



Home In Tacoma Public Hearing Public Comments Received

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Oral Testimony

Public Hearing – Home In Tacoma

March 6, 2024

- 1. Patricia Fetterly** – I first want to thank the planning department and our city forester for including tree protection in the draft code written to implement Home In Tacoma. In doing so, our public servants have recognized the value that trees provide for the health and well-being of all our citizens. They've also recognized the lack of equity in the tree canopy and the fact that Tacoma's tree canopy falls well below, unfortunately, many Puget Sound cities. Until very recently, the value of urban trees was not recognized by our city officials. This changed in 2018 when the City Council adopted the urban forestry plan, which set a goal of increasing our tree canopy, then at just slightly under and now slightly under 20% to 30% by 2030. The City Council also recognized the value of trees last year when it passed a long overdue ordinance to protect trees in the rights of way. It simply will not be possible to reach that 30% canopy goal unless strong protections for trees are included as part of Home In Tacoma. It is often said that there needs to be balance between tree protection and the need to increase the supply of housing. Tacoma, however, I would point out, has already provided many incentives to encourage development. These include the lack of impact fees imposed on developers and the granting of property tax incentives. New incentives for development are also contained in the draft ordinance. Balance simply cannot be achieved unless strong tree protections are also included as part of Home In Tacoma. Tree protection and increased housing and equity are not incompatible policy goals. All contribute to the quality of life in our city. The new code must encourage all these goals, including the protection of trees, to include true balance in the city. Thank you.
- 2. Tom Giske** – I live in Tacoma. I also would like to thank and commend Elliot and his team for the work they've done to bring landscape code into the Home In Tacoma—integrate the two. Lots of Douglas Firs. We, the people of Tacoma, are not living in a coma. We can see what is happening in unison. We're not clapping. When will we come to our senses? Unintended consequences are obvious to all of us. Yet we've been thrown under the bus. Never mind classrooms or parking, nor animals that are barking. Just build here, there, and everywhere until we have nowhere to spare. Give away tax revenue and our trees on the avenues, so homebuilders can demolish what can be preserved with polish. Outcomes are not low-cost housing, as you seem to be announcing—rather profits clearly ascending for developers here attending. For example, we ask you please do not permit our street trees to be counted as canopy and means to avoid penalty. Please do not give our public space in lieu of residential place for trees. We need to shade our homes and to protect our chromosomes. 200 names assigned our letter asking you to make our lives better, not for bonuses with fewer trees, rather requirements for more trees. We ask your consideration of our sheer determination. This gold rush for developers must include lots of Douglas Firs. This is our letter and it's signed by 200 people, not through lists and marketing programs, but by sheer networking. Thank you.
- 3. Courtney Davis** – I live in District three. Though this is a great draft code, there are areas that need to be clarified and changed. When you look at the bonus structure, it is codifying inequity and allowing for as low as 15% tree canopy in some cases. This means that lower income and BIPOC communities will continue to be in the most vulnerable of situations as climate change causes cities to get hotter and hotter and there will be more heat related deaths in these areas each year in Tacoma. Opponents of the landscaping code update will use terms like right tree, right place. There needs to be a balance between trees and housing and that a fee and lieu program should be put in place. These all sound like great concepts at face value, but please put a discerning ear and eye to what is actually being proposed. For the most part, opponents of these changes are not fully recognizing the fact that a healthy tree



canopy, scientifically proven to be 30%, is a public health and equity issue. There was a wonderful study done by the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group that shows that the landscaping code and housing code as it is written, can be achieved and that there's room for a 30% tree canopy on new development sites. And I'll just end with a personal story. I got an opportunity to volunteer with the Tacoma Tree Foundation with the Peace Lutheran Church in Hilltop in Tacoma, and we heard the pastor talk about how growing up in Hilltop he had to often go to North Tacoma and the outskirts of central Tacoma to be able to play basketball with his friends because there was 15 to 20 degrees difference in temperature in Hilltop because there was not an adequate tree canopy. Thank you for your time.

4. **Casey Twiggs** – I represent the Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium. The consortium provides education and advocacy to support affordable housing in Pierce County, and we appreciate the city's work to make Home In Tacoma a robust plan. We are excited about the rezones that will include more housing types and increased density while focusing on affordability and incentives. However, we would like to see an increase in the fee in lieu of affordable housing. The current amount of 72,000 needs to be higher and consistent with current cost as per state law. Affordable home ownership units average about 450,000, while affordable rentals go for anywhere between three and 500,000. We would also like to see a review of the income levels within the proposed UR zones happen every two years as opposed to stated as needed. To close, the consortium is always available to discuss and help guide Tacoma's housing policy. We appreciate your ongoing attention and dedication to affordable housing. Thank you.
5. **Jane Evancho** – I'm chair of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. We as a group have provided written comments as well. I'd like to speak to a couple of points that are in that letter. First of all, I'd like to ask that you consider restoring UR-1 zoning on the west side of Jackson Avenue parcels west of Jackson Avenue have been designated as UR-2 in the phase two effort. We believe this is because of the perceived proximity to the Geiger Montessori School. While houses are within the designated range, as the crow flies, in practicality they are well outside the referenced walking distance if a student were to cross Jackson at either 6th Avenue or South 12th street. In addition, the streets adjacent and parallel to Jackson are narrow, without sidewalks. Walking, garbage pickup, and emergency services would be severely impacted with allowed multi-unit development. We ask that the Home In Tacoma phase two zoning regulations redesignate the properties on the west side of Jackson Avenue as UR-1. I'd also like to speak to a request we have for public notification. As property owners with covenants and a City Council endorsed view sensitive overlay, we urge the development of a simple notification system that would inform development applicants of parcels that have a covenant or overlay. Many of the new zoning changes are in violation of our covenants, such as subdividing lots, setback distances, and tree heights, to name a couple. We understand that the city does not enforce covenants, but a courtesy notification of covenants and/or the overlay existence would be a huge help in reducing misinformation and help stem potential neighbor-to-neighbor litigation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
6. **Karen Kelly** – I live on the West Slope. I'm also on the board of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. We as a board, we encourage the Planning Commission to consider what we feel is an overreaction to anticipated population growth. House Bill 1110, which was inspired by the work of Home In Tacoma phase one is a more measured and practical approach. There has been no significant change in the population of Tacoma since the 2020 census—due to decreased number of children being born, people working from home and moving to other states, and having moved to other states that were more affordable. I will cite this census information in my letter to the Council. Our neighborhood has been described as postwar housing with 25-foot setbacks with street parking instead of alleys. The city's zoning proposals state front setbacks reduced from 20 feet to 15 feet in UR-1 and UR-2 and 10ft in UR-3. This will be hugely jarring and will destroy the character of the neighborhood if implemented. We suggest that an alternative to that setback should be an average of two adjacent lots which would be stipulated even with the housing bonuses one and two. Home In Tacoma phase one was proposed and passed by the City Council for low and midscale builds in residential areas. Over the following years, it has morphed into something that exceeds anything previously discussed. I support affordable housing and want younger generations to be able to afford pride in their homeownership, but this plan is not going to accomplish that. Phase one also included building design, which would be comparable to existing neighborhoods. This is also not being addressed. Lastly, I encourage you to look at Minneapolis

