



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

Date: November 8, 2016

Commission Members Present: Lowell Wyse, Philip Coughlan, Alison Baur, Peter Hickman, Theda Braddock, Alexandra Brewer, Alyssa Illich

Commission Members Excused: Josh Jorgensen, Sarah Chessman

Others Present: Kristin Lynett, Emily Campbell, Jim Parvey, Emily Watts, Steve Atkinson, Merita Pollard, Lisa Rennie, Clark Mather, Erica Tucci

- **Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:33pm. Members introduced themselves, and Tacoma Public Utilities representative Lisa Rennie introduced Clark and Erica – new to TPU; Erica will now be a liaison for the Commission to TPU.

- **Approval of October 11, 2016 Meeting Notes**

The October meeting notes were approved with no changes.

- **Review of November Agenda**

- **Planning Dept 2017 Workplan Engagement Opportunities – Steve Atkinson**

Steve Atkinson with the City's Planning Department presented the Planning Services Work Program, highlighting key projects.

The Department will assess zoning inconsistencies with the Comprehensive Plan, looking at the intended land use areas – 30,000 taxpayer notices will be sent out about these property assessments. They hope to produce an interactive online map for the public to consider the zoning on their own.

- Commissioner asked if there are potential controversial areas, and Steve explained that yes, there are likely some controversial areas such as non-pedestrian friendly areas or areas where multifamily development is possible by current zoning standards.

Open space corridors are included in this planned assessment with consideration to tree canopy and development. The zoning update will look at commercial zoning districts and key development standards, parking locations, and use types.

The Department is asking for another staff person (1FTE) and consultant service dollars to work on a potential urban design studio and review. Work will also focus on the JBLM accident potential zone and an institutional campus review regarding public notifications and master planning requirements.

- Commissioner mentioned that STC wrote a letter regarding design review, and is happy that they seem to be including more design review for participation in the development process.

The Department is allowing 18 months for their work plan, rather than just 1 year, trying to include better outreach and tools early in the process – for example they will host a public forum early in their planning process.

The Commission is encouraged to send suggestions to the Department on how they can improve their engagement and better inform the public on planning and design projects and processes, with the goal of greater transparency and better understanding. Ideas about how to increase attendance at public events such as the forum are welcome also.

- Commissioner asked about 6th Avenue not being zoned for walkability, what is required to improve, and if there is a plan for improving. Right now zoning doesn't protect walkability along this corridor – it is more auto-oriented. Private developments could be more street oriented.
- Commissioner asked how much of the displayed mapped open space is City owned versus privately owned. Steve guessed about half is each, and Kristi said maybe less is City owned.

- **2016 Low Impact Development Standards & Guidelines – Merita Pollard**

Merita presented on the 2016 Low Impact Development (LID) standards. Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is overarching LID and is meant to mimic how the land was before impact, when it was a forest.

Department of Ecology issued a new permit in 2013 saying the City must do a project to make LID the preferred and commonly used standard in the City. This includes minimizing impervious surface, native vegetation loss, and stormwater runoff.

The City's approach was to remove barriers to implementing LID, develop guidance, create incentives, develop equivalent stormwater management manual, and lead by example. Steve Atkinson, Jim Parvey and others were very helpful during this process. They reviewed several City documents to see where LID came up and how to integrate it. They did code updates to support LID, including changing definitions and adding words to the Tacoma Municipal Code to make room for things like pervious pavement.

The City offers rate reduction incentives to individuals or businesses taking on more LID design elements during development than the minimum requirements. The benefits for commercial businesses could be very beneficial and save significant money.

They also updated the Right-of-Way Design Manual; new chapters were added for things like pedestrian facilities and tree and vegetation management.

- Commissioner asked about funding for LID. The City has received grants for using pervious pavements.
- Commissioner asked how well pervious pavement is lasting. Old demonstration projects done by the City have had problems, but technology has improved significantly since. Now projects are expected to last 20 years. Pervious pavement is new to the west coast of the US, and people are still learning and improving.

They created standalone LID standard design details to help people learn how to do specific LID projects; example categories include bioretention, rain gardens, and soil quality and depth. There are several City Led Example projects such as Center for Urban Waters, Depaves, Pervious Roads, and the EnviroHouse.

City staff will use this newly developed information, as might developers, homeowners, schools, service groups, and others. The information is available at the City's website.

