

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Nikki Bufford called the study session to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Shannon Reynolds, Brett L. Wittner, Karen Mauer-Smith, Hunter T. George, and Joe Barrentine were present.

Councilmember Shannon Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were none.

WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT UPDATE

Tacoma Public Schools’ project team and consultants provided an update on the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project and stated that construction is anticipated to begin in June 2026, with completion and occupancy targeted for Fall 2027.

There was a brief discussion on traffic queuing and potential impacts to surrounding streets, highlighting the existing condition of vehicle stacking on Alameda Avenue during afternoon dismissal. The project team stated that site constraints limit options, and the potential use of a crossing guard to manage traffic and pedestrian safety was discussed and suggested.

The project team presented three interim traffic options during construction. The Council discussed Option C, which places parent queuing along Elm Tree Lane and routes buses through the parking lot. It was noted that there was potential for continued neighborhood traffic impacts regardless of the routing. There was a brief discussion of construction access and scheduling to minimize conflicts.

There was a brief discussion regarding whether the project could better utilize the existing right-of-way near Contra Costa Avenue to improve circulation. The project team reported on-site and alignment constraints.

Further discussions included improved landscaping and irrigation maintenance as required by the Fircrest Municipal Code, project permitting, stormwater improvements, construction staging and related parking, and regular communication with residents throughout the project timeline.

STEP HOUSING DISCUSSION

Kim Gunderson of Mahoney Planning provided an overview of the proposed code amendments related to STEP Housing and compliance with the Growth Management Act. She reported that the project includes a supplemental land capacity analysis and development code updates to allow STEP housing. The proposed code amendments would allow permanent supportive housing and transitional housing in residential zones, and emergency housing and shelters in MUN and MUU zones. Ms. Gunderson reviewed the proposed new Type 2C permit process and highlighted additional amendments to include updated parking standards and removal of the City’s definition of “family”.

Ms. Gunderson reviewed the project timeline, Washington State Department of Commerce review, and future public engagement. There was a brief discussion about an existing group home and its classification under the current code, as well as whether tiny homes were included in the proposed code amendments.

Ms. Gunderson stated that pending state legislation may impact the proposed code amendments.

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ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Viafore MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.

The Motion Carried (7-0).



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk