



## AGENDA

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting (Hybrid)  
**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, November 20, 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

### B. Approval of Agenda

### C. Approval of Minutes

- April 17, 2024
- May 1, 2024
- May 8, 2024 (special meeting)

### 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. One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Economic Development

- Description: Review and provide input on the Economic Development Element of the One Tacoma Plan.
- Action: Informational.



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.

- Contact: Adam Nolan ([ANolan@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:ANolan@cityoftacoma.org));  
Paul Bakker ([PBakker@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:PBakker@cityoftacoma.org))

## 2. One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Environment (Part 1)

- Description: Review and provide input on the Environment Element of the One Tacoma Plan.
- Action: Informational.
- Contact: Maryam Moeinian ([MMoeinian@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:MMoeinian@cityoftacoma.org));  
Kristin Lynett ([KLynett@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:KLynett@cityoftacoma.org));  
Lakecia Farmer ([LFarmer2@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:LFarmer2@cityoftacoma.org));  
Brandi Lubliner ([BLubliner@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:BLubliner@cityoftacoma.org))

## G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

- (1) Agenda for the December 4, 2024, meeting:
  - Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review – Environment Element (Part 2), Engagement Element
- (2) Agenda for the December 18, 2024, joint meeting with the Transportation Commission:
  - 15-Minute Neighborhoods
  - High Frequency Transit Network (including TOD Task Force work)
  - Pierce Transit Long Range Plan
- (3) January 1, 2024 – potential cancellation

## H. Communication Items

- (1) 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 meeting is a special meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.; the agenda (tentatively) includes interviews for the Landmarks Preservation Commission and presentations on the Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program, and the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code update. (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, April 17, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Karnes (Chair), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair) (departed at 6:45 p.m.), Morgan Dorner, 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 with a set adjournment time to 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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

There were no meeting minutes to approve.

### **D. Public Comments**

Chair Karnes noted that comments were not accepted for the discussion item, as it was the subject of a recent public hearing.

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

Commissioner Krehbiel disclosed that he spoke with the Tacoma Tree Foundation and the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department regarding trees.

Commissioner Rash disclosed that he spoke with the Tacoma Tree Foundation.

### **F. Discussion Items**

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

Brian Boudet and Alysa Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding unit lot subdivisions (ULS). Discussion ensued regarding homeowners associations, architectural uniformity, ULS for previously developed lots, increasing the opportunity for home ownership, and other security mechanisms. Commissioner Sadalge and Chair Karnes expressed interest in submitting amendments.

Boudet and Torrez presented what staff has heard from public input and potential changes for the Commission regarding amenity space. Discussion ensued regarding feedback from the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group (TPAG) and amenity space for people. Commissioners Martenson and Marlo expressed interest in providing amendments.

Boudet and Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding tree credits, tree retention, general tree standards, and tree

requirements. Discussion ensued regarding potential amendments, tree canopy cover minimum, tree removal, bonding mechanism, percentages of native tree species, density bonuses near critical areas, trees in parking lots, sidewalk maintenance and damage, flexibility for access, and the importance of prioritizing housing and amenity space over tree canopy requirements. Commissioners Krehbeil, Marlo, Martenson, Santhuff, Dorner, Chair Karnes, and Vice-Chair Steele noted interest in submitting amendments.

Boudet and Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding residential target areas (RTA).

Boudet and Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding visitability requirements. Discussion ensued regarding the Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program, accessibility actions, and the current requirements for accessible parking. Chair Karnes expressed interest in providing an amendment.

Boudet and Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding affordability bonuses. Discussion ensued regarding bonus review, future updates, the feasibility that market-rate developers will build affordable units, and fee in lieu amounts. Commissioners Krehbiel and Rash expressed interest in providing amendments.

Boudet and Torrez outlined what staff has heard from public input, minor staff changes or clarifications, and potential options for the Commission regarding building retention bonuses. Commissioner Marlo and Chair Karnes expressed interest in submitting amendments.

The Planning Commission recessed at 6:41 p.m. and reconvened at 6:47 p.m.

Vice-Chair Steele departed here at 6:45 p.m.

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, outlined the initial batch of commissioner amendments.

Chair Karnes withdrew his amendment (#1) regarding the walking distance from major transit stations on the zoning map.

Commissioner Santhuff provided background on his amendment (#2) regarding the removal of City of Tacoma identified Passive Open Space(s) and MetroParks Tacoma classified “Natural Areas” and “Other Facilities” from Parks and Open Space proximity that trigger upzone from UR1 to UR2.

*Commissioner Santhuff moved to add amendment #2 to the amendment package. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion.*

Discussion ensued regarding equity, the rationale of the amendment, and the benefits of natural areas.

*The motion failed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 3 – Karnes, Sadalge, Santhuff*

*Nays: 5 – Dorner, Krehbiel, Marlo, Martenson, Rash*

*Commissioner Krehbiel moved to postpone the remainder of the amendments to the May 15th meeting. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Commissioner Santhuff suggested having a special meeting.

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

(1) Agenda for the May 1, 2024, meeting includes:

- Capital Facilities Program
- Permitting LOS Code Amendment
- Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program

(2) Agenda for the May 15, 2024, meeting includes:

- Capital Facilities Program
- Home In Tacoma

*Commissioner Krehbiel moved to hold a special meeting of the Planning Commission on May 8, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Dorner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **I. Communication Items**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Boudet noted that during the work program discussion, he will debrief on the commissioner lunches. He also stated that the Charter Review Committee is looking into potential changes to the Planning Commission and will present their recommendation to the City Council at the May 7, 2024, Study Session.

## **J. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 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, May 1, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

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

**ABSENT:** Sandesh Sadalge

### **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 Krehbiel 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, noted there no written comments were received for public comment.

No individuals addressed the Planning Commission.

Public Comment ended at 5:03 p.m.

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

Commissioner Martenson disclosed that he had conversations with John Wolters at WC Studio regarding Home In Tacoma.

### **F. Discussion Items**

#### **1. 2025-2030 Capital Facilities Program Process**

Nick Anderson, Office of Management and Budget, provided an overview of the process to review the proposed projects for the 2025-2030 Capital Facilities Program (CFP), including the capital planning "solar system" and CFP roles. Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works, outlined the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program and how it relates to the CFP, the Transportation Commission's review process, and criteria questions. Anderson further presented the CFP, including the Planning Commission's role, goals for the public facilities component of the Comprehensive Plan, implementing actions, 2024 process updates, past practices, and next steps.

Discussion ensued throughout regarding funding decisions for streets, the state of good repair of bridges, an economic improvement lens for potential improvements, goals for the public facilities services, the Facilities Decarbonization Study, and other criteria.

## 2. Permitting Level of Service and Public Notice Code Amendment

Jana Magoon, Land Use Manager, presented draft code changes in response to the State of Washington mandates regarding land use permit level of service and public notice, including background, draft code for TMC 13.05 regarding level of service and public notice, and next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding variance timeframes.

*Commissioner Dorner moved to release the draft code and staff analysis for the public review and set a public hearing date for June 5, 2024, at 5:30 pm. Vice-Chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## 3. Planning Commission (PC) Annual Report and Work Program – Mid-Cycle Update; PC Meeting Operations – Review

Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager, provided a mid-cycle update on the Commission's Work Program for 2023-2025 and recent Commission feedback, including the reporting requirement, reporting schedule, sources, the planning and development process, key projects in 2024 and 2025, other projects, and an overview of feedback from Commissioners.

Discussion ensued regarding limiting the number of large discussion items on single agendas, meeting minutes, the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone, prioritization criteria for the Neighborhood Plan Program evaluation, the Comprehensive Plan update, printing resources, and getting materials early.

## H. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

- (1) Agenda for the May 8, 2024, special meeting includes:
  - Home In Tacoma – Potential Amendments
- (2) Agenda for the May 15, 2024, meeting includes:
  - Capital Facilities Program – Release for Public Hearing
  - Home In Tacoma – Potential Amendments
- (3) Agenda for the June 5, 2024, meeting includes:
  - Capital Facilities Program – Public Hearing
  - Permitting Level Of Service Code Amendment – Public Hearing
  - Home In Tacoma – Potential Amendments/Recommendation

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to cancel the July 3, 2024, meeting and hold a special meeting of the Planning Commission on June 26, 2024. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## I. Communication Items

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Atkinson noted the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan engagement workshops will begin on May 16, 2024.

Boudet noted that the Charter Review Committee is considering expanding the number of members for the Planning Commission. He also reported that the Council Chambers will undergo a remodel and that the next few Commission meetings will likely be moved to another location.

Commissioner Rash reported that the TOD Task Force has had conversations on how transit supports the development and vice versa.

## J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 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:** Special Meeting (hybrid)

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Karnes (Chair), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair), Morgan Dorner, 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 5:14 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 Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. Public Comments**

Chair Karnes noted that comments were not accepted for the discussion item, as it was the subject of a recent public hearing.

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

Commissioner Sadalge disclosed that he had conversations with the Eastside Neighborhood Advisory Council of Tacoma (ENACT) and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber regarding Home In Tacoma. Commissioner Krehbiel disclosed that he had conversations with Tacoma Urban Forestry Friends. Commissioner Rash and Vice-Chair Steele disclosed that they had conversations with the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. Chair Karnes disclosed that he had conversations with the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group.

### **E. Discussion Items**

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

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, provided introductory remarks and outlined the Commissioners' potential amendments.

Discussion ensued throughout for each amendment, including reasons for support, opposition, and modifications to the amendments.

