Large Scale Retail – Proposed Code Amendments

Planning Commission Public Hearing
December 7, 2011

Written Comments
Dear Planning Commission Members,

As you know, large scale retail has a ripple effect on our community. Although we might hope it could provide jobs, it also disrupts neighborhoods and increases traffic congestion. The retail may even fail as a business, and leave an ugly, empty box.

Please do not change regulations to allow large scale retail, especially in areas where it does not now exist.

Carol Webster
3019 North 29th Street
Tacoma, WA 98407
WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?
Additional information, including the complete text of the proposed amendments and other background information, is available from the Community and Economic Development Department at the address to the right, and on the Planning Division website:

www.cityoftacoma.org/planning
(click on "Large Scale Retail Moratorium")

HOW DO I PROVIDE COMMENTS TO THE COMMISSION?
You can testify at the hearing or provide written comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 9, 2011 using the return address on this card or by facsimile at (253) 591-2002 or via e-mail at planning@cityoftacoma.org.

If you have additional questions please feel free to contact Brian Boudet at:
(253) 573-2389

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at 591-5505. TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to WA Relay Services.
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Large Scale Retail - Proposed Code Amendments

The Planning Commission is considering revisions to the City's zoning regulations relative to large scale retail uses. The Commission is holding a public hearing to obtain community feedback on these proposed code changes.

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, December 7, 2011  5:00 pm  City Council Chambers
Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 1st Floor

WHAT IS BEING CONSIDERED?
The proposed changes would establish a Conditional Use Permit requirement for large scale retail uses in most of the areas of the city where they are allowed. Retail uses larger than 45,000 square feet in the commercial and mixed-use districts and larger than 65,000 square feet in the industrial districts would trigger this special review. The proposed conditional use permit process would include requirements for public notice, a public hearing, and a pre-application community meeting. The purpose of this new permit requirement would be to provide opportunities for community input on future large-scale retail projects and to better ensure that these types of projects minimize their impact on surrounding areas and are developed consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
Dear Planning Commission Members:

This letter presents the comments of the Central Neighborhood Council (CNC) on the Planning Commission’s recommendations to amend City of Tacoma’s code (Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) sections 13.06) regarding large-scale retail developments. July 19, 2011. The CNC is a nonprofit organization independent of the City, but created in 1992 by the City along with seven other neighborhood councils (they geographically encompass the entire City) to facilitate citizen input and participation in City governance, pursuant to TMC Chapter 1.45. Section 1.45.070 of TMC states, “Neighborhood Councils will directly advise City government on matters concerning the general health, safety and welfare of their neighborhoods. Their actions should reflect the needs and wants of the neighborhood.”

The CNC supports the Planning Commission’s recommended amendments to utilize a conditional use permit on large scale retail establishments. The conditional use permit will allow the community to provide input during the development process. It will also give the City more discretion regarding the type/style of development for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

We also commend the Commission for not limiting your recommendations to just size prohibitions. We recommend the Commission consider reviewing design criteria within our Community and Urban Mixed Use Centers next year. As discussed previously, inadequate attention was paid to these centers in 2009.

Thank you.

Tricia S. DeOme
Chair
chair@cnc-tacoma.com
Central Neighborhood Council

Justin Leighton
Secretary
justin.leighton17@gmail.com
Central Neighborhood Council

www.cnc-tacoma.com
December 9, 2011

Planning Commission
Brian Boudet
City of Tacoma, WA

To All Planning Commission Members & Brian,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you on Wednesday, December 7th. As I stated, I am a shopping center owner and developer (PMF Investments LLC) in the Pacific Northwest. I continue to work and make investments and contributions in various communities throughout the State of Washington, developing a strong working relationship in these communities as a result. An example of this investment is the recently remodeled Kmart in Bellevue (Vacant for 10 years). We worked closely with the City of Bellevue and the surrounding community to make it a successful development for all parties involved. Construction and retail jobs were created, the tax base expanded, environmental improvements made and a vibrant community asset was created at a site where there was an empty parking lot and vacant buildings. I recently worked with the planning commission, economic development commission and the City Council in the City of University Place to allow drive thru’s which will bring quality new tenant’s in my Green Firs Shopping Center.

Although the proposed amendment is well intended, there needs to be clarification such as not to defeat the intent of the Amendment. The Amendment should exclude any existing single Building that may have multiple tenants that the owner/developer may wish to make into a single tenant Building without increasing the Building footprint. This clearly is NOT expanding the Building footprint but only staying within the existing Building. If I am not allowed to expand a tenant space within the existing Building footprint, it will most likely remain vacant and become a blight on the community resulting in a lost opportunity to maintain or expand the tax base and provide new jobs for members of the local community. Although I will continue to receive rent from the vacant Building, an opportunity would be lost if it were to sit vacant and become an eye sore in our community.

Please consider this exception to any proposed Amendment without going through a conditional use.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Nat Franklin
Manager
PMF Investments LLC