

# South 38th Street Design Plan

A Land Use Management Plan Element



Conducted by the Tacoma Planning Commission consistent with  
Washington State Growth Management requirements



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**TACOMA CITY COUNCIL**

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Hal Neilsen, City Council Representative  
Benjamin J. Thompson, City Engineer

# South 38th Street Design Plan

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This plan is an element of the Land Use Management Plan, Tacoma's comprehensive land use plan, and was developed in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act.



Planning & development Services Department  
Growth Management Services Division  
Tacoma Municipal Building  
747 Market Street, Room 900  
Tacoma, Washington 98402  
(206) 591-5364

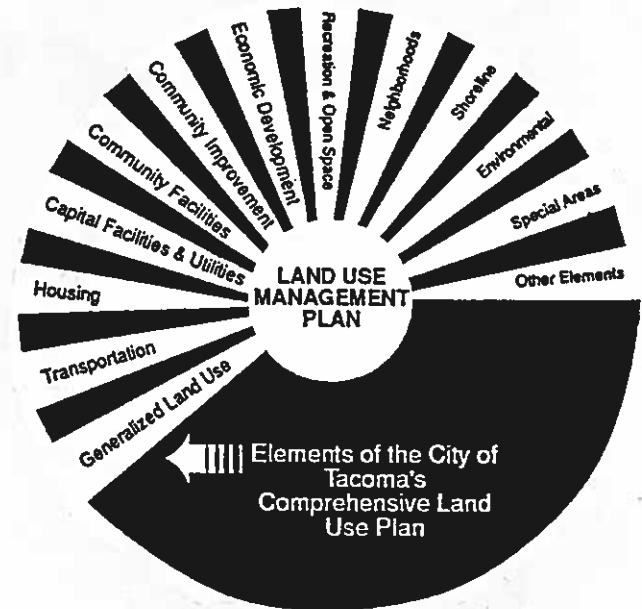
July 1993

The Planning and Development Services Department does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs or services. Upon request special accommodations will be provided within five(5) business days.

Contact 591-5364 (Voice) or 591-5058 (TDD).



The South 38th Street Design Plan is an element of the City's long-range, comprehensive Land Use Management Plan. It is accomplished pursuant to the authority conferred by the Washington State Constitution and Title 13 of the City's Charter and General Ordinances.



Tacoma's Land Use Management Plan contains the comprehensive plan elements required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). It also contains elements not required by the GMA that were adopted prior to the GMA. These prior existing elements will be reviewed and revised in the future to ensure complete consistency with the GMA, but shall remain in effect until specifically updated. Any conflict that should arise between an element adopted after, and consistent with the GMA, and previously adopted element shall be resolved in favor of the post-GMA element

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**Planning and Development Services Department**

Director: Norris V. Bacho

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**Growth Management Services Division**

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The Tacoma Planning Commission wishes to acknowledge the many individuals who provided their assistance in the development of this plan.



**Resolution No. 31634**

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has, pursuant to the Official Code of the City of Tacoma, developed the draft "South 38th Street Design Plan," and

WHEREAS, after careful review of the draft "south 38th Street Design Plan," the Planning commission recommended adoption of the study as an element of the "Land Use Management Plan," and

WHEREAS the City Council held a duly advertised public hearing on August 6, 1991, to hear testimony on the draft "South 38th Street Design Plan"; Now, Therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:**

That, pursuant to Chapter 13.02 of the Official Code of the City of Tacoma, the "South 38th Street Design Plan" is hereby adopted as an element of the "Land Use Management Plan" all in accordance with said study as recommended by the Planning Commission of the City of Tacoma, a copy of which is on file in the office of the City Clerk and by this reference incorporated herein.

