



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

Donald Erickson, Chair
Tina Lee, Vice-Chair
Theresa Dusek
Benjamin Fields
Sean Gaffney
Mark Lawlis
Matthew Nutsch
Erle Thompson
Scott Winship

AGENDA

MEETING: Regular Meeting
TIME: Wednesday, March 6, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. QUORUM CALL

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting on February 6, 2013
Regular Meeting on February 20, 2013

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Citizen Committees, Boards, and Commissions

- Informational presentation by the City Manager's Office regarding the review of the City's Citizen Committees, Boards, and Commissions.
- Katie Johnston, 594-7925, kathryn.johnston@cityoftacoma.org

2. South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS

- Review the status of the project, including the project's schedule, community outreach, the scoping process and comments received, and the next steps.
- See "Agenda Item D-2"
- Ian Munce, 573-2478, imunce@cityoftacoma.org

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

1. Letter from Chair Donald Erickson to the Department of Commerce regarding the Short Course on Local Planning in Tacoma on February 20, 2013 – See "Agenda Item E-1"
2. Key dates and information about the Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code for 2013 (or "2013 Annual Amendment"):
 - (a) **Planning Commission Public Hearing**, March 20, 2013, 5:00 p.m., Council Chambers.
 - (b) **Informational Session with Staff**, March 13, 2013, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Council Chambers.
 - (c) For more information, please visit the Planning Services Division's website at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning and click on "2013 Annual Amendment".
3. Tentative Agenda for the March 20, 2013 meeting:
 - Development and Permitting Activity Reports (2nd half of 2012)
 - Public Hearing on the 2013 Annual Amendment Package

F. ADJOURNMENT



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Planning and Development Services Department, 747 Market Street, Room 345, Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 591-5056 / www.CityofTacoma.org/Planning



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MINUTES (draft)

Time: Wednesday, February 6, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Tina Lee (Vice-Chair), Theresa Dusek, Benjamin Fields, Mark Lawlis, Erle Thompson
Absent: Matthew Nutsch, Scott Winship

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted, with a clarification suggested by Chair Erickson that, under Discussion Item #2 (Annual Amendment #2013-06 Development Intensity Designations), the “medical or institutional designation” would include educational institutions (such as colleges) as well as medical facilities.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Annual Amendment #2013-01 Drive-through Regulations

Dustin Lawrence, Planning Services Division; Elliott Barnett, Development Services Division; and Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works Department, facilitated the Commission’s review of the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code related to drive-through facilities. The review followed up on the discussion at the November 7, 2012 meeting. The Commission raised additional issues and suggestions, including: drive-through restrictions in the downtown should be summarized in a table like the other zoning districts; the 150-foot separation requirement from bus stops doesn’t include an adequate waiver process; stacking lane landscaping buffers and screening should include provisions for maintenance and irrigation; the stacking space quantity requirement could be clarified; coffee stands shouldn’t be exempt from all standards; and incorporate illustrations and examples into the draft code. The Commission concurred with the approach staff was taking and voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review, with the expectation that the issues raised will be properly addressed at the next meeting and the proposed amendments modified accordingly.

2. Annual Amendment #2013-09 Sign Code Revisions

Mr. Lawrence presented staff’s responses to the questions and concerns raised by the Commission in October 2012. The issues were primarily relating to sign brightness, hours of operation, height, and minimum sign area. The Commission raised additional issues and suggestions, including: number of exempt for above-sidewalk/under-canopy blade signs; prohibition of digital changing message center signs in pedestrian oriented areas; frequency of changing messages and hours of operation for digital changing message center signs; and super regional mall and public facility exemptions on digital changing message center signs. The Commission also discussed issues relating to feather signs and A-Board signs, and suggested adding standards for feather signs and increasing the number of A-Board signs allowed per business. The Commission decided to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

3. Annual Amendment #2013-06 Development Intensity Designations

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division, presented the proposed new framework for the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Designations and the corresponding zoning, as well as the associated text and map amendments to the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The framework had been modified based on the Commission's comments made at the last meeting on January 16, and included the following designations:

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family (low-density)
- Multi-Family (high-density)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Downtown Mixed-Use Center
- Urban Mixed-Use Center
- Community Mixed-Use Center
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Shoreline

Commissioner Thompson commented that the "Single-Family" and the "Multi-Family" designations do not recognize certain types of development; for example, Single-Family does not recognize duplex or mother-in-law units and Multi-Family does not recognize single houses. He suggested alternative terms such as "Residential (low-density)" and "Residential (high-density)" be considered. Discussion ensued. Commissioners and staff acknowledged that the terms of Single-Family and Multi-Family are commonly used and understood, that the community takes high pride on these terms and the associated connotations, and that it is the City's policy to protect and preserve the single-family neighborhoods while promoting mixed-use development. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments, as presented, for public review.

4. Annual Amendment #2013-12 Minor Amendments and Refinements

Mr. Boudet presented the proposed minor and "clean-up" amendments to the Land Use Regulatory Code intended to address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, and support efficient administration of the Code. The amendments included: establishing a new Administrative Determination permit type; creating a new level of variance, the Minor Variance permit; clarifying the ability for the Director of Planning and Development Services to approve equivalent approaches as part of the interpretation and application of the code; adding provisions for a one-year, one-time permit extension for certain Land Use Permits; allowing variances in all of the Downtown Districts; clarifying the measurement of building heights; and creating a new Use Category – Craft Production. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Commission acknowledged the receipt of the announcements regarding the "2013 Urban Studies Forum" (February 7, 2013), and the "Regional Short Course on Local Planning" (February 20, 2013).
- (b) Lihuang Wung briefly reviewed the tentative agenda for the February 20, 2013 meeting; he also provided an update of the logistic arrangement for the "Regional Short Course on Local Planning" and a status report of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.



MINUTES (draft)

Time: Wednesday, February 20, 2013, 5:15 p.m.
Location: Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 South 35th Street, Tacoma
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Tina Lee (Vice-Chair), Benjamin Fields, Mark Lawlis, Scott Winship
Absent: Theresa Dusek, Sean Gaffney, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Annual Amendment #2013-01 Drive-through Regulations

Dustin Lawrence, Planning Services Division, presented staff's responses to the questions raised by the Commission at the last meeting on February 6th concerning the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code related to drive-through facilities. The Commission suggested adding a provision to allow bicyclists to use drive-through facilities. Since this application had been approved by the Commission at the last meeting for the purposes of public review, no further action was taken.

2. Annual Amendment #2013-09 Sign Code Revisions

Mr. Lawrence presented staff's responses to the questions and concerns raised by the Commission at the last meeting on February 6th. He acknowledged that Chair Erickson had provided additional feedback and suggestions, such as only prohibiting digital signs on core pedestrian streets, putting a special exemption in place for the Tacoma Dome and other similar uses, and refinements on feather and A-board sign regulations, which will be incorporated. The Commissioners also discussed the logic and implications of prohibiting feather signs in pedestrian-oriented areas, and suggested that such prohibition be limited to core pedestrian streets and that staff look into allowing such signs for no-property business (such as food cart vendors). The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

3. Shoreline Public Access Alternatives Plan and Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines

The Commission suspended the rules to consider Communication Item #2 concerning the 2013 Annual Amendment Application #2013-05 Shoreline Related Elements.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, presented the final drafts of the Shoreline Public Access Alternatives Plan (PAAL) and the Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines (TWDG) that are intended to carry forward and integrate past shoreline implementation plans, including the Ruston Way Plan, the Shoreline Trails Plan, the Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan, and the Foss Waterway Design Guidelines, as well as update the public access and design strategies to respond to the goals and objectives of the Shoreline Master Program. Mr. Atkinson also presented the proposed revisions to the Waterfront Open Spaces and Shoreline Access section of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan with new references to PAAL and TWDG. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

4. 2013 Annual Amendment Package

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package, which included the following nine applications: #2013-01 Drive-Through Regulations, #2013-02 Countywide Planning Policies, #2013-04 Transportation Element, #2013-05 Shoreline Related Elements, #2013-06 Land Use Designations, #2013-07 Adoption and Amendment Procedures, #2013-08 Platting and Subdivision Regulations, #2013-09 Sign Regulations, and #2013-12 Regulatory Code Cleanup.

