



MINUTES

(Approved on July 21, 2021)

MEETING: Regular Meeting (Virtual)
DATE/TIME: Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
PRESENT: Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel, Alyssa Torrez
ABSENT: N/A

A. Call to Order

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Chair Petersen read the Land Acknowledgement.

B. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Karnes noted a typo on the agenda, stating Item E should be titled "Disclosure of Contacts."

Commissioner Karnes moved to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Strobel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes

- April 21, 2021
- May 5, 2021

Commissioner Torrez moved to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2021, and May 5, 2021, meetings. Commissioner Horne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Public Comments

- Comments on Discussion Item #1 are accepted by 12:00 noon on the meeting day; e-mail to planning@cityoftacoma.org.
- Comments on Discussion Item #2 are accepted through June 18, 2021, 5:00 p.m.; e-mail to planning@cityoftacoma.org.

There were no written comments received on Discussion Item #1. Three written comments were received regarding Discussion Item #2.

E. Disclosure of Contacts

There were no disclosures of contacts.

F. Discussion Items

1. Equity Index Updates

Bucoda Warren, Media and Communications Office, presented an overview of the Equity Index tool updates, including changes made to the tool, why inequities are addressed with the tool, redlining history, Home Owners' Loan Corporation assessment, the purpose of the Equity Index, and what the Equity Index is. He further outlined the Equity Index data layers, the distribution of the data, Tacoma 2025 goal areas, indicator groups, and how the Equity Index can be utilized.

Commissioner Edmonds asked about data on housing cost burden, how the data is integrated with other jurisdictions, and life expectancy maps.

Commissioner Karnes provided comments regarding the backlog of improvements and transit metrics, and he encouraged the Commission to incorporate the Equity Index as filter criteria for the evaluation of projects in the Capital Facilities Program and the Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program. He asked about the enduring results of redlining that occurred later in the 20th century.

Commissioner Givens requested clarification on the environmental health indicators and the source of that data.

Commissioner Strobel asked how one could suggest revisions and if there been factors where there is an inadequate amount of data to really characterize the inequity.

Discussion continued regarding the frequency of updates and the ability to compare data from different maps.

2. Public Scoping Hearing: 2022 Amendment – Assessment of Applications

Chair Petersen called the public hearing to order at 5:42 p.m. and outlined the procedures of the public scoping hearing.

Larry Harala, Planning Services Division, reviewed the purpose of the public hearing, an overview of the Annual Amendment process, timeline, assessment criteria, assessment determination, and the following applications:

- (1) NewCold Land Use Designation Change Request
- (2) South Sound Christian Schools Land Use Designation Change Request
- (3) South Tacoma Economic Green Zone
- (4) Minor Plan and Code Amendments

Matt Richardson, NewCold, presented the application on the NewCold Land Use Designation Change Request, including a brief history and current operations of NewCold, facts and figures, implementations, advantages of automation, experts and professionals in the industry, and highlights of the application.

Jeremiah Durr, First Western Properties - on behalf of South Sound Christian Schools and CenterPoint Christian Church - presented the application on the South Sound Christian Schools Land Use Designation Change Request, including background of an evaluation study, an aerial shot of the Tacoma Baptist School and CenterPoint Church sites.

Heidi Stephens, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council, presented the application on the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone, including the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District and the South Tacoma aquifer, pollution data, current regulations, and objectives and goals.

Chair Petersen called for testimony. Twelve people testified, as follows:

1. **Nick Nicholas** – I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak as an advocate for NewCold Tacoma's planned expansion. I've been with NewCold for 15 months as a QUESH manager, which stands for quality environmental safety and health. And it has been overly rewarding for me, building the safety culture here at NewCold with evidence of 442 days without a time loss injury. While growing up in Tacoma and being a business owner, I have witnessed and understand the importance of growth for the city of Tacoma. NewCold has given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge in food storage, logistics, and a stronger understanding of the importance of international trade. NewCold has created family wage jobs not only here at NewCold, but also because of its import export business that's helped to strengthen the support of our longshoreman, transportation workers, and the maritime industry. The expansion of the Tacoma facility will again create more family wage jobs and increase the amount of import export business through the port of Tacoma, as well as the port of Seattle. Tacoma is and will continue to grow, and I'm proud to be a part of NewCold team that is helping in that growth.
2. **Marilyn Kimmerling** – Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I attended part of the informational session prior to this, which was very interesting. I wanted to speak tonight in favor of

the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone proposal and encourage the Planning Commission to move it forward. I think that we all know that water is life. We all know that our water is precious, and we need to save what we've got.

