



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

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Public Comments

Meeting: Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Submittal: Written comments received at planning@cityoftacoma.org
by 12:00 noon on the meeting day

Subjects: Comments are addressing the following Discussion Item(s) on the agenda:

F1 – Home In Tacoma – Phase 2

**No. of
Comments:** Three



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¿Necesitas información en español? Cần thông tin bằng tiếng Việt? 한국어로 정보가 필요하십니까? ត្រូវការព័ត៌មានជាភាសាខ្មែរ?

Нужна информация на русском? Потрібна інформація українською мовою? ☎ Contact **TacomaFIRST 311** at (253) 591-5000.

From: [David Fisher](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Home in Tacoma - Public Comment for January 17, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting
Date: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 11:58:37 AM
Attachments: [Public Comment to City of Tacoma Planning Commission Meeting 1-17-2024 - David K Fisher.pdf](#)

Planning Commission Public Comment in regards to Stormwater Drainage & Vehicle Accessibility for tomorrows meeting January 17 2024 - see attached

Respectfully submitted,
David K Fisher

David K. Fisher AIA- LEED
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The Roberson
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Tacoma, WA 98402
(office entrance on court D Alley)

HOME IN TACOMA
MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING
JANUARY 2024

HOME IN TACOMA

PRESCRIPTIVE COMPLIANCE FOR URBAN RESIDENTIAL UR1, UR2, & UR3

DAVID K FISHER, ARCHITECT- David@DKFisherArchitects.com

WINIFRED CHAPIN, EDITOR

JANUARY 16, 2024

PROPOSED CONCEPTS & CONSIDERATIONS TO CITY OF TACOMA PLANNING COMMISSION

TO SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS OF PERMITTING MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING INCLUDING:

STORM DRAINAGE & UTILITIES

VEHICLE ACCESSIBILITY

MY GOAL & INTEREST FOR MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING IN TACOMA

As a licensed architect for over 37 years with my entire professional career in the South Puget Sound area and my career beginning and ending in Tacoma, I have unique experience in design and permitting all kinds of building types in this special region. My deep experience exposed me to many different planning codes from a variety of Washington State Counties and Cities. My goal is to use my experience while referencing the past or present Tacoma Municipal Code to help create and simplify user-friendly, positive, future code that promotes interesting, earth-friendly, environmentally healthy, efficient, and affordable Missing Middle Housing.

Storm Drainage & Utilities

In the newly proposed Urban Residential Zones UR1, UR2, UR3, the lots are fairly small and according to the HIT study, 80% of Tacoma's lots are between 6,000 sf to 10,000 sf. With an increase of Missing Middle Housing, the built footprint will enlarge and this will result in less pervious ground landscape areas where storm water can infiltrate into the ground. In the city lots with sloping land to the street, the storm water currently drains off to the street either to a city roadside swale or through the vertical concrete curb with a drain pipe into the gutter and then into a city street catch basin storm system. In the city, in lots that slope away from the street, the storm water flows to the neighbor's yards, alleys or hopefully into designated drainage swales, creeks or waterways. Very few existing lots with or without houses have a functioning onsite detention structure. Some, but very few, have infiltration trenches or rain garden ponds or swales. After completing the complex storm water management forms and related documents, many times, in the 6,000-10,000-sf lots, the storm drainage is simply a drain pipe directed off-site into the city street drainage system with no treatment. Hopefully with NO onsite parking required, we will have less of a need to treat storm water. However, there are prescriptive ways to treat driveway runoff water as found in the Environmental Services SWMM. It is necessary to address this stormwater runoff problem that will come with increased density. I believe this can be achieved with the current permit process and will not require the professional services of a licensed Civil Engineer as is found now in the current Environmental Services SSP and SWMM. Civil Engineers will be needed if the owner/applicant chooses or is forced by the code to go beyond the prescriptive path for storm water detention and treatment. Currently, we need an Engineer or Professional to do soils sample analysis reports to prove the site soils will not handle infiltration. This seems to be backwards, expensive and will delay and discourage Missing Middle Housing.

