



## **MINUTES**

(Approved on 07-17-2019)

- TIME:** Wednesday, June 5, 2019, 5:00 p.m.
- PLACE:** Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
- PRESENT:** Stephen Wamback (Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Jeff McInnis, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel
- ABSENT:** Anna Petersen (Vice-Chair), Dorian Waller

### **A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL**

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. It was announced that Commissioner Waller had resigned. A quorum was declared.

### **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### **C. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **1. 2019 Amendment - Future Land Use Map Implementation**

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, facilitated the Commission's review of public comment received regarding the Future Land Use Map Implementation (FLUM) as part of the 2019 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. He explained that staff is asking the Commission for very direct direction on what to move forward for potential recommendation, and that while focusing on zoning changes, any Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Map amendments could be made at the same time to ensure consistency. He then gave a brief presentation discussing general comments received and gave an overview of high density multifamily designation before going into area-specific review.

Concerning the area specific review, Mr. Atkinson explained that he would present each area, highlight comments received and staff recommendations, then the Commission would discuss and indicate which option they would like to move forward with.

(The meeting was recessed at 6:00 p.m. and resumed at 6:19 p.m.)

#### **(1) STADIUM**

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He noted that there is currently a significant mix of high-density and low-density multifamily. He presented the options of the proposed rezone to R-4 (excluding VSD) or to maintain existing zoning, which would be R-4L and is recommended by staff.

Commissioners discussed and agreed on maintaining the existing R-4L zoning. There was some discussion on possibly down-zoning to single-family in the future, however that would render several properties non-conforming. Commissioner Santhuff requested to see Historic Register properties indicated on the map in future materials.

#### **(2) DOMETOP**

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He explained that there are three separate areas grouped together as Dometop, and if the Commission would prefer to create distinction between the areas for zoning that is an option. The proposed rezone would

be to R-4, which would create an abrupt transition to the south. Staff recommendation is to maintain the existing R-4L zoning.

Commissioner Strobel commented that with investment being put into McKinley Street Bridge, the center district could become very walkable and have more access to transit and amenities. Commissioner Horne stated that he prefers maintaining R-4L, and noted that he does not like the idea of allowing taller building right at the end where the best views are and ignoring the properties behind them. Chair Wamback agreed with R-4L, and added several points, discussing that this area could be part of a discussion on a citywide View Sensitive District (VSD) and also that due to its topography, the area furthest to the east is not actually very accessible and could possibly be zoned R-3. He also stated that Commissioner Strobel made a good point, and that he could see the center area being zoned R-4 eventually. After some discussion, the general consensus was to maintain the current zoning.

(3) NARROWS

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He noted that there was a lot of concern about how the transition would take place and possible displacement, as well as creating a confused mix of housing with the rezone. He noted that the city does not do condemnation to stimulate development. Three options were presented: (1) staff recommended proposed rezone to R-4L, (2) consider rezone to R-3, or (3) maintain existing R-2 zoning.

Discussion ensued. Commissioner McInnis began the dialogue by stating that from a planning standpoint he sees how an up-zone would make sense, but that he likes this neighborhood for its affordability, among other reasons, and he would like to keep it R-2. Several Commissioners agreed with this, some stating that they could see going to R-3 but not up to R-4L, and remarking on the character and stability of the neighborhood.

Also discussed was the existing mixed-use zoning adjacent to the neighborhood. Chair Wamback stated that mapping this area as low-density would be inconsistent with the zoning around it, and he believes the entire Narrows Mixed-Use Center needs to be revisited. He added that there is a lot of potential in the area, but that it is not well used and the mixed-use area is too small to be effective. He stated that he would like to see the entire area zoned as R-4L or higher, and that he is not comfortable with down-zoning the map. Other commissioners supported the recommendation to look at the Neighborhood Center more broadly with consideration for the adjacent neighborhoods.

The general consensus was to rezone to R-3, and that any future up-zoning should be done as part of a larger study connected to the mixed-use center.