and Portland, Oregon who have implemented similar changes and examine any unintended consequences of such overreach. Thank you.

7. **Kelly Lucas** – Just briefly, I concur with the two prior speakers' statements. I would like to also add, as per an email with John Hines, we discussed the height limitations on the West Slope. I also live on the West Slope. The current limitations are 20 feet, and this proposal states a 35-foot maximum height. That's a huge differential. I would like to think that, what I worked my whole life, thus far, my husband, we've invested and now I'm going to lose my view potentially if that is not protected. That's why I bought there. Additionally, I'm very curious as to why Tacoma has not discussed, to my knowledge, rolling out implementing this plan in smaller increments. It would give us an opportunity as a city to change things as we went along to make corrections to pivot. Therefore, the rest of the city would not be subject to—I don't want to say disastrous, but—things that we could correct along the way. Thank you for your time.
8. **Gwen Felizardo** – I live in the Manitou area of South Tacoma. We've lived in our two-story 1912 home since 1978 and have since added a detached garage. We do not have plans to move and would like to add to our existing garage or build a second garage and build a rambler on the backside of our 75 x 100-foot lot—keeping our existing home and garage. The alley is fully accessible. We want to live in a rambler, no stairs and bigger bathroom, and have our son move into the primary two story which would eventually he would inherit. There are gaps in the proposed rules for the UR-1 which we fall under that would not allow us to realize the full functionality of our plan. Under the new rules, we are listed as UR-1. We plan and want to age in place, preserve the existing structures, add an extension to the back of the garage with an entrance from the front as well as the alley, build a detached or attached to the garage housing unit of approximately 1200 square feet. There would be three accessible walkways from the front of the house to the back as well as the full alley access. The gaps include the rules are too prescriptive and do not allow the planner flexibility to meet the intent of usability and functionality of the property with the client and our detached garage is considered an ADU which limits the build size. We want to double the garage, which is not allowed. We can only increase size by 400 square feet. We were also told that we may have to attach the detached garage to our home, current home in order to allow for an ADU in the back, which is not feasible. It would cut off our main access and then our personal property—building structures are limited by the floor area ratio instead of property ratio. You can read the rest of it, there's more. There's unintended consequences to being too prescriptive, and I'd ask you to look at that.
9. **Peter Bennett** – I'm the chair of the North End Neighborhood Council. We have written comments and submitted them to you through the email portal, but I just wanted to address how you will be looking at the proposal and will be looking at the comments. I want to urge you to use the approach of do no harm. I think that the Home In Tacoma proposal is obviously a good idea. The problem is its implementation and its impacts. So, if, as you look at these comments, could you address does each component achieve the overall desired result and are there any unintended negative consequences that come out of that? The limited time period between February and March that we have gone through is insufficient to understand the components and implications of this significant package of changes. A major component of the Home In Tacoma strategy was to increase housing affordability by increasing the current density allowed under the city planning regulations. As a result of the passage of House Bill 1110, there is now a state mandate that achieves that increased density. This removes the urgency for immediate implementation of a Home In Tacoma policy. I would respectfully ask that you postpone taking any action on approval or implementation of the current Home In Tacoma proposal. We as a neighborhood council and as all the neighborhood councils I would assume would be happy to work with you as you go through this. I did notice that Elliot's proposal with the dates did not include years, so we could just add next year on those dates and we could probably achieve it. Thank you.
10. **Carole Sue Braaten** – I am asking that the Planning Commission declare the Home In Tacoma phase two draft environmental impact statement inadequate as referenced in RCW 36.70A. It also needs an extension of at least six months in order to adequately reach all citizens and proposed businesses and others affected by the Home In Tacoma development. The DEIS—I am the only one and I live in Fife—that has a paper copy. I just got it today. There should have been ones at each meeting—hundreds available—so others could take it to other people. This is inadequate. I also worked on the RCW 36.70A

over 36 years ago, so I know what it entails. The Tacoma Power services, water, sewer, all affect Fife, all affect other areas. None of us were notified. Not one. Not my council members. I know I live next to them. No one. The Seattle Times today, dire water shortages. This affects our water, our sewer, and everything else. The water treatment plant is inadequate because it's in a tsunami, a lahar, and you have an earthquake fault line in front of it. In 2009, I had a mandatory evacuation out of there for a flood. It almost flooded. Now it needs to be moved. You need to deal with that. The PSE LNG—former Fire Chief Duggan did a catastrophic failure map that was never included in the PSE LNG EIS or FEIS. I talked to him. I have it. It's a 12.6 miles radiation of exclusion zone which explodes, blows out other things at that range and three mile thermal radiation asphyxiation zone. It flattens everything. So, you need that included. You also need to feel the effects of the Asarco water on the water system. I have other things, but thank you for your time and I ask that you extend it because I think everybody deserves the environmental impact statement.

