



To: Planning Commission
From: Larry Harala, Planning Services Division
Subject: **2022 Amendment – Assessment of Applications**

- “South Tacoma Economic Green Zone”
- “Minor Plan and Code Amendments”

Meeting Date: May 19, 2021
Memo Date: May 13, 2021

Action Requested:

Comment and Direction; and Set Public Scoping Hearing Date.

Discussion:

At the next meeting on May 19, 2021, the Planning Commission will continue to conduct assessment of applications for the 2022 Annual Amendment to the [One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan](#) and [Land Use Regulatory Code](#) (“2022 Amendment”), in accordance with the requirements of the [Tacoma Municipal Code](#) (TMC), Section 13.02.070.E.

Of the following four applications for the 2022 Amendment, the Commission has conducted an initial assessment of the first two applications at the last meeting on May 5th and will consider the remaining two on May 19th:

- “NewCold”
- “South Sound Christian Schools”
- “South Tacoma Economic Green Zone”
- “Minor Plan and Code Amendments”

Attached to facilitate the Commission’s review are the Assessment Report and the application for “South Tacoma Economic Green Zone.” Also attached is the Assessment Report for “Minor Plan and Code Amendments”, which is proposed by Department staff and an application form is not required.

Upon completing the assessment, the Commission will be asked to set June 16, 2021 as the date for a Public Scoping Hearing, which will provide an opportunity for Tacoma residents and stakeholders to comment on the scope of work of the applications as currently proposed. At subsequent meetings on July 7 and 21, 2021, the Commission will review public comments received and determine whether these applications should be accepted and moved forward for technical analysis, and if so, whether their scopes of work should be modified. Per TMC 13.02.070.E, such determination shall be made within 120 days of the closure of the application period (which was March 31, 2021).

Project Summary:

The Comprehensive Plan and its elements, as well as development regulations and regulatory procedures that implement the Comprehensive Plan, shall be adopted and amended by ordinance of the City Council following the procedures identified in TMC 13.02.070. Proposed amendments may be considered annually, for which the amendment process shall begin in July of any given year and be completed, with appropriate actions taken by the City Council by the end of June of the following year. This timeline has been modified due to the COVID-19 crisis, in the following ways:



- The 2020 Amendment process that should have been completed in June 2020 was not completed until December 2020;
- The 2021 Amendment process that should have begun in July 2020 has been pushed back and rolled into the 2022 Amendment process; and
- The 2022 Amendment process has started earlier than the July 2021 timeline; it started with accepting applications during January-March 2021.

For more information about 2022 Amendment, please visit www.cityoftacoma.org/2022Amendment.

Prior Actions:

- 05/05/21 – Assessment of Applications: “NewCold” and “South Sound Christian Schools”
- 03/31/21 – Application submittal deadline

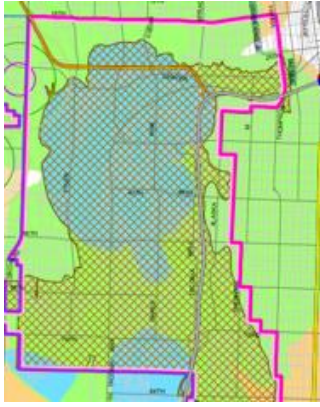
Staff Contact:

- Larry Harala, lhara1a@cityoftacoma.org
- Lihuang Wung, lwung@cityoftacoma.org

Attachments:

1. Assessment Report – “South Tacoma Economic Green Zone”
2. Application – “South Tacoma Economic Green Zone”
3. Assessment Report – “Minor Plan and Code Amendments”

c. Peter Huffman, Director



South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District - Economic Green Zone – Subarea Plan

Assessment Report May 19, 2021

The request is to conduct a broad review of the South Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial Center and South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD)/aquifer recharge areas, along with progressive changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Designations and Regulatory Code, to eliminate environmental and health risks and promote an Econ-Industrial Park and Economic Green Zone (“EIP-EGZ”) concept.

Project Summary	
Project Title	South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code update.
Applicant:	South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
Location and Size of Area:	South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Overlay (STGPD) • 5000+ acres
Current Land Use and Zoning:	Site is Designated Light Industrial Zoning District: M1- STGPD – Light Industrial District & South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District
Neighborhood Council Area:	South Tacoma
Date of Report:	5/13/2021
Proposal Summary:	Changes to Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Designations and Regulatory Code, including proposed creation of an environmentally sustainable industrial “green zone.”



Planning and Development Services City of Tacoma, Washington

Peter Huffman, Director

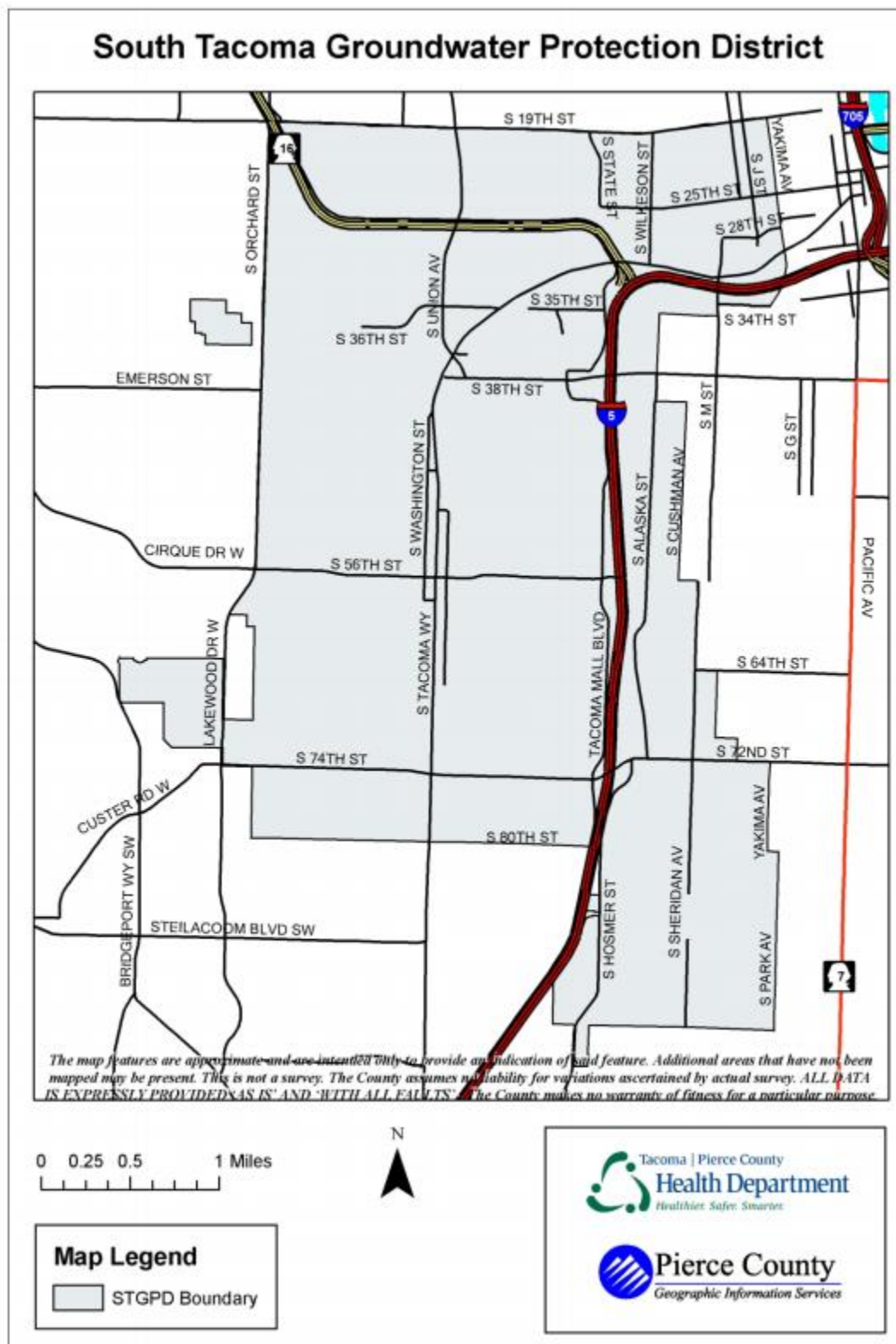
Project Manager

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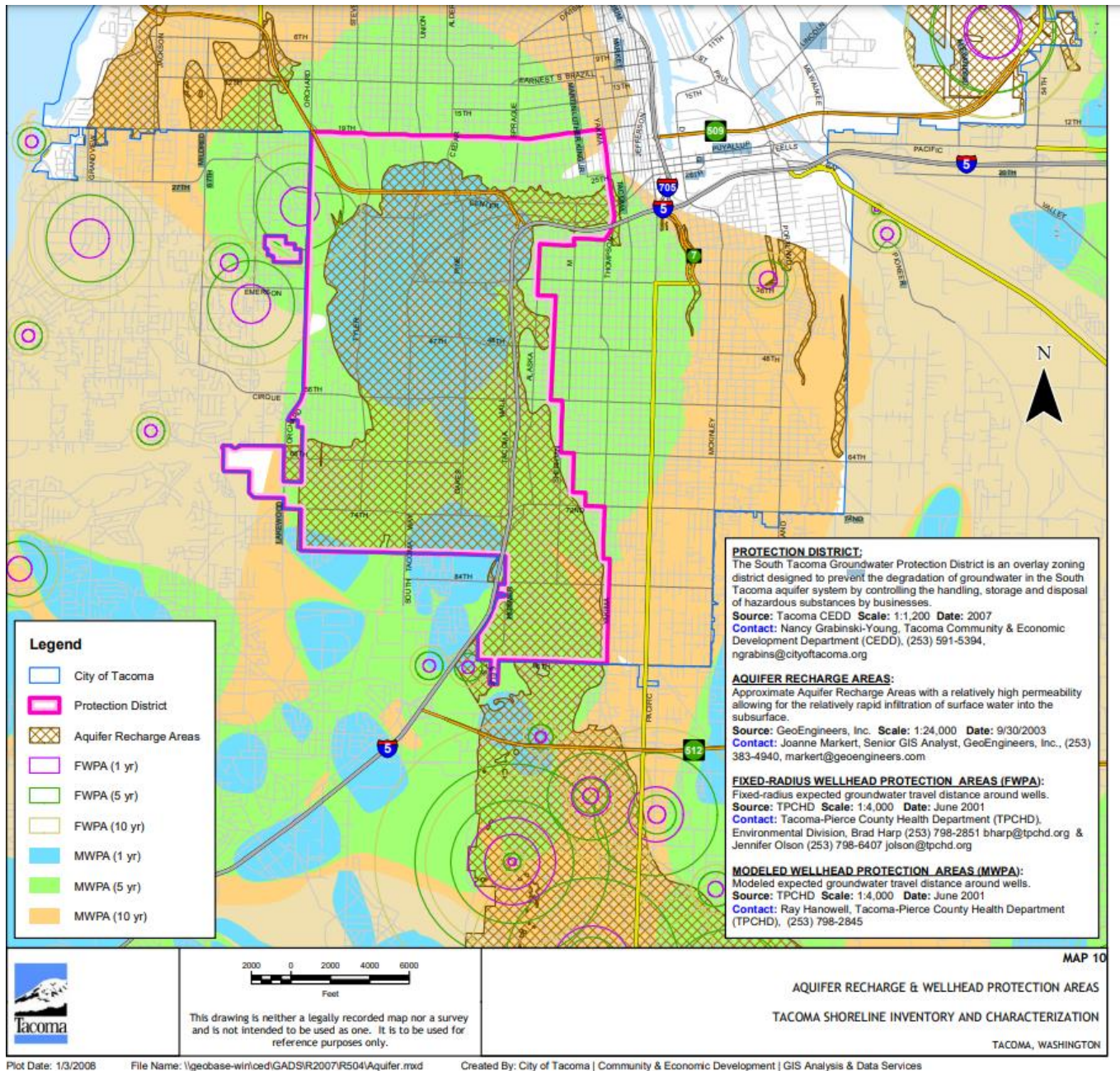
1. Subject Location



SITE LOCATION:

South Tacoma
 Groundwater
 Protection District
 Overlay (STGPD)

- 5000+ acres



2. Background

The South Tacoma groundwater aquifer system serves as a significant source of drinking water for the City of Tacoma. It supplies as much as 40 percent of the City's total water demand during periods of peak summer usage. In 1988 the City of Tacoma adopted Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Chapter 13.09 - South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) to protect this important resource. This regulation had a major update in 2006, with minor adjustment during the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan adoption in 2018. The STGPD program is managed by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Health Department) who work in close collaboration with the City of Tacoma and Pierce County.

The focus of the STGPD program is pollution prevention. Facilities are generally regulated based upon their use or handling of hazardous substances (whether product or waste). Facilities also may be regulated if they have drywells or stormwater infiltration systems on site. Regulated facilities receive a permit and biennial site inspections from the Health Department. Compliance issues or complaints may trigger additional inspections. Whenever possible, inspections are meant to provide educational and technical assistance to businesses to achieve voluntary compliance.

The Health Department has developed interagency agreements with the City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department, City of Tacoma Fire Department, and the Washington State Department of Ecology to ensure that the agencies are providing adequate and up-to-date information to businesses and providing coordinated effort.

The application requests that the City of Tacoma essentially engage in three broad based efforts:

- Update the Comprehensive Plan to further prioritize protection of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District
- Update to Tacoma Municipal Code Title 13 to create new industrial land use categories that would be specific to protection of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection district.
- Update to the Tacoma Municipal Code Title 13 to create a "Green Industrial" center and with the intent of economic development and also fostering environmentally sustainable industry specifically within South Tacoma.

3. Policy Framework

How does the proposed amendment seek to implement applicable provisions of State statutes, case law, regional policies, and the Comprehensive Plan?

The application itself is compliant with standards set forth in Tacoma Municipal Code 13.02.070, and the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan contains extensive support for protection and enhancement of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection district.

Urban Form:

Goal UF-1: Guide development, growth, and infrastructure investment to support positive outcomes for all Tacomans.

Policy UF-1.1: Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map establishes and maintains land use designations that can accommodate planned population and employment growth.

Policy UF-1.4: Direct the majority of growth and change to centers, corridors, and transit station. areas, allowing the continuation of the general scale and characteristics of Tacoma's residential.

areas.

Policy UF–1.6: Support energy-efficient, resource-efficient, and sustainable development and transportation patterns through land use and transportation planning.

Policy UF–1.11: Evaluate the impacts of land use decisions on the physical characteristics of neighborhoods and current residents, particularly underserved and under-represented communities. a. Avoid or reduce negative development impacts, especially where those impacts inequitably burden communities of color underserved and under-represented communities, and other vulnerable populations. b. Make needed investments in areas that are deficient in infrastructure and services to reduce disparities and increase equity and where growth and change are anticipated.

Design + Development:

GOAL DD–4: Enhance human and environmental health in neighborhood design and development. Seek to protect safety and livability, support local access to healthy food, limit negative impacts on water and air quality, reduce carbon emissions, encourage active and sustainable design, and integrate nature and the built environment.

GOAL DD–7: Support sustainable and resource efficient development and redevelopment.

GOAL DD–9: Support development patterns that result in compatible and graceful transitions between differing densities, intensities and activities.

Economic Development:

GOAL EC–1: Diversify and expand Tacoma’s economic base to create a robust economy that offers Tacomans a wide range of employment opportunities, goods and services.

Policy EC–1.12: Actively seek investments to grow Tacoma’s presence in the following target industries: a. Bio-medical and medical b. Information technology and cyber security c. Professional services d. Industrial and manufacturing e. Tourism and hospitality f. Creative economy g. international Trade h. Finance and Insurance.

GOAL EC–2: Increase access to employment opportunities in Tacoma and equip Tacomans with the education and skills needed to attain high quality, living wage jobs.

