



## Public Comments

**Meeting:** Wednesday, August 7, 2024

**Submittal:** Written comments received at [planning@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:planning@cityoftacoma.org)

**Subjects:** Comments are addressing the following Discussion Item(s) on the agenda:

### **F1 – South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Landscaping and Tree Canopy Standards**

**No. of  
Comments:** Two



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**From:** [Heidi S.](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment to Planning Commission re: STGPD landscaping  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2024 11:57:02 AM

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Public Comments to the Tacoma Planning Commission  
 August 7, 2024 Meeting

RE: South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Landscaping and Tree Canopy Standards

*This "landscaping" proposal was **not** requested by residents nor for just the ST M/IC and growth centers to only be focused on. What the community has asked for, repeatedly, is a comprehensive update of the entire district to include impervious surface limitations as soon as possible, and (as the initial code ammendment applicants) to be included in the process.*

To the Tacoma Planning Commission

Once again, tonight's presentation appears to be a confusing sidetrack instead of what PDS was supposed to be focusing on for the actual STGPD code update.

Last time the Planning Department had presented the STGPD code update status, the Planning Commission had firmly rejected their request to focus mainly on the Manufacturing Industrial and Designated Growth Centers.

The Planning Commission had instead instructed the Planning Department to move forward with working on:

- the entire South Tacoma groundwater district,
- comparison work on impervious surface restrictions, and
- to do a much better job of involving the community.

None of those things seem to have happened.

Neither the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council (which submitted the annual amendment to update the code) nor myself (as the principal author and elected stakeholder representative), much less the broader community, have been included in the process or even received general updates.

Instead, we've only recently been told that suddenly PDS wants to present a surprise "landscaping" policy, but we don't know what that means and (until I looked at tonight's meeting agenda packet) hadn't been supplied any information.

Our original code amendment had been submitted in early spring of 2021. Every other amendment submitted at that time had been concluded years ago, with much involvement from the requestors. Certainly, PDS will say that the STGPD code update is "complicated" but (in addition to asking for a full code review) we had also submitted a few specific code items that could have / should have been worked on immediately. Instead the entire scope continues to be delayed and delayed over years.

So much time passes between presentations that it's hard to track the last and, whether deliberate or not, it seems the City then takes advantage of that, by selectively discarding what had been previously directed.

Only recently was it requested from PDS to attend a community meeting (which now has been scheduled for later this month), but this one short up-coming presentation within a general community meeting is

not proper inclusion of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Board, with no time for meaningful understanding or discussion at such an event. The few minutes of presentation that PDS is planning is not proper community involvement, much less allowing for actual input from the amendment applicant (within a meeting which only allows a few minutes of Q&A) without instead having multiple separate meetings and work-sessions we have been denied being part of.

So, we continue to have no idea where PDS is in the process, while only seeing more and more damaging development in the critical area region without a properly updated code.

Benchmarking trees may be useful data, but that was not supposed to be the focus, especially while open land continues to be lost at an alarming rate due to the massive paving of the Bridge Industrial mega-warehouse (which doesn't seem to have been given proper acknowledgment here, at all) and even worse if "Home in Tacoma" Phase II passes (with South Tacoma affected more than any other area of the city for upzoning) and developers already building property-corner-to-property-corner and much more to come. I've been asking this Planning Commission to please include impervious surface considerations into residential zoning, but also has seemed to fall on deaf ears.

Yes, I do fully understand that TPU-Water may be considering impervious surface in their future Integrated Resource Plan, but that topic was supposed to be a main focus here, now, and action already implemented.

During year after year of delays, as this project has been passed from different planner to different planner (I believe we're on number five, now?) we had continually been assured we would be part of the update, but we have not been included or involved on any part of it. As the elected designee for this issue, I was supposed have been being included throughout the step-by-step process and ultimate line-by-line code review, which I have inquired about multiple times with no success.

So, we're not only confused by this process but again feeling completely disrespected and marginalized, especially to have heard Brian Boudet state in a recent City Council Study Session that the Neighborhood Council has been getting regular appropriate updates – no, clearly not. In that same meeting, Mr. Boudet also stated that Phase 1 of the STGPD was simply the "work plan", Phase 2 was the actual code update and now there's a Phase 3 for the STEGZ proposal... if we had been being filled-in along the way then that wouldn't have been a surprise to me, but that's because STNC isn't being included on it's own amendment application and those three phases also don't seem to match what had been approved the by the City Council.

I've been reaching out to PDS for a better understanding, only to finally be told yesterday that tonight's topic is mostly "just a conversation" – so, still not part of actual code updating even though tonight's presentation should be hearing about the work done to actively be updating the code.

Without able to have learned anything about this "landscaping" sidetrack, it (again) just feels like more dismissive distraction.

So, we'll be interested to see what is presented tonight and how it will continue to be spun that the community has "asked for" this – but, no, the community has never asked for this strange landscaping diversion... we've asked for meaning code update progress, impervious surface limitations and to be included.

We would love to be wrong in our reaction to this, but we have been waiting and hoping for months/years for PDS to please prove us wrong and show some meaningful response and involvement as we've been told to expect, but which never occurs.

Please help bring about a meaningful change to this situation, and soon!

Thank you,  
Heidi Stephens  
South Tacoma Neighborhood Council, Director At-Large



**From:** [Cathie Raine](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Public Public Comments for 8/7/24 Planning Commission Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2024 11:59:46 AM

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

I reviewed the information and materials submitted for today's 'STGPD-Landscaping and Tree Canopy Standards' presentation.

In this presentation, there is a 'claim' made by the Planners that the South Tacoma residents had requested that 'landscaping and tree canopy standards' be developed for the Industrial-zoned areas of the STGPD overlay area.

This is a false statement that is being made with the intent of diverting attention away from what the residents have requested to be included with the STGPD updates.

The residents had requested that IMPERVIOUS SURFACE RESTRICTIONS be added to ALL AREAS OF THE STGPD land area (NOT to be limited only to the 'Industrial zoned' areas).

In fact, at a previous Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission members had made a request to Stephen Atkinson:

Expand his research into other Communities' 'impervious surface standards or restrictions'...to include 'benchmarking' on the Impervious Surface restrictions.

There was no request made by the Planning Commission for the Planners to provide further research and benchmarking on 'landscaping and tree canopy' standards for industrial-zoned areas within the STGPD!

Why are we seeing this diversion tactic being used...avoiding the discussion and the 'benchmarking request of the impervious service restrictions'?

The Bridge Industrial warehouse project with greater than 100 acres of this site...located over the Aquifer..being paved over with PERVIOUS SURFACES! With this presentation today, Please notice that there is absolutely no reference..or inclusion of the impacts of this massive warehouse project on the STGPD!!

Please ask the Planners to pay serious attention to researching and 'benchmarking' the impervious surface restrictions additions to these STGPD!! Stop wasting time on these distracting tactics!

Thank you,

Cathie (Raine) Urwin