All the applications have been reviewed by the Commission and approved for public review purposes. Mr. Wung noted that staff is suggesting a minor change to Application #2013-08 where the requirement for complying with the Complete Streets Design Standards would be removed and future development projects would continue to meet the requirements of the Public Works Design Manual. This was in response to the concern expressed by the Master Builders Association. Mr. Wung also noted that there are three applications that have been removed from the package and are being conducted according to their own respective schedules; they are #2013-03 Container Port Element, #2013-10 Affordable Housing, and #2013-11 Trail-Oriented Design Standards. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package for public review and set the public date on March 20, 2013.

5. Communication Items

The Commission suspended the rules to consider Communication Items #1 and #3.

On Item #1, Ian Munce, Planning Services Manager, briefly described the Sands' application for Open Space Current Use Assessment and the Commission's involvement in processing the application. He noted that such applications provide an opportunity for certain categories of open space and agricultural lands to have their property tax structure based on the current use rather than on the traditional fair market value system, and the decision authority on them is shared by the City Council and the Pierce County Council. For that reason, Mr. Munce suggested that it would be appropriate that such applications are reviewed solely by the City Council and the County Council and that consideration be given to amending the Tacoma Municipal Code to streamline the existing review process. The Commission concurred with the approach. On Item #3, Mr. Wung briefly reviewed the tentative agenda for the March 6, 2013 meeting.

6. Retreat

At 5:50 p.m., the Commission conducted a retreat and an informational session with the presenters of the Short Course on Local Planning.

7. A Regional Short Course on Local Planning

The Commission reconvened at 6:30 p.m. and proceeded with the Regional Short Course on Local Planning, which was sponsored by the Planning Association of Washington and the Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC). Approximately 50 people were in attendance. Ms. Anne Fritzel of DOC moderated the short course; Mr. Munce provided an overview of current planning efforts and issues in Tacoma; and the following formal presentations were made:

- The Legal Basis of Planning in Washington State, by Phil Olbrechts
- Comprehensive Planning: the Context and Basics, by Ed McGuire
- Roles and Relationships in the Planning Process, by Deborah Munkberg

A question-and-answer session was held after the presentations. Mr. Wung indicated that all the presentation materials will be posted on the Planning Services Division's website at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning. The Short Course concluded at 9:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

Agenda Item
D-2

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ian Munce, Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS – Status Report
DATE OF MEETING: March 6, 2013
DATE OF MEMO: February 27, 2013

At the Planning Commission's meeting on March 6, 2013, staff will provide an update on the South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS project (a map of the area is attached). This will include an overview of the project's schedules, community outreach done to date, the scoping process and comments received, and the next steps and upcoming community input opportunities.

The City of Tacoma was selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. Coordinated by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), a 3-year, \$5 million grant for a 'Growing Transit Communities' program aims to:

- Support local efforts region-wide to promote socially equitable transit-oriented development
- Focus new job and housing growth in the vicinity of new high-capacity transit systems
- Put jobs and opportunity closer to where people live
- Sustain a healthy environment and a healthy economy in the decades to come

As a PSRC Catalyst Project partner, the City of Tacoma has received \$500,000 to develop a long-range Subarea Plan and area-wide SEPA Environmental Impact Statement addressing future development standards and incentives and coordinated infrastructure investments in South Downtown. As the second largest city in the Puget Sound region, Tacoma is the most important business center in the South Sound region and the South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS hope to capitalize on this potential and plan for expected future growth.

The South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS area encompass 600 acres of historic industrial and commercial land in the southern half of Tacoma's downtown and includes five distinct districts: the Dome District, Brewery District, UWT/Museum District, Thea Foss Waterway and Shoreline, and the Hillside District. The Subarea has a diverse built environment including approximately 100 historic properties but is also characterized by a relatively high concentration of underutilized land and buildings. The unique characteristics of the area represent an unmatched opportunity to absorb growth and transform into a transit-oriented community which is expected to absorb more than 30,000 new residents and 40,000 new jobs over the next 20 years.

