



MINUTES (Approved on 1-18-17)

TIME: Wednesday, January 4, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen, Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2016

Vice-Chair Wamback motioned to amend the agenda to move item D2 ahead of item D1. The agenda was approved as modified. The minutes of the regular meeting on December 7, 2016 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Beale opened the floor for public comments. The following citizens provided comments:

- 1) Eleanor Brekke:
Ms. Brekke reported that her family business, Brekke Properties, owns and manages 1.5 million square feet of commercial properties in the Puget Sound Region and that the business park in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood was the lowest performing property that they had managed for the last 30 years. She commented that to attract and secure good tenants they needed to be competitive without being concerned about thresholds and connectivity requirements.
- 2) John Brekke:
Mr. Brekke commented that the original connectivity plan for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood had been a street grid, which was still an effective transportation model today. He encouraged the Commission to recognize the value of the current grid system and advocate for investment in improvements including sidewalks, streetlights, and street trees. He commented that they can address the bottlenecks with strategic investments and that they did not need more underutilized roads, taking of private property, limiting developer's options, or leaving owners with small parcels.
- 3) JJ McCament:
Ms. McCament reviewed that at the previous meeting they had provided Commissioners with materials that outlined their objectives, issues, concerns, and recommendations. She noted that the connectivity provisions of the City of Lacey had been provided as an example. Their recommendations included an approach for threshold triggers that would encourage private investment while ensuring that improved connectivity on a parcel by parcel basis is incorporated into the redevelopment process when buildings are demolished or significantly reconfigured.
- 4) Val Fyalka-Munoz:
Ms. Fyalka-Munoz reported that she was a property manager for Michael's Plaza. She reviewed that they had been attending the subarea plan meetings since 2015 and that they can't continue to come to all of the meetings to defend the zoning. She requested that they eliminate the proposed roads and parks on commercial properties so that they can continue to do business.

- 5) Phyllis Ohrbeck:
Ms. Ohrbeck commented that she wanted to have more information on how the subarea plan would impact her property which appeared to be on the border of a proposed change.
- 6) Andrew Wilk, Harmony Capital Investments:
Mr. Wilk expressed concern that the information in the draft document was vague and had significant potential impacts to property owners. He commented that they needed specific information to identify if there will be an impact to their property. He asked that the City be equitable and not put extra burden on a few properties for the benefit of others. He noted that their property could potentially be made unusable by the proposed street network.
- 7) Beverly Bowen-Bennett:
Ms. Bowen-Bennett discussed having been involved in the process since the first bus tour. She expressed concern about the draft plan being vague and that the guidelines allowed the front doors of residences to be facing an alley.
- 8) Art Redford, Michael's Plaza:
Mr. Redford expressed concern about the two proposed roads going through their property. He commented that the east-west road that goes through a 100,000 square foot retail building was not feasible due to the topography. He expressed concern that knowing a road was coming in the future would cause tenants to leave. He commented that they needed some trigger points for cost so that they could ensure tenants that they would be able to stay. He noted that in the draft subarea plan there were now two parks shown on their property.
- 9) John Burkhalter, Michael's Plaza:
Mr. Burkhalter reviewed that the initial plan proposed two roads which would take 1.5 acres of their 17 acre property. He commented that if the developer was responsible for the cost of new roads it would decrease their property value. He suggested that the City compensate them for new roads as their development was not creating the need. He commented that they needed to be able to maintain tenants and expand to accommodate their current businesses as needed.
- 10) Cam Lehouillier:
Mr. Lehouillier commented that the Subarea Plan was an ambitious vision, but was too ambitious by making an investment where the demand did not exist yet. He suggested routing the loop road through South Cedar Street, which was in better condition, passes through an existing commercial area, and had already received investment including sidewalks. He commented that on Lawrence Street there were many potholes, no sidewalk, and significant elevation changes. He added that the pedestrian designated loop road would prevent certain uses from going into his property.
- 11) Jay Richards:
Mr. Richards reported that he ran a machine shop on the edge of the proposed zoning changes. He expressed concern about proposed open space that was originally planned to go through the middle of their property. He commented that their facility supported the old Atlas Foundry, that they had been a part of the community for a long time, and that they were one of the largest employers in the area. He commented that the logistics of moving the facility would be incredibly difficult and cost them millions of dollars. He asked what the implications of the stormwater proposals would be for their business and what the impact fees would mean.
- 12) Jeff Mann, Pierce County Planning and Land Services:
Mr. Mann commented that they felt the improvements proposed as part of the Subarea Plan would help enhance their campus. He commented that they supported the concepts of a loop road, the greening of streets, and connectivity. They had some concerns about the extension of Wright Street through their campus. Mr. Mann commented that they had also expressed interest in transit improvements which would improve access for the public to their campus.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, facilitated a discussion on the preliminary draft of the Subarea Plan. He noted that certain aspects of the plan, particularly the connectivity component, were clearly worrying people and there were questions that needed to be addressed such as parks, which would not be imposed as part of the concept. Mr. Barnett reported that they would have a more detailed discussion of the connectivity requirements, including a range of options, with the Commission on January 18. On February 1 they would discuss implementation, priorities, and funding options.

