



## AGENDA

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting (Hybrid)  
**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 5:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** Council Chambers, 1st Floor of the Tacoma Municipal Building  
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402  
**ZOOM INFO:** Link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/84416624153>  
Dial-in: +1 253 215 8782  
ID: 844 1662 4153

### A. Call to Order

- Quorum Call
- Land Acknowledgement
- Swearing in Re-Elected Commissioner

### B. Approval of Agenda

### C. Approval of Minutes

- January 17, 2024
- February 21, 2024
- March 6, 2024

### D. Public Comments

This is the time set aside for public comment on Discussion Items on this agenda.

- Written comments on Discussion Items must be submitted to [Planning@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:Planning@cityoftacoma.org) by 12:00 noon prior to the meeting. Comments will be compiled, distributed to the Commission, and posted on the Planning Commission's meeting webpage at [www.cityoftacoma.org/PlanningCommissionAgendas](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/PlanningCommissionAgendas).
- To comment virtually, join the meeting using Zoom and raise your virtual hand. To comment in person, sign in at the back of the Council Chambers. Where necessary, the Chair may limit the allotted time for comment.

### E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals

### F. Discussion Items

#### 1. Election of Commission Officers

- Description: Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for September 2024 – August 2025.
- Action: Nomination and Election.



The City of Tacoma does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at (253) 905-4146 (voice) or 711 (TTY) before 5:00 p.m., on the Monday preceding the meeting.

¿Necesitas información en español? Cần thông tin bằng tiếng Việt? 한국어로 정보가 필요하십니까? ត្រូវការព័ត៌មានជាភាសាខ្មែរ?  
Нужна информация на русском? Потрібна інформація українською мовою? Contact TacomaFIRST 311 at (253) 591-5000.

- Staff Contact: Mary Crabtree ([MCrabtree@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:MCrabtree@cityoftacoma.org))

## 2. Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)

- Description: Review the HIA pilot program, including background information on the process for developing an HIA, community involvement, and the current status and schedule for how the HIA is being utilized to support the City's long-range planning initiatives.
- Action: Informational.
- Contact: Erin Dilworth ([EDilworth@tpchd.org](mailto:EDilworth@tpchd.org))

## 3. One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Parks and Recreation

- Description: Review the Park and Recreation Element of the One Tacoma Plan and the recent update of the Metro Parks Tacoma System and Strategic Plan, including planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and opportunities to better align the City's goals and policies with the MPT System and Strategic Plan.
- Action: Informational.
- Contact: Alyssa Torrez ([ATorrez@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:ATorrez@cityoftacoma.org));  
Alisa O'Hanlon Regala ([alisa.ohanlonregala@tacomaparks.com](mailto:alisa.ohanlonregala@tacomaparks.com))

## G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) Agenda for the September 18, 2024, meeting:

- Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program
  - Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review - Urban Form, Housing, and Public Facilities and Services

(2) Agenda for the October 2, 2024, meeting:

- Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review – Historic Preservation

(3) Agenda for the October 16, 2024, meeting:

- Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program
- Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review

## H. Communication Items

(1) **Reports/Communications from Staff**

(2) **Status Reports by Commissioners** – Picture Pac Ave and the TOD Task Force.

(3) **IPS Agenda** – The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee's next hybrid meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.; the agenda (tentatively) includes presentations on the 2024-2029 Stormwater Permit and Stormwater Manual updates, and a request for honorary street naming in Twulshootseed for various public roadways within the Puyallup Tribal boundary. (Held at 747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Conference Room 248 or virtually at <http://www.zoom.us/j/87829056704>, passcode 614650)

## I. Adjournment



## **MINUTES (draft)**

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting (hybrid)

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Karnes (Chair), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair), Morgan Dornier, Robb Krehbiel, Brett Marlo, Matthew Martenson, Jordan Rash, Sandesh Sadalge, Brett Santhuff

**ABSENT:** N/A

### **A. Call to Order**

Chair Karnes called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Chair Karnes read the Land Acknowledgement.

### **B. Approval of Agenda**

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. Approval of Minutes**

- November 1, 2023

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to approve the November 1, 2023, meeting minutes. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **D. Public Comments**

Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, reported that three written comments were received regarding the Home in Tacoma project.

The following individuals addressed the Planning Commission

1. Courtney Davis, regarding the Home In Tacoma project.
2. Eric Seibel, regarding the Home in Tacoma project.
3. Alex Harrington, regarding the Home In Tacoma project.
4. Clinton Brink, regarding the Home In Tacoma project.

Public Comment ended at 5:10 p.m.

### **E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals**

There were no disclosures of contacts or recusals.

### **F. Discussion Items**

#### **1. Home In Tacoma – Phase 2**

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, introduced Heidi Oien, Mithun, and presented the Home in Tacoma package, including a revised project schedule; objectives; contents of the public review package; and outlines of the summaries, proposed urban residential (UR) zones, reduced parking areas, residential target areas, the

guide for the code changes, and the site planning exercise. Barnett introduced Mike Carey, Urban Forester, who outlined the required tree credits, in-lieu fees for required tree credits, and tree retention requirements.

The Commission provided feedback regarding the in-lieu fee program, potential connections to other bonus programs to reduce tree credits, mitigating impacts to tree canopy cover, variances, the importance of developing sites for homes versus trees, tree credits, costs and timing for applicants, tree preservation requirements, a minimum tree canopy when sites are redeveloped, utilities and access standards, public engagement, and the availability of information in other languages.

Barnett outlined the draft environmental impact statement, upcoming engagement, and an event schedule.

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to release the Home In Tacoma Phase 2 package for public review, to accept written comment February 5 through March 8, 2024, and set a public hearing date for March 6, 2024. Commissioner Marlo seconded the motion.*

Discussion ensued regarding the final changes to the package, descriptions in the package of how tree credits work, and when the interactive online map will be available.

*The motion passed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 8 – Dorner, Karnes, Marlo, Martenson, Rash, Sadalge, Santhuff, Steele*

*Nays: 1 – Krehbiel*

The Planning Commission recessed at 6:35 p.m. and reconvened at 6:43 p.m.

## **2. One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Scope and Budget**

Atkinson presented the scope elements for the One Tacoma Plan update, including a review of the regional planning framework, project initiation, engagement and communications, plan update and production, ongoing planning commitments, projects outside scope discussion, existing scope commitments, wish list elements, and evaluation criteria.

Commissioners provided feedback regarding the prioritization of potential scope elements.

## **H. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)**

(1) February 7, 2024 – Potential Cancellation

(2) Agenda for the February 21, 2024, meeting includes:

- Pacific Avenue Subarea Plan & EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to cancel the February 7, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **I. Communication Items**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Atkinson reminded the commissioners that staff is working to schedule the annual commissioner lunches, and “Spotlight on South Tacoma” engagement events will be held on January 25, February 29, and March 21, 2024.

## **J. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

*\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*

[http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees\\_boards\\_commissions/planning\\_commission/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/)



## **MINUTES (draft)**

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting (hybrid)

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Karnes (Chair), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair), Morgan Dorner, Robb Krehbiel, Matthew Martenson, Jordan Rash, Sandesh Sadalge, Brett Santhuff

**ABSENT:** Brett Marlo

### **A. Call to Order**

Chair Karnes called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Chair Karnes read the Land Acknowledgement.

### **B. Approval of Agenda**

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. Approval of Minutes**

There were no meeting minutes to approve.

### **D. Public Comments**

Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, reported that no written comments were received for public comment.

No individuals addressed the Planning Commission.

Public Comment ended at 5:01 p.m.

### **E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals**

There were no disclosures of contacts or recusals.

### **F. Discussion Items**

#### **1. Community Safety Action Strategy**

Gabe Moaalii, Office of Strategy, presented the plan, including background, input from the community and organizations, key sections of the Community Safety Action Strategy, and next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding highlighting work that the community doesn't see, promoting healing and repair, the 2022 Tacoma Community Survey data, roadblocks while creating healthy places and neighborhoods, community engagement, input mapping, safety around traffic issues, and recognizing past actions that have led to the community to feel less safe.

#### **2. One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Community Engagement Strategy**

Atkinson provided an overview of what has been happening with the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan update, including background, the guiding vision, and messaging.

Alyssa Torrez, Senior Planner, presented the coordinating efforts; the timeline, plan, and tools for engagement; how the community can get involved; and priority populations.

The commission provided feedback regarding youth and senior engagement, the draft Community Engagement Plan, reaching non-English populations, using social media metrics, the engagement gap analysis, going out into the community, and hands-on opportunities.

## **H. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)**

(1) Agenda for the March 6, 2024, meeting includes:

- Pacific Avenue Subarea Plan & EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)
- Home In Tacoma Phase 2 – Public Hearing

(2) Agenda for the March 20, 2024, meeting includes:

- Annual Permit and Building Data Report

Atkinson noted that some discussion items will be shifted.

## **I. Communication Items**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

## **J. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

*\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*  
[http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees\\_boards\\_commissions/planning\\_commission/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/)



## **MINUTES (draft)**

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting (hybrid)

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Karnes (Chair), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair), Morgan Dorner, Brett Marlo, Matthew Martenson, Jordan Rash, Sandesh Sadalge, Brett Santhuff

**ABSENT:** Robb Krehbiel

### **A. Call to Order**

Chair Karnes called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Chair Karnes read the Land Acknowledgement.

### **B. Approval of Agenda**

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. Approval of Minutes**

There were no meeting minutes to approve.

### **D. Public Comments**

Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, reported that no written comments were received for public comment.

No individuals addressed the Planning Commission:

Public Comment ended at 5:04 p.m.

### **E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals**

There were no disclosures of contacts or recusals.

### **F. Discussion Items**

#### **1. Home In Tacoma Schedule**

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, outlined the proposed schedule, including the Commission's process during the public hearing and considering changes to the packet.

Discussion ensued regarding having a tool to submit questions or proposed revisions to staff and the tentative timeline.

### **H. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)**

(1) Agenda for the March 20, 2024, meeting includes:

- Annual Permit and Building Data Report
- Pacific Avenue Subarea Plan & EIS ("Picture Pac Ave")

(2) Agenda for the April 3, 2024, meeting includes:

- Home In Tacoma – Phase 2 - Debrief

The Planning Commission recessed at 5:18 p.m. and reconvened at 5:30 p.m.

## **G. Public Hearing**

### **1. Home In Tacoma – Phase 2**

Chair Karnes called the public hearing to order at 5:30 p.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

Alyssa Torrez, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the Home In Tacoma package, including the public hearing process, and next steps.

The following individuals provided testimony:

- (1) Patricia Fetterly – I first want to thank the planning department and our city forester for including tree protection in the draft code written to implement Home In Tacoma. In doing so, our public servants have recognized the value that trees provide for the health and well-being of all our citizens. They've also recognized the lack of equity in the tree canopy and the fact that Tacoma's tree canopy falls well below, unfortunately, many Puget Sound cities. Until very recently, the value of urban trees was not recognized by our city officials. This changed in 2018 when the City Council adopted the urban forestry plan, which set a goal of increasing our tree canopy, then at just slightly under and now slightly under 20% to 30% by 2030. The City Council also recognized the value of trees last year when it passed a long overdue ordinance to protect trees in the rights of way. It simply will not be possible to reach that 30% canopy goal unless strong protections for trees are included as part of Home In Tacoma. It is often said that there needs to be balance between tree protection and the need to increase the supply of housing. Tacoma, however, I would point out, has already provided many incentives to encourage development. These include the lack of impact fees imposed on developers and the granting of property tax incentives. New incentives for development are also contained in the draft ordinance. Balance simply cannot be achieved unless strong tree protections are also included as part of Home In Tacoma. Tree protection and increased housing and equity are not incompatible policy goals. All contribute to the quality of life in our city. The new code must encourage all these goals, including the protection of trees, to include true balance in the city. Thank you.
- (2) Tom Giske – I live in Tacoma. I also would like to thank and commend Elliot and his team for the work they've done to bring landscape code into the Home In Tacoma—integrate the two. Lots of Douglas Firs. We, the people of Tacoma, are not living in a coma. We can see what is happening in unison. We're not clapping. When will we come to our senses? Unintended consequences are obvious to all of us. Yet we've been thrown under the bus. Never mind classrooms or parking, nor animals that are barking. Just build here, there, and everywhere until we have nowhere to spare. Give away tax revenue and our trees on the avenues, so homebuilders can demolish what can be preserved with polish. Outcomes are not low-cost housing, as you seem to be announcing—rather profits clearly ascending for developers here attending. For example, we ask you please do not permit our street trees to be counted as canopy and means to avoid penalty. Please do not give our public space in lieu of residential place for trees. We need to shade our homes and to protect our chromosomes. 200 names assigned our letter asking you to make our lives better, not for bonuses with fewer trees, rather requirements for more trees. We ask your consideration of our sheer determination. This gold rush for developers must include lots of Douglas Firs. This is our letter and it's signed by 200 people, not through lists and marketing programs, but by sheer networking. Thank you.
- (3) Courtney Davis – I live in District three. Though this is a great draft code, there are areas that need to be clarified and changed. When you look at the bonus structure, it is codifying inequity and allowing for as low as 15% tree canopy in some cases. This means that lower income and BIPOC communities will continue to be in the most vulnerable of situations as climate change causes cities to get hotter and hotter and there will be more heat related deaths in these areas each year in Tacoma. Opponents of the landscaping code update will use terms like right tree, right place. There needs to be a balance between trees and housing and that a fee and lieu program should be put in place. These all sound like great concepts at face value, but please put a discerning ear and eye to what is actually being proposed. For the most part, opponents of these changes are not fully



recognizing the fact that a healthy tree canopy, scientifically proven to be 30%, is a public health and equity issue. There was a wonderful study done by the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group that shows that the landscaping code and housing code as it is written, can be achieved and that there's room for a 30% tree canopy on new development sites. And I'll just end with a personal story. I got an opportunity to volunteer with the Tacoma Tree Foundation with the Peace Lutheran Church in Hilltop in Tacoma, and we heard the pastor talk about how growing up in Hilltop he had to often go to North Tacoma and the outskirts of central Tacoma to be able to play basketball with his friends because there was 15 to 20 degrees difference in temperature in Hilltop because there was not an adequate tree canopy. Thank you for your time.

- (4) Casey Twiggs – I represent the Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium. The consortium provides education and advocacy to support affordable housing in Pierce County, and we appreciate the city's work to make Home In Tacoma a robust plan. We are excited about the rezones that will include more housing types and increased density while focusing on affordability and incentives. However, we would like to see an increase in the fee in lieu of affordable housing. The current amount of 72,000 needs to be higher and consistent with current cost as per state law. Affordable home ownership units average about 450,000, while affordable rentals go for anywhere between three and 500,000. We would also like to see a review of the income levels within the proposed UR zones happen every two years as opposed to stated as needed. To close, the consortium is always available to discuss and help guide Tacoma's housing policy. We appreciate your ongoing attention and dedication to affordable housing. Thank you.
- (5) Jane Evancho – I'm chair of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. We as a group have provided written comments as well. I'd like to speak to a couple of points that are in that letter. First of all, I'd like to ask that you consider restoring UR-1 zoning on the west side of Jackson Avenue parcels west of Jackson Avenue have been designated as UR-2 in the phase two effort. We believe this is because of the perceived proximity to the Geiger Montessori School. While houses are within the designated range, as the crow flies, in practicality they are well outside the referenced walking distance if a student were to cross Jackson at either 6th Avenue or South 12th street. In addition, the streets adjacent and parallel to Jackson are narrow, without sidewalks. Walking, garbage pickup, and emergency services would be severely impacted with allowed multi-unit development. We ask that the Home In Tacoma phase two zoning regulations redesignate the properties on the west side of Jackson Avenue as UR-1. I'd also like to speak to a request we have for public notification. As property owners with covenants and a City Council endorsed view sensitive overlay, we urge the development of a simple notification system that would inform development applicants of parcels that have a covenant or overlay. Many of the new zoning changes are in violation of our covenants, such as subdividing lots, setback distances, and tree heights, to name a couple. We understand that the city does not enforce covenants, but a courtesy notification of covenants and/or the overlay existence would be a huge help in reducing misinformation and help stem potential neighbor-to-neighbor litigation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
- (6) Karen Kelly – I live on the West Slope. I'm also on the board of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. We as a board, we encourage the Planning Commission to consider what we feel is an overreaction to anticipated population growth. House Bill 1110, which was inspired by the work of Home In Tacoma phase one is a more measured and practical approach. There has been no significant change in the population of Tacoma since the 2020 census—due to decreased number of children being born, people working from home and moving to other states, and having moved to other states that were more affordable. I will cite this census information in my letter to the Council. Our neighborhood has been described as postwar housing with 25-foot setbacks with street parking instead of alleys. The city's zoning proposals state front setbacks reduced from 20 feet to 15 feet in UR-1 and UR-2 and 10ft in UR-3. This will be hugely jarring and will destroy the character of the neighborhood if implemented. We suggest that an alternative to that setback should be an average of two adjacent lots which would be stipulated even with the housing bonuses one and two. Home In Tacoma phase one was proposed and passed by the City Council for low and midscale builds in residential areas. Over the following years, it has morphed into something that exceeds anything previously discussed. I support affordable housing and want younger generations to be able to afford pride in their homeownership, but this plan is not going to accomplish that. Phase one also

included building design, which would be comparable to existing neighborhoods. This is also not being addressed. Lastly, I encourage you to look at Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon who have implemented similar changes and examine any unintended consequences of such overreach. Thank you.

