



To: Planning Commission
Re: Design Review and Concept Review

Planning Commission Members,

The North End Neighborhood Council strongly supports the Planning Department's and the Planning Commission's efforts to build a system of Design Review for the City of Tacoma. We also strongly support a Concept Review component of the Design Review process, where community members and developers and planners can work together in the earliest stages of the process to reach the best solutions for our built environment.

However, we recognize that a thoughtful and effective system of Design Review won't be ready for probably two years, maybe even longer. During those two years, Tacoma is likely to continue developing, especially considering the real estate market and the growth of Pierce County. So to help jump start the design process, we are seeking the Planning Commission's support for more immediate implementation of a trial form of Concept Review.

There are clear benefits to this early implementation. Other than some initial help from the Planning Department with framing the process, Concept Review will not place much burden at all on the City's resources. Neighborhood Councils can host meetings with developers and then provide feedback to the Planning Department, which will help build the local information that will help inform the planning for Design Review. By having conversations with developers, the Neighborhood Councils also will learn more about the development community and will learn what pieces of Concept Review will be important for the final plan.

We know that much of this initial work with Concept Review, before the City has formalized the process with Design Review, will be voluntary in nature. But if developers can be encouraged to attend a neighborhood meeting at the concept phase of their projects, and if the developers can see the value of engaging the neighbors before they've spent time and money on plans and designs, this early implementation of Concept Review could work in positive ways to build wide support for the Design Review that's coming. Also, it seems clear that there is ample support in the TMC for Concept Review at the Neighborhood Council level. Particularly relevant sections are TMC 1.45.040 ("Neighborhood Councils will serve in an advisory capacity to City government...") and 1.45.070.B.2 ("...solicit the position and reasoning of affected

Neighborhood Councils...") and 1.45.070.B.3 ("...encourage the proponents (of development) to discuss their proposal with the affected Neighborhood Council(s)").

At the Planning Commission meeting on June 7th, please support, as part of the City's Long Range Planning Work Program, early implementation of a pilot program for Concept Review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Price', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyle Price
NENC Chair, on behalf of the NENC