

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Cushman—Adams Future Use Study

April 2024 Update

Project Background and Context

The Cushman and Adams electrical substations, located in the North End Neighborhood of Tacoma between N 19th Street and N 21st Street and on the west and east sides of N Adams Street, were built in the mid-1920s to bring electricity from the Cushman Hydroelectric project to Tacoma. For many years, the substations served as active parts of the electric system. Adams Substation was declared surplus to utility needs in 2009. Cushman Substation has not yet been declared surplus to TPU's needs and anticipates the potential to surplus the property pending the outcome of a study of potential future uses (Future Use Study). Refer to Figure 1 for the Context Map of the Study Area.

In June 2017, the Tacoma City Council placed the exteriors of both substations on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and directed the City of Tacoma's General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) to work collaboratively and engage the community on future redevelopment of the properties. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the City of Tacoma's General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities in July 2018 and updated in 2024 designates the General Government will lead, with TPU support, an outreach effort to ensure broad community involvement and input regarding future re-use of the properties.

In the first quarter of 2024, staff will restart the project and resume community engagement to collect input on possible future use options in two phases: VISIONING and SCENARIOS development. Tacoma Public Utilities is still actively using the building and has plans to vacate and surplus the building by 2027, following construction of a replacement facility. Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) continues to utilize and maintain the structures and site.

Purpose of the Future Use Study and Key Considerations

City of Tacoma and TPU retained a consultant team in late 2019 to conduct a study of potential future uses of the Cushman and Adams substation sites and buildings. The consultant team, led by Otak, Inc. an interdisciplinary planning and design firm, and supported by Richaven Architecture & Preservation and Leland Consulting Group, will provide expertise in urban design, architecture, historic preservation and reuse, planning for public/public-private and community uses, development and financial feasibility analysis, and public outreach. The consultant team has experience directing successful community-based workshops resulting in a clear vision statement and community support. The future use study will be guided by the following key considerations:

- **COMMUNITY GOALS:** Identify community goals and explore options to maximize the potential to meet those goals.
- **HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:** Understand the potential to facilitate historic preservation goals, including improved public understanding and access to historic resources.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT:** Consider methods to harmonize with and enhance neighborhood aesthetics, livability, and quality of life.
- **PUBLIC AMENITIES:** Evaluate options to integrate publicly accessible spaces and amenities beneficial to the immediate neighbors, the North End, and the city as a whole.
- **HOUSING:** Pursuant to the City’s adopted policy for the sale/disposition of City-owned general government real property to better align city goals to increase prioritization for affordable housing and equity (Resolution 38529), the Future Use Study will evaluate the potential for housing at the Cushman-Adams sites as part of at least one future use scenario studied.
- **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF MARKET AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY:** Evaluate the potential for long-term financial sustainability of potential reuse alternatives, and assess a range of public, public-private, and private ownership and management approaches.



Figure 1 Cushman—Adams Future Use Study Context Map

Draft Guiding Principles for the Future Use Study

The project team, together with City and TPU staff, have started the process of identifying and confirming guiding principles for the Future Use Study, expanding upon the key considerations stated above. A draft of these initial guiding principles is provided below.

- The Future Use Study will support future Tacoma City Council and TPU Board decision-making regarding future use/reuse of the substation properties by providing a timely report that presents a feasible range of potential reuse alternatives.
- The study process will be transparent, equitable, and open to input from all members of the Tacoma community and general public.
- The study will evaluate and confirm the implications of the historical significance and historic designations associated with the properties and how these affect future reuse scenarios.
- The study will evaluate adopted City policies and plans so that scenarios studied align with these as relevant.
- The process will support key values of the Tacoma community, including equity and access to opportunity, sustainability, neighborhood and community vitality, stewardship of public resources and assets, and transparent public decision-making.
- A range of scenarios will be studied to fit a variety of potential future uses and needs.
- Scenarios studied will consider uses and design approaches to harmoniously fit with and enhance neighborhood scale, patterns, and aesthetics.
- Scenarios studied will include vibrant community gathering spaces and public spaces and amenities consistent with goals and needs identified through the study process, engagement results, and consultation.
- Pursuant to the housing policies as well as the City's adopted policy for the sale/disposition of City-owned general government real property (Resolution 40429) to better align city goals to increase prioritization for affordable housing and equity (Resolution 38529), the Future Use Study will evaluate the potential

for housing at the Cushman-Adams sites in at least one future use scenario studied.

