

CUSHMAN AND ADAMS SUBSTATIONS FUTURE USE STUDY

December 2024

Tacoma Cushman and Adams Future Use Study – October 2024 SCENARIOS Public Workshop Sessions

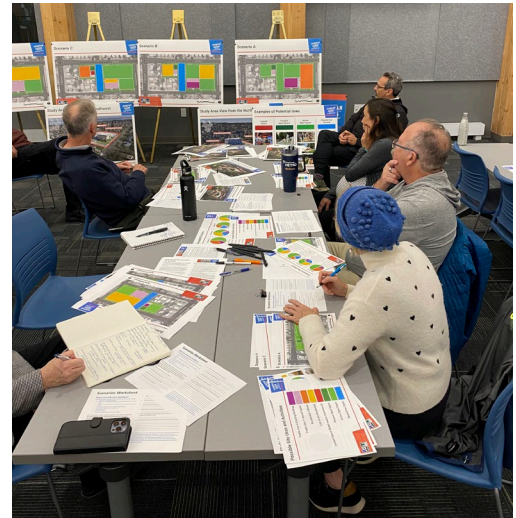
Event Summary

Following is a brief summary of the October 2024 SCENARIOS workshop sessions hosted for the Cushman and Adams Substations Future Use Study. A more detailed report on the outcomes from engagement activities throughout the duration of the project will be provided as part of the final report for this project.

Event Description

Four workshop sessions were held in October 2024:

- Two at the UW Tacoma Campus on Monday, October 21, 2024 from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm and from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
- Two at the Wheelock Library Branch in the Proctor District on Saturday, October 26, 2024 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm and from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm



The workshop sessions were all identical in content and activities, and were held for the purposes of sharing information and updates about the Cushman and Adams Substations Future Use Study and for discussing and gathering input on potential scenarios for future uses at the sites and in the buildings. In addition to the workshop sessions, the City also hosted an online open house and survey for the SCENARIOS phase of the project, which provided background information on the potential scenarios and provided an opportunity to gather additional input.

A previous VISIONING workshop series in June 2024 gathered input on the potential vision, ideas, and goals for the sites and buildings. An online VISIONING survey was also hosted as part of that stage of work.

About the Tacoma Cushman and Adams Future Use Study

The City of Tacoma is studying potential future uses for the historic Cushman and Adams substation sites and buildings. In 2018, a City Council resolution directed the City of Tacoma's General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) to work collaboratively and engage the community on the future redevelopment of these historic properties. These efforts were paused in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, the City restarted the project and conducted community engagement activities

through the summer and fall. Tacoma Power is still actively using and maintaining the Cushman building and plans to vacate and surplus it by 2027, following construction of an off-site replacement facility.

Participation and Partners

There were about 50 attendees across the four workshop sessions. In addition to members of the community, which mostly included residents, there were representatives from the following organizations:

- Tacoma City Council (observing)
- Tacoma Public Utility Board (observing)
- Metro Parks
- Tacoma Housing Authority
- North End Neighborhood Council
- West End Neighborhood Council
- Friends of Tacoma’s Cushman Substation
- Historic Tacoma

Language Access

Fact sheets about the Cushman and Adams Future Use Study translated into Vietnamese, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Russian were available at the event.

Next Steps

Following the SCENARIOS workshop sessions and close of the SCENARIOS online open house and survey, the project team is working on the full Future Use Study document, which will be published as a culminating report for this phase of study.

Community feedback gathered at both the VISIONING and SCENARIOS workshop sessions and through the two separate surveys, as well as previous input gathered from the North End Neighborhood Council’s outreach efforts, is being referenced to inform the team’s ongoing work on the final study document.



WORKSHOP AGENDA AND EXERCISES

Roughly 50 people total attended at the four SCENARIOS workshop sessions, with many of the attendees being from the North End. Most participants took the opportunity to provide input on potential future uses of the buildings and areas of the site in the Tacoma Cushman and Adams Substations study area by filling out worksheets and discussing their perspectives at the workshop sessions. (Note: Sign-in sheets from the workshop sessions were collected, but not all attendees signed in.)

The presentation from the workshop sessions is provided as an attachment to this summary. Four initial conceptual scenarios were presented for input, and participants were encouraged to comment on these scenarios, as well as to make their own recommendations. The workshop agenda was as follows:

1. Orientation to the Site and Buildings and Conceptual Scenarios
2. Filling Out Worksheets and the Smaller Group Work Tables and Holding Table Discussions
3. Full Group Discussion (Report Outs from Each Table) and General Commentary
4. Summary of Next Steps in the Study Process

As part of orientation to the site and buildings, background information was provided in the presentation that included an overview of decision-making criteria and key considerations, as follows:

- Public Input
- Feasibility
- Cost
- Sustainability (Environmental)
- Community Need
- Alignment with City Policies (Including Surplus Properties)

Participants were also reminded that the project should follow the City’s existing surplus policies, including first right of refusal to local tribes, and that City Council and Public Utility Board will be making the final decisions on determining the future uses and implementation pathway for the sites and buildings.

SCENARIOS—WHAT WE HEARD

Following is a summary of some of the common themes and perspectives that emerged from the workshop sessions and input gathered from participants. Refer to the SCENARIOS presentation to reference the scenarios that were presented and commented on. A variety of mixed opinions were shared on the Scenarios:



- Many commented that more “passive” open space should be reflected in the scenarios—providing more of a balance between active open space and passive open space.
- Most participants in the workshop sessions acknowledged the need for housing options in Tacoma. A range of housing types were discussed, from middle housing options such as multiplexes and townhomes to mixed use residential over active ground floor buildings.

- Several participants stated that the housing types should be designed to be in scale with the surrounding neighborhood (3 stories maximum).
- A few participants did not want housing at all and only wanted public use of the Cushman building and only public/park uses on the sites.
- Several expressed concerns about private development and how it would be controlled; others felt that having some amount of leased commercial and/or non-profit space could help the financial viability of future solutions.
- Several participants were concerned about how open space is shown as broken up in Scenario B, but others felt that it was positive to have open space on both sides of the Cushman building.
- Several stated to need to make sure open space is well connected across the two sites/Adams Street with lots of public corridors, courtyards, etc.
- Many participants were concerned about making sure sidewalk connectivity, street crossings, parking quantities, and traffic control are sufficiently addressed with redevelopment of the sites.
- There were concerns about the level of traffic carried by North 21st Street and vehicles traveling at higher speeds; people stated that countermeasures are needed to slow traffic and make pedestrian and bicycle crossings more safe.
- Many favored the idea of potentially vacating and closing Adams Street to eliminate through traffic and using that space for parking and open space.
- Several participants stated the need for better transit service to this area, and one person suggested that there should be a transit center at the Cushman site.



- A few participants asked why a “community center” was not listed as a specific use, and the planning team explained that the “public use” category was meant to encompass a range of possible public uses including community center type uses.
- There was a lot of positive feedback on Scenarios B and C, but some concerns expressed about these scenarios as well. Some participants suggested new scenarios, which the planning team will review when generating the final scenarios.
- Several participants stated that there should be a scenario with housing provided along Washington Street.

- A couple of participants stated that if there is living space in the Cushman building, it should be living/working space for artists and/or workers from the sites.
- Some were concerned about housing use west of the Adams building and the scale of housing given the surrounding neighborhood; others felt that was a good place for housing to be explored (instead of the Cushman site).

Among other concerns and ideas mentioned:

- The need for more trees and expanding the urban tree canopy was mentioned by many.
- A few participants stated concerns about the level of remediation that may be needed at the sites and buildings and if remediation extents/costs might be prohibitive to future use.
- Several participants stated a need for having a variety of activities for kids and families as part of future use of the buildings and sites.
- The need to create a thriving neighborhood gathering place was a common desire mentioned by several workshop participants.