



## **MINUTES**

(Approved on 04-15-2020)

- TIME:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
- PLACE:** Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Tacoma Municipal Building  
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
- PRESENT:** Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel, Alyssa Torrez
- ABSENT:** Ryan Givens

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

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. A quorum was declared.

### **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

The agenda for the meeting was approved. The minutes for the February 19, 2020, meeting was approved as submitted.

### **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Petersen called for public comments on Discussion Items 2, 3, 4, and 5.

The following citizens provided comments:

1. Tony Ivey – Mr. Ivey is a resident of Tacoma, also a field organizer for Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters. He commented that the Community Engagement Plan of the Tideflats Subarea Plan needed to center on equity. Public engagement should be distributed early and often to reach all communities, especially to diverse ethnic communities including Central and South Tacoma. The engagement should be done via multiple communication platforms; meetings should be scheduled at different times so that members of the public could attend. The engagement plan would also need to provide useful information to the public, with broad context and connections to impacts on their daily life. Mr. Ivey additionally advocated that the public should be empowered with some decision-making ability during the engagement process.
2. John Carlton – Mr. Carlton is a resident of Tacoma. He expressed appreciation and support for Mr. Ivey's comment. He stated that while jobs had been created, the destruction in the Tideflats area was extreme with toxic waste sites. He called the name "tideflats" an irony, as there was no tideflats left, adding that native species had been destroyed. He urged the Commission to include restoration and sustainability of the natural portion of the Tideflats in the greater discussion.
3. Nikie Walters – Ms. Walters voiced her concern that no health professionals were involved in the Tideflats Subarea Plan; she believed such professionals should be included. Ms. Walters also emphasized the importance of public participation, especially for large projects such as the Tideflats Subarea Plan that would carry impact into the future. She stated that it was necessary to listen to the public, of which some members had great ideas that should be incorporated into the plan.

4. Diane Walkup – Ms. Walkup is a resident of Tacoma, who has great interest in the Tideflats area. She called the Tideflats “one of the most magnificent salt-water estuaries” that produced food, salmon habitat, and food source for other species, etc. She would not want to see such a jewel reduced to an industrial site. Ms. Walkup would like to see good environmental policies and sustainability. In closing, she hoped to have substantial stakeholders of the project being public members and expressed interest in serving as one in such case.
5. Les Pogue Jr. – Mr. Pogue lives in the Hilltop area, and had attended a prior event where the Tideflats Subarea Plan was announced. Referring to Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier, Mr. Pogue stated that Executive Dammeier, using the image of a departing plane and its passengers, had indicated that the public would be engaged from the start of the project. However, Mr. Pogue had received emails saying otherwise. Additionally, he commented that the Planning Commission meeting time of 5:00 p.m. hindered participation from the public, especially those working until that time or later. He also deemed the Commission membership lacking in diversity and representation. Mr. Pogue concluded by saying it was detrimental to truly engage the public before carrying on the process.
6. Barbara Church – Ms. Church lives in the Northeast Tacoma area. She agreed with previous speakers about representation, adding that it was important to have information about health and safety. She indicated that she had previously attended an Advisory Group meeting and was grateful to be able to observe them in action.

#### **D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **1. Public Hearing – Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0**

Chair Petersen called the public hearing to order at 5:24 p.m., the subject of which was the proposed changes to the Residential Infill Pilot Program, Phase 2.0. She went over the procedures of the hearing and asked Commissioners to introduce themselves.

Mesa Sherriff, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the meeting objectives and next steps. The Residential Infill Pilot Program was established in response to the recognition of housing needs in the City. While the program is not directly related to the Affordable Housing Action Strategy, it is a near-term mechanism to test infill-housing types and help address the issues. Mr. Sherriff, then, explained each housing types proposed in the update as well as their respective changes. He also went over the application process and provided a summary of public comments received thus far.