- (7) Kelly Lucas – Just briefly, I concur with the two prior speakers' statements. I would like to also add, as per an email with John Hines, we discussed the height limitations on the West Slope. I also live on the West Slope. The current limitations are 20 feet, and this proposal states a 35-foot maximum height. That's a huge differential. I would like to think that, what I worked my whole life, thus far, my husband, we've invested and now I'm going to lose my view potentially if that is not protected. That's why I bought there. Additionally, I'm very curious as to why Tacoma has not discussed, to my knowledge, rolling out implementing this plan in smaller increments. It would give us an opportunity as a city to change things as we went along to make corrections to pivot. Therefore, the rest of the city would not be subject to—I don't want to say disastrous, but—things that we could correct along the way. Thank you for your time.
- (8) Gwen Felizardo – I live in the Manitou area of South Tacoma. We've lived in our two-story 1912 home since 1978 and have since added a detached garage. We do not have plans to move and would like to add to our existing garage or build a second garage and build a rambler on the backside of our 75 x 100-foot lot—keeping our existing home and garage. The alley is fully accessible. We want to live in a rambler, no stairs and bigger bathroom, and have our son move into the primary two story which would eventually he would inherit. There are gaps in the proposed rules for the UR-1 which we fall under that would not allow us to realize the full functionality of our plan. Under the new rules, we are listed as UR-1. We plan and want to age in place, preserve the existing structures, add an extension to the back of the garage with an entrance from the front as well as the alley, build a detached or attached to the garage housing unit of approximately 1200 square feet. There would be three accessible walkways from the front of the house to the back as well as the full alley access. The gaps include the rules are too prescriptive and do not allow the planner flexibility to meet the intent of usability and functionality of the property with the client and our detached garage is considered an ADU which limits the build size. We want to double the garage, which is not allowed. We can only increase size by 400 square feet. We were also told that we may have to attach the detached garage to our home, current home in order to allow for an ADU in the back, which is not feasible. It would cut off our main access and then our personal property—building structures are limited by the floor area ratio instead of property ratio. You can read the rest of it, there's more. There's unintended consequences to being too prescriptive, and I'd ask you to look at that.
- (9) Peter Bennett – I'm the chair of the North End Neighborhood Council. We have written comments and submitted them to you through the email portal, but I just wanted to address how you will be looking at the proposal and will be looking at the comments. I want to urge you to use the approach of do no harm. I think that the Home In Tacoma proposal is obviously a good idea. The problem is its implementation and its impacts. So, if, as you look at these comments, could you address does each component achieve the overall desired result and are there any unintended negative consequences that come out of that? The limited time period between February and March that we have gone through is insufficient to understand the components and implications of this significant package of changes. A major component of the Home In Tacoma strategy was to increase housing affordability by increasing the current density allowed under the city planning regulations. As a result of the passage of House Bill 1110, there is now a state mandate that achieves that increased density. This removes the urgency for immediate implementation of a Home In Tacoma policy. I would respectfully ask that you postpone taking any action on approval or implementation of the current Home In Tacoma proposal. We as a neighborhood council and as all the neighborhood councils I would assume would be happy to work with you as you go through this. I did notice that Elliot's proposal with the dates did not include years, so we could just add next year on those dates and we could probably achieve it. Thank you.
- (10) Carole Sue Braaten – I am asking that the Planning Commission declare the Home In Tacoma phase two draft environmental impact statement inadequate as referenced in RCW 36.70A. It also needs an extension of at least six months in order to adequately reach all citizens and proposed

businesses and others affected by the Home In Tacoma development. The DEIS—I am the only one and I live in Fife—that has a paper copy. I just got it today. There should have been ones at each meeting—hundreds available—so others could take it to other people. This is inadequate. I also worked on the RCW 36.70A over 36 years ago, so I know what it entails. The Tacoma Power services, water, sewer, all affect Fife, all affect other areas. None of us were notified. Not one. Not my council members. I know I live next to them. No one. The Seattle Times today, dire water shortages. This affects our water, our sewer, and everything else. The water treatment plant is inadequate because it's in a tsunami, a lahar, and you have an earthquake fault line in front of it. In 2009, I had a mandatory evacuation out of there for a flood. It almost flooded. Now it needs to be moved. You need to deal with that. The PSE LNG—former Fire Chief Duggan did a catastrophic failure map that was never included in the PSE LNG EIS or FEIS. I talked to him. I have it. It's a 12.6 miles radiation of exclusion zone which explodes, blows out other things at that range and three mile thermal radiation asphyxiation zone. It flattens everything. So, you need that included. You also need to feel the effects of the Asarco water on the water system. I have other things, but thank you for your time and I ask that you extend it because I think everybody deserves the environmental impact statement.

- (11)Melanie Moor – I'm a retired third grade teacher and I'm excited about this project. And I know we're growing as a city, and tonight we stand at a crossroads. We have the choice right now to make Tacoma healthier, more beautiful, more equitable, and a more vibrant city. Or we can just maintain the status quo of topping trees, not planting trees, living without trees. I believe that Tacomans want and need trees. We need to protect and preserve our existing trees, and we need to drastically increase our canopy to at least 30%. I ask you to do your part in making sure that the trees are planted and cared about for at least a minimum of three years and that you enforce the pruning standards and ensure protection of our heritage trees. In my opinion, the value of our trees will far outlive any of us sitting in this room and their value is worth more than the momentary capital gains of development.
- (12)Tom Rickey – I thank the commission for hearing me. I'm concerned about an FAQ answer that was in the Home In Tacoma FAQs. The question was will zoning changes affect my property value and property taxes? And part of the answer was research has found that affordable housing does not lower property values. We wonder if legitimate research ever has been done to answer that question since affordable is not a demonstrable real estate value parameter. Use of adjectives such as affordable, pleasant, comfortable, et cetera sound nice, but have no appraisal value. We urge you to get an independent certified appraiser to assess and comment before moving forward. We're not concerned about the impact of affordable housing. We all want affordable housing. Our concern is the impact of infill lowering property values, and upzoning is a common planner's term. Truth is, upzoning to mixed-use of single-family next to multifamily downgrades those single-family homes by any professional appraisals tool. Home In Tacoma wants changes that lenders and appraisers are very concerned about due to the impact on lending and the value of residential properties—changes that don't align with the type of properties most Americans desire to live in. Your proposals suggest absolute arrogance and disdain for people who live in single family homes. Sure, real estate in general goes up over time, but mixing single-family with multifamily increases the multifamily values and decreases the value of single family. Appraisers call this economic obsolescence. So my concern is this. The valuation is yet another compelling reason that Home In Tacoma should be put on the next ballot. We citizens need more facts given to more citizens and more time to consider so that an informed public is able to vote their choice and not left to a handful of people who think they know more than the citizens about their community.
- (13)Georgette Reuter – I'm here today to notify the Planning Commission that a letter has been submitted on behalf of our community-based advocacy group known as Tacoma Urban Forest Friends. And if you think that's a mouthful, you can just call us TUFF. Next, we would like to take the opportunity to thank Senior Planner Elliot Barnett and our Urban Forester Mike Carey and his staff for the leadership on the issue of tree preservation as outlined in the landscaping code reflected in Home In Tacoma phase two. We recognize that a healthy and mature tree canopy is a public health issue, and every citizen in the City of Tacoma has a right to an equitable tree canopy. Therefore, we encourage the Planning Commission to support the changes documented in the

landscaping code to protect our city's valuable mature trees, and also to plant thousands more on private property. If approved, Tacoma would finally begin to address our legacy of having the worst tree canopy in the Puget Sound region, which I know we've heard a lot of tonight. We therefore acknowledge Tacoma is growing, and we welcome more people into this city. But we really can and we must create a balance between our goal to expand tree canopy to 30% by 2030 and meet our growing population. Our neighboring cities have been successful in doing so, and we also know that Tacoma can as well. Thank you so much.

- (14) Joyce Conner – I'm a homeowner in Browns Point and I'm also a residential real estate appraiser. I'm very concerned about this new zoning, not only for my neighborhood, but also for my career. The new changes will allow up to eight units per single-family property. This would then cause appraisals to be completed by commercial appraisers only. Commercial appraisers will be very overworked and residential appraisers will lose their businesses. Appraisers must determine highest and best use, and if the highest and best use is anything over four units, then it does go to commercial appraiser work. In addition, there will be no parking required. So, people will be parking all over the streets because they won't require a garage or a carport or any specific parking areas. I understand there's a shortage of housing and something does need to be done, but this, in my opinion, is not the way to do it. I've been appraising in Seattle since some of the new zoning has passed up there, and many investors are purchasing old homes. I've personally appraised these. They either tear them down or they replace them and remodel them and then add more units, maybe one attached to that and then another one behind or a duplex behind. So they pack the lot. I'm wondering if you guys worked with appraisers when you made up this new zoning. I'm wondering if there will be height restrictions for people who have views. I guarantee you that the comment that was in there about the values will still go up. I guarantee you that values will change when 4-plexes and 8-plexes and multifamily properties come to your neighborhoods.
- (15) Rick Donohue – Thank you for being here and providing this opportunity for us. I want to echo all the comments that have been made. I want to open by saying, please don't Ballard my Tacoma. What does more density bring us? It brings more noise, more traffic, more garbage, more broken glass. We lose open space. Candidly, I'm a family guy. I got two kids. I'm raising a family here. And this is literally, I feel, an anti-family approach. We're actually taking family out of the language. More crime comes with more density. We can't staff the Tacoma Police Department right now. There's a \$25,000 signing bonus because we can't attract police officers to come here to work. To be clear, this does nothing to address our homeless problem, which is, I think, also tied to a lot of other social issues—drug use in particular. My point here is there's extensive availability for current apartments that are being built in the downtown area, and there's lots of other places throughout the city that can handle additional housing capacity. This whole thing is not necessary. I'd also like to point out what I feel is a fairly disingenuous comment about the state requiring this. They're following your lead. Then to fall back and say, like, oh, well, now the state requires it—we're just doing what the state says. That's really kind of false advertising here. It just feels like nobody's listening, you guys have already made up your minds about what's going to happen, and this is theater. My life and our neighborhoods are not theater. This is our community and you're going to change it. And change is inevitable, I understand that, but I really wish you would take the considerations of the community and the taxpayers in this community into close consideration. Thank you.
- (16) Lonnie Chavez – I'm a new member of the community. I came here because I loved the community. I loved our neighborhood. In the short time that I've been here, I have witnessed an apartment building that has gone up that does not provide adequate parking in the middle of an area that has school, residential, commercial, and now an apartment. And so not addressing the parking issue, I strongly disagree with, and I'm fearful of what's going to happen to our communities.
- (17) Laura Svancarek – I'm the Advocacy Manager at Downtown On The Go. We're the nonprofit advocate and resource for transportation in the greater Tacoma area. Thank you for taking comments. Tonight, I will be providing you with more detailed written comments from Downtown On The Go. But tonight, I'd like to share our general support of the Home In Tacoma proposal. We firmly support increasing density. Allowing missing middle housing types throughout the city is necessary. We're supportive of allowing developers to access bonus density by meeting affordability and retention requirements. We are also supportive of the expanded reduced parking

area, as well as the enhanced bike parking requirements. And we appreciate the commission consistently going above the requirements of House Bill 1110. New development must be met with improved infrastructure to make walking, biking, and transit use safe, easy, and preferable for as many residents as possible. We appreciate that the proposal encourages density in already walkable and complete neighborhoods, but we do ask that the city prioritize safety improvements along transit arterials, too. We must identify funding sources outside of grants to ensure that we can keep our infrastructure up with growth and not leave people stuck on the side of the road on a giant arterial. We encourage that the commission and the city seriously look at other funding sources for active transportation, like impact fees, transportation benefits, district vehicle licensing fees. We need to have money to make these improvements happen, to keep people safe, and make sure that everyone in Tacoma can get where they need to go. We must prioritize access and safety improvements in our transportation networks to show our current and future neighbors that they are valued here in Tacoma. So, thank you.

- (18) Tim Fikse – I understand the need for greater density. Basic supply and demand says if we supply more property, the prices will go down. But I'm really troubled by the elimination of single-family dwelling, single-family zoning. Young people, young families, I think, still need something to aspire to. And I think living in a neighborhood where you can, where there's not cars parked all in front of your house and you can see your kids playing in the neighbor's front yard, and your neighbors can see their kids playing in your yard, and your kids can walk up and down the streets, I don't think that's something that we want to eliminate. I think this would go a long ways into eliminating that type of neighborhood, the character of the neighborhoods that we aspire to, where we know our neighbors, where we get together with our neighbors, where we see our neighbors. Seeing the way these multi, drastically greater populations in the same areas, I think would have a serious effect on that. So, I think we need to find ways to increase density without destroying what, for many people even today, is an aspiration to live in a neighborhood where they know people, where they feel safe, where it's not crowded. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.
- (19) Cindy Turco – As the elected chair of the West End Neighborhood Council, I want to extend my support for my West Slope neighbors who are part of our council and my North End colleague. I urge you to reject the proposed Home In Tacoma phase two draft in favor of a less extreme plan and to extend the decision-making timetable. Amended Ordinance 28793 had no mandate. It passed due to a patchwork of compromises and promises. This draft package exceeds, I believe, the intent of amended Ordinance 28793 and goes far beyond the state legislative mandate. The recommendations for the West End Neighboring Council board are, (1) lower the density levels by merging UR-2 into UR-1. UR-2, as my West Slope neighbors mentioned, uses a misguided view of access to justify midlevel density in our neighborhoods. (2) limit density and a merged UR-1 and UR-2 to no more than the state-mandated four housing units plus two affordable bonus units. (3) limit density in UR-3 to the standards that you have labeled as UR-2 because again, UR-2 is really just midlevel density by anybody's standards. (4) retain deep and wide setbacks and the 25-foot height restrictions that were used for residential zoning before Home In Tacoma. And I can add, we had heard as of even last year after phase one had passed that we were going to have the same setbacks. I think that's just wrong. (5) require design standards in terms of scale and architectural style to ensure new buildings are compatible with neighborhood patterns. We are also going to submit something written that's much longer than this.
- (20) Dennis Munsterman – I'm the treasurer of the West End Neighborhood Council, and I will continue where Cindy was. So, we also agree that we need to strengthen the tree canopy requirements to ensure that developers don't opt out. Next one, is require at least one designated parking space per housing unit. You can actually drive down 6th Avenue west of Pearl and you will see a new housing unit that went up where they have only one parking space for each unit, and there's cars all over the street any time of day, even during the day when they're away. The other thing is we want you to ban shipping containers for housing or residential storage. What an eyesore that would be. Require the developers to pay all the impact fees. Other points to consider are the state legislature's zoning plan for the entire state—means that have a reduced burden has been placed on the City of Tacoma. The Growth Management Act requires periodic review and provides for modification if the burden becomes too heavy for urban areas. The city's population figure seems

inflated given long-term trends and recent demographic shifts. And the populations of Portland and Minneapolis have dropped despite upzoning due to the quality of life issues. Thank you very much for your time.

- (21) Tom Cline – I live on the West Slope and I'm also part of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition Board. I've already submitted my comments online to you folks and the City Council. I would appreciate it if you read those. I would very much appreciate that. But at the same time, if I can ask a quick question. Earlier in the presentation there was mention of 600 comments—people responding online. Do they publish the ratio of positive responses against negative responses to this? I don't know if they do that. Maybe if they do, I've missed it and I apologize for that. But I think it would be beneficial to most property owners because this is such a sweeping change that the average person, the average property owner, doesn't have enough time to absorb all of this information. Most people are busy and probably can't come to this meeting and make a public comment. So, the only way we would know other than showing up here is if maybe you published all of the comments somehow so we can kind of get an idea as being part of the community, what percentage of the community is actually for this and what percentage is against it.
- (22) Tyler Stetson – My family and I like living in Tacoma. We like the neighborhoods. We like the people. We like the trees. We like the history. We don't like inflation very much—t. hat's been in a lot of conversations lately. I looked it up and found out that regular goods and stuff the last ten years have gone up like 30%, like a third. Houses in Tacoma, 300%, like triple. I mean, who could afford that? So, these changes, they're not perfect. I especially like the bits about trees and stuff, but they're a step in the right direction, and they're doing a lot more than doing nothing. And doing nothing is how we get everybody out in the cold. It just kills me seeing that. I want to do something. So, let's get whatever incremental additional steps we need in this process to get to a point and then implement it, so that we can get more houses for more people and not tripling the price of everybody's place to live. Thank you.
- (23) Judith Anderson – I just moved here in November, and I moved here from Long Beach, California. I moved here because you got old houses and I like old houses. I actually just learned about your whole program a couple of days ago and I'm really enthusiastic about the tree canopy thing. Long beach was terrible about the trees. They let them be butchered. I understand that people have issues, but there are going to be people moving north because the climate is changing and you guys are at least taking some steps to accommodate that. And I appreciate it. I mean, I moved north because the climate is changing. So, I just wanted to say that I appreciate what you're doing. I know it's hard, and I really like that I moved here.
- (24) Reggie Brown – Elliot and Alyssa, thank you. You've done an excellent, amazing job. This is really hard. I've looked at it in great detail, and I like everything that you've done. I don't like the tree canopy plan at all. So, this is what I have to say. The trees have definitely been represented here. Property values have been represented here. I'm here to represent the 15,000 families that applied for 1500 housing vouchers in April of last year. 15,000 families, not 15,000 people, came to the Tacoma Housing Authority and said, we cannot afford without help. So, I just have two questions for the record. Do we not believe that there's a housing crisis? Because there's a housing crisis. No one's talking about it in this room, but there's a housing crisis and it's severe. And lastly, when is housing going to be more important than any excuse that we can come up with to not build more housing? Thank you.
- (25) Jeremy Rubin – I grew up in the Hilltop area at a time when it was ranked in the worst places to live in Washington and one of the worst places to live in the nation. Drug activity, gang violence, prostitution, and there was no help. A lot of us that were moving towards higher education and dreams were pushed to get out of the hood, get out of the Hilltop. And now within the last few years, it's one of the number one real estate markets in the nation. A lot of us who have families who want to get back in can't afford to, even with decent incomes. And I get it. My mom used to walk me to the North End. It was actually one of the things she would do once a week to teach me and my brother how to dream. She would always say, look at the nicest houses because when you get your education, that's what you're going to have. I think what's being lost is the conversation around the people that are being impacted that we can talk about protecting our property values. And I get it.

We can talk about protecting our neighborhoods. I get it. Even though when I lived in the neighborhood, nobody was looking to protect that. And that was a lot of single-family homes. There wasn't any multifamily at all. I will say this, though. I would encourage people for just a moment to get outside of themselves and figure out how can we be a part of the solution. That hasn't come up. I've heard about protecting trees, which I get. I love Washington. I love our trees. I've heard about protecting our family values. I get that. But what do we do to make space for others outside of ourselves? And I think that that's just as important. So, I know that this is tough, but I want to thank the council for its help and I think that if we come together, we can figure something out.

(26)Kit Burns – I live in the Hilltop. I've lived in Tacoma for the last 30 years and graduated from high school more than 50 years ago. I'd like to speak about three things. One is, you know that haste makes waste. So, I side with the people that say, hey, let's push the stop button. We still have enough provisions for people to build these houses. They can still continue, so there's no reason to rush this. I think we need some more time to consider this. Another point I want to make is the word affordable. I don't know what that is. When you say affordable—whenever I hear that—I always kind of cringe because I don't know if you're talking to me or if you're talking to Bill Gates. It's a word that has no meaning. I don't get it. To say that developers will build more affordable. I don't think that's going to happen. What needs to happen, though, is impact fees. Developers always plead poverty. I know, I've worked with them, but they come back and do more. Every contractor I've worked with pleads poverty, but they still make lots of money. Take for example, the mega warehouse that's going over the South. Tacoma Aquifer. You need to deal with the aquifer before we go forward. Think about that. They're going to put 120 acres over the property, which is the aquifer recharge area. There's no mitigation for that. There's a pretend mitigation. I can explain that, but not tonight. Take for example, the money in the Sixth & Alder Apartments. Those are really, I think, one of the better-looking apartments in Tacoma. When they came before the City Council, they said, well, this will cost \$30 million. It was completed in 2020 I think. Then two years later, it was sold for \$46 million. So, they made \$16 million in two years. They can afford a lot more. Every developer can afford a lot more. Deal with impact fees, deal with trees, and housing can continue as we refine this plan and make it good. Remember the phrase haste makes waste. Let's not hastily do this. Thank you.