Environmental + Watershed Health:

Policy EN–1.1 Recognize the multiple benefits of the City’s ecosystem services, including economic impacts, pollutant reduction potential, carbon sequestration and the reduction of stormwater runoff.

Policy EN–1.2 Promote equitable, safe and well-designed physical and visual access to nature while also protecting high value natural resources, fish and wildlife.

Policy EN–1.3 Consider the impacts of climate change and the risks to the city’s environmental assets in all phases of planning, programming and investing.

Policy EN–1.5 Protect the quantity, quality and function of high value environmental assets identified in the City’s natural resource inventories, including: a. Rivers, lakes, streams and associated riparian uplands b. Floodplains c. Riparian corridors d. Wetlands and buffers e. Groundwater f. Trees and urban forests g. Bays, estuaries and marshes h. Shorelines i. Native and other vegetation species and communities that provide habitat value j. Habitat complexes and corridors, rare and declining habitats such as wetlands, native oak and habitats that support special-status or at-risk plant and wildlife species k. Other natural resources as identified.

Policy EN–1.8 Ensure adequate resources to manage Tacoma’s environmental assets and to educate the public about the benefits of Tacoma’s natural resources.

Policy EN–1.11 Coordinate and partner with federal, state, regional and local governmental jurisdictions and the public to manage the City’s environmental assets.

Policy EN–1.12 Coordinate plans and investments with other jurisdictions, air and water quality regulators, watershed councils, soil conservation organizations and community organizations and groups to maximize the benefits and cost-effectiveness of watershed environmental efforts and investments.

Policy EN–1.13 Coordinate transportation and stormwater system planning in areas with unimproved or substandard rights of way to improve water quality, prevent localized flooding, enhance pedestrian safety and neighborhood livability.

Policy EN–1.17 Assess and periodically review the best available science for managing critical areas and natural resources and utilize the development of plans and regulations while also taking into consideration Tacoma’s obligation to meet urban-level densities under the Growth Management Act.

Policy EN–1.18 Evaluate climate data and consider climate risks in the development of regulations, plans and programs.

Policy EN–1.19 Evaluate trends in watershed and environmental health using current and historical data and information to guide improvements in the effectiveness of City plans, regulations and infrastructure investments.

Policy EN–1.25 Develop management plans for each of the City’s watersheds. Evaluate the current conditions of the watersheds in Tacoma and use the findings to inform decisions about future land use, stormwater planning and urban forest and open space management.

4. Objectives

(a) Address inconsistencies or errors in the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations;

The proposed amendment is intended to address the current inconsistency in how the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District is prioritized in the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, as well as within the City of Tacoma’s municipal code.

(b) Respond to changing circumstances, such as growth and development patterns, needs and desires of the community, and the City’s capacity to provide adequate services;

The key desired outcome of the application is to ensure that Tacoma’s groundwater is protected and preserved, as well that the land uses in South Tacoma are as compatible and harmonious with one another as possible. The applicant’s intent is to ensure that industrial uses in South Tacoma further enhance the area and Tacoma’s overall economic outlook as the regional and global economy continue to focus on environmentally sustainable “green” industry.

(c) Maintain or enhance compatibility with existing or planned land uses and the surrounding development pattern; and

The intent of the applicant is to create a much more compatible set of land uses with the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District and with the surrounding commercial and residential uses of South Tacoma.

(d) Enhance the quality of the neighborhood.

The application is intended to protect the quality of Tacoma’s drinking water, and the quality of the environment for the City of Tacoma on the whole but specifically South Tacoma. The applicant states a desire to attract high paying, high quality jobs to South Tacoma.

5. Options Analysis

In preliminary discussions with the applicant, they have expressed a willingness to consider a range of options, including a phased approach. Staff will continue working with the applicant to help bring forward more detail on that in subsequent meetings.

Generally the following are possible options:

- Engage in a more detailed study of the request, conduct preliminary analysis and conduct preliminary community and stakeholder engagement, possibly engage a consultant to assist with this. Then come back at a future time with a more detailed and specific proposal regarding specific plan and code updates/changes.
- Wait until the next GMA mandated comprehensive plan update and incorporate this request in that larger effort, tentatively planned for 2023/24.
- Take a phased approach and focus on one of the three key areas only,
 - update the comprehensive plan,
 - update the code,
 - create a new center/subarea plan.

6. Proposed Outreach

Outreach for this project should include surrounding potentially impacted industrial properties, commercial establishments and neighborhoods and expanded notice would be warranted. The continuing complexities around public meetings continues due to Covid-19. Staff is hopeful that by the early fall physical public meetings will again be possible. A hybrid approach incorporating online meetings and physical meetings will likely be necessary going forward.

7. Impacts Assessment

Given this is a broad, large request staff will acknowledge that potential impacts would be wide ranging and vary based on the scope of the proposal. A key impact of this proposal would be to many existing businesses and industrial uses, more study would be needed to determine the full extent of such impacts and these could vary widely depending on the specifics of the proposal. Staff has engaged with Pierce County Health District and Environmental Services staff that work closely to monitor and oversee the STGPD and will incorporate more materials and information from their groups in coming presentations and staff reports.

8. Supplemental Information

Feedback from South Tacoma residents, businesses and industrial properties would be required to identify areas of concern and unforeseen consequences of sweeping change to existing regulation.

A much more in-depth analysis is needed, and this would likely include engagement of specialized consulting services, to give a detailed analysis of the full range of positive and negative impacts, that such a proposal may have.

Next Steps

- May 19th, the Planning Commission will be asked to set the public scoping hearing for all applications.
- June 16th – Public Scoping Hearing
- July 21st – Planning Commission final determination on acceptance of applications.

Section B. Assessment

Pursuant to TMC 13.02.070.E, staff provides the Planning Commission the following assessment of the application:

1. Whether the amendment request is legislative and properly subject to Planning Commission review, or quasi-judicial and not properly subject to Commission review:

Staff Assessment: The amendment is legislative and properly subject to Planning Commission review.

2. Whether there have been recent studies of the same area or issue, which may be cause for the Commission to decline further review, or if there are active or planned projects that the amendment request can be incorporated into:

Staff Assessment: The subject area has not recently been reviewed for changes in land use designation in a similar way to the application proposal and there are no similar reviews underway or planned for the subject area or the STGPD.

3. A preliminary staff review of the application submittal:

Staff Assessment: Staff has conducted a preliminary review of the submittal and will continue to work with the applicant to ensure the application materials give the Planning Commission adequate information on the requested action.

4. Identification of other amendment options the Planning Commission could consider in addition to the amendment as proposed by the applicant:

Staff Assessment: There are many options to consider and those will be presented in greater detail in subsequent meetings. There is opportunity for reduction of scope, for phasing and for further preliminary action such as more study of the request and of what possible actions may be taken.

5. Whether the amount of analysis necessary is reasonably manageable given the workloads and resources of the Department and the Commission, or if a large-scale study is required, the amendment request may be scaled down, studied in phases, delayed until a future amendment cycle, or declined.

Staff Assessment: The proposal as submitted would likely be beyond what current staff and resources would allow for. Staff will continue working with the applicant and be bringing forward more information on this in subsequent meetings. The applicant has expressed openness to considering alternatives and phased approach to the request.

Section C. Summary of Public Comments

(Staff note: This portion will be completed after the Public Scoping Hearing.)

Section D. Recommendation

According to TMC 13.02.070.E, the Planning Commission will review this assessment and make its decision as to:

1. Whether or not the application is complete, and if not, what information is needed to make it complete:

Staff Suggestion: The application is complete.

(Staff note: This opinion may be subject to modification after the Public Scoping Hearing.)

2. Whether or not the scope of the application should be modified, and if so, what alternatives should be considered:

Staff Suggestion: *(Staff note: This portion will be completed after the Public Scoping Hearing.)*

3. Whether or not the application will be considered, and if so, in which amendment cycle.

Staff Suggestion: *(Staff note: This portion will be completed after the Public Scoping Hearing.)*

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South Tacoma Neighborhood Council Board Amendment Application to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code

Summary of Proposed Amendment and Purpose:

The South Tacoma Aquifer (providing up to 40% of Tacoma's back-up water supply) is damaged and threatened. The South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) and its current zoning overlay are in serious need of updating to reflect modern-day knowledge for better proactive action, instead of simply reacting to post-contamination which continues to occur.

We propose incremental/progression-step changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Designation and Regulator Code for South Tacoma, to promote a Green Manufacturing Area as well as leveraging existing possibilities of undeveloped sites within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas, to avoid further environmental contamination and negative health impacts, while also bringing additional economic opportunities and revitalization.

The time is well-past for developing a present-day approach to enable Eco-Industry and “New Business Incubation” while precluding hazards resulting in costly clean-up. We propose logical and reasonably-phased modifications transitioning away from harmful polluting industry, and instead toward promoting a South Tacoma Green Manufacturing Zone more consistent with Tacoma’s economic and environmental goals.

Our intent is initially for a broad review to align the Comprehensive Plan, the Urban Tree Canopy, Tacoma Environmental Act, Climate Justice Action Plan and Groundwater District Protection Code into a new unified Eco-Industrial Green Zone within South Tacoma.

Proposal for above the SOUTH TACOMA GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICT and Aquifer Recharge Areas for an ECO-INDUSTRIAL PARK AND ECONOMIC GREEN ZONE



1. Project Summary –

South Tacoma is a community made up of residential, recreational, school and business districts, yet has the worst air pollution and mortality rates in the city. Our neighborhood council and individual residents have brought concerns to the city for many years regarding the continued increase of heavily-polluting industry allowed in such close proximity to where we live, play, learn and work which has already resulted in health issues which could easily become a crisis.

It is time for a designated review of South Tacoma with special consideration of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) and aquifer recharge areas, to realign its superfund sites with EPA covenants and Pierce County policy (which is not referring solely to the notorious 12-A contaminated well; the aquifer district and concerns encompass a much larger area than that).

South Tacoma is rarely specifically cited in the One Tacoma Plan, but the little it is mentioned does not match with current proposals for industrial land use which were primarily written for the Port of Tacoma/Tideflats and is not appropriate for in the middle of our South Tacoma community and above a groundwater aquifer. The existing policy of infrequent "monitoring-then-correcting" does little to actually prevent contamination nor remove it afterward; it only identifies a problem after it has already occurred.

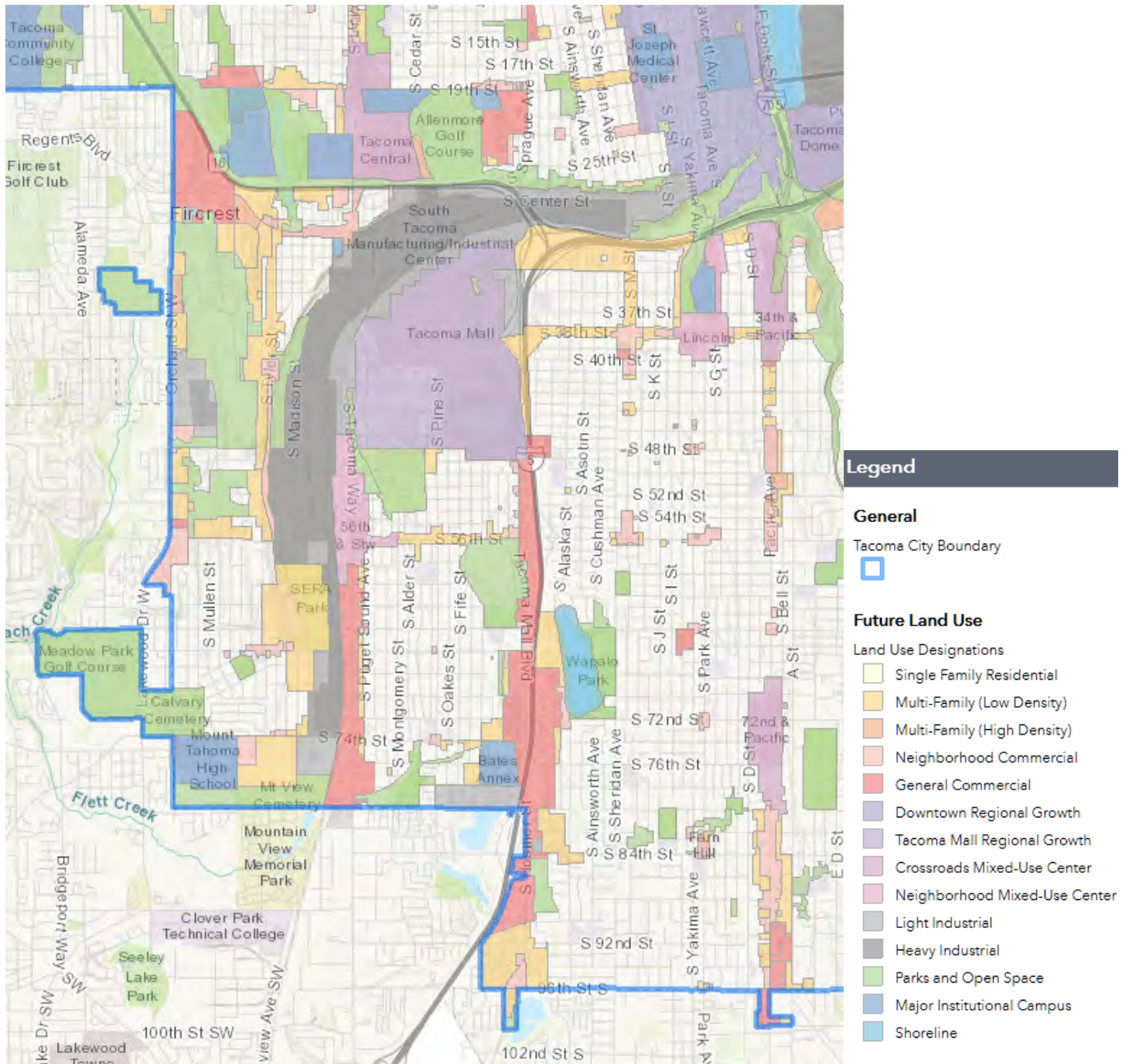
Our goal is to prevent even the possibility of contamination above/near the aquifer going forward, by creating better protections plus incentives for non-polluting industry which would then not only avert the need for extensive monitoring and costly long-term clean up but also avoid further health and environmental issues (since, currently, contamination is not found until after damage may already be done). "Periodic review" also needs to be more clearly specified for improved and consistent overview of the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas.

Now is the time to give South Tacoma the consideration it has always deserved but has not been receiving -- especially since the city is pushing for dense in-fill housing close to the border of the current industrial zone. We need to apply climate-change initiatives to newer updated policy and better protective overlays for a more forward-thinking future. We welcome working with the city toward this new direction, one of encouraging progressive-minded businesses to be part of a new South Tacoma Economic Green Zone as a sought-after location for new businesses and a leading example for our state.

