

Tacoma Billboard Community Working Group

Meeting 8

Monday, January 5, 2015, 4:00-6:00 P.M
Center for Urban Waters, 326 East D Street

MEETING SUMMARY

(as approved 1.12.15)

Working Group Members Attending:					
Tricia DeOme	X	Jill Jensen	X	Doug Schafer	X
Dale Cope	X	Eric Jackson	X	Ray Velkers	X
Nick Fediay	X	Mike Luinstra	X	Steve Wamback	X
Rusty George		Evette Mason	X	Sharon Winters	X
Pete Grignon	X	Rose Mednick			
Pam Guinn	X	Dale Reed	X		
Working Group Member Alternates Attending (* -- in audience):					
<i>*Dalton Gittens</i>	X	<i>John Thurlow</i>	X	<i>*Peter Wangoe</i>	X
City Representatives, Staff, & Support Team Attending:					
Brian Boudet	X	Karen Reed	X	John Harrington	X
John Griffith	X	Michelle Regan	X	Elliott Fitzgerald	X

The meeting convened at 4:05. Facilitator Karen Reed welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda for the evening. She also reminded the group of the addition of a meeting on January 12 and she recapped the ground rules.

The group approved the summary of Meeting 7 as submitted.

Karen then reviewed the overall direction from City Manager Broadnax and Council Member Campbell to the Working Group, as well as the consensus values and interests expressed by the Working Group (from homework #1). She also went over the proposed road map for meetings 8 through 11.

Peter Wangoe of Clear Channel (CCO) gave a presentation on CCO priority zones. The focus was on zones NCX, CCX, WR, DR, and DCC. Pam Guinn clarified that these are not the only zones of importance to Clear Channel; however, these are the five top priorities identified for this exercise. CCO's rationale for focusing on these non-consensus zones is these are the zones where the balance of the group's work needs to be done.

Doug Schafer asked what CCO views as the most problematic City regulations. Pam Guinn responded that there are many restrictions—the setback from the right of way requirement comes to mind as particularly restrictive. She said the goal is to make compromises and this presentation was designed to highlight priorities from CCO's perspective.

Tricia DeOme asked what can the group do to see some billboards come down, noting that the earlier exchange mechanism in code did not produce results? Pam Guinn responded that the group is in agreement about some zones—Shoreline and Residential, in particular. When billboards are removed

from these areas, there also need to be receiving areas, i.e., areas where billboards can be sited. She said this can be a win-win situation—remove from inappropriate areas and site where appropriate. She also spoke briefly explaining the term “cap and replace,” explaining that for certain zones, one approach could be to set a cap of whatever number of billboards currently exist in that zone with the intent to never go over that cap, but with the understanding that as billboards fail or need maintenance, they will be replaced.

Nick Fediay asked what CCO’s position is on total square footage: does CCO expect to add billboard square footage to other parts of town or see a reduction? Pam Guinn said this question is not settled and she mentioned that CCO has already reduced total square footage by 22 percent over the last couple of years. If further reductions occur, CCO would like “receiving areas” for new billboards to be sited. There is the possibility of eliminating billboards in some zones and consolidating, resulting in fewer numbers of structures sited appropriately.

John Harrington reviewed the numbers of billboards in Tacoma and the reasons they are nonconforming. The biggest factor making billboards nonconforming is the buffer requirement.

Ms. Guinn then asked City staff how the code for on-premise signs regulations compare billboards regulations for billboards—which are more restrictive? John Harrington replied that while on-premise signs cannot generally be as large as a billboard, there are more options for on-premise signs than for billboards, for example, digital options.

Nick Fediay asked about the City’s design criteria. Why did the City establish regulations that make so many billboards nonconforming? Brian Boudet responded that, for the most part, regulations were established for aesthetic reasons. Some of the rules relate to logistics, attempts to prevent interference with future development. He said he is not aware of any of the regulations being solely for safety reasons.

Doug Schafer asked, in setting the most recent set of regulations, did Tacoma look at what other cities have adopted, or to best practices in the Planning literature, or were the rules adopted in 2011 simply City Council preference?

Brian Boudet responded that some of the regulations were written based on public comment, some came from best practices in the Planning discipline, and some were based on Council preference.

Nick Fediay asked if CCO representatives could comment on what current City regulations are most onerous. Peter Wangoe responded that the prohibition against cantilevered and offset structures is difficult, and as Pam Guinn had already mentioned, the setback from ROW is also especially restrictive.