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to add amendment #3 to the amendment package. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion failed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 2 – Santhuff, Steele*

*Nays: 7 – Dorner, Karnes, Krehbiel, Marlo, Martenson, Rash, Sadalge*

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to consider amendment #4 for discussion. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The motion passed with the following votes:*

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

*Nays: 1 – Dorner*

Commissioner Santhuff moved to add amendment #4 to the amendment package, as modified. Vice-Chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion failed with the following vote:

Ayes: 2 – Santhuff, Steele

Nays: 5 – Dorner, Karnes, Martenson, Rash, Sadalge,

Abstain: 2 – Krehbiel, Marlo

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #5 for discussion. Commissioner Marlo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Santhuff moved to add amendment #5 to the amendment package. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #6 for discussion. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to add amendment #6 to the amendment package. Commissioner Dorner seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:

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

Nays: 1 – Steele

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #7 for discussion. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Rash moved to add option 1 of amendment #7 to the amendment package. Commissioner Dorner seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:

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

Nays: 1 – Santhuff

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #8 for discussion. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to add amendment #8 to the amendment package. Commissioner Rash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission recessed at 6:22 p.m. and reconvened at 6:28 p.m.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #9 for discussion. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Santhuff moved to add amendment #9 to the amendment package. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #10 for discussion. Commissioner Marlo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to add amendment #10 to the amendment package. Commissioner Santhuff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Dorner moved to consider amendment #11 for discussion. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #13. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:

Ayes: 7 – Dorner, Krehbiel, Marlo, Rash, Sadalge, Santhuff, Steele

Abstain: 2 – Karnes, Martenson

Commissioner Sadalge moved to consider amendment #16 for discussion. Vice-Chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:

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

Abstain: 1 – Karnes

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to add amendment #16 to the amendment package. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion failed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 2 – Sadalge, Steele*

*Nays: 7 – Dorner, Karnes, Krehbeil, Marlo, Martenson, Rash, Santhuff*

*Commissioner Sadalge moved to add amendment #13 to the amendment package. Commissioner Steele seconded the motion. The motion failed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 2 – Sadalge, Steele*

*Nays: 7 – Dorner, Karnes, Krehbeil, Marlo, Martenson, Rash, Santhuff*

*Commissioner Martenson moved to add amendment #11 to the amendment package. Commissioner Dorner seconded the motion. The motion failed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 3 – Dorner, Karnes, Martenson*

*Nays: 5 – Steele, Krehbiel, Rash, Sadalge, Santhuff*

*Absent: 1 – Marlo*

*Commissioner Dorner moved to consider amendment #12 for discussion. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Krehbiel moved to add amendment #12 to the amendment package. Commissioner Marlo seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 6 – Dorner, Karnes, Krehbiel, Marlo, Martenson, Rash*

*Nays: 3 – Sadalge, Santhuff, Steele*

*Commissioner Santhuff moved to consider amendment #14 for discussion. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Santhuff moved to add amendment #14 to the amendment package. Commissioner Sadalge seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:*

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

*Abstain: 1 – Steele*

*Vice-Chair Steele moved to consider amendment #15 for discussion. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:*

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

*Nays: 1 – Santhuff*

*Commissioner Dorner moved to add the text change of amendment #15 to the amendment package. Commissioner Rash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Sadalge moved to add the map change of amendment #15 to the amendment package. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following votes:*

*Ayes: 6 – Dorner, Karnes, Krehbiel, Marlo, Rash, Sadalge*

*Nays: 3 – Martenson, Santhuff, Steele*

*Commissioner Sadalge moved to table the remainder of the amendments and adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dorner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **F. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 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  
F1

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Adam Nolan, Planning and Development Services  
Paul Bakker, Community and Economic Development

**Subject:** **One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Economic Development**

**Memo Date:** November 13, 2024

**Meeting Date:** November 20, 2024

**Action Requested:**  
Informational.

**Discussion:**

Staff from Planning and Development Services and Community and Economic Development will be leading the Planning Commission on a review of the [Economic Development Element](#) of the One Tacoma Plan, with brief discussion of the Element's relationship to the Growth Management Act. Anticipated updates include more explicit linkages between the City's goals and policies related to economic development considerations attendant to the 15-minute neighborhood concept, the [Green Economy Strategy](#), equitable and accessible employment pathways, and the roles and planning for the City's employment centers, including Industrial Districts and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.

**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 comprises 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:**

- November 6, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Transportation Element and Design and Development Element.
- October 16, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Historic Preservation Element.
- October 4, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Urban Form Element.
- September 18, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Public Facilities + Services Element including opportunities to better align goals and policies with level of service standards and project prioritization criteria.
- September 4, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Parks + Recreation Element including opportunities to better align goals and policies with the Metro Parks Tacoma System and Strategic Plan.
- June 21, 2023: Reviewed planning requirements for the Periodic Update and recent legislative updates pertaining to housing and climate policy.
- December 20, 2023: Recommended scope of work and engagement strategy.

**Background Documents:**

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

**Staff Contacts:**

- Adam Nolan, Senior Planner, [anolan@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:anolan@cityoftacoma.org)
- Paul Bakker, Business and Economic Development Analyst, [pbakker@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:pbakker@cityoftacoma.org)

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: Assessment Report
- Attachment 2: Green Economy Strategy ([LINK](#))
- Attachment 3: Current Baseline Economic Data
- Attachment 4: Current Economic Development Element ([LINK](#))

cc. 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 previous update to the plan occurring in 2015. This document discusses the Economic Development element, including required updates as part of changes to the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2050.

## ELEMENT OVERVIEW

The Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan is listed in RCW 36.70A.070 as a mandatory element of the Growth Management Act (GMA), but is not currently required because funding was not provided to assist in developing local Plans when this element was added to the GMA. The City of Tacoma has historically included and maintained an Economic Development Element primarily for compliance with multicounty and countywide planning policies.

The current element contains background information and goals and policies for Tacoma's economic development and creating a diversified economy with a wide range of living wage job opportunities to improve the livelihood of residents of Tacoma. The background information includes data on income and employment, educational attainment, job-housing ratio, places of work and residence, and the role of the City's Manufacturing Industrial Centers.

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

- Diversify and expand Tacoma's economic base to create a robust economy that offers Tacomans a wide range of employment opportunities, goods and services; leverage Tacoma's industry sector strengths such as medical, educational, and maritime operations and assets such as the Port of Tacoma, Joint Base Lewis McChord, streamlined permitting in downtown and excellent quality of life to position Tacoma as a leader and innovator in the local, regional and state economy.
- Increase access to employment opportunities in Tacoma and equip Tacomans with the education and skills needed to attain high-quality, living wage jobs.
- Cultivate a business culture that allows existing establishments to grow in place, encourage new firms to locate in Tacoma and facilitate growth of homegrown enterprises.
- Foster a positive business environment within the City and proactively invest in transportation, infrastructure and utilities to support development in undeveloped and underdeveloped areas of the City.

- Establish a City brand and image that supports economic growth and leverages existing cultural, community and economic assets.
- Create robust, thriving employment centers by:
  - Building upon employment in planned employment areas through land use and development that supports the needs of businesses that Tacoma seeks to retain, grow and attract; and
  - Strengthening Tacoma's role as a regional industrial center by preserving its industrial land and encouraging investment in industry-related sectors.

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

As one of five designated Metropolitan Cities in the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2050, Tacoma is planning for 70,800 jobs by 2044 (per countywide planning policies) and 94,000 new jobs by 2050 (per VISION 2050). The city has more than enough physical and zoning capacity to accommodate this growth, based on the most recent Buildable Lands report, but to work towards this target, Tacoma must strategically attract and grow businesses to increase the number of jobs in the city. Not only does the city have to grow its economic base generally, it must also deliberately channel this growth into the areas of Tacoma best suited to accommodate this increase. Figure 23 presents the city's planned employment areas, including commercial areas, manufacturing and industrial areas and major campus institutions. While the city intends to channel growth into these areas, they are not exclusively where employment can occur.

Tacoma has initiated myriad efforts in recent years to recruit new businesses, support local companies and revitalize its neighborhoods. The goals and policies in this Economic Development Element provide high-level support for all of these ongoing efforts and serve as a guide for the development of new strategies to ensure that they are well-coordinated and supported by the City's land use policy. Economic development is a complex endeavor that requires extensive collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors. The City has unique capabilities to spur economic development, but its efforts alone will not produce the type of economy desired. The involvement of local businesses, educational institutions and other organizations is essential. Thus, many of the policies in this chapter emphasize working with a variety of partners so that the City's economic development plans can be successfully implemented. Additionally, coordination and linkage between other elements of the Comprehensive Plan are absolutely essential because land use, transportation and housing, to name a few, all play critical roles in fostering a thriving economy.

At the community scale, creating a diversified economy with a wide variety of living wage job opportunities will help to improve the livelihoods of Tacomans. Enhancing access to these jobs is absolutely essential, however. The jobs of today and tomorrow demand increasing levels of education, job training, and complex skills. This element provides goals and policies that address workforce development and education to increase



Tacomans' ability to take full advantage of the diverse and growing economy envisioned by the city.

## PRELIMINARY CHANGES

### Structural

Goals and policies have been reorganized and consolidated. The following provides a high-level summary of the changes in terms of reorganization:

- The existing themes and goals remain unchanged throughout the chapter.
- Strengthen or add policy to address gaps in newly-adopted VISION 2050 policy, including to:
  - Address and prevent displacement of existing businesses due to redevelopment/market pressures
  - Promote environmental and socially responsible business practices
- Integrate narrative and policies in support of advancing the City-adopted Green Economy Strategy.
- Add additional context and policies specific to the City's employment centers.
- Add additional context and policies to Industrial Districts and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers, including for:
  - Prioritizing/Retaining Industrial Lands and Employment
  - Environment and Climate
  - Mitigating Impacts on Adjacent Communities
  - Transportation Demand Management
- Embeds equity into policies where possible.

### Language

- Use more people-centered language such as community members rather than the general public.
- Define terms to add clarity.
- Consolidate Goals and Policies to be concise and reduce redundancies.
- Add Sidebars to provide more context and information, and to improve readability.