- 11. Melanie Moor** – I'm a retired third grade teacher and I'm excited about this project. And I know we're growing as a city, and tonight we stand at a crossroads. We have the choice right now to make Tacoma healthier, more beautiful, more equitable, and a more vibrant city. Or we can just maintain the status quo of topping trees, not planting trees, living without trees. I believe that Tacomans want and need trees. We need to protect and preserve our existing trees, and we need to drastically increase our canopy to at least 30%. I ask you to do your part in making sure that the trees are planted and cared about for at least a minimum of three years and that you enforce the pruning standards and ensure protection of our heritage trees. In my opinion, the value of our trees will far outlive any of us sitting in this room and their value is worth more than the momentary capital gains of development.
- 12. Tom Rickey** – I thank the commission for hearing me. I'm concerned about an FAQ answer that was in the Home In Tacoma FAQs. The question was will zoning changes affect my property value and property taxes? And part of the answer was research has found that affordable housing does not lower property values. We wonder if legitimate research ever has been done to answer that question since affordable is not a demonstrable real estate value parameter. Use of adjectives such as affordable, pleasant, comfortable, et cetera sound nice, but have no appraisal value. We urge you to get an independent certified appraiser to assess and comment before moving forward. We're not concerned about the impact of affordable housing. We all want affordable housing. Our concern is the impact of infill lowering property values, and upzoning is a common planner's term. Truth is, upzoning to mixed-use of single-family next to multifamily downgrades those single-family homes by any professional appraisals tool. Home In Tacoma wants changes that lenders and appraisers are very concerned about due to the impact on lending and the value of residential properties—changes that don't align with the type of properties most Americans desire to live in. Your proposals suggest absolute arrogance and disdain for people who live in single family homes. Sure, real estate in general goes up over time, but mixing single-family with multifamily increases the multifamily values and decreases the value of single family. Appraisers call this economic obsolescence. So my concern is this. The valuation is yet another compelling reason that Home In Tacoma should be put on the next ballot. We citizens need more facts given to more citizens and more time to consider so that an informed public is able to vote their choice and not left to a handful of people who think they know more than the citizens about their community.
- 13. Georgette Reuter** – I'm here today to notify the Planning Commission that a letter has been submitted on behalf of our community-based advocacy group known as Tacoma Urban Forest Friends. And if you think that's a mouthful, you can just call us TUFF. Next, we would like to take the opportunity to thank Senior Planner Elliot Barnett and our Urban Forester Mike Carey and his staff for the leadership on the issue of tree preservation as outlined in the landscaping code reflected in Home In Tacoma phase two. We recognize that a healthy and mature tree canopy is a public health issue, and every citizen in the City of Tacoma has a right to an equitable tree canopy. Therefore, we encourage the Planning Commission to support the changes documented in the landscaping code to protect our city's valuable mature trees, and also to plant thousands more on private property. If approved, Tacoma would finally begin to address our legacy of having the worst tree canopy in the Puget Sound region, which I know we've heard a lot of tonight. We therefore acknowledge Tacoma is growing, and we welcome more people into this city. But we really can and we must create a balance between our goal to expand tree

canopy to 30% by 2030 and meet our growing population. Our neighboring cities have been successful in doing so, and we also know that Tacoma can as well. Thank you so much.

- 14. Joyce Conner** – I'm a homeowner in Browns Point and I'm also a residential real estate appraiser. I'm very concerned about this new zoning, not only for my neighborhood, but also for my career. The new changes will allow up to eight units per single-family property. This would then cause appraisals to be completed by commercial appraisers only. Commercial appraisers will be very overworked and residential appraisers will lose their businesses. Appraisers must determine highest and best use, and if the highest and best use is anything over four units, then it does go to commercial appraiser work. In addition, there will be no parking required. So, people will be parking all over the streets because they won't require a garage or a carport or any specific parking areas. I understand there's a shortage of housing and something does need to be done, but this, in my opinion, is not the way to do it. I've been appraising in Seattle since some of the new zoning has passed up there, and many investors are purchasing old homes. I've personally appraised these. They either tear them down or they replace them and remodel them and then add more units, maybe one attached to that and then another one behind or a duplex behind. So they pack the lot. I'm wondering if you guys worked with appraisers when you made up this new zoning. I'm wondering if there will be height restrictions for people who have views. I guarantee you that the comment that was in there about the values will still go up. I guarantee you that values will change when 4-plexes and 8-plexes and multifamily properties come to your neighborhoods.
- 15. Rick Donohue** – Thank you for being here and providing this opportunity for us. I want to echo all the comments that have been made. I want to open by saying, please don't Ballard my Tacoma. What does more density bring us? It brings more noise, more traffic, more garbage, more broken glass. We lose open space. Candidly, I'm a family guy. I got two kids. I'm raising a family here. And this is literally, I feel, an anti-family approach. We're actually taking family out of the language. More crime comes with more density. We can't staff the Tacoma Police Department right now. There's a \$25,000 signing bonus because we can't attract police officers to come here to work. To be clear, this does nothing to address our homeless problem, which is, I think, also tied to a lot of other social issues—drug use in particular. My point here is there's extensive availability for current apartments that are being built in the downtown area, and there's lots of other places throughout the city that can handle additional housing capacity. This whole thing is not necessary. I'd also like to point out what I feel is a fairly disingenuous comment about the state requiring this. They're following your lead. Then to fall back and say, like, oh, well, now the state requires it—we're just doing what the state says. That's really kind of false advertising here. It just feels like nobody's listening, you guys have already made up your minds about what's going to happen, and this is theater. My life and our neighborhoods are not theater. This is our community and you're going to change it. And change is inevitable, I understand that, but I really wish you would take the considerations of the community and the taxpayers in this community into close consideration. Thank you.
- 16. Lonnie Chavez** – I'm a new member of the community. I came here because I loved the community. I loved our neighborhood. In the short time that I've been here, I have witnessed an apartment building that has gone up that does not provide adequate parking in the middle of an area that has school, residential, commercial, and now an apartment. And so not addressing the parking issue, I strongly disagree with, and I'm fearful of what's going to happen to our communities.
- 17. Laura Svancarek** – I'm the Advocacy Manager at Downtown On The Go. We're the nonprofit advocate and resource for transportation in the greater Tacoma area. Thank you for taking comments. Tonight, I will be providing you with more detailed written comments from Downtown On The Go. But tonight, I'd like to share our general support of the Home In Tacoma proposal. We firmly support increasing density. Allowing missing middle housing types throughout the city is necessary. We're supportive of allowing developers to access bonus density by meeting affordability and retention requirements. We are also supportive of the expanded reduced parking area, as well as the enhanced bike parking requirements. And we appreciate the commission consistently going above the requirements of House Bill 1110. New development must be met with improved infrastructure to make walking, biking, and transit use safe, easy, and preferable for as many residents as possible. We appreciate that the proposal encourages