(4) 72<sup>ND</sup> AND ALASKA

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He explained that historically, one of the fundamental issues in this area has been where to draw the line between commercial and residential. However, the Commission would not be discussing the commercial at this time. Staff recommended either the proposed rezone to R-3 or to consider R-4L, though the area did not meet the initial criteria concerning high frequency transit. Staff also gave the option of maintaining the existing R-2 zoning.

Commissioners discussed and generally agreed on R-4L, specifically commenting on the proximity to the park and walkability to the commercial area.

(5) 34<sup>TH</sup> AND PROCTOR

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He noted that there are a few properties within the proposed area which are currently non-conforming and would become conforming with the rezone. The proposed rezone is R-3 with the VSD on the eastern half of the street and just R-3 on the western half. Staff recommends the rezone, but also gave the option of maintaining the existing R-2 zoning.

The commission discussed briefly and generally agreed on R-3 zoning.

(6) 26<sup>TH</sup> AND ALDER

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He identified the proposed rezones as the transition areas between the center commercial block and the surrounding residential. The rezoning options for this area are the proposed rezone to R-3, which is recommended by staff, or to maintain existing R-2 zoning.

Discussion ensued. Commissioner McInnis asked about possible non-conforming multi-family properties in the top left area, which Mr. Atkinson clarified would not be cleanly brought into conforming use with R-3 zoning but would be more in line with the general intent. There was particular discussion about the homes across the street from the Big Value Market on North Alder. Commissioner Santhuff stated that these homes have a consistency and quality of character. He would be concerned about these being zoned to R-3 and would like to see them excluded, which several Commissioners agreed.

There was also some discussion about the possibility of the 2 parcels north of North 26<sup>th</sup> being rezoned to R-4L. The consensus seemed to be R-3 with special consideration for some properties as R-4L. Mr. Atkinson stated that staff could come back with an alternative map for the Commission to review at the next meeting, showing R-4L for the two specified areas and the rest maintaining single-family zoning.

(The meeting was recessed at 8:10 p.m. and resumed at 8:24 p.m.)

(7) 6<sup>TH</sup> AVE

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He explained that the basic zoning in the area is C-2 at Lawrence, and R-2 at Monroe, but the Comprehensive Plan identified these two end areas at Monroe and Lawrence streets because the existing uses are predominantly residential and maintaining residential uses in these areas would help to prevent potential continuous commercial activity not supported by Plan policies. The staff recommended option is the proposed rezone to R-4L. Other options included are to maintain the existing R-2 zoning or R-3 zoning as an alternative.

Commissioners discussed and concurred on the proposed R-4L rezone.

(8) NORPOINT

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He noted that this area is the closest thing to a commercial center in Northeast Tacoma and that previous rezones have created a donut hole of R-2 in the district. The option presented to the Commission are the proposed rezone to R-3, which is recommended by staff, or to maintain the existing R-2 zoning.

Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, also made note that though the area did not meet the criteria for R-4L now, it does fit into the Comprehensive Plan designation, meaning that it would be fairly easy to change the zoning up to R-4L at a later date.

Commissioners discussed the zoning classifications in the area and clarified that some of the adjacent land is in Tribal Trust which the City has no jurisdiction over. Overall, the consensus was on the proposed R-3 rezone.

(9) 56<sup>TH</sup> AND M

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He emphasized that one of the biggest concerns of this area is the Unitarian Church on the northeast corner. He noted that the goal is to not split-zone properties, but in this case there are three separate parcels with one use, the church on the corner and their parking lot to the north. The church is allowed outright in the current commercial zoning, but would require a conditional use permit within R-4L. The staff recommended option is the proposed rezone to R-4L. The second option would be to maintain commercial zoning on the corner and utilize T Zoning for the lots off South L Street.

The Commission discussed these options. It was agreed that they did not want to make the church non-conforming, so those parcels would be held over for further discussion and move forward with the proposed R-4L for the rest.

(10) MT TAHOMA

Mt. Atkinson emphasized that this is a utility site and is publicly owned, so it is unlikely that there will be significant redevelopment, but the proposed rezone is an opportunity to think about what is needed in this area in case something was to be developed. The options presented were the proposed rezone to R-3 or to maintain the existing zoning, and also to decide if it should be split-zoned or not.

