

Tacoma Permit Advisory Group

Hybrid meeting

Meeting #50 October 18th, 2023 2:00pm

Advisory Group Members in attendance: Clinton Brink, Jim Dugan, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jason Gano, Justin Gorocho, Robert Laing, Ken Miller, John Wolters

Excused: Layne Alfonso

Absent: Mandy McGill, Claude Remy

2:08 PM Welcome

2:12 PM Approval of Minutes

Meeting #49 on September 20th, 2023

Mike Fast moved. Ben Ferguson seconded. Unanimous, no further discussion or objection. Motion approved.

2:13 PM Public Comment

Jim Dugan shares an Infographic on permitting with Tacoma Public Schools and feels it is time to revisit and edit the document. This was sent out on 9/22/2023, please send any recommended updates to Liaison Char Carlyle at permitadvisorygroup@cityoftacoma.org.

Jim Dugan gives an update on capital bond planning with Tacoma School District (TSD) and Metro Parks. TSD propositions 1 and 2 are 4-year replacements of expiring levies to fund educational progress and help with improvements on 74 school facilities. This is expected to take place in February 2024. Metro Parks Tacoma updates will be February of 2026.

- No comments were provided by the public at this time.

2:14 PM Quick updates: City staff new items of interest

- Administrative updates (Corey Newton)
 - Budget standpoint- there will be an update at November's meeting.
- Recruitment (Corey Newton)
 - Memo to the City manager to be sent out with a proposed date of January 2024 for onboarding new members.
- Urban Design (Stephen Antupit)
 - Development Services Program Coordinator Noah Yacker shares that the urban design group is going to the Planning Commission tonight for recommendations. Public comments received at the last planning commission helped with adding to the departures list. After tonight the next step is bringing the proposal to the city council. Once the city council gives direction the urban design group will be looking to the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group (TPAG) for discussion and feedback on effective dates and accelera records.

- TPAG discussed keeping the subcommittee format with Ben Ferguson and Justin Goroch to have a more efficient and greater impact. Subcommittee to bring updates to monthly public meetings.
 - Noah Yacker explains that the city is currently working on the early mapping of the new record in Accela. Currently working on the informative process, how the program will function, how it works with Accela, and parcel notification for where the design review will be applicable. Tip sheets and blast emails will also be sent once important dates are set. He reiterates that getting input from this group will be very helpful.
 - Jason Gano asks for clarification on if the design review is based on size? Stephen Antupit answers it is determined by area and size. Geographically it could be considered Home In Tacoma (HIT) and not affected by Urban Design.
 - Decarbonization Strategy (Beth Jarot)
 - Senior Sustainability Analyst, Beth Jarot, with OEPS Sustainability gives a brief overview of the community-building decarbonization strategy. Resolution (no. 40776) was adopted by the city council in 2021 and the city is working with Applied Energy Group (AEG) consultants to build a draft proposal.
 - Presenting draft to Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) in January. Then plan to have it finalized within 1-2 months.
 - Beth Jarot explains this will be the first strategy WA jurisdiction has put together but California as already done it. The plan will address retrofitting and new energy codes, space and water heating with emissions, policies and programs to help building and property owners to achieve goals.
 - TPAG leadership will work on future agendas to try and fit this topic in. Ideal to have feedback prior to IPS
 - Chris Johnson adds that the Department of Ecology is updating the design manual and is looking for public comments through 11/10/2023. It is being evaluated now so the master builder or anyone else please give feedback to the Department of Ecology.

2:28 PM Subcommittee reports

- Outreach & recruitment – Jim Dugan
 - Discussed during quick updates.
- Design review – Ben Ferguson
 - Discussed during quick updates.
- Home in Tacoma – Ben Ferguson & Claude Remy
 - On today's agenda.
- Impact Fees –Mandy McGill
 - Mandy McGill not in attendance. No update currently.
- Sidewalk Policies & Recommendations – Justin Goroch and the committee
 - City staff working on this. No update currently.

- Unit Lot Subdivision (ULS)- Ben Ferguson
- Elliott Barnett explains that ULS is being considered in HIT. Feedback from TPAG is that subcommittees are the best approach. Jim Dugan clarifies that today we will identify the top 2-3 subjects to build subcommittees (2-3 person teams and a lead).
 - Subcommittee for ULS to include Clinton Brink, Ben Ferguson, Justin Gano, and John Wolters with city staff Elliott Barnett.

2:35 PM Home In Tacoma PowerPoint 1

The timeline for HIT:

- July-Dec 2023, Develop full package & EIS Consultation
- Jan-March 2024, Planning Commission Public Hearing, Release Draft EIS, and Planning Commission recommendation
- May-July 2024, City Council review, Release Final EIS, Council Public Hearing, and Council action

Senior planner Elliott Barnett with PDS Comprehensive Planning explains that HIT is a massive package and staff is looking for a publicly reviewed package in early 2024, so having feedback from this group is invaluable.