density in already walkable and complete neighborhoods, but we do ask that the city prioritize safety improvements along transit arterials, too. We must identify funding sources outside of grants to ensure that we can keep our infrastructure up with growth and not leave people stuck on the side of the road on a giant arterial. We encourage that the commission and the city seriously look at other funding sources for active transportation, like impact fees, transportation benefits, district vehicle licensing fees. We need to have money to make these improvements happen, to keep people safe, and make sure that everyone in Tacoma can get where they need to go. We must prioritize access and safety improvements in our transportation networks to show our current and future neighbors that they are valued here in Tacoma. So, thank you.

- 18. Tim Fikse** – I understand the need for greater density. Basic supply and demand says if we supply more property, the prices will go down. But I'm really troubled by the elimination of single-family dwelling, single-family zoning. Young people, young families, I think, still need something to aspire to. And I think living in a neighborhood where you can, where there's not cars parked all in front of your house and you can see your kids playing in the neighbor's front yard, and your neighbors can see their kids playing in your yard, and your kids can walk up and down the streets, I don't think that's something that we want to eliminate. I think this would go a long ways into eliminating that type of neighborhood, the character of the neighborhoods that we aspire to, where we know our neighbors, where we get together with our neighbors, where we see our neighbors. Seeing the way these multi, drastically greater populations in the same areas, I think would have a serious effect on that. So, I think we need to find ways to increase density without destroying what, for many people even today, is an aspiration to live in a neighborhood where they know people, where they feel safe, where it's not crowded. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.
- 19. Cindy Turco** – As the elected chair of the West End Neighborhood Council, I want to extend my support for my West Slope neighbors who are part of our council and my North End colleague. I urge you to reject the proposed Home In Tacoma phase two draft in favor of a less extreme plan and to extend the decision-making timetable. Amended Ordinance 28793 had no mandate. It passed due to a patchwork of compromises and promises. This draft package exceeds, I believe, the intent of amended Ordinance 28793 and goes far beyond the state legislative mandate. The recommendations for the West End Neighboring Council board are, (1) lower the density levels by merging UR-2 into UR-1. UR-2, as my West Slope neighbors mentioned, uses a misguided view of access to justify midlevel density in our neighborhoods. (2) limit density and a merged UR-1 and UR-2 to no more than the state-mandated four housing units plus two affordable bonus units. (3) limit density in UR-3 to the standards that you have labeled as UR-2 because again, UR-2 is really just midlevel density by anybody's standards. (4) retain deep and wide setbacks and the 25-foot height restrictions that were used for residential zoning before Home In Tacoma. And I can add, we had heard as of even last year after phase one had passed that we were going to have the same setbacks. I think that's just wrong. (5) require design standards in terms of scale and architectural style to ensure new buildings are compatible with neighborhood patterns. We are also going to submit something written that's much longer than this.
- 20. Dennis Munsterman** – I'm the treasurer of the West End Neighborhood Council, and I will continue where Cindy was. So, we also agree that we need to strengthen the tree canopy requirements to ensure that developers don't opt out. Next one, is require at least one designated parking space per housing unit. You can actually drive down 6th Avenue west of Pearl and you will see a new housing unit that went up where they have only one parking space for each unit, and there's cars all over the street any time of day, even during the day when they're away. The other thing is we want you to ban shipping containers for housing or residential storage. What an eyesore that would be. Require the developers to pay all the impact fees. Other points to consider are the state legislature's zoning plan for the entire state—means that have a reduced burden has been placed on the City of Tacoma. The Growth Management Act requires periodic review and provides for modification if the burden becomes too heavy for urban areas. The city's population figure seems inflated given long-term trends and recent demographic shifts. And the populations of Portland and Minneapolis have dropped despite upzoning due to the quality of life issues. Thank you very much for your time.

- 21. Tom Cline** – I live on the West Slope and I'm also part of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition Board. I've already submitted my comments online to you folks and the City Council. I would appreciate it if you read those. I would very much appreciate that. But at the same time, if I can ask a quick question. Earlier in the presentation there was mention of 600 comments—people responding online. Do they publish the ratio of positive responses against negative responses to this? I don't know if they do that. Maybe if they do, I've missed it and I apologize for that. But I think it would be beneficial to most property owners because this is such a sweeping change that the average person, the average property owner, doesn't have enough time to absorb all of this information. Most people are busy and probably can't come to this meeting and make a public comment. So, the only way we would know other than showing up here is if maybe you published all of the comments somehow so we can kind of get an idea as being part of the community, what percentage of the community is actually for this and what percentage is against it.
- 22. Tyler Stetson** – My family and I like living in Tacoma. We like the neighborhoods. We like the people. We like the trees. We like the history. We don't like inflation very much—t. hat's been in a lot of conversations lately. I looked it up and found out that regular goods and stuff the last ten years have gone up like 30%, like a third. Houses in Tacoma, 300%, like triple. I mean, who could afford that? So, these changes, they're not perfect. I especially like the bits about trees and stuff, but they're a step in the right direction, and they're doing a lot more than doing nothing. And doing nothing is how we get everybody out in the cold. It just kills me seeing that. I want to do something. So, let's get whatever incremental additional steps we need in this process to get to a point and then implement it, so that we can get more houses for more people and not tripling the price of everybody's place to live. Thank you.
- 23. Judith Anderson** – I just moved here in November, and I moved here from Long Beach, California. I moved here because you got old houses and I like old houses. I actually just learned about your whole program a couple of days ago and I'm really enthusiastic about the tree canopy thing. Long beach was terrible about the trees. They let them be butchered. I understand that people have issues, but there are going to be people moving north because the climate is changing and you guys are at least taking some steps to accommodate that. And I appreciate it. I mean, I moved north because the climate is changing. So, I just wanted to say that I appreciate what you're doing. I know it's hard, and I really like that I moved here.
- 24. Reggie Brown** – Elliot and Alyssa, thank you. You've done an excellent, amazing job. This is really hard. I've looked at it in great detail, and I like everything that you've done. I don't like the tree canopy plan at all. So, this is what I have to say. The trees have definitely been represented here. Property values have been represented here. I'm here to represent the 15,000 families that applied for 1500 housing vouchers in April of last year. 15,000 families, not 15,000 people, came to the Tacoma Housing Authority and said, we cannot afford without help. So, I just have two questions for the record. Do we not believe that there's a housing crisis? Because there's a housing crisis. No one's talking about it in this room, but there's a housing crisis and it's severe. And lastly, when is housing going to be more important than any excuse that we can come up with to not build more housing? Thank you.
- 25. Jeremy Rubin** – I grew up in the Hilltop area at a time when it was ranked in the worst places to live in Washington and one of the worst places to live in the nation. Drug activity, gang violence, prostitution, and there was no help. A lot of us that were moving towards higher education and dreams were pushed to get out of the hood, get out of the Hilltop. And now within the last few years, it's one of the number one real estate markets in the nation. A lot of us who have families who want to get back in can't afford to, even with decent incomes. And I get it. My mom used to walk me to the North End. It was actually one of the things she would do once a week to teach me and my brother how to dream. She would always say, look at the nicest houses because when you get your education, that's what you're going to have. I think what's being lost is the conversation around the people that are being impacted that we can talk about protecting our property values. And I get it. We can talk about protecting our neighborhoods. I get it. Even though when I lived in the neighborhood, nobody was looking to protect that. And that was a lot of single-family homes. There wasn't any multifamily at all. I will say this, though. I would encourage people for just a moment to get outside of themselves and figure out how can we be a part of the solution. That hasn't come up. I've heard about protecting trees, which I get. I love