## GMA CONSISTENCY

While an Economic Development Element is not specifically required, the Growth Management Act does require consideration of future population and employment growth

and requires that jurisdictions ensure an adequate land supply and provision of public facilities and services to support this growth. For GMA compliance, the City must demonstrate an adequate supply of land to meet the adopted employment targets for the City of Tacoma. These targets are established in the Countywide Planning policies. The City's current employment capacity, based on the 2022 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, is 84,436, which is sufficient to accommodate the 2044 planning target of 70,800 new jobs.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Policy Framework**

#### **State and regional policies**

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

The Economic Development Element directly supports the land use and economic goals of the State Growth Management Act ([RCW 36.70A.020](#)):

- (1) Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- (5) Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

##### **VISION 2050**

PSRC's VISION 2050 sets a four-county regional plan for growth. 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:

- Identify and enhance industry clusters, including those recognized in the Regional Economic Strategy that provide goods and services for export (MPP-Ec-3, Ec-4)

- Focus retention and recruitment efforts and activities to foster a positive business climate and diversify employment opportunities by specifically targeting:
  - Businesses that provide living wage jobs
  - “New Policy” Locally, women-, and minority-owned small businesses and start-up companies
  - “New Policy” Established and emerging industries, technologies, and services that promote environmental sustainability, especially those addressing climate change and resilience (MPP-Ec-1, Ec-3, Ec-4, Ec-7, Ec-9, Ec-16)
- “New Policy” Promote strategies and policies that expand access to opportunity and remove barriers for economically disconnected communities (MPP-Ec-13-14)
- “New Policy” Address and prevent potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of existing businesses that may result from redevelopment and market pressure (MPP-Ec-12)
- Develop a range of employment opportunities to create a closer balance between jobs and housing (MPP-Ec-18)
- “New Policy” Promote environmental and socially responsible business practices, especially those addressing climate change, resilience, and improved health outcomes (MPP-Ec-8, Ec-16)
- “New Policy” Support, recognize, and empower the contributions of the region’s culturally and ethnically diverse communities, institutions, and Native Tribes (MPP-Ec-15, Ec-17, Ec-20)

In addition, VISION 2050 establishes growth targets based on the regional geography and growth strategy. Tacoma, as a designated Metropolitan City, is expected to plan for and accommodate 94,000 new jobs in the City by 2050. Based on the 2022 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, the City has a current capacity for 84,436 new jobs. As a result, the City will likely need to incorporate policies and narrative describing how we will increase either supply of land for economic use or increase the efficiency of economic activity to support meeting the PSRC employment target.

## **Areas of Focus: Green Economy and Manufacturing and Industrial Centers**

As part of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the City is focused on two primary updates to the Element: 1. Integration of the Green Economy Strategy, and 2. Consolidating and updating policies regarding the role of the Manufacturing and Industrial Centers.

## **Green Economy**

The following documents provide background information on actions Council has taken to support the development of the Green Economy Strategy and are pertinent to the integration of that work into the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Resolution No. 40509 – Climate Emergency Declaration**

City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 through [Resolution No. 40509](#) that included support for initiatives to foster a Citywide climate emergency mobilization effort to combat global warming that will result in the goal of a just transition to a carbon-neutral economy and accelerate adaptation. Section 2 instructed that the City Manager work with the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability to develop an updated Environmental Action Plan that includes, among other things, a green economy section that will define actions and targets to assist existing Tacoma businesses with sustainability actions, attract and retain carbon-neutral and climate friendly businesses, increase the number of living wage jobs, and provide a just transition for the workforce into the next generation of sustainable manufacturing and construction jobs.

### **2030 Climate Action Plan (2021)**

The [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) centers frontline communities' priorities in detailing the City's plan for taking action for healthy, affordable housing; clean, reliable transportation; protections for public health; and green, good-paying jobs. It is designed to direct City funding, investments, and work over the next nine years to improve our communities and environment. The CAP includes priority actions for the green economy sector including workforce development, strategies to recruit green industries and development, and increasing City staff capacity to advance green economy initiatives.

### **Green Economy Strategy (2023)**

[From Climate Emergency to Shared Prosperity: Tacoma's Green Economic Development Strategy](#)

The Green Economy Strategy prescribes actions and policies that leverage the global economic shift towards clean energy and sustainable business practices to shape the direction of Tacoma's economic future. It focuses on supporting businesses across all sectors in their efforts to become greener and to remain competitive in supply chains that increasingly value sustainability. In addition to attracting innovative Green businesses to the region, the Strategy emphasizes the preservation and growth of Tacoma's green manufacturing industry to create living-wage jobs at scale while increasing Tacoma's share of traded sector activity. It also prescribes strategies for helping Tacoma's residents develop skills to prepare for these opportunities, emphasizing equity and anti-racist principles to assure that benefits flow to historically excluded populations. While the Strategy is led by Economic Development staff, execution is a multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together multiple departments,

agencies, non-profits, and industry partners to transform Tacoma into a hub of Green enterprise.

## **Manufacturing and Industrial Centers**

Recognizing the important economic role of industrial lands, the [Puget Sound Regional Council](#) and [Pierce County Regional Council](#) have adopted policies intended to preserve industrial lands, including implementing a designated regional center framework to prioritize areas for targeted growth and investment in the region. Manufacturing/Industrial Centers (MICs) have a very important role in the region as they are intended to continue to accommodate a significant amount of regional employment and be areas of targeted future employment growth. MICs provide economic diversity, support national and international trade, and offer higher-than average wages, while also generating substantial revenue for local governments. VISION 2050 calls for cities and counties to continue preserving industrial lands for manufacturing and industrial activities, and strictly limiting incompatible land uses in MICs. Tacoma's has two MICs: the Tideflats and South Tacoma.

Alongside their local and regional importance that situates the need to preserve and retain MICs and Industrial Lands there is the need to mitigate the impacts of industrial uses on neighboring communities. The integration of MIC and Industrial Lands policies into the Comprehensive Plan will fall under the categories of:

- Prioritizing/Retaining Industrial Lands and Employment
- Environment and Climate
- Mitigating Impacts on Adjacent Communities
- Transportation Demand Management

## **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 can be categorized within one or more of 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 Economic Development element broadly addresses these outcomes.

1. **Median Household Income.** Tacoma's median household income in 2021 was approximately \$69,000. However, according to the self-sufficiency standard for Western Pierce County, this income is insufficient to cover the needs of households with one or two children. Additionally, median incomes vary by race and ethnicity; Black households and American Indian or Alaska Native households earn around \$20,000 less than the overall median in Tacoma. This element's

policies aim to address this income gap by increasing access to high-quality jobs in equitable ways, as well as enhancing skills and education training opportunities.

2. **Childhood Poverty.** In Tacoma, childhood poverty rates are influenced by geography, race, and ethnicity. Areas such as the Eastside, South End, and South Tacoma face significantly higher rates of childhood poverty, particularly impacting Black, multi-racial, Hispanic, and Latino communities throughout the city. To address these disparities, it is crucial to develop an economic foundation that provides diverse employment opportunities, essential goods, and services. Additionally, implementing targeted anti-poverty public programs in priority communities can help lower childhood poverty rates effectively.
3. **Good and Promising Job Availability.** Good jobs are characterized by stable employment, competitive middle-class wages, and comprehensive benefits. Promising jobs refer to entry-level positions that typically allow workers to advance to a good job within a decade. In Tacoma, approximately 7% of jobs are classified as good or promising, with 24% falling into the category of high-skill good or promising jobs. To foster economic growth, development policies should focus on cultivating a culture of local entrepreneurship, facilitating investment, and creating a business-friendly environment. This includes supporting emerging local businesses and attracting new firms that provide high-quality job opportunities.

## Policy Audit

The principles below will guide the updates to the structure, content, and language of the economic development element.

### Structure and Content

- Strengthen the connection between goals and policies
- 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

### 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 partners
- Provide sidebars to add more context about specific City policies or in initiatives

- Use consistent terms:
  - Define and use a consistent set of geographies – centers, outside centers, residential pattern areas, neighborhood council districts, council districts, basins/watersheds.
  - Remove use of the term “citizen” and replace with either “community member” (includes visitors and workers) or “resident,” (those who specifically live in Tacoma), as applicable
  - 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. Additionally, the Project Team reviewed community input gathered through previous engagement activities that occurred between 2016 to present day in the Tacoma Existing Engagement Gap Analysis report.

In the engagement conducted for One Tacoma, community members voiced high levels of support for small businesses and, specifically, those that reflect the city’s demographic diversity. Community members also shared their desire to see the city attract and diversify jobs and employers to allow people more choices to live and work in Tacoma. Knowledge of various career pathways and the skills required for different job types was seen as a key need. In addition, there was significant support to increase opportunities for young people to develop skills through youth internships and training.





### Attachment 3: Current Baseline Economic Data

#### Employment Targets and Capacity

The [Pierce County Buildable Lands Report](#) (Nov 2022) tables below provide employment estimates and remaining need to meet employment targets.

The table below shows the 2020-2044 Pierce County employment growth target for Tacoma is 70,800 jobs and the employment capacity is 84,436. Tacoma meets the Growth Management Act requirements for planning for employment.

Tacoma Employment, 2010-2020 Growth, 2044 Target, Need, and Employment Capacity							
2010 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2010-2020 Growth	2010-2020 Annual Growth	2044 Employment Target	2020-2044 Employment Target Growth	Annual Growth Needed Between 2020-2044	2020-2044 Employment Capacity
104,399	121, 183	16,784	1,678	191,983	70,800	2,950	84,436

Through [VISION 2050](#), the Puget Sound Regional Council has set an employment growth target for Tacoma to plan for 94,000 additional jobs by 2050.

**Urban From Chapter – Baseline Data****Employment by Industry Sector by Center**

Acronyms for table:

- FIRE – Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services
- WTU – Warehouse, Transportation, and Utilities
- Const/Res – Construction Resource

Tacoma Employment by Industry Sector by Center, 2022									
Mixed Use Center	Const/Res	FIRE	Manufacturing	Retail	Services	WTU	Government	Public Education	Total
6th Avenue	*	*	-	190	840	10	-	80	1,140
Downtown	660	3,080	1,200	610	27,200	520	3,180	1,600	38,060
James Center	-	30	*	*	720	10	-	760	1,670
Lincoln	-	-	*	160	310	*	10	170	670
Lower Pacific	-	*	-	90	350	*	680	30	1,230
Lower Portland Avenue	40	-	-	*	30	*	610	-	710
McKinley	-	10	*	*	360	*	30	-	400
Narrows	*	*	-	20	100	-	30	80	290
Point Ruston	-	30	-	10	120	-	-	-	160
Proctor	*	60	-	360	500	*	60	130	1,120
South Tacoma Way	80	70	40	140	480	10	20	-	850
Tacoma Central	-	170	*	790	4,100	*	60	-	5,230

## F1 – Attach 3: Current Baseline Economic Data (11-20-24)

Tacoma Mall	320	580	80	3,050	4,440	440	1,520	20	10,450
Upper Pacific	20	50	-	340	360	-	-	-	780
Upper Portland Avenue	*	*	-	80	580	-	120	-	820
Westgate	-	110	-	280	820	10	-	-	1,220
South Tacoma MIC	1,260	90	1,020	270	2,400	960	1,360	-	7,360
Port of Tacoma MIC	600	110	2,540	420	1,740	4,230	700	-	10,340
<b>City of Tacoma</b>	<b>4,416</b>	<b>5,182</b>	<b>5,269</b>	<b>11,146</b>	<b>59,387</b>	<b>7,287</b>	<b>12,249</b>	<b>5,650</b>	<b>110,587</b>