(27)Elliott Yarwood – I'd just like to voice my support for everything the Home In Tacoma initiative is doing. We're in the middle of a housing affordability crisis, and the only way the city can solve this is by becoming less desirable and lowering demand or building more houses and increasing supply. The median household income in Tacoma, according to census.gov, is only, and this is household income, is \$80,000 a year. With that much income, you could afford a \$350,000 house. When I looked at Zillow this afternoon, 21 out of the 238 active Zillow listings that's including condos was below that \$350,000 threshold, meaning that 91% of the homes on sale right now are only available to the richest 50% of households in Tacoma. And the remaining 9% of houses for sale right now are left to the poorest 50% in the city to fight over to see if they can get one. I really wonder how many people in this room could afford their mortgage if they were forced to buy their house again today with how much housing prices have increased in the last 10, 15, 20 years. Any policy that makes it more difficult and expensive to build new homes is a policy that is exacerbating our housing affordability crisis and our homelessness crisis. I would like to see more transit-oriented development in the Home In Tacoma project, and I'm glad that the city is taking an initiative and going above and beyond the state-mandated requirements. Thank you.

(28)Vanessa Dolbee – Good work on behalf of the City of Tacoma staff. This is an excellent and a major project. 300 pages of code. I did not get a chance to read every single word, but I am here tonight to bring up one particular issue, and that is we are talking about a housing crisis, but we're also talking about a climate crisis. A piece in this code that I believe has been missed is looking at our opportunity as homeowners and property owners to provide solar panels on our roofs and to contribute to the solutions of climate. As we look at the heights and the transitions within these standards, we're going to result in impacting people who have already invested in solar panels without looking at access to light to roofs based on existing construction. And we also need to provide opportunities for those developments as they build in those backyards or add these other units so that they have that opportunity, too. The IBC, which may or may not be adopted within a

couple of days down at the state, provides provisions where new construction is going to be required to be solar-ready. So to that end, let's make sure that these standards evaluate access to light on properties. And we need to focus on that specifically in those transition zones where we see the UB1. I think I'm saying it right. UC1 next to UC2 or UC1 next to UC3. And make sure that those heights transitions and that plane that you've identified within the code is lowered so that access is available for light. Thank you this evening for my comments. And I also want to say my daughter sat through this whole thing, so thank you to her for sitting here for an hour and a half.

- (29) Carl Teitge – First thing I'd like to say is it's a matter of time. I was a lawyer for years and years. I spent six years on the Planning Commission. I built 800 lots after I left the Planning Commission. I've done a lot of utilities. 300 of those lots were for people that earned below median income under the farm home economic opportunity program where they built their own houses over nine months. I built this stuff. But there's a couple of things. First of all, a lawyer and an ordinary citizen doesn't read this book in a month. I haven't been able to do it and I know how to do it. It's very difficult. Equity. Parking. How does a poor person get to work when their hours are four in the morning or they're at two to the morning? They need a parking place. This city is against parking. I've been down here to complain about it—and property I have in the north end—and quite frankly got told they don't care if we put in things like built-in parking. Do it. You lose two or three parking places along Baltimore Street. Every place they do that. But equity is you've got to get to work. And the equity with housing—I bought a house, and the gentleman talked about it, on Stadium Way when I was on kidney dialysis. I had three girls, two kids of my own, my mother-in-law. \$385,000 for a house that has 4500 square feet and a view. You can't buy a house that you can live in for \$385,000 right now. So, we got a crisis. This is going to take some time. Great effort, but there's some things that need to be done. Utilities is one. Nobody's considered it yet. How do we get them there? I don't think there's any part of this plan where anybody has addressed if we're going to get this density, how we can deal with the City of Tacoma telling us what we need to put into these lots where we can build more. So thank you, but it's a good effort. But man, this is on a jet plane.
- (30) Kristen Carlson – I have lived in District two for 30 years, and I could go on and on about this. I really think that in many ways, although I know you've worked really hard on it, I do feel that this proposal is reaching for the bottom. And I hate to say it, but it's true. When you talk about what the state has mandated, this is the state mandate on steroids. I'm not sure it's needed. In fact, I don't think it is. I know it's not going to make our neighborhoods more beautiful. They're going to be a lot uglier. I don't know where the tree canopy is going to come from when you have that kind of density. I just don't see where it comes from. There's going to be fewer trees. There can't possibly be more unless you're going to take out whole neighborhoods and just plant trees. My biggest concern is infrastructure. I look around the city. St. Helens Avenue is terrible. We have issues with water. We have issues with sewer. We don't charge impact fees to developers. How are we going to pay for— We have increased density. I guess this assumes that everybody works remotely because nobody's talking about bringing any big employers to the city. I don't know where the jobs are coming from. I mean, spoiler alert, Tacoma is not Tokyo. It never will be. We don't want it to be. This idea that everyone's going to ride the bus and ride their bike and walk. I walk 8 miles a day. I walk all over the city. My husband bikes hundreds of miles every week. It's awesome. But we have three drivers in our house, and we have three cars. And I'm tired of this hypocrisy. I'm tired of it. I'm sorry to the on the go person who spoke earlier, but I've stood at the intersection of 38th and Steele and watched the busses, and most of them are empty. It takes an hour to get to Target from 21st street, and people are not going to give up their cars. That's fantasy. It is absolute fantasy. Thank you.
- (31) Steve Jones – I've lived in Tacoma for 40 plus years in the same house, oddly. So, I want to ask you a question. This is to you. Are we just checking a box tonight or are we really listening to what the people are saying? That's an open question. You're free to respond or not. This is feeling like we're rushing into chaos, is what it really feels like. And again, others have said, we appreciate your efforts for the good of the order, but I'm not satisfied that we have taken the time to analyze this carefully. There's a lot of different interests here that are being represented. And I feel like the preponderance of our attention is looking at the minority rather than the majority. It feels to me a little bit like this is a thinly veiled retelling of the Robin Hood story in a covert attempt to enrich some at the expense of others. That's really what it feels like. We have contractors, and you probably



already know this—you're the Planning Commission, who have left the city and they've said it's already saturated. There's no money left. We've mined this city and we're leaving. We have apartment buildings that are remaining vacant. There's plenty of places for people to stay. And if you want to talk about affordability, please, would one of you please define that for us? I mean, the people out here have asked repeatedly, what does that mean? Maybe I can't afford to live in it, but maybe you could. I don't know. I mean, who knows? Because it's undefined. So, do we have issues here? Do we have homeless issues? Yes, we do. But I'm not confident that your efforts are in this proposal tonight. I would ask you to please, as others have said, please extend this review, give more opportunity for public input.

(32) Jodi Cook – I've lived here for about 28 years. First, I do want to say how much I appreciate city Senior Planner Elliott Barnett and our Urban Forester Mike Carey for addressing in one way our deficient citywide tree canopy via the proposed landscaping code. Some people don't understand because I think we live in an area that has a lot of green grass. Everybody thinks that we have a lot of trees, things are really green and we're really healthy in Tacoma, but we're not. If you remove Point Defiance, if we remove all the gulches around Commencement Bay, a GIS specialist took a look at the tree canopy in Tacoma and has ascertained that there's only a 15.3% tree canopy in neighborhoods. If you take a look at the map, you will see that most of Tacoma everywhere is below 20%, mostly between 10 and 20%. So, we have a tree canopy problem. And so I'm really hoping that through the efforts of this suggestion with the landscaping code that you do endorse it as it is written, because we need to be able to preserve the little bit of tree canopy we have today in neighborhoods—not talking about the parks, I'm not talking about the gulches. So that we have an opportunity to move forward to robustly get to that 20-30 goal, which I think we're going to have to plant 10,500 trees in the next seven years to meet a 30% canopy. I hope that you will continue to fully endorse that. Secondly, I'm going to make comments as it relates to the bonus changes. I strongly object to the new bonuses that have been applied just in December and January to Home In Tacoma. It has with the three different zones, UR-1, UR-2, UR-3 that you have bumped up in the case of UR-2, double what House Bill 1110 states, which is up to six units with a bonus. You've entertained eight units in December and then you added on twelve units to UR-2 in January. I think the other aspect is with the UR-3 zone, which was formerly called midscale, was to be a buffer between mixed use centers and one and two story homes. With a maximum height of 35 feet. It was just to be residential, not a mixed use, that was supposed to stay in the mixed-use centers in Tacoma. With this new iteration, the bonus for UR-3 is up to 45 feet and four to five stories, which it appears may be in some cases allow commercial use via cup process. I'll just say it's disingenuous the way that this is being approached. Thank you.

(33) Heidi Stephens – Now that the state is implementing density regulations, the speed and overreach of Home In Tacoma two needs to slow down. There are still far too many unaddressed issues and unanswered questions such as future home buyers' potential, inability to receive FHA and VA loans after rezone, commercial appraisal concerns, and limitations of future single-family home sales when land is more valued by developers over the house. And let's be clear, walkable neighborhoods means no parking and no transit. But people will still need to get to outlying shopping and jobs somehow. There isn't nearly enough protection of mature trees or tree canopy requirements, especially in the most lacking communities, so a fee in lieu of retaining a tree is not acceptable. Tax breaks to developers has not resulted in affordability. Increasing for-profit housing supply to lower demand means units sit empty, so that's not helping homelessness. And still no impact fees offsetting what will essentially be residents subsidizing developers. And worst of all, nothing requiring residential construction zoned areas to be added to the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District. Even though the draft EIS mapped the entire city as an aquifer recharge zone. Both maps are wrong. That's enough to pause this. A housing crisis should not overshadow the pending water crisis. Houses being built today are no longer small single-family homes with large yards and trees. Mega multifamily buildings and parking lots are covering significantly more impervious service, so infiltration recharge must be considered and more protected. Within this draft EIS, there were some smattering notations of aquifer impervious surface and recharge. I wanted to read a quote which admits this, and yet it draws a conclusion with absolutely no evidence saying, although no significant adverse impacts to water resources are anticipated, the city could implement mitigation measures. But that's not an appropriate impact

study. Lack of data does not excuse the need for actual hydrologic assessment or proactive mitigations. There's no valid modern-day science or current data included here at all, so these are serious ramifications.

- (34) Erin Dilworth – I am the Healthy Community Planner at the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department and am a resident of Tacoma. The health department has been working on a health impact assessment of the Home In Tacoma DEIS and associated draft code. I will give a brief overview of the HIA recommendations and will work with city staff to get you the final HIA for your consideration. The health department supports the highest density zoning alternative and recommends that Home In Tacoma move forward with adoption and implementation without delay, but there are a few modifications we would like to see. Providing as many housing options as possible will lessen the risk of displacement, especially displacement outside of one's current neighborhood or community. Accelerating the objectives of the anti displacement strategy is one way we can lessen the harms caused by current and future displacement. Often when we think of density and more complete neighborhoods, walking and biking and more physical activity in general may come to mind. For this to be true in Tacoma, we need to ensure that our neighborhoods are actually walkable. This can be done with an equity-based walkability analysis, and we should prioritize sidewalk installation and maintenance in the areas designated for more density. With increased density often comes more options for public transit and, therefore, more connections to opportunities and less air pollution from cars. However, our transit network is not set up to accommodate the predicted increase in residents. While our system for traffic impact fees is being formed and ideally accelerated, we can mitigate some of the likely increase in traffic emissions with expanded tree protections, which I'll talk about now. Trees are a part of our public health infrastructure. They absorb harmful air pollution that can cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease, mediate temperatures both indoor and out, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for recreation and social connection. As we densify our city, we need to ensure that the areas in Tacoma that currently have low tree canopy and therefore don't receive these health benefits, don't experience an even greater loss in tree canopy. Equity guardrails need to be put into place in the landscaping code to ensure that development will not cause a neighborhood's urban tree canopy cover to decline, especially for those areas that score low on the Equity Index. Thank you.
- (35) Kathleen Roberts – I was born in Tacoma, and we have inherited—with my siblings—our parents property that they purchased right after the war. We love Tacoma so much, so we keep the property and come and go. Parking is a major concern of mine because the street already is close to 6th Avenue and would be an area where you would not protect parking. However, with people parked on both sides of the street, there's an inability to even drive down the street if there were two cars coming opposite ways. I would just encourage you to consider the parking considerations, not making them worse, but at least looking at them street by street. Second concern I have is on the historical properties. I noticed the last time I was there, and I grew up in a home that was built in 1995, that the compatibility of design may not be as high on the list of considerations. I used to walk by that blue house where Tarzan used to live every day on the way to Stadium, and now there's a big block house across the street from us. It just looks incompatible to have the historically protected properties, having these other properties almost next door or across from them, and I would encourage more consideration there. Thank you for this opportunity.
- (36) Mike Fleming – I live in the West Slope area of Tacoma, and I'd like to comment on the part of the Home In Tacoma (HIT) proposal that deals with trees. During a recent Planning Commission meeting, forestry staff spent over an hour explaining tree-related details, including how HIT proposals would support Tacoma's tree canopy goals. I listened with great interest as I live in an area that the city has designated as a view sensitive district, an overlay which applies to about 10% of Tacoma's land area. During that staff presentation, I did not hear anything about fostering compatibility between trees to be planted and preserving residents' views. So, in furtherance of that compatibility, please consider asking staff to add something that encourages planting of low-growing trees in view sensitive areas. Perhaps requiring or recommending a variety of tree species to plant as part of the permitting process for new development. And lastly, please note that over

half of tonight's speakers mentioned trees in their comments, which is a message in itself. Thank you.

- (37) Brett Johnson – Thank you for providing the opportunity for feedback here. I understand the need for the density increase in Tacoma and other cities. As somebody who at least I like to consider myself an environmentalist, I understand that we're trying to take development pressure off of our rural lands farther out in the county. I grew up in South Hill, Puyallup, which is the poster child of suburban sprawl. So I do get the need for building up an infill in our city, but I think any reasonably minded person knows that it has to be balanced with other things that are also important. For example, sewer systems. We have the sewer system and the capacity to handle the new development that's going to be going in over the coming decades. That needs to be addressed with impact fees. How about our water supplies in the summer? We're drawing from aquifer-based water supplies sometimes because we need to tap into that like in August when it's driest and hottest. Also transit – are we going to actually have the busses and the light rail and whatnot that we want to achieve this walkable community vision that folks have? So, there's just a lot of details that need to be addressed in this thing. Tree canopy has been addressed at infinitum already. I think some of the parking requirements along some of the major arterials need to be rethought. It might be a little bit of pie in the sky thinking on some of that. I'm just looking at the area around 6th Avenue, and it's like no parking requirements—might be a little bit extreme. Final comment, please support increasing our urban forestry staff so that we can accommodate the tree canopy planting and maintenance goals that we have over time. Because with three people right now it won't happen. We need to invest in our staff to make that happen.
- (38) Gordie Peters – My wife and I have lived in the West Slope since 2005, and I'll try and be brief as a number of my neighbors in this area have already spoken and brought up some good points. The one thing I wanted to bring light to was that the West Slope doesn't exactly end on Jackson. Jackson and westward flows down toward Titlo, but everything between 8th all the way down to 19th—which is our border with University Place—there are a number of streets, primarily Geiger Street, that are also view property and would be impacted by the UR-1 designation changes down on the west side of Jackson, as well as the designation of UR-2 for everything on the east side of Jackson that goes up to the top of that ridge, which extends to Geiger and in a couple of places near 12th, near St. Andrew's Church on Meyers. So, some of those are view homes as well, and I wanted to bring this to attention here so that Jackson isn't the dividing line for the West Slope. Thank you very much.
- (39) Charlie Schilling – I would just like to say that the initial thing of saying that you're going to go further than the state mandate seems too broad and too big. If you're going to start doing something like this, like other people have said, it should start more slowly and more cautiously. It seems like you're not taking into account not having enough time to get public opinion for what's going on. I also live on the West Slope and agree with other people that this area of the city does not have the infrastructure or the commerce to support high density housing. Nobody's going to be walking up that hill from Titlo Park to 6th Avenue to Jackson to Geiger to get to places of commerce. It just seems like it's too fast. Thank you.
- (40) Kimberly Freeman – I wanted to start by thanking you for all of your time. I know that you are volunteers. I know that this is an enormous package that is before you, and it is probably the biggest decision that you're going to make while you sit on the Planning Commission. I wasn't really going to speak on the proposal. I do have some comments, and I'll send those in. I wanted to speak to you as Planning Commission members and to just really think about how to roll this out with some checks and balances going forward so that there will be reviews as things happen and the city can come back and really look at how each of the code changes worked or didn't work and make changes before it impacts further across the city in a negative way. So, potentially think about rolling it out in increments or just making sure that there is review after the changes that the code is allowing, after these changes go in, really digging in and looking at if it worked the way we expected or are there changes we need to make? And again, I just want to thank you for your time and thank you, Elliott, for all of your time. And frankly, thank the city for bringing the conversation forward. It is a conversation we need to be having. Thank you.

- (41) Yvonne – I have been living on this block for 64 years and my parents before me, and there are already too many people on this block. There is no parking for me, my elderly sister, or my husband. We definitely do not need more people on this block. I just found out about this today, and I wanted to join this meeting. I don't have any eloquent words to speak. City of Tacoma has even failed to even pave our alleyway for 64 years, but they want to build a huge development here. I'm totally against it. And if there's any paperwork or anything that I can fill out, I will do so. I do not want another person on this block. I will welcome all the trees that you want to put on here, but we can't take another person. There is no parking. There is no space.
- (42) Rebecca – I just want to mention, I think a few points that many people have already mentioned. I think we need to look at evolution, not revolution. We need to look at this in an incremental way, not try to solve everything that might occur in population long before it does occur in population. Starting with, there are many areas in Tacoma that already have heavily impervious surfaces. They're on transit, and they're near downtown jobs. And in those areas, there are many empty or derelict properties. That needs to be a stage one. I noticed in the last year or so a number of apartment buildings have been going up there. There are many office buildings that are now not used for offices. The mayor recently said that we don't have a lot of vacancy, but that's because there's people that own them or they're still committed to them by lease, but they're not occupied. She also noted that. So those need to be converted into some other use, probably residential. That's something that needs to be factored in. Failing to incorporate parking as a requirement for residences will just cause friction between people. And we certainly don't need anything else that's going to cause friction between people. Neighborhoods are critical to people connecting and thriving. Expecting people to do their shopping, climb a steep hill in the rain carrying several bags of groceries, or to get half a mile from a bus line to their house, it's just not realistic. It's not going to happen. So, we really need to revert to keeping the new density in transit corridors and where density already exists, and eliminate the bonus approaches. Evolution, not revolution. Thank you.
- (43) Adam Torkar – I appreciate the time to allow me to speak. I just wanted to say that I live in the Proctor neighborhood, and one thing I really love about this neighborhood is just the old trees. Everywhere you look there's a different house, and you have the ability to see the water. I think I can maybe speak, like others, for instance, our neighbor to the north, one of the first things that they say when I tell them I live in Proctor is that's how Ballard used to be in the 1990s, or that's how Fremont used to be in the 1990s. So, I get everyone's concern. I definitely think Tacoma needs more housing, but I also think there needs to be a balance because Ballard definitely has gotten much more crowded. There's a lot more apartment buildings that are shielding out people's views next to small craftsman houses. Those houses have since lost their views, as others have said. There tends to be more trash and more garbage. I definitely think in implementing this plan, I would hope that maybe it would be in a phased approach, so we weren't doing it all city wide at once. I think the beauty of, for instance, in Proctor, it feels almost like a small town inside a big city, and it's wonderful. The trees, the beauty, the walkability. I just think that if we go too fast and build all these high rises, that particular neighborhood and others in Tacoma might lose their charm. And that's something that I worry about since I've moved here. I really appreciate your time. That's just a concern that I have along with the parking.
- (44) Amy Pow – I want to thank the city staff and, in particular, Elliott Barnett, who's working on this project so diligently for the past few years. I'm a retired planner and lived in the West Slope area for about 20 some years, and I love Tacoma. I caught it home for years, and I'm so proud of being a part of it. I made my comments in writing and I'm not going to repeat that, but just hearing the public comments, the thought that came back to me, which is crying out loud and clear, is I really encourage the city to implement that project by phase. Try to focus in areas with high opportunities, so that you can demonstrate to folks that this is going to work and it's going to improve your property value by implementing form-based code. And I really encourage the planners to think about the performance measures well before it's being implemented and in determining that performance measures work with the public, work with a group of people that are able to champion the project for you together, and it's a good opportunity to work with the public and build trust with them. So, this is my very last comment. I really encourage the Planning Commission to give serious

consideration of this project is a very, very worthwhile project to improve equity in the city. Thank you.