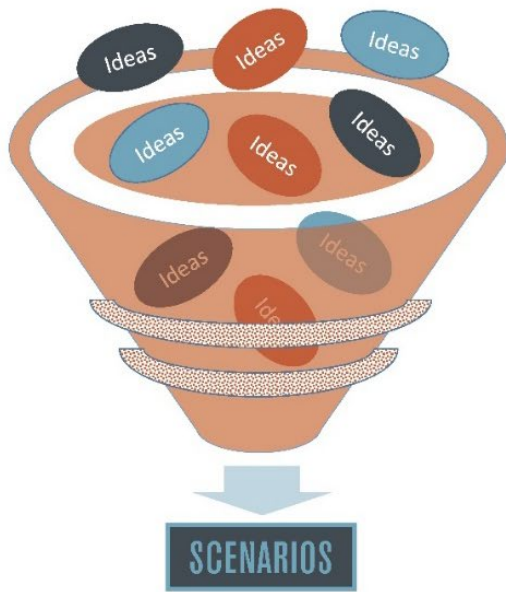
- Potential solutions studied will be scalable to be accomplished in phase over time.
- In accordance with the City of Tacoma Policy for the Sale/Disposition of City-owned General Government Real Property (Resolution 40429), where a General Government surplus property lies within the historical geographical boundaries of relevant tribe(s) existing prior to the Medicine Creek Treaty, the City shall give the relevant tribe(s) the first right of refusal to either purchase the property or to exchange tribal property or property rights for the surplus property. This will depend upon which surplus property applies. The City will invite tribal representatives to participate in the future use study as they may choose. Subsequent to the future use study, the City will follow the surplus policy by offering the first right of refusal to relevant tribe(s), subject to any specific Council direction regarding future use and disposition of the site(s).
- The decision-making process following the Future Use Study and to determine the preferred path forward for the properties will be well-defined and made clear to the public as a key outcome of the study.

The Importance of Community Involvement to the Outcomes of the Future Use Study

Given the key considerations of the project stated above, it will be essential for the Future use concepts and scenarios studied in this project to be shaped by input from the Tacoma community (citywide) as well as residents from the surrounding neighborhood, and a full diversity of the community and people who have interest in the project. A diversity of engagement activities will provide opportunities for everyone to have input throughout the course of the study effort.

From Ideas to Scenarios and Project Timeline

An important part of the engagement process will be gathering input and ideas and testing these through analysis of various potential future use scenarios, as shown in the diagram in Figure 2 below. The Future Use Study will extend through mid-2025, following the process in the timeline chart in Figure 3.



- 1. VISIONING WORKSHOPS:**
Ideas and opportunities are generated
- 2. SCENARIO WORKSHOPS:**
Scenarios are shaped from ideas
- 3. FILTERING:**
Market analysis and technical evaluation of scenarios
- 4. OUTPUTS:**
Alternatives for decision-making and additional feasibility analysis

