

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY OBSERVER REPORT

Tacoma Planning Commission meeting
By Lydia Zepeda

December 4, 2019

Members Present: Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, David Horne, Ryan Givens, Christopher Karnes, Andrew Strobel, Alyssa Torrez

Absent: Brett Santhuff

Others Present: Human Rights Commission housing taskforce (HRC): Sarah Rambaugh, Lisa Snyder, Andreta Armstrong (staff liaison), Ronita Boullt, Allen Ratcliffe
LWV Observer: Lydia Zepeda

Meeting called to order at 5:04pm

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (November 20, 2019): approved unanimously

Discussion Items - [Packet](#)

1. **Joint Session with the Human Rights Commission** task force on Housing to integrate equity considerations into the Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS) to implement AHAS 1.2: Inclusionary Zoning and AHAS 1.8: Diverse Housing Types.

• Staff Contact: Elliott Barnett, 253-591-5389, elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org

Video about history of redlining, [How We Got Here: A Reckoning with U.S. and Tacoma History](#) (City of Tacoma Office of Equity and Human Rights)

AHAS planning - market based plan to address growth: produce new homes, preserve existing homes, anti-displacement, removal of barriers to housing. Goals: 54,741 total housing units in Tacoma by 2040 with 75% single family detached homes; increase housing choice in neighborhoods. **Will invite public engagement for AHAS planning in January.**

The HRC housing task force members asked to be partners, not advisory to the Planning Commission (“the Commission”). HRC indicated they wanted housing for the homeless, support to help people get into housing and changes in zoning to allow for transitional housing. They suggested that the city should buy housing for those who were redlined, and protect the housing stock and preserve neighborhoods from gentrification. They commented that there was not much diversity in the room, and a need to bring people from different communities to the conversation. They also mentioned the need to stop evictions and the fact that there is a 5 year limit on Housing Authority, which is not sufficient time to get into regular housing.

The Commission focused on housing needs to meet growth, none mentioned the homeless. They asked for a survey of what kind of housing people want, information on barriers to services and amenities that impact access to housing, how they could connect people to resources, how they could get diverse perspectives, and a map that overlays historic redlining on current land use.

They wanted to integrate an equity and environmental justice lens into the Commission work and generally supported more communication, but questioned a full partnership, preferring a task force approach. One mentioned that their focus on growth centers in the lower equity, economically disadvantaged zones in South Tacoma, rather than the north end could exacerbate inequity.

Edmonds, a realtor, mentioned houses under \$350,000 are sold in a day which does not give most people a chance to buy. She suggested Tacoma needs lower priced housing stock, but developers do not want to build these types of houses. She also mentioned that many sellers do not get full price when they sell because they cannot afford small repairs. She also identified a need for financial education so buyers do not lose the opportunity to get a loan to buy a home because they did not manage their credit card. She also stated that realtors have volumes of data on who is buying where and what they can afford.

Peterson reminded them the scope of the Commission was to advise city council on zoning and policy for the comprehensive plan; they could not do anything about home loans or evictions, though they should be kept in mind. She mentioned the need to zone to attract businesses that paid a living wage, rather than minimum wage retail.

The Commission agreed to work with HRC in a task force. Ratcliffe volunteered. Elliot said staff would put together scope and get back to HRC in January.

There was a question for Rambaugh about how police cause evictions. She responded that there are rules about the number of domestic violence calls before one is given an eviction notice.

Adjourned at 6:23. Members of HRC left. Re-adjourned and at 6:35.

2. Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Amendments reviewed for the Transportation Master Plan. Amendments will be **released for public review in January 2020**. TMP was adopted in December 2015. The Amendments to the plan address inconsistencies in plan.

- Staff Contact: Lihuang Wung, 253-591-5682, lwung@cityoftacoma.org

While there were many amendments proposed to other areas of Tacoma, they are only forwarding the Tacoma Mall Subarea (TM) amendment for the 2020 amendment packet. The city lacked staff to complete analysis of the other amendments proposed in June 2019. TM had a clear list, while Hilltop, etc did not. TM is the 2nd regional growth center (after downtown). The list of projects is found on pp 45-46.

The TM Amendments have been reviewed by the Transportation Commission, but need to be approved by the Commission to go forward to the City Council. Consent by assent to put TM amendment in 2020 amendment plan

3. Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0 Review of draft code language and program modifications.

Staff Contact: Mesa Sherriff, 253-591-5480, msherriff@cityoftacoma.org

This is a pilot program since 2015 to promote residential infill for new and existing structures. It essentially allows for increased density and there are currently 60 projects city wide. The Comprehensive plan encourages environmental friendly material but are not required. Will bring **recommendations back on Dec 18 for the Commission to vote on.**

Examples of the program: DADU=detached accessory dwelling unit.
On a 7200 SF lot one could convert a house to duplex + one DADU;
on a 10,200 SF lot a house could become a 4-plex, or a house + 1 duplex + DADU, or 2 duplexes; and on a 12,000 lot one could have a 4-plex + DADU, or 2 duplexes + 1 DADU, or 1 house + 1 duplex + 1 DADU.

Commission members expressed concerns about ownership structure of multiplexes and DADUs, whether anyone would want to live in homes as small as 500 square feet, whether there was a minimum size, the loss of yard space, how it would change neighborhoods, and whether parking requirements would make such projects infeasible. They wanted feedback from the neighborhoods where the projects were implemented. They asked that parking requirements be removed from the recommendations. They were assured that current setbacks would not change.

Topics of the Upcoming Meeting December 18, 2019:

1. Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0
2. Links to Opportunity
3. VISION 2050
4. Year-End Review

Communication Items

1. The Planning Commission's meeting on January 1, 2020 will be canceled.
2. The Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee is meeting on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 4:30 p.m., in Room 248. Tentative agenda (subject to change) includes: Sustainable Tacoma Commission Interviews; and Healthy Homes, Healthy Neighborhoods.
3. **City Council will vote on a Climate change proclamation next Tuesday** that may affect zoning and other city services.

ADJOURNMENT around 7:50pm.