about the amount of room for the Link on the roadway, the pounding on the road during the Link construction, and the stability of the hillside. He added that he's seen that bank collapse several times on Schuster; it's not the best situation.

(3) **Jane Moore, Co-Chair, Transportation Commission:**

Ms. Moore appreciated the emphasis on open space and mobility. She indicated that the parking recommendations are inconsistent, in that the subarea plan proposes to increase the Reduced Parking Area but also to increase the amount of on-street parking in the Stadium neighborhood. She suggested that instead of increasing parking, some sort of transportation management plan or parking management system be considered. Ms. Moore was also concerned about the Stadium slope issues and would really like to have the pedestrian connection from Stadium Way down to Schuster Parkway. She also mentioned that some of the language in the subarea plan is very understandable to planning people, but might mislead the residents or business owners; for example, "primary pedestrian streets" and "primary transit streets" should be explained more.

(4) **Denny Faker, Stadium Business District:**

Mr. Faker indicated that the Stadium District consists of many personal services and small business, is the most densely populated among the 15 business districts of Tacoma, and brings in a lot of visitors from outside of the neighborhood. The district is bordered by the North Slope, which contains large homes, big families, and lots of cars. The district is the home to Stadium High School that brings 1,850 students, teachers, and employees to the area every school year. The district is also home to Wright Park that has many festivals and functions going on. Straight across Wright Park is

Multicare that has thousands of employees, patients, and visitors every day. A huge concern for some time now in the area has been the lack of parking in the district. Mr. Faker pointed out that the area lost 50 parking spaces in the last 24 months, and supported the idea in the subarea plan that no more parking is taken away from the district. He asked the City to help the district develop more parking, 420 stalls, to get back some of the parking that was lost. Mr. Faker stated that there's room for growth, and the district has an unlimited height restriction up there.

(5) Marty Mattes, Director of Facilities and Operations, Bates Technical College:

Mr. Mattes relayed that Bates Technical College is updating its Master Plan, which has taken into consideration current and future needs of the college. The college is planning to replace one of the existing buildings at the downtown campus with a 70,000 sq. ft. health science center facility, which will engage partnerships with the University of Washington Tacoma as well as major healthcare providers within a one-mile radius of the campus. The North Downtown Subarea Plan will help Bates with their application for State funding support for the new building. Mr. Mattes indicated that Bates also supports the SEPA Environmental Impact Statement process as it will save the college money, schedule, time, and labor for the construction of the new building project if funding becomes available.

Seeing no more citizens coming forward to testify, Chair Gaffney reiterated that the public hearing record will remain open until July 18, 2014, and closed the public hearing at 5:25 p.m.

4. Billboards Update

John Harrington, Development Services Division, provided an update regarding billboards in the City, including the background of the current billboard situation and outlook for a regulatory resolution, as well as the approach, desired outcomes, proposed schedule, and next steps. In August 2012, the City entered into a Standstill Agreement providing an opportunity for the City and Clear Channel to explore other viable options related to the regulation of billboards in an attempt to resolve the outstanding disputes and ongoing lawsuits. Over the next six months, staff will be working through a community process to examine the potential for an alternative regulatory approach to billboards that could be brought forward for the City Council's consideration in early 2015. The goal is to reduce the number of billboards that are not in compliance with the current code, with a particular focus on those billboards located in or near residential areas, historic districts, view sensitive districts, shoreline areas and key pedestrian areas. Mr. Harrington indicated that a Community Working Group will be established to serve as an advisory and sounding board for the project and the membership will include a representative from the Planning Commission. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Erickson nominated Commissioner Wamback as the representative and Commissioner Thompson as the alternative; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Beale and passed unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, provided the following information:

- (a) A staff memo regarding S. Puget Sound Avenue Area-wide Rezone.
- (b) A letter from the Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group requesting the City Council to reinstate a provision regarding affordable housing at the Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center.
- (c) Applications for amending the Comprehensive Plan and/or the Land Use Regulatory Code for 2015 are being accepted through August 1, 2014.
- (d) Applications for the Planning Commission's positions of District No. 1, Development Community, Public Transportation, and Environmental Matters are being accepted through July 23, 2014.
- (e) Agenda for the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee meeting, July 23, 2014.
- (f) Agenda for the Planning Commission meeting, August 6, 2014.

Mr. Boudet reported that the City Council rescheduled the final reading of ordinances for adopting the 2014 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code from July 1 to July 22, 2014. The extended timeframe would allow the Council to consider additional amendments to the ordinances to address issues relating to electric vehicle infrastructure and affordable housing policy.

Mr. Boudet informed the Commission that the one-year Interim Land Use Regulations for Recreational Marijuana Uses adopted by the City Council on November 5, 2013 are expiring in November 2014 and that the Council's Committee of the Whole has determined that it would be appropriate to extend the interim regulations for six months and the extension process will be handled by the Council through a public hearing.

Mr. Boudet provided additional background information and clarifications on the S. Puget Sound Avenue Area-wide Rezone, as included in the Communication Items. Commissioner Beale, the requester of the information, appreciated staff's response and indicated that he will relay the information to the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.