Proactive City leadership in the Plan was discussed. Mr. Barnett reported that the Plan put the city in a good position to bring infrastructure investment into the neighborhood. He discussed concepts for streets that had been included in the meeting packet. Other examples of proactive City leadership in the Plan included doing an up-front environmental review; incentives to encourage investment and development; an infrastructure plan that included stormwater and streets; and a list of actions proposed for the City.

Proposed code changes were discussed. Mr. Barnett reported that Phase 1 would establish connectivity and update existing zoning tools. Regarding zoning districts and height, Mr. Barnett asked Commissioners to consider if the proposed code changes to the zoning districts were being true to the idea of concentrating development in the core areas with transitional zoning to the lower intensity residential areas. He noted that for the industrial mixed-use transition area they would be providing more flexibility than they could under the current zoning.

Mr. Barnett reported that Development Regulation Agreements were an optional tool currently used in Downtown that would allow flexibility for large developments with public benefits. He added that it was an avenue for flexibility that did not specifically meet the connectivity or zoning requirements.

Commercial design code updates were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that the purpose of the updates was to select the main streets for the district; to promote building to street orientation; and to promote a higher intensity use of core sites along the important streets. He noted that designated pedestrian streets were an existing tool that provides higher design standards for things like windows and doors facing streets. Core pedestrian streets would limit certain types of land uses, particularly in residential areas. Mr. Barnett reported that they had begun an analysis of a minimum floor to area ratio (FAR) for designated pedestrian streets, which would encourage a higher density. He suggested that they also consider if there were additional design standards that the City should be considering for drive-throughs. Mr. Barnett discussed the idea of larger sites having additional connectivity pathways. He reported that they were looking at jurisdictions where parking lots are more integrated with buildings.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner McInnis expressed concern about getting from where they are to the vision and putting together a plan that was trying to wrap up everything. He commented that there were several proposals in the project that he really liked such as the proposed I-5 off-ramp and the road that goes through the mall from the north. He suggested that the minimum viable product be implemented to see how successful it is instead of trying to address everything.
- Chair Beale commented that they needed to focus more on the middle chapters of where the plan goes and more on the urban form. He commented that the FAR concept complicates things and that the market wasn't strong enough to support multistory buildings as a requirement. He noted being concerned by things like the retaining wall that supports the Pacifica, where there could have been an opportunity to get the building closer to the street. He suggested that they needed to be less focused on creating an outcome in the short to mid-term and more on making sure that development had a better relationship to the street and creating allowances through zoning that could have a positive impact on the future.
- Vice-Chair Wamback expressed concern that the study area was too big and suggested that they could focus solely on the area east of Cedar Street, improving the development access at the mall properties and encouraging mixed-use style redevelopment in the residential area of Lincoln Heights. He noted that they can make immediate improvements to address connectivity issues and improve transit access if they focus on the two eastern quadrants.

- Commissioner Santhuff commented that he liked the long term vision for how they wanted to see the entire regional growth center develop. He suggested that the middle chapters were important, but they also needed to consider the timelines and triggers associated with development.
- Chair Beale commented that focus was needed, but he didn't want to exclude the southwestern residential portion. He commented that the middle chapters were where they needed to figure out how to encourage some of the low rise development to have a good relationship with the street and allow for better pedestrian mobility.
- Commissioner McInnis commented that he was concerned about the size of what they were trying to do, suggesting that they focus their more immediate plans and projects in the areas east of Cedar Street and reserve the ability to do work in the western quadrants at a later time. He commented that as they move forward it is easy to overplan, which makes it difficult for development to occur if the demand is not there.
- Commissioner Winship asked if the plan could be phased in terms of time and area. He expressed concern about how they get from here to there, how that change is made, how it is paid for, and how property owners can realize the value of their property and continue to invest so that the next iteration of their property meets the goals of the plan.
- Commissioner Petersen commented that she saw the plan as laying the groundwork for the future and that they needed to aim high. She commented that it was up to property owners, residents, and people working in the area to fill in the middle chapters, but it would probably not happen if direction was not provided. She added that they should not exclude the western quadrants as many of the catalysts for the plan had been developments in those areas.

