

## Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 1, 2015  
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Town Hall Meeting Room

*Note: The Action Minutes represent a summary of presentations given and actions taken. For a more detailed record, the audio recording of the meeting can be accessed through the City Clerk's Office, City of University Place. Contact Emy Genetia at (253) 460-2511.*

1. **Call to Order (7:03)** Chair Quisenberry called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. **Roll Call (7:03)**

**Planning Commission Members Present**

Mr. Cliff Quisenberry – Chair  
Mr. Frank Boykin – Co Vice Chair  
Mr. Diogenes Xenos  
Mr. Morry Stafford  
Mr. Tony Paulson

**Planning Commission Members Absent**

Mr. Steve Smith – Co Vice Chair  
Mr. Chris Barrett

**Staff Present**

David Swindale, Director, Planning and  
Development Services  
Jeff Boers, Principal Planner  
Jack Ecklund, City Engineer  
Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant

3. **Approval of Minutes (7:04)**

Commissioner Stafford requested that, on page 2, item 6, 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, the phrase “neighborhood zoning character” be shown “neighborhood zoning/character.”

**MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos and seconded by Commissioner Stafford to approve the minutes of May 20, 2015 as amended. Motion passed.**

4. **Public Comment (7:05)**

*Bob Mandell, owner of Dairy Queen on Mildred Street.* He requested information about plans to shut down Mildred Street while it is being re-built, expressing concerns about how this would affect his business. City Engineer Ecklund gave him timelines.

There being no further public comment on any item not appearing on this evening's agenda, Chair Quisenberry announced that the Public Comment section of the meeting was closed.

5. **Public Hearing: Comprehensive Plan Update (7:10)**

Chair Quisenberry provided rules for the public hearing (attached to the minutes as Attachment 1).

Principal Planner Boers provided a summary of the purpose of the hearing, and well as procedures followed up to this point in drafting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Substantial amendments are being proposed in each element, which have been provided to the Commission. Information has been updated in the Transportation and Capital Facilities elements regarding level of service and infrastructure projects. Plan Map and Zoning Map amendments are being proposed for Commercial and Town Center areas in part to alleviate confusion over the names of designations and classifications.

Proposed code amendments are intended to reflect changes in state law since the Plan was last updated. Other amendments would ensure consistency between the Zoning Code and updated Plan. Some housekeeping amendments are included in the proposal; others will be brought forward at a later date. Minor amendments to the City's wetland regulations in the critical areas code and minor amendments to impact fee regulations are intended to ensure consistency amended state laws.

Commission questions and discussion covered the following topics:

- It was confirmed that the proposed change in the timeframe to use impact fee funds from a specific project, from 6 years to 10 years, is to stay in alignment with updated State law.
- A Council study session on the Comprehensive Plan amendments is tentatively scheduled for July 25. Ideally the Planning Commission recommendation would be completed in the month of July.

Public Hearing:

All individuals listed spoke in opposition to including the extension of 37<sup>th</sup> Street W from Bridgeport to Sunset as a Circulation Project in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The primary issues raised by each speaker are listed. Complete comments can be heard on the audio recording of this meeting.

*Lori Fudge, 7921 37<sup>th</sup> St W.* Read into the record a printed statement, provided as Attachment 2 to the minutes.

*Mike Knutsen, 8002 37<sup>th</sup> St Ct. W.* Concerned about notification of area residents, zoning changes, sewers, future development, lots of traffic.

*Heather Nelson, 7823 37<sup>th</sup> St W.* Concerned about due process and notifications. Not convinced the street extension is necessary.

*Sharon Jiminez, 7809 37<sup>th</sup> St W.* Expressed safety concerns should the extension be done, especially for residents walking dogs, or children being present in the neighborhood.

*Dan Anderson, 63 Salmon Beach, representing issues of mother who has lived on 37<sup>th</sup> since 1960.* Concerned about noise problems crime problems. City Engineer responded to a question by stating that there has not been a tie in between this project and the receipt of federal funding.

*Paul Nelson, 7823 37<sup>th</sup> St W.* Expressed the opinion that the trip savings do not justify the cost of the project. He also feels that the increased pedestrian access would be helpful.

*Nancy Loberg Arnold, 7521 37<sup>th</sup> Street W.* Feels the City does not spend money in appropriate ways. Does not want 37<sup>th</sup> Street to become a raceway. If this project is done, will sidewalks be installed?