Washington. I love our trees. I've heard about protecting our family values. I get that. But what do we do to make space for others outside of ourselves? And I think that that's just as important. So, I know that this is tough, but I want to thank the council for its help and I think that if we come together, we can figure something out.

26. Kit Burns – I live in the Hilltop. I've lived in Tacoma for the last 30 years and graduated from high school more than 50 years ago. I'd like to speak about three things. One is, you know that haste makes waste. So, I side with the people that say, hey, let's push the stop button. We still have enough provisions for people to build these houses. They can still continue, so there's no reason to rush this. I think we need some more time to consider this. Another point I want to make is the word affordable. I don't know what that is. When you say affordable—whenever I hear that—I always kind of cringe because I don't know if you're talking to me or if you're talking to Bill Gates. It's a word that has no meaning. I don't get it. To say that developers will build more affordable. I don't think that's going to happen. What needs to happen, though, is impact fees. Developers always plead poverty. I know, I've worked with them, but they come back and do more. Every contractor I've worked with pleads poverty, but they still make lots of money. Take for example, the mega warehouse that's going over the South. Tacoma Aquifer. You need to deal with the aquifer before we go forward. Think about that. They're going to put 120 acres over the property, which is the aquifer recharge area. There's no mitigation for that. There's a pretend mitigation. I can explain that, but not tonight. Take for example, the money in the Sixth & Alder Apartments. Those are really, I think, one of the better-looking apartments in Tacoma. When they came before the City Council, they said, well, this will cost \$30 million. It was completed in 2020 I think. Then two years later, it was sold for \$46 million. So, they made \$16 million in two years. They can afford a lot more. Every developer can afford a lot more. Deal with impact fees, deal with trees, and housing can continue as we refine this plan and make it good. Remember the phrase haste makes waste. Let's not hastily do this. Thank you.

27. Elliott Yarwood – I'd just like to voice my support for everything the Home In Tacoma initiative is doing. We're in the middle of a housing affordability crisis, and the only way the city can solve this is by becoming less desirable and lowering demand or building more houses and increasing supply. The median household income in Tacoma, according to census.gov, is only, and this is household income, is \$80,000 a year. With that much income, you could afford a \$350,000 house. When I looked at Zillow this afternoon, 21 out of the 238 active Zillow listings that's including condos was below that \$350,000 threshold, meaning that 91% of the homes on sale right now are only available to the richest 50% of households in Tacoma. And the remaining 9% of houses for sale right now are left to the poorest 50% in the city to fight over to see if they can get one. I really wonder how many people in this room could afford their mortgage if they were forced to buy their house again today with how much housing prices have increased in the last 10, 15, 20 years. Any policy that makes it more difficult and expensive to build new homes is a policy that is exacerbating our housing affordability crisis and our homelessness crisis. I would like to see more transit-oriented development in the Home In Tacoma project, and I'm glad that the city is taking an initiative and going above and beyond the state-mandated requirements. Thank you.

28. Vanessa Dolbee – Good work on behalf of the City of Tacoma staff. This is an excellent and a major project. 300 pages of code. I did not get a chance to read every single word, but I am here tonight to bring up one particular issue, and that is we are talking about a housing crisis, but we're also talking about a climate crisis. A piece in this code that I believe has been missed is looking at our opportunity as homeowners and property owners to provide solar panels on our roofs and to contribute to the solutions of climate. As we look at the heights and the transitions within these standards, we're going to result in impacting people who have already invested in solar panels without looking at access to light to roofs based on existing construction. And we also need to provide opportunities for those developments as they build in those backyards or add these other units so that they have that opportunity, too. The IBC, which may or may not be adopted within a couple of days down at the state, provides provisions where new construction is going to be required to be solar-ready. So to that end, let's make sure that these standards evaluate access to light on properties. And we need to focus on that specifically in those transition zones where we see the UB1. I think I'm saying it right. UC1 next to UC2 or UC1 next to UC3. And make sure that those heights transitions and that plane that you've

identified within the code is lowered so that access is available for light. Thank you this evening for my comments. And I also want to say my daughter sat through this whole thing, so thank you to her for sitting here for an hour and a half.