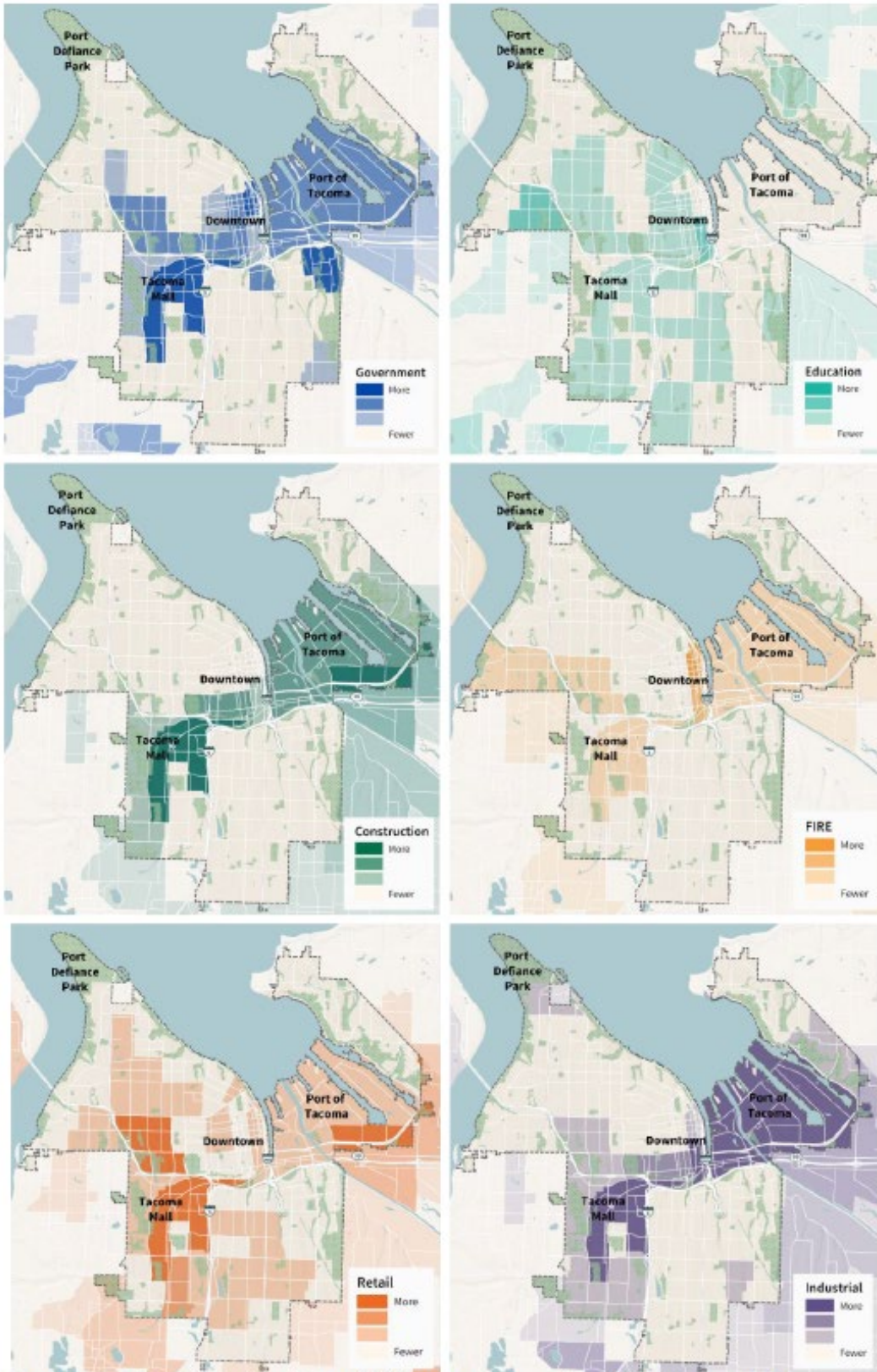
A dash (-) denotes zero covered employment. An asterisk (\*) denotes data suppression. Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2024

**Jobs by Acre, by Center**

<b>Tacoma Jobs by Acre by Center, 2022</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b>Gross Acres</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Jobs / Acre</b>
6th Avenue	86	1,140	13.3
Downtown	1,385	38,060	27.5
James Center	248	1,670	6.7
Lincoln	100	670	6.7
Lower Pacific	84	1,230	14.7
Lower Portland Avenue	105	710	6.7
McKinley	57	400	7.1
Narrows	62	290	4.7
Point Ruston	36	160	4.4
Proctor	42	1,120	26.4
South Tacoma Way	94	850	9.0
Tacoma Central	200	5,230	26.1
Tacoma Mall	573	10,450	18.2
Upper Pacific	74	780	10.5
Upper Portland Avenue	76	820	10.8
Westgate	92	1,220	13.2
South Tacoma MIC	826	7,360	8.9
Port of Tacoma MIC	5,070	10,340	2.0

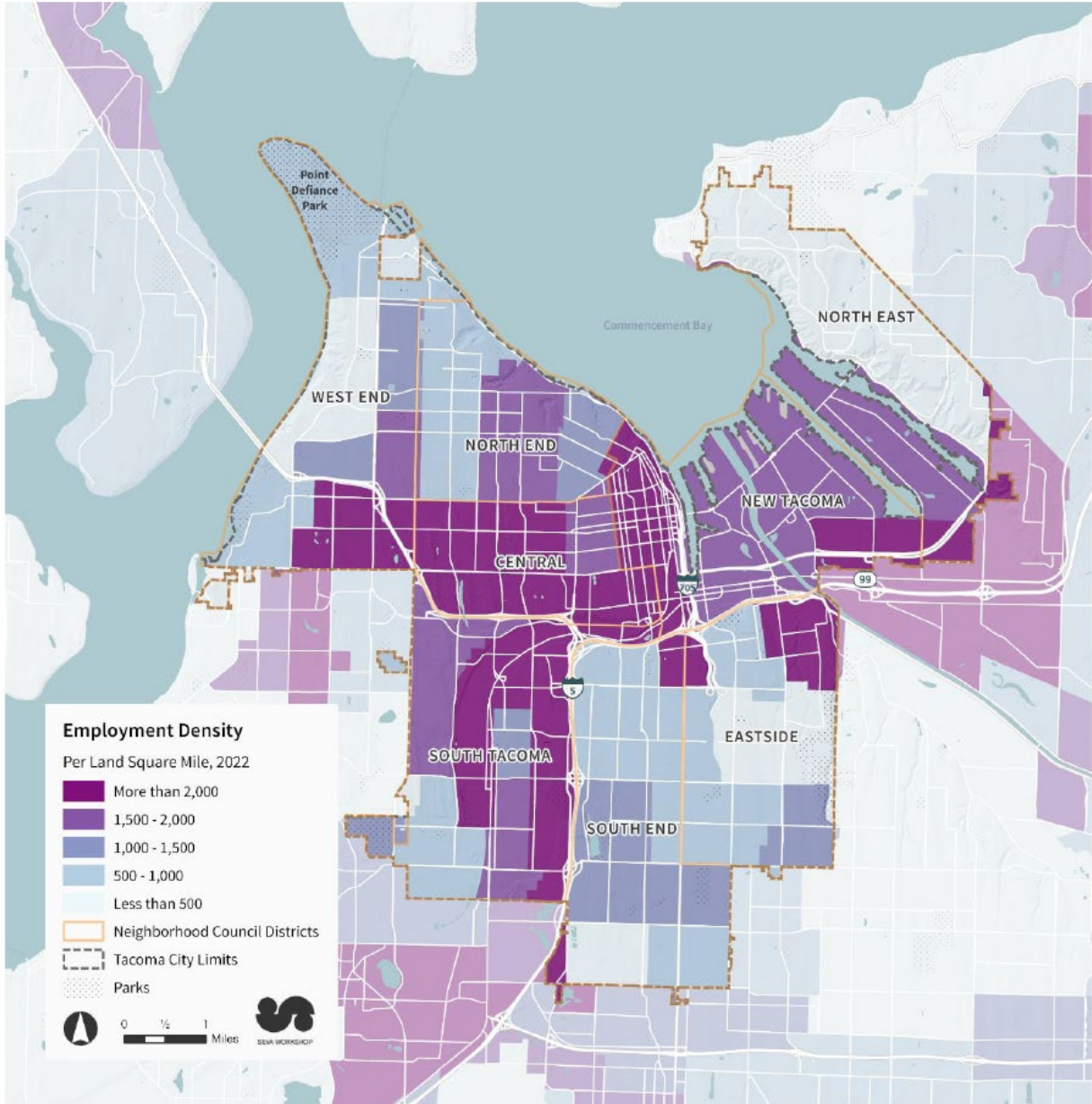
Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2024

### Proportions of Employment by Sector, 2022



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council Vision covered employment estimates, 2022

### Employment Density, 2022



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2024

**One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan - Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline** [\[LINK\]](#)

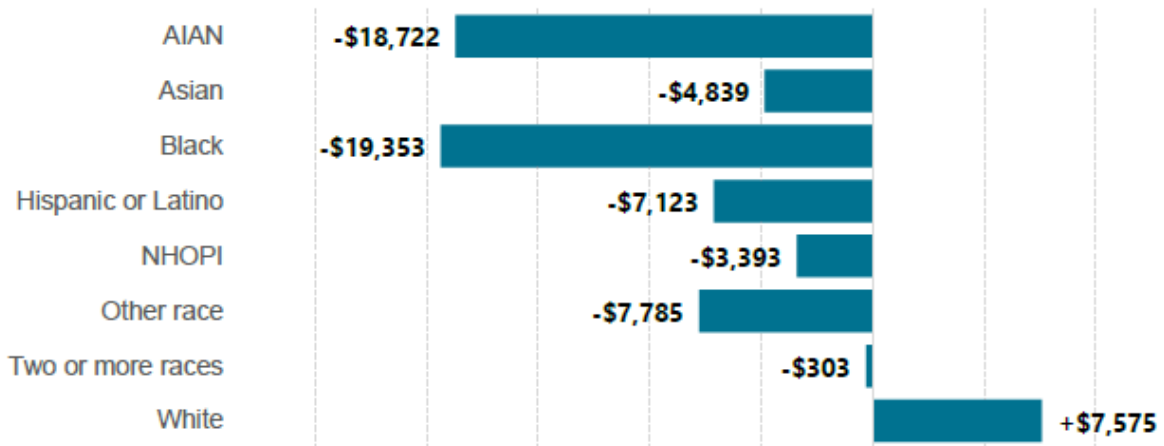
**Economic Opportunity Excerpt**

## 4.8 Economic Opportunity

### Median Income

The University of Washington Center for Women’s Welfare **Self-Sufficiency Standard** defines the income working families need to meet a minimum yet adequate level, taking into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs. The standard is published for the western cities in Pierce County annually and it reflects the income needed to be earned by each adult in the household. Tacoma’s 2021 median *household* income was \$69,956. Compared to the self-sufficiency standard for Westen Pierce county, this level of income is insufficient for most households with two children, and many households with one child especially if they are below school age. Median income varies in Tacoma according to the race and ethnicity of the head of household as shown below. The median income among American Indian and Alaska Native households and Black headed households is nearly \$20,000 less than the overall Tacoma median. Median incomes among Hispanic headed households and households headed by other races also experience a significant lag against the overall median.

