



## City of Tacoma Planning Commission

Chris Beale, Chair  
Stephen Wamback, Vice-Chair  
Donald Erickson  
Jeff McInnis  
Meredith Neal  
Anna Petersen  
Brett Santhuff  
Dorian Waller  
Scott Winship

### **MINUTES** (Approved on 6-1-2016)

**TIME:** Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 4:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

**PRESENT:** Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Brett Santhuff

**ABSENT:** Donald Erickson, Anna Petersen, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL**

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. A quorum was declared.

#### **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2016**

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the regular meeting and public hearing on May 4, 2016 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

#### **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No members of the public came forward to provide comments.

#### **D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **1. Capital Facilities Program 2017-2022**

Christina Watts, Office of Management and Budget, provided a review of the draft program and the list of proposed projects for inclusion in the 2017-2022 Capital Facilities Program (CFP). Ms. Watts reviewed that staff had been working since early 2015 to make improvements to the CFP development process. Several major changes had already been instituted including a revised calendar with the process beginning earlier; a new database with a new set of data; revisions to the CFP document to make it more public friendly; and new prioritization criteria for projects based on the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Watts reported that after the presentation they would incorporate Commission feedback and ask the Planning Commission to seek public comment. In July, a recommendation would go to the City Manager, who would then work to develop funding for the projects. The City Manager would present the proposed CFP to the City Council and the book would ultimately be adopted in November.

Ms. Watts reviewed the roles in the CFP process. Staff would develop project proposals, identify and request sources of funding, and answer project prioritization questions. The Planning Commission would review the list of projects, help assure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, and guide project prioritization. The City Manager would allocate the available funding, balancing the recommendations of the Planning Commission, input from the City Council, Community desires, and any other identified needs. The City Council would approve the CFP document and the funding.

Ms. Watts discussed project prioritization for the complete list of 161 projects and how the information had been organized in the packet. She reviewed that the initial scoring was based on ten prioritization questions. Projects that satisfied 7 or more of the prioritization questions were sorted to Tier 1; Tier 2 included projects with 5-6 answered questions; and Tier 3 included projects with less than 5. She added

that Tier 1 included Utility projects and LID projects which were fully funded through property owner contributions.

Project Information Sheets provided additional information about each project. Ms. Watts reviewed that the information sheets included the initial prioritization tier, CFP section, project title, request type, location, initial estimated project cost, description, rationale for the project, and the explanation for unanswered project prioritization questions.

Ms. Watts discussed the projects included on the CFP list. She noted that the list included 68 new projects, the majority of which did not have secured funding. The total cost to complete all of the new projects was \$136 million. Of the 161 proposed projects, 35 were ranked Tier 1 and 39 were ranked Tier 2. Ms. Watts noted that the difference between Tier 1 and 2 could be as little as the answer to one question and that project managers had varied in how broadly questions had been interpreted. Chair Beale asked what the Commission's role would be in reviewing the prioritization questions, noting a question that could have been interpreted differently, potentially moving a project into the first tier. Ms. Watts suggested that the Commission could recommend projects for higher priority and provide general guidance on the questions for the next cycle. Ms. Watts reviewed that 63 projects were ranked Tier 3, many of which were facility projects such as city buildings, libraries, and parking garages. She commented that it was difficult for some facility projects to score highly on the prioritization criteria used. Chair Beale asked if staff was preparing a summary to consider adjustments to refine the prioritization criteria. Ms. Watts responded that they had identified it as an area for future improvement and would welcome guidance from the Commission. Chair Beale suggested that instead of leaving explanations blank for prioritization questions that were not answered affirmatively they provide some analysis as to why the project did not meet the criteria.

The CFP document was discussed. Ms. Watts commented that because of the revised calendar they were not yet ready to present the proposed draft document. She commented that they had provided examples in the packet of what the structure of the document would look like. One of the biggest changes in the CFP project information was the reduction of the complexity in the CFP project sections. A reader's guide would provide detailed descriptions of each of the sections. The completed project section would be a new section highlighting some of their accomplishments including several projects of significance, a list of all completed projects, and projects anticipated to be completed by the end of 2016. The future CFP projects section would identify projects that could not be prioritized in the next six years, but should not be forgotten. The project section introductions would include clarification on funding, the operating impacts of projects, and level of service standards.