Chair Petersen called for testimony. The following citizens provided comments:

1. Bruce Arneklev – Mr. Arneklev stated that about 4 years earlier, the City had rezoned his area and planted Christmas trees. Referencing page 185 to page 205 of the [Planning Commission's Recommendations on 2016 Annual Amendment](#) to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code, he shifted to mention his disabled son, who was living with him, and a disabled granddaughter currently without housing, to demonstrate his familiarity with housing needs. Mr. Arneklev also mentioned Pastor Bruce Walmer, whom he stated had worked with homeless people and might have input to offer. Mr. Arneklev closed his comment with a poem.
2. Diane Walkup – Ms. Walkup stated that she was interested in Accessory Dwelling Unit and Cottage infill, which would help her financially. She had a garage that could be converted into a cottage where she could later live in and lease her main house. She suggested the Commission focus on planning for homeowners as well as low-income people in need of housing. She would also like the permitting process to be fair and affordable.
3. Justin Goroch – Mr. Goroch is a business owner in Tacoma. He presented five (5) “L’s” that he believed were the cause and could as well be a solution to housing crisis: land, labor, lending,

lumber, and laws. Mr. Goroch commented that the Residential Infill Pilot Program was a step in the right direction and expressed his support.

4. Nikie Walters – Ms. Walters wanted to see natural components incorporated into the program. She then explained that along with more housing, there would come a need for more power source. She had attended a study session at Tacoma Public Utilities where a speaker suggested bringing nuclear power to Tacoma to accommodate development. Ms. Walters claimed that people would find such decision problematic. Additionally, she explained that her home had solar panels installed; and from her understanding, batteries to store excess solar power were prohibited in Tacoma. She would like the City to allow such batteries.
5. Les Pogue Jr. – Mr. Pogue commented that it was not clear how revenue from development was invested in future growth and to support resolving housing issues. He requested the Commission to provide such information.
6. Chuck Sundsmo – Mr. Sundsmo commented that the program had a long review process and encouraged the Commission to speed that up. He argued that the program should be approved and move forward as fast as possible, because there was a housing crisis in Tacoma.

Chair Petersen reiterated that written comments would be accepted until March 6, 2020. She closed the public hearing at 5:51 p.m.

Commissioner Santhuff requested staff, at the next meeting, to walk through the timeline of the application process, so that the Commission could determine if the timeframe could be reduced and how.

The meeting was recessed at 5:53 p.m. and resumed at 5:58 p.m.

**2. Pierce Transit Destination 2040 Long Range Plan Update, and**  
**3. Pierce Transit Bus Rapid Transit**

*The Commission decided to listen to both presentations from Pierce Transit before providing comments.*

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, welcomed Pierce Transit staff and provided context information in terms of how the subjects of the two presentations relate to the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan.

Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit, indicated that Pierce Transit was in the public review period for their Long Range Plan Update (LRPU) and would appreciate a comment letter from the Commission. He moved on to present the objectives of the update. Mr. Stavish highlighted that there would be ten (10) new routes and increased frequency from 1 hour to 30 minutes for all routes. He also provided an overview of comments Pierce Transit had received, adding that they were utilizing a dynamic and interactive software called Social Pinpoint to solicit feedback, which proved greatly effective. Finally, he noted that the draft LRPU and its appendices were available for public review on their website.

Sean Robertson, Pierce Transit, introduced himself and proceeded to provide the Commission with a project update, particularly the route that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) would cover. Furthermore, he explained the challenges that Pierce Transit was facing in regards to the E. 26<sup>th</sup> Street turnaround. The bridge's load is lower than the potential weight of a 60 ft. bus. Pierce Transit was in communication with the City about retrofitting the bridge; in the meantime, buses may detour to E. 25<sup>th</sup> Street as a resolution.

