

**Tukwila International Boulevard  
Tukwila City Council and Planning Commission Joint Worksession  
January 8, 2015**

**Scribe Notes**

On Thursday January 8, 2015 a joint worksession was held with the Tukwila City Council and Planning Commission at the Tukwila Community Center from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m to kick off the update of the Transportation Corridor Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The intent of the worksession was to check-in on results of City planning and investments made over the previous decade and a half in the Tukwila International Boulevard (TIB) District, and to review the vision for the area in light of any change in condition or the community's desires. To that end, City staff and a team of consultants from Via Architecture, Heartland LLC, and Real Retail facilitated small group discussions and hands-on map work. The comments taken from that worksession are provided below. A set of questions used to guide the discussion at each table is included after the comments.

**Table 1**

- Tukwila's vision doesn't exist in any south county cities
- Tukwila's ideal would be a pioneer
- Senior citizen homes for people of Tukwila to age in city
- Walkable with places to gather and sit could fill in space between buildings "campus like"
- Why is the city investing? Is the area giving the best return for the public money spent?
- Is this a "parade street" or should investment be made somewhere else?
- Because city took over street we can now control the traffic - faster travel/high speeds can use the freeway
- Light rail provides opportunity with transit oriented development that includes small businesses and housing
- Micro business opportunities and 5 stories of residential over 1 story commercial type of developments (5over1)
- Great views of neighborhoods from station
  
- When travelers arrive at the LRT station they ask:  
What's to do here?"
- Great green canopy; views of Rainier
- Because of the length and distance of the TIB, there will be nodes of activity: Bernie & Boys (130<sup>th</sup> & TIB), 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB, 160<sup>th</sup> and TIB (Heights available), and the light rail station
- P-Patches in multifamily area
- Benchmark to monitor possible gentrification
- Disagreement about households & population:



- need to attract more households/“roof tops”
- Tukwila does not have the population to bring in grocery, but also not a scum
- Disagreement as to why no store
- Household incomes and their housing create eclectic neighborhoods that are interesting and work well
- Need quality affordable housing and increase its density to make goal of maintaining affordability.
- The Planning Commission walking tour revealed substandard conditions
- How to incentivize mixed use with market rate and affordable housing
  
- Asset: Proximity to school and transit
- Betting lighting and walkability needed
- How do you retain eclecticness?
- Low income next to high income households
- Can't have everything, need to prioritize
- there's retail leakage,
- need people to stay, cheapness doesn't lead to profitability (i.e. Chinatown isn't cheap)
- Sidewalk café business on ground floor and housing on top
- Walkable schools
- Would like to see market work here rather than have the public subsidies to make business happen here
- How do we enhance the district? (catalyst could be event/programming, not just facilities)
- What is Tukwila's “personality” (Leavenworth has distinct personality)
- 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB is “50 yard line”
  
- TIB feels like a highway, it's too big (maybe main street should be an east-west road)
- traffic volumes on TIB are not that high
- Main street in a node instead of long and linear (*intersection?*)
- End zones of “emphasis area” – 154<sup>th</sup> and 144<sup>th</sup>
- Make the street narrower, convert lanes, slow traffic, and put parking on street.
- Don't encourage people to pass through. Change TIB to a “to” instead of a “through”

#### Question 2 Barriers

- Lack of master plan
- Undesirable motels, even new motels wouldn't be nice/can't pencil out
  - Why couldn't a new motel pencil out?
- Increase height to incentivize redevelopment
- Theft is a problem
- Everyone is waiting, lack of coordination and confidence in future
- City needs to take the initiative
- Is crime a reality or perception?

## Near Term

- Revise zoning for two blocks East/West of TIB
- Business training- help businesses market themselves
- Market Analysis
  - – how to distinguish the area from Southcenter
  - not a big box area
  - theater?
- Maybe Tukwila doesn't have a main street, but a collection of different types of “neighborhoods commercial areas”
- Lots of employment/employees to into for market
- There are many little commercial areas within Historic Neighborhoods: Duwamish, Riverton, and Foster. What can make up/characterize this type of area within TIB?