- 29. Carl Teitge** – First thing I'd like to say is it's a matter of time. I was a lawyer for years and years. I spent six years on the Planning Commission. I built 800 lots after I left the Planning Commission. I've done a lot of utilities. 300 of those lots were for people that earned below median income under the farm home economic opportunity program where they built their own houses over nine months. I built this stuff. But there's a couple of things. First of all, a lawyer and an ordinary citizen doesn't read this book in a month. I haven't been able to do it and I know how to do it. It's very difficult. Equity. Parking. How does a poor person get to work when their hours are four in the morning or they're at two to the morning? They need a parking place. This city is against parking. I've been down here to complain about it—and property I have in the north end—and quite frankly got told they don't care if we put in things like built-in parking. Do it. You lose two or three parking places along Baltimore Street. Every place they do that. But equity is you've got to get to work. And the equity with housing—I bought a house, and the gentleman talked about it, on Stadium Way when I was on kidney dialysis. I had three girls, two kids of my own, my mother-in-law. \$385,000 for a house that has 4500 square feet and a view. You can't buy a house that you can live in for \$385,000 right now. So, we got a crisis. This is going to take some time. Great effort, but there's some things that need to be done. Utilities is one. Nobody's considered it yet. How do we get them there? I don't think there's any part of this plan where anybody has addressed if we're going to get this density, how we can deal with the City of Tacoma telling us what we need to put into these lots where we can build more. So thank you, but it's a good effort. But man, this is on a jet plane.
- 30. Kristen Carlson** – I have lived in District two for 30 years, and I could go on and on about this. I really think that in many ways, although I know you've worked really hard on it, I do feel that this proposal is reaching for the bottom. And I hate to say it, but it's true. When you talk about what the state has mandated, this is the state mandate on steroids. I'm not sure it's needed. In fact, I don't think it is. I know it's not going to make our neighborhoods more beautiful. They're going to be a lot uglier. I don't know where the tree canopy is going to come from when you have that kind of density. I just don't see where it comes from. There's going to be fewer trees. There can't possibly be more unless you're going to take out whole neighborhoods and just plant trees. My biggest concern is infrastructure. I look around the city. St. Helens Avenue is terrible. We have issues with water. We have issues with sewer. We don't charge impact fees to developers. How are we going to pay for—we have increased density. I guess this assumes that everybody works remotely because nobody's talking about bringing any big employers to the city. I don't know where the jobs are coming from. I mean, spoiler alert, Tacoma is not Tokyo. It never will be. We don't want it to be. This idea that everyone's going to ride the bus and ride their bike and walk. I walk 8 miles a day. I walk all over the city. My husband bikes hundreds of miles every week. It's awesome. But we have three drivers in our house, and we have three cars. And I'm tired of this hypocrisy. I'm tired of it. I'm sorry to the on the go person who spoke earlier, but I've stood at the intersection of 38th and Steele and watched the busses, and most of them are empty. It takes an hour to get to Target from 21st street, and people are not going to give up their cars. That's fantasy. It is absolute fantasy. Thank you.
- 31. Steve Jones** – I've lived in Tacoma for 40 plus years in the same house, oddly. So, I want to ask you a question. This is to you. Are we just checking a box tonight or are we really listening to what the people are saying? That's an open question. You're free to respond or not. This is feeling like we're rushing into chaos, is what it really feels like. And again, others have said, we appreciate your efforts for the good of the order, but I'm not satisfied that we have taken the time to analyze this carefully. There's a lot of different interests here that are being represented. And I feel like the preponderance of our attention is looking at the minority rather than the majority. It feels to me a little bit like this is a thinly veiled retelling of the Robin Hood story in a covert attempt to enrich some at the expense of others. That's really what it feels like. We have contractors, and you probably already know this—you're the Planning Commission, who have left the city and they've said it's already saturated. There's no money left. We've mined this city and we're leaving. We have apartment buildings that are remaining vacant. There's plenty of places for people to stay. And if you want to talk about affordability, please, would one of you please define that for us? I mean, the people out here have asked repeatedly, what does that

mean? Maybe I can't afford to live in it, but maybe you could. I don't know. I mean, who knows? Because it's undefined. So, do we have issues here? Do we have homeless issues? Yes, we do. But I'm not confident that your efforts are in this proposal tonight. I would ask you to please, as others have said, please extend this review, give more opportunity for public input.

- 32. Jodi Cook** – I've lived here for about 28 years. First, I do want to say how much I appreciate city Senior Planner Elliott Barnett and our Urban Forester Mike Carey for addressing in one way our deficient citywide tree canopy via the proposed landscaping code. Some people don't understand because I think we live in an area that has a lot of green grass. Everybody thinks that we have a lot of trees, things are really green and we're really healthy in Tacoma, but we're not. If you remove Point Defiance, if we remove all the gulches around Commencement Bay, a GIS specialist took a look at the tree canopy in Tacoma and has ascertained that there's only a 15.3% tree canopy in neighborhoods. If you take a look at the map, you will see that most of Tacoma everywhere is below 20%, mostly between 10 and 20%. So, we have a tree canopy problem. And so I'm really hoping that through the efforts of this suggestion with the landscaping code that you do endorse it as it is written, because we need to be able to preserve the little bit of tree canopy we have today in neighborhoods—not talking about the parks, I'm not talking about the gulches. So that we have an opportunity to move forward to robustly get to that 20-30 goal, which I think we're going to have to plant 10,500 trees in the next seven years to meet a 30% canopy. I hope that you will continue to fully endorse that. Secondly, I'm going to make comments as it relates to the bonus changes. I strongly object to the new bonuses that have been applied just in December and January to Home In Tacoma. It has with the three different zones, UR-1, UR-2, UR-3 that you have bumped up in the case of UR-2, double what House Bill 1110 states, which is up to six units with a bonus. You've entertained eight units in December and then you added on twelve units to UR-2 in January. I think the other aspect is with the UR-3 zone, which was formerly called midscale, was to be a buffer between mixed use centers and one and two story homes. With a maximum height of 35 feet. It was just to be residential, not a mixed use, that was supposed to stay in the mixed-use centers in Tacoma. With this new iteration, the bonus for UR-3 is up to 45 feet and four to five stories, which it appears may be in some cases allow commercial use via cup process. I'll just say it's disingenuous the way that this is being approached. Thank you.
- 33. Heidi Stephens** – Now that the state is implementing density regulations, the speed and overreach of Home In Tacoma two needs to slow down. There are still far too many unaddressed issues and unanswered questions such as future home buyers' potential, inability to receive FHA and VA loans after rezone, commercial appraisal concerns, and limitations of future single-family home sales when land is more valued by developers over the house. And let's be clear, walkable neighborhoods means no parking and no transit. But people will still need to get to outlying shopping and jobs somehow. There isn't nearly enough protection of mature trees or tree canopy requirements, especially in the most lacking communities, so a fee in lieu of retaining a tree is not acceptable. Tax breaks to developers has not resulted in affordability. Increasing for-profit housing supply to lower demand means units sit empty, so that's not helping homelessness. And still no impact fees offsetting what will essentially be residents subsidizing developers. And worst of all, nothing requiring residential construction zoned areas to be added to the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District. Even though the draft EIS mapped the entire city as an aquifer recharge zone. Both maps are wrong. That's enough to pause this. A housing crisis should not overshadow the pending water crisis. Houses being built today are no longer small single-family homes with large yards and trees. Mega multifamily buildings and parking lots are covering significantly more impervious service, so infiltration recharge must be considered and more protected. Within this draft EIS, there were some smattering notations of aquifer impervious surface and recharge. I wanted to read a quote which admits this, and yet it draws a conclusion with absolutely no evidence saying, although no significant adverse impacts to water resources are anticipated, the city could implement mitigation measures. But that's not an appropriate impact study. Lack of data does not excuse the need for actual hydrologic assessment or proactive mitigations. There's no valid modern-day science or current data included here at all, so these are serious ramifications.
- 34. Erin Dilworth** – I am the Healthy Community Planner at the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department and am a resident of Tacoma. The health department has been working on a health impact assessment of the Home In Tacoma DEIS and associated draft code. I will give a brief overview of the HIA