*Rick Arnold, 7521 37<sup>th</sup> St. W.* Opposed to push through and widening of 37<sup>th</sup> Street west and construction of Larson Lane.

*David Ohls, 7803 37<sup>th</sup> St. W.* The neighborhood on 37th Street is one that helps gives University Place its character. This will ruin UP.

*Marsha Fallon, 8010 37<sup>th</sup> St. Ct. W.* Expressed a desire to maintain quality of life for the homeowners, who are the backbone of the community. What would it take for the residents to prohibit this project?

*Cheri Finegan, 8001 37<sup>th</sup> St. Ct. W.* Does not see the necessity to push this road through. This will create a 37<sup>th</sup> Street raceway.

*Doug Lueken, 7701 37<sup>th</sup> St W.* Expressed concern that notification should be made to a broader group. Feels this extension would become a raceway and would detract from the single family feel of University Place.

Chair Quisenberry allowed time at this point for staff to respond to concerns raised and questions asked.

Director Swindale stated that the issuing of notices to the public regarding this hearing followed both the City's code and requirements laid out by state law. In order to change the requirements, the City's Municipal Code would have to be changed, and this would raise issues regarding compliance with state law.

Regarding the need for 37<sup>th</sup> Street to be extended through to Sunset, Director Swindale stated that the Town Center project and EIS both assumed that the road was going to be extended. There are only a limited number of intersections on Bridgeport, and as growth occurs the level of service at these intersections will decrease to the point that they will fail. There is a need to mitigate increased traffic congestion as much as we can. Putting this road through will provide relieve for other intersections.

Before this project were to move forward, environmental studies would be necessary, including wetland and drainage analyses. Public safety access would be maintained during any construction. The Engineering team would meet with the neighbors before any project is started to listen to and address concerns. Protecting community character is a goal as is providing safe and effective transportation access. He stated that there is no reason to allow Stonewood Apartments access off of 37<sup>th</sup> Street. Regarding Pierce County sewer service, the sewer utility policy is that, as systems fail and are within 300 feet of a sewer line, they are required to hook up to the line.

City Engineer Ecklund provided additional information, stating that the 37<sup>th</sup> Street project is not new and has been in the Comprehensive Plan for many years. He provided the history of this project and stated that this is still a planning level document. This is not an imminent project. Funds for this project would come from sources that cannot be used for any type of expenditure except for transportation projects, thus funding would not be withheld from Parks and Recreation to pay for this project. If the project ever goes forward it would require locating a funding source as well as to have its priority established through Council goals and expectations. When this project is actually placed on a project list that would be executed, there will be more neighborhood outreach.

The project is designed to address two needs – pedestrian circulation and traffic circulation. This project is intended to alleviate pressure at the intersections of 40<sup>th</sup> and Sunset, and 40<sup>th</sup> and Bridgeport. There is no zoning change required or anticipated with this project. The question for the Planning Commission is whether or not the project is left in the Plan or modified. The current plan is that 37<sup>th</sup> would be a low volume neighborhood arterial, with a speed limit posted at 25 mph, and designed with a neighborhood-street feel. It would be a 20 foot travel lane with 6 foot sidewalks on each side. About a foot of right of way would be required on each side as the City has a 30 foot right-of-way through this area.

This project would not include sewer service work, as the City does not provide sewer service. If the county has plans to do sewer work in the area, the City would be receptive to partnering with them at the time the project is done. If there is below-standard water service in the area of the project, it is likely that Tacoma water would partner with the City at the time the project is done.

City Engineer Ecklund stated that the road was classified as a neighborhood collector many years ago on a form that was set up so that the maximum usage of the road had to be listed. He stated that the increase in traffic trips per day on 37<sup>th</sup> if it were extended would be from 200 per day to 1,000 per day, not the 5,000 that was previously estimated. He reported that, in previous projects with similar concerns, the issues of crime and decreased property values have not occurred.

City Engineer Ecklund addressed the issue of traffic impacts on Sunset Drive, and stated that these types of projects are not intended to serve as a bypass for traffic, but provide more ease of navigation for neighborhood residents. He does not anticipate that extending 37<sup>th</sup> Street would increase traffic on Sunset at all. In response to a query, he reported that the cost estimate for the project is \$800,000 and that there would need to be a funding mechanism in place in order to pursue the project. He reiterated that funding for this project would come from resources identified for transportation projects only.