Figure 2 Future Use Study Process

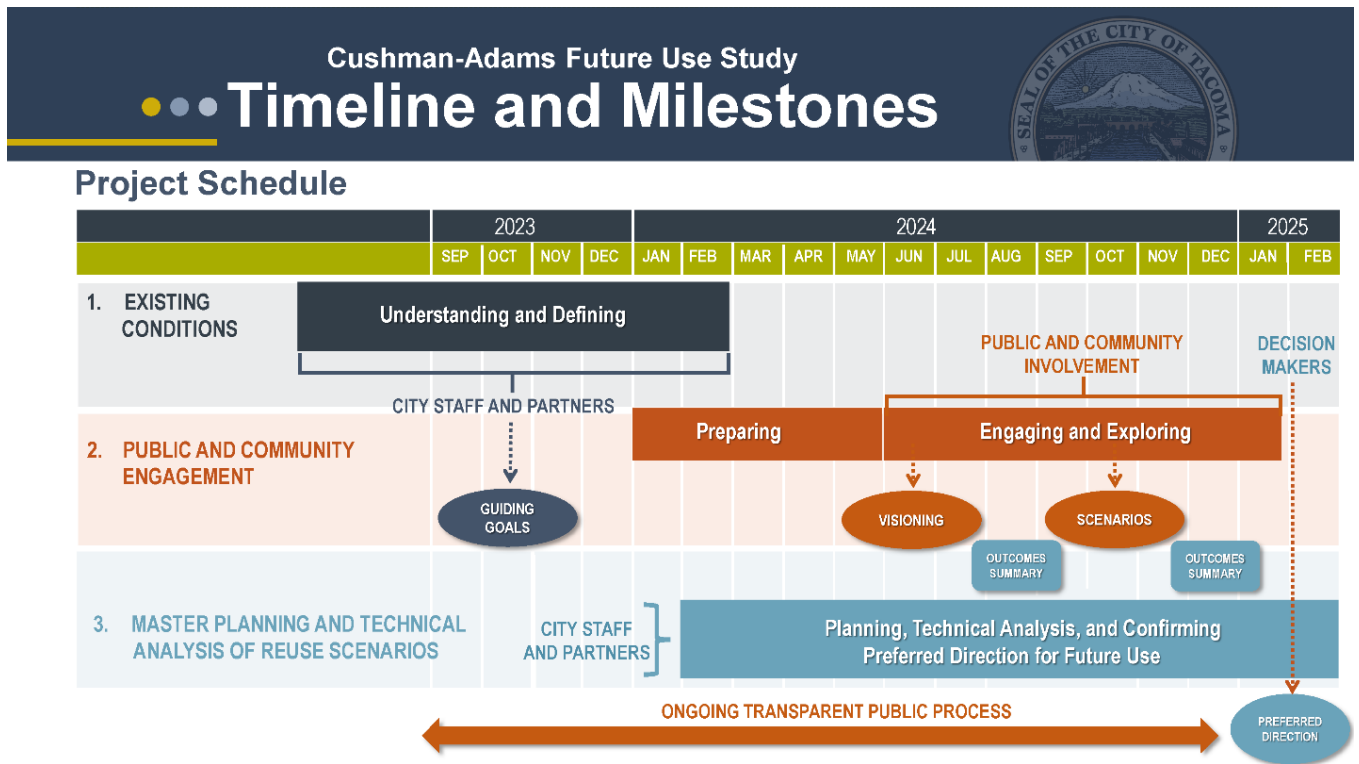


Figure 3 Future Use Study Timeline

Engagement Methods—Past, Present/Ongoing, and Future

City of Tacoma’s Commitment to Diverse Methods for Engagement

Tacoma is committed to broad and authentic public engagement and careful consideration of a wide variety of methods to ensure inclusive and equitable community engagement, diverse demographics, and lessons learned to promote the most meaningful participation possible.

City of Tacoma Engagement, Administration, and Implementation Goals and Policies

These goals and policies from the City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan are important considerations as a foundation for engagement activities. The following goals and policies specifically set the tone for engagement activities.

Goal AD–1 Engage the interests of the entire community in planning for the future.

Policy AD–1.2 Ensure that community engagement opportunities are broadly accessible and incorporate a range of locations, times, and formats, including accommodations that allow people with disabilities, people with childcare responsibilities, and people with first languages other than English to fully participate.

Policy AD–1.4 Collaborate with communities to design culturally appropriate processes to meet the needs of traditionally under-served and under-represented groups.

Goal AD–2 Build and sustain robust partnerships with individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, institutions, and other government agencies.

Policy AD–2.1 Maintain partnerships and engagement with:

- a. Individual community members
- b. Historically under-served and under-represented communities, including low-income communities and communities of color
- c. Neighborhood and business associations, including groups without formal affiliations
- d. Businesses, unions, employees, and related organizations
- e. Interest and affinity organizations and groups
- f. Institutions, governments, and tribal sovereign nations

Goal AD–3 Ensure that city decision-making processes are clear and transparent, with good understanding from the community about who is responsible for making decisions and how community input is taken into account.

Policy AD–3.1 Establish and communicate clear roles, rights, responsibilities and timeframes for participants and decision-makers.

Policy AD–3.2 At each stage of the planning process, identify what topics can be influenced or changed through community input, and what ones are being guided by established regulations or policies.

Past Engagement Efforts

In anticipation of the conversion of the Cushman and Adams substations to other future uses, the City and TPU staff have been laying the groundwork for an extensive public and community engagement effort as part of the Future Use Study. Staff also have supported the North End Neighborhood Council with various outreach efforts, including the well-attended “Discover Cushman!” event held on September 22, 2018, hosted by the North End Neighborhood Council. Initial input gathered from the public regarding potential future use alternatives was documented and has been made available to the consultant team as background for the Future Use Study.

In addition the City engaged residents as part of development of the Proctor Neighborhood Plan and gathered input relevant to the Cushman-Adams substations site as part of that engagement. More information is available in the separate Feedback Summary Report.

Among the key themes of these early conversations are a broad interest in public access to the site and potential reuse as a community facility, as well as preserving and providing public understanding of and access to sites of historic significance.