The group then turned to the subgroup work, beginning with Part 5: Design & Landscaping. The subgroups also worked on Part 1: Buffering. **Group 1** members for this discussion included Tricia DeOme, Doug Schafer, Pam Guinn, Peter Wangoe, Ray Velkers, Nick Fediay, Dalton Gittens, Dale Reed, and Sharon Winters. **Group 2** members were Steve Wamback, Jill Jensen, John Thurlow, Mike Luinstra, Eric Jackson, Pete Grignon, and Evette Mason. Results of the subgroups’ discussions appear in the Attachment 1.

The meeting ended at 6:20pm.

Attachment A: Summary of Discussion at Meeting 8 Regarding Design Code & Buffer Issues:**Part 1: Summary of Design Code Issues Discussion:**

Key: green shaded cells: consensus that this is a low priority to retain in code (it can go!)
blue cells—high priority to keep this provision
no color—split opinion

#	Code item -- CWG Recommendation	Group Votes High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) importance
J	2 billboard faces per structure, max <u>Split opinion</u> as to whether it is important to retain this code restriction.	Group 1: Unanimous high priority to retain this code requirement. Group 2: Consensus that it is low priority (assuming back coverage requirement retained.) (1-H, 6-L vote)
K.1	Faces must be w/in 5 degrees of perpendicular with road. Consensus: <u>low importance</u> for BB faces being perpendicular to road.	Group 1: low importance Group 2: low importance: (1-H, 6-L vote).
K.2	Faces must be back to back. <u>Moderate to High importance</u> for faces being back to back	Group 1: medium importance. Group 2: high importance (unanimous)
L	No offset or cantilevered construction of structure Consensus: <u>low importance</u> to retain this code provision.	Group 1: unanimous, low importance. Group 2: consensus low importance to both cantilevered (1 H – 6 L) and offset (7 L) construction.
M	May not project above adjacent building Consensus: <u>low importance</u> to retain this code provision.	Group 1: 60%+ view as low importance (1-H, 2-M, 5-L) Group 2: unanimous low importance. (7-L)
N	No rooftop construction Consensus: <u>high importance</u> to retain this restriction.	Group 1: Unanimous Group 2: Consensus (6-H, 1-L)
O	Must have facing to cover back bracing and framework Consensus: <u>high importance</u> to retain this restriction.	Both groups unanimous—high importance
P	Maximum 10 foot setback from street Consensus: <u>low importance</u> to retain this	Both groups consensus vote—low importance.

	restriction.	Group 1: (1-H, 1-M, 6-L); Group 2: 1-M, 6-L)
Q	<p>May not install a BB structure or onsite signage structure on a parcel/property where either such type of structure is already present.</p> <p><i>No consensus on whether to keep this provision. Discussion centered on whether it should instead be handled through dispersal requirements.</i></p>	<p>Group 1: More appropriate issue of dispersal rather than as a number of signs per parcel. As written it would have little impact on dispersal since two billboards could be in close proximity on separate parcels. Split of opinions with some considering it of low importance and some wanting a dispersal requirement instead.</p> <p>Group 2: 1-H, 2-M, 4- L Consider size of parcels. Handle as dispersal rule.</p>
R	<p>Screen base of support from pedestrian view. Alteration of street trees requires prior city approval</p> <p><i>Consensus: Low importance to retain this provision</i></p>	<p>Group 1: 1-M, 7-L</p> <p>Group 2: 7-L</p>
	<p>Alternate Concepts: WALL SIGNS</p> <p>1. Billboards in DCC, C-1, DMU, WR are wall signs (not freestanding) that do not block windows or historic architecture features.</p> <p><i>Consensus support for this idea over both groups-- medium to high support.</i></p>	<p>(Rating 5-1 with 5 being highest)</p> <p>Group 1: 5 votes rating “5”, 1 vote “3”, 2 votes “1”)</p> <p>Group 2: 1 vote “5”, 4 votes “4”, 2 votes “3”,)</p>

Part 2: Summary of Discussion at Meeting 8 Regarding Buffers:

Group 1 Brief recap of discussion:

- Discussed past buffers and buffers in other cities with Seattle being used as an example to support a 50 foot buffer.
- Concern expressed that 500 and 250 foot buffers too large to accommodate the high number of residential areas.
- Noted that buffers had the highest potential impact of all changes discussed and should be considered carefully.
- **Consensus to eliminate 500 foot buffer in favor of smaller buffer(s) (Yes: 7 votes No: 1 vote)**
- Discussion of the 250 foot buffer on 6th Ave: example of challenges of a 250 ft. buffer.

Group 2 Brief recap of discussion:

- **Discussion focused on several options for reducing buffers. (no consensus on any specific option)**
 - (1) Measure buffer from center of the zone, rather than the edge
 - (2) Maintain a 300’ buffer from any and all residential zones
 - (3) Minimize buffer if design guidelines, including lighting, are adhered to
 - (4) Go back to 1988 100’ buffer in exchange for no new billboards in NCX