Commissioners provided the following comments and questions:

- Vice-Chair Wamback suggested that in the introduction they might want to consider including a description of what level of service and concurrency are.
- Commissioner Santhuff suggested that for completed projects they include the timeline to complete each project to help the public understand the effort involved.
- Commissioner McInnis asked if there had been a prioritization process before. Ms. Watts responded that there had been 14 tie in questions based on the Comprehensive Plan, but it did not include an explanation of scoring.
- Commissioner McInnis asked if projects ranked Tier 3 could expect any funding at all. Ms. Watts responded that the tier was only one piece of input considered by the City Manager.
- Commissioner Neal commented that she would like to see the amount of grant funding that they have for projects. Ms. Watts responded that she could follow up with a list of projects that had secured non city funding.
- Chair Beale asked why street trees and green infrastructure were not included in the CFP. Ms. Watts responded that it depended on how they had chosen to define Capital Projects and Capital Facilities Programs in compliance with the Growth Management Act.
- Commissioner Santhuff commented that many projects were related to other projects on the list and that noting related or codependent projects would be useful.

Commissioner McInnis motioned to set a public hearing date for June 15, 2016. Commissioner Neal seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Beale recessed the meeting at 4:49 p.m. for the 2016 Annual Amendment Public Hearing.

## **2. Urban Forestry Program Update**

Mike Carey, Environmental Services, provided an overview of the Urban Forestry Program and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

The history of the Urban Forestry Program was reviewed. Mr. Carey highlighted the following notable events: the first tree ordinance was adopted in 1927; they hired their first Urban Forester in 1990; the original Urban Forest Management Plan was adopted in 1992; the Urban Forest Policy Element was adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2010; in 2014 landscaping and buffering standards were adopted and the Urban Forest Manual was published; in 2015 the first landscaping development standards were adopted; and in 2016 the Environmental Action Plan was adopted.

The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) was discussed. Mr. Carey reviewed that the UFMP defined the intent and philosophy on how they manage urban forests in Tacoma; examined existing conditions; and looked at an implementation framework which was used to define the new urban forestry program. Mr. Carey reviewed that the urban forest management plan had six goals: to provide staff support for urban forest management; provide legal basis for the urban forestry program; establish a formal tree care program; provide adequate record keeping tools for urban forest management; transform the major urban forestry participation of Tacoma Public Utility from line clearance to energy conservation and community support; and providing the socio-political climate so an urban forest synergy can flourish. Mr. Carey reviewed that the UFMP had seven basic program functions: policy making, organizational structure, tree care, financial, tree conservation, record keeping, and stewardship.

Mr. Carey discussed how the Urban Forestry program had moved between different departments, each of which had a component of the program that they managed or integrated with. He noted that the mission of the Office of Environment Policy and Sustainability provided an umbrella organization to make sure the departments have the resources needed to make appropriate decisions. He reviewed that major participating internal organizations included Environmental Services, Public Works, Community and Economic Development, Neighborhood and Community Services, and Planning and Development Services. External organizations that they coordinated with included Metropolitan Parks District, Tacoma Public Utilities, Port of Tacoma, local organizations including other government agencies, and the public.

The new Urban Forest Management Plan was discussed. Mr. Carey commented that for the next phase they wanted to examine what worked and what improvements needed to be made. They would first conduct an existing conditions audit which would determine a baseline for short and long term adjustments. Inventory and data management would utilize tools to inventory urban forest assets and strategize improvements for maintenance operations. A tree risk management plan would consider an emergency response plan and how to deal with street trees conflicting with sidewalks or power lines. A cost/benefit analysis would look at the ecosystem services that the trees in the City provide and the maintenance cost versus benefit to retain those trees. Public relations and education would research incentive programs and effective communications for stewardship. Mr. Carey reviewed the next steps with the implementation process anticipated to start in 2017.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner Neal asked if they had discussed having a tree committee. Mr. Carey responded that it was something that they would consider in the future.
- Vice-Chair Wamback suggested that they should consider creating code that would prevent homeowner's associations from prohibiting trees on private property. Mr. Carey responded that he couldn't speak to their ability to regulate HOAs, but previously there had been talks about the use of property and whether it would be considered a taking. He commented that the zoning code for single family areas does not currently require onsite trees which could be a possible strategy.
- Vice-Chair Wamback recommended a focus on preservation of existing trees and holding adjacent property owners accountable for damage done to trees. Mr. Carey responded that the staff analysis would look at whether the enforceable provisions in the code were adequate.
- Commissioner McInnis asked for more information on the criteria that had gone into 30 by 30 and how achievable it was. Mr. Carey responded that there had been a regional analysis that looked

at canopy coverage as an indicator of environmental health. The analysis had proposed a 40% canopy coverage goal for similar municipalities.