Adopted 2-11-92

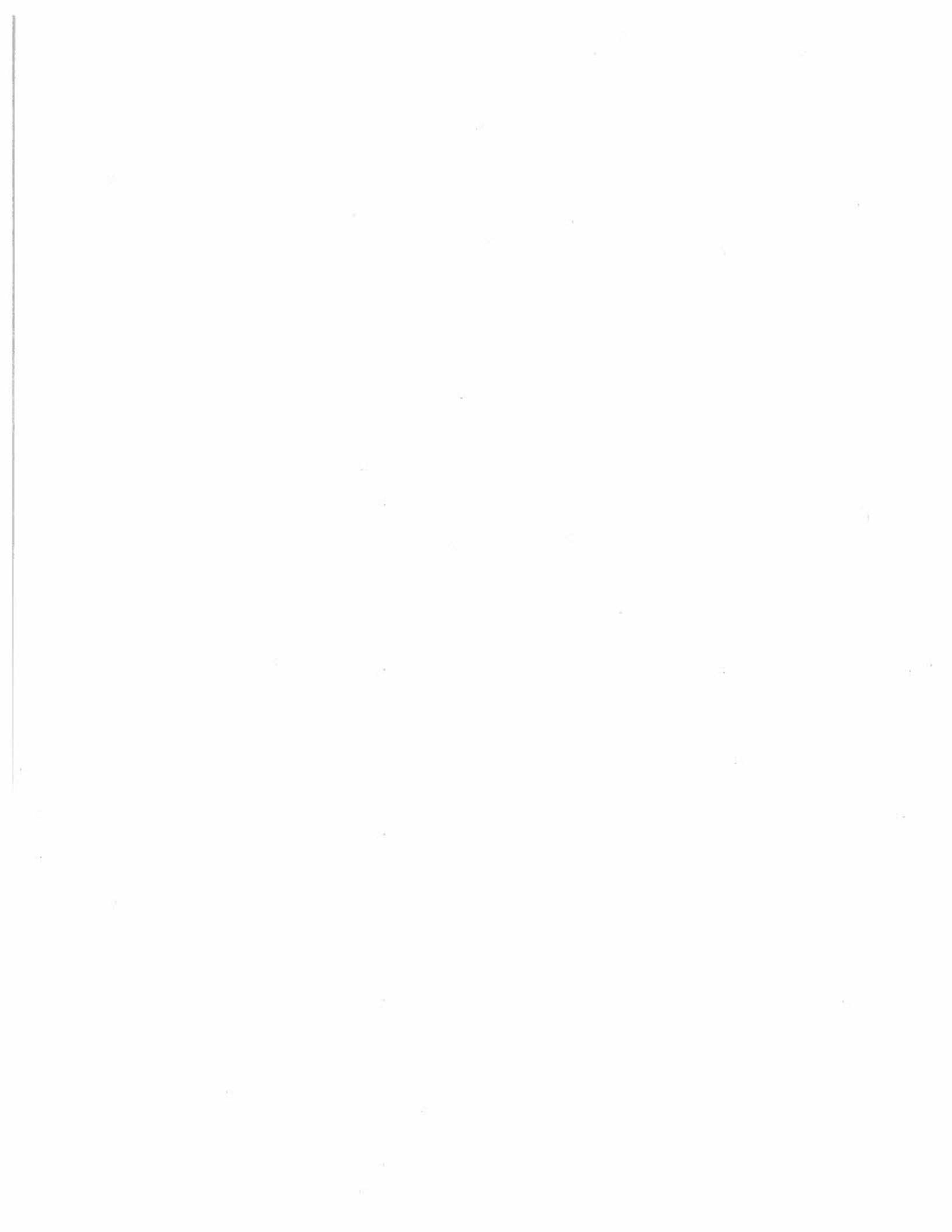
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Karen L.R. Vialle".

Karen L.R. Vialle  
Mayor

Attest:  City Clerk

KJC/bn

7503r







## Planning Commission

July 15, 1991

Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

The Tacoma Planning Commission is pleased to transmit to you the South 38th Street Design Plan. The document is a guide for development and improvement in the public rights of way in the South 38th Street area. The plan area runs along South 38th Street from the Interstate 5 overpass to the State Route 7 overpass. Also included within the plan area are some north-south and east-west intersecting streets warranted by design consideration.

Special emphasis has been given to improving the commercial areas through design, identifying parking opportunities, enhancing the common boundary between the business district and the adjacent residential community, and accommodating pedestrians. The plan promotes improvement in design, appearance and economic vitality by making recommendations for land use, circulation, physical development, urban design and methods of implementation.

The South 38th Street Design Plan was developed by the Planning and Development Services Department under the direction of the Planning Commission. The Commission found the plan consistent with the expressed goals and adopted policies of the City and desires of its citizens.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft plan on April 19, 1991. After thorough review of all concerns and comments received, the Commission made modifications which included naming specific species of trees for street tree planting, calling out a specific lighting standard, adding trash receptacles as a desired amenity, and adding more specific accommodations for on-street parking and vehicular circulation.