**Figure 21 Median Household Income by Race Compared to Overall Tacoma Median (\$69,956)**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (B19013A-H)

## Child Poverty

Child poverty highlights a lack of opportunity and resources at a crucial developmental stage. The incidence of poverty is related to the economic opportunities available to caregivers, as well as the availability and effectiveness of public anti-poverty programs and services such as SNAP. The experience of childhood poverty is disproportionately high in the communities of Eastside, South End and South Tacoma. Across Tacoma, Black communities, multi-racial, and Hispanic and Latino communities experience a disproportionately high prevalence of childhood poverty. These childhood poverty rates are linked other priority outcomes related to health, housing, education, and economic opportunity for the coming generations.

**Figure 22 Disproportionality in Children Under 5 in Poverty, by neighborhood and race/ethnicity**

	DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 IN POVERTY	DISTRIBUTION OF ALL POPULATION BY NEIGHBORHOOD	DIFFERENCE
<b>Central</b>	4%	9%	-6%
<b>Eastside</b>	25%	15%	10%
<b>New Tacoma</b>	0%	7%	-7%
<b>North East</b>	4%	9%	-5%
<b>North End</b>	1%	12%	-11%
<b>South End</b>	28%	20%	8%
<b>South Tacoma</b>	33%	15%	18%
<b>West End</b>	5%	13%	-8%

	DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 IN POVERTY	DISTRIBUTION OF ALL POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY	DIFFERENCE
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	2%	1%	1%
<b>Asian</b>	6%	8%	-2%
<b>Black or African American</b>	18%	10%	7%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	2%	1%	1%
<b>White</b>	19%	57%	-39%
<b>Multi-race household</b>	27%	9%	18%
<b>Other race</b>	3%	1%	3%
<b>Hispanic or Latino, any race</b>	24%	12%	11%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year estimates 2018-2022 by tract (B17001A-I)



## Good and Promising Job Availability

Over 100,000 jobs are located in Tacoma. Health care, retail, government, and administration are some of the sectors that comprise the largest shares of Tacoma-based jobs. The Brookings Institute Opportunity Industries report and analysis examined industries for their ability to provide pathways and quality employment to workers without college degrees. They also produced metropolitan area level estimates by industry about the availability good and promising jobs according to the following definitions:

- **Good jobs** provide stable employment, middle-class wages and benefits.
- **Promising jobs** are entry-level positions from which most workers can reach a good job within 10 years.
- **High-skill jobs** are Good and promising jobs held by workers with a bachelor's degree. The bachelor's degree represents a barrier to entry.
- **Other jobs** do not provide decent pay, benefits, or pathways to good jobs.

About 17% of jobs located in Tacoma are considered good or promising by the Brookings Institute definition. Another 24% are high-skill good or promising jobs. The North East has the highest share of good jobs, driven largely by the number of logistics jobs located there. Many Tacomans have work locations outside of the city but may choose to work closer to home if the opportunity was available.

**Figure 23 Good and Promising Jobs by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	PROMISING JOBS	GOOD JOBS	HIGH-SKILL JOBS	OTHER JOBS	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE GOOD AND PROMISING JOBS RATE
Central	8%	7%	25%	60%	-1%
Eastside	8%	9%	23%	60%	1%
New Tacoma	8%	9%	27%	57%	0%
North East	9%	18%	18%	55%	10%
North End	9%	5%	23%	63%	-3%
South End	10%	5%	17%	68%	-1%
South Tacoma	10%	7%	18%	64%	1%
West End	9%	5%	20%	66%	-2%
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>60%</b>	

Source: U.S. Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) LODES 8.1 Workplace Area Characteristic (WAC), All jobs (JT00), 2021 by block; Brookings Institute, Opportunity Industries for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA 2018

### Health Excerpt

## Access to healthy food

Access to healthy food is a key component of health equity. City plans and programs can create the conditions for healthy food stores and temporary food markets to open in neighborhoods, as well as support mobile food options, food affordability, and food distribution. The Tacoma Equity Index uses the modified Retail Food Environment Index (mRFEI) to measure access to healthy food. The mRFEI is the percentage of all food retailers in an area that are considered healthy.

## F1 – Attach 3: Current Baseline Economic Data (11-20-24)

This measure captures areas with no food options (“food deserts”; correspond to a score of zero) as well as areas that have food outlets that are dominated by large relative amounts of unhealthy snack foods (“food swamps”; correspond to lower scores) (Centers for Disease Control). Tacoma overall has an mRFEI score of 0.7. The South End and New Tacoma stand out as areas with relatively healthy food options. The North East, South Tacoma, and West End have relatively unhealthy options.

**Figure 8 Access to Healthy Food by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	HEALTHY FOOD AVAILABILITY	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
<b>Central</b>	0.9	0.20
<b>Eastside</b>	0.5	(0.16)
<b>New Tacoma</b>	1.3	0.63
<b>North East</b>	0.1	(0.62)
<b>North End</b>	0.5	(0.23)
<b>South End</b>	1.4	0.67
<b>South Tacoma</b>	0.3	(0.35)
<b>West End</b>	0.3	(0.38)
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>0.7</b>	

Source: City of Tacoma, Equity Index 2022 by block group; ESRI Business Analyst

The distribution of grocery stores by neighborhood largely reflects similar patterns as the mRFEI. However, contrasting figures for South Tacoma and West End suggest that while there are relatively more food outlets available, they are not necessarily healthy options. More equitable distribution of healthy food access would result in less variation in this index across the city. Tacoma also has a goal for daily essentials, including grocery, to be within a 15-minutewalk of all residences. In North East, where a single grocery serves many people in a large area, many residents likely drive to a neighboring city or to other parts of Tacoma for grocery access.

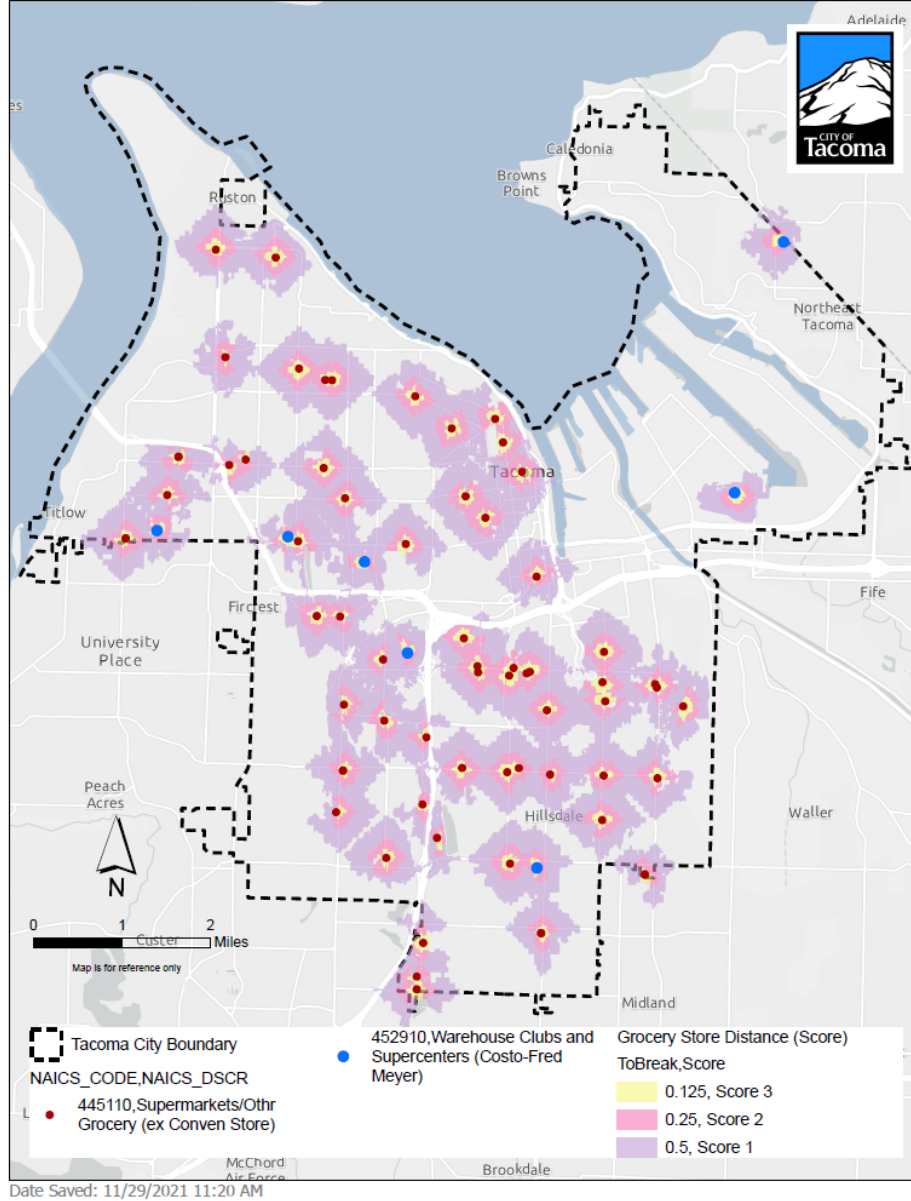
**Figure 9 Grocery by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	GROCERY	ACRES PER GROCERY	PEOPLE PER GROCERY	ACRES PER GROCERY DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE RATE
<b>Central</b>	7	346	2,939	(73)
<b>Eastside</b>	11	331	2,974	(88)
<b>New Tacoma</b>	6	788	2,536	369
<b>North East</b>	1	2,986	19,760	2,567
<b>North End</b>	6	471	4,458	52
<b>South End</b>	21	213	2,061	(206)
<b>South Tacoma</b>	12	440	2,728	21
<b>West End</b>	10	466	2,881	47
<b>Tacoma</b>	74	419	2,963	

Sources: City of Tacoma, 2022.