3. **Tim Young** – I've been working at NewCold Tacoma as the Maintenance Technician and started in 2018 as an intern while I was graduating from Clover Park Technical College, which was a great program and gave me the opportunity to gain the skills I learned here in college. Through this internship, I was able to be hired on to the team in July 2018, which makes me three years here. It's been a great place to work for, especially the culture here with the family that NewCold has developed here. This company is great for me growing on. I've seen a lot of people grow quickly from the bottom up coming in as forklift drivers and growing into leadership roles. Here we continue to train and develop skills that keep our facility running more effectively and allows us all to grow into stronger, better individuals. Expansion to the site would bring more jobs to the local economy, more people would be able to be hired and develop skills in here. And also allow us to develop more low carbon cold storage, which is better for the environment and better for everyone. I love the way the company works with its employees, love the social environment, the family environment that NewCold has developed, and I'd love for it to be able to expand so we can give more opportunities to people around here to be able to learn from this company like I have. Thank you for lending me your time.
4. **BB Gonzalez** – I'd like to thank you Planning Commission for giving me the opportunity to speak. I started here as a forklift driver in 2018. I now work with stock control. I personally think that NewCold is a great place to work. I've been given several opportunities and challenges here. I'm still growing in my career. I don't plan on stopping anytime soon. NewCold has become like a second family to me.
5. **Brett Johnson** – I'm here on behalf of Sierra Club Tatoosh Group of Pierce County and want to voice full support for the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone. The aquifer that it sits on provides up to 40% of our backup water supply that's becoming more and more and more important in those dry late summer months. Definitely need to protect that. I read through the application a bit and it mentioned the need to do prevention rather than following up after things happen. So, we fully support that prevention aspect. Thank you very much, and please move it forward in full.
6. **Joseph Gosar** – My name is Joseph and I am a part of a nonprofit organization that works closely with the state and closely with economic development board and other groups doing economic development work here. I live in Pierce County, and our mission at Impact Washington is to help manufacturers, and that includes food processing, food production, and seafood production. Facilities and companies like NewCold play a very key role in the food supply chain. NewCold helps bring money into Pierce County. Without partners like them - the food and seafood production that we do here in the northwest - we couldn't pull dollars in from other places around the country, around the world, and even from around our region. We're talking about jobs here. We're talking about an expanded facility - a member of the community that's already proved itself to be an investor in the community. The truth is that whether it's NewCold, or someone else, facilities like this need to exist in the Northwest, and if Tacoma doesn't take advantage of this opportunity, some other cities some other place will. They're already here. They've already proven themselves. So, it kind of seems like a good idea to help them grow and to not become a hindrance. And additionally, one other thought is that, we grow food, we fish here in the Northwest. But if we can't store it, and we can't have the logistical mean necessary, not only can we not sell it to other people and keep the cost of food here in Northwest reasonable, but also thinking about COVID and thinking about emergencies, we wouldn't have access to this or these kind of facilities and capabilities in an emergency if we don't have them here. And with COVID, and everything that we faced over this last year to two years and just the changes in the world, we kind of have to think about things in a little bit different way. And in that light, this makes sense to me - Jobs, financial stability of the region, and also, in some ways even emergency preparedness measure as well.
7. **Sean Eagan** – I'm here tonight on behalf of the Port of Tacoma. The Port of Tacoma supports an estimated 42,100 jobs in the south sound region, and we generate over \$2.8 billion in labor income every year. Why do we have these jobs here? We have these jobs here because beneficial cargo