Proposed Engagement Efforts as Part of the Future Use Study

Community input will be gathered throughout the course of the Future Use Study through a variety of specific activities described below. Overall, the intent will be to provide equitable and broad opportunities for meaningful participation in the process. Activities will engage the full community and gather input from diverse interests—including residents from the surrounding area, citywide residents, and groups with specific interests. Through the process of workshop sessions, the project team will identify common themes and interests, as well as areas of potential conflicting perspectives and interests that need to be addressed. For the Future Use Study, the following engagement efforts are proposed.

Tools for Notification and Gathering Public Input on an Ongoing Basis

Website—A project web presence is in development and located:

<https://engagepiercecounty.mysocialpinpoint.com/cushmanadams-substation-reuse>

Project information is also available at: [City of Tacoma website](#) and [TPU](#) with ongoing updated postings of information so everyone can check in on the project at any time and understand the status. Information also is available at:

<https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/projects/power-towers-north-21-street/cushman-substation/> and at My TPU: www.cityoftacoma.org/cushman

Points of Contact/Feedback Loop—The public will have the opportunity to submit input at any time through the Planning and Development Services Department. Inquiries can be emailed to neighborhoodplanning@cityoftacoma.org, and may be made to Lauren Hoogkamer, Principal Planner at (253) 591-5254 or LHoogkamer@cityoftacoma.org. Inquiries to Tacoma Public Utilities should be directed to Dr. John Gaines, Senior Government Affairs Advisor, at JGaines1@cityoftacoma.org or (253) 441-4661.

Listserve—An electronic mailing list will be used to provide updates to interested parties regarding meetings, events, and progress on the project. PDS will build a contacts list of interested people and organizations as work on the project proceeds. We will also collaborate with the North End Neighborhood Council, who have committed to distribute project updates to their Listserve contacts.

Social Media—The City of Tacoma, Planning Tacoma, and TPU maintain accounts on Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram, which can be used to announce project meetings and events and to make connections to the website and project information updates.

Responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)—the City will develop a set of FAQs about the project and make them available on the City's website.

Media/Press Relations—City staff will be coordinating with the media and press contacts to provide updates and press releases during the course of the project. Announcements for key events will be distributed to local media outlets including the Daily Index and The News Tribune, KNKX Public Radio, and other outlets.

Presentations and Updates to Groups, Boards, and Commissions—City staff will be providing periodic updates to organizations and formal boards and commissions of the City throughout the process. Updates to City Council, TPU Board, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Tacoma Metro Parks, neighborhood groups, and others are anticipated.

Online Open Houses/Surveys—The City will invite comments and share information through online forums hosted on the Social Pinpoint web platform. Online workshops will be designed to broaden public access and understanding to the project and enhanced opportunities to comment. The open house will include video and pictures of the site, background information and studies, presentation materials from public events, work products, and an opportunity for interactive public comments/survey.

TV Tacoma—The City will supplement engagement efforts through announcements and videos on TV Tacoma.

TPU Supported Outreach—TPU is assisting the project team with various postings and outreach activities including posting information about the project on MyTPU.org at the website where people pay bills and check their water and power usage. TPU also will support publishing e-news articles and other web notices to advertise upcoming meetings.

Tabling at Special Events, Farmers Market—Distributing information about the project, such as a project information sheet that directs people to the website and invites people to workshop events, could occur as part of tabling at special events and the Farmers Market.

Planned Engagement through Two Separate Workshop Series

VISIONING Workshop Series, June 22, 2024 and September 7, 2024 Discover Cushman Event—A series of workshop sessions with community and neighborhood groups will be held at the Wheelock Library Branch. Two identical public workshop sessions will be held—one at 10:30 am to Noon and one from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm, with the public asked to attend the workshop session that is most convenient for them. As an outcome of this workshop series, the planning team will develop a strong draft vision statement and guiding principles as a foundation for future scenarios to be analyzed.

In addition, on **September 7, 2024, Discover Cushman**, a special event open to the general public at the Cushman site, will be held to share information and goals for the project and to gather input on the draft vision statement and guiding principles for future use.

The Visioning Workshops will take place via in-person meetings and via the online open house, with opportunities to participate in either method. The Visioning Workshops will invite all ideas and open dialogue. The team will present the public with an overview of background information about the site and the City's policies. We will display examples of other adaptive use projects/precedents.

Intended Outcomes:

- Input from a diversity of interests on the potential future vision for the sites.
- Understanding of community and neighborhood interests and needs.
- Through visual preference tools, gather input on scale, character, pattern of potential uses that could fit in with the neighborhood.
- Generate enthusiasm for participating in the planning process and for the project overall.
- Inform about the schedule, next steps and Fall 2024 scenarios workshop

Upon completion of the Visioning Workshops, the planning team will proceed to prepare a draft vision statement and revise/expand the guiding principles for the project to encompass community input and perspectives.