Chair Karnes closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

## **H. Communication Items**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Atkinson noted that on March 5, 2024, the City Council adopted a six-month extension of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District moratorium, and they conducted a public hearing on the proposed moratorium on historic districts.

## **I. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

*\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*  
[http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees\\_boards\\_commissions/planning\\_commission/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/)





City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
F2**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Health Impact Assessments**  
**Memo Date:** August 28, 2024  
**Meeting Date:** September 4, 2024

**Action Requested:**  
Informational

**Discussion:**

Erin Dilworth from the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department will be presenting an overview of the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) pilot program, including background information on the process for developing an HIA, community involvement, and the current status and schedule for how the HIA is being utilized to support the City's long-range planning initiatives. This presentation is intended to lay the groundwork for future discussions with the Commission on the findings and recommendations for each of the project areas.

**Project Summary and Background:**

HIAs serve as a tool to inform decision-makers, and the public, of the potentially significant impacts – both beneficial and harmful – of a proposed project, policy, or program. Many technical definitions of HIAs exist, but Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department uses the definition from the Committee on Health Impact Assessment of the National Research Council:

*HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.*

The City of Tacoma and the Health Department are currently partnering on a pilot HIA program associated with the City's long-range planning initiatives. This pilot agreement will leverage the Health Department's expertise in HIAs to inform the Planning Commission and City Council on the potential health implications of future land use choices associated with two projects: Tideflats Subarea Plan, and the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code Update. The Health Department has completed an HIA on Home in Tacoma, and is in the final stages of completing an HIA on the Pacific Avenue Subarea Plan – it should be noted that while these two efforts began before this pilot program was established, the results of these HIAs can still be taken into consideration by the Planning Commission.



Planning Commission  
Health Impact Assessments  
September 4, 2024  
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- Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org).

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: Home in Tacoma HIA

c. Peter Huffman, Director



# HOME IN TACOMA HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TACOMA, WA  
MAY 2024

Conducted by Sandra Whitehead, PhD  
for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

**Document Contact:** Erin Dilworth, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

**Contributing Agencies/Organizations:**

**Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department**

Erin Dilworth | Healthy Community Planning

Adam Reichenberger | Housing

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**City of Tacoma**

Elliott Barnett | Comprehensive Planning

Alyssa Torrez | Comprehensive Planning

Mike Carey | Urban Forestry

Ted Richardson | Affordable Housing Action Strategy

Liz Kaster | Transportation Planning and Engineering

## Executive Summary

### What is a Health Impact Assessment?

The way we build our communities impacts our physical, social, and mental health. It is widely recognized that the conditions in which we live, or Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) – including exposure to pollution, stable and quality housing, education, access to nutritious foods, and safe places to walk and roll – have a far greater impact on our health than traditional medical practices and dollars spent on healthcare. Consequently, improvements in public health can only occur if SDoH are incorporated into development projects, planning policies, and other government programs in non-health related sectors.<sup>4</sup>

Health Impact Assessments (HIA) serve as a tool to inform decision-makers, and the public, of the potentially significant impacts – both beneficial and harmful – of a proposed project, policy, or program. Many technical definitions of HIAs exist, but Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Department) uses the definition from the Committee on Health Impact Assessment of the National Research Council:

*HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.*<sup>4</sup>

### Home in Tacoma Health Impact Assessment

This HIA was commissioned to provide a tool to discuss health impacts of [Home in Tacoma](#) (HIT) Phase 2, part of City of Tacoma's [Affordable Housing Action Strategy](#) (AHAS). Implementation of Phase 2 is intended to increase housing supply, affordability, and choice for current and future residents through zoning changes, design standards, affordability options, and anti-displacement strategies.

The City determined that HIT would likely cause significant, adverse environmental impacts, so they were required to assess these impacts through an Environmental Impact Statement. The [draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (DEIS) assessed three alternatives defined primarily by the number of new housing units likely to be developed under the new zoning rules, as well as associated development standards establishing new density, building size, parking, landscaping, and other requirements.

This HIA examined the DEIS and associated changes to the [Municipal Code](#) to understand the health impacts associated with increased density, changes in the transportation network, and changes in tree canopy. Within each change category, the HIA team looked at health impacts associated with two to three topic areas. The topic areas for each change category are illustrated in Figure 1. Because HIT is complex and nuanced, this HIA could have focused on any number of topic areas. The scope of this HIA was narrowed to fit a rapid HIA format, time available, and goals of the HIA Team.

Changes in density	Changes in the transportation network	Changes in tree canopy cover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with increased physical activity</li> <li>• Impacts on housing stability and habitability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with changes in air quality</li> <li>• Impacts associated with increased connection to opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with the urban heat island effect</li> <li>• Impacts associated with respiratory disease</li> <li>• Impacts on mental health</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Change Categories and Topic Areas

## Key Assessment Findings

In a rapid HIA, assessment consists of refining the literature review and discussing how conclusions can be applied to the decision under consideration. This includes an analysis of potential positive and negative health impacts of the three alternatives identified in the DEIS. This HIA does not evaluate each alternative separately but rather, outlines the relative severity and scale of impacts for residents across the three alternatives.

### Changes in Density

Density, the number of developed units in a specific area of land, is a significant component of neighborhood design. The design of our neighborhoods—including the types and quantity of housing available and how far it is from amenities—determines much of our quality of life.<sup>6</sup>

Higher density zoning will result in the development of middle housing options across a large area of the city. Middle housing options like du-tri-quadplexes, detached accessory dwelling units, and multi-family apartment buildings are significantly more affordable than single-family homes. An influx of middle housing options will increase affordable home ownership and rental opportunities citywide, while decreasing displacement risk in the long-term. Near-term displacement risk may increase as property owners remodel existing housing to accommodate more units.

Habitability standards for new, repurposed, or remodeled housing will also be key to improved health by eliminating environmental and safety hazards, reducing the spread of communicable diseases, and ensuring housing is built for our changing climate. Examples of these standards include mold prevention and remediation strategies, and filtration and ventilation systems to reduce disease spread and exposure to airborne particulates.

Zoning that allows for more dense neighborhoods will encourage the development of health-promoting destinations such as grocery stores, childcare centers, and medical facilities, closer to housing. With more desirable destinations nearby, the likelihood of residents walking, rolling, and biking increases. This type of physical activity is known to prevent heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, some types of cancer and depression. However, these outcomes depend on the City's sidewalk and trail network having capacity to support these new users.

### Changes in the Transportation Network

Under HIT, new density will be located near arterial roadways with ready access to transit, making active transportation modes like walking, rolling, cycling, and public transit for everyday transportation needs

more accessible. When more people use these transit modes, respiratory health outcomes improve as local air quality gets better. Providing transportation options also increases connectivity to jobs, healthy and culturally relevant foods, and social connections for residents who do not own a car, creating new opportunities for health and well-being. The City's public transportation system must be invested in and maintained for residents to enjoy ready access to public transit and other modes of active transportation and to achieve the subsequent improvements in respiratory health and connection to opportunities.

### Changes in Tree Canopy Cover

Trees serve as essential components of public health infrastructure, offering multiple health benefits including reduced respiratory and cardiovascular disease, reduced urban heat and heat-related illnesses, and improved mental health. As housing development pressure increases and urban tree canopy is reduced, these positive health outcomes will be diminished. Enhanced urban tree canopy protections, adopted along with HIT, can help lessen or mitigate the negative public health impacts that may arise from the removal of trees as more housing is built.

### Highlighted Recommendations

After an assessment of the health impacts of each topic area was completed, recommendations were drafted to maximize positive health impacts and minimize negative impacts. Detailed recommendations for each topic area can be found in the full report, and align under the following public health themes:

#### Housing Stability

- Prioritize and accelerate funding and implementation of key [Anti-Displacement Strategy \(ADS\)](#) objectives to mitigate the negative health impacts associated with near-term displacement from increased density, particularly for residents of color.

#### Healthy Housing

- Study the feasibility of adopting a residential habitability standard into the Building and Development code. Partner with the Health Department to identify appropriate elements of the standard, such as air conditioning in all newly licensed units and ventilation/filtration to help prevent the spread of communicable disease and reduce exposure to other airborne contaminants. This will have the added benefit of improving residents' climate related health outcomes from extreme heat and wildfire smoke events.

#### Physical Activity

- Bolster and prioritize investments in the City's sidewalk and active transportation networks to ensure residents who live in or move to densifying neighborhoods enjoy the benefits of a complete neighborhood and the health, social, and economic opportunities that come with it.

#### Respiratory and Cardiovascular Health

- Increase funding for public transportation services and infrastructure to increase ridership and improve air quality.
- Enhance and clarify tree planting and retention protections, including increased funding for Urban Forestry staffing and programs.

#### Social Connection

- Ensure density results in complete neighborhoods, with sidewalks, active transportation, and access to goods and services so residents can fully benefit from the improved social determinants of health.



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## Background

According to the Affordable Housing Action Strategy, the City of Tacoma is in a housing affordability crisis.<sup>1</sup> The American Community Survey shows that 46% of renters and approximately 37% of homeowners were cost burdened in Tacoma. This means they paid 30% or more of their household income toward rent in 2021 (US Census Bureau, 2021)<sup>2</sup>.

To address affordable housing statewide, the state legislature adopted E2SHB 1110 in 2023. E2SHB 1110 directs certain cities to allow for more middle housing. Middle housing refers to a range of multiunit or clustered housing types, such as duplexes, fourplexes, courtyard housing and multiplexes, which are compatible in scale with single-family homes.

The Home in Tacoma (HIT) Project is part of the city's action plan to address the provision of affordable housing over the next 30 years and complies with the new state law. Home in Tacoma unifies the city's growth strategy, zoning and land use regulations, and affordable housing development incentives into a concerted effort to:

- Increase housing supply.
- Create more affordable housing options.
- Expand the choice of housing types throughout Tacoma's neighborhoods.

Home in Tacoma consists of two phases to date. Phase One was completed in December 2021 and included:

- Amendments to the [One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan \(One Tacoma Plan\)](#).
- Changes to the housing growth strategy, policies, and programs.
- Near-term code and programmatic actions.

A key component of Phase One was to adopt a new Future Land Use Map. This replaced all Single-Family and Multifamily Low Density land use designations with Low-Scale and Mid-Scale Residential. View additional information about Phase One in [City of Tacoma Ordinance No. 28793](#).

In Phase Two, the City proposes to implement Ordinance 28793, in part by adopting new zoning designations, development standards, and other actions to increase housing supply, affordability, and choice for current and future residents. Phase Two will implement Tacoma's adopted policies regarding housing growth and development to:

- Enable middle housing in Tacoma's neighborhoods.
- Ensure Tacoma gets housing growth right.
- Take actions to make housing more affordable.<sup>3</sup>

By creating more types of housing in existing neighborhoods, it is assumed that more units will be available for rent and purchase, with some new affordable units and more existing units available at different price points. With more units, the price pressure will alleviate and make housing more plentiful and reasonably priced.

Phase Two’s overall objectives serve to improve the social determinants of health because they support economic stability, equitable access, and a health promoting built environment. By increasing housing supply, affordability, and choice for current and future residents, HIT will affect the most impactful social determinant of health: having a safe, affordable place to live, dream, and grow.

Home in Tacoma is expected to promote housing equity and address displacement in the long term. HIT seeks to direct new housing units to areas in the city already served by transit or on major roadways, which will connect residents to economic opportunities, healthcare services, and healthy food options.

The HIT draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) studied three alternatives defined primarily by the number of new housing units likely to be developed under new zoning designations, as well as associated development standards. These standards will establish new density, building size, parking, landscaping, and other requirements. Figure 2 below shows the total number of new housing units projected for each alternative.<sup>3</sup>

Alternative	Number of Units
Baseline	3,840
Low Zoning Alternative (LZA)	25,660
High Zoning Alternative (HZA)	53,620

Figure 2. Number of Units per Alternative predicted to be built over a 30-year time horizon.  
Adapted from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, (City of Tacoma, 2024)

In collaboration with City of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Health Department) commissioned a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to understand the health impacts associated with these proposed changes. An HIA is a structured process that uses scientific data, professional expertise, and input from the affected community to identify and evaluate public health consequences of proposals and suggests actions to minimize adverse health impacts and optimize beneficial effects.<sup>4</sup>

This HIA was conducted by the HIA team, which included the consultant Sandra Whitehead, the Healthy Community Planner from the Health Department, and two Senior Planners from the City of Tacoma. Health Department staff were the main point of contact for the HIA consultant. City of Tacoma Planning staff provided data, reviewed documents, and provided feedback on the feasibility of draft recommendations.

This report follows the phases of HIA as defined in the Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessment.<sup>5</sup> While the sections follow a linear path through the phases, the process itself was much more iterative than is reflected here.

## Screening

The screening phase results in a decision about whether to conduct an HIA and, if moving forward, a rationale for why an HIA is an appropriate approach for the context. The HIA team also chooses the type and scale of HIA to perform. During Screening, the Health Department decided that a rapid HIA was the appropriate tool to examine the health impacts of HiT in the Spring of 2023. This decision was based on the timeline of policy adoption and resources available.

## Scoping

The scoping phase is defined by its tasks shown in Figure 2.

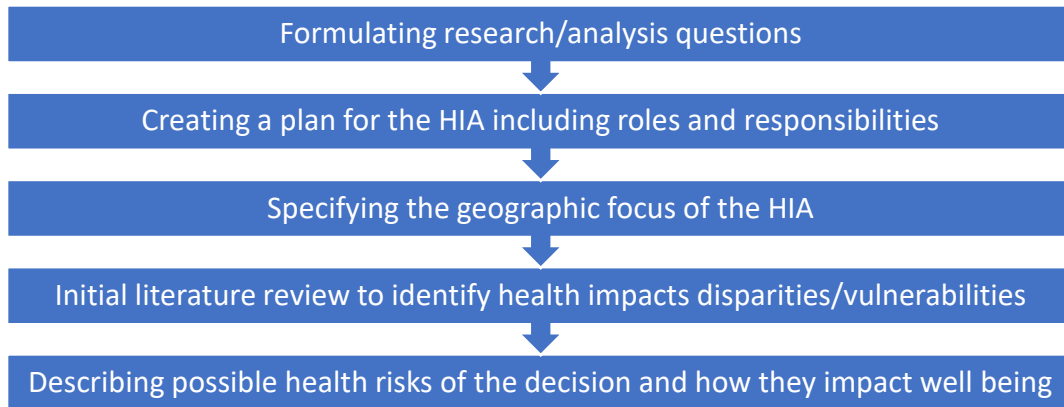


Figure 3. Scoping Tasks

The HIA Team selected these research and analysis questions for the scale and scope of this HIA:

1. What are the most severe or immediate health impacts associated with HiT?
2. Which of these can be addressed through adjusting the policy parameters?
3. Which alternative(s) produces fewer negative impacts/more beneficial health impacts?

Using these questions as a guide, the team formulated the HIA to include:

- Research literature to provide background and evidence for HiT policies and actions.
- Identify opportunities to maximize potential health benefits of HiT.
- Elevate public health considerations related to housing policy and land use changes.
- Recommendations to mitigate risks and unintended consequences.

Because this is a rapid HIA, the HIA Team accessed information online or through data available from the Health Department and City. The HIT Team met regularly to discuss the progress of the HIA's assessment and development of recommendations. Additionally, the Health Department's Climate Justice Coordinator and Housing Policy Coordinator provided comments and input on the HIA document.

While community engagement was not conducted specifically for the HIA process, City of Tacoma staff have completed three phases of engagement to inform the development of the HIT policy. The Health Department will use the HIA findings in discussions with the public and City staff about HIT during policy formulation and to monitor the adoption of the HIA recommendations.

### Range of Impacts Considered

The HIA team used the DEIS report and the associated draft changes to the Tacoma Municipal Code to analyze how changes in density, transportation network, and tree canopy coverage will impact residents' health. Within each of these change areas, the team looked at health impacts associated with two to three topic areas.

Figure 3 below shows the topic areas for each change category. Because HIT is complex and nuanced, this HIA could have focused on any number of topic areas, but it had to be narrowed to fit both the format of a rapid HIA, time available, and goals of the HIA Team.

Changes in density	Changes in the transportation network	Changes in tree canopy cover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with increased physical activity</li> <li>• Impacts on housing stability and habitability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with changes in air quality</li> <li>• Impacts associated with increased connection to opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts associated with the urban heat island effect</li> <li>• Impacts associated with respiratory disease</li> <li>• Impacts on mental health</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Change Categories and Topic Areas

This HIA does not evaluate each alternative separately but rather, outlines the relative severity and scale of impacts for residents across the three alternatives.

## Assessment

In a rapid HIA, assessment consists of refining the literature review and discussing how conclusions can be applied to the decision under consideration. This includes an analysis of potential positive and negative health impacts. The assessment section consists of an introduction on each topic area, and a discussion of potential health impacts associated with each topic area, across the three alternatives.

To identify health impacts associated with each topic area, a literature review was conducted using the following databases: PubMed, Google Scholar and JSTOR. Key words included public health, health outcomes, health impacts, and the name of each change category (increased density, transportation, urban tree canopy). Systematic reviews and epidemiologic studies were prioritized to provide the broadest range of results.

### Changes in Density

Density, the number of developed units in a specific area of land, is a significant component of neighborhood design. The design of our neighborhoods—including the types and quantity of housing available and how far it is from amenities—determines much of our quality of life.<sup>6</sup> Density around centers and corridors can increase access to healthcare services, employment, and grocery stores. Density brings more destinations and a mix of activities like restaurants, retail, and recreation closer to residential areas which can encourage more physical activity because more routine destinations are within walking or rolling distance.<sup>6,7</sup>

This mix of uses also adds more places to gather and opportunities to interact with friends and neighbors which can boost mental health. However, increasing density can also affect mental health when current residents worry about and experience displacement, the effects of gentrification, and loss of community.

Increased density can also impact resident health through increased noise, light, and air pollution, if not properly mitigated. Communicable diseases may spread more readily in dense neighborhoods. However, when more residents are housed rather than in congregate shelters or unsanctioned encampments increased density may reduce the spread of communicable disease in a community.