Commissioner McInnis noted that this seems like an area that could go beyond R-3 and suggested bumping up to R-4L for the entire area. Other commissioners agreed, and the consensus was R-4L.

(11) PORTLAND

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He emphasized that this is an area with a lot of potential and that it really calls for a broader corridor plan. Staff gave several options to consider: (1) proposed rezone to R-4L/R-4; (2) recommend corridor plan to address land use and infrastructure, with potential consideration of a Neighborhood Center; (3) maintain current zoning; or (4) shift potential residential zones.

Discussion ensued. Commissioner Givens raised concerns about the local businesses across from Salishan in the proposed R-4, stating that he would like to see them recognized. Chair Wamback discussed Pierce County's future plans around annexation in the area, and noted that unless there is significant transit improvement, Portland Avenue would become a main transportation corridor. He stated that the area needs attention and is afraid that supporting a short term band aid of a zoning change will allow it to be ignored. Commissioner Edmonds disagreed, stating that she would rather not wait to do something because a corridor study could take time. Overall, the Commission agreed that they should move forward with the proposed rezone now, and strongly recommend a corridor study.

(12) S 19<sup>TH</sup> AND PROCTOR

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Boudet explained that the concern for this area is that the center parcel does not connect to the street, but that the rezone could create a more logical zoning boundary line. The proposed rezone is to R-4L, but could also be R-3 or R-2. Commissioners supported the proposed R-4L rezone.

(13) N YAKIMA

Mr. Atkinson provided the Commission with a summary of public testimony for this area. He acknowledged that many of the public comments received were concerning the area's VSD. He stated that any portion zoned R-4L in the VSD would have a 25-foot height-limit and staff does not see an inherent conflict. He also emphasized that it is proposed for R-4L due to the planned high-frequency transit in the area. Staff provided three options to consider: (1) proposed rezone to R-4L, (2) maintain existing R-2 zoning, or (3) alternative R-3 zoning.

Discussion ensued. Commissioners expressed concerns that the area could become choppy with the proposed re-zones and generally favored maintaining R-2 or possibly R-3 zoning. Commissioner Strobel inquired about the large apartment complex in the area, which is currently non-conforming. Mr. Boudet recognized that it may not be conforming with the R-4L zoning, but would certainly be more consistent.

Commissioners also discussed the parcels on the west of the map, which are unique due to their proximity to the gulch. Concerns were raised about promoting development in the area, but also not wanting to take away from the corridor. It was agreed that R-3 would be a good middle ground.

#### **D. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING (June 19, 2019)**

- (1) Urban Design Program
- (2) Public Scoping Hearing on 2020 Amendment Scope of Work
- (3) 2019 Amendment – Recommendations

#### **E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

Mr. Boudet provided the following:

- Personnel changes and updates:
  - As previously mentioned, Commissioner Waller has resigned. The recruitment process to fill the District 2 position will be held soon.
  - Commissioner Givens and Vice-Chair Petersen have been re-appointed by City Council for another three-year term, representing the “Architecture, Historic Preservation and/or Urban Design” and “Environmental” position, respectively.
  - There will also be a new Commissioner representing District 4 starting at the first meeting in July.
- The Tideflats Steering Committee will be meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup> to speak generally about perspectives, interests, and desires out of the Subarea Plan. They will also start the discussion on the appointments of the stakeholder group.
- The JBLM Airport Compatibility Overlay District is now being considered for adoption by the City Council. There were a lot of comments made appreciating the Planning Commission’s work on the project.
- The City Council will conduct a study session on the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, and consider a resolution on the same night making a recommendation to Sound Transit on which station location and alignment options should move forward for study in the EIS process.
- This is Chair Wamback’s last meeting, staff thanks him for all his work on the Commission over the last 6 years.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

***\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:***

***[http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees\\_boards\\_commissions/planning\\_commission/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/)***