Kristi asked if people at the City's Permit desk are able to engage with people on this. Merita has done trainings and developed tip sheets, so she thinks they are pretty familiar, though it is still new.

- Commissioner asked what percentage of commercial development projects have taken advantage of the incentive? Currently there are three participants in the program. To get the incentive you have to be in an area where LID is not required, and you have to do more than what is required. They want to get more people on board with the program. Most commercial businesses said that incentives aren't that enticing and they need to know the details better. The City leading by example more may increase participation by others.
- Commissioner asked about incentive for homeowners. The incentive program does apply to and offer a lot of technical assistance for homeowners.
- Commissioner asked how long the program would take to pay back on commercial developments. Commercial payback would be fairly quick compared to homeowner projects considering other avoided costs like extending storm drains. Payback is very site specific.

- **Subcommittees Discussion**

Transportation: Did not meet.

Climate Resiliency: The group had a virtual meeting through series of emails. Priorities were identified from the Environmental Action Plan (EAP): 1) align subcommittee goals with EAP priorities, such as C1, C4, C5, and C6; 2) understand current climate resiliency work going on in Tacoma; and 3) establish relationships with other City groups and commissions working on climate resiliency, such as Planning Commission. They intend to set a work plan for the upcoming months.

Buildings and Energy: Had an initial phone meeting and are meeting on Friday (11/11).

Materials Management: Did not meet.

Local Food: Did not meet.

Natural Systems: Did not meet.

The group mentioned that the subcommittee goals should be saved to the STC Google drive. Lisa Rennie with TPU said that Commissioners should pass along any thoughts or interests related to conservation to TPU.

Virtual meetings seem to be a good way for subcommittees to meet as they are easier to schedule. Setting up a recurring monthly meeting is helpful, and all subcommittees are encouraged to do this. There was a question of whether the City can provide a conference line, but there are simple free conference lines that can be setup online. Skype also has a multi-person function that could be used. For next meeting all subcommittees should schedule recurring meetings, meet, have goals and priorities established, and report out on any action items identified.

At the October STC meeting the Transportation Subcommittee asked for several presentations, and these are on Kristi's radar.

- Commissioner asked about how Green Roads are accommodated into LID. Jim Parvey explained that the City has a Green Roads checklist that projects are supposed to use, and there are Green Road options and information available in the permitting process. Commissioner also asked if the City tracks and audits Green Road checklists. The City doesn't, but using the checklist should be part of a culture change initiative. The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability could be involved, and the program needs a champion.

- **Staff Updates**

- Two students will be interviewed tomorrow (11/9) for the youth STC seat. The new member should be at the December meeting.
- There is interest from the Planning Commission to meet with STC members. Lowell offered to be a liaison with BPTAG. Josh or Alyssa offered to be a liaison for the Transportation Commission. A liaison is still needed for the Planning Commission. Kristi will connect STC members with the Planning Commission email list. Members should be at least aware of what is on the agendas for these groups' meetings. Report-outs on what happens with these groups should be added to the monthly STC agenda. Lowell is interested in having other groups get involved in STC also.
- The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability is looking for another AmeriCorps member to serve December – May 2017.
- Kristi and Jim met with Councilmember Mello, and they discussed the following:
 - The Commission should advocate and educate on broader transportation issues such as Pierce Transit's redesign proposal and how it would support the Commission's climate goals. Commissioners should submit comments to Pierce Transit. Kristi will send a link to Commissioners on how to submit comments.
 - Councilmember Mello also is advocating for the Commission's enhanced budget request for the Resource Conservation Manager, and noted that Commissioners should share this request with the Council as a whole also, such as at the Tuesday night Council meetings (tonight's agenda includes the budget, so tonight is a good opportunity). Jim

- mentioned that the sustainability office may also propose that the position be a mid-biennium hire.
- o Councilmember Mello also spoke favorably about the Sustainable Materials Management Plan model.

- **Public Comment**

Clark Mather, Community and Government Relations Manager with Tacoma Public Utilities, spoke as an introduction to his position and his and Erica's relation to the Commission and the City. He does federal, state and local advocacy for TPU. There will be new TPU positions coming up soon.

- **Objectives for Next Meeting**

No objectives were set.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9th Floor Visibility Center.