Goals of the project include pre-approving up to 30 million square feet of new development space through the SEPA process; prioritizing transportation investments; identifying and prioritizing necessary infrastructure improvements; planning for parks, trails, and open space; and developing potential funding strategies. Some of the specific actions proposed in the Plan are:

- Align Downtown planning to further Vision 2040 with a focus on Downtown Mixed-Use zoning
- Approve the UWT's Campus Master Plan and add regulatory flexibility for the University of Washington Tacoma
- Advance a \$40 million initiative to rebuild the Brewery District Streets to complete street standards
- Rebuild Puyallup Avenue as a catalyst for transit-oriented residential and mixed-use development
- Fully participate in the design of the new Amtrak Station

- Accelerate Sound Transit's Freighthouse Square access improvements
- Creation of a "Quiet Zone" for trains in the Dome District
- Full Funding for the Prairie Line Trail and Thea Foss Esplanade
- Increase the South Downtown area's capacity to receive Transfer of Development Rights by restructuring the density bonus palette
- Add preservation of affordable housing to the list of TDR sending sites
- Address affordable housing objectives recommended by the City's Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group and PSRC
- Expand the market-based approach to off-street parking to all of South Downtown
- Allow Flexibility in the application of South Downtown design standards
- Program utility and street upgrades to compliment private investment

Throughout the creation of the Draft Plan and EIS two groups/committees have been actively participating in the process through their guidance and input. The first is the 43-member Working Group that was created by Council resolution and includes stakeholders with a diverse range of expertise and interests. Working Group members include representatives of non-profits organizations, neighborhood councils, transit authorities, governmental agencies, labor, and business interests. The other group that has been involved with the project is the Steering Committee which is comprised of residents and property and business owners within the boundaries of the Subarea Plan. Approximately 80 people/representatives are invited to attend the monthly meetings and about 20 people attend each meeting. These committees have been guided and assisted by the public outreach work of the Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium and the Cross Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County.

The Draft Subarea Plan and EIS have already been circulated for informal comment and will be released for the formal 30-day public comment period this month (March 2013). Public comments and stakeholder input will then be incorporated into the final EIS which will likely be issued in July of this year. The revised Plan is expected to be provided to the Planning Commission in September and then forwarded to the City Council for review and adoption no later than December 2013.