Commissioner Paulson stated in the instance of both Morrison and Alameda, sidewalks were built as part of the project. The City has a 30 foot right-of-way between Bridgeport and Sunset. If a project was federally funded, would bicycle lanes be built as well? City Engineer Ecklund answered that the decision to build bicycle lanes or not would depend on the source of funding. If bike lanes were built, there would be additional right-of-way needs.

Commissioner Boykin addressed the cost vs. benefit question. There will be relief to the level of service at the intersection of 40<sup>th</sup> and Sunset, and, as the City grows, some benefit at the 40<sup>th</sup> and Bridgeport intersection. City Engineer Ecklund stated that the City has not done a trip savings or cost savings analysis, and would not do this unless there is money in the pipeline to actually implement the project. Discussion of levels of service at the intersections at both Sunset and 40<sup>th</sup> and Bridgeport and 40<sup>th</sup> followed.

Commissioner Stafford stated that from looking at the transportation grid, it seems that 35<sup>th</sup> or 44<sup>th</sup> Streets would serve a much larger part of the City. And it seems that Drexler should move traffic from 40<sup>th</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup>. Why isn't it doing so? City Engineer Ecklund stated that Drexler represents only a portion of the entire traffic grid system, and to say it is not working is not taking into account the full picture.

**MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos, seconded by Commissioner Boykin to extend the meeting for 15 minutes. Motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes was approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Paulson inquired whether, since increased pedestrian access is one of the goals of this project, could sidewalks only be built first to address the pedestrian connection, and then the roadway could be completed later? City Engineer Ecklund stated that the sidewalks would likely have to be rebuilt if the road were to come later. Limited funding options would make this difficult.

City Engineer Ecklund addressed questions about Larson Lane. This road was originally proposed to run between 35<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup>. In reality what has been adopted in the grid plan is a segment between 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup>. Construction of the section of Larson Lane between 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> is contingent upon the assembling of land to do a significant development project. That segment is totally development driven. The City does not have a current plan to construct a street going through those properties. This needs to be clarified in the Comprehensive Plan.

*Lori Fudge* – Ms. Fudge commented that the situations that were referred to as similar situations that have not resulted in a large impact, are in fact NOT similar as they didn't have a high school with a connection to a Starbucks. She asked what type of sign or signal would be placed at the end of 37<sup>th</sup>? City Engineer Ecklund stated that the proposal is that there would be a stop sign on 37<sup>th</sup>, and not one on Sunset. There would be a retaining wall – similar to what was done on Drexler Drive, integrated into the roadway itself in order to minimize the impact to residents.

*Paul Nelson* asked for clarification of the right-of-way. Director Swindale stated that it is 30 feet wide and then goes up to 45 feet in certain areas.

**MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos, seconded by Commissioner Stafford to extend the meeting until 9:30. Motion to extend the meeting until 9:30 was approved unanimously.**

*Doug Lueken* thanked Commissioners for volunteering for these positions and asking good questions. He also thanked City Engineer Ecklund for his honesty and forthrightness.

*Sharon Jiminez* stated that according to the manual traffic count she did in 2010, there was a maximum of 50 trips per day through the neighborhood. City Engineer Ecklund stated that some yards along the street may have, over the years, encroached on City property. He also stated that any required acquisition of property would be accomplished with compensation to property owners.

Chair Quisenberry stated that the Commissioners need to study this issue more at the next session before making a decision. The desire was also expressed to allow the absent two members of the Commission to be able to have input before a decision is made.

A gentleman representing the company that has just purchased the property at 6919 24<sup>th</sup> Street West had concerns because of the public notice sign that was posted very close to that property. Director Swindale noted that the sign went up in a location where the zoning classification will not be changed. There will be no impact to the property or business.

#### **6. Staff Comments (9:21)**

Discussion was held regarding possible dates for a special meeting in July in place of the July 15 meeting. Two possible dates are Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> and Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, and staff will poll the Commissioners as to which would work best.

#### **7. Commission and Liaison Comments (9:28)**

Commissioner Boykin appreciated the spirit of the folks who came to speak to this issue tonight. It was mentioned that notification was done according to requirements and parties of record. Complaints about notification are fairly common. Principal Planner Boers noted it was quite unusual for the City to be providing notice for an item that is NOT proposed to be changed.

Commissioner Stafford congratulated City staff how fluid the US Open went.

**8. Adjourn (9:30)**

**MOTION: by Commissioner Boykin, seconded by Commissioner Xenos to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was approved unanimously.**

Submitted by:

Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant  
Community and Economic Development

Approved as submitted: July 23, 2015