“One Tacoma” Website / One Tacoma Plan Map

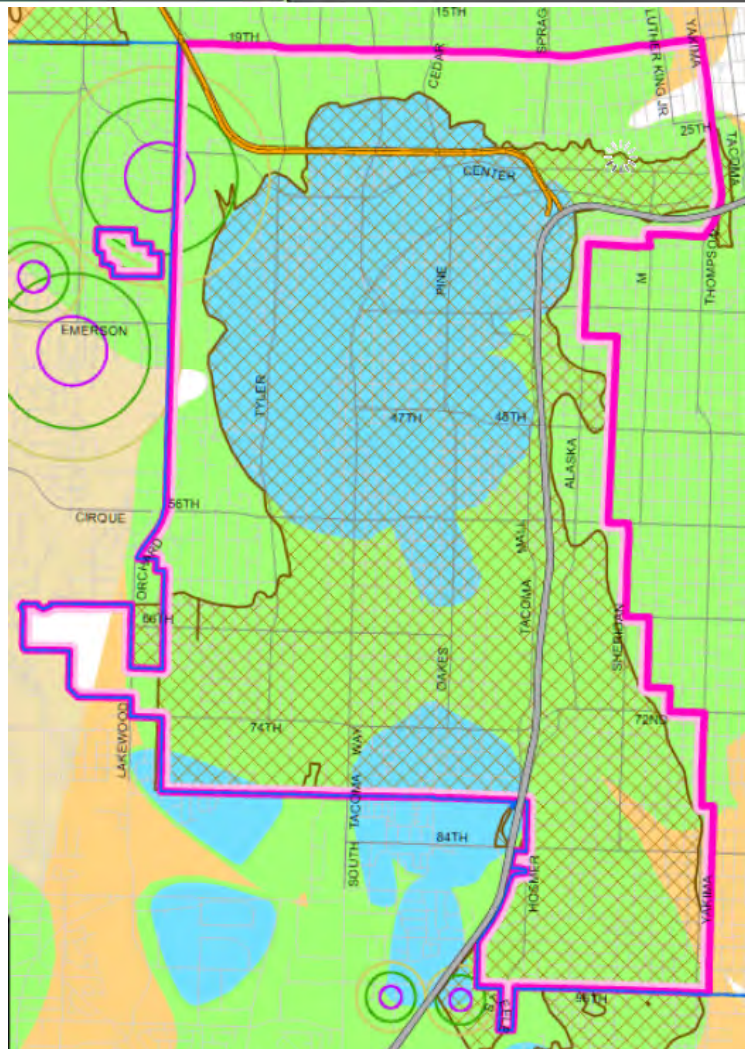
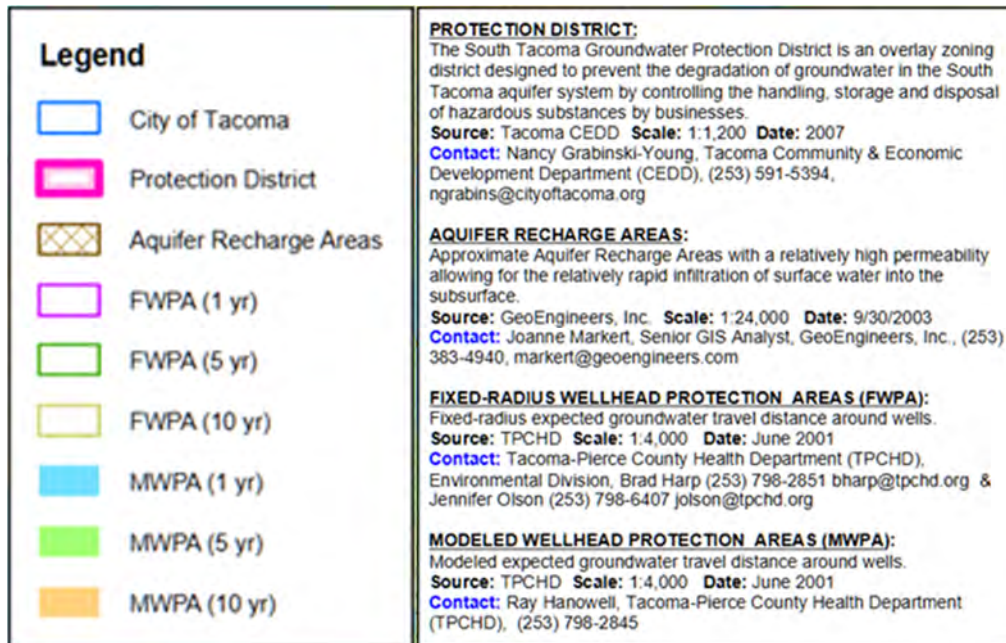
General area of the STGPD and aquifer recharge zones, indicating the scope of applicability, surrounding areas, land uses from current Comprehensive Plan and current zoning classification for affected area.

<https://wspdsmap.cityoftacoma.org/website/PDS/OneTacoma/>



City of Tacoma | Community & Economic Development Aquifer Recharge and Wellhead Protection Areas

https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/Shoreline/Maps/10_Aquifer.pdf



2. Background –

Before it was known as South Tacoma, indigenous people had named the area after elk hunted here. Early settlers brought dairy farms in the 1870s, but by 1881 a substantial amount of the land was owned by Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1891 land was purchased for the first elementary school using the area's name of "Edison" in hopes of enticing an electrical laboratory to this area, moving away from coal dust, wood and oil smoke of those days toward a cleaner, brighter future. That same year, though, instead saw the opening of railroad shops (such manufacturing used steam power requiring an abundance of water the aquifer supplied), which eventually grew to be the largest rail operation in the west and unfortunately began a legacy of pollution in the area.

By 1895 the name Edison was replaced with "South Tacoma" when annexed into the City of Tacoma, and between 1892 and 1980 continued industrial activities at the "South Tacoma Field" resulted in the release of toxic chemicals into the soil and groundwater creating contaminated superfund sites. Over the next decades, heavy industrial zoning here seemed to be accepted as simply the norm by the city leaders; however, the spirit of Edison persists, and the residents of South Tacoma continue to encourage our city to consider new possibilities, moving away from allowing heavily-polluting industry in the middle of our urban area and above the groundwater supply which affects more than just South Tacoma.

South Tacoma seems to have been an after-thought in the currently proposed Tideflats and Industrial Non-Interim Regulation preparations – only recently in this process does it seem to have been realized that a large area of South Tacoma was still zoned heavy industrial, and only even more recently were the residents of South Tacoma made aware of its inclusion in the Port of Tacoma plan. Not only is South Tacoma vastly different than the industrial tideflats, but the regulations as currently proposed for South Tacoma are not in line with the Comprehensive Plan, Urban Tree Canopy, Tacoma Environmental Act or Climate Justice Action Plan, and certainly not the vision of a South Tacoma Economic Green Zone which is the necessary future.

It could be that South Tacoma is routinely overlooked since it is hard to believe that heavily-polluting industry/manufacturing is occurring in this urban location surrounded by residential, recreational and school districts, as well as above a protected groundwater and aquifer recharge areas. Regrettably, this caustic positioning hasn't been without damage. Plastics, petrochemical, heavy-metals and other toxins have resulted in much of this once-healthy land becoming hazardous waste sites.

However, within the last decade and with the help of the EPA, steps have been taken and some areas have been contained. Still, the contaminated soil above the groundwater aquifer continues to be constant concern, as well as air quality and early mortality rates in South Tacoma being the worst in Pierce County and even the nation (per Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department / Tacoma Environmental Action Plan, siting our city as one of only 32 areas in the US below standard air quality).

Although Tacoma had begun moving in a better direction, the recent allowance of new heavily-polluting businesses in South Tacoma is a terrible step backwards. Not only does the current non-interim proposal not limit heavily-polluting industry in South Tacoma, it actually restricts the kind of non-polluting businesses we'd like to encourage here.

Putting economy over health is archaic thinking and is also a very real form of discrimination by keeping one area of the city's lowest income residents continually subjected to higher pollution levels, lower quality of life and higher mortality rates. Significant multi-family in-fill being planned will increase the population of South Tacoma, yet the protections being put into place are for the benefit of heavy industry when it should be instead protecting residents and incentivizing non-polluting business practices.

As our residents had 100 years ago, we still believe South Tacoma is worthy of singular review and deserves more than just mirroring regulations which were meant primarily for the industrial port. We must regain a better direction: any heavy industrial businesses currently in the South Tacoma Manufacturing Industrial Center (ST-M/IC) must have better monitoring - and – we also must remove the possibility of new polluting businesses or expansions in this area, going forward.

In following on the EPA's steps to stabilize damaged land and to retain that precarious balance above the aquifer, this is our chance to create a better future for South Tacoma with progressive green industry incentives and ensuring the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas have enhanced protections going forward, which will be a benefit to all of Tacoma.

Present Day / Environmental Racism:

On the above and below illustrations, note the heavy saturation within South Tacoma compared to North or Central Tacoma or other neighborhoods. Such an issue is referred to as “Environmental Racism”, defined as disproportionate health, environmental and economic impacts on “fenceline” communities and especially those of color and/or low-income.

Pierce County Environmental Health

<https://www.tpchd.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=776>

(Excerpts)

Low-income, minority, and tribal communities have historically borne a disproportionate share of environmental risks, and are more likely to live in areas with increased risks.

Low-income people and people of color are also more likely to have fewer resources and choices about what to eat, where to live and work, and be exposed to multiple hazards.

Unemployment, discrimination, and other stress may make adults and children more vulnerable to environmental hazards.

Who's most vulnerable?

- People living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and rural areas with limited geographical and financial access to healthy foods, grocery stores, parks, transportation options, and other resources.
- People who live, work, or go to school near major roads.
- Low-income individuals and communities with fewer resources to adapt to climate change.

TPCHD - vulnerable neighborhood maps

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-places/public-health-data/maps>

Age Group Population in the City of Tacoma Living Below Poverty by Census Tract

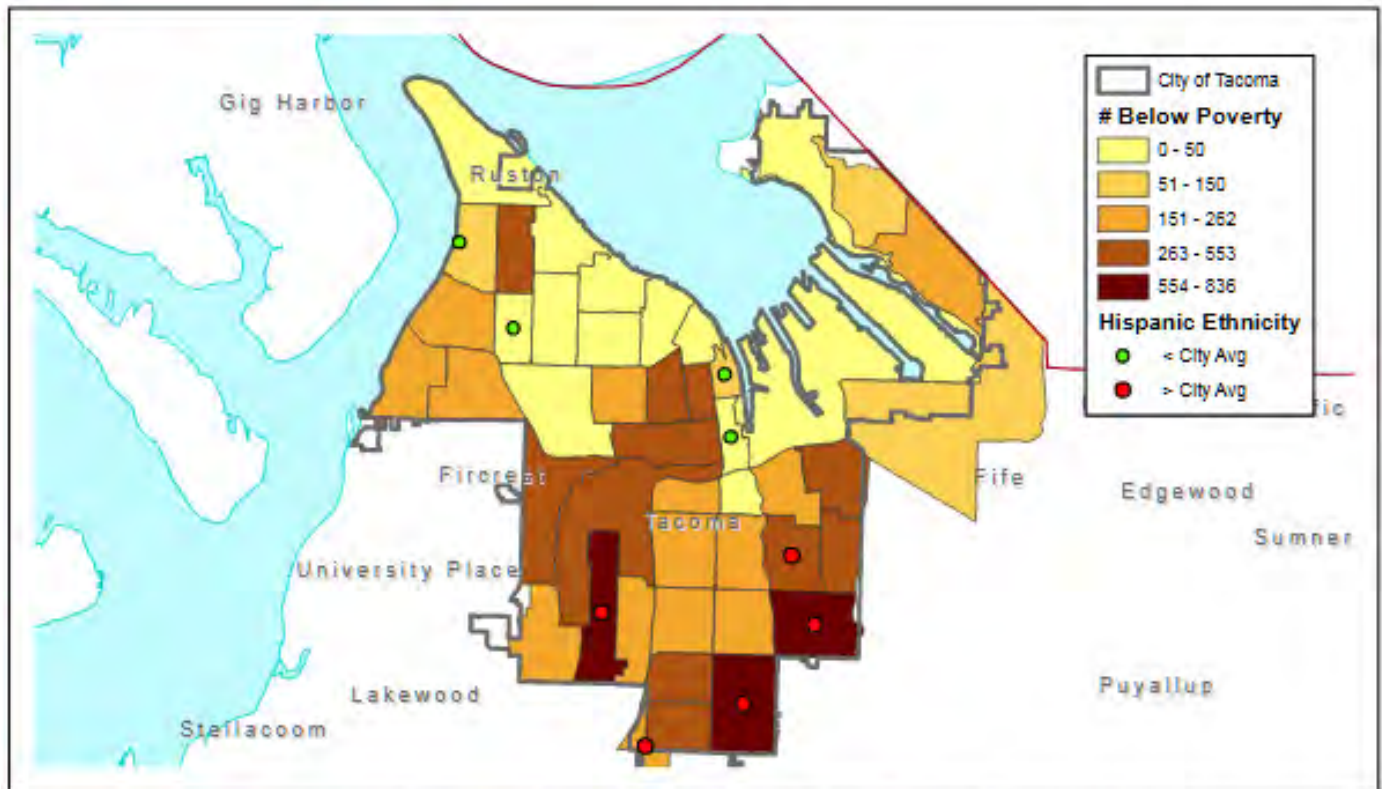
*Note: Mean Hispanic population for the City of Tacoma is 499. Standard deviation is +/- 359.
Census tracts marked with a green dot have a lower Hispanic population than the city mean minus 1 std dev.
Census Tracts marked with a red dot have a higher Hispanic population than the city mean plus 1 std dev.*

Office of Assessment, Planning, & Improvement
(253) 798-7668



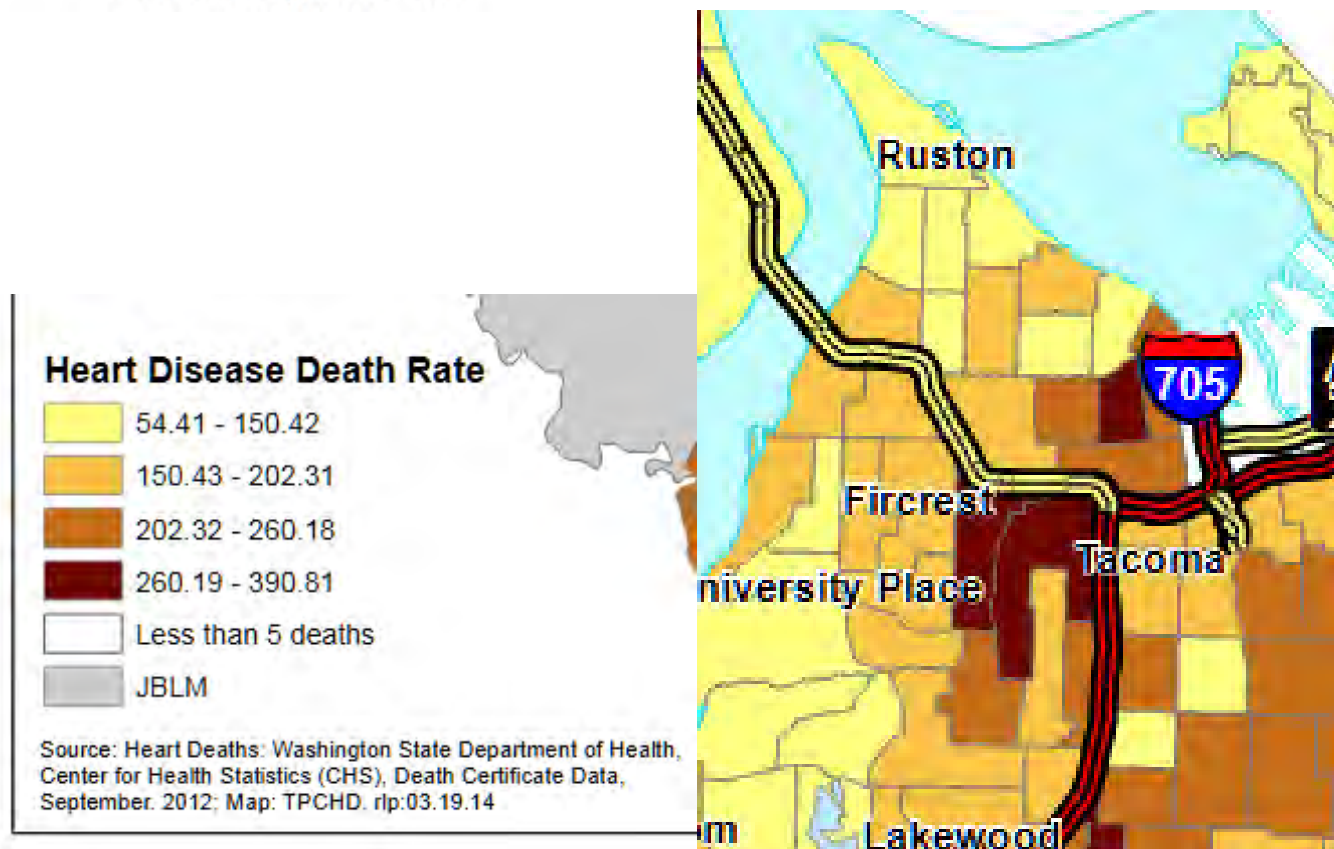
Source: Geography: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, Pierce County GIS;
Poverty Estimates: ACS 5 year Detailed Tables 2006-2010;
Map: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department: 05.17.2012:rip

The map features are approximate and are intended only to provide an indication of said feature. Additional areas that have not been mapped may be present. This is not a survey. Orthophotos and other data may not align. The County assumes no liability for variations ascertained by actual survey. ALL DATA IS EXPRESSLY PROVIDED 'AS IS' AND 'WITH ALL FAULTS'. The County makes no warranty of fitness for a particular purpose.