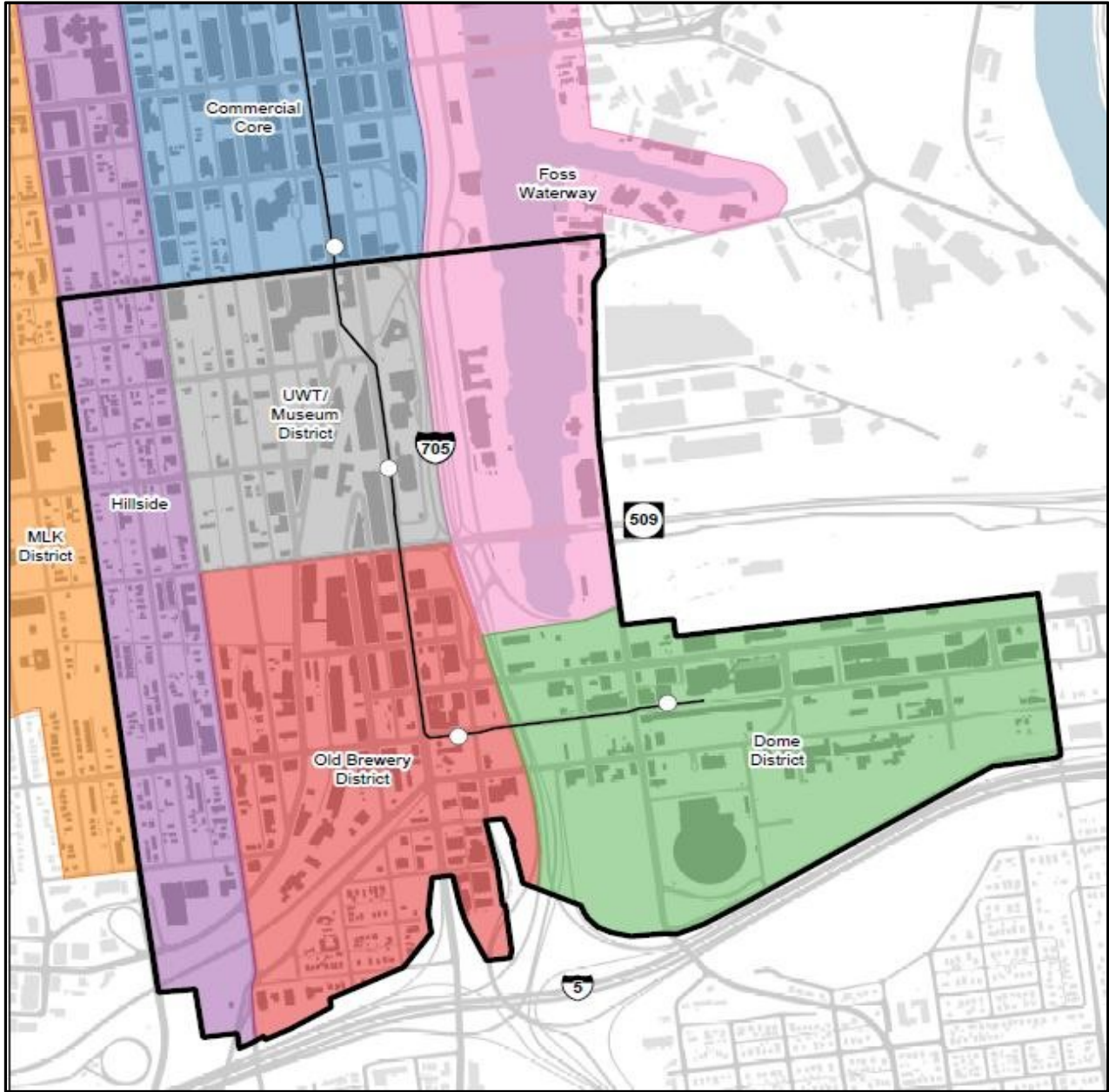
For more information about this project, please visit the following website: www.cityoftacoma.org/planning and click on "South Downtown Subarea Plan & EIS".

If you have any questions or requests regarding the South Downtown Subarea Plan, please contact Ian Munce at (253) 573-2478 or imunce@cityoftacoma.org.

Attachment

- c. Peter Huffman, Interim Director

South Downtown Subarea Plan & EIS Study Area





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**Agenda
Item
E-1**

February 21, 2013

Leonard Bauer, Managing Director
Growth Management Services
Department of Commerce
1011 Plum Street SE
P.O. Box 42525
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

RE: Tacoma Regional Short Course on Local Planning, February 20, 2013

Dear Mr. Bauer,

I would like to commend your staff, Janet Rogerson, Dee Caputo, and Anne Fritzel, for a great performance in coordinating and conducting a successful Regional Short Course on Local Planning in Tacoma on February 20, 2013. The event was attended by approximately 50 people including elected/appointed officials and staff from governmental entities in the region, employees of private firms, citizens, and students. They were fully engaged in the discussion with the three excellent presenters: Phil Olbrechts, Ed McGuire, and Deborah Munkberg.

As the Chair of the Tacoma Planning Commission and a retired urban planner and urban designer, I continue to find the short course interesting and beneficial and believe my fellow Commissioners do so as well. The presenters were able to give a concise history of planning in Washington from the first zoning enabling act through SEPA, SMP, and GMA. Regional planning, the importance of countywide planning policies, comprehensive plans, concurrence, etc. were thoroughly covered as was the important role planning commissions play. This included the Planning Commission's role in collecting and analyzing data, holding public hearings, considering policy recommendations on multiple issues including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, historic preservation, and sustainability, and then reporting these findings and recommendations to their elected officials.

We appreciate the important role your department has played, along with that of the Washington Planning Association, in putting on the Short Course throughout the State of Washington over the last many years and hope you will continue to be able to do so in the future. The course itself and the high caliber of the presenters clearly benefit not only people in planning and related fields, but also the general public. We look forward to hosting another one in the future.

Sincerely,

Donald K. Erickson, AICP
Chair