The following sections discuss the health impacts of increasing density associated with physical activity and housing stability and habitability in relation to the HIT alternatives.

#### Impacts Associated with Physical Activity

Home in Tacoma proposes to primarily cluster new units under the LZA and HZA, along arterial corridors where multimodal transportation options are more likely to be available.<sup>3</sup> HIT explicitly calls out walkability as a goal and calls for supporting policies like mixed use designations that would support the creation of businesses, restaurants and entertainment, grocery stores, and childcare centers near housing. Public health literature strongly supports links between increased density, walking, rolling, and health.<sup>8</sup> Because increased density creates opportunities for more walking, providing supportive infrastructure, such as sidewalks and curb cuts is important to encourage physical activity.<sup>9</sup>

Investing in supportive infrastructure will save lives by encouraging health promoting behaviors. Transportation investments that make walking, biking, and transit more convenient than driving increase those activities.<sup>9</sup> According to the Community Health Assessment for Pierce County, only 22.1% of adults get the recommended 30 minutes of exercise per day.<sup>10</sup>

When a person gets at least 30 minutes of physical activity more than twice a week, it can help prevent heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, some types of cancer and depression.<sup>6</sup> Building out the active transportation network can encourage physical activity and reduce the risk and prevalence of these diseases.

Choosing transportation options that involve physical activity, like walking, rolling, or cycling, can also have positive effects on mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins and neurotransmitters that promote feelings of well-being and happiness.<sup>11</sup>

Walking and cycling in green spaces, or along scenic routes, can further enhance mental well-being by providing opportunities for relaxation and connection with nature. Walking is associated with healthier populations since it contributes to lower blood pressure, and lower incidences of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.<sup>12-16</sup> Neighborhood walkability is also associated with lower respiratory diseases rates like asthma in children.<sup>17</sup>

Based on the DEIS, it is anticipated that both the LZA and HZA will spur more physical activity, which will vary based on the amount of increased density and the number of people impacted. Since the HZA will impact more current and future residents' physical activity levels by increasing density even more than the LZA, the HZA will promote health most by enabling more physical activity.

The HZA and its associated zoning changes will encourage development of more destinations relative to each other and to housing, increasing the likelihood of residents using active transportation. However, these outcomes depend on the active transportation network having safe and accessible connections to support these new users.

According to a 2022 active transportation inventory, the city does not have a complete sidewalk network which would make it safe, easy, or convenient to walk. The city has approximately 969 miles of existing sidewalk and an estimated 408 linear miles of missing sidewalk, but only builds, on average, less than one mile of new sidewalk per year. The same inventory found that Tacoma has completed approximately 25% of needed curb ramps, and approximately 29% of its planned bikeway network.<sup>3</sup>

Using this rate of building and funding, it will take 136 years to complete Tacoma's active transportation network.<sup>18</sup> The areas of Tacoma with the most linear miles of missing sidewalk were Eastside, South End, South Tacoma, and West End Neighborhood Council Districts. Further, the City's active transportation network—walking trails and bike lanes—is only at 70.4% coverage.<sup>18</sup>

The lack of complete active transportation and sidewalk network, residents may be less likely to get the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity more than twice a week. Less exercise can result in a greater risk of diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle like cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer.<sup>19</sup> Because of this significant gap in bike and pedestrian infrastructure, estimating the amount of increased physical activity will depend on the city's ability to catch up to current needs and to create the capacity for new residents.

#### Impacts on Housing Stability and Habitability

Home in Tacoma will allow higher density housing across the city, not just in lower opportunity neighborhoods, which had been a common practice in neighborhood rezoning in the past. The DEIS assumes that housing costs will be tempered by development of a large area of the city with middle housing options, which are significantly more affordable than single-family homes. This can result in a significant increase in affordable ownership and rental opportunities citywide, and a decrease in displacement risk.

However, some areas in Tacoma could experience an increased displacement risk, and racially based disparities in housing—especially as experienced by Tacoma's Black and Hispanic residents—are likely to persist under all alternatives. Low-income people and renters are also at a higher risk for displacement.<sup>3</sup>

Displacement is occurring now due to current development pressure – and results in increases in rent and property taxes, and a lack of affordable homes for residents to move into within their communities. Seniors may be unable to remain in Tacoma, and young adults may be unable to start their independent lives in the community they grew up in. Displacement can also occur when a housing unit is unfit for habitability, or when a landlord remodels a property, and tenants cannot stay in the unit during the remodel. After remodels, landlords may choose to not participate in formal affordability agreements and may increase rent to cover the cost of construction. This displaces the occupant who will need to find less expensive housing, which may not be within their established community.

According to Mapping Race in Tacoma, the neighborhoods at highest risk of displacement are those that have been most subjected to historic housing discrimination. In 2020, Hilltop and parts of East Tacoma—neighborhoods with the highest percentages of residents of color—had the highest risk of displacement.<sup>20</sup> The Puget Sound Regional Council also identified South End and Downtown residents as being at high risk of displacement.<sup>21</sup>

The consequences of displacement are severe. By forcing long-term residents and communities out of their neighborhoods, it can alter the foundations of their lives, from jobs and housing to social connections.<sup>22</sup> Displacement can trigger the loss of community anchors like neighbors, churches, and small businesses, which create the fabric of a neighborhood. These losses can result in the erasure of community history, culture, and opportunities.<sup>23</sup> Children’s lives are also disrupted as they are forced to change schools by moving.<sup>24</sup> Displacement also increases homelessness, especially in circumstances when alternative housing is unavailable or the cost of moving to less expensive areas is prohibitive.<sup>25</sup> Displacement affects mental health, including increased depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, leaving an impactful toll on those who are forced to experience it.<sup>26</sup> Displaced residents face exacerbated food insecurity. Those most vulnerable to displacement are more likely to have diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and higher cancer rates.<sup>27</sup>

While no displacement is ideal, when families are able to move within their existing community, displacement has much better health outcomes. This is because of the mental health benefits associated with maintaining a sense of community and belonging.<sup>28</sup>

People with stronger social relationships had a reduced risk of dying than those with weaker social relationships.<sup>29</sup> Residents with stronger community ties and feelings of belonging and trust have lower hypertension and diabetes rates.<sup>30</sup> These findings indicate that when more housing is available nearby during displacement scenarios, the negative impacts of displacement on social and community connections can be mitigated.

The risk of near-term displacement will be greatest under the HZA because there will be more opportunities to remodel existing housing to accommodate more units – meaning residents will need to move while the unit they were residing in is remodeled. However, the net increase in new housing, particularly in new more affordable housing should moderate displacement in time. Under the HZA, more housing units should become available in the same neighborhoods where residents may be displaced, mitigating the negative impacts associated with displacement outside of one’s community.<sup>31</sup>

While residents of color may experience less displacement under the LZA and the HZA than they would under the baseline alternative, HIT can still be considered a race-neutral policy because it does not specifically seek to undo racially based housing disparities.<sup>32</sup> Because displacement will occur across all alternatives, the HZA is most likely to reduce long-term displacement for residents of color because it will create more housing that is more affordable than the other alternatives.

Increased density can also impact the habitability of housing by bringing increased noise, light, and air pollution, and increased pest and rodent populations. Additionally, dense multi-unit housing must be built with sufficient ventilation and filtration to reduce the potential for mold and moisture concerns and

the spread of communicable disease. The National Healthy Housing Standard provides health-based measures to fill gaps where no property maintenance policy exists and serves as a complement to the International Property Maintenance Code and other housing policies already in use in the City. The National Healthy Housing Standard includes sample code and policy language to improve the habitability of housing. This includes sections on moisture and mold, ventilation, integrated pest management, lighting, thermal comfort and more. As housing density increases, it becomes even more important to ensure that housing is healthy and safe.<sup>67</sup>

#### Recommendations: Changes in Density

- Study the feasibility of adopting a residential habitability standard into the Building and Development code. Partner with the Health Department to identify appropriate elements of the standard, such as air conditioning in all newly licensed units and ventilation/filtration to help prevent the spread of communicable disease and reduce exposure to other airborne contaminants. This will have the added benefit of improving residents' climate related health outcomes from extreme heat and wildfire smoke events. Review and adoption of select National Healthy Housing Standards will be critical.
- Prioritize and accelerate funding and implementation of the following [Anti-Displacement Strategy](#) (ADS) objectives to mitigate the negative health impacts associated with near-term displacement caused by the remodeling and repurposing of existing housing stock, and possible short-term housing cost increases:<sup>33</sup>
  - Community Prioritization (ADS 4.1)
    - This can prevent the trauma and mental health impacts for families who have been through multiple displacements, suffer from loss of community, and the resulting physical impacts of displacement.
  - Preservation Ordinance (ADS 2.1)
    - This objective will help reduce the likelihood and impacts of displacement that will occur when landlords/property owners remodel their property to take advantage of the new density allowances.
  - Right of First Refusal Policy (ADS 2.2)
    - This objective will help ensure both naturally occurring and formal affordable housing remains affordable if the property changes ownership.
  - Down payment homebuyer assistance (ADS 1.3)
    - Expand education and funding for the program targeting current residents of color and tailoring it to their needs.
  - Land Banking (ADS 1.6)
    - To catalyze affordable housing production and rehabilitation of existing units, the city should identify city owned land appropriate for affordable housing and opportunities to purchase vacant lots or homes. Work with non-profit developers to leverage funding and ensure units go to those most at risk for displacement.
  - Housing Preservation Fund (ADS 2.4)
    - Set up this fund as soon as possible to keep rents stable, make property improvements, and extend or attach affordability periods to units in densifying neighborhoods.



- Improve the livability of existing owner-occupied homes (ADS 2.5)
  - Continue and expand support for the City's contracts with community partners to provide home repair and weatherization services to low-income homeowners.
- Tenant Relocation Fund (ADS 3.2)
  - This program should receive expanded funding, as its current provisions are not adequate to assist tenants with current rental prices. The fund currently provides \$2,000 in relocation assistance to eligible tenant households. This money assists with moving costs when they are displaced due to demolition, substantial rehabilitation, or a change in use of their rented residence. However, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,790. A family will need a minimum of \$3,580 just for first and last month's rent, not including utility deposit, pet deposits, and moving expenses.<sup>35</sup>
- Complete sidewalk and active transportation networks to ensure that HIT meets physical activity goals and residents who live in or move to densifying neighborhoods enjoy the benefits of a complete neighborhood and the social and economic opportunities that come with it.
  - Investments made to support the sidewalk and active transportation networks should be prioritized in Eastside, South End, South Tacoma, where residents face disproportionately worse health outcomes compared to the rest of Tacoma.
- Bolster and prioritize investments in the sidewalk and active transportation networks through [developer impact fees](#) in areas identified for more density.

### Changes in the Transportation Network

The DEIS assumes new density will be located near arterial roadways with ready access to transit and that more residents will use active transportation modes like walking, cycling, and public transit for everyday transportation needs. If this assumption is true, per capita single occupancy vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will decrease, resulting in reduced air pollution. However, the DEIS also shows that overall VMT will increase across all three alternatives, as the population increases.<sup>3</sup>

Providing transportation options also increases connectivity to jobs, healthy and culturally relevant foods, and social connections for residents who do not own a car, creating new opportunities for health and well-being. This section examines the health risks and benefits of changes in the transportation network associated with changes in air quality and connection to opportunities.

### Impacts Associated with Changes in Air Quality

Air quality significantly impacts human health. Poor air quality can lead to respiratory issues like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and bronchitis.<sup>36</sup> Poor air quality can also increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks, strokes, and hypertension.<sup>37, 38</sup> Emerging evidence also links air pollution to adverse effects on mental health, including depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.<sup>39</sup>

Encouraging the use of public transit, walking, and cycling can reduce the reliance on personal vehicles, thereby decreasing air pollution from vehicle emissions. Lowering per capita VMT and number of vehicle trips is associated with lower levels of several air pollutants that have adverse respiratory health impacts, including fine particulates, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds.<sup>37, 40</sup>

Conversely, when air quality changes for the worse, due to increased traffic and fewer trees, fewer residents tend to choose active modes of transportation.<sup>41</sup>

Each of the HIT alternatives will generate more vehicle trips. Figure 4 shows the increase in vehicle trips under each of the alternatives.

Alternative	Vehicle Trips PM Increase at afternoon rush hour	Vehicle Trips Increased Citywide
Baseline	2,500	29,000
LZA	8,500	120,200
HZA	17,000	171,600

Figure 5. Vehicle Trips Generated by Alternative<sup>3</sup>

According to the DEIS, VMT will increase under all three of the scenarios, causing increases in air pollution. Under the LZA vehicle trips would increase and could result in greater VMT on an average compared to the baseline alternative, although per capita VMT would be lower, due to reduced reliance on personal vehicles associated with increased density. Under the HZA, vehicle trips would increase and could result in greater VMT on an average compared to the baseline and LZA, although per capita VMT would be the lowest.<sup>3</sup>

The assumption that VMT will decrease due to residents becoming less reliant on personal vehicles because they will use public transit more is flawed because our public transit system is not currently set up to support this increase in ridership, nor reliably meet the needs of potential riders. Public transit driver shortages and service reductions have been issues in Pierce County and Tacoma for years.<sup>42</sup> If public transit investments and services do not pace with the expected scale of population increase, there could be an increase in per capita VMT, and an increase in traffic-related air pollutants.

This increase in traffic-related air pollutants may be localized to the areas where the zoning is proposed as Urban Residential 3, i.e., the most density. Conversely, an increase in population density and associated economic opportunities, and thereby an increase public transit ridership, could advance more investment in public transportation services, creating an environment where the assumption that per capita VMT decreases is true.<sup>43, 44</sup>

#### Impacts Associated with Connection to Opportunity

A well-connected transportation network can improve access to more destinations for people who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Reliable and affordable transportation options enable people to reach jobs, social services, and more types of retail. This includes healthy and culturally relevant food options. Providing these types of transportation choices promotes social equity by ensuring that all members of society, regardless of income or mobility status, have access to opportunities.<sup>45</sup>

Improved access to transportation also facilitates participation in social activities, community events, and employment opportunities, fostering social inclusion and reducing disparities in health outcomes. People with stronger social relationships had a reduced risk of dying than those with weaker social

relationships.<sup>29</sup> Residents with stronger community ties and feelings of belonging and trust have lower hypertension and diabetes rates.<sup>30</sup>

Because grocery stores tend to be located on arterial roads and at transit nodes, expanding transit connections in more dense areas can also help people access grocery stores and healthy food retailers within walking or biking distance of their homes. People in more walkable neighborhoods are more likely to walk to work or a grocery store than those in less walkable neighborhoods.<sup>46, 47</sup> As population density increases, more businesses and services like nutrition classes, farmer’s markets, community gardens, and mobile markets also become more available.

An increase in population density and associated economic opportunities, and thereby an increase in public transit ridership, could advance more investment in public transportation services, connecting residents to more opportunities.<sup>9</sup> Following this assumption, the LZA will have more benefits than the baseline alternative, and the HZA will have the most benefits for residents in terms of connections to opportunities.

#### Recommendations: Changes to the Transportation Network

- Increase funding to build out the City’s public transportation system:
  - City of Tacoma should accelerate the adoption of the [Transportation Impact Fee program](#). This includes any required municipal action, like the adoption of an ordinance or resolution.
  - Pierce Transit and Sound Transit should perform a gap analysis to understand the level of infrastructure and service investments needed to keep up with anticipated density.
  - Pierce Transit should consider advocating for a ballot measure to maximize the sales and use tax.
- The City will need to mitigate for worsened air quality during the interim period when population density may increase without a corresponding increase in public transportation service. This is especially needed in the localized areas that will experience the most density and related traffic emissions:
  - Strongly support the DEIS Mitigation Measure; “Expand tree preservation regulations on private property and in the right-of-way.” The City’s Urban Forestry Department should have a much more active role in the control and responsibility for tree planting and maintenance in the rights-of-way. Street trees will mitigate some of the air quality impacts from the near-term increase in localized vehicle traffic.
  - Clarify and expand urban tree infrastructure protections in the draft Landscaping Code to ensure existing tree canopy disparities do not worsen, especially for significantly lower tree canopy in neighborhoods with the lowest opportunities and highest environmental health disparities.
- Encourage use of public transportation through reduced parking minimums, which will also improve local air quality.

#### Impacts Associated with Changes to Tree Canopy

Trees serve as essential components of public health infrastructure, offering multiple public health benefits.<sup>48</sup> The city’s goal for tree canopy cover, established in the 2010 comprehensive plan, is to have

30% across the city by 2030. However, tree canopy is not distributed evenly in the city, ranging from 3% in some census block groups to more than 60% in others.

Tree canopy coverage is also not distributed equitably across Tacoma. Based on the Equity Index map, the average canopy cover in areas classified as very low opportunity was approximately 15%, while the average canopy cover in areas classified as very high opportunity was more than 26%.<sup>49</sup> This indicates the health impacts and protections associated with tree canopy are also not equally or equitably distributed.

The DEIS assumes that both the LZA and HZA will reduce development pressures - and related tree canopy loss - outside of the city, creating a regional-scale protection of plants and animals. However, within the City, the amount of land available to support tree canopy will reduce, with the HZA having the most impact on tree canopy.

The DEIS also assumes that these negative impacts will be prevented or minimized because of the proposed mitigation measures and associated draft landscaping code. These include requirements for tree retention and planting, variance allowances, and an affordability bonus that would allow for less stringent requirements in certain situations.<sup>3</sup>

This section discusses the health impacts associated with the changes of tree canopy across the three alternatives in terms of the urban heat island effect, respiratory disease, and mental health.

#### Impacts Associated with the Urban Heat Island Effect

Fewer green spaces and more impervious surfaces like roads, parking lots, and buildings, etc. absorb and retain heat from the sun to create a heat island. Because of the way we have built infrastructure, many urban areas experience higher temperatures compared to their rural surroundings. This difference in temperature is what defines an urban heat island. Urban areas experience higher temperatures due to the urban heat island effect (UHI), which can exacerbate heat-related illnesses and heat stress.<sup>50, 51</sup>

Planting trees and vegetation helps reduce UHI effects. Trees provide natural shade and evaporative cooling, helping to lower ambient temperatures and create more comfortable microclimates. By lowering temperatures, trees and vegetation help mitigate the health impacts of extreme heat, and mature trees provide these benefits on the largest scale.<sup>52-54</sup>

Tree-driven cooling alone significantly reduces summertime deaths. Recent modeling studies in urban areas across the country have shown cities that meet their 2030 urban tree canopy goals with more urban tree canopy coverage can avert hundreds of heat-related deaths.<sup>55, 56</sup>

In Tacoma, UHI causes and effects are not distributed evenly, nor equitably. Lower opportunity neighborhoods have 19% more impervious surface than higher opportunity neighborhoods.<sup>49</sup> Some areas in North Tacoma saw temperatures that were up to 14 degrees cooler than Central, South, and Eastside Tacoma. Tacoma's historically redlined areas have about 15% less tree cover than areas that were not subject to redlining. Further, in Tacoma, a strong correlation between household income and severe urban heat islands exists.<sup>57, 58</sup>

### Impacts Associated with Respiratory and Cardiovascular Disease

Many studies show a direct association between decreasing tree canopy and increasing respiratory disease, excess morbidity, and mortality.<sup>59</sup> The presence of a healthy urban forest reduces the risk of respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular diseases because trees mitigate air pollution by absorbing harmful pollutants known to cause these health conditions, including carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter.<sup>51, 60</sup>

The DEIS shows that land available for planting and retaining trees will be reduced as the density increases—with the least amount available under the HZA.<sup>3</sup> While the DEIS assumes that net tree canopy loss will be prevented or minimized under the LZA and HZA due to the proposed mitigation measures, there is still a significant risk that during the construction of new units resulting in tree loss, residents may experience a rise in doctor's and emergency room visits. This would be especially true for children, elders, and those with underlying conditions like asthma and COPD.