owners choose to move their products through the port of Tacoma. Beneficial cargo owners are companies you are aware of and you've heard of. They are companies like Trident. They are companies like IKEA. They are companies like Lamb Weston. They are the ones that go to the ocean carriers like Maersk or Evergreen and Hyundai and say, when you bring my product in or out of North America, I want you to run through the Port of Tacoma. And when they choose to move that cargo, they create a trail of jobs. That trail of jobs includes everything from longshore workers to truck drivers, tugboat operators, line handlers, ship chandlers, and suppliers, a whole variety of types of jobs. And what's great about these jobs is that on average, they pay above the average wage here in Pierce County. They are also the types of jobs that you are able to go and get a long-time career in with great benefits without having to go off to get some sort of an advanced degree someplace. I'm glad that we've got companies like Microsoft and Amazon in your region, but not every kid is going to go off to the University of Washington and get a master's degree in Computer Engineering. You in fact, can graduate from a local high school like Foss High School, get a job in the longshore union, get a job at Tacoma Rail, and ultimately, over time, get a six-figure salary. Those are the types of jobs that we are talking about. The question then is how do you persuade these companies like Trident, IKEA, and Lamb Weston to move their cargo through the Port of Tacoma. The key is having a healthy supply chain, and in particular, the key is having distribution facilities like what NewCold is proposing. That is why we are in support of their proposal. By being able to bring in NewCold and allowing NewCold to be able to eventually expand, not only do you create the extra 100 jobs on site that NewCold talks about in their application, but you're also going to be able to create additional employment opportunities for migrant individuals who may own their own trucks and own their own trucking companies to be able to have additional business to be able to bring product down to the Port of Tacoma. You're going to create more longshore jobs, more jobs for Crowley, more jobs for Foss, more jobs for our terminal operators like SSA Marine, so I would really encourage you to look with a positive eye at NewCold's proposal, and I asked for your support.

8. **Frank Boykin** – I'm the director for the Manufacturing Industrial Council (MIC) for the South Sound, and a representative for the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, representing more than 1300 businesses in the South Sound. We are a coalition of manufacturing, industrial, and maritime businesses at work to grow and sustain jobs that support local families which anchor Washington economy. I'm calling to support NewCold's application to rezone their parcel from light industrial to heavy industrial. This is a critical redesignation for the growth and expansion for their premier core business in Tacoma - which promotes the vitality of the Port and related industry. The proposed amendment will generate an estimated 100 new family wage jobs and catalyze more than \$100 million in private capital investment. This is good for Tacoma, and good for Tacoma's families. Further, the NewCold Tacoma site is a key link to the transportation of goods within the region from manufacturers to consumers logistically. The MIC recognizes this as a vital contribution and aligned with our state's desire and seeking to build economic strength through manufacturing. Lastly, due to NewCold's highly automated operations and technology, there are a number of efficiencies to be gained by power, electrical, and cooling usage by expanding the current development rather than developing a new location.
9. **Adam Mays** – I'm also here to advocate for NewCold Tacoma's proposed expansion. I am currently employed by NewCold as an implementation specialist. I started here in May of 2018. I was hired on as a planner, and I worked there for about a year. It was a very rewarding experience. I learned a lot about the warehousing industry and a lot about automation, and I was rewarded with a promotion to work for the stock control department. Where in stock control, they gave me even more tools to learn and grow, and now I am on the regional team as an implementation specialist. This is my second month in that role, and I'm very excited to be able to help get new projects off the ground, such as this particular expansion, if/when it were to come to pass. And I'm really excited about my next opportunity to be able to help the company get started with a new site in Indianapolis. So, one of the biggest reasons to me why we need to have this expansion is similar to what we've heard a lot of the other speakers bring to the table, which is jobs. It's going to add a lot of great jobs that have a lot of good growth opportunities for people. They're not just jobs, as we've heard before, but they're sustainable jobs, lasting fulfilling jobs, with great benefits, and more opportunities for people to grow and learn as I did, to put us in a better position to really earn what we're able to do

for the company. They're ready to reward you for what you can contribute. In addition to that, also, not to reiterate what everyone says but it's a great opportunity for Tacoma to grow the local economy, not only directly from the jobs that NewCold is able to provide, both for local businesses, transportation companies, material handling equipment companies, the port of Tacoma, and more.