recommendations and will work with city staff to get you the final HIA for your consideration. The health department supports the highest density zoning alternative and recommends that Home In Tacoma move forward with adoption and implementation without delay, but there are a few modifications we would like to see. Providing as many housing options as possible will lessen the risk of displacement, especially displacement outside of one's current neighborhood or community. Accelerating the objectives of the anti displacement strategy is one way we can lessen the harms caused by current and future displacement. Often when we think of density and more complete neighborhoods, walking and biking and more physical activity in general may come to mind. For this to be true in Tacoma, we need to ensure that our neighborhoods are actually walkable. This can be done with an equity-based walkability analysis, and we should prioritize sidewalk installation and maintenance in the areas designated for more density. With increased density often comes more options for public transit and, therefore, more connections to opportunities and less air pollution from cars. However, our transit network is not set up to accommodate the predicted increase in residents. While our system for traffic impact fees is being formed and ideally accelerated, we can mitigate some of the likely increase in traffic emissions with expanded tree protections, which I'll talk about now. Trees are a part of our public health infrastructure. They absorb harmful air pollution that can cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease, mediate temperatures both indoor and out, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for recreation and social connection. As we densify our city, we need to ensure that the areas in Tacoma that currently have low tree canopy and therefore don't receive these health benefits, don't experience an even greater loss in tree canopy. Equity guardrails need to be put into place in the landscaping code to ensure that development will not cause a neighborhood's urban tree canopy cover to decline, especially for those areas that score low on the Equity Index. Thank you.

- 35. Kathleen Roberts** – I was born in Tacoma, and we have inherited—with my siblings—our parents property that they purchased right after the war. We love Tacoma so much, so we keep the property and come and go. Parking is a major concern of mine because the street already is close to 6th Avenue and would be an area where you would not protect parking. However, with people parked on both sides of the street, there's an inability to even drive down the street if there were two cars coming opposite ways. I would just encourage you to consider the parking considerations, not making them worse, but at least looking at them street by street. Second concern I have is on the historical properties. I noticed the last time I was there, and I grew up in a home that was built in 1995, that the compatibility of design may not be as high on the list of considerations. I used to walk by that blue house where Tarzan used to live every day on the way to Stadium, and now there's a big block house across the street from us. It just looks incompatible to have the historically protected properties, having these other properties almost next door or across from them, and I would encourage more consideration there. Thank you for this opportunity.
- 36. Mike Fleming** – I live in the West Slope area of Tacoma, and I'd like to comment on the part of the Home In Tacoma (HIT) proposal that deals with trees. During a recent Planning Commission meeting, forestry staff spent over an hour explaining tree-related details, including how HIT proposals would support Tacoma's tree canopy goals. I listened with great interest as I live in an area that the city has designated as a view sensitive district, an overlay which applies to about 10% of Tacoma's land area. During that staff presentation, I did not hear anything about fostering compatibility between trees to be planted and preserving residents' views. So, in furtherance of that compatibility, please consider asking staff to add something that encourages planting of low-growing trees in view sensitive areas. Perhaps requiring or recommending a variety of tree species to plant as part of the permitting process for new development. And lastly, please note that over half of tonight's speakers mentioned trees in their comments, which is a message in itself. Thank you.
- 37. Brett Johnson** – Thank you for providing the opportunity for feedback here. I understand the need for the density increase in Tacoma and other cities. As somebody who at least I like to consider myself an environmentalist, I understand that we're trying to take development pressure off of our rural lands farther out in the county. I grew up in South Hill, Puyallup, which is the poster child of suburban sprawl. So I do get the need for building up an infill in our city, but I think any reasonably minded person knows that it has to be balanced with other things that are also important. For example, sewer systems. We have the sewer system and the capacity to handle the new development that's going to be going in

over the coming decades. That needs to be addressed with impact fees. How about our water supplies in the summer? We're drawing from aquifer-based water supplies sometimes because we need to tap into that like in August when it's driest and hottest. Also transit – are we going to actually have the busses and the light rail and whatnot that we want to achieve this walkable community vision that folks have? So, there's just a lot of details that need to be addressed in this thing. Tree canopy has been addressed at infinitum already. I think some of the parking requirements along some of the major arterials need to be rethought. It might be a little bit of pie in the sky thinking on some of that. I'm just looking at the area around 6th Avenue, and it's like no parking requirements—might be a little bit extreme. Final comment, please support increasing our urban forestry staff so that we can accommodate the tree canopy planting and maintenance goals that we have over time. Because with three people right now it won't happen. We need to invest in our staff to make that happen.