The length and severity of these respiratory illnesses will vary based on the number and age of trees removed and the span of time over which buildout occurs under the LZA and HZA. Air quality will worsen during construction of new units due to increased land clearing, lot scraping, and loss of tree canopy.

Other impacts associated with construction that will negatively affect air quality include increased truck traffic emissions, increased particulate matter from construction materials, and dust. After construction, restoration of local air quality will be determined by the number and type of mature trees retained on-site, the number and type of new trees planted, and how fast they mature.

Across all the alternatives, development or redevelopment projects that increase housing density will not happen immediately or at the same time. Additionally, not every redeveloped parcel will be developed to the full extent of its allowable density because of other factors (like lot size or shape, or owner preference).

### Impacts on Mental Health

Access to green spaces and natural environments are linked to improved mental health outcomes, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression.<sup>61-64</sup> Trees and urban greenery provide opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and social interaction, enhancing overall psychological well-being and quality of life.<sup>65</sup>

Urban trees also create aesthetically pleasing environments that promote positive mood and cognitive function, fostering a sense of connection to nature and community. The presence of trees and other greenery reduces stress and crime and increases perceptions of safety.<sup>66</sup>

People will experience the mental health effects of changes in the urban tree canopy on a continuum. Urban tree canopy loss within City limits will be the lowest in the baseline alternative, however, trees outside of the city would continue to be removed due to more geographically widespread development.<sup>3</sup>

The negative mental health impacts of urban tree canopy loss will magnify, and the positive mental health impacts of a healthy urban tree canopy will diminish, as development pressure increases. These impacts can be lessened or mitigated if we adopt enhanced tree protections along with Home in Tacoma.

#### Recommendations: Changes in Urban Tree Canopy

- Expand funding and staff for existing programs that support tree planting and maintenance and coordinate these investments with implementation of policies in the City’s Urban Forest Management Plan (2019) and Climate Action Plan (2021).
  - Focus investments in areas of the City identified as UHIs.
  - Where possible, acquire or lease property identified as an UHI to replenish the Urban Tree Canopy.
- Clarify and expand urban tree infrastructure protections in the draft Landscaping Code to ensure existing tree canopy disparities do not worsen, especially in neighborhoods with significantly lower tree canopy that also have the lowest opportunities and highest environmental health disparities.
  - Clarify the fee-in-lieu language under TMC 13.05.10.B.1.(1) to ensure the City meets its Urban Tree Canopy goals equitably:
    - This section needs more precise language on what conditions must be met to demonstrate infeasibility of meeting the tree retention and/or planting and how one obtains a variance.
  - Expand funding to the City’s Urban Forestry Program to bring on additional staff to assist in the reviewing, conditioning, and granting of variances under the Landscaping code, and conduct periodic equity review of implementation.
  - Develop a protocol to ensure that tree planting/retention variances and the affordability bonus structure do not further exacerbate urban tree canopy disparities in Tacoma.

## Reporting

The reporting phase is when the HIA team documents the findings and recommendations and shares these publicly. This report will serve as the primary reporting mechanism. Findings can also be shared via webinars and technical publications with the consent of the Health Department. The Health Department may also share these findings through their regular communication channels, prioritizing resident access to information.

## Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and Monitoring is the phase that considers sustainability beyond an initial project period. Evaluation includes evaluation of the HIA in terms of process to identify improvements in practice for the HIA team, and for the larger field of practice. Monitoring includes the development and implementation of a strategy to sustain the relevance of HIA recommendations and relationships over time and track the predicted potential impacts on health determinants and outcomes over time. This section contains the process evaluation and monitoring framework.

## Process Evaluation

Because this is a rapid HIA, the evaluation phase is limited to an abbreviated process evaluation involving a review of the Minimum Elements and Practice Standards to determine if this HIA conforms to the definition and standards of HIA practice. Figure 6 on the following page summarizes this information.

## Monitoring

The Health Department will monitor and evaluate the implementation of these recommendations through:

- Regular attendance at and participation in City of Tacoma Planning Commission and City Council meetings.
- Thorough evaluation of the final Environmental Impact Statement and adopted changes to the Municipal Code and One Tacoma Plan.

The Health Department will also monitor the implementation of key recommendations for Pierce Transit and Sound Transit review and evaluation of newly adopted policies, strategies, and budgets.

The Health Department will continue to monitor the prevalence of respiratory and cardiovascular disease, mental health, physical activity, extreme heat events, and their associated health outcomes. While many other health-promoting policies are occurring throughout Tacoma in conjunction with HiT, it can be assumed that if the recommendations made in this HIA are implemented, the health outcomes outlined above will improve over time.

Changes in some of the health outcomes and status that were evaluated in this assessment will be not readily observable in the near term, due in part to the nature of some chronic illnesses and the frequency at which they are measured. For example, if air quality in Tacoma improves over the next decade, we may only then begin to see reductions in the instances of respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

Housing stability, and its impacts on health, may be more readily observed in the near-term as more housing becomes available. The Health Department will continue to track local and regional analyses of housing availability and cost, cost-burden of residents, rates of homeownership, and displacement – all with an equity lens.

It can be assumed that if the recommendations made in this HIA are implemented, less displacement—especially among residents of color and residents with low-incomes—will occur. With less displacement, we should expect to see stronger community connections and improved mental health, less people experiencing homelessness, improved cardiovascular health, and higher rates of homeownership.

<b>Criteria from the Minimum Elements and Practice Standards (2022)</b>	<b>How this HIA Meets the Minimum Elements and Practice Standards</b>
HIA assesses the potential health and equity consequences of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project under consideration by decision-makers, and is conducted proactively, with sufficient time to inform the proposal in question. In some cases, HIAs are conducted concurrently with the decision-making process but are completed before the decision is made.	While most elements of the HiT project had been determined before the HIA was begun, the team worked with staff to identify elements of the project that would benefit from making connections to health impacts. The group prioritized three topic areas that that could still be influenced by the recommendations made in the HIA.
HIA involves and engages stakeholders affected by the proposal, particularly populations facing inequities and significant barriers to health and wellbeing who may be disproportionately affected by the proposal.	Because this is a rapid HIA, engagement with impacted communities was not conducted. This HIA an evaluation of how existing proposals could affect health.
HIA systematically considers a range of potential impacts of the proposal on multiple health determinants, indicators of health status, and dimensions of health equity.	This HIA considers a total of 5 impacts across 3 topic areas.
HIA provides a baseline summary of existing conditions relevant to the proposal, including the policy environment; relevant historical context; and relevant social, economic, environmental, and structural factors. HIA also catalogs baseline health outcomes for populations affected by the proposal, particularly populations that may be disproportionately impacted.	The Background section describes the policy context, baseline health conditions as outlined by the Health Department and economic inequities.
HIA characterizes the proposal’s potential impacts on health, health determinants, and health equity and documents the process followed.	The Assessment section describes the potential health impacts as well as the impact tables and describes the process used to generate them.
HIA provides feasible, evidence-based recommendations to promote potential positive health impacts and mitigate potential negative health impacts of the proposal, identifies responsible parties for implementing recommendations and, where appropriate, suggests alternatives or modifications to the proposal. Recommendations should be responsive to the results of the assessment.	Each recommendation can be traced back to findings in the assessment section. Each recommendation was reviewed for relevance and feasibility by HiT staff.
HIA produces a report (or comparable communication product) that includes, at a minimum, documentation of the HIA’s purpose, findings, and recommendations, and provides reasonable access to documentation of the processes, methods, and stakeholders involved.	This report serves this function.
The HIA report (or comparable communication product) should be publicly available and shared with decision-makers and other stakeholders including populations affected by the proposal.	The HIA report will be shared according to Health Department policies and regulations.
HIA proposes indicators, actions, and responsible parties to monitor and evaluate the implementation of recommendations.	The Monitoring section describes how Health Department staff will monitor and evaluate the implementation of recommendations.
HIA proposes indicators, actions, and responsible parties to evaluate the outcomes of the proposal, including changes to health determinants and health status.	The Monitoring section describes how Health Department staff will evaluate the outcomes of the proposal, including changes to health determinants and health status.

Figure 6. Process Evaluation Summary



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City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
F3**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Parks and Recreation Element  
**Memo Date:** August 28, 2024  
**Meeting Date:** September 4, 2024

**Action Requested:**  
Informational.

**Discussion:**

Staff from Planning and Development Services and Metro Parks Tacoma will be leading the Planning Commission on a review of the [Park and Recreation Element](#) of the One Tacoma Plan and the recent update of the Metro Parks Tacoma System and Strategic Plan, including a discussion of the planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and opportunities to better align the City’s goals and policies with the MPT System and Strategic Plan.

**Project Summary and Background:**

Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan, [One Tacoma](#), is the City’s official statement concerning its vision for future growth and development. It identifies goals, policies, and strategies for maintaining the health, welfare, and quality of life of Tacoma’s residents. The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of numerous individual elements, including elements addressing such important issues as urban form, design and development, environment and watershed health, parks and recreation, housing, economic development, and transportation and infrastructure.

The City of Tacoma amends its Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis as permitted by state law. In addition to these regular amendments, the [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA) requires counties and cities to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plans and regulations to bring them in line with any relevant changes in the GMA, and to accommodate updated growth targets. [RCW 36.70A.130](#) establishes the review procedures and schedule for Comprehensive Plan amendments and periodic review. Tacoma last completed such a “periodic update” in 2015 and is mandated to undertake and complete another “periodic update”.

In addition, the City of Tacoma is the designated “Metropolitan City” for Pierce County and is allocated, through [Vision 2050](#) and the [Countywide Planning Policies](#), to accommodate a significant share of the region’s population and employment growth. The Puget Sound Regional Council evaluates and certifies local comprehensive plans for consistency with the multi-county planning policies (see the [Plan Review Manual](#), page 27). The Comprehensive



Plan update will include a review and update to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of Vision 2050

**Prior Actions:**

- December 20, 2023: Recommended scope of work and engagement strategy.
- June 21, 2023: Reviewed planning requirements for the Periodic Update and recent legislative updates pertaining to housing and climate policy.

**Background Documents:**

- [Dept. of Commerce Checklist](#)
- [Vision 2050 Checklist](#)
- [One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update Work Plan](#)

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**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: Assessment Report
- Attachment 2: Parks + Recreation Element

c. Peter Huffman, Director

## PURPOSE

The City of Tacoma is updating its Comprehensive Plan *One Tacoma* to the year 2050. This is a major update for the City, with the last update to the plan occurring in 2015.

This document summarizes planned updates to the Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element.

## ELEMENT OVERVIEW

The City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma together manage more than 3,000 acres of developed parks and natural areas, as well as local and regional trails, the urban tree canopy, and community gardens. Programs are offered for all ages at community centers, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities. Parks and natural areas give life and beauty to the city and are essential assets that connect people to place, self and others. The goals and policies of this chapter are intended to ensure this legacy is preserved for all Tacomans and future generations and that the City and Metro Parks will rise to meet the challenges posed by growth and change within the City and region.

### **The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City's intent to:**

- Set clear standards for service delivery and expansion of parks and recreation facilities and services.
- Achieve interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the provision of park and recreation facilities.
- Provide more equitable service delivery in areas that are currently deficient in services or are anticipated to be deficient in services based on anticipated growth and development.
- Promote park and recreation facility design that reflects the City's unique cultural communities and ecological settings.

### **Why does this matter?**

Good parks and recreation services provide green infrastructure and help manage climate change. Socially, they revitalize communities, create safer neighborhoods, help children learn and grow, improve public and environmental health, and support smart growth. Culturally, open space and program services can nurture a sense of place in the community and provide opportunities to engage the public of diverse backgrounds. Economically, they support adjacent commercial centers and promote tourism.

### Exhibit 1: 2015 Planned Park and Recreation System





### Exhibit 2: 2015 Comprehensive Plan Park and Recreation Service Gaps

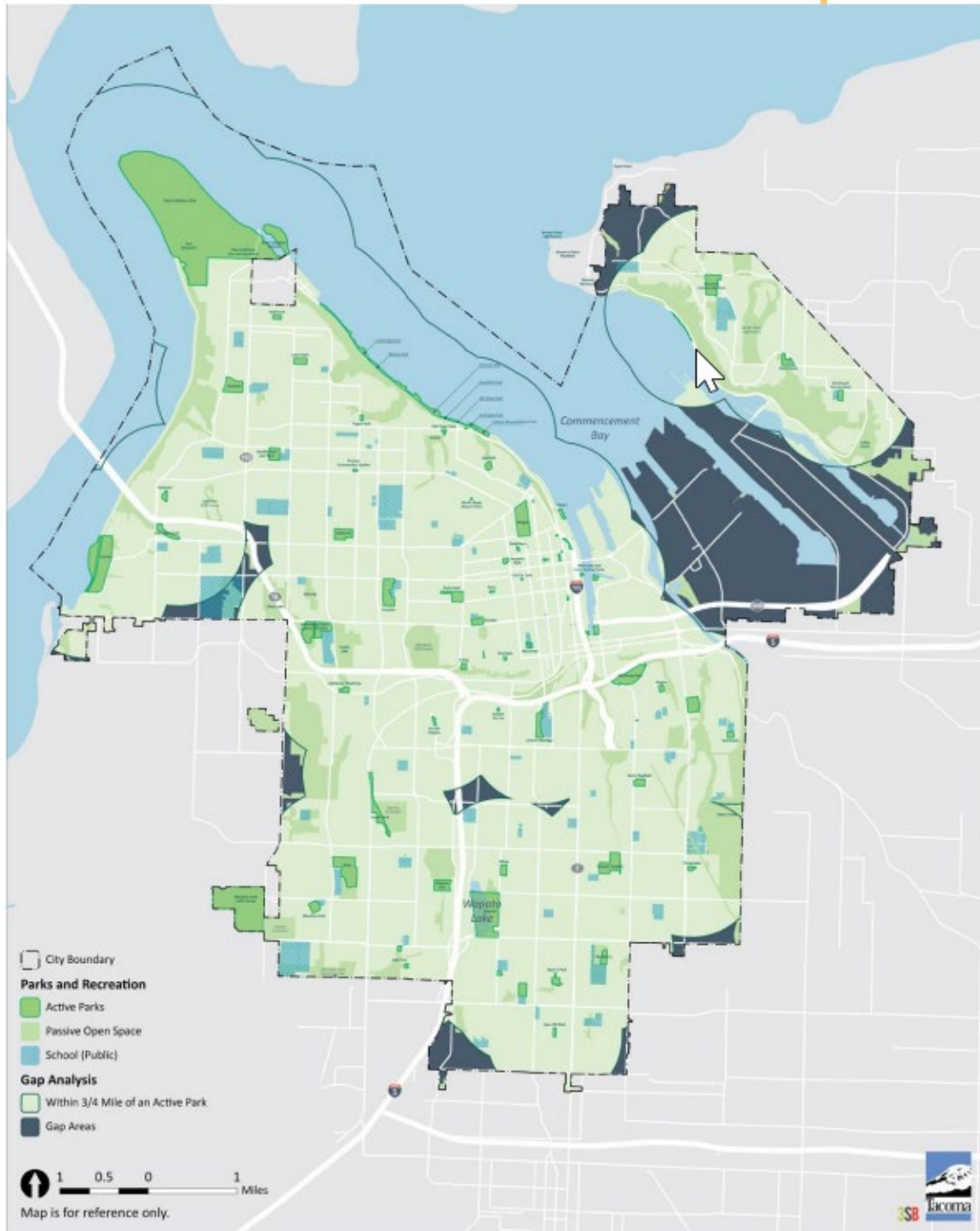


FIGURE 40. Park + Recreation Service Area Gaps

# PRELIMINARY CHANGES

## Structural

- Alignment with and clear connections to the recent update of Metro Parks' Strategic Plan, including an increased focus on youth and programming
- Address priority outcomes like the connections between parks and recreation and neighborhood quality, walkability, heat island effects and cultural access to programs and experiences
- Incorporate results of equity assessment
  - **Urban Heat Index.** Urban heat island effect was found to be highest in the Eastside, Central, and South End neighborhoods.
  - **Walkability.** Walkability scores include access to public facilities such as parks. Neighborhoods with the overall lowest walkability scores compared to city averages were North East, West End, and South Tacoma.
  - **Satisfaction with Cultural Access.** Parks facilities and programs contribute to the network of cultural opportunities in Tacoma. Geographically, there were not statistically significant differences in reported satisfaction across studied areas. Disaggregated by race, Black residents felt least satisfied with access to arts, culture, science, and/or heritage programs or experiences.
- Create stronger ties to the Public Health Focus Area
- Connect to community engagement. Community members support the 15-minute neighborhood concept. Community members want to be able to easily access schools; grocery stores; restaurants (not just fast-food); essential services like childcare, medical services and mental health support; small businesses and retail; movie theaters and other entertainment; pharmacies; libraries; gathering places; outdoor recreation; and safe places for children. This theme overlaps with the desire for more green open space with small parks and community gardens and increasing overall tree canopy across neighborhoods.
- Clarify policies that refer to resources (fee-in-lieu) and how funds are collected, distributed, used (and by whom)
- Consider re-organization to integrate level-of-service standards, gap analysis, and project lists into the Park + Recreation Chapter, rather than Public Facilities and Services Chapter (similar to the Transportation Master Plan)

## Language

- Use more people-centered language that focuses on the experience that the City aims to create rather than the characteristics of the physical environment.
- Use more active language where possible. For example, use the core action rather than “strive to” or “consider”

- Identify accountable parties where possible
- Use consistent terms
- Be more specific or at least provide a range related to terms like “regularly”

## **GMA Consistency**

- Integrate a Level of Service Standard (LOS). Align inventory and LOS metrics with the Metro Parks’ Strategic Plan but update to reflect distinctions for City of Tacoma and considerations of school relationships, city-owned parks, and similar differences in the inventory used for analysis, if needed.
- Update Inventory and better differentiate between existing inventory of park and recreation facilities and the planned system
- Incorporate findings from Metro Parks Tacoma and City-led community process supporting the forecast of future need
- Incorporate tree canopy coverage
- Improve coordination with Metro Parks Tacoma

# **BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 Policy Framework**

### **State and regional policies**

#### **Growth Management Act Goals and Policies (RCW 36.70A)**

The GMA establishes 15 planning goals to guide planning and policy development efforts. Two of these 15 speak specifically to parks and recreation:

*(9) Open space and recreation. Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.*

*(12) Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.*

Further, the expectations for a Parks Element are detailed in RCW 36.70A.070(8).