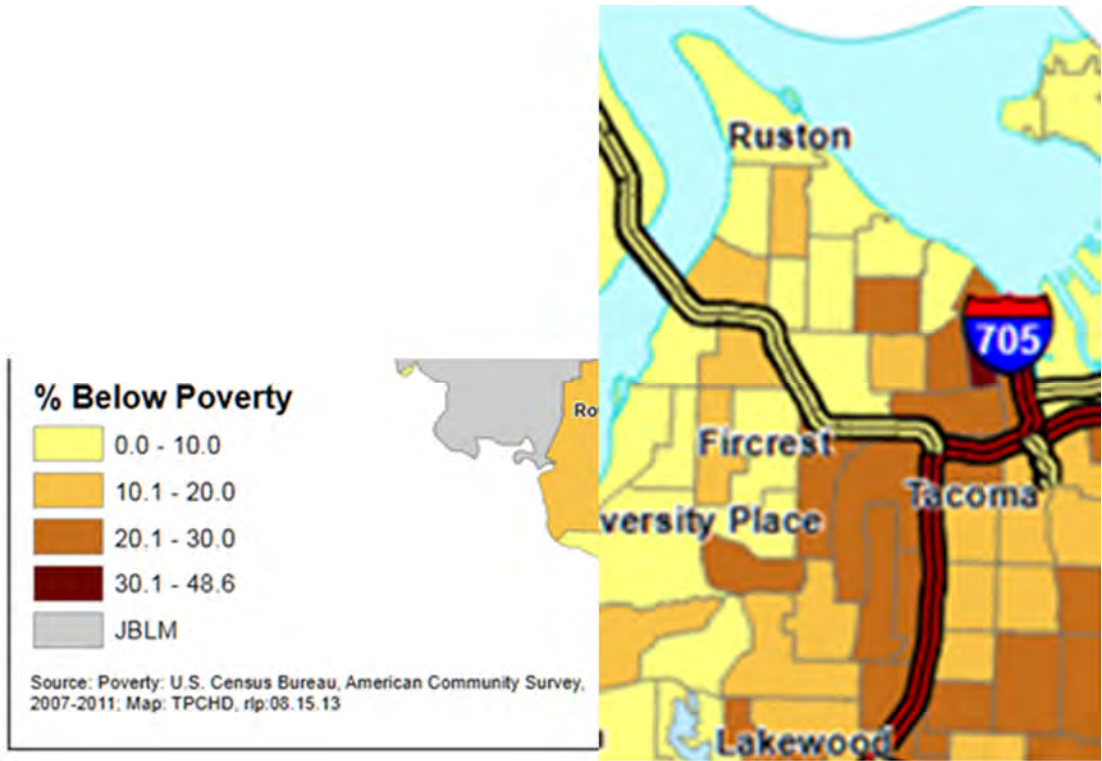


Number of Persons Ages 0-17 Living Below Federal Poverty Level

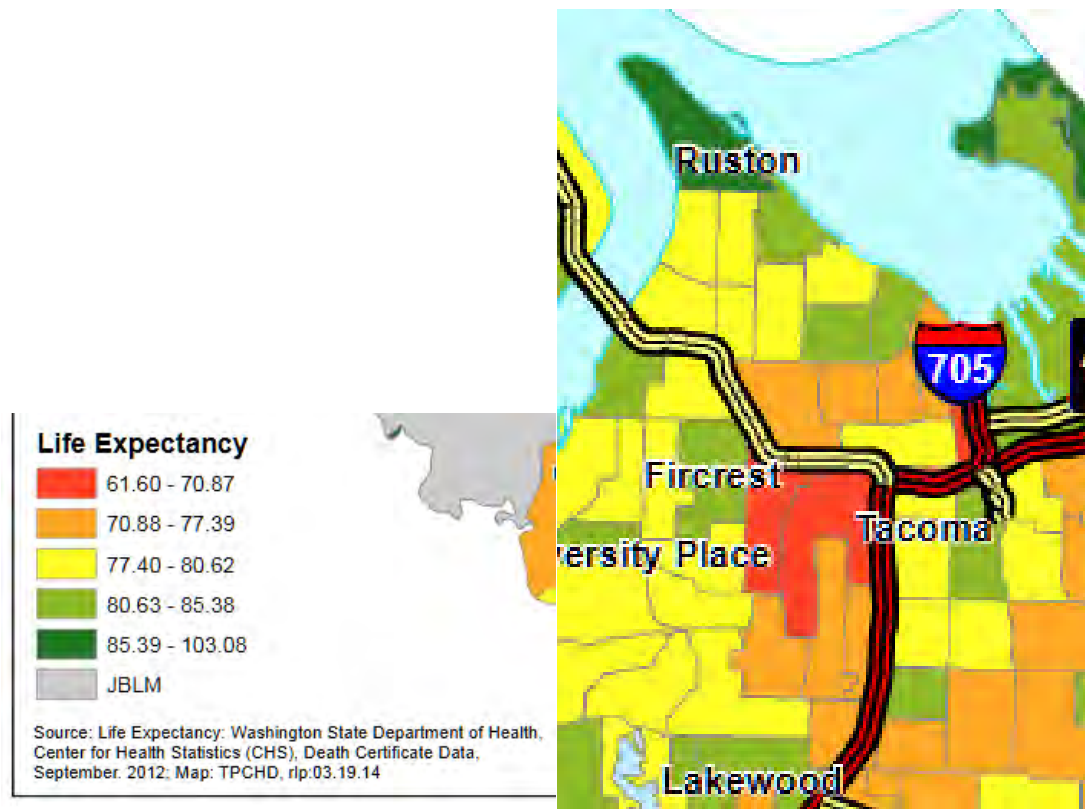
**Heart Disease Death Rate by Census Tract
Pierce County, 2009 - 2011**



Percent Population Below Federal Poverty Level
by Census Tract, Pierce County, 2007 - 2011



Life Expectancy at Birth by Census Tract
Pierce County, 2011



A city presenter recently spoke of limiting high-density housing near “risky” businesses for minimizing negative impacts to “avoid high-risk situations first” so as not to “jump to compensation” – based on the maps, above, South Tacoma would be the last place to consider high-density in-fill housing, then, until our history of heavily-polluting industry in the area has changed.

Since the city continues offering incentives for developers to build multi-family housing in South Tacoma, we should also be creating incentives to bring clean, eco-minded businesses where people can walk and bike to an eco-industrial park from the many housing in-fill projects currently being built in the Mall Subarea multi-family blocks.

This approach would be more in-line with the city’s Climate Justice Action Plan which encourages being proactive and listening to residents and contemporary scientists, not taking action solely for those few self-promoting voices looking to profit in the short-term. It’s time to instead guide the way for sustainable long-term and more healthy economic successes.

For the sake of future generations, going forward, our goal must be to prevent allowing businesses with any potential contamination possibilities to operate above or near our aquifer, so as to no longer need constant monitoring and costly clean up, to reduce health risks and better protect our environment.

***“... it's more economical in the long run
to offer clean incentives
than the cost of correcting
environmental/health issues later.”***

- Climate Justice Action Plan, Tacoma

3. Policy Review –

The expectation for this South Tacoma Economic Green Zone amendment is to result in a strategic plan applied to the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District and aquifer recharge areas. This comprehensive review is intended to protect the priceless natural resource of the South Tacoma aquifer while stabilizing and improving the environmental conditions for a historically poorly-impacted community and preservation of some of the last undeveloped open space within Tacoma.

The One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, in reference to South Tacoma, focuses on business and social activity, commercial, recreational and residential concentration near employment (2-29/40)... not heavily-polluting industry.

Reference to the aquifer and its protection (4-38/1-1) are in conflict with the Manufacturing Industrial Center (1-2) and green space expectations (1-3).

Action is specifically noted (E-7) for the TPCHD to revise the Tacoma Municipal Code regarding requirements and infiltration of the groundwater aquifer (C-11).

In addition to protecting our ground water, we must also consider air pollution, noise pollution, increased industrial traffic which very much affects a community made up of residents, schools, businesses and recreational areas and deserves better than having heavily-polluting industry allowed nearby.

Urban Form (1-14/27) speaks to improved nature, environmental-minded approaches to cleaner stormwater run-off, new parks and open spaces, more tree cover for improved water and air quality as well as expanded urban wildlife to increase quality of life, better health and property values.

This portion also speaks of “transitions” between housing and the South Tacoma Manufacturing Industrial Center (ST-M/IC) (1-22), yet South Tacoma’s overall air quality and mortality rates are the worst in the city.

Permit notifications of 2500 ft is not adequate and does not reach everyone who would be affected by potential groundwater, air and noise/traffic pollution.

The proposed Tideflats Industrial Non-Interim Land Use Regulations are not consistent with the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, nor the Tacoma Environmental and Climate Justice Action Plans when including South Tacoma community in with that heavy industrial zoning.

Potentially contaminating industry should no longer be allowed to establish itself in South Tacoma within the groundwater/aquifer recharge areas, and so near to our residential, school and recreational districts, keeping in line with the Tacoma Municipal Code, Environmental Action Plan and Climate Justice Action Plan.

The way to avoid constant monitoring of possible contamination and after-the-fact (if ever) clean-up, is to better eliminate any possibility of such polluting activity, with additional protections and clean business incentives.

The City of Tacoma has declared a climate emergency, and South Tacoma can be the first area of focus to meet set goals and see dynamic change for the better.

South Tacoma is Due for Review:

- 1) Per the current Tacoma Municipal Code, Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code / Overlay Districts

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5. Prohibited uses

D. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.

c. The above high impact uses should be **periodically revised, updated, and amended**, as appropriate, by Planning and Development Services or its successor agency in consultation with the TPCHD in order to take into account other potential high impact uses or improvements in technology, pollution control, and management.

- 2) Although not within the specific scope of the recent review of the Tideflats and Industrial Non-Interim Land Use Regulations, we appreciate this Planning Commission's resulting recommendation:

The **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure the effectiveness of current standards and to consider any necessary modifications.** The Planning Commission has heard significant concerns raised about the compatibility of industry with the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District as well as between the industrial areas and residential neighborhoods. These concerns should be evaluated as part of a separate planning effort.

- 3) The ten-year review of physical boundaries is overdue so, at the same time, "boundaries" should be more than a physical line on the ground but also aspects of potential threats to the aquifer.

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4. General provisions

1a. District Designated (Location). For the purposes of this chapter and to carry out these regulations, the boundaries of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District are delineated on a map and accompanying legal description as now or hereafter updated and supplemented, which are made part hereof by this reference. Planning and Development Services shall maintain this map. Note: Copies of the map are available from Planning and Development Services. **The boundaries of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District will be reviewed by the Department and the City of Tacoma not less frequently than every ten years to account for best available science, development, and zoning changes.** The physical boundaries of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District are more particularly described in the General Guidance and Performance Standards.

b. District Designated (Environmentally Sensitive Area). Pursuant to Ecology's Chapter 197-11-908 WAC and TMCSection13.12.908 of this title as may be amended from time to time, the area described above is hereby designated as an environmentally (geo-hydrologically) sensitive area.

Proposed Changes:

1) Update the Tacoma Municipal Code 13.06.070.D to:

- Exclude any exceptions to the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.
- Define and implement “periodic” review.

2) Propose to additionally prohibit:

- No Metal Recycling/Metal Shredding/Auto-Crushing (as well as no expansions of current facilities) anywhere within city-limits but especially not within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) and aquifer recharge areas.
- No new above-or-below ground hazardous substance tanks or storage within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas.
- No new polluting industrial/manufacturing within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas (for promotion of proposed South Tacoma Economic Green Zone).

Suggested updates to the Tacoma Municipal Code, regarding prohibited uses in the South Tacoma Groundwater protection district.

Current Code:

TMC Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code / Overlay Districts

D. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.

5. Prohibited uses.

a. The following “high-impact” uses of land shall hereafter be prohibited from locating within the boundaries of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District. ~~Exceptions will be considered by Planning and Development Services, in consultation with the TPCPD, only upon conclusive demonstration that the high-impact use will result in no greater threat to the groundwater resource than that posed by a compliant nonprohibited use.~~

- (1) Chemical manufacture and reprocessing.
- (2) Creosote/asphalt manufacture or treatment.
- (3) Electroplating activities.
- (4) Manufacture of Class 1A or 1B flammable liquids as defined in the Fire Code.
- (5) Petroleum and petroleum products refinery, including reprocessing.
- (6) Wood products preserving.
- (7) Hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facilities. (“Designated Facility” per Ecology’s Chapter 173-303 WAC et seq.).

(8) Metal Recycling / Metal Shredding / Auto Crushing and/or Disassembling

b. The Director of Planning and Development Services, or his or her designee, shall consult the North American Industry Classification System (“NAICS”) Manual for assistance in reviewing and making use interpretations pursuant to this subsection.

c. The above high impact uses should be **periodically revised, updated, and amended**, as appropriate, by Planning and Development Services or its successor agency in consultation with the TPCHD in order to take into account other potential high impact uses or improvements in technology, pollution control, and management.

d. Permanent or temporary storage of hazardous substances on sites with pervious surfaces, the disposal of hazardous substances, and the disposal of solid waste is prohibited, ~~unless such discharge or disposal is specifically in accordance with a valid discharge permit, is approved for discharge into the City's municipal wastewater system pursuant to Chapter 12.08 of the Tacoma Municipal Code as may be amended from time to time or is conducted in compliance with the requirements of a solid waste handling permit issued by the TPCHD.~~

In addition to the #8 added (in red), we need to confirm no expansion to existing businesses of items listed.

Regarding the yellow highlighted areas, please note that although these prohibitions are to be “periodically” reviewed for revision, they do not seem to have been for decades.

Strike-out areas: No more exceptions (as was done for the 2019 allowance of the metal recycling/car crushing facility) anywhere within the STGWP or aquifer recharge areas. Zero allowance for storage of hazardous substances, and zero tolerance plus significant consequences for contamination should be the requirement going forward.

***“Preventing contamination is
far less expensive than
cleaning up contaminated groundwater.”***

- WA Department of Ecology

- **Prohibit Metal Recycling, Metal Shredding, Auto-Crushing/Disassembling**

In 2019, Tacoma allowed a metal recycling/auto-crushing facility to build directly above our aquifer, not far from an outdoor recreational center. Auto-crushing requires the draining/storage/disposal of the very liquids on the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's list of prohibited contaminants:

Prevent infiltration and contamination

Infiltration within the STGPD.

Pollution occurs when water picks up contaminants along the ground surface. Polluted water can reach the drinking water aquifer. Some common contaminants include:

- Auto fluids.
- Sediment.
- Metals.
- Soaps and degreasers.

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-places/waste-management/business-pollution-prevention/south-tacoma-groundwater-protection-district>

In addition to concern of liquids and heavy-metals (contaminating soil, storm water run-off and groundwater), auto-crushing methods add to noise and especially air pollution through microplastics and glass dust. Broken auto glass and plastic are often found along the roads and surrounding areas of such sites. When left to weather and degrade in UV light, these plastic and glass fragments are also being run-over, creating smaller and smaller and more dangerous shards and microparticles. These microparticles become another environmental concern, as eventually smaller and smaller particles enter the air and groundwater, are ingested by people and wildlife, plus inhaled after becoming airborne during auto-crushing (which is now understood as a serious health hazard but only beginning to be researched regarding the damage caused to lungs, especially in children).

Articles regarding microplastics in air to be inhaled, and may also enter water to be ingested:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/18/science/what-are-microplastics.html>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/04/microplastics-pollution-falls-from-air-even-mountains/>

<https://time.com/5601359/microplastics-in-food-air/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/aug/14/microplastics-found-at-profuse-levels-in-snow-from-arctic-to-alps-contamination>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/08/microplastic-air-pollution-real/596119/>

These obviously serious health risks (of tiny glass dust/shards produced during the auto-crushing from both glass and fiberglass, now being identified in lungs and bloodstreams) are still being studied.

This permitted South Tacoma facility had initially reported that their planned method of dust control would be to continually hose-down / spray water which will surely result in more uncontrolled water run-off and contamination, and create more of an opportunity to pollute soil above and seep into the ground above the aquifer and aquifer recharge zones (where there is high permeability, resulting in rapid infiltration to the groundwater where this facility was allowed to locate directly above) – or – create toxic stormwater runoff into our streams and bay.

Other countries have instead turned to “dismantling” (not crushing) techniques which better separate recycling and control hazardous liquids, but it should no longer be acceptable to simply attempt to reduce and/or later clean-up costly spills and leaks of toxic substances from these methods; such potential hazards should be completely prohibited from within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas.

Supporting sources:

Danger in air near metal recyclers - HoustonChronicle.com

Dec 29, 2012 - A single Houston recycler, Texas Port *Recycling* in the Manchester ... and dangerous source of air pollution: metal recyclers and *car crushers*, ... latter a *risk* 600 times higher than what is acceptable to federal *health* scientists.

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Danger-in-air-near-metalrecyclers-4154951.php>

Crushing Cars Is a Loud, Smelly Business That's Terrible for Air ...

Oct 17, 2018 - *Crushing Cars* Is a Loud, Smelly Business That's Terrible for Air Quality attorney at NRDC who works on air quality and community *issues*, says even if General Iron ... It's hard, sharp, and potentially a public *health* concern.

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/crushing-cars-loud-smelly-business-thats-terrible-air-quality>

Removing Mercury Switches from Vehicles

Methylmercury is a persistent, toxic contaminant that bioaccumulates in the tissues of fish. Relatively low concentrations of mercury in fish pose serious health risks to people and wildlife that consume them. Anthropogenic mercury emissions enter water bodies, either directly or through deposition from the air and, through biological processes, transform into methylmercury, which enters the aquatic food chain... mercury can be released into the air, soil and water during crushing...

http://www.4cleanair.org/ECOS_QC_Mercury_LR.pdf

Other cities have recognized the need for significant regulations and oversight of existing facilities, or have had the foresight to completely prohibit them.

American Planning Association

<https://www.planning.org/pas/reports/report201.htm>

A number of local governments have completely excluded wrecking and processing yards from their jurisdictions. Interest in this approach is bound to be stimulated by *Oregon City v. Hartke*,⁹ the recent case in which the Supreme Court of Oregon upheld such an exclusion. The court decided that the city was entitled to make a distinction between wrecking yards and other uses that were claimed to have similar characteristics.

The city commission may have felt that the operation of an automobile wrecking yard would produce more noise, smoke or fumes and would be more unsightly than the permitted uses.

The court further concluded that the city could exclude a business solely on the ground that it was "offensive to aesthetic sensibilities."

The prevention of unsightliness by wholly precluding a particular use within the city may inhibit the economic growth of the city or frustrate the desire of someone who wishes to make the proscribed use, but the inhabitants of the city have the right to forego the economic gain and the person whose business plans are frustrated is not entitled to have his interest weighed more heavily than the predominant interest of others in the community.

In an effort to cope with the health hazards of wrecking and processing yards, New Haven, Connecticut, has included the following regulation in the zoning ordinance:

All materials shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent the breeding or harboring of rats, insects, or other vermin. Where necessary, this shall be accomplished by enclosures in containers, raising of materials above ground, separation of types of material preventing the collection of stagnant water, extermination procedures, or other means.

This was the best outlook of what would be going into the soil even after filtering / treatment:

STORMCEPTOR STC

PERFORMANCE TESTING RESULTS

- **COVENTRY UNIVERSITY – FULL SCALE TESTING:**
 - 97.8% OIL REMOVAL
 - 83% INORGANIC SEDIMENT REMOVAL
 - 73% ORGANIC PARTICLE REMOVAL
- **FIELD MONITORING - SEATTLE, WA**
 - 87% TOTAL SUSPENDED SOILDS (TSS) REMOVAL
 - 99% TOTAL PETROLEUM HYDROCARBONS (TPH) REMOVAL
- **FIELD MONITORING – WESTWOOD, MA**
 - 93% TSS REMOVAL
 - 82% TPH REMOVAL
- **FIELD MONITORING – COMO PARK, MN**
 - 76% TSS REMOVAL
 - 65% TOTAL KJELDAHL NITROGEN (TKN) REMOVAL
 - 32% TPH REMOVAL

From a 2019 presentation to the city created by Huitt-Zollars, indicating that water “treatments” are nowhere near 100% (some as ineffective as leaving more than half the toxins still in the “treated” water which would then be put into a swale to contaminate the ground directly above our drinking water before entering a “perforated pipe”).

This is counter-productive to “protecting” our aquifer.

Such contaminants build-up over time, so (since 100% “treatment” results seem unobtainable) any business allowed to operate within STGPD/aquifer recharge areas should have zero run-off/containments. Tacoma has had a history of failing to follow protective covenants (neglecting to include EPA involvement), and the practice of spot-monitoring only discovers damaging issues after-the-fact. So the best solution would be to prohibit any possible polluting at all in the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas, going forward.

Regarding metal shredding, although this is not currently done in South Tacoma (as far as I know) Tacoma has experienced a history of fires and contamination where shredding is allowed. This practice presents an additional level of hazard, so metal shredding must never be allowed within the STGPD or aquifer recharge areas, preferably prohibiting any new/expanded shredding from anywhere within the entire city limits.

It is not an exaggeration to state that people exposed to these toxins are dying: workers, first responders and nearby residents. A recent and tragic example, demonstrating the toxicity of such sites, is this story of a WA State Trooper who investigated wrecking yards / scrap processors and hulk haulers during her career.

Washington state trooper's death was caused by toxic chemicals, officials say

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/washington-state-troopers-death-linked-to-toxic-on-the-job-exposure/>

Feb. 15, 2021 at 6:26 am Updated Feb. 16, 2021 at 7:13 pm

By The Associated Press

OLYMPIA — A Washington state trooper's 2018 death has been reclassified as occurring in the line of duty after an investigation determined the cause of her fatal cancer was exposure to toxic chemicals during an illegal auto-wrecking investigation.

Trooper S. Renee Padgett was 50 when she died on Sept. 4, 2018, after a long battle with cancer, according to a Washington State Patrol (WSP) news release.



Officials: state trooper's death caused by toxic chemicals | Tacoma News Tribune

Trooper S. Renee Padgett was a trooper for 27 years, working first in Gig Harbor as a trooper cadet, then in Bellevue after completing her basic training. Courtesy of the Washington State Patrol ...

www.thenewstribune.com

Besides clean/green incentives, there must be strict penalties for non-compliance such as is part of this Vermont final ruling for salvage yards regarding minimum/maximum material removal and immediate cessation of operation:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/SalvageYardRuleFinalAdopted-09-01-2015.pdf>

Finding of harm; threat of harm. If the Secretary determines that immediate suspension or revocation of a salvage yard permit is necessary to prevent actual substantial harm or an imminent and substantial threat of harm to the public health, public safety, or the environment under subdivision (e)(3)(F) of this section, the suspension or revocation shall become effective upon the receipt of the Secretary's notice under subdivision (e)(4) of this section. The suspension or revocation shall be effective until any requested hearing has been completed and a final decision issued by the Secretary._

Even if the currently allowed car-crushing/metal recycling facility is meeting minimum requirements (which we have yet to discover), those standards are still unacceptable and shortsighted. What is being presently allowed-for presumes the toxic fluids in swales will never reach the groundwater, but that doesn't take into account what may happen in an earthquake. It doesn't consider what may happen if Mt. Rainier erupts and cuts off our other water supply from rivers. It's time to re-evaluate and only allow for companies with zero-chance of contamination within our aquifer protection district.

Current "protections" are sadly proving not impenetrable. To our south, Lakewood is currently suing the Department of Defense for Per-and-polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination which has since also reached South Tacoma (well 10-A) resulting in our residents' only non-fluoridated water source no longer being available for consumption.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/14/health/what-are-pfas-chemicals>

A growing body of science has found that there are potential adverse health impacts associated with PFAS exposure, including liver damage, thyroid disease, decreased fertility, high cholesterol, obesity, hormone suppression and cancer. These chemicals can easily migrate into the air, dust, food, soil and water.

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/exposure.html>

- Drinking contaminated municipal water or private well water
- Eating fish caught from water contaminated by PFAS (PFOS, in particular)
- Accidentally swallowing contaminated soil or dust
- Eating food that was packaged in material that contains PFAS

Research has suggested that exposure to PFOA and PFOS from today's consumer products is usually low, especially when compared to exposures to contaminated drinking water.

Just as we see the infiltration of permanent and forever toxins from outside of the GWPD boundaries, the need to protect our surface water runoff is just as critical as an outflow as well. The majority of surface runoff from South Tacoma exits to the south and west, to Chamber bay and Lakewood Water District. External groups have worked diligently to clean up a salmon stream and wildlife refuge. We must take full responsibility and accountability for our contribution to the load of runoff chemicals, to prevent any possibility that Tacoma could be sued for failing to abide by either existent protective code or purposefully neglectful of best science.

At the March 24, 2021 Infrastructure Planning and Sustainability meeting, the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) informed us of another recent contamination discovery (petrochemicals) within South Tacoma. Instead of having to manage more superfund sites within the STGPD, we should do everything we can to no longer create them by only allowing practices within STGPD and aquifer recharge areas which pose zero possibility of soil contamination.

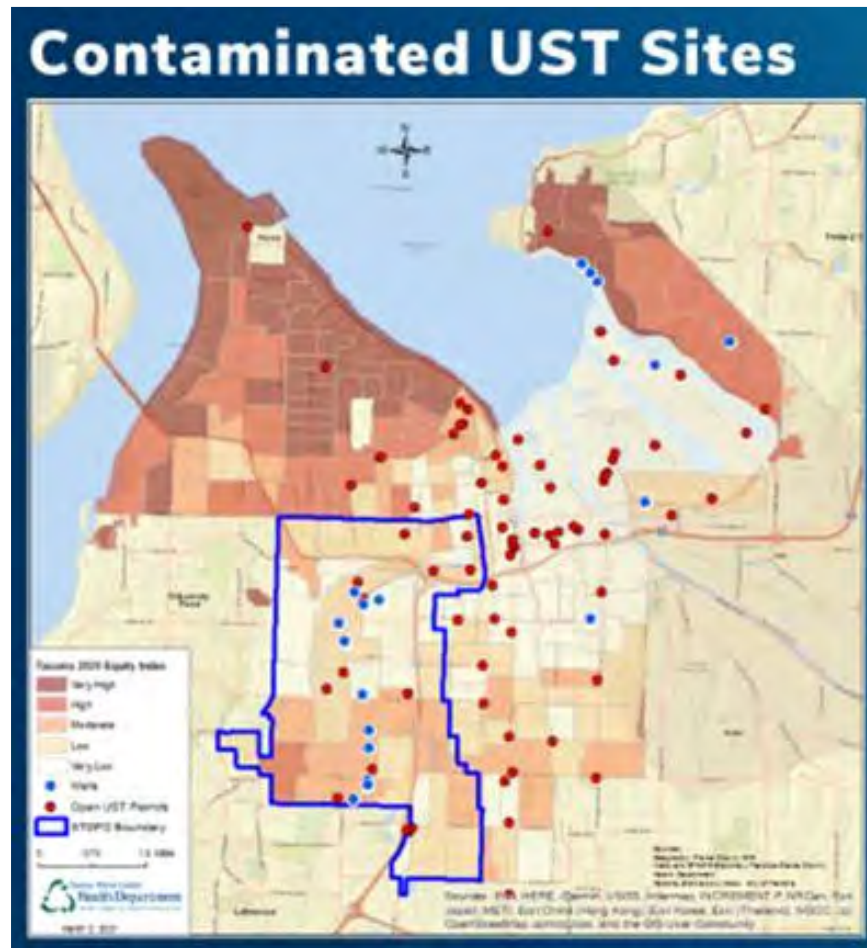
As one speaker put it in recent public comments, it's time for Tacoma to "think ahead" – this is no longer the 1950s when the heavy industrial zoning codes were put into place, and when industrialization and economy preempted everything, even personal health. We now know better and have this chance to remove even the remote possibilities of potentially polluting contaminants anywhere near our protected groundwater aquifer and recharge areas.

- **No new above-or-below ground hazardous substance tanks or storage within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD).**

The following information was provided by the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD).

Roughly half of all known contamination is from underground storage tanks (USTs) which have resulted in hundreds of contaminated sites with up to possibly 20% of businesses currently operating in non-compliance... and the TPCHD purview does not even extend to contaminated sites without UST history.

Purple boundary outlines the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District:



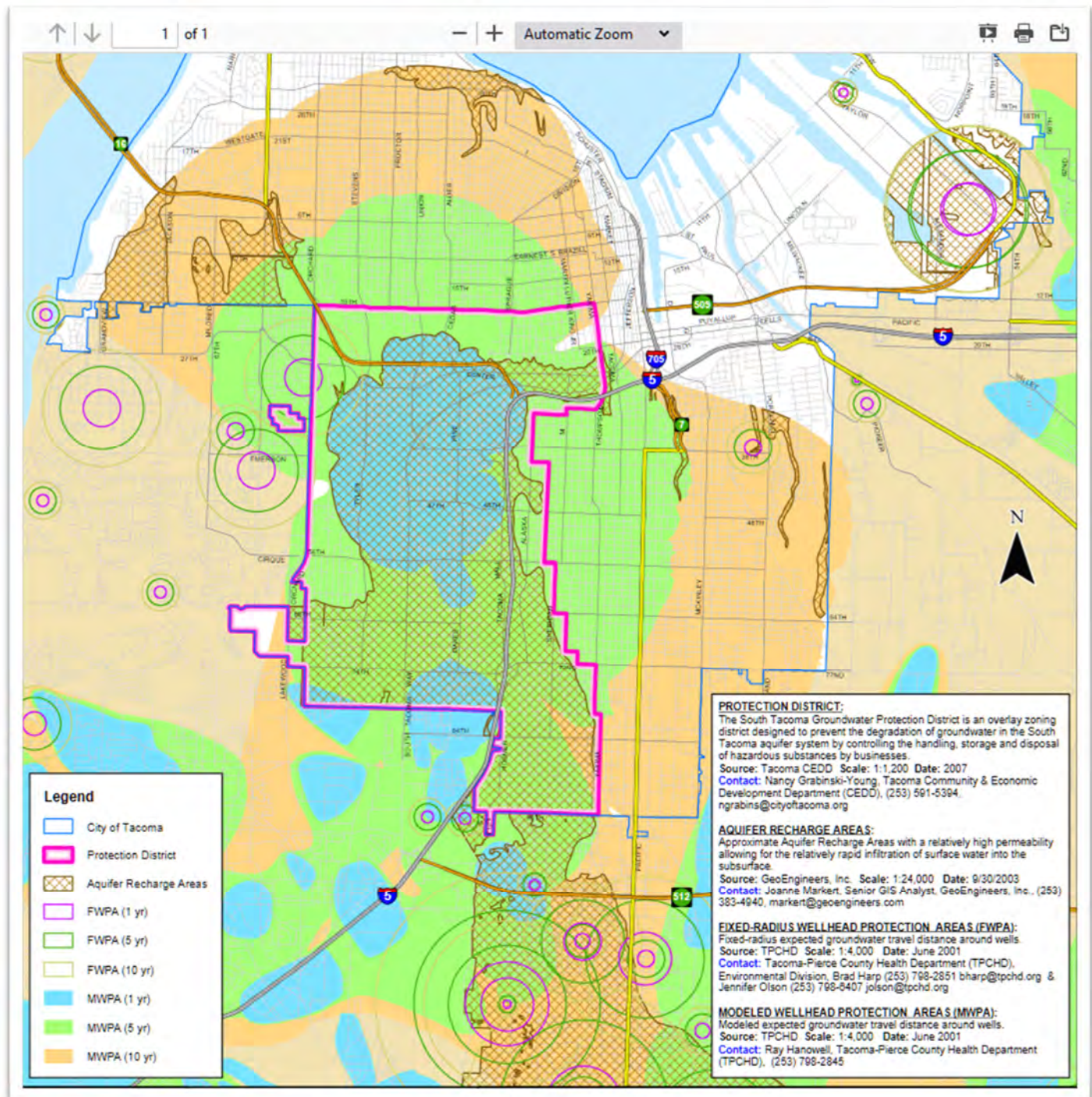
The state Department of Ecology (DOE) has over 6,000 contaminated sites listed and does not have the resources to enforce cleanup on all of them. Last known, the State has over 600 contaminated sites of varying types just in Pierce County. The majority of these fall under state accommodation of voluntary cleanup, so it's not unexpected that only a portion of these sites ever actually undergo actual cleanup. Other examples of non-UST contaminated sites include dry cleaners, spills from vehicles, above ground containers/drums, heavy-metals, poor housekeeping at auto repair facilities, auto accidents, etcetera.

At many contaminated sites, the extent of contamination and risk level is not well understood. UST sites under our local enforcement are not immune to this; even compliant sites have a difficult time getting the full extent of the problem under control and understood. This is the challenging nature of sub-surface issues, which are hard to monitor, investigate or gain access to for cleanup. Since we know that even surface pollution can reach the aquifer (see PFAS contamination discussed further down), underground storage tanks are an obvious additional unacceptable risk.

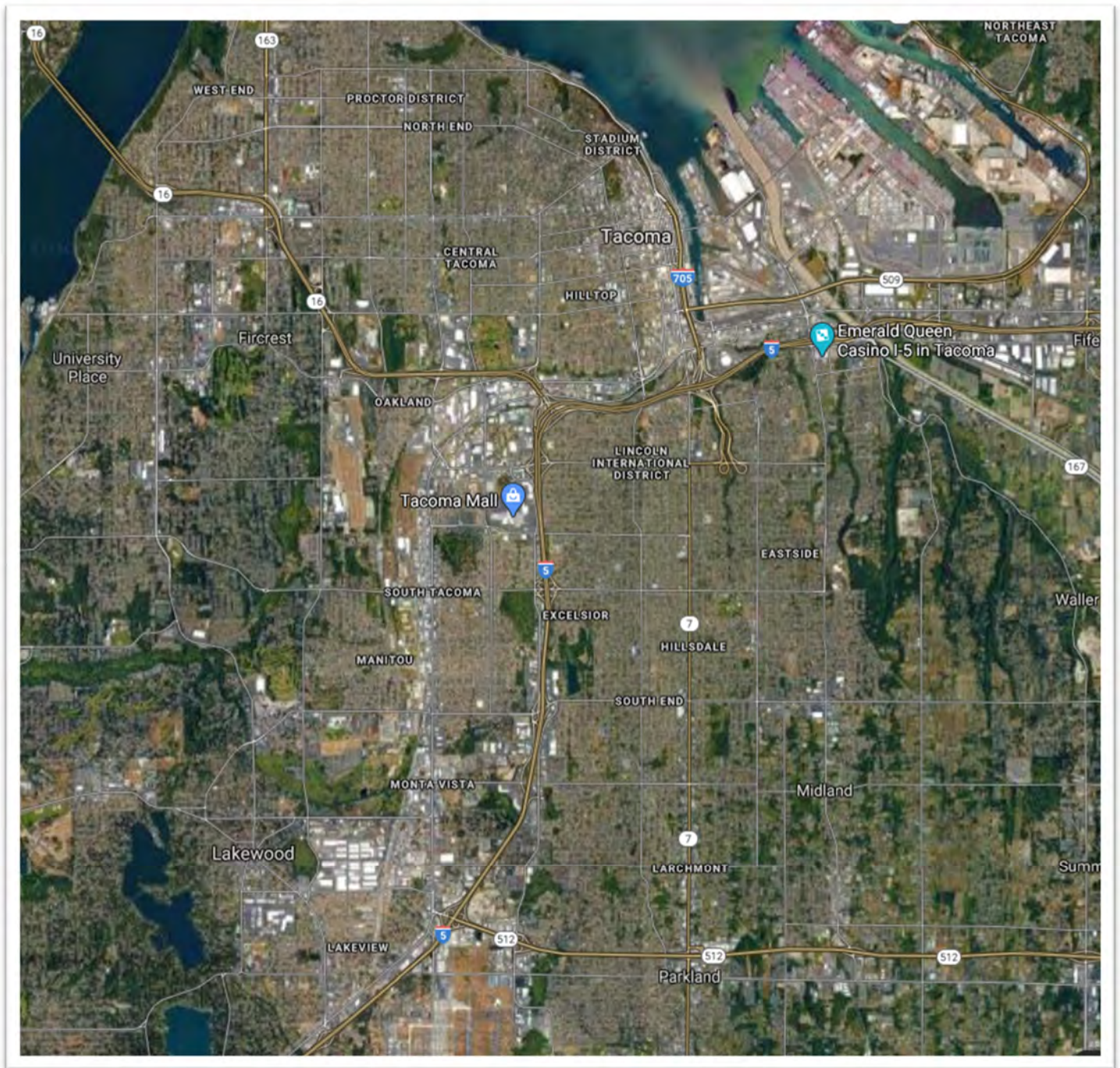
The city has been supplied ample information (via multiple submissions from other residents / organizations during the Tideflats & Industrial Non-Interim Land Use Regulations process) on the topic of pollution reduction/prevention, environmental/health hazards and costly clean-up; so, this section will illustrate further the STGPD and aquifer-recharge areas which require different/better protections and fit into the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone proposal.

South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (outlined in pink, below)

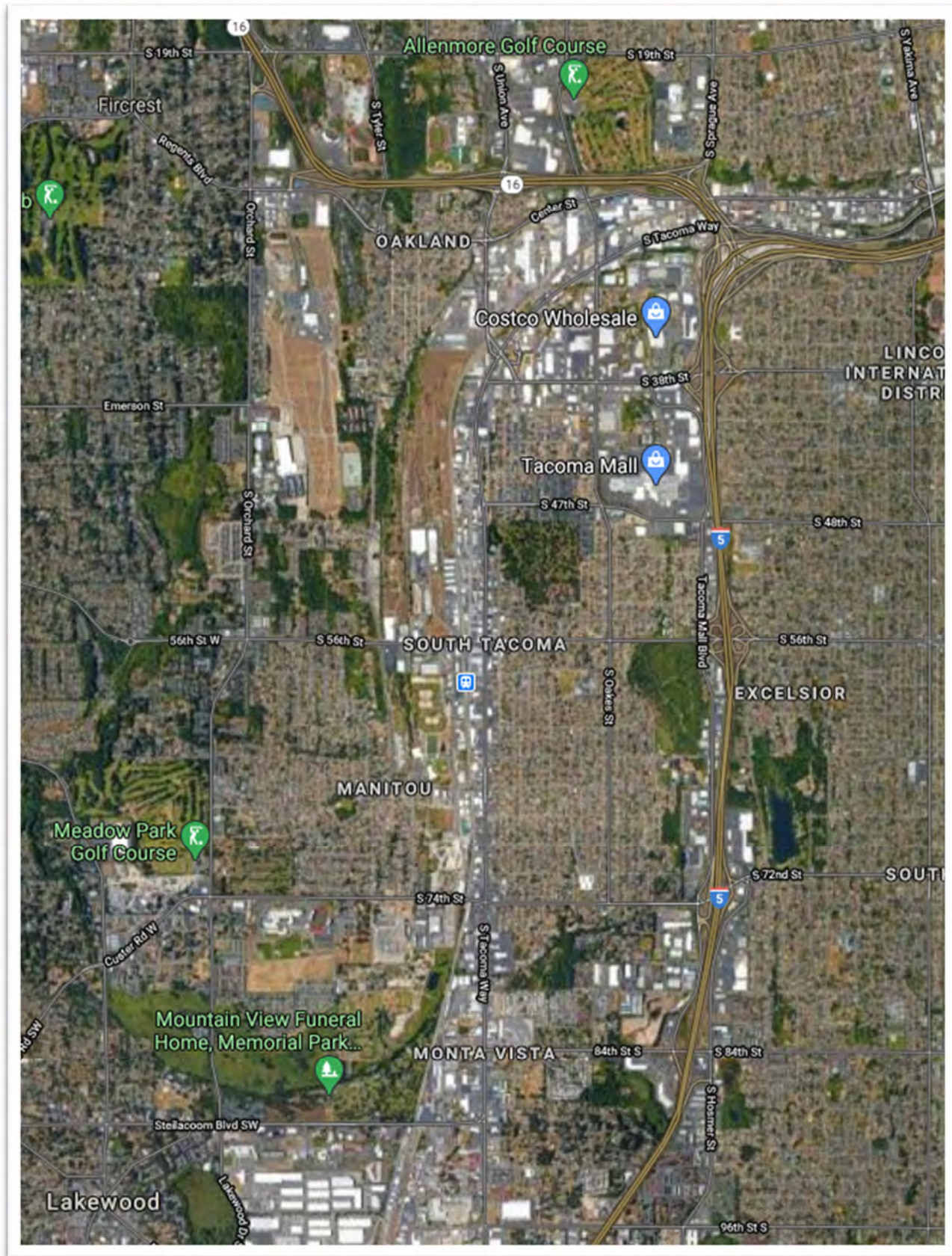
https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/Shoreline/Maps/10_Aquifer.pdf



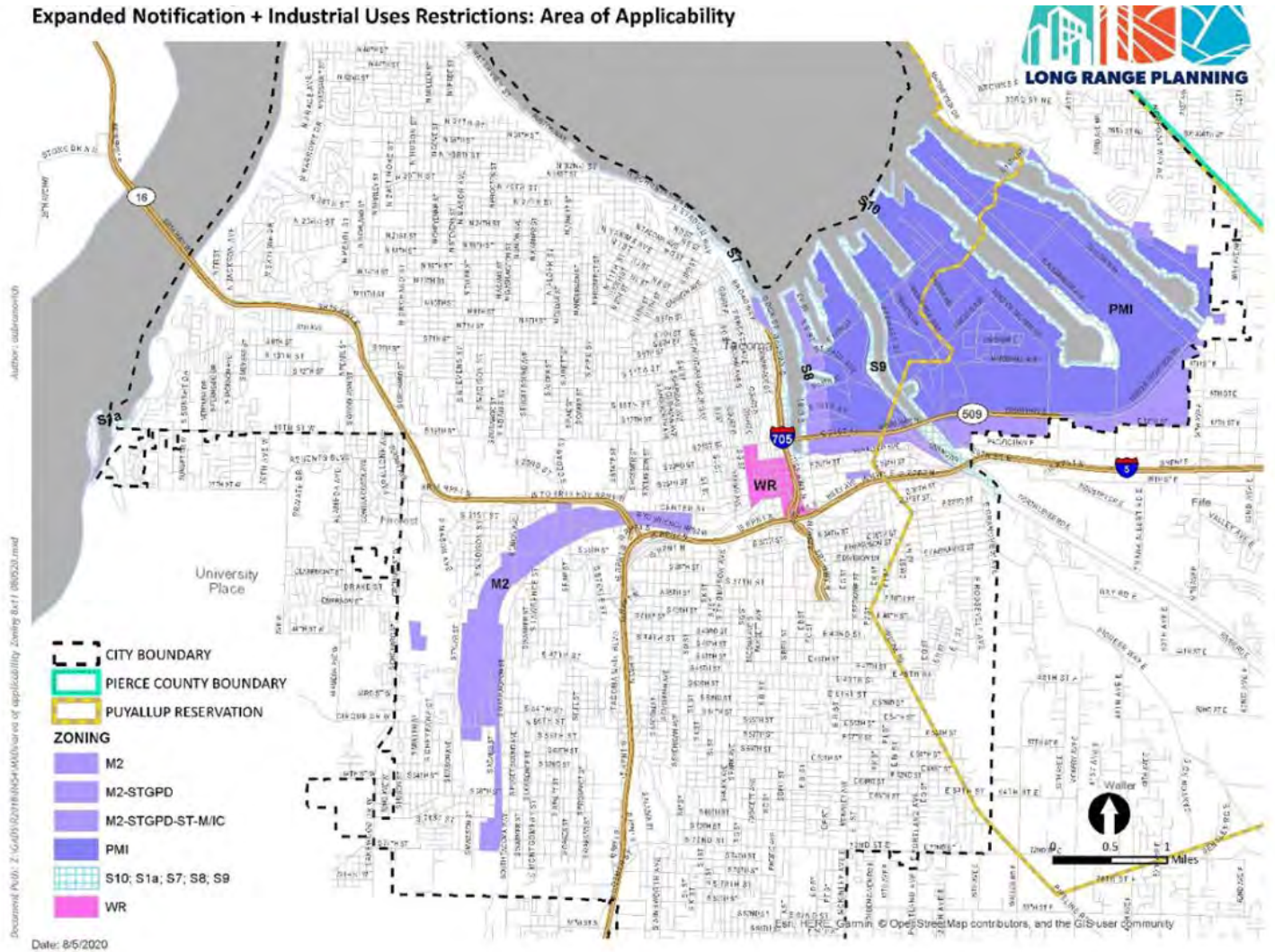
Satellite view of same area, to show developed land versus undeveloped, and the few open-space green areas left for our care and consideration:



Closer view of the groundwater protection district. Note very little undeveloped land left (not counting the Tacoma Landfill) within the STGPD, yet much is currently specifically zoned as M2 (ST-M/IC) instead of more proactively protective.



Currently proposed Non-Interim Land Use:



Side by side comparison of those images, illustrating the heavy industry zoning directly over the STGPD and the remaining undeveloped land we still have a chance to change direction for future environmental improvement:



Water will be the most critically important element of the future, and we must protect this essential resource.

It's not enough to hope that the contaminants above the aquifer will never reach the ground water. Although the city seems to be preparing for sea-level rise along the shoreline, in addition we must acknowledge that climate change can also affect groundwater.

As sea levels rise, this won't only affect just shorelines but may seep underground for a mile or so inland causing groundwater to rise and push into contaminated soil becoming contaminated itself, plus releasing toxins into the air. So, despite the remedial action taken, we cannot assume contamination may always be safely "contained" in the soil above (simply hoping that infiltration will never go so deep, nor that groundwater could ever reach so high).

<https://www.npr.org/2021/02/08/963673676/near-coasts-rising-seas-could-also-push-up-long-buried-toxic-contamination>



Near Coasts, Rising Seas Could Also Push Up Long-Buried Toxic Contamination : NPR

Near Coasts, Rising Seas Could Also Push Up Long-Buried Toxic Contamination Along some coastlines toxic contamination could seep into basements or broken sewage lines in coming years. In ...

www.npr.org

The change to preclude heavily-polluting industry in the STPGD/aquifer recharge areas and promote more tree canopy cover would help protect the aquifer as well as provide better air quality and possible green space for the many 3-4 story multi-family apartment buildings (currently permitted and in the process of development) within the Tacoma Mall Subarea region (directly to the east of the ST-M/IC), as well as becoming more in-line with the Tacoma Environmental Act, Climate Justice Action Plan and Urban Tree Canopy programs.

Failure to acknowledge and begin addressing this issue now may well result in a situation such as is currently occurring in Flint, MI where former elected officials are being charged for their poorly thought-through choices, neglect to act and for the resulting harm to residents.

Michigan plans to charge ex-Gov. Snyder in Flint water probe

FILE - In this March 21, 2016, file photo, the Flint Water Plant water tower is seen in Flint, Mich. Former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, Nick Lyon, former director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and other ex-officials have been told they're being charged after a new investigation of the Flint water scandal, which devastated the majority Black city with lead-contaminated ...

[apnews.com / https://apnews.com/article/flint-lead-water-crisis-gov-rick-snyder-801ba227340f0ac2e10e37a06a82f08d](https://apnews.com/article/flint-lead-water-crisis-gov-rick-snyder-801ba227340f0ac2e10e37a06a82f08d)

South Tacoma already has some of the highest air pollution levels and mortality rates, yet appears intended for even more heavily-polluting industry and high-density in-fill housing. Inviting only heavily-polluting industry to ST-M/IC would bring more noise, air pollution, large vehicle congestion and possible water contamination -- all of which would be detrimental to the health and quality-of-life for current and future residents.

Quote from Sept. 14, 2019, TNT:

Clousing pointed out that the South End has a history of health disparities compared to other parts of Tacoma. A Washington State Department of Health map shows high levels of diesel emissions and other health risks in the South End compared to northern areas of Tacoma.

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article234895557.html>

Eventually, efforts should be taken for all open undeveloped land directly above the groundwater aquifer to best allow for natural saturation through uncontaminated and native plant filtering ground layers, instead of redirecting precious fresh water away, down greywater pipes and storm drains either to wastewater or polluting the ocean.

It's time South Tacoma received adequate acknowledgement for improvements. South Tacoma is a community, not the industrial port; so, inviting more heavily-polluting industry within such close proximity is a community health issue which could easily become a crisis which we must take steps now to avoid.

***“We have learned that it is much easier
and less expensive to protect aquifers
from pollution and harmful development
than to find new water supplies or
restore ground water quality after
it has been contaminated.”***

- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

- **Prohibit further heavily-polluting industry in STGPD and aquifer recharge areas to instead promote a South Tacoma Eco-Industrial Park / Economic Green Zone**

Ideally the city should be actively working to obtain all remaining undeveloped land within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas to preserve as green space, for the future protection of our water supply. Second to that, we should be implementing incentives for the owners/occupants to that extent as much as possible.

The concept of an Economic Green Zone is to attract not only businesses which have no chance of a spills/leaks and other harmful polluting which could contaminate our air, ground or water in any way, but to also entice businesses which manufacture products and/or provide services for the betterment of our more environmentally sustainable future.

We propose additional protections in the overlay above/within STGPD and aquifer recharge areas (still complying with all requirements of the environmental covenant). So, for the heavy industrial businesses in the ST-M/IC currently operating, we must 1) be more vigilant about monitoring, and 2) prohibit any new expansion of heavily-polluting industry/manufacturing in this area going forward (any current heavy industry/manufacturing could be grandfathered-in but with the agreement of no future expansion). All other businesses anywhere within the STGPD/aquifer recharge areas would be henceforth held to non-polluting industry/commercial/recreational and/or designated undeveloped green zones, also with no expansion of polluting industry allowed.

The Tideflats and Industrial Non-Interim Land Use Regulations proposal limits businesses within the ST-M/IC to only heavy industry while the "Home in Tacoma" proposes more high-density "affordable" housing within the city's most-polluted area. Not only is this an unfair form of discrimination against the city's lower-income demographic, but it also prohibits numerous non-polluting business options.

Many of the proposed restricted businesses/facilities are the very ones we would actually like to see promoted to come to South Tacoma, not be limited. Restrictions should instead be with the intent of reducing heavily-polluting industry farther away from our homes, schools and recreational areas, and especially away from the STGPD/aquifer recharge areas.

This wouldn't be limiting all industry (not even all heavy industry), it would instead be allowing for more of the right non-polluting kind. For example, currently Pierce County is one of the only counties which doesn't have a horse arena which is a multi-million dollar domain but which the proposed non-Interim regulations would prohibit, while promoting heavily polluting industry instead.

Another example of an up-coming/booming business is industrial hemp, which is not only becoming the future replacement of hardwood but also actually improves the land it is cultivated on.

Hemp is the New Oak: America's First Hemp "Wood" Factory is Being Built

"HempWood" is 20 percent harder than oak, and grows 100 times as fast. It's a sustainable alternative for hardwood furniture, flooring and more... HempWood will be used to make blocks, boards, flooring, cutting boards and skateboards, all at prices far cheaper than oak, the company said.

<https://returntonow.net/2019/04/14/americas-first-hemp-wood-factory-is-being-built/>

Hemp is a non-psychoactive crop which would be beneficial to have planted anywhere there is contaminated soil (which is truly most of Tacoma, due to the Arsarco smelter contamination) with the condition of no pesticide/herbicide usage allowed.

One example of hemp plants used to clean-up toxic areas is in Chernobyl, through the plant's process of "phytoremediation" by penetrating deep into the soil and absorbing both harmful chemicals and rich nutrients. The hemp plants store the toxins in its stalks and stems, but the flowers remain clean. Recent studies have shown that when low-THC plants are used to remove toxic heavy-metals from the soil, the stress on the plant drives up CBD content with no measurable boost in psychoactive THC, thus producing a high demand CBD. Full study here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6715179/>



Hemp plants naturally purify soil by pulling man-made pollutants and heavy-metal toxins into the stalk, which can then be turned into bio-fuel or textile fiber or many other uses. The flowers, however, are free of toxins and THC, so can produce high quality CBD products.



4. Objectives –

The time has come for a broad review of South Tacoma, the ST-M/IC and STGPD/aquifer recharge area overly districts, regarding potential environmental and health impacts of the area, and developing a clear vision to eliminate all possibilities to risks to groundwater and residents, with codes to promote a cleaner Eco-Industrial Green Zone concept.

The Port of Tacoma is not the only economic engine in this city. South Tacoma has the potential to be molded into position as one of the first areas to obtain up-coming federal funding of Green Opportunity Zones, uniquely located to include Tacoma Rail and the forthcoming "North Access Road" from SR 16. South Tacoma is where our city can demonstrate initiative and leadership with a first-of-its-kind Green Center.

This may be done in a number of ways, and we are open to exploring them all. For this submission, it was recommended we lay out our vision for the city's planning experts to then assist with the specific policy and code changes which will best support this shift toward (and ultimately reaching) these goals while considering possible:

- Increased protection overly enhancement of the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas for code, plan and/or land designation changes
- Subarea review of all South Tacoma, opening additional options

Example: South Tacoma Green Zoning Development Overlay

An additional protection layer, put into the city code, combining the aquifer protection district, tree canopy, and compatible industries in one comprehensive section. Instead of ever allowing for exceptions to protections, the Green Zone overlay would be a non-negotiable baseline, with credits and advantages given to qualifying businesses after they meet all of the Green Zone overlay controls such as measures in place to resist possible natural disaster catastrophic conditions.

Example: Businesses within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas could opt to create a natural basin in exchange for various provisions of the Eco-Industry Economic Green Zone benefits. This would not be for holding hazardous substances (as is currently being done) but for improved clean stormwater management with natural basins doing more than just collecting water while also managing it from run-off, with the option to reward efforts taken to allow for natural saturation through undeveloped uncontaminated and naturally filtering ground layers, instead of redirecting fresh water away, down greywater pipes and storm drains either to waste or polluting the ocean.

Example: Just as builders are able to select from a "palette" for exemptions/exceptions, the same concept could be applied to a different "green palette" for any business/development within the STGPD and aquifer recharge areas. Although there would be a firm requirement of no pollutant groundwater run off or storage within this protected zone, there could be options to preserve variations of open space such as is being done in Whitemarsh Township, PA where they have discovered that natural basins with un-mowed native plants and especially tall trees (which are the ultimate tool in stormwater management) are much more effective than mowed swales.

See: **Whitemarsh Township Stormwater Management**

<https://www.whitemarshtwp.org/275/Stormwater-Management>

The South Tacoma Economic Green Zone will be an area for Tacoma to bring community input and manufacturing coalitions into a consortium with city departments/committees to encompass all common goals.

This application requests a comprehensive review of South Tacoma for deconfliction of existing zoning, code, and requirements coupled with an inclusive leveraging of development programs to create the positive conditions for an economy of the future, incorporating / partnering with additional city departments such as the Community & Economic Development Department and/or support from council sub-committees: Community Vitality and Safety – and - Infrastructure Planning and Sustainability.

The resulting plan will provide for leveraging of economic development efforts such as the state Opportunity Investment Zones and create shovel-ready green code for coming state and federal green infrastructure funding.

This idea is centered on three characteristics:

- Green Policies - zoning deconfliction, access, restrictions, and community oversight metrics
- Green Processes - closed loop resource integration, energy management, certifiable national and international standards
- Green Technologies - Synergistic Industrial and Manufacturing clusters and nodes, low impact construction, onsite energy production

The South Tacoma Economic Green Zone could be a sought-after destination with green prerequisites required before a new business could establish above the aquifer. For those businesses, claiming to be part of South Tacoma Economic Green Zone could become synonymous to desired eco-certification branding and promotion as a certified part of an elite green manufacturing district.

Instead of continuing to give exceptions to businesses up-front, better to create incentive goals. Only when businesses have met and sustain the green qualifications, would they then earn the right to eco-exceptions.

Such a “Green Code” will reward businesses which meet and exceed green environmental and economic standards. Meeting those standards is expected. Exceeding them is rewarded.

No exceptions will be permitted which might endanger the aquifer or regional environment. Current businesses in conflict or in variance with existing code will be induced to work toward complete compliance.

This will be the way of the future and, in my discussion with existing businesses in the area, they know it is ultimately in their best interest to start taking carbon-neutral steps now as contributing members of the community. This can be a positive plan for all involved.

There are many resources of available to pattern, as well as a passionate community ready to assist however possible. With collaborated efforts, South Tacoma has the potential to become a distinct and desirable business destination and manufacturing region unlike anywhere else in Washington state.

5. Community Outreach –

This has been a topic within our community for decades, but it was especially reignited in 2019 with the city's approval of a car crushing/metal recycling facility to be allowed directly over the STGPD not far from an outdoor recreational area. Then, with the recent casual inclusion of South Tacoma into proposed land-use regulations written primarily for the industrial Port of Tacoma, there have been additional discussions at the neighborhood and STNC board meetings, plus outreach to residents, area businesses, landowners and community organizations as well as conversations with TPCHD and Tacoma Police Department (TPD) specifically about concerns/issues due to the metal recycling facility (e.g. increased traffic hazards and congestion, metal/auto theft, a spontaneous street village nearby where the occupants rely on scrapping metal resulting in the subsequent inappropriate unregulated dismantling of vehicles and appliances on the side of the street).

Thus far, we have not met with any objections since we are not suggesting eliminating business, but instead promoting the concept of an Eco-Industrial Green Zone where new non-polluting business could get a foot-hold to “incubate” and clean businesses would desire to permanently establish within.

Examples of neighborhood council communications to the city:



Mayor Victoria Woodards
City Council of Tacoma
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA. 98402

September 10, 2019

Dear Mayor Woodards and Tacoma City Council,

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council is concerned regarding the current zoning of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District. The concern arose from the recent permit application by Sutter Metals Recycling Center to build an Auto Crushing & Metal Recycling Center at 5312 South Burlington Way.

The South Tacoma groundwater aquifer system serves as a significant source of drinking water for the City of Tacoma. It supplies approximately 40% of Tacoma's total water demand. This resource is important to the City of Tacoma.

The Neighborhood Council recently discovered the zoning of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District has been M-2 heavy Industrial since 1953.

The zoning is outdated and not conducive to the current changing times.

The Neighborhood Council is requesting the City Council consider initiating a rezone of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District from M-2 heavy Industrial. Please consider initiating an amendment to the comprehensive plan to change the zoning to protect Tacoma's groundwater supply.

Respectfully,

South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
board@southtacoma.us



1/27/2021

Mayor Victoria Woodards
City Council of Tacoma
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA 98402

Mayor Woodards and the Tacoma City Council,

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council is once again communicating our urgent request regarding the need for rezoning of land above and near the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District. We had sent a similar letter on September 10, 2019 but received no action, much less even a reply.

Only recently, we learned the Planning Commission has now been tasked to "fast track" non-interim regulations which were primarily written for the Port of Tacoma tide-flats, yet those are also being applied to South Tacoma even though South Tacoma is vastly different than the heavy industrial port.

South Tacoma is a vibrant community made up of both historic homes and newer multi-family housing, recreational fields, school and business districts. South Tacoma's protected groundwater aquifer serves as a significant source of the city's drinking water, supplying up to forty percent of Tacoma's water demand. South Tacoma's history of railroad industry no longer reflects present day, and the M2 industrial zoning from 1953 is inappropriate and should have been recognized as outdated long ago.

Ironically, the ST-MIC proposes to restrict precisely the kind of non-industrial businesses we would like to welcome to South Tacoma, which CoT recognized as obviously incompatible with heavy industry. For example, the proposed regulations acknowledge that an assisted-living facility should not be near an M2 zone, while at the same time the city's "Home in Tacoma" project is proposing high-density housing in South Tacoma near the very areas the non-interim regulations are trying to retain as solely heavy industry.

South Tacoma needs to be removed from the Tide-flat Non-Interim Regulations, and the industrial zoning must be reviewed and changed. It is no longer acceptable to assume that South Tacoma may someday later get a closer look' as was suggested by the city staffer in a recent Planning Commission meeting. Now is the time to take the obvious action and give South Tacoma proper designation instead of allowing for continued high pollution levels contributing to the unbalanced early mortality rates occurring here (per TPCHD).

We envision a new approach, such as a "Green Zone" which could be realistically obtainable with progressive-minded enticements and rezoning to support economically and environmentally sustainable businesses, while preventing additional health hazards and prohibiting further threat or contamination to the aquifer.

We of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council are once again formally requesting that this issue no longer go unnoticed, un-responded to and un-acted upon. We look forward to working with the city in determining the best new approach for South Tacoma; either as a separate interim-or-non-interim regulation specific to this area, or an amendment to the comprehensive plan for corrected rezoning, and/or your welcomed solutions to create a better future for South Tacoma which will also be for the betterment of our entire city.