I propose that the existing 16-page *Combined Stormwater Site Plan (SSP) and Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan Report Short Form* be simplified and abbreviated. To keep the cost

and time reduced and the viability of Missing Middle Housing, the Environmental Services Department needs to provide a hookup to an off-site storm system or an approved discharge to an off-site waterway. This would drastically simplify the permitting process. I propose that Environmental Services can require storm water systems on individual sites or lot-specific stormwater structures but only if they identify the lot requirement in a map of the neighborhood storm system beforehand. This way difficult lots can be tagged before they are developed and the developer will have clear instructions about what needs to be done, preventing needless time and money wasted jumping through all the hoops in place right now. It is of the utmost importance that Environmental Services studies and continually updates the storm water requirements per lot after they do a neighborhood stormwater flow and system evaluation from every water shed to the Puget Sound or water body. A simple drain pipe to a thought-out neighborhood storm system would be fantastic for all future Missing Middle Projects! The ideal system would have all storm detention treatment on city right of ways and city property so that maintenance is done routinely, system conflicts are minimized, and improvements can be made in an orderly fashion with fairness to all, no matter what neighborhood in Tacoma! The Environmental Services Department needs to fully understand and control the city's storm water systems to make sure the system protects the citizens from floods and/or water damage whether from a neighbor's runoff or a heavy rainstorm. The current system puts all the responsibility on the owner to engineer, build, and maintain on-site storm water systems. Some owners maintain them and some do not.

The city storm water monthly customer fees should be raised to upgrade and improve stormwater systems including studies, monitoring, maintenance, stormwater structures, and all improvements. Charging developers, land owners or building owners for site-specific impacts (water does not subscribe to anything site-specific), or charging them for local or city-wide improvements is regressive and only makes new housing more expensive since the added construction costs will be passed on to rents or the purchase price. Making all customers pay the same water fee per month is fair

and much like our on-going cost of buying insurance. We buy insurance and hopefully we will not have to use it, so the risk is shared by everyone. Clean storm water being released into our waterways should be the responsibility and a requirement for the city. A clean, unpolluted Puget Sound is a benefit to us all! We certainly want to support and encourage owners who invest in rain gardens, decorative ponds, infiltration trenches, rain barrels, and other environmentally helpful storm water detention structures. But the city needs to have a base storm water hook-up in place for everyone.

Utility Accessibility

Utilities, such as water, sewer, electricity, internet etc. can be served to the site or lot as one connection and then separate connections to each unit. Metering to each home unit can be done by the projects/building management. The owner/developer should decide how they want to provide utilities, separately served by utility or combined, and who will manage metering and utility payments. The owner/developer will need to evaluate construction cost, management cost, value, and other factors to decide the best way to provide utilities. If we want to encourage ADU's, we need to stop charging an extra fee to hook up the ADU to the city utilities. The ADU can go through the existing building's utilities. We have to stop encouraging density with our words and then discourage it by charging so many extra fees, complex code requirements, and giving power to the NIMBYs.

Vehicle Accessibility

If onsite parking is city required for Missing Middle Housing at any ratio per housing unit, then driveway aprons from the streets or alleys will be required. As we know, in single family zoning a

majority of our land is dedicated to the vehicle and not to people. Requiring onsite parking is problematic with the higher density of housing units. Potential green gardens, side yards, back and front yards become parking strips. This will make any infiltration of storm water difficult and more expensive. Street to site driveway aprons will have to become continuous or include very wide curb cuts if we require parking on site. We will be forced to place the parking stalls in the front yard, perpendicular from the street. Picture a row of town houses with parking in front of each unit. There will be little room for nature. More driveway aprons mean less parking on public streets, which are already paved. Perpendicular parking strips off alleys cut into the potential for outdoor yards and patios and cut into the space for housing humans. With 5 ft side setbacks and 15 ft front and back setbacks, parking will have to be placed under the buildings and this will not only increase the cost of the building which will be passed on to the renter or buyer but also use up an extra floor for humans. If an owner wants to provide parking for the renters or buyers of the higher end condos then so be it, but do not require parking. That is not Missing Middle Housing. It is not affordable. If we have no requirement for onsite parking we can use our city right of ways, that in fact, are very wide compared to other cities. Parking can be parallel, angled or perpendicular and on one side or both of the already paved street. We should make use of the dedicated right of way for vehicles and sidewalks, and reserve lots for people's homes. The right of way can also be used for underground storm detention vaults or other utility needs.