*(8) A park and recreation element that implements, and is consistent with, the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. The element shall include: (a) Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period; (b) an evaluation of facilities and service needs; (c) an evaluation of tree canopy coverage within the urban growth area; and (d) an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.*

As referenced in this description, the parks element will need to be consistent with relevant information shared in the Public Facilities and Services element. We will establish a current level of service and evaluate future demand based on growth targets. We will show the UGA's tree coverage and evaluate opportunities for intergovernmental coordination in meeting parks demand.

## **VISION 2050**

PSRC's VISION 2050 sets a four-county regional plan for growth. One of its nine identified goal areas is to "protect a network of open space". The multicounty planning policies (MPPs) developed as part of this effort provide a framework and reference guide for comprehensive plan updates. Relevant MPPs from VISION 2050 include:

- **\*New policy\* MPP-RC-3:** Make reduction of health disparities and improvement of health outcomes across the region a priority when developing and carrying out regional, countywide, and local plans.
- **\*New policy\* MPP-En-9:** Enhance urban tree canopy to support community resilience, mitigate urban heat, manage stormwater, conserve energy, improve mental and physical health, and strengthen economic prosperity
- **MPP-En-12:** Identify, preserve, and enhance significant regional open space networks and linkages across jurisdictional boundaries through **\*added segment\*** implementation and update of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.
- **\*New policy, most direct guidance\* MPP-En-15:** Provide parks, trails, and open space within walking distance of urban residents. Prioritize historically underserved communities for open space improvements and investments
- **MPP-DP-3:** Enhance existing neighborhoods to provide a high degree of connectivity in the street network to accommodate walking, bicycling, and transit use, and sufficient public spaces.
- **MPP-DP-11:** Identify and create opportunities to develop parks, civic places (including schools) and public spaces, especially in or adjacent to centers. **\*addition of schools reference is new\***

- **MPP-DP-16:** Address and integrate health and well-being into appropriate regional, countywide, and local planning practices and decision-making processes.
- **MPP-PS-2:** Promote affordability and equitable access of public services to all communities, especially the historically underserved. Prioritize investments to address disparities.
- **\*New policy\* MPP-PS-26:** Work cooperatively with school districts to plan for school facilities to meet the existing and future community needs consistent with adopted comprehensive plans and growth forecasts, including siting and designing schools to support safe, walkable access and best serve their communities.

New and revised policies in VISION 2050 elevate issues of health, access, and walkability for park and recreation amenities. There is also an added focus on school partnerships for an enhanced network and the role of urban tree canopy in promoting community resilience.

## 1.2 Addressing Priority Outcomes

In the first phase of the comprehensive planning process, the project team identified key outcomes that assess a baseline of wellbeing across a community. The 19 selected outcomes reflect the key themes for this plan update: equity, public health, sustainability, opportunity, and safety. Outcomes were evaluated geographically, comparing results across eight Tacoma neighborhoods. The parks element addresses three of these outcomes directly and many more indirectly.

1. **Urban Heat Index.** Urban heat island effect was found to be highest in the Eastside, Central, and South End neighborhoods.
2. **Walkability.** Walkability scores include access to public facilities such as parks. Neighborhoods with the overall lowest walkability scores compared to city averages were North East, West End, and South Tacoma.
3. **Satisfaction with Cultural Access.** Parks facilities and programs contribute to the network of cultural opportunities in Tacoma. Geographically, there were not statistically significant differences in reported satisfaction across studied areas. Disaggregated by race, Black residents felt least satisfied with access to arts, culture, science, and/or heritage programs or experiences.

## 1.3 Policy Audit

The below principles for plan development will be used when drafting language for this element update.

### Structure and Content

- Strengthen the connection between goals and policies in all chapters

- If needed, aim for more goals and fewer policies per goal to maintain clear connections (some goals and policies currently read like a laundry list)
- Remove redundant language
- Connect everything to the Vision Statement and Focus Areas and reinforce the overall growth strategy
- Policy Chapters should be better connected to community engagement. Key opportunities for community engagement should be explicit.

## Language

- Use more people-centered language that focuses on the experience that the City aims to create rather than the characteristics of the physical environment.
- Use more active language where possible. For example, use the core action rather than “strive to” or “consider”
- Identify accountable parties and parties where possible
- Use consistent terms:
  - Define and use a consistent set of terms for geographies – centers, outside centers, residential pattern areas, neighborhood council districts, council districts, basins/watersheds.
  - Use a consistent term or terms for those we intend to serve with the plan. There were several uses of the word “citizen”
    - Recommend using *community member* as the most inclusive term (of visitors and workers) and *resident* when specifically referring to those who live in Tacoma.
    - Finalize the vision statement and use the language consistently.
    - Be more specific about equity terms, existing disparities (reference baseline conditions), and priority groups.

# COMMUNITY INPUT

The Project Team compiled qualitative data from eight community visioning workshops and categorized it into overarching themes representing community priorities for Tacoma’s growth over the next 25 years. One key theme in the comments was a show of support for the 15-minute neighborhood concept. Community members want to be able to easily access schools; grocery stores; restaurants (not just fast-food); essential services like childcare, medical services and mental health support; small businesses and retail; movie theaters and other entertainment; pharmacies; libraries; gathering places; outdoor recreation; and safe places for

children. **This theme overlaps with the desire for more green open space with small parks and community gardens and increasing overall tree canopy across neighborhoods.**

Certain themes emerged specific to the different neighborhoods of Tacoma. In relation to Parks and Recreation:

- Northeast residents would like to see more parks, in addition to services and shops.
- South Tacoma would like to see more places that contribute to the local history and sense of place including parks, and places for kids to play with outdoor recreation like soccer fields, swimming pools, and community centers.
- South End residents expressed the desire for improved cycling safety by creating greenways that connect as bike corridors and wayfinding to green parks.

Another form of engagement during the project's visioning phase was conducted via the virtual "Ideas Wall". This page allows visitors to start conversation threads and contribute to dialogue on topics of interest, organized by topic area. Reviewing these conversation threads, "Green/open space" was the 6<sup>th</sup> most popular topic area with 10 different threads about adding bigger parks as well as microparks, turning parking lots into green spaces, and increasing tree canopy.







eight



# PARKS + RECREATION



## PARKS + RECREATION GOALS

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**GOAL P-1** Strive to provide safe, convenient, and equitable access to high-quality parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational opportunities and contribute to the health and well-being of all Tacomans.

**GOAL P-2** Promote public and private partnerships that expand the variety of community services and programs, provide open space, and enhance the quality of life for Tacomans.

**GOAL P-3** Preserve and expand parklands and facilities to ensure the long-term viability of the park system to serve Tacoma's current and future population.

**GOAL P-4** Develop and operate park and recreational facilities in a manner that is responsive to the site and the needs of the community.

**GOAL P-5** Facilitate a multi-faceted inclusive community conversation to ensure that park and recreation facilities are responsive to community interests and needs.

**GOAL P-6** Manage natural areas and urban forest to protect unique urban habitats and offer Tacomans an opportunity to connect with nature.

**GOAL P-7** Establish and maintain a complete park and recreation system to serve the diverse needs of Tacoma residents.

**GOAL P-8** Provide specific area and signature facilities according to adopted master plans.

# EIGHT

## PARKS + RECREATION

### WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City's intent to:

- Set clear standards for service delivery and expansion of parks and recreation facilities and services.
- Achieve interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the provision of park and recreation facilities.
- Provide more equitable service delivery in areas that are currently deficient in services or are anticipated to be deficient in services based on anticipated growth and development.
- Promote park and recreation facility design that reflects the City's unique cultural communities and ecological settings.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Good parks and recreation services foster economic benefits and promote tourism. Environmentally, they provide green infrastructure and help manage climate change. Socially, they revitalize communities, create safer neighborhoods, help children learn and grow, improve public and environmental health, and support smart growth. Culturally, open space and program services can nurture a sense of place in the community, and provide opportunities to engage the public of diverse backgrounds.

The City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma together manage more than 3000 acres of developed parks and natural areas, as well as local and regional trails, the urban tree canopy, and community gardens. Programs

#### Book I: Goals + Policies

- 1 Introduction + Vision
- 2 Urban Form
- 3 Design + Development
- 4 Environment + Watershed Health
- 5 Housing
- 6 Economic Development
- 7 Transportation
- 8 **Parks + Recreation**
- 9 Public Facilities + Services
- 10 Container Port
- 11 Engagement, Administration + Implementation
- 12 Downtown

#### Book II: Implementation

##### Programs + Strategies

- 1 Shoreline Master Program
- 2 Capital Facilities Program
- 3 Downtown Regional Growth Center Plans
- 4 Historic Preservation Plan

#### METRO PARKS

**TACOMA** is an independent government agency, created in 1907, providing park and recreation services to Tacoma and adjacent areas. The City and MPT work very closely together in planning for park services. In preparing the element of the Comprehensive Plan, MPT's current strategic plan, *Green Vision 2030*, was consulted to ensure consistency between plans.



*Pooch pool party at Stewart Heights Pool*

are offered for all ages at community centers, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities. Parks and natural areas give life and beauty to the city and are essential assets that connect people to place, self and others.

The following policies ensure this legacy is preserved for all Tacomans and future generations and that the City and Metro Parks will rise to meet the challenges posed by growth and change within the City and region.

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The community assessment that supports the Parks and Recreation Element includes a review of demographics in Tacoma, input from Tacomans about parks and recreation interests and needs, and an inventory of park and recreation facilities. This assessment also incorporates the needs assessment conducted by Metro Parks Tacoma as part of the *MPT Green Vision 2030 Strategic Plan*. Key information is summarized below.

**Demographic Profile.** Please see the Housing Element for a summary of Tacoma's demographics and opportunity maps developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council illustrating Tacoman's access to critical opportunity structures and social infrastructure to succeed in life.

**Public Input.** In 2014 and 2015, the City conducted an integrated and wide ranging public outreach effort in support of several planning initiatives, including *Tacoma 2025*, the *Transportation Master Plan*, and the Comprehensive Plan update. Collectively, these efforts touched over 2,000 Tacomans and included valuable input on parks, recreation and open space usage in Tacoma. Outreach activities were specifically designed to reach out to broad range of community interests and included interactive booths at farmers' markets, festivals and special events, one-on-one interviews, an online community forum and comment opportunities, presentations to community groups, community meetings and workshops, Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee meetings, Transportation Commission meetings and Planning Commission meetings. In 2014, the City also conducted a community wide survey of the quality of life in Tacoma (see sidebar). In addition, prior outreach efforts by Metro Parks Tacoma, including email blasts, e-newsletters, webpage updates and workshops, have been reviewed and considered as part of the planning process.

Collectively, this information provided guidance for the goals and policies contained in the Parks and Recreation Element, including the focus areas of striving to provide equitable access to park and recreational facilities that contribute to the health and well-being of all Tacomans, promoting partnerships to expand and enhance programs, protecting natural areas to offer Tacomans an opportunity to connect with nature, and establishing and maintaining a complete parks and recreation system to serve diverse needs.

**Park and Recreation Facilities.** Public park and recreation facilities are shown in Figure 36 on page 8-12 and trails are shown in Figure 37 on page 8-21. A description of park facility classifications is provided as part of Goal P-7 and supporting policies (Complete Park System).

The Public Facilities + Services Element contains additional information about the City's park system including levels of service for park facilities (Table 9 on page 9-12), planned capital improvements (Tables 9.14 and 9.15) and a map of park service gaps (Figure 40 on page 9-37).

## 2014 TACOMA COMMUNITY SURVEY

*With respect to park and recreation services, this survey found the following:*

- 79% rated City parks as excellent or good
- 68% rated recreation programs as excellent or good
- 62% rated recreation centers as excellent or good
- 45% rated open space as excellent or good
- 58% report that they have used Tacoma recreation centers
- 91% report that they have visited a City park

Source: [http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/finance/budget/2014\\_reports/Community\\_Survey\\_2014\\_Results.pdf](http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/finance/budget/2014_reports/Community_Survey_2014_Results.pdf)



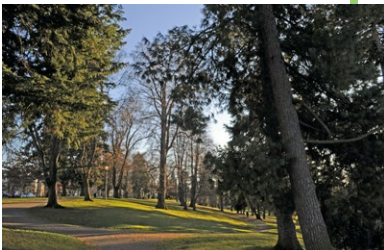
Dash Point Park



Norpoint Park



Stewart Heights Park



Wright Park



Puget Park

## GOALS + POLICIES

### EQUITY + ACCESS

**GOAL P-1** Strive to provide safe, convenient, and equitable access to high-quality parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational opportunities and contribute to the health and well-being of all Tacomans.

**Policy P-1.1** Provide and maintain an adequate supply and variety of parkland and recreational facilities to serve the city's current and future population based on identified level-of-service standards and community needs.

**Policy P-1.2** Prioritize investment in acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities in areas where need is greatest, including:

- a. Where availability and access to facilities is lowest; and
- a. Where the greatest population growth is occurring or forecast, such as the mixed use centers.

**Policy P-1.3** Foster social equity by providing a wide range of accessible, inclusive, affordable, convenient and safe opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the changing community.

**Policy P-1.4** Provide a variety of recreational facilities and services that contribute to the health and well-being of Tacomans of all ages and abilities.

**Policy P-1.5** Establish and manage specialized recreational facilities within the park system to respond to identified public needs, take advantage of land assets, and meet cost recovery goals.

**Policy P-1.6** Consider the varied cultural and demographic needs of the community in park and recreational facility design and promote public involvement in all aspects of park and recreation planning.

**Policy P-1.7** Encourage the multiple use of recreation and open spaces to meet community demands.



**Policy P–1.8** Maintain special recreational facilities (such as golf courses and sports stadiums) as enterprises to meet public needs, ensure maximum use, and financial self-sufficiency.

**Policy P–1.9** Periodically review trends in park and recreation facility use and adapt plans and investments to respond to changing community needs.

## PARTNERSHIPS

**GOAL P–2** Promote public and private partnerships that expand the variety of community services and programs, provide open space, and enhance the quality of life for Tacomans.

**Policy P–2.1** Jointly plan for new park and recreation facilities and services that contribute to the health and well-being of Tacomans of all ages and abilities.

**Policy P–2.2** Continue to work in close partnership with Metro Parks Tacoma, including supporting updates to long term plans for the parks and open space system.

**Policy P–2.3** Encourage public-private partnerships to develop and operate publicly-accessible recreational facilities that meet identified public needs.

### *Special recreation facilities (clockwise from top left)*

*Youth baseball at  
Cheney Stadium*

*Foot golf at Meadow  
Park Golf Course*

*Vintage Hickory International  
at Meadow Park Golf Course*

*Kandle Pool*

*Rainier's game at  
Cheney Stadium*



*Norpoint Park*

## PARTNERSHIPS

With a history of successful partnership that extends over 100 years, the City and Metro Parks Tacoma are committed to working together to create healthy opportunities for Tacoma residents to play, learn and grow.

Other key partners include the Port of Tacoma, the Tacoma School District, Tacoma Public Utilities, and other public and private partners.

**Policy P–2.4** Partner with public and private entities to encourage, sponsor, and support a range of public activities and events within appropriate open spaces, as well as within temporary closed streets, such as markets, festivals, and parades.

**Policy P–2.5** Support and encourage the use of streets and sidewalks, on a temporary and intermittent basis, for a range of activities, such as markets, festivals, shopping, dining and recreation, while ensuring safety and balancing street and sidewalk use for transportation.

**Policy P–2.6** Coordinate the planning and improvement of trails with corridor improvements.

**Policy P–2.7** Recognize public school fields and play areas as a valuable part of the City’s park system. Seek opportunities to work with the school districts to enhance the recreational value of these facilities.

**Policy P–2.8** Maintain an accurate inventory of the city’s park and recreation facilities in coordination with Metro Parks Tacoma and other providers.

*With over 50 developed school campuses and school sites, Tacoma Public Schools’ play areas and fields are an important part of all Tacoma neighborhoods.*

*Figure 36 on page 8-12 shows both the public park system and school campuses.*

*Play equipment at Franklin Park, adjacent to Franklin Elementary School*





## FUNDING + CAPITAL PLANNING

**GOAL P-3** Preserve and expand parklands and facilities to ensure the long-term viability of the park system to serve Tacoma's current and future population.

**Policy P-3.1** Maintain a long-range park capital improvements program that balances acquisition, development, and operations; provides a process and criteria for capital improvements project selection; and emphasizes creative and flexible financing strategies.

**Policy P-3.2** Seek funding for new parks and recreation facilities through a variety of sources and consider innovative strategies for the provision of new facilities:

- a. Develop zoning incentives, controls and/or funding mechanisms, such as transfer of development rights, to create highly functional urban parks and amenities within mixed use centers, downtown and planned residential developments.
- b. Consider adopting a fee-in-lieu program that would allow development to contribute toward open space, park, community garden or recreational space within a mixed-use center rather than providing on-site open space.

**Policy P-3.3** Evaluate opportunities to acquire and/or develop lands declared surplus by other public agencies, or offered as donation by private owners, if consistent with policies herein.

## MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

**GOAL P-4** Develop and operate park and recreational facilities in a manner that is responsive to the site and the needs of the community.

**Policy P-4.1** Improve parks, recreational facilities and natural areas in accordance with current master plans, management plans, or adopted strategies that reflect user group needs, development priorities, development and maintenance costs, program opportunities, financing strategies, and community input.

*Please see the Public Facilities + Services Element for information on parks and recreation capital facility projects*



*Remediation of heavy metals on the future Waterway Park site*



*Balloons are used to mark topography of a future 11-acre park on the peninsula at Point Defiance (left)*

*Citizens attend an open house to look over the draft update to the Point Defiance Park Master Plan (right)*



**Policy P-4.2** Encourage park and recreation facilities design that complements the natural features of the site.

**Policy P-4.3** Provide amenities at parks and recreation facilities, such as restrooms, lighting, seating, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, bicycle parking, and shelters when possible, feasible and appropriate to extend the hours of use and service quality.

**Policy P-4.4** Incorporate green building practices into park design and construction, including green demolition and disposal practices, use of local and recycled products and low impact development techniques.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### EXAMPLES OF DIVERSE OUTREACH METHODS:

- Walking tours*
- Storytelling and listening sessions*
- Social media*
- Video*
- Festivals*
- Partnering with community organizations*

**GOAL P-5** Facilitate a multi-faceted inclusive community conversation to ensure that park and recreation facilities are responsive to community interests and needs.

**Policy P-5.1** Regularly solicit and incorporate community members' knowledge about park and recreation needs to ensure a system that is responsive to community interests and needs.

**Policy P-5.2** Employ a diverse array of outreach methods that recognize different communication styles and increase convenience for citizens.

**Policy P-5.3** On a regular basis, evaluate park and recreation preferences, needs and trends through assessment of usage and participation rates, surveys and other methods.



*Fishing at  
China Lake*

## NATURAL AREAS

**GOAL P-6** Manage natural areas and urban forest to protect unique urban habitats and offer Tacomans an opportunity to connect with nature.

**Policy P-6.1** Preserve, enhance, and manage natural areas and resources to protect and improve their ecological health and to provide compatible public access.