The Planning Commission strongly supports the enhancement of the city's neighborhood business districts as important assets to the community. Therefore, it is recommended that the South 38th Street Design Plan be adopted as an element of the City's long-range, comprehensive Land Use Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Hewkin, Chairman  
Tacoma Planning Commission

LW:vg  
OS.4833G



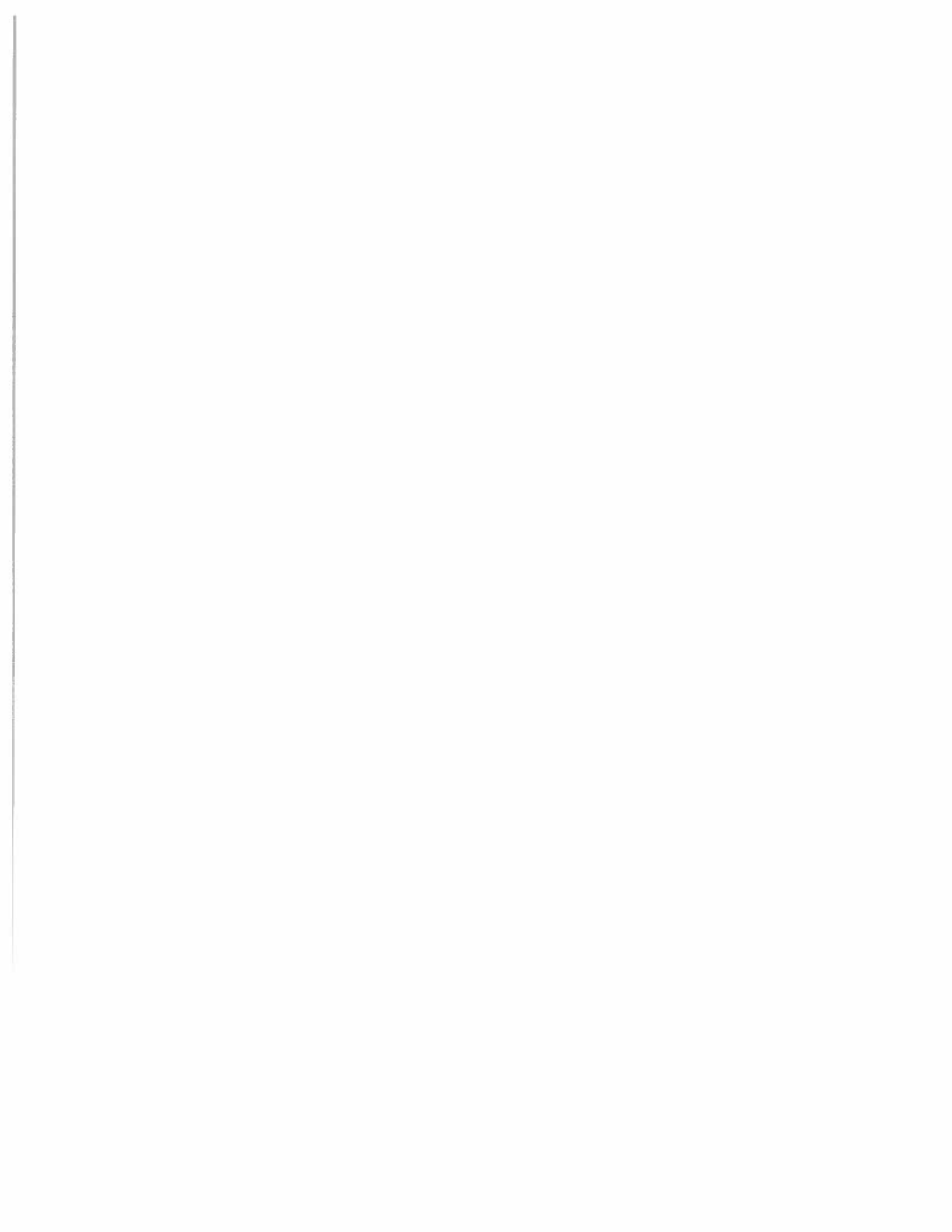
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# Summary

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### **Background**

City Council Resolution No. 28832 directed the Planning Commission to undertake a design plan to improve the aesthetic quality and economic vitality of commercial areas of South 38th Street. Although the plan primarily addresses public rights-of-way, private properties are discussed. Design and development principles such as building patterns/appearance, district edge conditions, pedestrian environment, vehicular circulation and parking, landscaping and special features are discussed.

The plan area runs along South 38th Street from the Interstate 5 overpass to the State Route 7 overpass. Included are nodes at South M Street extending from South 38th to South 39th Street, South Yakima Avenue extending from South 38th Street to South 40th Street, South G Street extending from South 38th Street north to the Interstate 5 overpass, and Pacific Avenue extending from South 38th Street north approximately one-half block. Also included within the plan area are the north-south and east-west intersecting streets up to one-half block in depth as may be warranted by design considerations.

Special emphasis has been given to improving the commercial areas through design, identifying parking opportunities, enhancing the common boundary between the business district and the adjacent residential community, and accommodating pedestrians. The plan promotes improvement in design, appearance and economic vitality by making recommendations for land use, circulation, physical development, urban design and methods of implementation.

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for the revitalization of the South 38th Street commercial district. The primary responsibility in carrying out the plan's recommendations will rest with the property owners and merchants. The City has not identified any funds to implement the public improvements suggested in this plan. Individual property and business owners can use this plan for guidance when making improvements to their buildings or join with other owners to make larger scale improvements in a particular area.

### **Design Concept**

The design concept for the South 38th Street plan area is the "Neighborhood Center." The primary purpose of this concept is to strengthen the core area of the Lincoln business district as a focus of neighborhood commercial activity and as a pedestrian-oriented district. The Lincoln area business district extends approximately from South G Street to South Thompson Avenue along South 38th Street with extensions on G Street, Park Avenue and Yakima Avenue. To achieve the concept of this plan, it is recommended that new commercial growth locate within or near the core area contiguous to other commercial uses which over time will create a concentrated pedestrian-oriented district. The concept envisions a unified and cohesive neighborhood center with a variety of cultural, social, residential and commercial uses and services to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and areas beyond.

## Summary

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### **Design Objectives:**

Specific objectives were developed in support of the design concept and were used to develop recommendations and guidelines for development activities. These objective are as follows:

- Through design, positively affect the economic viability of the commercial areas and livability of the adjacent established residential neighborhoods.
- Improve the core commercial district.
- Protect and enhance residential areas.
- Emphasize the area's best features.
- Improve the safety of the area.
- Develop the area consistent with the design concept of this plan.
- Improve circulation relationships.

### **Design Recommendations:**

Design recommendations are specifically intended for the planning, design and development of public and private improvements. The recommendations express specific actions that can be taken to achieve the above design objectives.

- Use the vintage style, ornamental, pedestrian-level street light as the unifying element for the South 38th Street Design Plan area.
- Provide street trees throughout the Plan Area.
- Require new buildings and building renovations to be architecturally compatible with the character of the district.
- Enhance Lincoln Park and Lincoln High School.
- Use a distinctive sign to serve as an identifier of the South 38th Street area.
- Make Park Avenue one-way northbound to relieve congestion, improve traffic flow and allow room for additional on-street parking.
- Provide additional on-street parking along South Yakima Avenue.
- Improve sidewalks and walkways to increase pedestrian access and safety.
- Establish a Business Special Review District for the core commercial area.
- Provide buffers between commercial and residential developments.
- Target the South 38th Street Area for expenditure of housing funds.



**Implementation and Recommendations:**

All improvements recommended in this Plan will not occur simultaneously. The Plan is likely to be implemented incrementally over time and some projects or parts of projects may never occur.

One important step in the implementation will be detailed analysis of the cost estimates in order to seek out possible cost saving and to accurately reflect actual development costs. Any major physical improvements in the area will require considerable investment. Accomplishing all of the proposed improvements is estimated to cost \$1,008,900. (Estimates in the Plan are stated in 1991 dollars; actual costs of projects may be affected by inflation and other factors.) This detailed cost analysis will occur as the availability of funds for the various projects becomes known. One method to finance improvements may be a Local Improvement District (LID) where each property owner could be assessed annually for a share of the costs for a certain period of time. Other financing methods include state and local grants or capital improvement projects.

The Plan indicates several actions that should be undertaken to accomplish the proposed improvements along South 38th Street. These recommendations range from general to specific and from short range to long range in scope. In addition, necessary ordinance changes involving required improvements in conjunction with development will be proposed in order to achieve the objectives of the Plan.

The following recommendations are implementation methods which can be undertaken to assist in the revitalization of South 38th Street:

- Investigate methods to establish a funding source to assist neighborhood commercial district revitalization efforts.
- Designate funds in the annual capital biennial for infrastructure improvements in neighborhood commercial districts.
- Initiate or support citizen petitions for formation of a local improvement districts to provide Streetscape improvements.
- Actively support federal and state legislation which would provide funding and assistance for commercial revitalization.
- Review funding policy regarding installation and maintenance of supplemental lighting for pedestrian safety and convenience.

The public sector must continue and strengthen its intent to improve the South 38th Street corridor by actively seeking funds for improvements, providing coordination between private property owners concerning development and maintaining staff resources. It can be anticipated that as private projects are undertaken, the South 38th Street Design Plan will be utilized as a guide for improvements to the public street areas.

The private property owners and businesses can assist in the revitalization of South 38th Street by forming associations to represent their interests and to coordinate activities in the commercial districts. The association can support programs to enhance the appearance of buildings, streets and sidewalks, promote special events to attract shoppers, increase the safety of the area, and recruit new businesses and investors.

This Plan is based on the premise that no attractive physical environment is desirable and necessary for a healthy business community. South 38th

## Summary

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Street is deserving of the careful attention to detail as outlined in this plan. Broad-based community support, strong public commitment, and cooperation between property owners and government will be necessary to accomplish the intent and recommendations contained in this plan.

# Introduction

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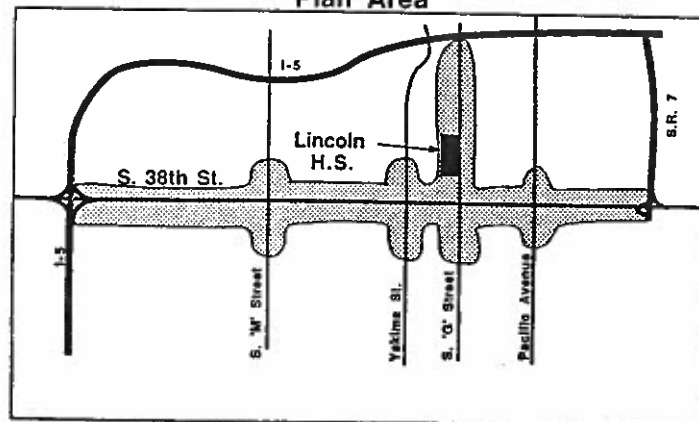
### Plan Area

The South 38th Street Design Plan area is located in South Tacoma, just to the east of I-5 and the Tacoma Mall.



The plan area runs along South 38th Street from the Interstate 5 overpass to the State Route 7 overpass. Included are South M Street to South 39th Street, South Yakima Avenue extending from South 38th Street to South 40th Street, South G Street extending from South 38th Street north to the Interstate 5 overpass, and Pacific Avenue extending from South 38th Street north approximately one-half block. Also included within the plan area are the north-south and east-west intersecting streets up to one-half block in depth as may be warranted by design considerations.

South 38th Street Design Plan Plan Area



Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department

north  
↑  
not to scale

## **Introduction**

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### **Scope**

City Council Resolution No. 28832 directed the Planning Commission to undertake a design plan to improve the aesthetic quality and economic vitality of South 38th Street commercial areas. Although the plan primarily addresses public rights-of-way, private properties are discussed. Design and development principles such as building patterns/appearance, district edge conditions, pedestrian environment, vehicular circulation and special features are discussed.

### **Purpose and Intent**

The plan promotes improvement in design, appearance and economic vitality by making recommendations for land use, circulation, physical development, urban design and methods of implementation. Special emphasis has been given to improving the commercial areas by suggesting unified design elements, identifying parking opportunities, enhancing the common boundary between business districts and the adjacent residential communities, and by providing recommendations to better accommodate pedestrians. The plan is intended to give direction to land use policy and decisions in the area and to provide a guide for public and private improvements. It also is intended to help the business community make decisions concerning the long-term future of the South 38th Street commercial areas.

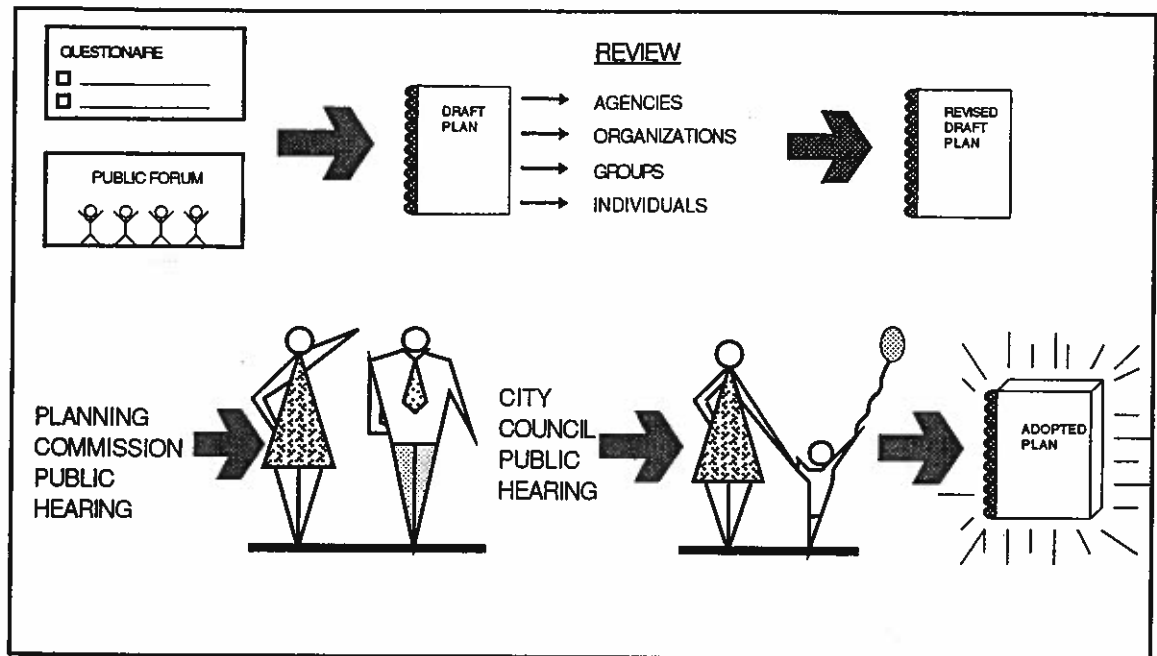
Many of the recommendations contained in the South 38th Street Design Plan support or affirm the policies and recommendations of the Generalized Land Use Plan.

Specifically, this plan will provide:

- a schematic design concept
- drawings of unifying design elements
- design guidelines for public and private development
- recommendations for public improvements and implementation methods

### **Plan Development and Adoption Process**

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Tacoma Planning Commission. It was the Commission's objective to obtain a broad range of citizen participation. Consequently, a questionnaire was mailed to residents, businesses, and property owners within the plan area to solicit their comments. A public forum was also held by the Commission to receive comments on general design concepts. The information received from the citizen questionnaire and public forum were used to prepare a draft plan.



Pursuant to the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21 RCW) and the SEPA Rules (Chapter 197-11 WAC), the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Generalized Land Use Plan was adopted for the South 38th Street Design Plan. In addition, an addendum to this environmental document was prepared. The addendum provides additional analysis of the proposed plan and any potential environmental impacts. The adoption notice and addendum are included in the Appendix of the plan. An environmental assessment was completed as part of the plan development process.

The draft plan and environmental information were circulated to various agencies, organizations, groups and individuals for review and comment. Appropriate comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft plan.

Further discussions of the draft plan and environmental information were held during a public hearing before the Planning Commission. Revisions, as appropriate, were made before the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the plan. The City Council further reviewed the draft plan and held a public hearing to obtain additional citizen comment. Adoption of the plan by the City Council formally establishes the City's position concerning the design and development of the South 38th Street plan area.

### Plan Amendment Process

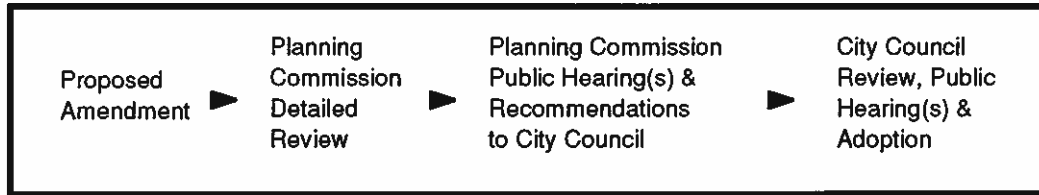
To ensure the plan continues to be an effective policy document, the plan should be reviewed periodically concerning its content and timeliness. Changing conditions and needs may dictate amendments to the document. Proposed amendments will be subject to the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act and the State Growth Management Act.

Amendments to the plan will receive detailed review by the Planning Commission, and public hearing(s) will be held to solicit citizen comment. After further consideration, and prior to adoption, the Commission will make formal recommendations to the City Council. The Council will then

## Introduction

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conduct their own review of the proposed amendments, hold a public hearing, modify the amendments if necessary, and adopt them as part of the South 38th Street Design Plan.





# Framework

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## Background

South 38th Street is a busy, well-traveled arterial with several distinct commercial nodes and significant stretches of single-family homes and multi-family developments. The core commercial area, between South Thompson Avenue and South G Street has an international flavor with several businesses catering to the Southeast Asian community.

It is the City's goal to maintain its older commercial areas as attractive and vital shopping districts while mitigating impacts of commercial activities on surrounding established residential areas. This design plan is intended as a guide to achieve these goals.

## History

The growth of Tacoma's south end was originally dependent upon the construction in 1888 of Ransom Radebaugh's narrow gauge streetcar line to Fern Hill, a small community located

six miles south of Commencement Bay. This line ran in the vicinity of South Street near the Indian Henry Trail, a road used earlier by the Indians when traveling from Mount Rainier, and in the 1840's by the Hudson's Bay Company when traveling from Fort Nisqually to Commencement Bay. Development in this area began as scattered farm cottages. Gradually, as streets were developed, newer housing was constructed in between the older cottages; and the economic, social and cultural facilities were established for the residential communities which were formed.

Lincoln High School, Park and Bowl are all features of historical and architectural significance within the plan area. The land for the park was dedicated in 1889 and expanded through a later donation.

The cornerstone for the Tudor-style Lincoln High School was laid in 1913. Approximately seven years later the athletic field and bowl were completed.

Many of the older, residential structures along South 38th Street have been remodeled into commercial uses. This transition of uses has impacted the residential neighborhoods surrounding the plan area with many of the abutting single-family structures converted into rental units or commercial uses.

Many of the present commercial structures predate the 1940's and have considerable potential for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation of existing structures has taken place recently, with many retail developments changing uses.



## Framework

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### Land Use

The chart below lists the number of land uses fronting on South 38th Street. Commercial uses, including retail, service, and eating and drinking establishments predominate followed by residential uses. Vacant structures, quasi-public, and medical uses are all minor uses in the area.

Commercial	92
Retail	45
Service	33
Eating/Drinking	14
Residential	66
Single-Family	61
Multi-Family	5
Vacant	9
Quasi-Public	6
Public	3

Source: Land Use Field Survey, Fall 1988  
Tacoma Planning Department.

*“Land Uses in the South 38th Street Design Plan Area - Commercial, residential, quasi-public, public, and vacant uses are intermixed throughout the plan area.”*

The South 38th Street plan area is generally comprised of small businesses who cater to daytime shoppers. Most small retail stores close by 6:00 p.m. and are closed on Sunday. The primary source of business customers is the surrounding residential neighborhoods, employees of private and public facilities in or near the district and Lincoln High School faculty and students. Drive-by customers also are important. Several Asian businesses have opened in the area over the past few years. These businesses range from laundry facilities and Asian markets to restaurants. The district also has several well-established specialty uses which draw customers from throughout the City and beyond. These include a religious goods store, drugstore, bakery and educational materials.