Respectfully submitted

David K Fisher – Architect

Winifred Chapin – Editor

From: ryan@meachamdev.com
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments for the record for the 1/17 planning commission regarding Home In Tacoma (HIT)
Date: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 4:54:05 PM

My name is Ryan Meacham and I'm a homeowner in Tacoma as well as a builder and realtor. The following are some comments I'd like the board and planners to consider on the Home In Tacoma program. See below:

1. Per the planners own studies of the Home In Tacoma and application of the rules, the amenity space requirement seems to be an issue and nearly as restrictive as the former lot size, lot width or yard space requirements. This amenity space should be deeply reviewed in regard to the practicality of adding viable density and easier permit review for the standard Tacoma 5K or 6K SF lots.

2. There is a current comment in the HIT as follows: " J. Remove the landscape buffer requirement when the site is separated from a residential district by a street" . This should be specified somewhere to whether the City code is referring to a street only or both a street and alley. This is confusing if it isn't specified. Note: my idea would be to remove the required buffer fully because if every lot can have 4 units, what are we 'buffering from' between zones. A buffer won't have any visual effect where 4 units or more are allowed on any and all lots.

3. Under 13.06.090 site development standards, B. Landscaping standards-"to require tree retention in ur zones" needs to be flexible if trees are within the building footprint. There are many sites where a tree is in the middle of the lot or the root system is within 2 feet of a building footing. If a tree can't be removed, a good and affordable building design is very difficult. If the City wants tree canopy, then I suggest to have a fee in lieu or replacement tree planting coverage as part of the code, and that these both remain flexible. If a site is full of trees because the site has been undeveloped for 30 years, it will be impractical and nearly impossible to develop the site if all trees have to remain.

4. Part of the new HIT is to lessen the required width of entry paths connected to the City sidewalk from the current standard to 4' for a smaller quantity of units. I agree with this concept since sidewalks are impervious and wasted space on tight 5000 -6000 SF lots. I would like this 4' standard width carried through to the general code and included in our 'current' high density business district zones. Herein, why would we have the agreeable smaller entry paths in UR while higher density areas are still within the X district zones.

Thank you and please make this of Record:

Ryan Meacham
 Windermere Real Estate
 Meacham Development, LLC

-----Original Message-----

From: Ryan Meacham <rmeacham1974@gmail.com>
 Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 11:16 PM

To: Meacham Ryan <ryan@meachamdev.com>

Subject: Amenity space requirement is an issue. Too excessive and diminishes the ability to add design interest, building modulation, etc. too hard to meet

Sent from my iPhone

Ryan Meacham

253-222-5883

From: [Heidi S.](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [matthewgmartenson@gmail.com](#); [assteele@msn.com](#); [jordanrash.tacoma@gmail.com](#); [TPCDorner@gmail.com](#); [bsanthuff@gmail.com](#); [sandeshtpc@gmail.com](#); [robb.krehbiel@gmail.com](#); [brettmarlo18@gmail.com](#); [chris.tacoma@gmail.com](#)
Subject: Public Comments for 1/17/24 Planning Commission Meeting, HIT2
Date: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 5:46:13 PM

Public Comments for January 17, 2024

Re: 1. Home In Tacoma – Phase 2

Planning Commissioners,

Before authorizing public release of zoning and standards for Home in Tacoma Phase 2, the package must include:

1.
Protection of mature trees -and- tree canopy requirements within residential zoning for all housing density categories, private and commercial.
2.
Requirements of residential construction and zoned areas to also comply the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (since housing being built today is no longer small single-family homes with large yards and trees; so infiltration-recharge must be reconsidered and more protected, against these ever-increasing residential impervious surfaces).

It's critically essential that these items are within the draft, prior to its release for public review and hearing.

Thank you,
Heidi Stephens