### 15-Minute Neighborhood Mapping

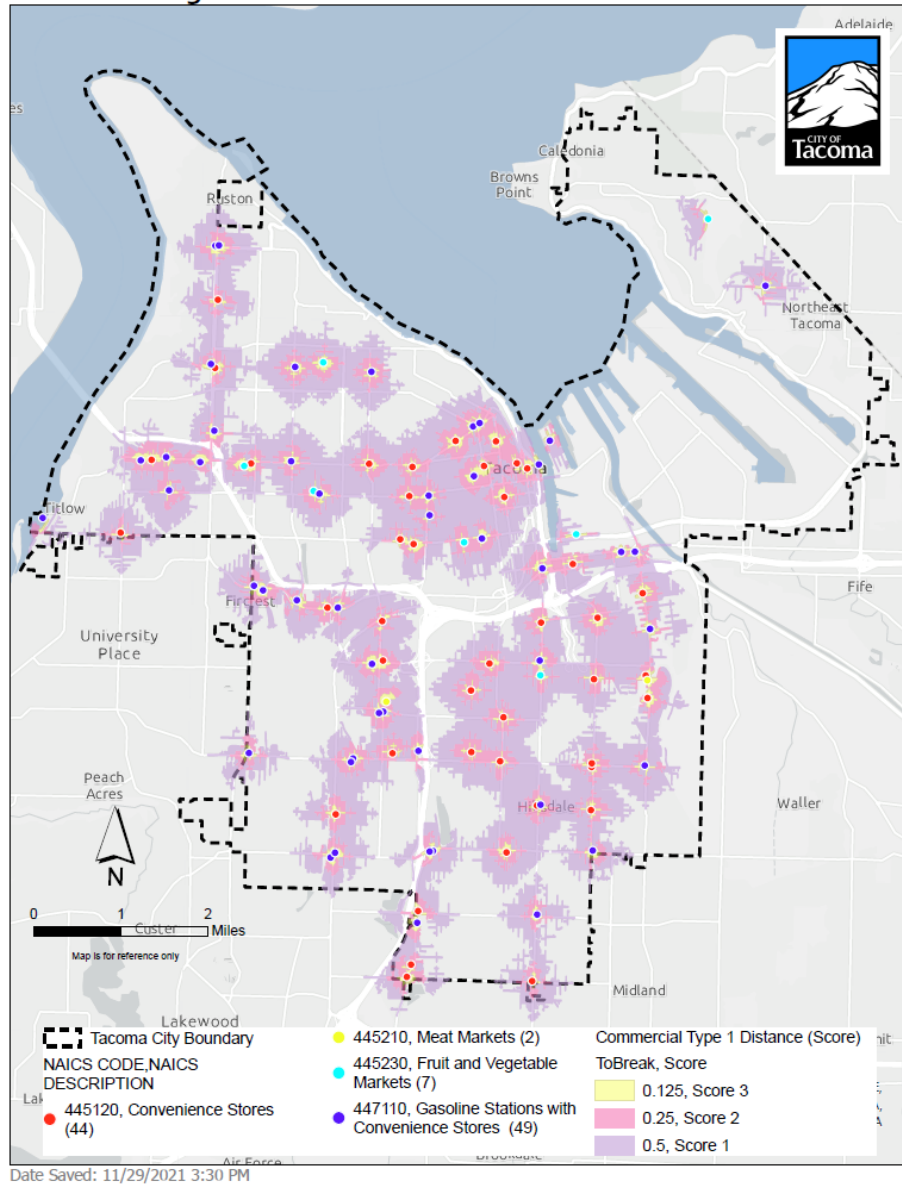
20 Minute Neighborhoods: Grocery Stores



Map 1. Food Access and Commercial Grocery Stores

- Mapping NAICS: Supermarkets, warehouse-type grocers
- Buffers: Walking Distance of 1/8 mile (0.125), 1/4 mile (0.25), and 1/2 mile (0.50)
- Scoring: Weighted by Walkshed Distance

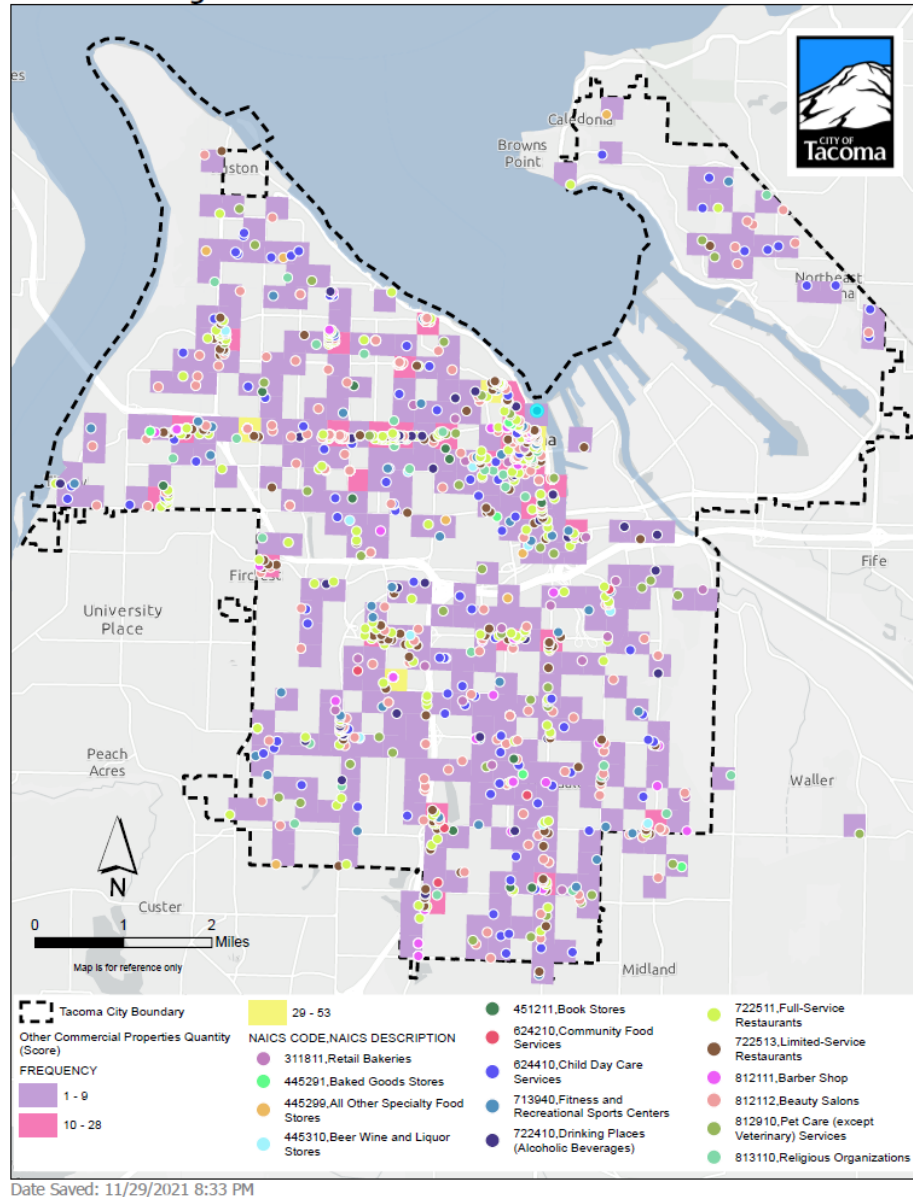
### 20 Minute Neighborhoods: Commercial



### Map 2. Commercial Type 1 – Mapping of Convenience Stores and Markets

- Mapping NAICS: Convenience stores, meat markets, fruit and vegetable markets, gasoline stations with convenience store
- Buffers: Walking Distance of 1/8 mile (0.125), 1/4 mile (0.25), and 1/2 mile (0.50)
- Scoring: Weighted by Walkshed Distance

### 20 Minute Neighborhoods: Other Commercial



### Map 3. Commercial Type 2 - Other Commercial (Services)

- Mapping NAICS: Services: book stores, fitness, barber or beauty shop, full service restaurant, pet care, religious organizations, and Personal service level: (dentist, doctor, pharmacy)
- Buffers: Quarter-mile Squared Grid Cell
- Scoring: Weighted by Number of Occurences per Quarter-mile Squared Grid Cell (Density of Services)





**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Maryam Moeinian, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update – Environment + Watershed Health Element**  
**Memo Date:** November 13, 2024  
**Meeting Date:** November 20, 2024

**Action Requested:**  
Informational.

**Discussion:**

Staff from Planning and Development Services and Environmental Services will be leading the Planning Commission on a review of the of the [Environment + Watershed Health Element](#) of the One Tacoma Plan. This will be the first of two initial discussions with the Commission focused on this element. This discussion will focus on Growth Management Act and VISION 2050 planning requirements for climate and stormwater management/water quality, including a review of the [2030 Climate Action Plan](#) and the [Urban Watershed Protection Plan](#). The discussion will explore opportunities to better align with the goals and policies of both the 2030 Climate Action Plan and Urban Watershed Protection Plan. At the Commission's meeting on December 4, 2024, will conclude with a focused review of the Element as it pertains to critical areas preservation.

**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 comprises 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:**

- November 6, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Transportation and Design + Development Elements.
- October 16, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Historic Preservation Element.
- October 4, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Urban Form and Housing Elements.
- September 18, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Public Facilities + Services Element including opportunities to better align goals and policies with level of service standards and project prioritization criteria.
- September 4, 2024: Reviewed planning requirements for the Parks + Recreation Element including opportunities to better align goals and policies with the Metro Parks Tacoma System and Strategic Plan.
- June 21, 2023: Reviewed planning requirements for the Periodic Update and recent legislative updates pertaining to housing and climate policy.
- December 20, 2023: Recommended scope of work and engagement strategy.