## Table 2

- Turnover rental housing => demolish and reconstruct into mid-rise
- get amenities
- TIB trolley – Connects to other parts of city (to and from mall to other parts of the City [more of a local system])
- TIB is used now as a bypass for I-5 - want slow traffic, more pedestrians
- Too much competitiveness among individual businesses, crime (barriers)
- Want a destination place for community and region (e.g. bakery or similar to what Columbia City has)
- Want more of a transition from higher density/height on TIB to single family neighborhoods, less abrupt change
- Bernie's (130<sup>th</sup> & TIB) seen as a potential node, would need to consolidate properties
- 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB as bull's eye of area
- City owned property close to each other => will create synergy
- Need a rendering of TIB in the future, market it
- Partner with SeaTac's mixed used development @ LRT station (utilize SeaTac's project as an asset and build off of that)
- Change at Military & TIB – potential to redevelop to create a sense of arrival into TIB area
  
- Theme? Leavenworth has one. For TIB, what would represent international theme? Needs to be genuine.
- Examples - Crossroads, Town Center in LFP (Third Place Books)
- Pooling of international restaurants
- International flavor in TIB is authentic, others are trying to create.
  - How can we protect, promote, and make space for it?



- Renton-food hall, Seattle-Melrose Place, Ron Sher... food hall. (Need central place where people can gather).
  - Should put flags down TIB
- Don't want it to be "corny" - must be authentic
- Art should have a place (music, food, boutiques)
- Art at Foster HS
- Gallery showcasing at-risk youth's art
- Make Foster HS have the best business program=> attracts other programs/people to area. Good schools are an important asset.
- Small schools are a draw
- Connect and leverage existing assets
  
- East/West connectors (node at 144<sup>th</sup> - push sidewalk improvements East/West from there)
- Crosswalks are too few and far between, need crosswalks at mosque
- Improve signage and implement improvements that slow traffic
- Larry's is too high (elevation) to create a street presence, need to reorient to street (natural barrier)
- Department of Homeland Security brings people into area. How can Group Health employees get to TIB?
- 599 interchange is the gateway to TIB, but looks bad - weeds
- Think about Transitions along the corridor
- Need flexibility in heights
- Mixed use development is desired (mixed with housing), e.g. North lot in Seattle at stadiums
- A change in housing will change the demographics
  
- How to incentivize property owners to consolidate? Monetary win for buyer and seller
- What role does SeaTac MU project (across from LRT station) play and how can we influence?
- Goals & policies should address:
  - Pull in Partners (e.g. school districts)
  - City should continue to spend money to consolidate properties if project is worthwhile
  - Node at LRT, 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB
- Take down green building on north end of TIB and create park
- Need Open space/parks in TIB? Group felt that a Park on TIB not desired now because neighborhood needs to change (less crime)
- Ensure the SeaTac mixed use project doesn't turn their back to Military road/TIB
- Pancake chef is a destination

#### Immediate Actions

- Pop-Up stores, food trucks
- Vacant pawn shop – turn into a Fanuel Hall
- Crowd Source data,
  - Ask what should be done with TIB on the internet
- Hold a "Future City" competition, kids know what they want

- Cut TIB boundary off at 130<sup>th</sup> and designate area to the north as something else that would go all the way to 599
- Between 132<sup>nd</sup> and 139<sup>th</sup> is the gateway to the TIB - everyone drives through

### Table 3

- Pull/Tug for Residents and Businesses
- Southcenter is not the center - where is the center?
- Discussion area: TIB is center, but treat the residential area separate from TIB? Tukwila Village is epicenter because of proximity to high school, library, poop
- Residential streets leading from TIB into neighborhoods are not sufficiently improved
- Need residential streets/owners invested in area or else the TIB is only a transportation corridor
- Must get sidewalks, crosswalks etc. on cross streets so people will spend time on TIB (pedestrian infrastructure)
- Not so interested in small business - few jobs
- Concentrate on large projects to generate shoppers, taxes, etc. (e.g. Airport and Health industries)
- Develop distinct districts, maybe with a big development that could house small businesses
- Not necessarily a place to shop, but a workplace for higher income workers.
- The scale of the project would likely require property consolidation