- 38. Gordie Peters** – My wife and I have lived in the West Slope since 2005, and I'll try and be brief as a number of my neighbors in this area have already spoken and brought up some good points. The one thing I wanted to bring light to was that the West Slope doesn't exactly end on Jackson. Jackson and westward flows down toward Titlo, but everything between 8th all the way down to 19th—which is our border with University Place—there are a number of streets, primarily Geiger Street, that are also view property and would be impacted by the UR-1 designation changes down on the west side of Jackson, as well as the designation of UR-2 for everything on the east side of Jackson that goes up to the top of that ridge, which extends to Geiger and in a couple of places near 12th, near St. Andrew's Church on Meyers. So, some of those are view homes as well, and I wanted to bring this to attention here so that Jackson isn't the dividing line for the West Slope. Thank you very much.
- 39. Charlie Schilling** – I would just like to say that the initial thing of saying that you're going to go further than the state mandate seems too broad and too big. If you're going to start doing something like this, like other people have said, it should start more slowly and more cautiously. It seems like you're not taking into account not having enough time to get public opinion for what's going on. I also live on the West Slope and agree with other people that this area of the city does not have the infrastructure or the commerce to support high density housing. Nobody's going to be walking up that hill from Titlo Park to 6th Avenue to Jackson to Geiger to get to places of commerce. It just seems like it's too fast. Thank you.
- 40. Kimberly Freeman** – I wanted to start by thanking you for all of your time. I know that you are volunteers. I know that this is an enormous package that is before you, and it is probably the biggest decision that you're going to make while you sit on the Planning Commission. I wasn't really going to speak on the proposal. I do have some comments, and I'll send those in. I wanted to speak to you as Planning Commission members and to just really think about how to roll this out with some checks and balances going forward so that there will be reviews as things happen and the city can come back and really look at how each of the code changes worked or didn't work and make changes before it impacts further across the city in a negative way. So, potentially think about rolling it out in increments or just making sure that there is review after the changes that the code is allowing, after these changes go in, really digging in and looking at if it worked the way we expected or are there changes we need to make? And again, I just want to thank you for your time and thank you, Elliott, for all of your time. And frankly, thank the city for bringing the conversation forward. It is a conversation we need to be having. Thank you.
- 41. Yvonne** – I have been living on this block for 64 years and my parents before me, and there are already too many people on this block. There is no parking for me, my elderly sister, or my husband. We definitely do not need more people on this block. I just found out about this today, and I wanted to join this meeting. I don't have any eloquent words to speak. City of Tacoma has even failed to even pave our alleyway for 64 years, but they want to build a huge development here. I'm totally against it. And if there's any paperwork or anything that I can fill out, I will do so. I do not want another person on this block. I will welcome all the trees that you want to put on here, but we can't take another person. There is no parking. There is no space.
- 42. Rebecca** – I just want to mention, I think a few points that many people have already mentioned. I think we need to look at evolution, not revolution. We need to look at this in an incremental way, not try to

solve everything that might occur in population long before it does occur in population. Starting with, there are many areas in Tacoma that already have heavily impervious surfaces. They're on transit, and they're near downtown jobs. And in those areas, there are many empty or derelict properties. That needs to be a stage one. I noticed in the last year or so a number of apartment buildings have been going up there. There are many office buildings that are now not used for offices. The mayor recently said that we don't have a lot of vacancy, but that's because there's people that own them or they're still committed to them by lease, but they're not occupied. She also noted that. So those need to be converted into some other use, probably residential. That's something that needs to be factored in. Failing to incorporate parking as a requirement for residences will just cause friction between people. And we certainly don't need anything else that's going to cause friction between people. Neighborhoods are critical to people connecting and thriving. Expecting people to do their shopping, climb a steep hill in the rain carrying several bags of groceries, or to get half a mile from a bus line to their house, it's just not realistic. It's not going to happen. So, we really need to revert to keeping the new density in transit corridors and where density already exists, and eliminate the bonus approaches. Evolution, not revolution. Thank you.

- 43. Adam Torkar** – I appreciate the time to allow me to speak. I just wanted to say that I live in the Proctor neighborhood, and one thing I really love about this neighborhood is just the old trees. Everywhere you look there's a different house, and you have the ability to see the water. I think I can maybe speak, like others, for instance, our neighbor to the north, one of the first things that they say when I tell them I live in Proctor is that's how Ballard used to be in the 1990s, or that's how Fremont used to be in the 1990s. So, I get everyone's concern. I definitely think Tacoma needs more housing, but I also think there needs to be a balance because Ballard definitely has gotten much more crowded. There's a lot more apartment buildings that are shielding out people's views next to small craftsman houses. Those houses have since lost their views, as others have said. There tends to be more trash and more garbage. I definitely think in implementing this plan, I would hope that maybe it would be in a phased approach, so we weren't doing it all city wide at once. I think the beauty of, for instance, in Proctor, it feels almost like a small town inside a big city, and it's wonderful. The trees, the beauty, the walkability. I just think that if we go too fast and build all these high rises, that particular neighborhood and others in Tacoma might lose their charm. And that's something that I worry about since I've moved here. I really appreciate your time. That's just a concern that I have along with the parking.
- 44. Amy Pow** – I want to thank the city staff and, in particular, Elliot Barnett, who's working on this project so diligently for the past few years. I'm a retired planner and lived in the West Slope area for about 20 some years, and I love Tacoma. I caught it home for years, and I'm so proud of being a part of it. I made my comments in writing and I'm not going to repeat that, but just hearing the public comments, the thought that came back to me, which is crying out loud and clear, is I really encourage the city to implement that project by phase. Try to focus in areas with high opportunities, so that you can demonstrate to folks that this is going to work and it's going to improve your property value by implementing form-based code. And I really encourage the planners to think about the performance measures well before it's being implemented and in determining that performance measures work with the public, work with a group of people that are able to champion the project for you together, and it's a good opportunity to work with the public and build trust with them. So, this is my very last comment. I really encourage the Planning Commission to give serious consideration of this project is a very, very worthwhile project to improve equity in the city. Thank you.

--- (Public Hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.) ---