**Background Documents:**

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

**Staff Contacts:**

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- Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner, [mmoeinian@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:mmoeinian@cityoftacoma.org)

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: 2030 Climate Action Plan Overview
- Attachment 2: Urban Watershed Plan Overview
- Attachment 3: Assessment Report
- Attachment 4: Current Environment + Watershed Health Element ([link](#))

cc. Peter Huffman, Director



## Attachment 1: 2030 Climate Action Plan

Tacoma's Climate Action Plan (CAP) was developed in response to the City's climate emergency and outlines a roadmap to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The plan includes specific targets for 2030, which serve as milestones to help Tacoma stay on track toward this long-term goal. The CAP also includes 64 climate actions aimed at reducing the city's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. While the CAP touches the Environment element of the Comprehensive Plan as we mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, its benefits extend beyond this element. Investments in these climate actions can also support healthy, affordable housing; clean and reliable transportation; public health protections; and the creation of green, well-paying jobs.

### Staff Contacts:

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- Lakecia Farmer, Senior Sustainability Analyst, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, [lfarmer2@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:lfarmer2@cityoftacoma.org)

### Website:

- 2030 Climate Action Plan ([Link](#))



## **Attachment 2: Urban Watershed Protection Plan**

The City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department, Environmental Programs Group, ensures our compliance with Washington State Department of Ecology's Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit (Permit). Stormwater is a leading contributor of pollutants to Washington State's receiving waters because the pipes connect our surficial land uses and contaminants such as fertilizers and pesticides from homes and landscaping, heavy metals from cars, commerce, and industry, as well as oils and other toxic chemicals to local waterbodies. The Permit requires programmatic stormwater authority, policy, and management across the City's coverage area to ensure oversight of the stormwater infrastructure, permitting for new and redevelopment, outreach to residents, and protection of surface and ground waters. Compliance with the Permit is complex requiring we coordinate across almost all Tacoma's departments to manage and oversee long range planning, new development, redevelopment, source control, resources to address spills and illicit connections, and ongoing monitoring to name a few. In the latest reissuance, Ecology has new requirements that align well with work the city had already initiated for planning and managing areas of existing development.

The Urban Watershed Protection Plan (UWPP) was recently completed by the Environmental Programs Group to provide the scientific basis and the planning process on how and where we, the City, can apply stormwater services equitably as well as ensure effective water quality improvements. This City-led initiative has produced a planning process, GIS Tool, and recommendations to focus the Cities funds and staff time on Tacoma's stormwater goals.

This transparent process will be used repeatedly over time to adapt Tacoma's stormwater goals to changing conditions and concerns like climate resilience, clean up objectives, and redevelopment options. Development of the UWPP and the Watershed Tool have highlighted citywide needs to manage our watersheds ranging from scientific data layers, policy updates to manage stormwater onsite or in a more distributed green infrastructure approaches such as Low Impact Development (LID), and the importance of coordination to tie funding to needed updates. These recommended next steps inform where we should focus when we seek new grants or where to coordinate on existing projects in the planning phases to improve existing conditions in surface waters and protected habitats.

### Terminology:

Terminology comes from the [Phase I Permit](#) starting on page 90 of 99.

**Best Management Practices** are the schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and structural and/or managerial practices approved by Ecology that, when used singly or in combination, prevent or reduce the release of pollutants and other adverse impacts to waters of Washington State.

**Groundwater** means water in a saturated zone or stratum beneath the surface of the land or below a surface water body. Refer to Chapter 173-200 WAC.

**Impervious Surface** means a non-vegetated surface area that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as under natural conditions prior to development. A nonvegetated surface area which causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow from the flow present under natural conditions prior to development. Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, roof tops, walkways, patios, driveways, parking lots or stormwater areas, concrete or asphalt paving, gravel roads, packed earthen materials, and oiled, macadam or other surfaces which similarly impede the natural infiltration of stormwater.

**Low Impact Development** means a stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation, and transpiration by emphasizing conservation, use of on-site natural features, site planning, and distributed stormwater management practices that are integrated into a project design.

**New Development** means land disturbing activities, including Class IV-General Forest Practices that are conversions from timber land to other uses; structural development, including construction or installation of a building or other structure; creation of hard surfaces; and subdivision, short subdivision, and binding site plans, as defined and applied in Chapter 58.17 RCW. Projects meeting the definition of redevelopment shall not be considered new development. Refer to Appendix 1 for a definition of hard surfaces.

**Receiving Waters** means naturally and/or reconstructed naturally occurring surface water bodies, such as creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and marine waters, or groundwater, to which a MS4 discharges.

**Redevelopment** means, on a site that is already substantially developed (i.e., has 35% or more of existing hard surface coverage), the creation or addition of hard surfaces; the expansion of a building footprint or addition or replacement of a structure; structural development including construction, installation or expansion of a building or other structure; replacement of hard surface that is not part of a routine maintenance activity; and land disturbing activities. Refer to Appendix 1 for a definition of hard surfaces. Runoff is water that travels across the land surface and discharges to water bodies either directly or through a collection and conveyance system. See also "Stormwater."

**Source Control BMP** means a structure or operation that is intended to prevent pollutants from coming into contact with stormwater through physical separation of areas or careful management of activities that are sources of pollutants. The SWMMWW separates source control BMPs into two types. Structural Source

Control BMPs are physical, structural, or mechanical devices, or facilities that are intended to prevent pollutants from entering stormwater. Operational BMPs are non-structural practices that prevent or reduce pollutants from entering stormwater.

**Stormwater** means runoff during and following precipitation and snowmelt events, including surface runoff, drainage, and interflow.

**Stormwater Facility Retrofits** means both: projects that retrofit existing treatment and/or flow control facilities; and new flow control or treatment facilities or BMPs that will address impacts from existing development.

**Staff Contacts:**

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**Website:**

- Urban Watershed Protection Plan ([Link](#))



# 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 Environment and Watershed Health element.

# ELEMENT OVERVIEW

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

- GOAL EN-1 Ensure that Tacoma's built and natural environments function in complementary ways and are resilient to climate change and natural hazards.
- GOAL EN-2 Protect people, property and the environment in areas of natural hazards.
- GOAL EN-3 Ensure that all Tacomans have access to clean air and water, can experience nature in their daily lives and benefit from development that is designed to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and environmental contamination and degradation, now and in the future.
- GOAL EN-4 Achieve the greatest possible gain in environmental health City-wide over the next 25 years through proactive planning, investment and stewardship.
- GOAL EN-5 Plan at a watershed scale to restore and protect natural resources that contribute to watershed health.

## **Why does this matter?**

Situated in the Puget Sound Lowlands, at the mouth of the Puyallup River Valley and the tidal waters of Commencement Bay, Tacoma's natural resources provide an array of ecologically, economically and aesthetically valuable ecosystem services. Our river, streams, aquifers and floodplains convey and store water and provide critical habitat for native fish and aquatic species. Our natural areas and vegetation clean and cool Tacoma's air and water, soak up rainwater and provide wildlife habitat. The deep waters of Thea Foss support international trade, commerce and sea life. Many of these resources also trap carbon and reduce urban heat island effects. These natural resources are key contributors to Tacoma's identity, economy, reputation and sense of place.

The City has made a commitment to restoring and maintaining a high-quality environment; however many of Tacoma's natural resources have been lost over time or are currently at risk. Development increases stormwater runoff which in turn erodes

stream channels and pollutes waterways making them unable to support healthy habitat. There is concern that anticipated growth and development will result in substantial tree removal, continued habitat loss and negative impacts on at-risk plant and animal species.

The City's land use plans and investments have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in helping to guide and understand effective approaches to preserving natural resources. In addition, the City has invested time and money to restore our watersheds. The goals and policies in this chapter protect these investments and help the City meet various regulations to protect public health and the environment. With thoughtful guidance, the community can work together to face new challenges, and achieve and sustain healthy watersheds and a healthful environment for all Tacomans as the city grows.

## PRELIMINARY CHANGES

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of our community and preserving our natural resources, we are integrating several key plans into the Environmental Element of the One Tacoma Plan. These plans are critical to advancing our environmental goals and ensuring that our strategies align with broader, city-wide initiatives for a resilient, healthy, and sustainable future.

This update to the Environmental Element is crucial to addressing the evolving needs of Tacoma as it grows and faces increasing pressures on its natural resources.

### Structure

- Stronger emphasis on watershed-scale and connections to the Comprehensive Plan's vision of 15-minute neighborhoods supporting access to nature in everyday life.
- Alignment with:
  - 2019 Urban Forest Plan – Add consideration of urban heat island effect and areas underserved by urban tree canopy.
  - 2023 Climate Action Plan and Adaptation Strategy – Consider incorporation of GHG reduction targets, key actions, and data/performance measures.
  - 2023 Puyallup Tribe Comprehensive Plan – review for opportunities to update City goals and policies to align with the Tribe's Comprehensive Plan.
  - 2024 Urban Watershed Plan and Stormwater Management Program/NPDES - Stormwater management and water quality are areas of focus in GMA and VISION 2050 that need to be more wholly addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.



- Highlight the Comprehensive Plan’s overall Health and Equity themes
- Remove redundant policies

### Language

- Opportunities to highlight disproportionality in access to environmental assets and equity goals
- Align with HEAL Act “overburdened communities” terminology
- Add discussion on maximizing multiple benefits of strategies to preserve and increase ecological services
- Shift language from “no net-loss” to “net-gain” in ecological functions and environmental assets

## GMA CONSISTENCY

The Environment and Watershed Health Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the following land use planning requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA):

- **Groundwater Protection:** Safeguarding the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies.
- **Environmental Justice:** Consideration of environmental justice, including efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities.
- **Promoting Active Transportation and Reducing Vehicle Dependency:** Planning approaches that promote physical activity and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- **Stormwater Management:** Draining, flooding, and stormwater runoff and guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state.
- **Wildfire Risk Reduction:** Utilizing land use planning tools to reduce and mitigate wildfire risk.
- **Critical Areas Protection:** Designation and protection of Critical Areas – Wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat protection areas, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas and geologically hazardous areas – using the best available science.

## BACKGROUND

Together, the State Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Regional Growth Strategy and Multi-County Planning Policies in the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC)

VISION 2050 Long Range Plan, form the legal and regulatory framework that guides the development and content of local comprehensive plans. The relevant GMA laws as well as the guidance PSRC uses to review local comprehensive plans for certification, are listed below.

## 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. Three of these 15 speak specifically to Environment and Watershed Health:

##### [RCW 36.70A.020](#)

(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.