- Commissioner Santhuff asked what kind of strategy they had for acquisition of properties to protect open space areas. Mr. Carey responded that the open space program was not currently set up for property acquisition and they were focusing on utilizing the properties they currently have. It was anticipated that the next step could look at property acquisition and land swaps.
- Commissioner Santhuff commented that he would like to see them develop policies to protect heritage trees. Mr. Carey responded that he was hoping that they could look at incremental programs like a heritage tree program on a voluntary basis and after building support over the years considering stronger regulations.
- Chair Beale commented that the bar for significant tree retention should be set higher for commercial, industrial, and multifamily. Mr. Carey responded that in a previous conversation on tree retention they had concluded that they should incentivize retention rather than requiring it. He noted that through the code they provided tree credits for retained trees and that regulating tree retention was definitely a conversation that they would be having.
- Chair Beale asked where they were with proactive planting and if they would see larger street tree projects that would be funded through the Capital Facilities Program. Mr. Carey responded that through the zoning code updates they now trigger street redevelopment projects and they were taking a look at certain triggers that would trigger street trees. Through their operations budget, they were budgeting for a street tree program as well.

### **3. Public Hearing – 2016 Annual Amendment**

At 5:00 p.m., Chair Beale called the public hearing (which was the second hearing on the subject) to order and reviewed the procedures, noting that written comments would be accepted through May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, noted that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive input on the proposed 2016 Annual Amendment package. He reviewed that the amendments were proposed in compliance with the Growth Management Act and TMC 13.02. Public outreach had included the Planning Manager's letter, notice regarding study areas, and two notices regarding public hearings.

Mr. Atkinson reviewed the items included in the Annual Amendment package. Future Land Use implementation included proposed area wide rezones and designation amendments for the following study areas: Nob Hill, McKinley Police substation, Franke Tobey Jones, N 33<sup>rd</sup> and Pearl, N of TCC to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, S Alaska and 72<sup>nd</sup>, South Tacoma Industrial Zones, and the Cheney Stadium and Foss High School area. Multi-family Design Standards would implement design and development policies of the One Tacoma Plan. Wireless Communication Facilities amendments would incorporate new FCC rules and provide additional measures to address visual impacts. Short Term Rental amendments would clarify the definition in the code, determine zoning allowances, require a conditional use permit for accessory activities, require registration and inspections, and address nonconformities. Code Cleanup amendments would improve the consistency and clarity of the code, create a new CUP for non-conforming uses, and update the Shoreline Master Program.

Chair Beale called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

**(1) Russell Rodger:**

Mr. Rodger reported that he had owned a house on Alaska Street since 2005 and had had a series of renters in the house. He commented that he was in favor of the rezone and that he wanted it to be a C2 rezone instead of C1. He commented that he knew the value of businesses with drive-throughs and that the nearby Starbucks provides a sense of community. He commented that he had a hard time getting renters to stay at the house because of repeated break-ins and car thefts. He commented that forcing it to stay a residential use was not a good use of that property. He commented that there are a variety of different transitional uses that could go in to the north of his property like hotels or multifamily, which would add to the neighborhood and make more use of the park than the existing homes on the street. He commented on the amount of traffic on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street making it not a good place to live as a single family unit. He commented that it would be a beneficial use for the properties to the north as well.

**(2) Bruce Arneklev:**

Mr. Arneklev commented that he was the only person in study area 4 that paid any property tax. He reviewed that he started paying property tax in 1975 and that he had been assigned an additional drainage tax this year. He commented on how his civil rights had been violated by the City not taking action on noise. He commented that the proposed zoning change would significantly increase his property tax. He commented on how other agencies had collocated on the Bates site, 20 feet from his property, and how he did not know if they were paying property tax. He reviewed that AT&T had gone in during 2001 and that he hadn't found if they had paid any property tax. He requested a reexamination of the decision from 20 years earlier to allow telephone booth sized installations in the area. He commented that he appreciated the need for apartments, but wanted justification and to reexamine the decision from 20 years ago.

**(3) Gail Goodman:**

Ms. Goodman reported that she lived on 35<sup>th</sup> Street near Bates Technical College. She commented that the existing greenbelt was a significant factor of why they moved there and that the rezoning proposal would eliminate that desirable neighborhood characteristic. She commented that there would be increased noise pollution and traffic congestion, adding that the road was presently in a state of disrepair. She commented that the egress from North 33<sup>rd</sup> to Pearl is already congested during the summer from people going to Point Defiance. She commented that they would like to see the environmental impact study and the traffic impact study as North 33<sup>rd</sup> was the only direct egress to North Pearl Street. She commented that Truman Middle School was already at maximum capacity and the action would result in rezoning of the school boundaries in the area. She asked that they clarify where the bicycle circulation area would be. She asked that they reconsider the harmony, scale, and character of their neighborhood and the impact of the proposal to the surrounding area.

