

**Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force**  
Virtual meeting  
Meeting #26 – July 8, 2021, 10:30am

**Task Force Members in attendance:** Clinton Brink, Jim Collins, Jim Dugan, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jessica Gamble, Jason Gauthier, Justin Goroch, Joshua Jorgensen, Evan Mann, Mandy McGill, Claude Remy, Chuck Sundsmo, John Wolters,  
**Excused:** Layne Alfonso  
**Absent:** Lacey Hatch

**10:32 AM: Welcome**

**10:33 AM: Approval of June 2021 meeting minutes**  
Claude Remy moved, Justin Goroch seconded. Motion approved.

**10:40 AM: New items of interest**  
Lynda Foster provided an update on the City's work to return to in person meetings.

**10:43 AM: Group exercise prelude**  
Jim Dugan provided an overview of the goal of the meeting's exercise. Staff need specific topics related to off-site improvements to work on. The goal of the conversation is to identify the top four or five topics.

Chris Johnson added that this was an opportunity for the task force to prioritize what projects staff take on.

**10:48 AM: Off-site improvement group exercise**  
Jim Dugan invited Task Force members to identify specific off-site improvement issues they want the Task Force to work on.

Chuck Sundsmo suggested: Sidewalks to nowhere, fee in lieu opportunities, and Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) where the City supplements funding for improvements.

Ben Ferguson suggested: non-conforming driveways, sometimes having to move a driveway five or ten feet so that it's more conforming. Tearing out sidewalks that are mildly non-conforming. Like a 3% cross slope instead of 2% drive slope.

Justin Goroch suggested: frontage improvements – specifically the addition of new pavement, whether it's road widening or condition of the street. Clarity on ADA requirements. He shared his experience of not getting clarity on ADA requirements and the feeling that it is a moving target. Look for a better way to get a more cohesive improvements that are hopefully more efficient and will serve the neighborhood better than patchwork improvements.

Mike Fast suggested: sidewalks to nowhere. He asked for information on how many continuous blocks of sidewalks have been built since this program started. Private property owners have to pay wheel chair rounds. Many put in by the City that are no longer up to code and then people have to change them. Patching ordinance City has with streets.

Chuck Sundsmo suggested: Curb cuts. Public works be at meetings, including Home In Tacoma and infill 1.0 meetings. Shared an experience of a meeting where staff approved plans but public works did not attend and later did not let the permit go through as agreed to.

John Wolters shared: It's interesting listening to the different perspectives because Task Force members all probably look at different project types. His projects are in the missing middle category, duplex to thirty units, all residential. He also builds some, and knows how much the offsite improvements cost. He thinks the pre app process is working very well and he gets his monies worth. The flexibility for smaller projects with curb improvements is something he already experienced. On bigger projects, where the budget is in the millions, it's a different conversation. Suggested: maybe there's a way the pre app process can be more detailed about the ADA requirements. That would be the time to do it. He is a fan of the fee in lieu idea, suggested considering how different developers pay into a program like that even if they pay to re do sidewalks in the area or do not have to re do sidewalks with the project.

Ben Ferguson suggested: thresholds for patching up the street. The City should be held to the same or higher standard than the private industry. Improve process for initial review of Site Development (SDEV) and ROW Occupancy (ROCC) permits. Can building (BLDCN) be issued before the SDEV?

Justin Goroch shared: if there's ever a work order required we jump all over that first and establish that work order. This can take months off of permitting. This might be a process improvement with the City.

Mandy McGill shared: disappointed that the gentleman who owns Cooks Tavern isn't here because it was these types of conversations he wanted to participate in. She remembers him talking about how he was not able to open up a restaurant on hilltop because of issue with off-site improvements and how expensive it was going to be for him. I wanted to ask the rest of the group if you remember if his issues were specific to this conversation? The group discussed this and it was not clear the issue. Discussion included parking criteria, driveway issues.

Mike Fast commented on Kurtis Kingsolver's note in chat, "I'm hoping someone can point me to areas where the City is not meeting the same standards that we are requiring of the private sector including ADA requirement, street repairs, etc. I completely agree that is unacceptable but every time I ask for more clarity, no one ever can tell me where and when. This is something I really want to address especially with our utilities so any help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you." Mike raised the issue of the City not adding curb and gutter when repairing streets with streets initiative funding.

Chuck Sundsmo shared: when he asked about streets initiative funding he was told "What do you want, more curbs/gutter/sidewalks, or do you want more roads?" Chuck suggested that sidewalks are a public benefit and should be the responsibility of the City of Tacoma.

Evan Mann shared: when thinking of off-site improvements, he doesn't typically think of frontage improvements. He thinks developer should only be responsible for frontage improvements. He suggested: Tacoma should look at City of Puyallup.

Jim Dugan asked: what is the distinction in your mind between frontage improvement and off-site?

Evan Mann shared: frontage improvement would typically be, any curb/gutter/sidewalk, pavement restoration along frontage of your own property. Anything that extends beyond your property line is off-site. We don't need gold standard we need livable communities.

Chris Johnson shared: The improvements beyond the property owner's property lines contained within public right-of-way or a public easement required to meet code and design standards in support of public health and safety. Examples of these are, but not limited to, construction or reconstruction of: sidewalk, American with Disabilities accessible ramps, public utilities, street paving and curb and gutter.

John Wolters shared: his understanding is that the ADA upgrades to curb ramps is not a City standard, it's a state or federal guideline that the City can't override.

Kurtis Kingsolver shared: when we require a developer to replace a ramp on your corner, federal requirements do require the adjacent corners as well. It is the City's requirement that has you do the first ramp, and that one requirement triggers the domino effect to happen.

John Wolters suggested: red curb painting is currently missing from discussion. Red curb painting should be part of off-site improvements. Crosswalk marking – the white stripes/bars that go across the crosswalk. Drivers tend to think if there aren't white bars then a pedestrian doesn't belong there. If we're going to put the ramps in, then the striping should also be there.

Ben Ferguson suggested: look at how to meet code when things are imperfect and built before the rules. An example is existing parking lots (SDEV, LU permits – Site, Land use and Traffic code "review") don't meet the review and would not be allowed or significantly modified, but is a selling point for the property. Policies should be different for existing buildings, intent should be to get as good as it can get without having to be perfect and cost prohibitive. This would apply to driveways, alley widths, buffers between neighboring parking lots.

Task Force members discussed the history of wheel chair ramp regulations in Tacoma. Staff fact checked information shared. Task Force members and staff had additional discussion about staff's role in this meeting. Staff emphasized the value of listening directly to Task Force members and understanding their concerns, and in providing space for Task Force members to get all issues on the table without bogging down the discussion. In future meetings staff will provide history and context for different policy areas so deeper discussions can occur with full context. Task Force members said staff's voice was valuable and emphasized the need for open discussion between staff and the Task Force in the future. Finding solutions would take everyone working together to overcome these issues.

Corey Newton asked for background on the Fee in Lieu ideas shared. Evan Mann shared past discussions with the City of Puyallup and how they created something similar to watersheds called "walk sheds". Information will be sent to staff to be shared out with the full Task Force.

Mandy McGill asked: If staff are hearing things from a development community that they think would be valuable to with the Task Force about then let the Task Force know.

James Dugan took notes on the conversation and believes the topics discussed can fit into themes.

#### **11:58 AM: Final comments**

Jim Dugan will work with staff to write up proposed themes for future discussion, and which ideas fall into each theme. This will be sent out to the Task Force for review.

#### **12:00 PM: Adjourned**