### Assets

- Cascade View has excellent access to Seattle
- Intersection of light rail and 518
- Capital Investment: stop lights @ intersections to develop distinct areas. (would that change area? Need to provide low income housing?)
- Sub Areas: Tukwila Village with school and stadium (to be center point); light rail station
- 130<sup>th</sup> and TIB another good spot for focal point because of proximity to Tukwila Village
- Slow down the speed with the built environment (sidewalks, buildings)
- Low income housing, a barrier or asset? Barrier of apartments.
- Make housing affordable with jobs that pay more (rather than building more low income housing)
- Need more activity, more concentrated (taller, denser)
- 3-5 stories as a limit, because taller buildings don't seem like a neighborhood.
- Where are the engaged citizens? Multi-family units do not generate publically involved citizens
- What level of income/density is needed to support retail?
  - Need to go beyond neighborhood serving retail

- What goes between more intensive nodes?
- When area feels safer, more people from other Tukwila neighborhoods would come to TIB.
- Northern part of TIB with sidewalks seems cleaner, safer, and has more of a sense of ownership
  - TIBAC is responsible for picking up much of the trash
- Tukwila Village and other projects like it will bring in more customers
- Don't see new affordable housing being developed for the very low income levels
  - New construction will cost more
  - Should focus on increasing wages so they can afford new housing
  - Encourage job creation for existing residents
- The City of Tukwila is already a job center (2 times as many jobs as residents) so we don't need to focus on creating more.
  - TIB likely to be small businesses and retail
- Major demographics are older retired people and immigrants getting established (transitioning up or down)
  - Reducing transience will benefit area as people's situations improve
  - Refugee population is less vested in community than immigrants
  - Encourage businesses that will employ them (refugees)
- Low income population is being priced out of Seattle and moving south
- Large infill houses can be disruptive to neighborhood
  - Why not accommodate that demand that wants larger close in houses
- Heartland comment - Types of Jobs : Small scale professional offices, services (nail and hair salon), small retail
- Based on current building stock
- New, 5 over 1 buildings will have higher rents
  - TIBAC supports market driven heights with transition to neighborhood
- Don't see TIB as an area where same people work and live (access is so good that people can work lots of places,
- TIB will be residential with neighborhood serving retail
- refugees are being priced out of area and going farther south).
- Proximity to airport - gives an international flavor - good or bad to tie into?
- North end of TIB is big offices and has good access from all directions
- 135<sup>th</sup> area may be transitioning
- Crime in the area?
- 154<sup>th</sup> walkable to light rail and a 2 bed apartment rents for \$1800/month
- Light Rail area doesn't need to follow the same development pattern as the rest of the TIB
- 152<sup>nd</sup> has more Somali businesses
- 154<sup>th</sup> - SeaTac will continue to reconfigure roads tied to light rail (market not strong enough for redevelopment so interim uses may be parking) future uses - hotel, or other airport related use?
- Future conference center use at south end of TIB
- Best Assets to Keep: New schools, remodeled middle school, pool rebuilt, new library/civic core, police resources center, Namaste garden, Buddhist center, sewer and water districts building

- Opportunities: lots of diverse religious institutions to unite community, Southgate Park is a green space that could connect neighborhood with trail.
- Light rail area – convention center or hotel
- Retail could concentrate at 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB to develop the heart of the area that would promote authentic international experience and provide connection from the light rail/future convention center area. Embrace international flavor.
- Connect light rail area to the remainder of the TIB to promote international culture
- Connections:
  - how to do east west to high school performing center
  - pedestrian crossings at north end of Tukwila village
  - TIB to community center (shuttle all over)
- Possible public safety facilities on TIB - spur growth by bringing in more businesses and activities
- Longer hours for business
- Larger lots near south end, but let it take care of itself
- Better to focus on 144<sup>th</sup> and TIB at Tukwila Village
- Nodes up and down TIB
- What about displacing low income uses?