Mr. Robertson also presented traffic analysis, from which some concerned would require additional study. Regarding bus selection, he indicated that Battery Electric Buses (BEB) was the preferred option, leading to consideration for installation of top-off chargers at Commerce Street. In terms of branding and stations, there were three (3) options with the design concepts of Suspension, Mountain, and Ripples. Mr. Robertson

described inspiration for each as well as design strengths and drawbacks. Moving forward, upcoming outreach effort and timeline were presented.

Discussion from the Commission ensued. Regarding the BRT, Commissioner Karnes asked if the BEB was used by other BRT systems, to which Mr. Robertson responded that IndyGo, of the City of Indianapolis, was the most recent to use BEB. For the LRP in particular to the BRT route along S. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Commissioner Karnes pointed out that per the City's Comprehensive Plan, Sound Transit intended to have light rail along that corridor. He recommended Pierce Transit engage the City and Sound Transit in a high capacity transit study of the S. 19<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. He additionally asked clarifying questions about the LRP.

Commissioner Edmonds inquired about how significant changes in the Tideflats area, if made, would be incorporated into the Long Range Plan. Mr. Stavish indicated that there would be mechanisms to adjust the plan should the need arise. Commissioner Edmonds continued to state that many people were pleased with the express service from Northeast Tacoma to Downtown, and asked about ridership.

Commissioner Strobel wanted to know if the future service plan was showing prioritized routes or full buildout. Mr. Stavish responded that it was the full plan; however, Pierce Transit would determine an implementation plan to prioritize what to build first and execute incrementally. Moreover, Commissioner Strobel asked for what Pierce Transit could do to increase frequency and ridership and support infill development in Tacoma, as well as if there was any consideration for sustainable measures (e.g., green building design) in the BRT station designs.

Vice-Chair McInnis recused himself from the discussion as he (his firm) had become involved in the project.

Commissioner Santhuff wanted to further study Portland Avenue for optimal utilization. Secondly, he would like Pierce Transit to explore recreational areas and connecting routes for those destinations. In terms of current route alignment, he commented that Tacoma Avenue did not have a bus route running its entire length, especially in Downtown. He felt that the corridor, with the right investments, would yield great results. Commissioner Santhuff also provided a comment on streetscape and tree selection for the BRT station designs.

Commissioner Torrez inquired about how Pierce Transit planned to notify the public about their meeting dates. Mr. Robertson stated that they had a consulting firm called EnviroIssues lead their outreach efforts via multiple platforms (door-to-door, flyers, virtual open houses, social media specialists, pop-ups, etc.).

Chair Petersen asked the Commission for consensus to send a formal letter to Pierce Transit. Consensus was given. Commissioner Karnes volunteered to compose the first draft. Any Commissioners with comments would send emails to Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, so that he could forward to Commissioner Karnes.

The meeting was recessed at 7:01 p.m. and resumed at 7:06 p.m.

#### **4. Urban Design Studio**

Mesa Sherriff, Planning Division Services, provided a recap of the Interim Summary Report covering the milestones from 2005-2019 and the composition of stakeholder groups. He also went over the decisions and key takeaways from Phase I of the program. Moving onto Phase II, Mr. Sherriff presented the timeline and next steps with scheduled workshops.

Commissioner Edmonds started the discussion by asking for when the program would be applicable citywide. She also mentioned that at a previous meeting, the Commission had requested to have a member from historic preservation community on the Review Board, which she did not see. Mr. Sherriff clarified that the program was yet at the point of making those specific decisions. Commissioner Edmonds wanted to ensure inclusion of suggested member.

Chair Petersen commented in regards to building placement and orientation. She suggested stronger language, specifically requiring building entrances to face pedestrian entry and be functional. She wanted more information on how drive-through affected pedestrians' ability to cross an area or access buildings. She also would like to make alleys more pedestrian-friendly.

Commissioner Santhuff noted that he enjoyed reading the code language that consultants had identified. Additionally, he wanted to make it possible for members without professional license to serve on the Review Board.