Since September's TPAG meeting the Comprehensive Planning group has met with the planning commission and today's presentation is an abbreviated version and basic sense of the package so that subcommittees can be created to work on the details. List of potential subcommittees include: Unit Lot Subdivisions, Landscaping (trees), and Hypothetical developments

- Use of space (parking, amenity space, trees)
 - Things that compete for space include parking, trees, yards, and everything that is not the building. This is being considered because of legislative direction and public comment. The goal is to reduce parking and increase trees.
 - In theory the closer you get to transit stations the less parking you will need so the larger UR-3 zones will have the least parking requirements.
 - Tonight's planning commission will decide if there are any additional areas that can have parking requirements reduced.
- Amenity space (usable yard area) the amount of amenity space would be linked to the zone. This will be on a sliding scale so that as you get denser you need less yard.
 - Jason Gano inquires if Amenity space is a new term? Elliott Barnett yes to HIT- Keeping consistent with the urban design who uses the term currently. A HIT goal is to allow more density while still providing livability including yards, rooftop gardens etc.
 - Ben Ferguson asks if this includes open space and setbacks? Elliott Barnett answered yes. Currently "usable yard space" is similar, HIT is just grouping more into the already existing term and calling it amenity space.
 - Ben Ferguson would urge the HIT team to take 4-6-unit versions and show examples of how this would work. With the scale of adding a bonus to 6 units on UR-1, more required parking, and then a larger yard. He feels there is not enough space! Elliott Barnett explains there are some examples they can

provide, and this is a huge opportunity for a subcommittee on “Hypothetical development subcommunities” to receive TPAG’S perspective.

- Clinton Brink agrees with Ben Ferguson and Elliott Barnett with a subcommittee to think creatively and have unusual examples to see how it will develop. Justin Gorocho agrees with Ben Ferguson and Clinton Brink. We need to be careful how much is going to be mandated. There needs to be flexibility.
- Tree standards: This will need to be part of a subcommittee exercise.
Elliott Barnett shares the top comments
 - There is going to be an increase in tree density but the goals with trees and climate sustainability is the focus.
 - Extension of tree canopy requirements.
 - There will be a list of small, medium, and large tree options so that there is a tree credit with the canopy but not use up all the space on the site.
 - More tree credits will be required in UR-1 and less as you go up.
 - The proposal is to start requiring tree planting with new development for all new residential developments.
 - Tree retention requirement fee, if a tree is over a certain size, then the city may require it to be maintained.
- Elliott Barnett opens to TPAG for Questions and Comments
 - Mike Fast feels this is a massive land-taking requirement.
 - Robert Laing asks where is the cost effect going to be when we are trying to address affordability within HIT?
 - Jason Gano shares a photo of the trees covering the space that is part of Seattle’s retention program and inquiries about a replacement program instead. Mike Fast adds that tree retention is a huge deal breaker for infill lots. This is going to take away from buildable land.
 - Ken Miller inquires if there is a transfer of tree rights when a property is sold?
 - Jim Dugan inquires if the credit can be put on another property?
 - Ben Ferguson states that most people would like to live in a city full of trees however the reality is that some people cannot afford to live here. If you say they can have a house they can afford versus a utopia that they cannot afford they will choose to own a home. There needs to be some level of finding a middle ground.
 - Justin Gorocho adds this is a city this is where we are supposed to have the density and just have these benefits close by.
 - Clinton Brink feels that setbacks and all the requirements and combinations will make it impossible to build.
 - Jason Gano states the City Of Tacoma is in a housing crisis, not a parking or tree crisis.
 - John Wolters explains he does not know what the 25-30% means but feels like there are a lot of overlaps and there is a misconception that it will take a lot of usable space. I would encourage it not to have to be on the property why can't it be extended into the right of way?

- Ben Ferguson also reminds the group to consider the space required by environmental services for garbage pick-up.
- Elliott Barnett addresses the above questions and comments, we have evaluated the use of space we believe this works and there is enough space, and it will provide more dense housing. The tree retention is going to cause the biggest issues.
 - Elliott Barnett reiterates there is a tree crisis. HIT is directed to meet multiple goals. Lessons learned from other jurisdictions, but your expertise is invaluable.
- Ben Ferguson gives kudos to Elliott Barnett's team as TPAG feels phase one was cooked before it was brought to the group and is happy this process has been more transparent for phase two. He feels it is going to have a better chance to be successful. Elliott Barnett appreciates all the great questions and comments.
- TPAG took a vote and majority rules to have one subcommittee to discuss topics in greater detail and bring them back to the public meeting monthly. Clinton will be the lead.
 - Justin Goroch reiterates that the subcommittee can bring example projects through the proposed regulations.
 - Jim Dugan would like a subject matter expert on trees from city staff to attend.
 - Jim Dugan feels that parking and hypothetical concepts should also be a focus during the subcommittee.
 - Mike Fast explains that the city was logged to the ground 150 years ago, he would like to know if the benchmarking is based on comparable cities? Elliott Barnett answers yes, they are looking at areas with similar goals and he will send out the list.
 - Jason Gano says a tree is a crop that slowly produces less and less oxygen as it matures. What is the overall goal? Elliott Barnett answers that environmental sustainability is a goal. He states there are measurable benefits of a matured 7-8-year-old tree and that most urban trees die prior to that. Therefore, the city feels more established trees need to have tree retention. Trees also help reach neighborhood compatibility and soften the look of larger denser buildings

Future Agenda Topics (Prioritized List)

- *Sidewalk Policies & Recommendations Subcommittee*
- Process alignment: Commercial vs. Residential permit requirements
- TPAG Mission Statement
- E-permits
- Pedestrian/Emergency Access DADU's
- Long Range Planning – update from city staff
- Capital Bond Projects
- Solid Waste Collection & Development Projects

3:29 PM Final Comments

Jim will draft guidance for the next one to two months on what to expect. Clinton Brink will work with Liaison Char Carlyle to set up new subcommittee invites.

3:30 PM Adjourn