### **End of Meeting – Quick Summary by Table Groups & Consultants**

Table 1

- Identity – should be authentic
- TIB should be walkable, lower speeds even to 25 mph
- Not a downtown main street
- Not as busy a street as we think
- Diversity of housing stock is an asset
- Need a change in building & zoning code
- Recognize schools as features/assets of neighborhood
- Lots of affordable housing – enhance don't destroy
- Tukwila Village is in right spot, a node not a strip
- Development should work its way south from Tukwila Village towards light rail – let it evolve
- Higher buildings & offices between Tukwila Village & Light rail station
- Bring in performing arts, food
- People get off at Light rail station and say “now what do we do?”

Table 2

- TIB Trolley – connects to rest of City
- Destination/bull's eye at Tukwila Village
- Like Columbia City
- Like food truck ideas
- Transition heights from TIB down to single family neighborhoods
- Partner with SeaTac on shared vision
- International flavor – install flags down TIB

- Space for vendors/farmers market/art
- Improve E-W connectors for residents; N-S for through traffic
- City should continue investing in TIB and in consolidating properties
- Nodes of more intensive uses at 144<sup>th</sup> & 154<sup>th</sup>
- Bring northern boundary down – north end of TIB is very different
- Implement a Future Cities program

Table 3

- We are what we are
  - Next to airport, diverse
- Tukwila Village is at epicenter of TIB area – high school, library, pool
- Improve E-W corridors into the neighborhoods
- TIB should have residential focus – more housing & neighborhood serving retail
- Green Space/Southgate Park should be used to tie to Community Center
- Need sidewalk lighting to make walking safer
- Connect to different neighborhoods
- Put in P-patches in higher density multifamily developments
- Increase housing ownership – Somali community establishing; help decrease costs
- Embrace international flavor
- Other areas will evolve as nodes over time
- Affordable housing – new construction will cost more
  - Bring in higher wage jobs so people can afford more
  - Encourage job creation for existing residents
- Like W. Seattle as an example

#### Consultants

- Unique community with lots of opportunities
- Emerging residential urban village
- Fewer crime generators
- Sense of ownership
- Institutions – schools, religious institutions, pool, library
- Civic corridor on S 144<sup>th</sup>
- Diversity exists here
  - How to grow while preserving this?
- Nodes – focus on few places to concentrate efforts
  - 144<sup>th</sup>, light rail station – address Tukwila Village first, then station area
- North 1/3 of TIB is very different, needs different approach
- Not a lot of traffic on TIB at rush hour
  - Slow traffic down
  - Potential street car?

#### Other comments

- TIBAC and long-time residents have been instrumental in cleaning up and pushing for TIB area planning and improvements
- Why is City investing so much here? Is the City getting a return on the investment? How will this benefit the rest of the City?

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**January 8, 2015**  
**Questions for Breakout Groups**

1. What is your long-term (10 to 20 year) vision for the TIB neighborhood?
  - What should be the overall character of this place? For example, describe specific features, such as types of uses, focused nodes of activity, transportation options, building height and massing, and street and sidewalks?
  - Are there subareas and are any of them where efforts should be focused or that are a priority?
  - What are the area's existing assets that should be preserved and carried forward to support the long-term vision, for example, affordable housing choices or small ethnic businesses? If success leads to loss of housing affordability, small businesses and international character – should there be strategies to prevent this loss?
  - Should the community allow all things in order to facilitate the redevelopment or should the community be selective about type and scale of uses?
  - Community input refers to a “main street” for the neighborhood. What constitutes a main street to you? Could TIB be a main street or should an existing east/west street or a new street elsewhere in the area be the area's main street?
  
2. What are the main barriers to achieving the desired positive change for TIB? For example,
  - Regional perceptions?
  - Zoning and land use regulations?
  - Lack of or type of public infrastructure?
  - Undesirable uses?
  - Safety, crime?
  - Lack of consensus on priorities or recommendations?
  
3. What are your near-term (3 to 5 year) hopes for TIB?
  - What types of new uses could best catalyze near-term revitalization?
  - What existing assets can be leveraged to attract investment, for example, developable land, transit access, open space, or successful businesses?
  - Where are the best sites for redevelopment?
  - Are there any ideas for immediate action/change?