## **5. Tideflats Subarea Plan – Community Engagement**

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, acknowledged and thanked the members of community that provided comments at the beginning of the meeting. He explained the three (3) main objectives for the discussion at this meeting: to provide the Commission with a status update, to gather input on public engagement practices, and to establish a pattern of consultation with the Commission.

Mr. Atkinson proceeded to present the subject area of the Tideflats Subarea Plan. He explained that while the area was based on the Port of Tacoma Manufacturing and Industrial Center, the public engagement would include not only property owners and employees within area, but also people in surrounding areas that might potentially be impacted. This project was one with impacts beyond geographical boundaries. To provide a broad overview of the process, Mr. Atkinson outlined the project phases, noting that they were approaching the end of the Project Initiation phase with the Public Engagement Plan.

In terms of the Public Engagement Plan, given its complex and multi-faceted nature, Mr. Atkinson stated it would be critical for the plan to be able to effectively communicate information to community members, including the scope of work, areas of concerns, scheduled meetings, ways they could provide feedback, decision-making bodies and processes, etc.

Subsequently, Mr. Atkinson described different modes of notifications and asked the Commission for further ideas. Chair Petersen suggested coordinating with the Tacoma Public Schools to utilize their email announcement system. Commissioner Edmonds requested for every resident in Council District 2 to receive direct mailing notices. She added that Northeast Tacoma had homeowner associations with newsletters that she would be willing to feature relevant information and notices. Commissioner Karnes wanted to make sure websites would be mobile-friendly and suggested leveraging the Tacoma Public Utilities newsletter. Vice-Chair McInnis recommended reaching out to Neighborhood Councils as well as other community groups that had their own meetings to make announcements. Commissioner Torrez agreed with his advice and added text message-based communications (e.g. surveys through text messages). In addition, Chair Petersen mentioned Nextdoor and noted that mailing to the entire District 2 might be excessive.

Regards the methods of engagement, Commissioner Edmonds suggested bus tours of the area for public members. Vice-Chair McInnis proposed hosting a series of meetings for each general group of audience, to provide people with time to ponder and, in turn, provide meaningful comments. Commissioner Torrez inquired about the targeted demographics of the engagement process and how they would be identified; she also expressed support for the idea of meeting series.

After that, Mr. Atkinson continued by explaining the different groups and agencies that were involved, as well as the composition of the Tideflats Steering Committee and the Advisory Group. He also briefly went over the plan on how to conduct engagement and next steps.

Commissioner Edmonds commented that the Steering Committee and Advisory Group were heavily weighted on government, for which she would like some mechanism to assure the public that their input would be heard and taken seriously.

## **E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING**

- 1) Consolidated Plan 2020-2024
- 2) Home In Tacoma – AHAS Planning Actions 2020-2021 (debriefing of 2/19/20 hearing)
- 3) 2020 Amendment Package (release for public review):
  - Heidelberg-Davis Land Use Designation Change
  - West Slope Neighborhood View Sensitive Overlap District
  - Transportation Master Plan Amendments
  - Minor Plan and Code Amendments
- 4) Pierce Transit Long Range Plan Update (letter of comments)

## **F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Commissioner Karnes reported that the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group had a walking tour of the Dome District at their last meeting on Monday, February 24, 2020.

The Housing Equity Taskforce had their first meeting scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2020.

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Manager, informed the Commission of the following:

- T-Town City Services Expo, a City-sponsored event, would take place on March 28, 2020, at the Tacoma Dome, to offer opportunities for the community to learn about services provided by the City as well as to share ideas and feedback.
- At the City Council meeting on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, the Council was presented with the letter of intent regarding the proposal for a soccer stadium in the Heidelberg-Davis Park, which was closely related to one of the four (4) applications in the 2020 Annual Amendment packet.
- All lunch meetings with Commissioners had happened; staff would compile the input and provide a summary to the Commission at the next meeting.

## **G. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 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:***

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