

Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force
Virtual meeting
Meeting #31 – January 13, 2022, 10:30am

Task Force Members in attendance: Layne Alfonso, Clinton Brink, Jim Collins, Jim Dugan, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jessica Gamble, Jason Gauthier, Justin Goroch, Joshua Jorgensen, Mandy McGill, John Wolters

Excused: Evan Mann, Claude Remy

Absent: N/A

10:35 AM: Welcome

Approval of December 2021 meeting minutes

- The meeting minutes will be reviewed and approved at the February meeting.

10:36 AM: Update from Chair on meeting with Councilmember McCarthy to discuss Impact Fees

Jim Dugan shared highlights from the meeting:

- CM McCarthy said he heard from the building and development community that impact fees could be helpful if used appropriately to address confusion with having offsite improvement requirements, i.e. if impact fees were in lieu of some off site requirements/costs.
- CM McCarthy did not want impact fees to be additive to cost.
- Jim Dugan highlighted the Task Force's memo, that the Task Force could not say they supported or did not support impact fees until a long list of questions were addressed. The questions were bucketed into categories.
- Jim raised the concern that impact fees as currently being considered would be an add-on, not in lieu of current costs.
- PW staff (Jennifer Kammerzell) was asked to provide some background on current work. She shared:
 - PW is recognizing the work of the Task Force and working towards addressing questions.
 - They are waiting to return to the Task Force and talk further until they can answer the questions raised.
 - Phase 3 was funded in the last budget update, so work will continue.
- CM McCarthy additionally commented on the timing, that with the current marketplace, the timing may not be right.

Jason Gauthier inquired about any timeline for the next year. Lynda shared that as part of the modifications to the 2021-2022 Biennial Operating Budget, the City Council approved \$175,000 towards the next phase of Impact Fees. The proposed scope will build on the [Impact Fee Framework Study](#) completed in 2021, which includes addressing Task Force and community comments and questions, and community engagement. Staff proposes to advertise a Request for Proposals in February with a project kick-off in April 2022. Jennifer Kammerzell will be the project lead. Jennifer would come back to the Taskforce when there is substantive information to share.

Justin Goroch felt that the tone of this was more impact fees are coming, they are just not going to be additive. Lynda suggested re-sharing the Taskforce's memo with the Council, in the interest of good communication, since there are three new members.

Mike Fast saw the inevitability of it coming forward as a done deal, but whether it would be adopted is not set in stone. There are many unknowns, more conversations to be had.

Ben Ferguson wanted to consider individual Councilmember's perspective, to see where the new Councilmembers stand and make sure to frame things with big picture in mind.

Kurtis Kingsolver discussed the difference between impact fees and offsite improvements. From a staff perspective, staff's job is to provide information. This is not a done deal, but it is moving forward in a path. He would like the Taskforce to focus on the structure and workings of the fees.

Justin Goroch asked that the topic come back sooner than later so that the Taskforce could provide thoughtful and intentional input before decisions are made.

Ben Ferguson added that everything that add costs to housing make them more expensive, and thus less affordable. They are intricately tied. He wanted to make sure this point is established for the Councilmembers.

Kurtis Kingsolver suggested having the consultant, once they are brought on board, come to the Taskforce to get direct feedback and questions.

10:51 AM Quick Update: City staff new items of interest

Impact fees: (mentioned above in Impact Fees discussion)

- As part of the modifications to the 2021-2022 Biennial Operating Budget, the City Council approved \$175,000 towards the next phase of Impact Fees. The proposed scope will build on the Impact Fee Framework Study completed in 2021, which includes addressing Task Force and community comments and questions, and community engagement. Staff proposes to advertise a Request for Proposals in February with a project kick-off in April 2022. Jennifer Kammerzell will be the project lead.

Home in Tacoma – Phase 2: Design Standards & Review:

- We have an Urban Design program. Some members of the Taskforce are on the Advisory Group for that project. The initial focus of the project is on design guidelines/standards for development, primarily in Mixed-Use Centers and Downtown.
- Home in Tacoma will be starting into Phase 2 shortly, which will include zoning and design guidelines/standards for development in residential areas. This subject is scheduled to present to the Taskforce at the February meeting.

Jason Goroch asked who the staff lead is on the Design Review section of Home in Tacoma – Phase 2.

- PW was re-organized at the end of 2021 and there is a new Traffic Division. Josh Diekman is the lead for Traffic. Lynda would send out the memo with the organization chart.

Proposal to request the Tacoma City Council change the Task Force to an Advisory Board

[\(PowerPoint 1\)](#)

Staff presented background information and issues with the characteristics of a taskforce, which this group has evolved beyond. The recommendation was to transition the Taskforce to the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group.

Jim Dugan shared feedback from Justin Goroch to include one or two residential contractor/developers on the Advisory Group, and from Layne regarding term limits.

John Wolters had questions about having a structural engineer on the Advisory Group. Ben Ferguson, as the recommender of this idea, explained that sometimes the Taskforce talk about engineer-specific things that are challenging, it comes down to what is reasonable from a seismic standpoint. He had found value in the past for engineers. Structural engineers have insight into re-use of existing buildings. The City has mentioned that adaptive re-use is important.

Jessie Gamble wanted the residential contractor/developer position to have more than one. There are remodelers, smaller builders, to mid-sized or large production builders. They work with different types of permits, which would bring different perspectives and different problems.

Ben Ferguson stated that the philosophy here was to figure out the minimum requirements that the Taskforce would like to fill, then at-large positions are people with similar expertise that can fill in. The risk of having a group like this is that there can be too much representation in one particular area and that can unfairly affect policies.

Jim Dugan proposed that the Taskforce use the meeting time to ask clarifying questions of what the recommendation is, then take the time as they go forward to review the presentation in depth, think through and see if it missed anything or what can be combined.

Lynda Foster advised the Taskforce that there would be a pause in appointing new members until this process is done. No one would be bumped off the Taskforce and they would start with a two-year term when the Advisory Group is adopted.

It was noted that Jason Goroch left for another meeting and Layne Alfonso was listening in.

Jim Dugan also asked the Taskforce to think about the leadership team and how that would work.

11:10 AM: Improving Off-site Improvements presentation

[\(PowerPoint 2\)](#)

Chris Johnson provided a recap of the off-site improvements.

Justin Goroch commented in regards to the idea of patchwork sidewalks and patchwork frontage improvements. There had to be a better solution out there than to update working infrastructure to a new planned infrastructure. He would like this to be a continued focus.

Ben Ferguson agreed the one area that has not been resolved (a policy issue) is the sidewalks to nowhere. It would be good to write a policy letter to the City leadership stating that current approach to solving sidewalk infrastructure in 300 years is not a good plan; this issue needs a policy look.

Kurtis Kingsolver mentioned that PW has been asked to go in front of the City Council to discuss sidewalks. The timing coincides really well and early feedback to the Council would be helpful.

The Taskforce and staff discussed priorities for scheduling. It was agreed upon that the Taskforce would not put off Home in Tacoma – Phase 2. Ben Ferguson, Justin Goroch, and Mike Fast were tasked with drafting a white paper position on what the Taskforce had said and done over the course of time, and having it ready for approval by the following meeting or earlier via email.

Kurtis Kingsolver clarified that they were not asking the City Council for decisions; they are in a budget year for 2023-2024.

The draft letter would be high level, aiming at policy level points and examples.

11:42 AM: Final comments

Mandy McGill spoke about how the Taskforce was started. In terms of membership and how she fit into the group, she did not really fit into the categories being proposed. A lot of it is about relationship and bringing people together. Term limits are something that need to be considered. Without term limits, they may end up not actively recruiting new members. Maybe the Taskforce should put together a subcommittee specifically for actively recruiting new members.

Jim Dugan expressed appreciation for the Taskforce members.

11:49 AM: Adjourned