Residential design standards were discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that the proposals included the idea that Madison and Lincoln Heights should be lower density and less intensive. The proposed design standards would also seek to address issues in recent townhouse developments with standards specifically for street orientation, pedestrian orientation from houses to sidewalks, and clear transitions. Regarding townhouses that face alleys, Mr. Barnett reviewed that it had been a pattern in the Madison district and that whether it worked was largely dependent on the quality of the alley. He suggested that the Commission consider what refinements should be done to the City's townhouse zoning standards to address the desire to have a unit that faces the alley. Mr. Barnett reviewed improvements that were being proposed for consideration for the existing townhouse standards including requiring an attractive pedestrian pathway to each unit; requiring additional information during permitting on where garbage and utilities will be located; using the code language from other districts for transition to the sidewalk; and requiring street trees for smaller units and 15% canopy cover in urban residential mixed use zones.

Noting that the proposed changes were effectively a downzone of the Madison district, Vice-Chair Wamback commented that if the district was truly part of the larger mixed-use center they should be promoting taller buildings with more urban style amenities. Vice-Chair Wamback also commented that there are vacant parcels and low occupancy strip plazas all over the City and they should be conscientious that the strategies they are developing for the Tacoma Mall neighborhood need to be reasonably applicable to those properties citywide.

Chair Beale recessed the meeting at 5:39 p.m. The meeting resumed at 5:46 p.m.

1. Capital Facilities Program 2017-2022 Update

Christina Watts, Office of Management and Budget, provided an overview of the 2017-2022 Capital Facilities Program (CFP) adopted by the City Council on November 22, 2016 and the outlook for the next CFP. Ms. Watts reviewed that the CFP document was required by the Growth Management Act to ensure that public facilities and services are able to serve development without reducing level of service standards. Any changes to the CFP document were reviewed by the Planning Commission to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Watts reviewed that during the previous CFP update, the Planning Commission had requested changes to the process, in part to make their role in that review more meaningful. Changes incorporated into the process for the 2017-2022 CFP included a revised timeline, a new CFP data collection tool, an update to the CFP document to make it easier to understand, and revised prioritization criteria. Changes made to make the CFP document more readable included the addition of a reader's guide; the addition of a completed projects section; the new 2017-2018 Capital

Budget section that identifies the funded projects for the next two years; and the addition of a project narrative introduction for each of the project sections. Ms. Watts noted that the CFP was a planning document and helped inform the budget process, but the funding approval for capital projects was done through the City Council's Capital Budget process.

Ms. Watts provided an overview of the 2017-2022 CFP. She reported that the final project list had a total of 154 projects of which 60 were new. 96 of the projects were funded with 72 receiving new funding. The total cost to complete all of the projects would be roughly \$1.5 billion. Ms. Watts discussed each of the categories from the 2017-2018 Capital Budget perspective, noting what was funded in the next two years. There were six Community Development projects with new funding for a total of \$8.6 million. The Cultural Facilities category included new non-voted bonding to fund \$21.3 million in improvements to the Tacoma Dome and \$900,000 in other improvements. Within the Cultural Facilities category there was also \$4 million dedicated for performing arts support. The Municipal Facilities category included \$1.4 million for improvements at community and senior centers, to replace outdated CityNet network technology, and to renovate the Tacoma Municipal Building. New funding for libraries would include \$450,000 to refurbish the South Tacoma Library. Local Improvement Districts (LID), which had been given their own category in the CFP, had two active LIDs which had increased in scope had received an increased appropriation funded through property owner contributions. For Parks and Open Space, \$350,000 had been provided for the Prairie Line Trail Art Park. The Public Safety category included \$80,000 for restoration of the parking lot at the Police Headquarters and \$133,000 to renovate Fire Station #5. The Transportation category had \$32 million in funding for several capital programs including \$250,000 for neighborhood programs, \$250,000 for traffic enhancements, \$500,000 for the Unsafe Sidewalk program, \$500,000 for the Safe Routes to Schools plan, and \$1 million for school speed zone flashing beacons. The Transportation category also had funding for several City trail projects including \$750,000 for Phases I and II of the Prairie Line Trail, \$112,000 for the Water Ditch Trail, and \$2.5 million for the Pipeline Trail Phase II. Projects receiving Streets Initiative funding included \$8.6 million for 56th and Cirque corridor improvements, \$600,000 for a project on East 64th Street, \$470,000 for the Taylor Way rehabilitation project, and \$6 million to meet the City's contribution for support of the Streets Initiative.

Ms. Watts reported that they would seek to make continued improvements including improving the consistency of project data and prioritization criteria; adding 'system completeness' as prioritization criteria; working to identify interdependent and closely related projects; exploring the link between the CFP and Urban Forestry; and reviewing the CFP inventory of existing assets.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, updated the Commission on the following items:

- The agenda for the next meeting included four potential items, but would focus on the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan.
- City Manager T.C. Broadnax would be leaving to become the new City Manager for Dallas. The City Council had started the recruitment process for the new City Manager.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, reported that they would be sending out over 30,000 taxpayer notices regarding the long-range planning work program for 2017-2018 and potential area wide rezones.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:14 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.