10. **Timothy Smith** – In the past, I have served two terms on the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council. I've also been involved in zoning and land use issues in South Tacoma and the city at large. I fully support the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone amendment proposal and implore the Planning Commission to approve it in full for inclusion in the upcoming amendment cycle. The city staff is correct that for 30 years we've had well established code to protect our South Tacoma aquifer, probably the most critical natural resource in the city of Tacoma controls. Yet alarmingly, this vital resource continues to be in jeopardy. Well 12A is only now, after millions and millions of dollars, now possibly being able to return to service. We find another well at the south end of the field has been contaminated with permanent chemicals from firefighting foam from Joint Base Lewis McChord. Lakewood will probably have to sue the federal government. So yes, the district is important. The current protection district is a zoning overlay designed to protect the city of Tacoma's drinking water. This district is located above the South Tacoma aquifer. Our aquifer can provide the city with up to 40% of its drinking water from 14 different wells having a production capacity of over 55 million gallons of water per day, and it serves as strategic backup to our Green River primary supply. This critical strategic reserve is used particularly in the summer or in a drought or in times of major climatic change in stress. This protective overlay, according to our own code, should be reviewed every 10 years and include updates and incorporate best science. A comprehensive review is long overdue. This amendment will provide an opportunity to expand possible land uses and promote environmentally conscious green economic development unique to the Pacific Northwest while expanding protections for our water supply. Please approve this and fully support a much-needed review of the protections for our most vital life resource - the water. Thank you, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council for this brilliant idea, the most forward-looking proposal seen in years around this city.
11. **Maddie Merton** – I am Vice President for Business Retention and Expansion with the Economic Development Board (EDB) for Tacoma-Pierce County. The EDB helped recruit Netherlands-based NewCold to Tacoma eight years ago. It was not an easy decision for a foreign based company to place its first major US expansion. They opted to choose to place expansion in Tacoma, Washington. It took many meetings and several partners to land this company and the subsequent 75 jobs that they currently have in Tacoma. I urge you to support NewCold's application to amend a small portion of their Tacoma facility to allow for future expansion and future jobs for our region. This application is supremely critical to NewCold's success in Tacoma and also within the United States. The requested designation would allow the company to expand in the most optimal way, providing great efficiencies for their site and also for their customers and end users. And ultimately, would benefit Tacoma's economy in the long run. The amendment will help further diversify and expand Pierce County's local economic base, and also bring more investment into our region. Most importantly, the amendment will help pave the way for 100 new family wage jobs with an average salary of \$64,280 in automated cold storage logistics. Due to its highly automated and clean systems, the facility generates efficiencies within the transportation systems not otherwise known within our system. The amendment will help strengthen Washington's economy to withstand economic disruptions as is the current COVID-19 pandemic and would help further our food supply chain within Tacoma and also Washington State. I urge you to consider this amendment for NewCold.
12. **Michael Lewis** – I'm here to advocate for NewCold Tacoma's expansion. I first started here at the NewCold Tacoma site as a construction laborer, and towards the end of the project NewCold recognized my hard work and offered me a job. I was then hired as an order picker, which is one of the entry-level jobs. I work that position for a year. I've been working here since April 16, 2018. I was then promoted to a pick floor lead, and I held that position for eight months. I am now the pick floor supervisor. I believe one of the biggest advantages of expanding the site is the opportunity to hire newly qualified team members and give them the opportunity to learn and grow with the company like myself. NewCold is a great place to work and has become my second family.

Chair Petersen closed the public hearing at 6:56 p.m., reiterated that written comments would be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Friday, June 18, 2021, and thanked those who testified.

G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) Agenda for the July 7, 2021, meeting includes:

- Impact Fees Program Update
- 2022 Amendment – Assessment of Applications (Debriefing of Hearing)

(2) Agenda for the July 21, 2021, meeting includes:

- 2022 Amendment – Assessment of Applications (Determination)
- Planning Commission Annual Report 2020-2021 and Planning Work Program 2021-2023

H. Communication Items

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

(1) Equity Retreat for Landmarks Preservation Commission and Planning Commission tentatively planned for late July.

- Reuben McKnight reported that the joint training retreat will be a multiday format and is tentatively scheduled for late July or early August. He stated that the objective is to increase awareness of issues of privilege and systemic racism in government, recognize how that impacts the work of the commissions, and to identify some key strategies addressing those issues.
- Chair Petersen suggested delaying the retreat due to upcoming Commission turnover.

(2) Planning Commission Vacancies – The City Council is looking to fill two positions on the Planning Commission, representing Districts No. 3 and 5. Applicants must reside in the respective districts and will serve a term of three years from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2024. Applications must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by the end of day Friday, June 18, 2021. For more information or to apply, visit the [Committees, Boards, and Commissions webpage](#).

- Mr. Wung reminded the Commission about the vacancies, and stated the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee (IPS) interviewed two applicants for the District No. 2 position vacancy and they plan to interview additional candidates for the District Nos. 3 and 5 vacancies.

(3) Mr. Wung informed the Commission of the adoption of Resolution No. 40794, requesting the Planning Commission to review the prohibition of shipping containers for accessory building and/or storage uses as well as explore how the city could allow shipping containers to be adaptively reused for innovative housing solutions to address the housing shortage and affordability crisis in the City of Tacoma.

(4) Mr. Wung updated the Commission on the City of Tacoma's reconstitution plan.

(5) Status Reports by Commissioners – TOD Advisory Group, Housing Equity Task Force.

- There were no status reports provided.

I. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 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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