## COMPLETE PARK SYSTEM

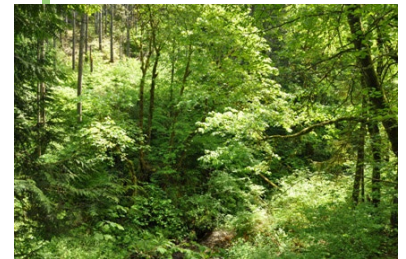
**GOAL P-7** Establish and maintain a complete park and recreation system to serve the diverse needs of Tacoma residents.

Functioning within a highly urbanized setting, the City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma partner together to offer a complete park and recreation system, ranging from low-impact, natural resource-driven habitat areas to recreation-oriented, high-impact parks and sport complexes.

This system is made up of both public and private ownerships. On the public side, the City and Metro Parks are the primary owners of most of those lands categorized below. In addition, the Tacoma School District owns school properties that serve residents’ recreation needs during non-school hours. The Port of Tacoma, Tacoma Public Utilities and other public agencies also manage open space and recreation assets. This spectrum of publicly-owned open space is complemented by lands managed by private landowners, with whom the City will continue to partner.

A brief description of each different type of facilities, together with supporting policies is provided below. Please see also Figure 36, Park and Recreation Facilities for more information.

*Please see the  
Environment + Watershed  
Health Element for a  
discussion of natural  
open space areas and  
the urban forest*



*Canopy (top) and  
pedestrian bridge (bottom)  
at Swan Creek Park*



FIGURE 36. Park + Recreation Facilities



## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide daily convenient access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents by foot or bicycle. Generally small in size, neighborhood parks are developed primarily for spontaneous and non-structured recreation activities. Sawyer Tot Lot and Optimist Park are examples of neighborhood parks.

**Policy P-7.1** Neighborhood parks should be designed to enhance neighborhood identity, preserve neighborhood open space and improve the quality of life of nearby residents.

**Policy P-7.2** Neighborhood parks should be located and distributed to provide convenient, daily walking access to basic recreational opportunities for nearby residents living within a 3/4-mile radius of the park.

### **Neighborhood parks (clockwise from top left)**

*Old Town Park dock*

*Manitou Park*

*Optimist Park*

*Play equipment at  
Sawyer Tot Lot*

*Baltimore Park field*

*Festivals held at Wright Park*



*Music and art festival*



*Ethnic Fest*



*Food truck festival*



*Titlow Park*

## Community Parks

Community parks are usually more than five acres, preferably ten to 15 acres, providing visitors with access to high and low impact recreation opportunities. Community parks should be designed to enhance community identity and preserve community open space. As a sub-category of community parks, Signature Community Parks have a wider community appeal providing a unique benefit which often contribute to the identity of a planning area and enhance the quality of life of District residents. McKinley Park is an example of a community park and Wapato Park a signature community park.

**Policy P-7.3** Community parks should be sited and designed to serve those residents living within a 1.5-mile radius of the park and to provide a wider range of recreational opportunities to accommodate large group activities, structured recreation programs, and major outdoor recreation facilities, such as sports facilities.

**Policy P-7.4** Community park sites should front onto a public street, preferably a collector or arterial street complete with sidewalks and bicycle lanes, or easily accessible by public transit.



**Community parks (clockwise from top):** Wright Park conservatory; Parks Appreciation Day at McKinley Park; Summer bash events at Norpoint Park; Basketball court at Franklin Park; Skate park at Kandle Park; Wapato Park



Thea's Park



21st Street Park

## NODAL + LINEAR URBAN PARKS



Examples of nodal urban parks include public squares, urban plazas, landscaped courtyards and community gardens. Linear urban parks include widened boulevards and landscaped promenades adorned with street furniture, water features and art work, and completed with bike facilities.

## Urban Parks

Offering outdoor breathing space in an otherwise concrete built environment, urban parks are a special type of open space serving the unique lifestyles and recreation needs of those who live or work in or close to downtown and designated centers. While urban parks often serve as neighborhood parks for their nearby residents, they may also provide opportunities for community events and district-wide gatherings. They contribute to place-making by enhancing the quality of life and the identity of the urban core and the mixed-use districts. Creating a network of linear urban parks connected with public squares, gardens and plazas will allow urban residents or workers to walk to public spaces or destinations designed for art displays and other leisure pursuits. Urban parks may be developed and/or managed by other public or private agencies or in partnership with them, depending on their locations and forms of development. Thea's Park is an example of an urban park.

**Policy P-7.5** Plan for the acquisition and design of urban parks within the Downtown and designated centers based on forecast growth and adopted growth assumptions.

- a. Establish specific targets for open space, park, and recreation facilities to meet needs within mixed-use centers.
- b. Identify potential locations and opportunities for further action and use innovative methods and partnerships to fund the identified needs.
- c. Ensure park and recreation opportunities are provided in the mixed-use centers as the population in the center increases

**Policy P-7.6** Develop nodal urban parks for social gathering and linear urban parks for active recreation such as walking and bicycling.

**Policy P-7.7** Locate and design nodal urban parks to create a focal point and distinctive sense of place for each center.

**Policy P-7.8** Coordinate the development of linear urban parks with the design of designated corridors and signature trails.





## Regional Parks

Regional parks, usually over a hundred acres, provide visitors with access to unique regional features and attractions. Regional parks often accommodate large group activities and have infrastructure to support special events and festivals. Contributing to economic development through tourism, regional parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. Point Defiance Park, with 760 acres and a wide variety of attractions, is an example of a regional park.

**Policy P-7.9** In addition to those facilities normally encouraged in community and neighborhood parks, unique and high quality amenities, landscape improvements and gardens, and infrastructure to support events and festivals should be provided. Sports fields, lit or unlit, may also be included within regional parks.

### *Regional parks (clockwise from top)*

*Owen's beach at  
Point Defiance Park*

*Trail along Ruston Way*

*Rose garden at Point  
Defiance Park (left)*



*Point Defiance Park  
ecology shoreline oblique*



**Community gardens  
(clockwise from top left)**

*40th Street*

*Proctor*

*Swan Creek Park food forest*

*Neighbors Park*

*Please see the Design +  
Development Element  
for additional policies*

## Community Gardens

Land gardened by a community group for food, plant or fiber production, either for personal or charitable uses. Community gardens provide access to fresh produce; encourage a connection to the environment; support general health and wellbeing through outdoor activity and the therapeutic benefits of gardening; provide safety and beautification benefits; create healthy soil, which helps with stormwater management; and adds to a neighborhood's livability. Properly designed and managed, community gardens can greatly enhance a neighborhood's vitality and can be created on their own or in coordination with neighborhood parks, playgrounds, housing developments or apartment complexes.

**Policy P-7.10** Enhance existing and support new community gardens within parks and on appropriate public and private lands.

**Policy P-7.11** Support creative approaches to managing gardens, such as support by educational institutions or volunteer management by community organizations.



*Splashground at South End  
Recreation & Adventure  
(SERA) Campus (left)*

*Meadow Park Golf  
Course (right)*

## Special Recreation Facilities

Outdoor or indoor facilities offer opportunities for programmed activities to promote active living, an appreciation for nature and the environment, and to foster respect for culture and heritage amongst all ages. These facilities can be free-standing or sited within a community or regional park and are usually managed by Metro Parks Tacoma.

**Policy P-7.12** Give priority for the location of new special recreation facilities to areas that are currently underserved.

**Policy P-7.13** To the extent feasible, locate new destination facilities within or in close proximity to designated centers.

*Examples of special recreational facilities include multi-purpose centers and mission-led specialty centers, such as sports complexes, athletic fields, golf courses, outdoor and indoor pools, boathouse marinas, nature centers, zoos and aquariums, wildlife parks, botanical conservatories, and historic interpretative centers.*



*Dome to Defiance  
Promenade*



*Titlow Park trail between  
the beach and railway*



*Natural trail in Swan  
Creek Park*

## Trails

Trails serve both a recreation and an active transportation function. Walking and bicycling provide many benefits to individuals as well as to the community. In Tacoma, trails provide opportunities for walking, bicycling, jogging, in-line skating, dog walking and wildlife watching. An integrated, safety-oriented multi-purpose trail increases mobility choices, reduces reliance on single-occupant vehicles, provides convenient access to schools, centers, transit, parks and other destinations, and encourages regular physical activity to enhance health and wellness.

**Policy P-7.14** Establish, improve, and maintain a citywide system of public trails that are a component of a larger network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This citywide trail system should connect Tacoma's neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, commercial areas, regional trail system, and other key places that Tacomans access in their daily lives. Please see Figure 37, Citywide Trails Map.

**Policy P-7.15** Utilize Tacoma's natural topography to connect Tacomans to natural areas and the waterfront.

**Policy P-7.16** Design specific trails according to the purposes served and the location.

- a. Trails developed primarily for low-impact access to or through habitat areas should be developed to minimize their impact to the environment through location choices, narrower width, and use of pervious surfaces.
- b. Trails developed as non-motorized transportation corridors should be wide enough for the projected use and developed with a durable hard surface.

**Policy P-7.17** Locate and develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide on- and off-road recreation for the community

**Policy P-7.18** Develop new trails and recreation facilities to accommodate rollerblading and skateboarding without posing conflicts to other recreational uses.

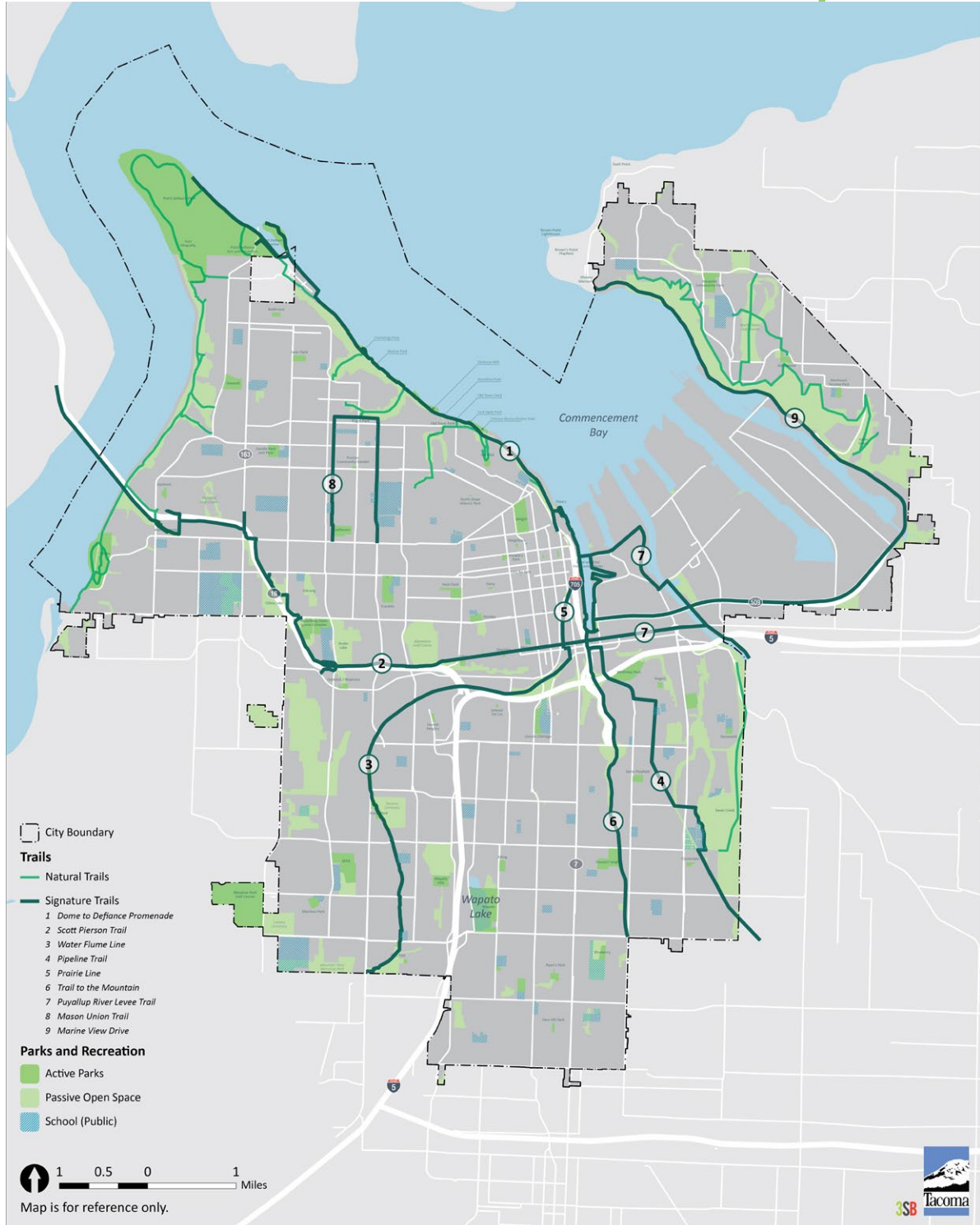


FIGURE 37. Citywide Trails

*Please see the Urban  
Form Element for  
additional policies*



*Julia's Gulch*



*Pedestrian bridge through  
the Tacoma Nature Center*

## Open Space Corridors

Lands that support, nurture and preserve natural and wildlife habitats and native vegetation. Open Space Corridors usually contain environmental assets, such as wetlands, streams, wildlife, native and forested habitats, that are managed for stewardship and conservation via best management practices. These lands often provide opportunities for environmental research and interpretative programs, in addition to low-impact recreational activities.

**Policy P-7.19** Encourage public access provisions in open space corridors where such access will complement, not negatively disrupt fish, wildlife and plants.

**Policy P-7.20** Provide opportunities for Tacomans to engage with and experience nature and wildlife amid varied natural settings.

**Policy P-7.21** Provide opportunities for education and continuous learning about Tacoma's environment assets and geographic setting.

## Waterfront

Tacoma's shorelines and waterfront areas are a source of economic activity, entertainment and recreation, as well as providing invaluable ecological and cultural functions. As such, the promotion of shoreline access and recreation is a major priority for Tacomans. The City's waterfront provides opportunities for recreation and the experience of nature that cannot be replicated in other areas of the City and region. Recognizing the multiple benefits and values of its shorelines, the City and others have made substantial investments to clean up environmental pollution and improve shoreline access, recreation and cultural opportunities. Given the strong connection many people feel to shorelines, investments like these will provide benefits that will be enjoyed and appreciated by a great number of people, improving Tacoma's livability and long-term prosperity.

**Policy P-7.22** Recognize the strong community connection to Tacoma's shorelines and waters as cultural, historic, recreational, educational, economic, natural and aesthetic assets of tremendous value.



*Owen's beach at Point  
Defiance Park*



*Dragon boat racing  
at Maritime Fest*



*Pier at Dash Point Park*

**Policy P-7.23** Enhance Tacoma's identity as a waterfront community, including designating and enhancing shoreline areas for public access, recreation, educational and interpretive displays, public art, community events, habitat restoration and other activities.

**Policy P-7.24** Develop and enhance opportunities for swimming, boating including use of Tacoma's water trails, fishing, SCUBA diving, educational activities, wildlife observation and other shoreline and water-dependent activities.

**Policy P-7.25** Implement the priority actions identified in the Shoreline Master Program Public Access Alternatives.



*Thea Foss Waterway  
and 21st Street Bridge*



Point Defiance Zoo  
& Aquarium

## MASTER PLANS

### GOAL P-8 Provide specific area and signature facilities according to adopted master plans.

Over time, the City and partners have identified and conducted will improve the capacity to achieve the goals of this Element by developing plans for specific areas. This list is intended for larger, signature parks and open space sites. It is not exhaustive, and is intended to be updated regularly. Other public agencies, in particular Metro Parks Tacoma, maintain separate projects lists which should be consulted as well.

Inclusion in this section is intended to convey the City Council's support for and recognition of the policy direction in these plans, and to convey that they are planning and implementation priorities. Inclusion in this section lends support to applications for City approvals such as conditional use permits, rezones and development regulation agreements meeting the intent of these plans, as well as the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This section also provides a forum for the Council to refine their policy direction on a given site, in consultation with the Planning Commission and other stakeholders.

**Policy P-8.1 Point Defiance Park.** MPT's conceptual plan for their signature 768-acre park, referred to as Destination Point Defiance, was developed over multiple years with broad public input and support. It includes commercial, educational and recreational features (including the zoo, a lodge, eating establishments, gift shops, a visitor's center, additional pavilion buildings, a farmers' market, entertainment and educational facilities, and bike and kayak rental facilities) that broaden the use of the park and expand its function as a unique destination.

While the current (2014) Land Use Intensity Designation is Low, the City recognizes the unique role that Point Defiance Park plays as a citywide and regional destination. Therefore, or until the Land Use Designation changes, alternative review processes such as Development Regulation Agreements may provide an appropriate avenue for City review of more intensive, destination-oriented features within the park.



**Policy P-8.2** *First Creek Action Plan.* In 2011–12 the City collaborated with community stakeholders to develop a consensus vision and framework for action to improve East Tacoma’s 3.5 mile First Creek corridor. The plan identifies actions to be implemented by multiple stakeholders over a 5–10 year planning period.

**Policy P-8.3** *Wapato Hills Conceptual Plan.* In 2013 the City and MPT collaborated to update the 1996 conceptual plan for the 80-acre Wapato Hills. The final conceptual plan recognizes that Wapato Hills functions primarily as a natural area for recreational walking on a system of trails and viewpoints. The conceptual plan also includes the existing park in the southwest corner and a proposed visitor center on the eastern side.

**Policy P-8.4** *Downtown Subarea Plans.* From 2011 to 2014, the City has worked to develop the South Downtown, Hilltop and North Downtown Subarea Plans and EIS’s. The South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS was adopted in December 2013, the Hilltop Subarea Plan and EIS was adopted in May 2014, and the North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS is slated for adoption in late 2014. These plans provide thorough guidance on open space and recreation issues and priorities for the respective subareas.

**Policy P-8.5** *Shoreline Public Access Alternatives.* In 2013 the City adopted updates to the Shoreline Master Program (SMP), including the Shoreline Public Access Alternatives. This plan thoroughly addresses open space and recreation issues and priorities in Tacoma’s Shoreline Districts.

**Policy P-8.6** *Tacoma Landfill Land Use Plan.* This 1998 plan represents incorporation of ideas gathered for the future uses of the closed portions of the City Landfill. The plan reports that over 151 acres will eventually be filled and capped. After landfilling ceases, much of the area may be utilized as a recreation and open space asset.

**Policy P-8.7** *Port of Tacoma Public Access Plan.* In 2013 the Port Commission adopted a public access plan to identify specific needs and opportunities to provide public shoreline access. The plan will guide Port actions to meet the City of Tacoma’s SMP requirements for the Port to provide public access to shorelines.



*Dick Gilmur Shoreline  
Restoration and Kayak  
Launch at the Port of Tacoma*



*Swan Creek mountain  
biking trail*

**Policy P-8.8** *Swan Creek Master Plan.* Swan Creek Park is a 383-acre greenspace nestled on the boundary between East Tacoma and Pierce County with a salmon bearing stream, wooded canyon, upland forest, paved and natural trails, and a community garden. In 2011 MPT adopted a long-term vision and plan for future site development, stewardship, and programming.