The team also will be continuing to complete feasibility and technical analyses to better inform feasible uses for the properties. From here we will frame out potential scenarios to present at the Fall 2024 Scenarios Workshops. We will also integrate input from others who will be briefed at regular intervals during the project including City Commissions.

SCENARIOS Workshop Series, Fall 2024—A second series of workshop sessions with interest groups and a general public workshop. This workshop series will focus on development and analysis of potential future use scenarios, as well as key criteria for use in evaluation of scenarios.

The Scenarios Workshops will take place via in person at meetings and an online open house, with opportunities to participate in either method. The Scenarios Workshops will begin with a presentation on outcomes of the team’s technical and feasibility analysis and show a range of potential feasible uses for the two sites, framed into potential scenarios. The scenarios will be grounded in implementation, funding, community input, and feasibility considerations. We will gather community input on these scenarios through interactive tools/polls. We will seek to gain an understanding of community interests in the key concepts and scenarios, as well as potential additional uses/program elements that could/should be considered, as well as identifying potential refinements to the scenarios that may be needed. Presentation of potential future neighborhood scale connectivity, wayfinding, and enhancements needed to support the future use scenarios.

Intended Outcomes:

- Input from a diversity of interests on potential future use scenarios for the sites and potential preferences.

- Input on neighborhood scale connectivity, wayfinding, and enhancements that may be needed to support the future use scenarios.
- Ongoing understanding and more in-depth building of this understanding of community and neighborhood interests and needs.
- Through sketch up illustrations and renderings, gather input on scale, character, pattern of potential uses that could fit in with the neighborhood.
- Continue to generate enthusiasm for participating in the planning process and the project overall.
- Inform about the schedule, next steps and when the draft study will be completed and the future review process for the draft study.

Upon completion of the Scenarios Workshops, the planning team will proceed to prepare the full draft study and continue with technical and feasibility analysis related to the refined scenarios to determine a potential future direction for the sites, considering community input and technical feasibility, costs, funding potential, and other influences. We will also integrate input from others who will be briefed at regular intervals during the project including City Commissions. When the draft study is complete, we will support the City in facilitating the formal review process.

City Council and Board Decisions—The full draft Future Use Study will be prepared and brought forward to decision makers—City Council and the Tacoma Public Utilities Board in 2025. The full draft Future Use Study will include a complete record of the process and engagement efforts, the range of concepts and scenarios studied and how these align with technical considerations, costs and funding opportunities, and community interests. The study will present an understanding of the costs and tradeoffs and make recommendations for an implementation pathway forward.

The elected officials with City Council and the Tacoma Public Utilities Board will determine the next steps for the future of these important assets based on the outcomes of the Future Use Study process.

Who Will Be Engaged?

Everyone will have opportunities to be involved and provide input into this important project for the City of Tacoma. Future use of the Cushman and Adams substations has the potential to benefit residents surrounding the site, as well as others throughout the Tacoma community. At the same time, future use scenarios will need to harmonize with and enhance the character of North Tacoma. Accordingly, this engagement plan includes activities and methods for engaging all interests—the general public, local neighborhood, and various interest groups, including but not limited to:

- North End neighborhood residents

- North End Neighborhood Council
- Friends of Cushman
- Proctor District residents and visitors
- Other residents throughout the City of Tacoma
- Historic preservation groups and interested people
- Parks, recreation, cultural, arts, and other similar interests
- Housing interests/developers, affordable housing program representatives, advocates and professionals
- Businesses and employees from surrounding areas
- Tacomans generally, all of whom have a share in the utilities paid for by Tacoma property owners

Key Messages to the Community and Engagement Participants

There are a variety of important opportunities that will be explored in the Future Use Study, and these opportunities can be woven into key messages published about the project. These include:

1. Maximizing opportunities for historic preservation, access, and interpretation
2. Telling and sharing the story of Tacoma Public Utilities
3. Exploring adaptive reuse options associated with the two historic buildings
4. Creating spaces and amenities for public access, use and enjoyment
5. Enhancing the appearance, aesthetics, and livability in harmony with the neighborhood
6. Increasing equitable access to community assets and neighborhood opportunities
7. Meeting Tacoma's housing supply, choice, and affordability goals
8. Creating capacity for culture, art, and learning
9. Creating space for local business, shopping, and dining
10. Promoting economic development and increasing public revenue/sustainable revenue
11. Promoting sustainability, trees, and green features
12. Scale and massing of development on the two sites