Respectfully,
South Tacoma Neighborhood Council

CC: Tacoma City Council, Tacoma Planning Commission, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Pierce County Council, All Tacoma Neighborhood Councils, Rep. Melanie Morgan, Rep. Steve Kirby, Sen. Steve Conway

PO Box 112136, Tacoma, WA 98411 - board@southtacoma.us



March 27, 2021

Tacoma Planning Department
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: Amendment Application Fee Waiver

At our monthly meeting on March 18, 2021, Board Members of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council voted in unanimous support of submitting this Amendment Application to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code.

Thank you for the application fee-exemption of our Neighborhood Council submission due to this formal written confirmation of the STNC-Board's approval.

Respectfully,

Joe Bushnell - Chair
Phone: 253-792-1857
South Tacoma Neighborhood Council

PO Box 112136, Tacoma, WA 98411 • board@southtacoma.us

6. Supplemental Information to Proposal:

The Edison (South Tacoma) Eco-Industrial Center and Economic Green Zone



Goal: to attract non-polluting businesses – and -- entice the type of businesses with services or manufactured products for the betterment of our more environmentally sustainable future.

Eco-industrial park

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eco-industrial_park

An eco-industrial park (EIP) is an industrial park in which businesses cooperate with each other and with the local community in an attempt to reduce waste and pollution, efficiently share resources (such as information, materials, water, energy, infrastructure, and natural resources), and help achieve sustainable development, with the intention of increasing economic gains and improving environmental equality.

An example of multiple plans to assist municipalities with the development and implementation:

Green Zones

<https://www.cbecal.org/issues/green-zones/>

Picture a Green Zone as a community transformed—from a highly polluted, economically depressed neighborhood into a vibrant area with green business practices, a healthier environment and a stronger economic future... the Green Zone concept is an affirmative approach to reduce and prevent pollution—one that looks at the overall environmental and economic health of a community.

The definition of a Green Zone varies from community to community, but there is a common concept: A Green Zone designation provides a local framework to protect the environmental and economic health of a community heavily affected by local pollution. A Green Zone's boundaries could be defined by those of a particular area within a city where residents live with heavy concentrations of pollution.

In a Green Zone, you'll find:

- Land use policies that prevent new pollution projects from locating in these communities
- Support for businesses in the Green Zone that want to “green up” operations
- Greening these communities by creating more parks, community gardens and urban farms, and developing green businesses and jobs.

The Environmental Protection Agency endorsed the Green Zone concept at a forum at the White House in December 2010. The EPA expressed support for the Green Zone model to protect environmental and economic health, one that represents a new direction for the environmental justice movement.

This opens the door to more effective work in creating Green Zones in communities around the country to protect the environmental and economic health of low-income residents and communities of color.

Green Economic Zones as a Catalyst for Regional Sustainable Development

https://www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Green-Economic-Zone_8bRZ.pdf

Green industrial clusters focus Economic Zone (EZ) activity on the production of green technologies and products necessary for a transition to green growth. The availability of green technologies, which promote efficient use of natural resources and emit fewer greenhouse gas, are instrumental in achieving the green transition. EZs which cluster green industries therefore contribute to both national and international green objectives. Green industrial clusters also provide spillovers to the wider economy, supporting the success of eco-industrial parks and low carbon zones. Examples of successful green clusters include Himin Solar Valley, China's largest geographic zone for the solar industry, and Atlantis Greentech SEZ, designated in South Africa for the manufacture of green technologies and provision of green services.

EZs provide opportunities to achieve green growth by:

- implementing greener production processes: for example, encouraging energy efficiency improvements for existing industries;
- testing innovative green policies: for example, setting low-carbon targets and testing experimental policies aimed at reducing environmental impact of growth; and,
- developing green product supply chains by attracting investment towards supply chains that support the green transition, such as solar energy panel producers.

Economic zones which contribute to green growth can be categorized by three, not mutually exclusive, categories:

- eco-industrial parks,
- low carbon zones,
- and green industrial clusters.

The Sustainable Development Code

<https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/create-green-zones-2/>

Offers best practices for community development. Help for all local governments to build more resilient, environmentally conscious, economically secure, and socially equitable communities.

Planning Toolbox: Green Development Codes/Ordinances

<https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/Tools/GreenCodes.cfm>

Green land development ordinances provide the following advantages:

- **Energy Conservation:** The use of green development practices and techniques can reduce the long-term use of energy.
- **Financial Benefits:** Houses (as well as non-residential structures) built in developments using green design principles can require less energy to heat and cool, thus allowing financial resources to be directed towards other appropriate areas.
- **Encourages Market Acceptance:** Developments using green technology can stimulate more such developments and can help increase their market acceptance.
- **Lowers Pollution:** Sustainable land developments can reduce air pollution and improve indoor air quality.
- **Environmental Protection:** Green developments can help protect sensitive environmental areas through their preservation and by removing pollutants.
- **Safety:** Green developments stress the safety of their residents, including roadway and environmental safety.

Green Infrastructure Toolkit

<https://www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/toolkits/green-infrastructure-toolkit/incentive-based-tools.html>

Financial and Development Incentive-Based Tools

While mandates are the most certain method to change behavior, both financial and development incentives for green infrastructure can be important tools as well. Both types of incentives can stand alone or can accompany mandates; unlike mandates, incentives can influence stormwater management practices on property that is not otherwise subject to zoning or building code requirements (i.e., existing development not planned for renovation). They therefore can be a critical tool for highly-developed municipalities to spur change on private property.

Sustainable: Green zones offer energy-efficiency incentives

<https://finance-commerce.com/2019/04/sustainable-green-zones-offer-energy-efficiency-incentives/>
(One example of green zone incentives effectively and successfully put into practice.)

The idea would be for non-polluting businesses to incorporate land protection practices above the aquifer for even small green-spaces, such as other areas are doing:

Denmark plans to plant one million trees (to combat air pollution and cover groundwater sites to protect their drinking water).

... forests are one of the most effective means of [absorbing CO2](#), and much needed to achieve global climate emissions targets and protect biodiversity. In popular terms, the forests are the lungs of the earth,” said the Growing Trees Network Foundation, citing data from the United Nations climate reports. “At the same time, they protect our groundwater reservoirs, create new habitats for plants and wildlife, and new areas of recreation for citizens.”

<https://www.sustainability-times.com/environmental-protection/denmarks-tree-telethon-raises-funds-for-forests/>

King County moves closer to planting one million trees

<http://www.mi-reporter.com/news/king-county-moves-closer-to-planting-one-million-trees/>

Naturalization of land, even small plots, is less expensive than run-off infrastructure, and easily economical in the short and long-term since naturalized plots require little-to-no-maintenance and with the added benefit of attracting birds, butterflies and other essential pollinators. Eventually, with the advent of climate change, all fresh water will likely need to infiltrate into aquifers for the future of our drinking water supply, never directed into wastewater or the salt-water bay. The sooner we begin repairing the ground above our aquifer, the better.

Other groundwater protection approaches have been to donate land:

Nature Conservancy

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/texas/stories-in-texas/edwards-aquifer-protection/>

This kind of natural land covering is economical in the long run, since it is self-maintaining (no mowing) made of native plants and trees, as well as benefitting nearby residents and the drinking water quality. Such improvements may also open additional federal incentive options.

Conclusion:

It is time to give South Tacoma and its groundwater aquifer the consideration it has always deserved but has not been receiving, especially since the city is pushing for dense in-fill housing in South Tacoma close to the border of the industrial area, and because our climate is reaching a state-of-no-return if we don't begin making better choices now. This is our time to correct these oversights, better protect our precious groundwater resource, and our very realistic chance to begin turning South Tacoma into a contemporary green business district of the future, unique to anywhere in Washington State.

Submitted by:

South Tacoma Neighborhood Council - Board

Heidi Stephens, Resident of South Tacoma, At-Large Board Member



Minor Plan and Code Amendments

Assessment Report

May 19, 2021

The “Minor Plan and Code Amendments” is one of the applications for the 2022 Amendment to the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code. It proposes minor, non-policy type of revisions to the *One Tacoma Plan* and various sections of the Tacoma Municipal Code (primarily in Title 13 – Land Use Regulatory Code). The intent is to keep information current, address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, increase clarity, and improve provisions that, through implementation of the Plan and administration of the Code, are found to be unclear or not fully meeting their intent.

Project Summary	
Application ID:	“Minor Plan and Code Amendments”
Applicant:	Planning and Development Services
Location and Size of Area:	Citywide
Current Land Use and Zoning:	Various
Neighborhood Council Area:	Citywide
Proposal Summary:	Minor, non-policy type of revisions to the <i>One Tacoma</i> Comprehensive Plan and various sections of the Tacoma Municipal Code, intended to keep information current, address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, increase clarity, and improve provisions that, through implementation of the Plan and administration of the Code, are found to be unclear or not fully meeting their intent. See Exhibit “A” for the Preliminary Scope of Work.



Planning and Development Services
City of Tacoma, Washington

Peter Huffman, Director

Project Manager

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 (253) 591-5682

E-mail: lwung@cityoftacoma.org

Website: www.cityoftacoma.org/planning

Section A. Proposed Scope of Work

1. Area of Applicability

Citywide.

2. Background

The application of “Minor Plan and Code Amendments” is an annual process used by staff to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan and the Tacoma Municipal Code (primarily Title 13 – Land Use Regulatory Code). The application addresses issues identified by staff, customers of the Planning and Development Services Department, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and/or the public. These issues are usually not substantive enough to rise to the level of a stand-alone annual amendment application. The preliminary scope of work is depicted in Exhibit “A.”

3. Policy Framework

As individual issues included in the scope for work are analyzed, applicable supporting provisions of State statutes, case law, regional policies, and/or the Comprehensive Plan will be identified.

4. Objectives

Would the proposed amendment achieve any of the following objectives?

- Address inconsistencies or errors in the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations;
- Respond to changing circumstances, such as growth and development patterns, needs and desires of the community, and the City’s capacity to provide adequate services;
- Maintain or enhance compatibility with existing or planned land uses and the surrounding development pattern; and/or
- Enhance the quality of the neighborhood.

Staff Response: Issues included in the scope of work typically address the first objective, while some issues may address the other three objectives.

5. Options Analysis

It is expected that many proposed amendments are straightforward corrections and clarifications. Alternative approaches to addressing certain issues may be needed and will be considered as appropriate.

6. Proposed Outreach

Outreach will include meetings with the Community Council, and depending on the issues, with certain identified Neighborhood Councils and stakeholders. Consultation with the Puyallup Tribe will be conducted.

7. Impacts Assessment

Potential impacts, if any, of individual proposed amendments will be identified and analyzed, as appropriate.

8. Supplemental Information

Exhibit “A” – Preliminary Scope of Work for the Minor Plan and Code Amendments.

Section B. Assessment

1. Staff Assessment

TMC 13.02.070.E requires that staff provides an assessment of the application against the following criteria for the Planning Commission's consideration:

- (a) Whether the amendment request is legislative and properly subject to Planning Commission review, or quasi-judicial and not properly subject to Commission review.

Staff Assessment: Proposed minor amendments to the *One Tacoma Plan* and the Tacoma Municipal Code, primarily Title 13 – Land Use Regulatory Code, are legislative and properly subject to the Commission's review.

- (b) Whether there have been recent studies of the same area or issue, which may be cause for the Commission to decline further review, or if there are active or planned projects that the amendment request can be incorporated into.

Staff Assessment: The issues included in the preliminary scope of work (Exhibit "A") have never been studied. There may be additional issues added later. As technical analysis proceeds, some of the issues may be removed from the list, incorporated into other projects, and/or elevated to policy-level discussion.

- (c) A preliminary staff review of the application submittal.

Staff Assessment: Some initial staff review had already been conducted on all issues included in the preliminary scope of work in order to suggest what potential amendments or approach of study may be applicable.

- (d) Identification of other amendment options the Planning Commission could consider in addition to the amendment as proposed by the applicant

Staff Assessment: As the technical analysis proceeds, various amendment options may be identified.

- (e) Whether the amount of analysis necessary is reasonably manageable given the workloads and resources of the Department and the Commission, or if a large-scale study is required, the amendment request may be scaled down, studied in phases, delayed until a future amendment cycle, or declined.

Staff Assessment: The preliminary scope of work is expected to be modified, but the amount of analysis for the issues is expected to be reasonably manageable.

2. Planning Commission Decision

TMC 13.02.070.E requires that the Planning Commission, upon review of the assessment, make a decision on the application, as to:

- (a) Whether or not the application is complete, and if not, what information is needed to make it complete.

Staff Recommendation: The nature of the application of "Minor Plan and Code Amendments" is a list of issues to be studied, as depicted in Exhibit "A." The application is considered complete.

- (b) Whether or not the scope of the application should be modified, and if so, what alternatives should be considered.

Staff Recommendation: The preliminary scope of work is expected to be modified, and the amount and scale of technical analysis will be adjusted accordingly.

- (c) Whether or not the application will be considered, and if so, in which amendment cycle.

Staff Recommendation: The application should be considered in the 2022 Amendment cycle.

Exhibit “A” – Preliminary Scope of Work

Code Section / Plan Element	Issue
TMC 13.06.140.C	It is not clear whether the requirement for construction to be Built Green 4 Stars or LEED gold certification applies only to new PRDs, or to new buildings/roads in established PRDs as well. Need clarification. Also, analysis may be needed to determine how such clarification could impact all existing PRDs.
TMC 13.06.100.D.1.	TMC 13.06.100.D.1. Downtown District Minimum Building Design Standards. - Applicability. A comma needs to be added so reads like this: The basic design standards, and additional standards applicable to the DCC and DR districts, except as otherwise noted, shall apply to all new....." so these standards apply to all Downtown Districts, not just the DCC and DR Districts.
TMC 13.06.100.D., 13.06.100.E., and 13.06.090.L.	There are no standards for ground-level utilities (screening, location, etc.) for mixed-use developments and 4-plexes and above within the Downtown Districts. The only standards are for rooftop equipment.
TMC 13.06.100.E.1	Request to add design standards and/or minimum density standards for SFDs in commercial districts, specifically T and C1. "1. Applicability. The following requirements apply to all single, two, and three-family dwellings in *T, C,* and X-Districts, and to all two and three-family dwellings in all districts."
TMC 13.06.010.D.1-2	There's a two-block section of Pac Ave - 25th to 27th - that is not designated as a pedestrian street. This may not have been intentional. Should be fixed.
TMC Chapter 13.04	Based on the decision for the Morcos Preliminary Plat, our attorney has recommended that we take out language that states that an approved preliminary short or long plat is an assurance that the Final Plat will be approved. This language is not provided for in the RCW; rather it was added in by a previous PW's Director many years ago.
TMC 13.05.010.A.6.g. and 13.06.090.C.3.h.	Please move the "Each unit shall provide no more than one off-street parking space", parking quantity maximum out of TMC 13.05.010.A.6.g. and move it to the Parking Quantity Table in TMC 13.06.090.C.3.h. (See PRE20-0049)
TMC 13.06A.065.B.2.a-b. and 13.06.510. Table 2	Micro Housing allows for smaller, many more units than may have been anticipated when linking the number of ADA stalls to "the number of parking stalls that would have been required" by the Parking Code (had the site not been in the RPA and/or with reductions allowed w/in the X-Center). Alternatively, if feel that provision under TMC 13.06A.065.B.2.b. is the relief, then add it to the "Exemptions" section in Table 2 for TMC 13.06.510. (Reference PRE19-0157)
Accessory buildings in commercial and mixed-use districts	There are no specific regulations for accessory buildings, such as garages, that are associated with a residential use, leaving room for inconsistent implementation. Recommend a footnote in the use tables referring residential accessory buildings to the R section of the code.
Long-term Bicycle Parking Requirements	Code required large, grouped long-term bike parking located separately from residential units is always significantly underutilized. Alternative or improved design/configuration are needed (such as through a clear accessible bike path between the sidewalk and a different manner of dedicated bike storage areas and/or clear space within individual units for that purpose). Option for variance? “Bike Runnels”?

###