**(4) Joyce Carle:**

Ms. Carle reported that she lived on North 35<sup>th</sup> Street in study area number 4. She commented that the area is already full of apartments and that there are also over 400 apartment units to the North. She commented that Pearl was a busy four lane highway and there was no safe place to merge onto southbound traffic from 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. She commented that there was a big expanse with no pedestrian crosswalks or merging lanes and that it was an unsafe location for multifamily. She commented that they were surrounded by apartments and that they were the only wetland oasis in the area and that she would not like to see that go away. She encouraged the Commission to reevaluate the situation and visit the area.

**(5) Roger Carle:**

Mr. Carle reported that he lived in study area number 4 on North 35<sup>th</sup> Street. He commented that if they were looking at Vision 2040, then they also had a goal of developing a comprehensive bike and pedestrian network citywide with specific strategies for high traffic areas. He noted that bicycle boulevards were typically slower residential streets and emphasized safety concerns. He asked where the high density area of apartments would fall within the guidelines of a slow paced, tree lined, residential street which has an emphasis on safety concerns. He discussed the 30 by 30 tree canopy goal and noted the nearby greenspace and the presence of wildlife in study area number 4. He noted that many people were relocating to Tacoma from Seattle and asked why they would be locating apartments to the South which would cause them to drive even further. He commented that he had read the 205 page report and felt that not enough planning had gone into the area, expressing concern that not enough organizations had been notified. He read a letter from a 7 year old girl expressing concerns about the proposals impact on local wildlife.

**(6) Harold Nance:**

Mr. Nance reported that he had lived on South Alaska Street for the past 53 years. He commented that he had provided them with a letter. He suggested that they should clarify the difference between a C1 and C2 rezone when they send out a notification. He commented that he was in favor of the plan and provided detail as to the reasons in his letter.

**(7) Lori Kalac:**

Ms. Kalac commented that she was a homeowner on South Alaska Street. She reviewed that she had provided testimony at the May 4<sup>th</sup> public hearing, where she had asked for studies to be done to help determine the right zoning. She commented that it was evident that the City would be moving forward with rezoning the area and the planning office had communicated the need to have diverse urban housing options to accommodate future growth. She commented that the proposed C1 zoning was putting the City in a restrictive position in seeing its visions come to life, offering only what was already behind Alaska Street. She asked if any other zoning designation had been considered and suggested that NCX would be a more appropriate zoning for the vision. She commented that she would agree that a rezoning would be in the best benefit, but that the new proposal has them being the buffered residential property, which they did not want.

**(8) Charles Mann, Tacoma Central Neighborhood Council:**

Mr. Mann reported that he was the Chair of the Central Neighborhood Council and they had concerns about the Cheney Stadium and Foss High School rezone from R-1 to C-2. He noted that presently under the R-2 zoning a conditional use permit is required for any kind of development, which provides visibility to the community. He commented that a C-2 zoning also enables billboards which would be inappropriate for the area. He commented that they were opposed to the rezone.

**(9) Melvin Nobles:**

Mr. Nobles reported that he was there to represent the True Vine Community Church on North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. He commented that they had owned 1.25 acres for 41 years and had only had minor problems with thefts. He commented that to change it to low density multifamily would be nice in a way, but there was already significant traffic congestion on Sundays. He expressed concern that putting apartments close by would impact the available parking space. He noted that they have a number of people who are disabled who have to walk up a hill and that it might be a disservice to them to increase traffic. He commented that it would be best for them to leave the current zoning.

Seeing no one else coming forward, Chair Beale closed the public hearing at 5:53 p.m. and recessed the meeting. The meeting resumed at 6:02 p.m. with the Urban Forestry Program Update.

**E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Atkinson reported that they had provided a presentation on the 2016 Annual Amendment package to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee. Feedback had included questions on the Short Term Rental amendments and concerns about the proposed rezone at 72<sup>nd</sup> and Alaska.

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, reported that the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee had discussed the shift to a 2 year Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle.

Mr. Boudet reviewed that the City Council was continuing through its process for marijuana regulations. He reported that the ordinance from the first reading reflected the Planning Commission recommendations for retail store location standards.

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:57 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.