



City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item
D-2**

To: Planning Commission
From: Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division
Subject: **2015 Comprehensive Plan Update**
Meeting Date: April 1, 2015
Memo Date: March 26, 2015

At the next meeting on April 1, 2015, the Planning Commission will engage in a working session on multiple elements and subjects associated with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, including an overview of the draft Transportation Master Plan, a briefing on the Environmental Policy and the Housing Elements, and a review of the proposed Urban Form chapter and how it relates to open space and neighborhoods issues. Staff will also review the outreach strategy highlighting the series of the Community Workshops in Council Districts scheduled to occur in March-April.

The following background and supporting materials are attached:

1. A memo from Fehr & Peers regarding the Transportation Master Plan
2. A memo from ESA regarding the Environmental Policy Element
3. An outline of the current Housing Element content
4. A preliminary draft Existing Conditions Report exploring issues of residential infill development in Tacoma produced by a graduate student planning group from the Portland State University
5. An outline of the Urban Form Chapter
6. An illustration of Urban Form Building Blocks
7. An announcement of the Community Workshops

If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 591-5531 or satkinson@cityoftacoma.org.

Attachments (7)

c: Peter Huffman, Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 24, 2015
To: Steve Atkinson, City of Tacoma and Deborah Munkberg, 3SquareBlocks
From: Kendra Breiland, Fehr & Peers
Subject: **April 1, 2015 Planning Commission – Transportation Check In**

Fehr & Peers staff is looking forward to presenting at the April 1, 2015 Tacoma Planning Commission meeting and getting Commissions' perspectives on how the Transportation Element should proceed. During the presentation, we anticipate covering the following topics:

- Overview of the Transportation Master Plan, which is out for public review. Topics include:
 - Contents of the TMP
 - How the TMP responds to land use allocations
 - Public outreach efforts
 - Goals and policies forming the foundation for the TMP (Commissioners provided input on the goals and policies earlier this year)
 - Layered network framework that guided the TMP (follows the Green Transportation Hierarchy, which was developed in the Mobility Master Plan)
 - Networks for each travel mode (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, auto)
 - How conflicts between modes will be addressed
 - Transportation demand management strategies
- How the TMP informs the Transportation Element
- Decisions that still need to be made within the Transportation Element

This presentation will include discussion of key items that we understand to be of interest to Commissioners:

- How are complete streets addressed within the TMP?
- How is the Mobility Master Plan being incorporated into these efforts?
- 20 Minute Neighborhoods – what are they and how are they being used?
- What is System Completeness and why is this policy shift recommended?

We welcome input and feedback from the Commission, especially as it relates to additional items they would like addressed in the Transportation Element. The draft TMP is available for review at: https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/public_works/engineering/transportation_master_plan/.



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memorandum

date March 24, 2015

to Stephen Atkinson, Planning and Development Services
Tacoma Planning Commission

from Reema Shakra, Environmental Science Associates
Deborah Munkberg, 3 Square Blocks

subject Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update - Environment Element Meeting #1 of 2

What is the topic of discussion?

We will have a high-level discussion of the following three chapters of the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan at the April 1st Planning Commission meeting (*note: asterisks indicate policy topics that overlap with another chapter*):

1. Environment Policy Element - this chapter provides a policy framework for regulating development based on environmental considerations, with special emphasis on critical areas. Policies address the following topics: low impact development*, pollution and remediation, recreation and open space*, air and water quality, stormwater and solid waste, noise, scenic areas*, and critical areas* (aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, wetlands and stream corridors, and mineral resource lands). This chapter was adopted in 2004, and last amended in 2011.
2. Urban Forest Policy Element - this chapter directs the City and Metro Parks to promote, conserve and improve Tacoma's urban forest. The intent of the chapter is to also educate the community about the value of an urban forest as a community resource and asset. The element is meant to serve as a policy foundation for developing an Urban Forest Management Plan and Manual for City staff, agencies, and developers. Policies address the following topics: urban forest management, preservation, planting care and maintenance, urban agriculture, planning and design, and urban forest in rights-of-way and public property. This chapter was adopted in 2010.
3. Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element - this chapter is a parks and open space plan that is meant to satisfy the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office funding requirements, provide a basis for directing capital projects and funding allocations, and establish policy directives that aim to create an integrated network of open space lands and facilities, including parks, habitat areas, trails, community gardens, shorelines, and habitat connections. Policies address the following topics: recreation lands and facilities*, urban parks, green infrastructure*, community gardens, trails, waterfront, habitat areas*, critical areas preservation*, administration and operation, implementation. Appendix I identifies high priority projects for expanding and improving Tacoma's open space and habitat network. Appendix II

lists Tacoma’s inventory of existing parks and open space. This chapter was adopted in 2008, and last amended in 2014.

What are the proposed changes?

Structural

The following are recommended adjustments to the overall structure of the three elements:

1. Consolidate all three elements into one element and call it the “Environment Policy Element.”
2. Move recreation component of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element into Public Facilities and Services (recreation to be discussed in more detail at another meeting).
3. Remove the implementation section of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element (possibly to an appendix) and move the inventory and project list appendices to the Capital Facilities Plan.
4. Move glossary sections from Urban Forest and Environment into a separate Glossary chapter that defines terms used throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Consolidate the sections into an outline that follows these general topics:

Section I - What is this chapter about?

Section II - Why is this chapter important?

Section III - Goals and policies

Section IV - Background information (if deemed necessary)

Section V - Maps

6. Replace narrative text with infographics, text boxes, and pictures. Background information in narrative form can be included at the end of the element if deemed necessary.

Content

The following are recommended adjustments to the content of the three elements:

1. Remove redundant policies, policies that are no longer relevant, policies included in other planning documents, and low priority policies. Remove detailed policies and include only general policies (policies that speak to the 10,000 foot level).
2. Review policies to ensure consistency with PSRC’s Vision 2040 and Countywide Planning Policies.

3. Adjust policies that address critical areas in the following manner:
 - a. Review policies for consistency with best available science. For example, possible outcomes from best available science review might be to change the wetland rating system and improve protections for steep slopes in the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance. Such regulatory changes may require adjustments to the wetland policies and new policies that address geologically hazardous areas. Policies addressing frequently flooded areas may also need to be added.
 - b. Evaluate the adequacy of existing policies addressing aquifer recharge areas for protecting Tacoma’s sources of drinking water, and recommend changes if needed.
4. Reevaluate intent of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation and Urban Forest elements to create regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to protecting tree canopy, open space, and habitat areas because the City has not yet followed through on implementation of these elements.
5. Add new policies that address climate change, both to increase Tacoma’s resilience to climate change and to reduce the community’s greenhouse gas emissions.
6. Add new sustainability policies promoting equitable access to open space and proximity to a healthy environment, and supporting a healthy economy that recognizes Tacoma’s environment in monetary terms (i.e., ecosystem services).
7. Clarify the difference between conserving and preserving open space and habitat areas with restoring such areas.

What are we discussing at the meeting?

The recommendations identified above will be discussed in more detail at the meeting. The following questions will also be posed to the Planning Commission at the meeting to facilitate a discussion around the major themes the elements should address.

1. Is the current vision for the elements still relevant? Do the visions for each element adequately characterize what you think Tacoma’s environment should be like in 2035? Are the vision statements accurately characterized as outcomes or do they focus on approach (for example, what outcome is Tacoma trying to achieve by establishing a 30 percent tree canopy by 2030)?

Current Element	Current Vision/Goal Statement
Environment	Ensure conservation, protection, enhancement and proper management of natural resources and shoreline, while providing for a balanced pattern of development and the needs of the citizens of the City of Tacoma.
Urban Forest	The City of Tacoma takes the lead in establishing a citywide tree canopy cover of 30 per cent by the year 2030 ("30-by-30") through effective education, extensive outreach, innovative partnerships and pragmatic implementation strategies.

Open Space
Habitat and
Recreation

Create an integrated system of habitat and recreation lands and facilities in Tacoma that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, supports and nurtures plant and wildlife habitat, offers a well-balanced range of recreation opportunities and enriches the lives of Tacoma's current and future citizens.

By the year 2034, Tacoma will be a more livable and green city through implementing the policies in this Plan. Significant progress will have been made toward conserving Tacoma's habitat areas. Habitat restoration efforts will be well-established and active community stewardship will play a major role. The city as a whole will have more vegetation, supporting healthy tree canopy coverage, while achieving a decrease in invasive species. Tacoma will have achieved a net gain in overall habitat health and a reduction in the city's environmental footprint over 2014 conditions. Tacoma's parks and recreation facilities will be assets within each neighborhood, including the downtown business district and shoreline areas. The City will have developed and improved its trail system and established links with regional trails. Tacoma's parks and open spaces will support a high quality of life, a healthy environment and a vital economy.

2. What are the top three priority areas (or themes) that the policies should address?

Current Housing Element Content

- **Neighborhood Quality** – A combination of policy to protect and preserve single family areas, with policy on infill housing options as well as transitions between centers and residential neighborhoods.
- **Housing Preservation** – Intent statement is similar to Neighborhood Quality, but policies suggest that primary means of meeting housing needs are through preservation and repair of existing structures. Policies also commit City to performing housing conditions surveys.
- **Housing Choice** – Promotes a range of housing types but continues to emphasize that the general housing preference is for single family detached housing. Recognizes changing needs and desires of different demographic groups, but the policies do not all specifically relate to the expansion and diversification of housing units. There are several design related policies that better fit under the proposed Design and Development Chapter.
- **Housing Affordability** – Intent is to increase the amount of affordable housing. Recognizes a continuum of affordable housing types. This chapter includes affordable housing principles that are not identified as policies. For example one principle is that every neighborhood needs affordable housing developments, but this is not carried over into policy.
- **Housing Fairness** – This section intent is repetitive of the section on Housing Choice but also includes policies on housing discrimination, dispersion of affordable housing, and barrier free housing access.
- Recommended Actions to Implement

Proposed Element Sub-Chapters

- Diverse and Expanding Housing Supply
- Housing Access
- Housing Location
- Housing Affordability
- Health and Safety

Other Policy Issues and Recommendations

- Integrate 2030 housing targets and goal for 25% of housing targets to be met at affordable levels
- Update intent statements to be more direct and succinct
- Better integrate affordable housing principles into the policy element
- Shift neighborhood issues to chapter on Urban Form
- Reconcile policies on concentration versus dispersion of housing and affordable housing units
- Better balance policies on protecting and preserving single family areas with other policy objectives
- Include only data that relates to policies

Proposed Intent Statements for Housing Chapter	Explanation	Intent and Policy Support from VISION 2040
Ensure adequate access to a range of housing types for a socially- and economically-diverse population.	Expanding diversity of housing options is supported through zoning and development standards as well as incentivized through the Multifamily Tax Exemption. 65% of the City's housing units are currently single family detached structures. Achieving the 2030 housing targets adopted in the Countywide policies will require a greater focus on multi-family units.	<p>Intent: Our success depends on ensuring the availability of a variety of housing types and densities, as well as an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents.</p> <p>MPP-H-1: Provide a range of housing types and choices to meet the housing needs of all income levels and demographic groups within the region.</p>
Expand the number and location of housing opportunities, both market rate and assisted, for families and individuals throughout the city.	While the primary focus of our zoning and growth allocations is to accommodate growth downtown and in the centers, this intent promotes an equitable accommodation of new housing units and types within all neighborhoods, as well as a desire for both affordable and market rate units.	MPP-H-5: Expand the supply and range of housing, including affordable units, in centers throughout the region
Concentrate new housing in and around centers and corridors near transit and services to reduce the housing/transportation cost burden.	The City's growth strategy promotes the highest concentration of new housing units within designated centers (Downtown, Urban, Community and Neighborhood) to promote new development in locations that are adequately serviced by transit and other amenities. This statement also recognizes that centers are integrated into broader neighborhoods and in some cases additional housing density around the centers may be appropriate given the proximity to services and transit within the center.	MPP-H-4: Develop and provide a range of housing choices for workers at all income levels throughout the region in a manner that promotes accessibility to jobs and provides opportunities to live in proximity to work.
Support fair, equitable, healthy, resource efficient and physically-accessible housing.	This intent statement represents policy issues that are more directly implemented through the work programs of other Departments,	Intent: The region will preserve, improve, and expand its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe

	<p>including rehabilitation loan programs, energy efficiency programs, and the work of the Human Rights Division at the City of Tacoma which investigates and resolves complaints alleging discrimination in housing which violate Chapter 1.29 of the Tacoma Municipal Code and the Federal Fair Housing Act.</p>	<p>housing choices to every resident. The region will continue to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.</p>
<p>Increase the amount of housing that is affordable, especially for lower income families and special needs households. Promote a supply of permanently-affordable housing for Tacoma's most vulnerable residents.</p>	<p>This intent is consistent with adopted Countywide policies to achieve 25% of the 2030 housing targets as affordable units. In addition, the City of Tacoma Housing Division in its administration of CDBG funds has a lead role in promoting a supply of permanently affordable housing units, typically targeting the most vulnerable residents.</p>	<p>MPP-H-2: Achieve and sustain — through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development — a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of low-income, moderate-income, middle-income, and special needs individuals and households that is equitably and rationally distributed throughout the region.</p>

SPRING | 2015

EXPLORING ISSUES OF RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF TACOMA:

DRAFT Existing Conditions Report

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	3
The Regulatory Context: Housing is a regulatory requirement	3
The Planning Context: Population growth necessitates more housing options	4
The Problem: To address questions about compatibility and affordability	5
The Purpose: To design a multi-audience toolkit to guide strategic infill development..	6
CHAPTER 2. SNAPSHOT OF TACOMA	7
Demographic characteristics	7
Population density	7
Population of color	8
Average household size	8
Median annual household income	9
Percent of population in renter-occupied units.....	9
Presence of older adults (60+) in household.....	10
Built environment characteristics.....	11
Housing units	11
Vacancy rate.....	11
Location affordability index.....	12
Median year built of improved structures.....	13
Median total market value.....	14
Intersection density and street corners	15
CHAPTER 3. WHAT IS TACOMA’S EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT?	16
Why examine residential development patterns?.....	16
Making the distinction between residential “character” and “patterns”	16
What are Tacoma’s broad residential development patterns?	18
Neighborhood patterns: Overview and methodology.....	18
CHAPTER 4. LET’S TALK ABOUT: COMPATIBILITY	25
CHAPTER 5. HOW DOES TACOMA CURRENTLY PLAN TO MAINTAIN RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS AND CHARACTER?	27
A Note on Design Compatibility	29
A Note on Density.....	29
A Note on Affordability	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	32
APPENDICES.....	33
A. Neighborhood character audit.....	33
B. Select Lot Size and Building Envelope Standards	35
C. Relevant Uses in Residential Zones	36
D. Municipal code supporting aesthetic compatibility, density and affordability	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Tacoma has policies that both encourage the densification of neighborhoods through a broadened range of residential infill options, and protect the character of single-family housing patterns. However, recent residential development has illustrated the difficulty of achieving goals of compatibility and density simultaneously. This prompts a closer look at the ethics surrounding affordability and equal access to opportunity. How can development incorporate better design standards and place-making practices that respond to a neighborhood's unique character while maintaining affordability through diversification of the housing stock?

The Existing Conditions Report presents an overview of the policy and regulatory context of residential infill development and its current trends in the City of Tacoma. Relating to the City's anticipated population growth, issues regarding compatibility, affordability and density are discussed, providing preliminary observations on implications for the City's planning goals.

In addition to providing a snapshot of current housing and demographic trends in the City, a preliminary analysis of different residential development patterns found throughout Tacoma is presented. This examination is prefaced by a discussion of the distinction between neighborhood patterns and neighborhood character. The study of different built form patterns reveals four distinct areas of the city: the hilly, curvilinear streets of the view-oriented neighborhoods of West End and Northeast Tacoma; the tight street grid and uniform housing stock of Central and North End Tacoma; the larger rights-of-way and mixed housing quality of the upper South End and parts of the East Side; and the unimproved streets, non-traditional lot size and low-lying, post-war housing of the lower Eastside, South End and South Tacoma neighborhoods.

Building upon these high-level observations, the report summarizes the existing zoning and municipal code that relates to issues of design, density and affordability. This establishes the regulatory framework for making future recommendations.

The information from the Existing Conditions Report establishes the foundation for informing an infill development toolkit that considers current trends and makes a statement about Tacoma's future growth. In addition, the report provides a starting point for assessing policy recommendations and implementation actions, and establishes baseline conditions for future monitoring and further analysis.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“With the opportunities and challenges that come with growth and new development, the region must be attentive to how we address the housing needs of the region’s population while protecting our environment, supporting our economy, and enhancing our communities”

– VISION 2040, Housing Chapter

In 2010, the Puget Sound region was home to nearly 3.7 million people, and it continues to grow significantly, ranking tenth of all metro areas for absolute population growth between 2012 and 2013.¹ The area’s high quality of life and employment opportunities are attracting a young and well-educated labor force, which has contributed to considerable increases in population across the region. As outlined in VISION 2040, the region’s growth strategy, local jurisdictions are required to plan for accommodating an allocation of future regional population growth. As the second largest city in the Puget Sound and center of commerce for the South Sound region, the City of Tacoma is primed to absorb a considerable share of this growth. In order to harness the opportunities that growth and development accord, the City’s mission is to “guide [our] expected community growth in a manner that protects our environmental resources, enhances our quality of life, promotes distinctive neighborhoods and a vibrant downtown, and involves citizens in the decisions that affect them.”² In anticipation of this growth, the City must plan for 127,000 additional residents and 47,000 new housing units by 2040.³ This will not only place considerable demands on existing infrastructure and land supply but also have inevitable impacts on the character of Tacoma’s communities.

The Regulatory Context: Housing is a regulatory requirement

Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties and cities to conduct periodic reviews to align their plans with any GMA changes and updated growth targets. The City of Tacoma last completed a periodic update in 2004 and is scheduled to complete its next periodic review by the end of June 2015. In addition to extending the planning horizon to 2040, the major updates to local comprehensive plans due in 2015 focus on making statutory changes, accommodating new growth targets, reviewing for consistency and updating relevant data and inventories.

The GMA requires a housing element as one of six comprehensive plan chapters. This element must:

- “[Ensure] the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods that:*
- a. Includes an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth;*
 - b. includes a statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single-family residences;*

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). Newsroom briefing: County and metro population.

² City of Tacoma (2013). Tacoma 2040: Growing Tomorrow’s City, Draft Scope of Work and Public Participation Plan.

³ Puget Sound Regional Council. (2009). VISION 2040 Growth Management Strategy.

- c. *identifies sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group homes and foster care facilities; and*
- d. *makes adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.”*

In order to implement the GMA, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has adopted VISION 2040, a strategic planning document that guides regional growth management, environmental, economic and transportation efforts in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties. VISION 2040 contains Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), an environmental framework, a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and implementation actions. The VISION 2040 housing chapter articulates an overarching goal:

"The region will preserve, improve and expand its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy and safe housing choices to every resident. The region will continue to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people."

In order to encourage sufficient housing production to meet existing and future demand, VISION 2040 emphasizes the location of housing and promotion of equal and fair access to housing. It also calls for preserving and expanding affordable housing options, and incorporating quality and environmental design in homebuilding.

The Planning Context: Population growth necessitates more housing options

A central tenet of the City's Comprehensive Plan is to accommodate growth within connected and compact neighborhoods served by multimodal transportation options. To further this goal, Tacoma's zoning code allows for high densities and mixed-use development in designated neighborhood centers and corridors. These strategies are a response to regional goals set forth by VISION 2040. While concepts like "equitable transit communities" have garnered significant political attention and financial investment in VISION 2040, direction about how to accommodate density in other ways is only provided as guidance. Recently, the PSRC developed a Housing Innovations Program (HIP), which collects resources aimed to provide local governments with information about tools and techniques for facilitating the production and preservation of affordable housing and innovative, compact development. However valuable, this is only provided as guidance.

Considering Tacoma's limited development capacity and a housing target of 47,000 additional units by 2035, the City's ability to manage its projected growth cannot solely rely on infill development in Tacoma's designated Downtown Regional Growth Center, as the City's Plan update assumes.⁴ At the same time, the City has put in place policies that preserve and protect the highly cherished character of single-family housing patterns. However, some moderate density increases in single-family neighborhoods will be needed in order to comply with federal regulations regarding equal access to opportunity and fair housing.

⁴ City of Tacoma (2013). Tacoma 2040: Growing Tomorrow's City, Draft Scope of Work and Public Participation Plan.

The Problem: To address questions about compatibility and affordability

A revival in the development potential of Tacoma's neighborhoods has encouraged new housing projects. However, recent residential infill development is highlighting the difficulty of achieving moderate density increases while simultaneously protecting residential character. It is not clear whether housing constructed in recent years necessarily achieves consistency with neighborhood design or other objectives, such as pedestrian orientation, affordable building design and sustainable construction. This uncertainty creates a problem for ensuring compatibility with neighborhood design and the perceived character of residential areas. Not surprisingly, the debate surrounding this concern is often design-centric and code-specific. But backlash against infill development often masks a deeper discussion about critical housing issues that stem from rapid and impactful change. Tacoma's ambitious housing targets and population forecasts command a close look at the ethics surrounding affordability and displacement—concepts that are often sidestepped in the name of density and design. The question is then: why is it important to diversify the housing stock and encourage affordable options in single-family neighborhoods, and how can we ensure that this development contributes positively to residential character?

The benefits of a diverse and affordable housing stock are numerous. Not only does it allow people to live in communities of their choice, but a balanced housing market is also linked to job creation, improved health outcomes and a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.^{5,6} While more affordable housing units in a community is usually a good thing, over-supplying these units in a specific neighborhood can hinder fair housing efforts by re-creating income and racial segregation. As in other parts of the region, Tacoma has a history of racial and ethnic segregation. Practices such as “redlining” and restrictive covenants on property have had long-lasting impacts on neighborhoods. Within Tacoma, certain neighborhoods, like Hilltop, were subject to redlining as a form of discrimination to segregate people of color.⁷ Neither government nor private banks would invest in schools, businesses, and public infrastructure, resulting in pockets of impoverished communities. Allowing strategic yet moderate density increases across single-family neighborhoods of both high and low opportunity is essential for reconciling this history.

However, our current economic framework hampers our ability to address the issue of housing equity. The tension between economic efficiency and social equity is exceptionally palpable in the real estate development market. Without market interventions, developers find it difficult to justify building affordable units. But if regulation is too stringent, it can create inefficiencies that harm both developers and renters by under-supplying the market and shifting more costs onto consumers. Market interventions are best exercised when they are informed by those who function in the real estate market. This means that cooperation between policymakers and developers is essential for promoting techniques that set new housing trends and generate buy-

⁵ Wardrip, K., Williams, L., & Hague, S. (2011). The role of affordable housing in creating jobs and stimulating local economic development: A review of the literature. Center for Housing Policy.

⁶ California Department of Housing and Community Development. (2014). Affordable housing cost study: Analysis of the factors that influence the cost of building multi-family affordable housing in California.

⁷ Puget Sound Regional Council. (2014). Fair housing equity assessment for the central Puget Sound region.

in from the development community. Whether the market moves developers or developers move the market, policymakers must insert themselves in an effective yet supportive manner in order to work towards greater goals. In doing so, development can reflect better design standards and place-making practices that respond to a neighborhood's unique elements and contribute to the community.

The Purpose: To design a multi-audience toolkit to guide strategic infill development

In light of Tacoma's future growth and the overlapping issues at play, the purpose of this project is to develop a toolkit that serves as a resource for those involved in designing, building, planning or participating in dialogue about Tacoma's new residential infill development. The guide will present and prioritize different approaches for promoting and implementing neighborhood-specific solutions that are oriented towards the demands of the future.

Recommendations will reflect place-making practices and propose strategies that speak not only to preserving or enhancing neighborhood character through design, but also to maintaining affordability and mitigating potential intra/inter-urban displacement. Some of these final project recommendations may guide revisions to relevant sections of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan.

CHAPTER 2. SNAPSHOT OF TACOMA

Before discussing ideas of character, compatibility and affordability, it is important to examine characteristics of the people and the place from a high vantage point. This section explores recent demographic trends and features of the built environment. Who lives in Tacoma, and where? How diverse is the city? Which locations are more welcoming to families? To older adults? What does the distribution of renters versus homeowners look like? What is the age, vacancy, value, and affordability of the housing stock? How accessible is the street network? Knowing the answer to these questions is critical for moving a conversation in any direction.

Tacoma is situated in the southern end of the Puget Sound. To the north lies Commencement Bay, to the east is Federal Way and Puyallup, to the south is Lakewood, and across Tacoma Narrows Bridge to the west lies Kitsap Peninsula and Gig Harbor. Tacoma is the second most populous city in Washington, with a population in 2013 of about 200,900. As compared to other cities along the west coast, Tacoma's geographic size is closest to San Francisco, though its population density most similar to Portland (Figure 1). Its 50 square miles of land means its population density is about 3,900 people per square mile. Most of the city was incorporated prior to 1910, with the exception of parts of Northeast and industrial New Tacoma, which were annexed after World War II. The Port of Tacoma and Joint Base Lewis-McChord military installation are major hubs of economic and employment activity. In 2011, about three-quarters of the 93,800 employees working in the city commuted into the city from elsewhere.

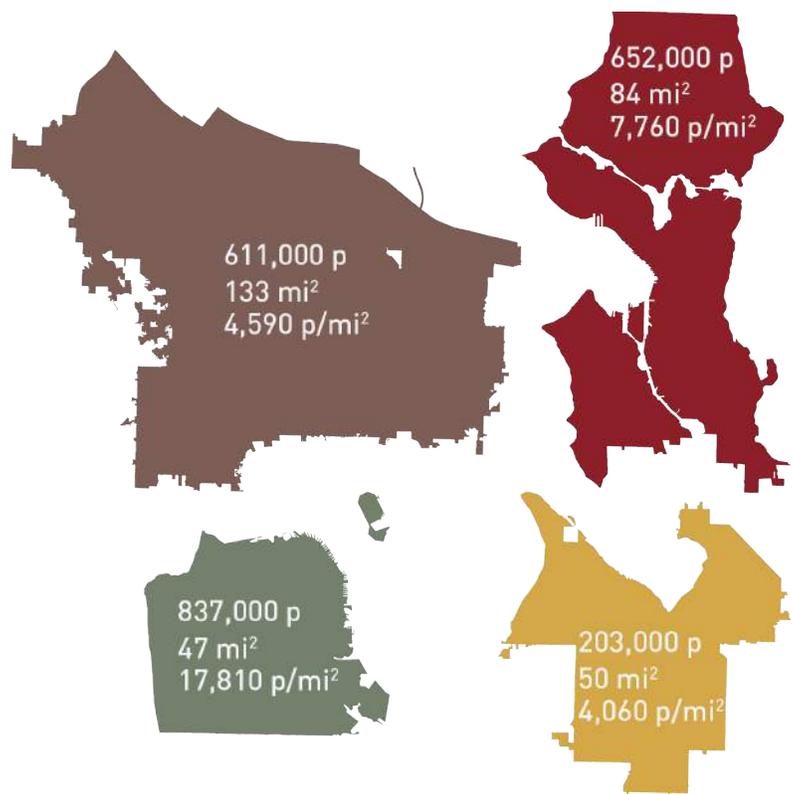


Figure 1. Geographic Size Comparison: Portland, Seattle, Tacoma and San Francisco (clockwise)

Demographic characteristics

Population density

In 2010, the population of Tacoma was 198,400, which increased to 200,900 by 2013. The downtown core of Tacoma is not only a center for commerce but also home to many people. Many parts of the North End and Central Tacoma have more than 10 people per acre, and the South End, the Eastside and South Tacoma have between 3 and 10 persons per acre.

Population of color

The share of the population of color is one indicator of diversity.⁸ It also helps shed light on issues such as segregation. In 2010, Tacoma's total share of persons of color was 31.8 percent, which was about average for the region (31.2 percent) and slightly lower than Seattle (33.7 percent). The largest community of color was the Hispanic or Latino population, which captured 11.3 percent of the population. Next was Black or African American at 10.7 percent, followed by Asian at 8.1 percent.

Tacoma's Eastside has the highest share of persons of color; one block group has 78.3 percent of the population identifying as a person of color. Parts of the South End and South Tacoma also have a higher share of this population. The North End and West End have the least racial and ethnic diversity in the city, with 20 percent or fewer residents of color.

Average household size

The average household size of the city in 2010 was 2.44. The area with the largest household size on average is the Eastside. These block groups have as high as 3.83 persons per household, suggesting larger families or co-housing among roommates. The South End has slightly higher average household sizes—between 2.5 and 3.0 persons per household. Much of the North and West End and Central Tacoma reflects the citywide average, and downtown has the lowest household size, at less than 2.0 persons per household, which might reflect the multifamily housing stock of that neighborhood

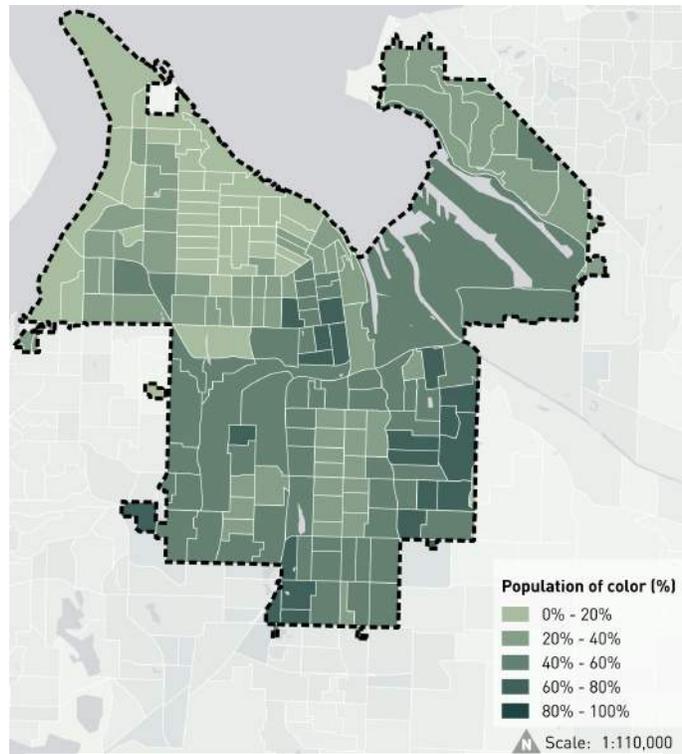


Figure 2. Population of Color

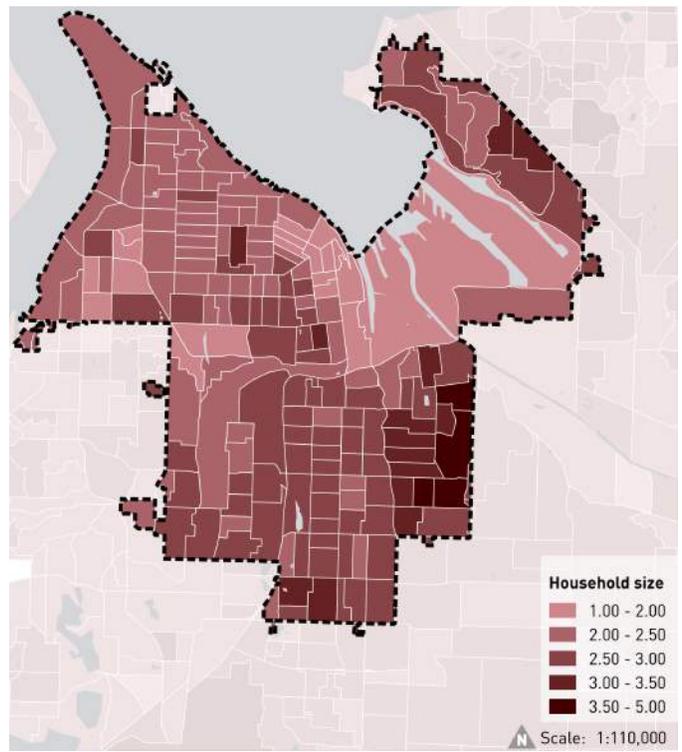


Figure 3. Average Household Size

⁸ Populations of color include all minority race categories (non-White) and persons identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

Median annual household income

In 2013, Tacoma's median household income was \$50,500, which effectively decreased from the year 2010 by more than \$600. For comparison, Seattle's median household income in 2013 was \$65,300. The distribution of income in the city shows concentrations of higher income earners near Point Defiance and the North End. Parts of Central and South Tacoma have lower incomes than average.

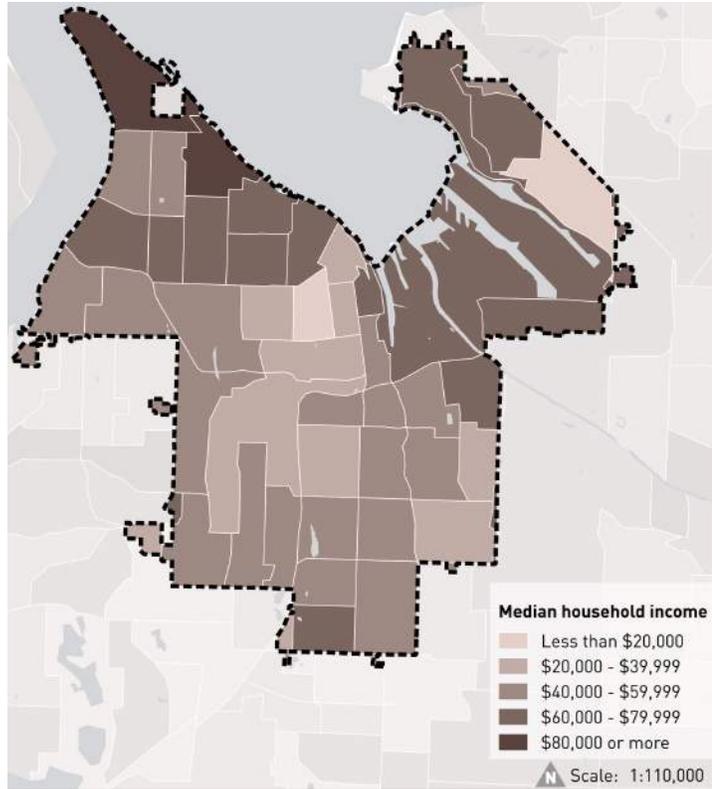


Figure 4. Median Household Income

Percent of population in renter-occupied units

In 2010, the share of the total population in renter-occupied units was 43 percent. The downtown core has the highest percentage of the population in rental housing, followed by South Tacoma and parts of the Eastside, where between 80 and 100 percent of the population is in renter-occupied units. Northeast Tacoma and the North End have the highest share of the population in owner-occupied units.

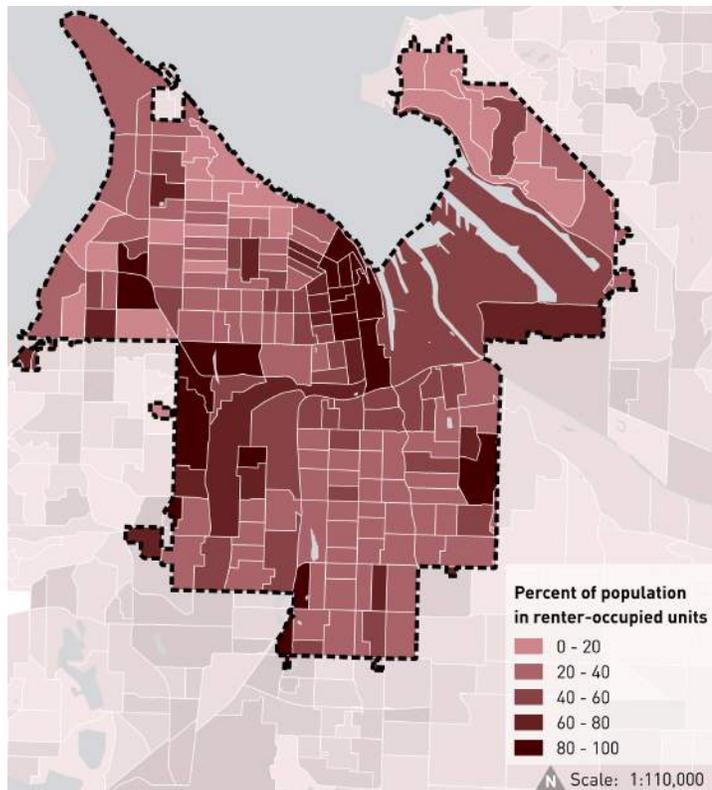


Figure 5. Percent of population in renter-occupied units

Presence of older adults (60+) in household

The presence of households with older adults should be considered when planning for services and land uses, particularly when pursuing aging-in-place strategies. Despite the median age of 31.5 in 2010, about 30 percent of all households in Tacoma—or almost 30,000—had at least one adult who was 60 years of age or older. The most significant concentrations of older adults are in the West End and near downtown. The South End also has many areas with greater densities of older adults. South Tacoma and New Tacoma have considerably fewer households with older adults.

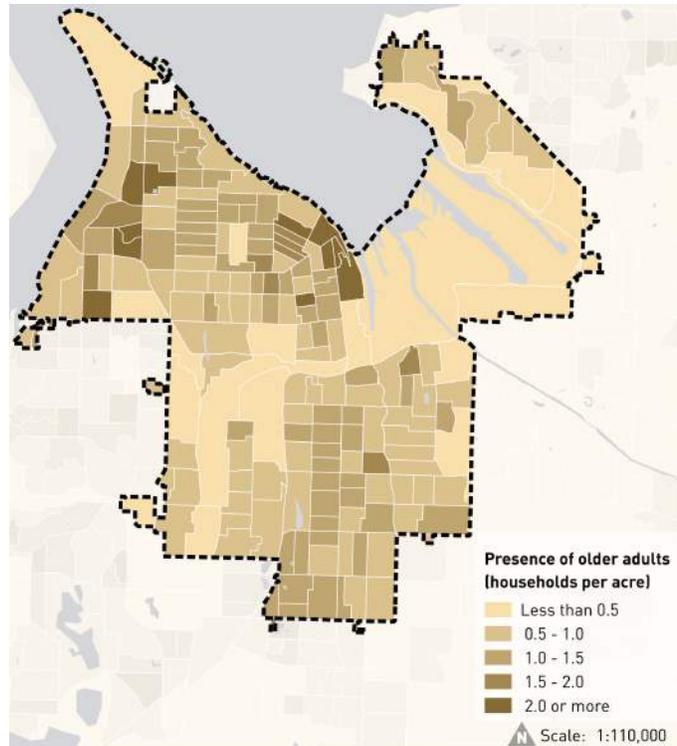


Figure 6. Presence of older adults (60+) in household

Built environment characteristics

Housing units

Housing unit density shows the distribution of the supply of housing in the city. Tacoma's 98,400 occupied housing units in 2010 were spread across 50 square miles, meaning 3.1 occupied units per acre on average. Similar to population density, much of the density of units is in the central city, where some block groups have higher than 1,200 occupied units. Some block groups in the West Slope and in South Tacoma have a high number of units per acre.

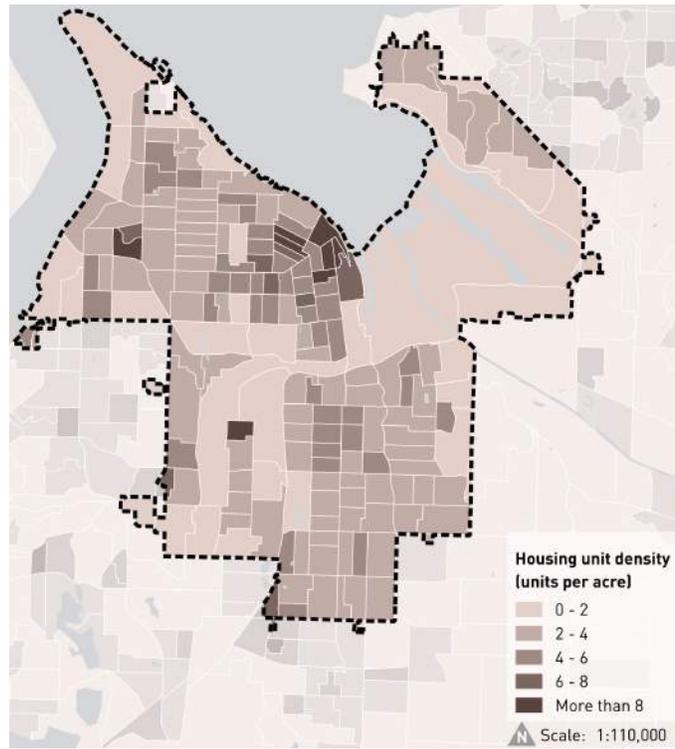


Figure 7. Housing Unit Density

Vacancy rate

Vacancy rates are an indicator of a healthy housing market. Although it varies over time, if the rate is too high, it suggests there is an oversupply of housing. This sends a signal to developers to stop building new units. If the rate is too low, it suggests a shortage of housing, which creates inefficiencies and drives up the cost to consumers. The central city has the highest concentration of vacant units, averaging 13.5 percent. South Tacoma also has higher vacancy rates, between 9 and 16 percent. The South End shows more variability in vacancy, ranging from 3.5 to 14.1 percent, with pockets of high vacancy next to low vacancy.

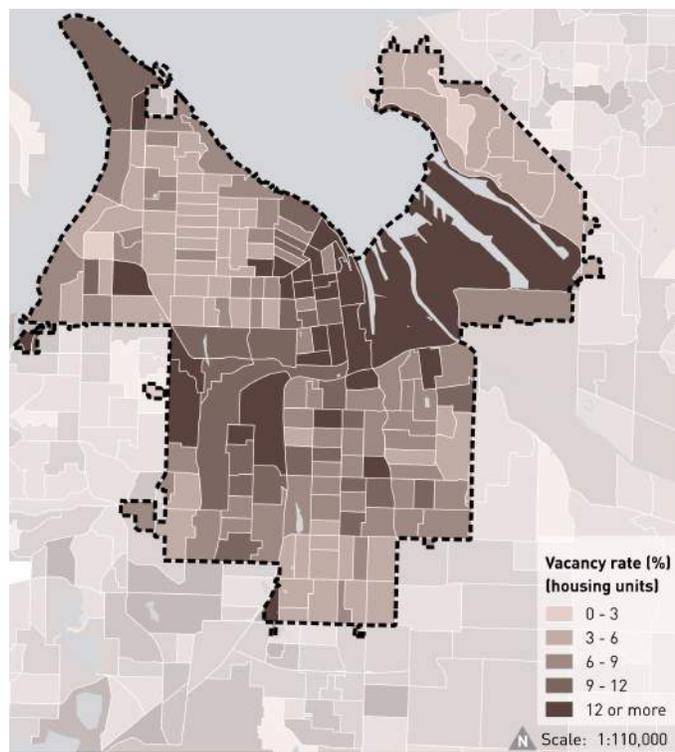


Figure 8. Vacancy Rate

Location affordability index

Affordable housing is traditionally defined as at or below 30 percent of a household's income. This threshold is insufficient to measure the true cost of a location because it doesn't consider transportation expenses. A better metric is *location affordability*. A location is considered affordable when housing and transportation expenses do not exceed 45 percent of a household's income.⁹ Applying the Location Affordability Index for moderate-income families reveals that few locations within the city of Tacoma are affordable¹⁰. Most of the affordable locations are clustered in industrial areas, the downtown area and South Tacoma. The Eastside and some sporadic areas in the West End also have some locations where housing and transportation costs total less than 45 percent of a moderate-income household's earnings.

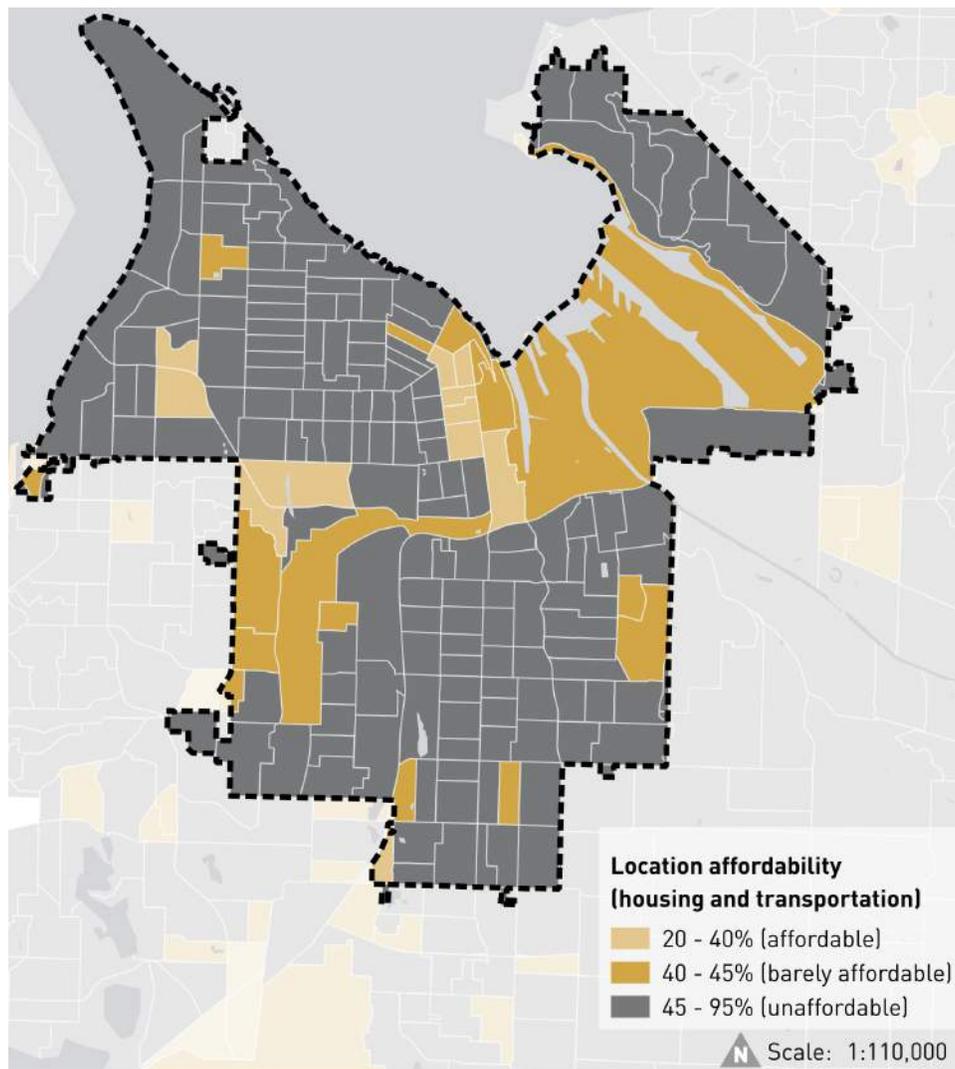


Figure 9. Location Affordability Index

⁹ Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). (2012). H+T Index methodology.

¹⁰ A moderate-income family is defined as a three-person household with one commuter earning \$53,950 or less per year, which was 80% of the regional median income in 2010.

Median year built of improved structures

The following analyses use 600' x 693' (2.9 ha) hexagonal polygon samples to depict patterns of the built environment. The benefit of using a hexagon as opposed to square polygons is that they tend to reduce orientation or sampling bias from the rectangular shapes of the street grid.¹¹ Using Tacoma's tax assessment data, the year built of each improvement and other variables can be obtained and summarized into a hex cell.

Tacoma's early history was a polycentric city, with centers in Old Tacoma and South Tacoma. The historic streetcar era of Tacoma started in 1888, and by 1912 more than 125 miles of tracks were spread across 30 streetcar lines. The map here shows that development typically followed streetcar era lines until about 1939. The North End and South End experienced rapid growth between 1940 and 1959. Development occurring in the 1960s to 1980s largely happened in Northeast Tacoma, the West End, and in the southernmost area of the city.

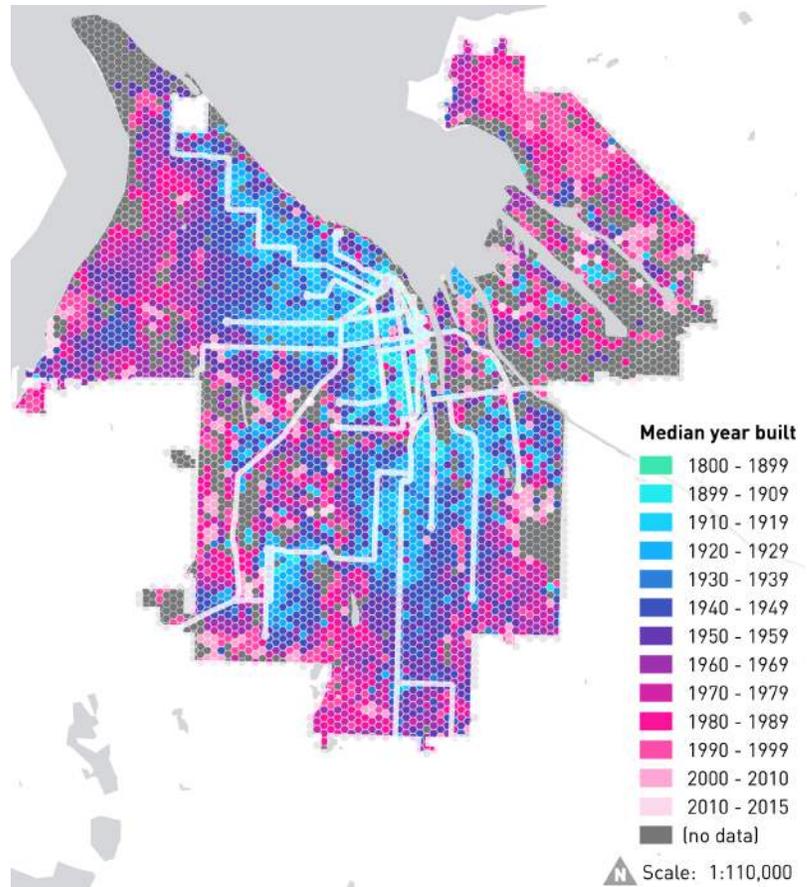
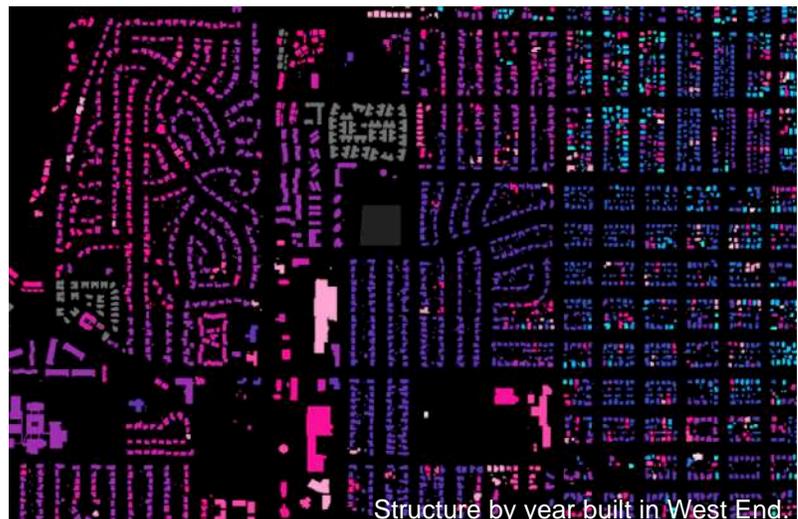


Figure 10. Median Year Built of Improved Structures



¹¹ Weisner, C., and Cowen, D. (1997). Modeling urban dynamics with artificial neural networks and GIS.

Median total market value

Total market value is the sum of land value and improvement value of assessed tax parcels. In 2015, the median total market value for residential structures in the city of Tacoma was \$198,200.¹² The areas with the highest home values are in Northeast Tacoma and the North and West Ends. There is a sharp divide between the North End and Central Tacoma in terms of total market values, and the housing stock is of lesser value in the South End and particularly the Eastside.

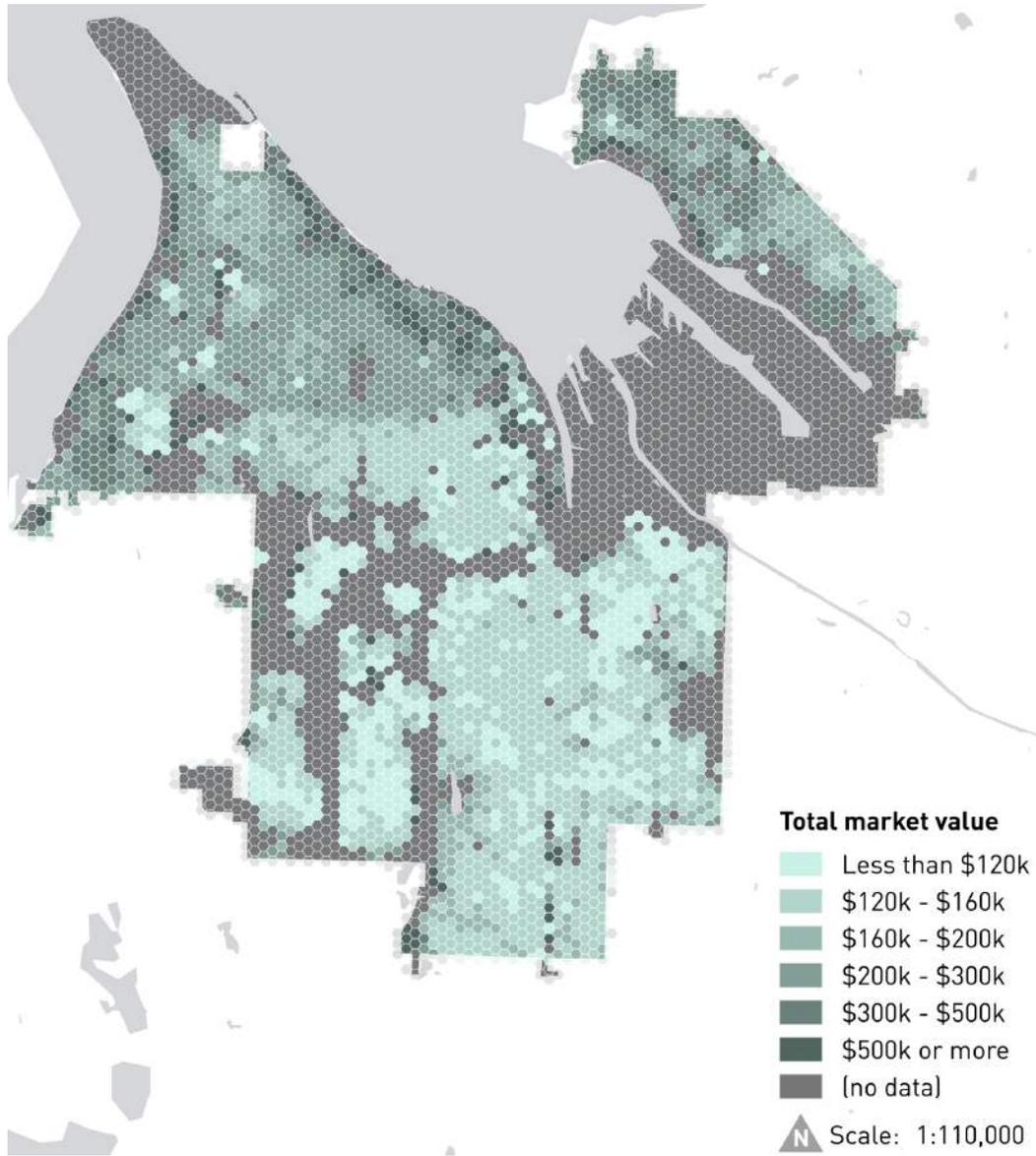
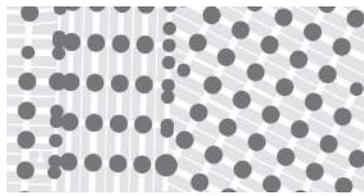


Figure 11. Median Market Value

¹² Residential structures include single-family dwellings, plexes up to 4 units, multi-family housing with 5 or more units, condominiums and high rises.

Intersection density and street corners

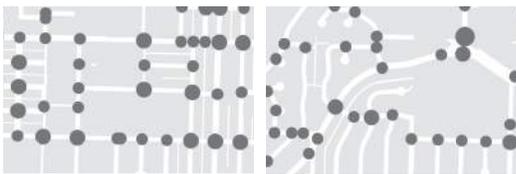
Intersection density is a measure of street network accessibility. The more intersections in an area, the better chance it has to support a walkable environment, which leads to improved health outcomes, greater use of public transportation and diminished environmental impacts. In Tacoma, the areas with the highest intersection density are the North End, Central Tacoma and parts of the South End. The West Slope and Northeast Tacoma have fewer intersections.



Intersections in the North East

Similar to intersection density, street corners are a more granular assessment of network permeability. If an intersection is the junction of two or more streets, the number of street corners is the number of streets converging at an intersection.

In Tacoma, the regular street pattern and small block size of the North End enables a high number of street corners, whereas in Northeast and the West Slope, the presence of curvilinear streets and culs-de-sac allow fewer corners.



Intersections in the South End

Intersections in the West End

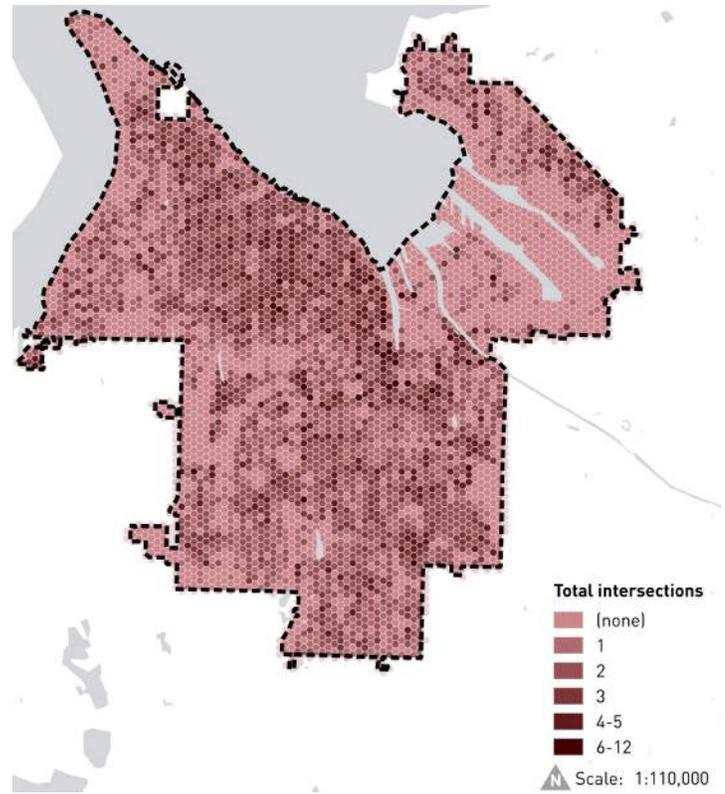


Figure 12. Intersection Density

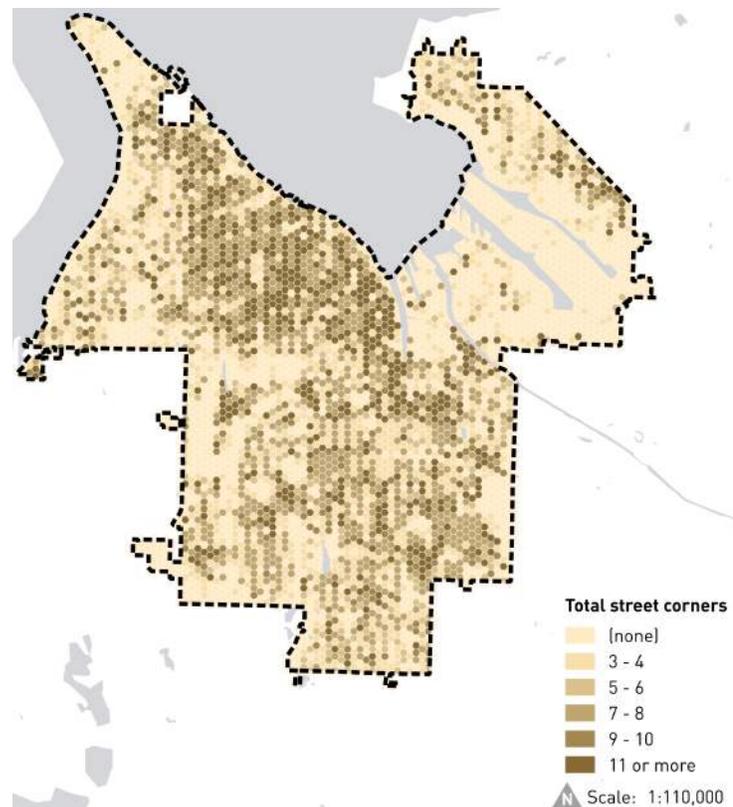


Figure 13. Total Street Corners

CHAPTER 3. WHAT IS TACOMA’S EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT?

Why examine residential development patterns?

The information above paints a broad picture of Tacoma, which is useful for understanding overall city trends and characteristics. But areas of the city vary considerably from one another. Identifying where and how these variations in residential areas occur is a necessary first step to ensure that future development maintains compatibility with existing residential conditions, as emphasized in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Understanding these variations will allow the City to enhance placemaking opportunities for residents through location-specific strategies, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach for neighborhoods. Promoting residential infill development that expands housing options and is contextually-sensitive is therefore not only a policy goal of the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, but also a key opportunity to strengthen neighborhood character.

This chapter outlines an approach to categorizing the diversity of residential development within the City of Tacoma. This is important for starting a discussion about how these distinctions can be used to make policy recommendations.

Making the distinction between residential “character” and “patterns”

Many qualities define the neighborhoods we live in—from the people who live next door, to the houses found on the block, to community greenspace, or an iconic local restaurant. The identity of a neighborhood can be enhanced through strategies that build on these existing elements to create a sense of place. A challenge in developing place-making strategies is first determining *what* and *where* all those places are, and then how to evaluate the factors that lend to their distinct character. *There is a distinction between physical patterns and neighborhood character.* Both are essential to understanding neighborhoods.

Understanding physical patterns:

Neighborhoods take a variety of physical forms. The greatest impacts on built form start with the street grid and early transportation infrastructure, like streetcar lines. This is seen in the compact form of streetcar-era neighborhoods, which varies greatly from the sprawling development pattern of interstate-era suburban communities in terms of housing density, lot size, street connectivity and orientation of housing to the street. These spatial patterns can have profound impacts on the appearance of a neighborhood. Plenty of models exist for identifying neighborhood patterns. As an example, the City of Portland’s Infill Design Toolkit defines physical neighborhood patterns broadly enough to include a range of architectural styles, instead categorizing patterns through an emphasis on maintaining continuity in more general elements such as street orientation of buildings, the presence of street trees and green areas, and the frontage and setback characteristics of buildings.¹³

¹³ City of Portland, OR. (2008). [Infill design toolkit](#). Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

Understanding neighborhood character:

Whereas neighborhood patterns are based on broad, observable, physical characteristics, neighborhood character is a more qualitative and abstract concept that often varies highly between neighborhoods. Rather than focusing solely on the physical interaction between buildings, streets and the natural environment, neighborhood character refers to how a neighborhood functions and feels, in addition to how it looks. Social, economic, demographic and cultural factors are all important elements of neighborhood character, apart from its physical pattern.

The relationship between physical patterns and neighborhood character:

The relationship between the broader, more general physical patterns of neighborhoods and the more specific elements of local neighborhood character has been studied in great depth, especially in the context of active transportation and public health. In general, there is a strong correlation. The physical layout of neighborhoods can play an important role in influencing how likely people are to be physically active through walking or biking.^{14,15} Further, this physical activity increases the likelihood of neighborhood residents developing social capital through interactions with other neighbors.¹⁶ Policies regarding pedestrian-oriented design, whether of housing or streetscapes, are rooted in these relationships. However, some studies have shown a bit more skepticism about the effect that urban design has on patterns of active travel behavior, arguing that while the design of neighborhoods and streets was important, it is not the most important factor.¹⁷

The common thread through this research on physical activity levels and neighborhood design is that the physical environment of neighborhoods is important, but not absolutely essential for determining the character of a neighborhood. There are many other socioeconomic, demographic and cultural factors that are key in determining neighborhood character.

An Approach for Defining Tacoma's Residential Patterns

Identifying the physical pattern areas that define different Tacoma's different neighborhoods is the first step in exploring context-sensitive infill design strategies. After identifying these observable and relatively objective physical characteristics, we will have a better lens with which to evaluate the more subjective elements of a neighborhood's character. *This approach does not prioritize the physical pattern and design components over the softer elements of neighborhood character, but instead recognizes the identification of neighborhoods by physical form as the first step in describing neighborhood character.*

¹⁴ Charreire, et al. (2012). Identifying built environmental patterns using cluster analysis and GIS: Relationships with walking, cycling and body mass index in French adults. *The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 9(59).

¹⁵ Owen, Neville et al. (2007). Neighborhood Walkability and the Walking Behavior of Australian Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 33, Issue 5, 387 – 395.

¹⁶ Leyden. (2003). Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93(9): pp. 1546-1551.

¹⁷ Cervero and Duncan. (2003). Walking, Bicycling, and Urban Landscapes: Evidence From the San Francisco Bay Area. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93(9): pp. 1478-1483.

What are Tacoma’s broad residential development patterns?

Neighborhood patterns: Overview and methodology

This section discusses how particular built features create distinct pattern areas across the city, helping to evaluate the spatial dimension to neighborhood character in Tacoma. Identifying these pattern areas involved quantitative and qualitative analyses, including a literature review, key-informant interviews, mapping analysis, site visits and a neighborhood audit (Appendix).

The literature review provided an understanding of the urban form and design components that would help inform a pattern analysis. Two texts were essential in the literature review: BPS (2011)¹⁸ and Clifton et al. (2008).¹⁹ BPS (2011) identified several key urban design features on which the team later collected data. These include block structure, street patterns, street characteristics (such as curbs, sidewalks, road width, surface materials and landscaping), lot pattern and building placement, built form features (such as scale and bulk), and finally vegetation, landscaping and natural features. Further, the team interviewed the primary author for BPS (2011).²⁰ He provided guidance and insight into how a similar approach could be taken for the City of Tacoma.

With these components in mind, the team could begin GIS analysis and develop a neighborhood audit protocol. Clifton et al. (2008) provided background on many GIS methods used, such as intersection density. GIS methods also consisted of choropleth mapping of demographic variables. Comparing and contrasting the various demographic and housing characteristics presented above helped inform the analysis. However, the most informative characteristics for arriving at a draft version of the pattern areas described below were:

- *Street grid and placement of building on lots;*
- *Median year built of improved structures;*
- *Broad street characteristics.*

This section discusses how particular built features create distinct pattern areas across the city, helping to evaluate the spatial dimension to neighborhood character in Tacoma. While recognizing that there are finer-scaled nuances within each pattern area, this study is informed by a high-level overview of block structure, lot size, building form and street grid. In Tacoma, four broad pattern areas have been identified (Figure 13).

¹⁸ City of Portland, OR. (2011). Urban form: Portland Plan background report. Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

¹⁹ Clifton, K., Ewing, R., Knaap, G., & Song, Y. (2008). Quantitative analysis of urban form: A multidisciplinary review. *Journal of Urbanism* 1(1), 17-45.

²⁰ Personal interview with Bill Cunningham, City Planner at the City of Portland, OR, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. (11 Feb 2015).

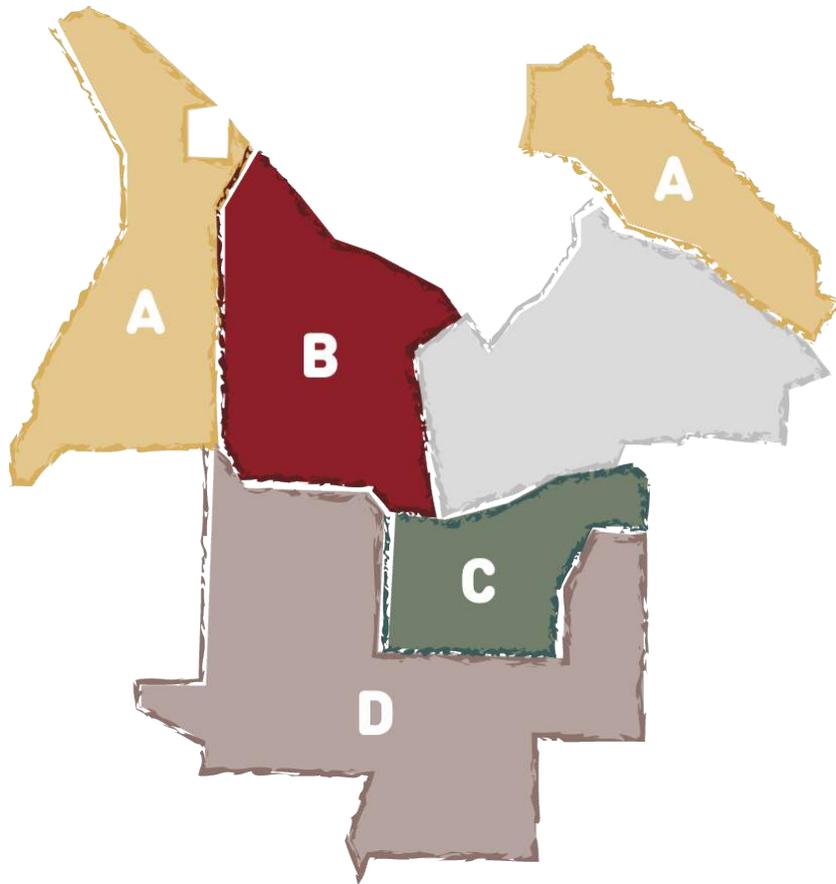


Figure 14. Residential Development Pattern Areas

Pattern area A

Buildings and use of land

Pattern Area A is characterized by a hilly landscape with steep slopes that lend to wide, curvilinear streets. Major arterials connect to pockets of homes around looping streets, culs-de-sac and dead ends. Roads are paved and well-maintained, with a complete sidewalk network. Some higher-end residential areas, particularly along the steeper slopes, have relatively narrower, unmarked roads without sidewalks, but with very low traffic volume. Alleyways are uncommon throughout this area.

Homes in this area are mostly built post-war. Garage-dominant homes (sometimes referred to as “snout houses”) and one or two-story ranches are common, though this area is more likely to have homes that have a coastal feel, with angled roofs, oversized windows and visible decks. Some materials include siding, stucco or shingle. If they are long and narrow and built low to the ground, houses are often oriented towards the street or the views along the long side. Particularly where views are prominent, homes are terraced behind one another across the sloping landscape, as the View Sensitive Overlay requires. Setbacks are large, with more prominent garages and driveways, so few cars are parked on the street. Generally, while the

average lot size is 5,000 square feet, there is a greater perceived intensity in the use of land because homes are more likely to be larger than average.

Landscape and artifacts

Pattern A is characterized primarily by its environment. A sloping landscape gives way to prominent views of the water, either across Commencement Bay or the Narrows Bridge. A low, sparse tree canopy lends to a greater expanse of sky and helps preserve these views. Abundant shrubbery adds to the landscape where trees are deficient. Well-maintained lawns reflect well-maintained homes, crisply delineating property edges. Landscaping is very distinct, with low-lying shrubs and trees that are more likely to reflect coastal vegetation. In certain areas, landscaping adds additional privacy to homes, especially along streets in the terraced neighborhoods.

Few artifacts are found in these well-kept yards. Boats and RVs are either parked in driveways or are out of sight in a garage. Generally, there are no streetlights or telephone poles visible in the residential areas, indicating newer infrastructure and a sensitivity towards preserving views. Homes are more likely to have alarm boxes or home alert signs. Sale or rent signs were uncommon.



Figure 15. Pattern Area A Housing Examples

Pattern Area B

Buildings and use of land

Pattern Area B is characterized by grid street patterns, complete sidewalks, small blocks and uniform frontages that are oriented towards the street. Based on these characteristics, the heart of the pattern area exists in the area between N. Orchard St. on the west, N. Union Ave. on the East, N. 30th St. on the North and N. 6th St. as the southern boundary. The blocks in this section of town are very short, averaging between 4-6 houses on each side of the street. Alleyways are very common in this pattern area, with many houses lacking driveways and garages due to the presence of alleyways. There appears to be a great deal of uniformity of the housing stock within blocks in this pattern area. For example, while there are a range of housing

values across this pattern area, within specific blocks there is very little difference to the untrained eye between the perceived value, size or architecture of the homes.



Figure 16. Pattern Area B Housing Examples

N. Union Ave. appears to be somewhat of a dividing line within the pattern area. On the east side of Union, the characteristics of grid street patterns, street-oriented frontages with uniform setbacks and complete sidewalks all remain fairly similar to those described in the “heart” of the pattern area; however, there is a noticeable change to larger houses, narrower streets and longer blocks. Whereas the heart of the pattern area generally has single-story ranch homes, east of N. Union is almost entirely 2-story bungalow/craftsman style homes. While the right-of-way from sidewalk to sidewalk remained constant (~52’-53’) the streets east of Union were narrower, dedicating a larger amount of right-of-way to a grassy parking strip separating the road from the sidewalk.

Due to the presence of alleys and the relatively low-density single-family homes, the streets feel very quiet and somewhat empty. There are low levels of traffic on side streets, plenty of on-street parking available and only small amounts of pedestrian and bike traffic.

Landscape and artifacts

The landscape in Pattern Area B is fairly flat, allowing for a grid street pattern; however, the rolling hills found throughout this pattern area have the effect of creating a feeling of enclosure and privacy on many of the streets in this neighborhood, since the view down the street does not continue for more than a few blocks in many places.

Yards are well-maintained but also rather minimalist, with many houses opting for a small number of shrubs, flowers or small trees. There is a partial street tree canopy which is denser

than many areas of Tacoma, but there are still many vacant areas to plant trees and very few large canopy trees. Many of the existing large trees are in private yards.

Pattern Area C

Buildings and use of land

The heart of Pattern Area C is S Yakima Ave and S 56th St. Regular block patterns with wide streets characterize this area. The right-of-way dedicates more width to the street and has narrower parking strips to accommodate on-street parking. Traffic counts are low, and major



thoroughfares collect much of the traffic. Typical block sizes are 600' x 250', but other common block sizes include 400' x 250' and sometimes 800' x 250'. Sidewalks are complete, though some areas lack them. Alleys are common, but even in locations that have alleys, residents tend to utilize on-street parking.



Housing values vary little within this pattern area, and most of the housing stock was built pre-war. Houses use moderate- to high-quality building materials. For the typical block size, there are 9–12 houses per block. Houses are uniformly set back by 36 feet and are 1–1.5 stories. American Craftsman and Craftsman-inspired homes are common. Homes have low- to medium-height roof pitches and are oriented towards the street. Lot sizes are between 5,500 and 6,500 sq ft.



Landscape and artifacts

The neighborhoods in Pattern C are mixed in maintenance. Landscaping ranges from minimalist to meticulous. High tree canopy areas are sporadic; patches of low trees and shrubs are broken by large, historic trees. Fences are common, especially in blocks that lack alleys. The presence of Jeeps, RVs, boats and trailers along the street and in parking strips creates a more rural feeling and suggests that lifestyles may be oriented

towards the outdoors. Upholstered furniture on porches, childrens' toys, and vehicles in disrepair are common sights.

Figure 17. Pattern Area C Housing Examples

Pattern Area D

Buildings and use of land

Pattern Area D has a landscape that is characterized by wide streets and sporadically unimproved roads, right-of-ways, sidewalks, and alleyways. Streets generally maintain a rectilinear arrangement, as the partially-flat and partially-rolling hill terrain does not require curvilinear intervention, though culs-de-sac do exist in some neighborhoods. Incomplete streets break the grid in many places, creating very long or deep blocks, sometimes including unofficial pedestrian or auto access across them, others remaining impermeable due to residential development. These nontraditional block sizes have encouraged creative land use, namely development opportunities for flag lots, pipe-stem development, and utilization of alleyways. Homes tend to have consistent setbacks from the street, and backyard and side yard setbacks can be generous, creating a fair amount of interstitial space between houses and also within the interior of large blocks. Use of gravel in driveways, alleyways, and partial roads is common.

Many of the houses in Pattern D were built post-war, including many ranch houses, some with second-story additions, and garage-dominant facades. Exterior cladding is mostly of this era, meaning lap siding (clapboard) is very common. Post-war housing stock is interspersed with occasional groupings of several pre-war houses. Infill development over the last fifteen years tends to have the same front setbacks as surrounding homes, but is likely to be taller and to prominently feature garages, sometimes two-car. Overall, the majority of development is low to the ground and spread out, giving this area a feeling of openness to the sky. Wide, clear streets lend to higher vehicle speeds, though thoroughfares like S Yakima Avenue, 72nd Street, and 84th Street may still include residential development, despite the faster traffic.

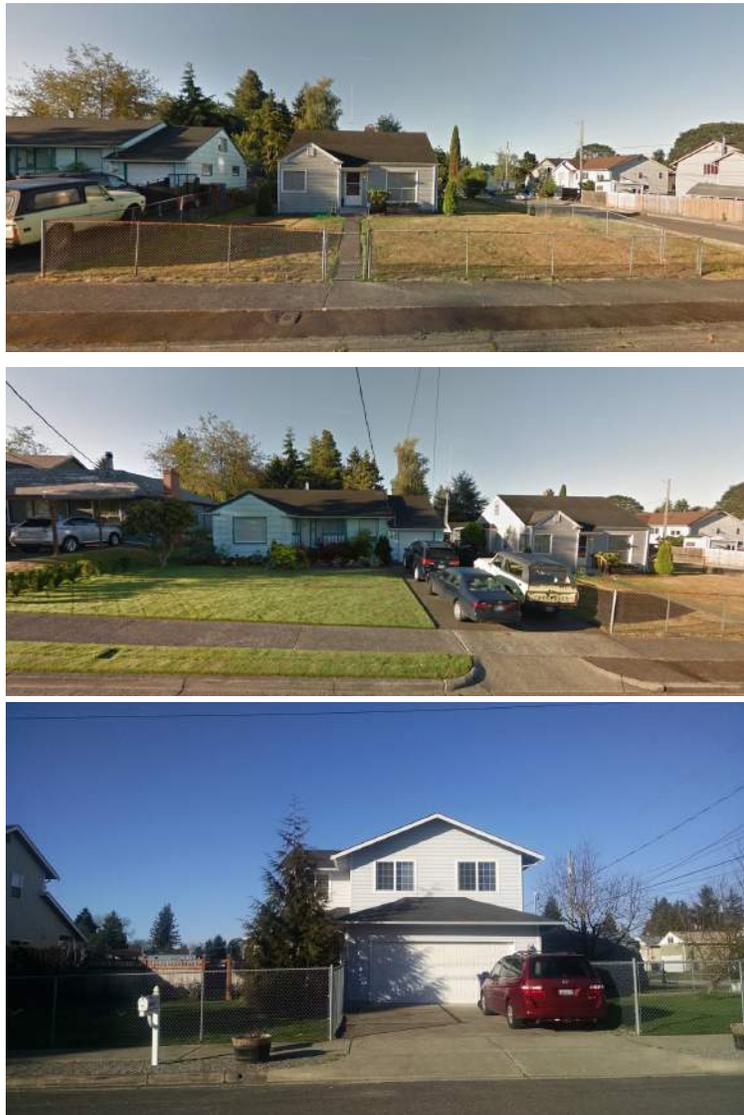


Figure 18. Pattern Area D Housing Examples

Landscape and artifacts

Lots in Pattern Area D tend to have a fair amount of green space, meaning that residents have ample lawns and gardens. Most of these are well-kept and fairly simple, with grass lawns and some flowers. Low chain link fences are fairly common in front yards, and less common, though existent, are wooden fences. The tree cover is sparse to medium, though some small groupings of mature trees are interspersed through the area in yards and often at the site of a discontinued road, but the lack of developed right-of-way means that there are few street trees.

Many residents park their cars on the street or on at-grade right-of-way, especially on blocks where unmaintained alleyways host garages. It is likely to spot RVs and boats parked at the back of houses, in alleyways, or in driveways.

CHAPTER 4. LET'S TALK ABOUT: COMPATIBILITY

Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the importance of compatibility between new and existing development, identifying physical pattern areas provides context for examining how residential infill development is responding to neighborhood design. Because design is so often a source of controversy, one goal of this study is to formulate strategies for residential infill development that is compatible with the built environment. However, before doing so, it is important to take a step back and examine the rationale for compatibility. What are the unintended consequences of promoting compatibility, and should this always be the desired goal?

On the one hand, compatibility is a sign of stability in a neighborhood. On the other hand, compatibility may not always be the desired outcome if it means continued support of the car-dominated development patterns prevalent in some of Tacoma's neighborhoods. Maintaining compatibility as a decisive factor in design policy conflicts with the feasibility and implementability of new residential development. This could essentially prevent the City of Tacoma from realizing its objectives of more compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.

First, there is a question of the future housing market for home-buyers. Millennials are a burgeoning group of homebuyers that values walkable, mixed-use, transit-accessible locations. For existing property owners to maximize their investment and increase the value of their neighborhood as more Millennials begin buying homes, they must be open to the increases in density that these new buyers will demand.

Second, even through restrictive zoning it is not possible to truly zone out "bad" development. While a city can create code that requires strict adherence to certain objective criteria (e.g. setbacks), it cannot zone for requirements such as "high quality materials" or the approval of everyone in the neighborhood, nor would most neighbors want such a restrictive policy. Furthermore, most neighborhoods have a mix of architectural styles, so it would be difficult to enforce an objective standard of uniformity. Design review is one potential option, but given the volume of developments on single-family residential lots, such a standard would be unfeasible and is not a common practice. Even in cities that have design review for higher-intensity developments, neighbors are commonly frustrated by the recommendations of the commission.

Third, the infill projects that cause the most controversy in the community are developments that depart significantly from the prevailing size, architectural style, bulk or other features of the neighborhood. This is particularly noticeable in neighborhoods where most of the housing is uniform in its design. By encouraging more diverse styles of architecture that are less "compatible," new development is less likely to stand out as a nuisance. This seems counterintuitive, yet since new development is certain to occur and design review is an unfeasible option, promoting diversity as a means of compatibility is a potential strategy for retaining neighborhood character.

Setting aside these issues, residents in the community may be opposed to *any* type of new development in a neighborhood. Such opposition can be a cause for inertia among developers and planners. This frequent situation highlights the importance of not only being sensitive to existing neighborhood development patterns, but also being mindful of the important social needs that make up neighborhood character. In the same way that neighborhoods have characteristics beyond the connectivity of their streets and the orientation of their buildings, housing has characteristics that go beyond just the architectural design of the unit. The social need fulfilled by an affordable, safe, comfortable place to call home is arguably the most important component of any housing unit. In addition to promoting compatibility with architectural styles, careful attention must be paid to this important community value to make Tacoma's housing compatible with its social needs.

CHAPTER 5. HOW DOES TACOMA CURRENTLY PLAN TO MAINTAIN RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS AND CHARACTER?

While the City of Tacoma is interested in positive changes to the status quo that may allow for a diversity of housing types, the City strives to mediate development-related change through the Municipal Code (specifically Chapter 13: Land Use Regulatory Code) as a way of meeting the perceived community desire for predictability. This section covers the City's existing building code that plays into:

- regulation of architectural and aesthetic compatibility of residential development;
- regulations around density of units and people in residential areas; and
- code that permits unconventional land use, allowing for more affordable dwelling development.

Tacoma has nine low- to medium-density residential zoning districts that comprise traditional neighborhood development patterns.²¹ They are:

R-1 District: Intended for a “typical” single-family residential neighborhood. It is most appropriate in established areas with a relatively quiet and stable neighborhood environment. The R-1 District has low traffic volumes and larger lot sizes. R-1 may be subject to the View Sensitive Overlay district.

R-1 zoning covers 7.9% of land in Tacoma.

R-2 District: The most common residential zoning district in the City. This district is similar to the R-1 District, however its density is slightly higher than the R-1 District. It permits all uses allowed in the R-1 and may also allow for lodging uses limited to one guest room. It generally abuts more intense residential and commercial districts.

R-2 zoning covers 52.5% of land in Tacoma.

R-2SRD District: Although similar to the R-2 District, it allows for a limited number of two and three-family dwellings, subject to an approved conditional use permit (“where the location, amount and quality of such development would be compatible with the single-family character of the area and enhance the area’s overall quality”). Some pre-existing multifamily dwellings may also exist in this district.

R-2SRD zoning covers 3.3% of land in Tacoma.

HMR-SRD District: Designed to apply to existing neighborhood areas or portions of existing neighborhood areas which have been designated as a Historic Special Review District because the buildings within reflect significant aspects of Tacoma’s early history, architecture and culture. Single-family dwellings are the predominant land use within the HMR-SRD District. Conversion of existing multiple-family uses to single-family uses will be encouraged, but not required.

HMR-SRD zoning covers 0.7% of land in Tacoma.

²¹ Tacoma Municipal Code 13.06.100 and Tacoma Zoning Reference Guide 2014, City of Tacoma website.

R-3 District: Intended for one-, two-, and three-family dwellings. Some lodging and boarding homes are also appropriate. The R-3 District is characterized by low residential traffic volumes and generally abuts more intense residential and commercial districts. The setback requirements are the same as the R-2 District.

R-3 zoning covers 4.1% of land in Tacoma.

R-4-L District: Intended for low-density multiple-family housing, retirement homes, and group living facilities. The R-4L district is very similar to the R-4 District, but has more restrictive site development standards which are intended to minimize adverse impacts of permitted and conditional uses on adjoining land.

R-4-L zoning covers 1.4% of land in Tacoma.

R-4 District: Intended for medium-density multiple-family housing. Other appropriate uses may include day care centers, and certain types of special needs housing. The R-4 District is located generally along major transportation corridors and between higher and lower intensity uses.

R-4 zoning covers 1.1% of land in Tacoma.

RCX District: Primarily residential in nature, though commercial uses are allowed. Commercial uses are small and serve the immediate neighborhood. This is usually a transition area to single-family neighborhoods.

RCX zoning covers 1.8% of land in Tacoma.

NRX District: Predominantly residential and discourages removal of single-family residential structures. This district encourages infill of appropriate size and design. This district is intended for areas which previously allowed denser residential uses and some neighborhood commercial uses.

NRX zoning covers .04% of land in Tacoma.

Additionally, the City of Tacoma has several high-density residential districts: **R-5** (intended for high-density multiple-family housing and also permits residential hotels, retirement homes, and limited mixed-use buildings, covers 0.1% of land in Tacoma) and **DR** (downtown residential, covers 0.6% of land in Tacoma). Other mixed-use districts allow for high-density housing.

Within these districts, a variety of housing types are allowed. Table 1 in the Appendix details the specifications of allowed uses relevant to this study. Most notably, small multifamily plexes are excluded from the **R-1** and **R-2 Districts**, relegating these units to districts that span far fewer square miles of Tacoma. Table 2 in the Appendix explores select lot size and building envelope standards for uses of note. Tacoma has made progress recently in this venue by permitting smaller-than-minimum lot sizes in all residential zones, allowing for more development options. Table 3 describes many of the Tacoma Municipal Code's specific regulations that work towards promoting the goals of residential compatibility, density or affordability. This list is not exhaustive, but it shows a broad overview of the major elements of code. Modification of these

codes may be instrumental for balancing the City's objectives. The discussion below focuses on the pieces of code that are most influential to these goals.

A Note on Design Compatibility

Cities commonly use land use code to regulate aesthetics. When building or modifying a dwelling, twenty-minute pre-application assistance meetings are available with subject matter experts (SMEs) at the City's permitting counter or over the phone. These meetings do not tend to cover aesthetic-related questions beyond minimum zoning requirements, as SMEs do not have the power to deny an application based solely upon its aesthetic appearance.

"Compatibility" is a common term in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), and it involves an immense amount of discretion. As discussed earlier, the definition of "compatibility" may range from strictly physical characteristics of dwellings to a connection between social goals and land use patterns. Currently, Tacoma interprets "compatibility" to range from physical characteristics—like allowed setback and height—to a more nondescript requirement for duplexes and triplexes to "fit in" with single-family houses. While neighborhood and subarea plans may make note of existing design features or desired architectural characteristics, these documents do not hold power over minimum zoning regulations; rather, they mostly give guidance to the rezoning of any part of that area should the need arise.

While strict regulation may keep the most offensive designs from becoming a built reality, overly specific design requirements may also limit the creative capacity of designers. Neighborhoods can benefit from having a diversity of both housing types and styles. Even historic districts can incorporate a mix of new architecture when design responds to surrounding development.

A Note on Density

Greater density can be achieved through several patterns of development. In one, increased density happens through smaller lots, smaller houses, and more houses within a given area, increasing the amount of land that is covered by buildings. In another scenario, more units are added to the existing land use pattern without a visible change to the built environment; for example, a large single-family house is divided into several units. A healthy mix can be achieved through code that allows for smaller lots and houses, pipestem lots, more small multi-family (duplex, triplex, quadruplex), accessory dwelling units and other creative options. Tacoma has made strides in allowing for the development of small lots and pipestem or flag lots.

Additionally, Tacoma does allow for some development of ADUs. Amendments to ADU regulation have been brought forward from the general public on several occasions that would extend detached ADUs to more residential districts. However, City Council maintains that the community does not want that sort of development, so these amendments have not been adopted.²² Tacoma's sentiment and regulations around ADUs is considered "typical" of municipalities.²³ Generally, Tacoma prohibits detached ADUs in the most common residential

²² From a phone conversation with Lisa at the City of Tacoma permitting counter - Monday, March 9, 2015.

²³ Alan Durning, "ADUs and Don'ts," *Sightline Daily: News & Views for a Sustainable Northwest*, March 15, 2013. <http://daily.sightline.org/2013/03/15/adus-and-donts>.

zones, where larger lots are better suited to add a secondary structure. Size requirements also tend to be overly restrictive.

Allowing for a variety of housing types includes allowing for low-density, multi-family plex housing. These dwellings can be designed to match single-family homes or have otherwise attractive facades, which the TMC suggests. However, this housing is not permitted in the most prevalent residential zones, and in R2-SRD and HMR-SRD, conditional-use permits are required for duplexes and triplexes. One of the requirements for a conditional use permit is demonstrating that “special circumstances exist on the site which make development or continuation of a single-family dwelling difficult.” Single-family dwellings are given preferential treatment in these zones, which may be contrary to goals of the Comprehensive Plan that call for greater density but also speak to the City’s policies of preserving single-family residential character. In addition, triplexes and larger are labeled “apartment houses” in TMC Title 2 (Buildings), which means that they require certain additional amenities, such as on-site laundry. Accessibility requirements established in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Act are triggered at four or more units in a building, which is a federal standard. These requirements could make development more expensive and therefore less attractive.

Tacoma does not currently permit cottage or cluster housing in residential zones. In this housing type, a handful of small, single-family homes are developed on a large lot around a common green space. This type of housing is presented as another option for increasing density in the City’s Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group’s *Policy Recommendations to the City Council* from December 2010.

A Note on Affordability

Code regulations directly impact housing affordability. The more cost-effective it is to build the unit, the less cost is passed on to the buyer. This means that any regulation that requires developers to commit more resources to a project will increase the cost of the completed home or discourage its development (i.e. the laundry machine requirement for triplexes, or requiring major infrastructure investment). Tacoma already has a decent amount of land use code that provides for development of non-standard lots, making development more attainable and cheaper; for example, pipestem development, decreased lot size standards, and variances for design requirements on oddly shaped lots. Tacoma does not have impact fees, which makes development less expensive than in neighboring jurisdictions, but may limit the City’s ability to finance and maintain developer-built infrastructure.

In 2010, about 42,000 households in Tacoma were owner-occupied.²⁴ Homeownership offers many benefits: stability, tax benefits and equity (if value increases). Most first-time homebuyers are unable to jump directly into a very large, expensive house. Maintaining an adequate stock of “entry-level” homes is essential to affordability in the region. This means that the City may need to protect existing smaller, less-expensive homes—especially in areas close to neighborhood centers and downtown. This is especially important because these areas primed for the displacement of low-income communities, as seen in cities like Portland and Seattle). While this

²⁴ AHPAG (2010). [Policy Recommendations to the City Council](#).

may not happen through code, it can help achieve this by allowing small lots development. Additionally, regulation around design in historic areas can be essential for preserving valuable cultural relics, but maintenance of historic homes can be very expensive when code regulations require certain material standards, like replacing windows with wooden trim instead of vinyl. If the City wants to keep people in place as population increases, retaining that neighborhood character which is so highly valued, it will need to ensure that existing homeowners have the ability to maintain their homes.

While homeownership may be an American ideal, many people do rent, whether by choice or necessity. Though much of the residential development in Tacoma in the next decades may be slated for neighborhood centers and corridors in high-density residential and mixed-use districts, many renters still wish to live in single-family neighborhoods and experience those neighborhoods the same way a homeowner is privileged to do so. While renters are sometimes perceived as transitory, many simply do not have the capacity to purchase a home. Some may be able to rent single-family detached homes, but others may desire the amenities of a traditional neighborhood without the responsibility of an entire house or simply want a less expensive option. Restricting the development of duplexes and other small, multi-family dwellings, as well as ADUs, severely limits options for people with those goals. The more rentals there are available, the more affordable rentals will be.

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APPENDICES

A. Neighborhood character audit

A number of steps were taken to ensure inter-rater reliability. First, the team discussed design concepts before fieldwork was conducted so that each individual had a minimum essential level of understanding of the topic. Second, researchers worked in teams of two to survey two pattern areas together. This helped to balance perceptions by being able to discuss the environment. Lastly, the team collected over 150 photographs and videos of houses and streetscapes for post-fieldwork discussion.

Fieldwork began with driving and walking around each pattern area, taking pictures and notes along the way (note the dates fieldwork took place: 21 & 28 Feb 2015). After becoming acquainted with several blocks, surveyors completed the audit form below for each pattern area. The audit is divided into three components:

1. **A description of the neighborhood characteristics.** Surveyors referenced a table of features to make note of.
2. **An assessment of the street environment.** Surveyors took note of sidewalks, tree canopy, parking, and street width.
3. **An assessment of three buildings.** Surveyors used their discretion to determine three housing units they felt represented the pattern area. Data were collected on neighboring buildings' setback, the unit's in question setback, massing, building height, and building age or architectural style.

Finally, these surveys and notes were compiled, discussed and finally turned into narratives about each pattern area. Not all areas of the city could be explored. As such, additional site-visit research is needed to adequately categorize some parts of the city into a pattern area established in this document.

Date: _____

Block(s) surveyed: _____

Surveyor: Anais Hannah Michael Nick

Consider the list of **neighborhood characteristics** on the opposite page. Note any features present in the neighborhood.

The street environment:

Sidewalks: [1] Complete [2] Partial [3] No/very little sidewalk
Tree canopy: [1] Tall, dense [2] Partial canopy [3] Sparse, bare
Parking (mark primary): [1] On street [2] Garage [3]
Other
Street width: Approximately ___ ft wide

Note the features of **three buildings** you feel represent the neighborhood answer these:

Building setback: [1] Uniform [2] Random [3] New line set back [4] Old line set back
Setback: Approximately ___ ft set back
Massing: [1] Bulky [2] Asymmetric [3] "Stepped back"
Building height: Approximately ___ ft tall
Building age/era and architectural style: _____

Neighborhood characteristics to note:

Buildings	Architectural style Purpose Size Materials and workmanship Design quality Maintenance and condition	Land and landscape	Used by whom Attention paid to gardens/landscaping Kinds of landscaping: Flowers, vegetables, native shrubs? Density of shrubs Density of tree canopy Could you communicate through the fences/shrubs to your neighbor? Slope or elevation
Use of buildings and land	Nature of the activity Intensity	Special-purpose buildings	Churches, colleges
Artifacts	Streetcar lines, horse ties Nameplates, mailboxes, doorbells Grates, grilles, alarm boxes, home security alert signs Toys, bicycles Automobiles, trucks, campers, motorcycles Cleanliness and display of windows, curtains Electric meters, telephone, electric Signs for way-finding; recently sold/for sale/rent; parking Street lights Graffiti Business signs Litter or trash	People	Race, age, sex Clothing styles Status, interests, lifestyles How people are using the space
		Commercial areas	How close/far is the nearest commercial use? What is that use?

B. Select Lot Size and Building Envelope Standards

Select Lot Size and Building Envelope Standards										
Requirement	R-1	R-2	R-2SRD	HMR-SRD	R-3	R-4-L	R-4	RCX	NRX	Further explanation
Minimum Lot Area, Single-Family Detached, Standard Lots	7,500 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.		3,750 sq. ft.	Consistent throughout fairly different zoning districts.				
Minimum Lot Area, Single-Family Detached, Small Lots	6,750 sq. ft.	4,500 sq. ft.	4,500 sq. ft.	4,500 sq. ft.	3,500 sq. ft.	3,000 sq. ft.	2,500 sq. ft.			Allows for flexibility in infill development.
Minimum Lot Area, Two-family dwelling			6,000 sq. ft.	6,000 sq. ft.	6,000 sq. ft.	4,250 sq. ft.	3,750 sq. ft.		2,500 sq. ft. per unit	Does not necessitate doubling of lot size when doubling number of units.
Minimum Lot Area, Three-family dwelling			9,000 sq. ft.	9,000 sq. ft.	9,000 sq. ft.	5,500 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.		6,000 sq. feet	Assumes that addition of third unit requires 3,000 sq. ft. more space in several districts.
Minimum Lot Area, Multiple-Family Dwelling						6,000* sq. ft.	6,000 sq. ft.		6,000 sq. ft.	*Plus 1,500 sq. ft. for each unit in excess of four.
Minimum Lot Area, Mobile home/trailer court						3.5 acres*				*Provided at least 3,500 sq. ft. is provided for each mobile home
Minimum Average Lot Width - Standard Lots	50 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.*	50 ft.*	50 ft.*		25**	**14ft. for townhomes, 32ft. for two-family dwellings **Also for duplex/triplex, 14 for townhouses
Single-Family Small Lots - Minimum Average Lot Width	45	35	35	35	30	25	25			May be subject to reductions pursuant to 13.06.145.
Maximum Height Limits, main buildings	35 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	35 ft.	Same throughout very differently developed neighborhoods. For small lots, lots 40-50 feet wide may be 30 feet tall. Lots < 40 feet wide may be 25 feet tall.					

C. Relevant Uses in Residential Zones

Relevant uses in residential zones P = permitted, CU = conditional use, N = prohibited										
Uses of interest	R-1	R-2	R-2SRD	HMR-SRD	R-3	R-4-L	R-4	RCX	NRX	Further explanation
Accessory uses and buildings	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			These are not accessory dwelling units. This may include workshop space, shed, etc.
Dwelling, single-family detached	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	No lot shall contain more than one-dwelling unless each dwelling complies with the use regulations, height regulations, area regulations, and parking regulations of the district.
Dwelling, two-family	N	N	P/CU	P/CU	P	P	P	P	CU	In the R-2SRD and HMR-SRD districts, two-family dwellings are permitted if lawfully in existence at the time of reclassification to R-2SRD/HMR-SRD or only upon issuance of a conditional use permit.
Dwelling, three-family	N	N	P/CU	P/CU	P	P	P	P	CU	Does not allow for single-family or two-family dwellings to be enlarged to a three-family dwelling without being made to comply with all standards applicable to new buildings.
Dwelling, multiple-family	N	N	N	P/N	N	P	P	P	N	In HMR-SRD, only those in existence prior to 2005 permitted and may not be expanded.
Dwelling, townhouse	N	N	CU	N	P	P	P	P	CU	
Dwelling, accessory	P/N	P/N	P/N	P/N	P	P	P	P	P	Detached ADUs prohibited in R-1, R-2, R-2SRD, and HMR-SRD. Attached ADUs permitted in all.
Group housing	P*	P*	P*	P*	P**	P***	P***	P	P	*Limited to 6 unrelated adults. **Limited to 15 unrelated adults.
Lodging house	N	P*	P*	P*	P**	P**	P/CU**	P	CU	*Lodging limited to one guest room only. **Lodging limited to two guest rooms.

D. Municipal code supporting aesthetic compatibility, density and affordability

PROMOTES COMPATIBILITY/ DENSITY/ AFFORDABILITY?	CODE	KEY TEXT / WHAT IT DOES	RELEVANCY
D/A	13.04.230.D Pipestem Lots	"to minimize negative impacts of inconsistent development patterns while allowing land to be divided when more traditional layouts are not achievable" - allows for development of inner-block sections of large lots through non-traditional siting practices	Allows for utilization of portions of properties that might otherwise be inaccessible due to requirements for frontage along a street. Allows for more units per neighborhood block and more/cheaper development options.
C	13.05.045 Historic preservation land use decisions	"provide regulatory procedures for historic preservation decision making bodies" - allows for discretion to "approve or deny proposals to alter individual properties or contributing properties within historic and conservation districts" which includes residential areas	Homes in historic review areas are subject to special design review, which is often more restrictive than zoning code for underlying residential district. Landmarks Preservation Commission must issue Certificate of Approval for final designs for changes. Application for such an approval requires a significant amount of specifics, including but not limited to: proposed colors of paint, photographs of architectural details. Ensures that historic areas do not experience surprising changes.
C	13.06.100.D Lot size and building envelope standards	Vehicular doors must be set back 20 feet from property line, minimum front setback can be average of yards of adjacent buildings, dwellings with capability of developing vehicular access at the rear of the building must do so (i.e. in alleyways),	Maintains a pedestrian focus on street, allows for variation in setback to best match surrounding development.
C	13.06.100.F Accessory building standards	Limits accessory building footprints, total can be no more than 85% of square footage of main building footprint, no more than 15% square footage of lot. Total building footprint square footage may be no larger than 1,000 sq. ft.; if accessory dwellings include a detached ADU, may be up to 1,500 sq. ft. total.	Further code must additional limitations on development of auxiliary dwelling units. When including other accessory building footprints or considering smaller lot sizes, may significantly limit size of ADUs.
C/D/A	13.06.145 Small-lot single-family residential development	New single-family dwellings on new lots may be smaller than normal minimum lot sizes so long as meet requirements in Design Standards regulations of this section. Design Standards give guidance on form to best blend in with surrounding lots.	Allows for flexibility in infill development by legalizing smaller than normal minimum lot sizes, which are cheaper to develop and create denser neighborhoods. Design regulations direct these dwellings to blend in with normal development patterns.
C/D/A	13.06.150 Accessory dwelling units	"Add affordable units to the existing housing supply," ensure that "ADUs are installed in a compatible manner," "increase density," generally guide development of ADUs through regulation of size (no larger than 1,000 square feet), design (much match main dwelling), location, ownership, etc.	ADUs allow for more people to enjoy the amenities of a neighborhood while making a minimal physical impact. ADUs can both be a means of income for homeowners who wish to rent them out and cheaper housing for those willing to live in smaller spaces than traditional single-family homes. Design requirements strive to design ADUs that are low-profile.
C	13.06.501.N Single, Two, and Three-Family Dwelling	To "emphasize pedestrian access, compatibility with residential neighborhoods, building orientation to the street, and to minimize impacts of vehicular access." Defines entry and facade design for	Requires that duplex and triplex dwellings follow particular design guidelines to look like single-family homes or delineated units.

	Standards	duplexes and triplexes.	
C	13.06.555 View-Sensitive Overlay	"A building, structure, or portion thereof, hereafter erected, shall not exceed a height of 25 feet" with some exceptions.	This generally protects views looking into the Puget Sound.
C	13.07.040 Historic Special Review Districts / Conservation Districts	Defines characteristics of each Overlay Zone. Historic: "areas that possess a high level of historic integrity in existing architecture, development patterns and setting, in which these characteristics should be preserved." Conservation: "clearly established existing character related to historical development patterns and/or the overall appearance of building types that were constructed in a defined period of time, generally prior to 50 years before the present."	Some vagueness and some overlap.
C	13.07.320 Guidelines for building design and streetscape improvement review of the North Slope Historic Special Review District	"Architectural integrity, as it relates to scale, proportion, texture, color, compatible materials, space, and composition in various periods of architecture, should be respected and, to the extent possible, maintained in contributing properties." Also defines design characteristics for new or non-contributing dwellings.	Residential area that includes historic design review.

Chapter 2: Urban Form

What is this chapter about?

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

- Foster an equitable system of compact mixed-use and commercial centers across the city to increase access to community services and businesses and create more low-carbon complete healthy connected neighborhoods.
- Improve Tacoma's major corridors so that they become vibrant urban places and key transportation connections.
- Enhance Tacoma's public realm, integrate nature into the city and link people, places and wildlife through active transportation facilities, green infrastructure investments and habitat connections.
- Describe the city's overall development pattern and area character to inform and guide future investments and development.

Why is this important?

Tacoma's identity now and in the future is significantly shaped by the design and physical structure of the city and its neighborhoods. How people live and get around is partly determined by the location of services and other destinations and the arrangement and design of buildings, streets and other public spaces. Together these design characteristics help determine whether: (1) a community is walkable, (2) children have safe places to play, (3) people have places to gather and (4) businesses are easy to access.

Where housing and services are built, where street networks are connected and how all of this is designed provides a key opportunity to: (1) enable people to meet more of their daily needs locally, (2) strengthen neighborhoods, (3) improve equitable access to services and (4) support healthy, active living.

This chapter includes policies that support enhancing centers across the city as anchors to complete neighborhoods, providing Tacomans with convenient access to local services. Clustering destinations in centers makes access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical and reduces the amount of driving needed to access services. Focusing growth and investments in centers and along connective corridors can also make good use of existing infrastructure capacity and encourage efficiency in new infrastructure investments.

Contents

- Citywide Design and Development
- Centers
- Patterned Corridors
- Employment Areas
- Transit Station Areas
- Open Space Corridors
- Signature Trails
- Historic Neighborhood Pattern Areas



CENTERS

Compact, mixed use urban areas targeted for growth will provide access to jobs, commercial services, transit connections and housing options.



PATTERNED CORRIDORS

Major city streets with growth potential that provide critical connections to centers, and links to transit, commercial services, jobs and housing options.



EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Diverse and growing areas of employment that host a variety of business sectors in different parts of the city.



TRANSIT STATION AREAS

Station areas along high frequency transit lines that connect people to important residential and employment destinations.



OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS

A system of enhanced open space corridors that connect fish, wildlife and people to key natural features throughout the city.



SIGNATURE TRAILS

A citywide network of shared-use trails that connect people to nature, parks and major destinations or centers.



HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN AREAS

Broad areas of the City with distinctive character and land use patterns that include centers and smaller concentrations of commercial activities and amenities that support the daily needs of the residents.

TACOMA 2040

SHARED VISION, SHARED FUTURE

JOIN US AT THESE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS!



What began with Tacoma 2025 continues as we design Tacoma's future together through the Comprehensive Plan

Come share your neighborhood values

Tell staff about the quality of life in your neighborhood and what would make it better

All workshops start at **6:00 PM** and end at **8:00 PM**

District 1 Thursday April 2

Truman Middle School
5801 N. 35th Street
(front entry near flag pole)

District 4 Monday March 30

Lincoln High School
701 S. 37th Street

District 2 Thursday April 16

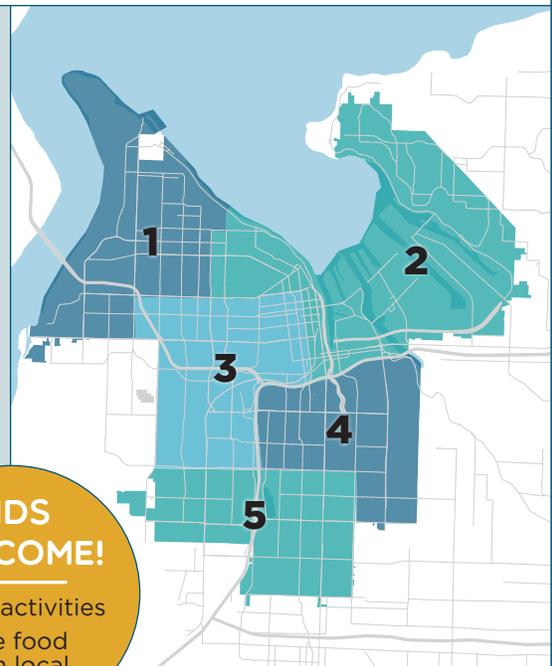
Stadium High School
111 N. "E" Street

District 5 Thursday April 9

Gray Middle School
6229 S. Tyler Street

District 3 Thursday April 23

Tacoma Nature Center
1919 S. Tyler Street



KIDS WELCOME!

Family activities
Free food from local vendors

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