(10) Environment. Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

(14) Climate change and resiliency. Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under [RCW 36.70A.210](#) and chapter [47.80 RCW](#) adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.

- *(Note: Climate Change Element not required for Tacoma until 2029)*

#### **State Regulatory Framework for Updating the Environment and Watershed Health Element**

##### [RCW 36.70A.070 \(1\)](#)- Amended 2023

(1) The land use element shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies. The land use element must give special consideration to achieving environmental justice in its goals and policies, including efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities. Wherever possible, the land use element should consider utilizing urban planning approaches that promote

physical activity and reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled within the jurisdiction, but without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state. Where applicable, the land use element shall review drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state, including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound. The land use element must reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires by using land use planning tools...

(9)(a) A climate change and resiliency element that is designed to result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions and that must enhance resiliency to and avoid the adverse impacts of climate change, which must include efforts to reduce localized greenhouse gas emissions and avoid creating or worsening localized climate impacts to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

(b) The climate change and resiliency element shall include the following sub elements:

(i) A greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub element;

(ii) A resiliency sub element.

(c) The greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub element of the climate change and resiliency element is mandatory for the jurisdictions specified in [RCW 36.70A.095](#).

The resiliency sub element of the climate change and resiliency element is mandatory for all jurisdictions planning under [RCW 36.70A.40](#).

(d)(i) The greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub element of the comprehensive plan, and its related development regulations, must identify the actions the jurisdiction will take during the planning cycle consistent with the guidelines published by the department pursuant to [RCW 70A.45.120](#) that will:

(A) Result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions generated by transportation and land use within the jurisdiction but without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state;

(B) Result in reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled within the jurisdiction but without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state; and

(C) Prioritize reductions that benefit overburdened communities in order to maximize the cobenefits of reduced air pollution and environmental justice.

(iii) A jurisdiction may not restrict population growth or limit population allocation in order to achieve the requirements set forth in this subsection (9)(d).

(e)(i) The resiliency sub element must equitably enhance resiliency to, and avoid or substantially reduce the adverse impacts of, climate change in human communities and ecological systems through goals, policies, and programs consistent with the best available science and scientifically credible climate projections and impact scenarios that moderate or avoid harm, enhance the resiliency of natural and human systems, and enhance beneficial opportunities. The resiliency sub element must prioritize actions that benefit overburdened communities that will disproportionately suffer from compounding

environmental impacts and will be most impacted by natural hazards due to climate change. Specific goals, policies, and programs of the resiliency sub element must include, but are not limited to, those designed to:

- (A) Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency to climate impacts, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration;
- (B) Identify, protect, and enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built environment factors, that support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice; and
- (C) Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns.

#### [WAC 365-196-405](#)

(1) (c) The element must contain the following features:

Provisions for protection of the quality and quantity of ground water used for public water supplies.

(2) (e) Counties and cities must review drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area or nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state, including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound. Water quality information may be integrated from the following sources:

- i. Planning and regulatory requirements of municipal stormwater general permits issued by the department of ecology that apply to the county or city.
- ii. Local waters listed under Washington state's water quality assessment and any water quality concerns associated with those waters.
- iii. Interjurisdictional plans, such as total maximum daily loads.

Per [RCW 90.56.010](#), "Waters of the state" includes lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, inland waters, underground water, salt waters, estuaries, tidal flats, beaches and lands adjoining the seacoast of the state, sewers, and all other surface waters and watercourses within the jurisdiction of the state of Washington.

#### [WAC 365-196-485 \(1\)\(d\)](#)

RCW 36.70A.070(1) requires counties and cities to provide for protection of the quality and quantity of ground water used for public water supplies in the land use element. Where applicable, the land use element must review drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area and in nearby jurisdictions, and provide guidance to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state, including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound.

[RCW 36.70A.172](#) - Critical Areas Designation and Protection – Best Available Science

(1) In designating and protecting critical areas, cities shall include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas. In addition, cities shall give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

#### WAC 365-190-080 Critical Areas

(1) Cities must protect critical areas. Cities required to plan under the act must consider the definitions and guidelines in this chapter when designating critical areas and when preparing development regulations that protect all functions and values of critical areas to ensure no net loss of ecological functions and values.

(2) Cities must include the best available science as described in chapter [365-195 WAC](#), when designating critical areas and when developing policies and regulations that protect critical areas. Cities must give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries. Cities are encouraged to also protect both surface and groundwater resources, because these waters often recharge wetlands, streams and lakes.

(3) Cities are encouraged to develop a coordinated regional critical areas protection program that combines interjurisdictional cooperation, public education, incentives to promote voluntary protective measures, and regulatory standards that serve to protect these critical areas.

(4) Cities should designate critical areas by using maps and performance standards.

- a) Maps may benefit the public by increasing public awareness of critical areas and their locations. Staff may also benefit from maps which provide a useful tool for determining whether a particular land use permit application may affect a critical area. However, because maps may be too inexact for regulatory purposes, cities should rely primarily on performance standards to protect critical areas. Cities should apply performance standards to protect critical areas when a land use permit decision is made.
- b) Cities should clearly state that maps showing known critical areas are only for information or illustrative purposes.

## **VISION 2050**

PSRC's VISION 2050 sets a four-county regional plan for growth. The multicounty planning policies (MPPs) developed as part of this effort provide a framework and reference guide for comprehensive plan updates.

VISION 2050 promotes protecting and restoring natural systems, conserving habitat, improving water quality, and reducing air pollutants. Since the health of all residents and the economy is connected to the health of the environment, therefore planning should

consider the impacts of land use, development, and transportation on the ecosystem and use the best environmental information available.

Policies and programs should:

<b>Environment</b>	
<b>Protect and restore the environment</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>
Protect critical areas, habitat, and water quality and coordinate planning with adjacent jurisdictions, tribes, countywide planning groups, and watershed groups	MPP-En-1, En-6, En-11-12, En-14, En-16, En-Action-3
Advance integrated and interdisciplinary approaches for environmental planning and assessments	MPP-En-2
Promote innovative and environmentally sensitive development practices in siting, design, materials selection, construction, and maintenance	MPP-En-5
<b>“New Policy”</b> Support programs to ensure that all residents, regardless of race, social, or economic status, have clean air, clean water, and other elements of a healthy environment and prioritize the reduction of impacts to vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately affected	MPP-En-3-4, En-7-8, En-21
<b>“New Policy”</b> Support and incentivize environmental stewardship on private and public lands	MPP-En-10
<b>“New Policy”</b> Identify open space, trail, and park resources and needs, and develop programs for protecting and enhancing these areas	MPP-En-11-12, En-15, En-Action-4
Protect and restore native vegetation and tree canopy	MPP-En-9, En-13
<b>“New Policy”</b> Protect and restore hydrological functions and water quality, including restoring shorelines and estuaries, removing fish-blocking culverts, reducing use of toxic products, and retrofitting basins to manage stormwater	MPP-En-16-20
Ensure all federal and state air quality standards are met and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases	WAC 173-420-080 MPP-En-22

<b>Climate Change</b>	
<b>Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of state, regional, and local reduction goals</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>
<p>“New Policy” Support achieving regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “New Policy” Electrifying the transportation system,</li> <li>• Reducing vehicle miles traveled through increasing alternatives to driving alone and using land use strategies that reduce trips and trip length, and</li> <li>• Expanding the use of conservation, alternative energy sources, and energy management technology</li> </ul>	MPP-CC-1, CC-3, CC-5, CC-11-12, CC-Action-3
Reduce building energy use through green building and retrofit of existing buildings	MPP-CC-2, CC-Action-3, DP-46
“New Policy” Protect and restore natural resources that sequester and store carbon	MPP-CC-4
“New Policy” Address impacts to vulnerable populations and areas that have been or will be disproportionately affected by climate change	MPP-CC-6, CC-8, CC-Action-3, CC-Action-4
“New Policy” Identify and address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on the region to increase resilience	MPP-CC-7-10, CC-Action-4
“New Policy” Address rising sea water by siting and planning for relocation of hazardous industries and essential public services away from the 500-year floodplain	MPP-CC-10
<b>Land Use/Development Patterns</b>	
<b>Promote healthy communities</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>
“New Policy” Reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes	MPP-RC-3, DP-18

## 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 **Environment and Watershed Health** Element addresses these priority outcomes:

1. **Climate impacts, Air Quality and Urban Heat Index.** Overburdened communities, that is communities that experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures or greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, tend to be overwhelmingly BIPOC communities and low-income communities. These communities will be most impacted by climate change and climate exasperated events such as wildfires and heat waves. Tacoma's Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaption Strategy are committed to implementing actions and strategies that would prioritize these frontline communities while protecting and enhancing the city's environmental assets.
2. **Life expectancy at birth.** Longer life expectancy is correlated with higher environmental quality, which includes the quality of the air and water. Policies that protect and improve Tacoma's natural environment and watershed health can mitigate the chronic health impacts of air pollution and water contamination, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, that decrease life expectancy.
3. **Access to healthy foods.** When healthy, Tacoma's watersheds and natural environment nurture food production through local farms. A healthy, biodiverse ecosystem supports food diversity, which promotes nutritional health and is a key component of access to healthy foods. As watersheds are connected to larger bodies of water and impact surrounding ecosystems, their health impacts food systems beyond local food production.

## 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 nine community visioning workshops and categorized it into overarching themes representing community priorities for Tacoma’s growth over the next 25 years. Additionally, the Project Team reviewed community input gathered through previous engagement activities that occurred between 2016 to present day in the Tacoma Existing Engagement Gap Analysis report.

## Environment & Watershed Health

In recent years, various initiatives focused on environmental and watershed health have emerged, including the Urban Watershed Protection Plan and the Urban Forest Management Plan. Concerns about the impact of human activities on natural spaces, particularly the cleanliness of local water bodies, were highlighted by Tacoma residents through surveys and workshops. The restoration and cleanup of natural areas were identified as top priorities, alongside supporting green jobs and enhancing infrastructure.

Community members expressed a desire to collaborate with the Puyallup Tribe on environmental stewardship. Challenges identified included the need for increased funding for groundwater protection and infrastructure maintenance. Air and water pollution emerged as significant health concerns, exacerbated by recent wildfire events. Additionally, the UWPP noted underrepresentation of Latinx/Hispanic and renter groups in their engagements, with the most active watersheds being Foss Waterway, Flett Creek, and North Tacoma.