Lincoln High School, Lincoln Bowl, and Lincoln Park have a major impact on this planning area. The high school has a student capacity of 1,739 and the Bowl provides field play for the Tacoma School District, AAA football, soccer, and track. Lincoln Park is a sixteen acre park adjacent to Lincoln High School. The park is family-oriented, providing public tennis courts as well as other recreational opportunities for all ages. Increased traffic volumes and parking impacts occur in association with the use of these facilities.

Public facilities within and nearby the plan area bring an influx of people from other parts of the city. The post office at South G Street and South 38th Street serves the area from South 32nd to South 43rd and Sheridan Streets to Pacific Avenue with approximately 3,000 mail deliveries. This station is one of several locations in the city which distributes food stamps.

Puget Sound Hospital is a 160 bed facility with nearly 500 employees. This hospital, located just outside the plan area boundary, serves all of Pierce County with surgical and chemical dependency in- and out-patient facilities, acute care, family after-care, and a mental health clinic.

The Pierce County Health Department is located at South 37th and D Streets. The main health facilities are housed in a two story brick building with administration offices located in a separate building. The Health Department also rents space in other adjacent buildings. The facility employs 300 people and provides an array of services to the Pierce County area.

### **Development Pattern**

Development fronting the South 38th Street corridor occurs in a linear fashion and consists of three different development patterns: traditional commercial, setback suburban, and residential.

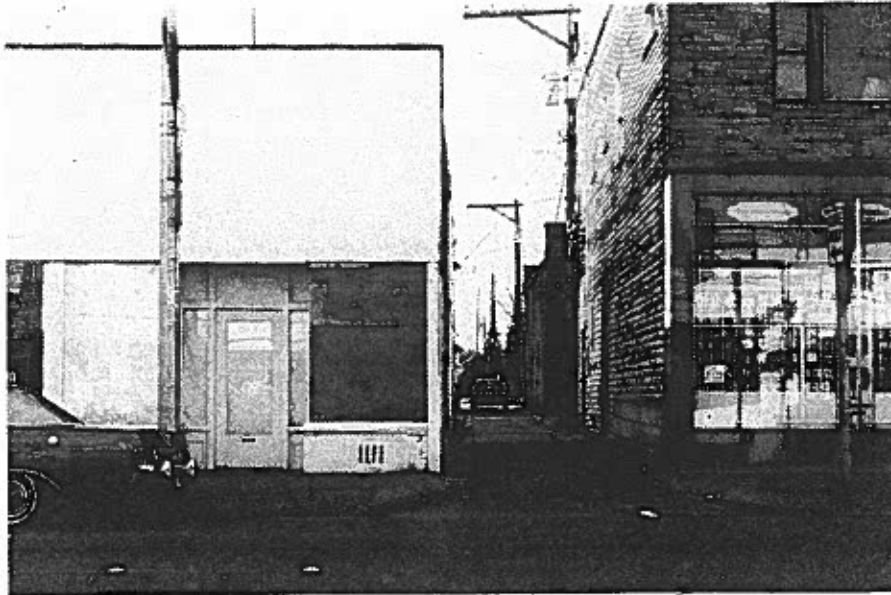
#### **Traditional Commercial:**

Traditional commercial development features buildings abutting front and side property lines creating continuous facades along the street, breaking only for alleyways and intersecting streets. This type of development pattern is highly-oriented to pedestrians, provides a sense of security and allows a concentration of many uses in a small area, as well as providing

## Framework

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direct access into buildings from the street. Multi-stop trips are encouraged as shoppers can conveniently travel from store to store along the sidewalk. Traditional commercial development is generally prevalent in older commercial areas. Buildings tend to be a human scale of one to two stories, similar in bulk and constructed of similar materials. Parking is usually located on the street and to the rear of the buildings.



## Setback Suburban



Within a setback suburban development area, buildings are set back from the sidewalk area and parking areas abut the sidewalk. Vehicular access directly from the fronting arterials, often interrupts the pedestrian pathways. This type of development is oriented to the automobile and is

common in newer commercial and multi-family developments. This type of development uses large tracts of land to accommodate parking areas. This type of development is normally developed with a single use, e.g., grocery store or multi-uses, such as a shopping center. Travel between developments is difficult, requiring shoppers to return to their car and exit onto the adjacent street and re-enter on an adjoining parking area. Buildings are generally single-story.



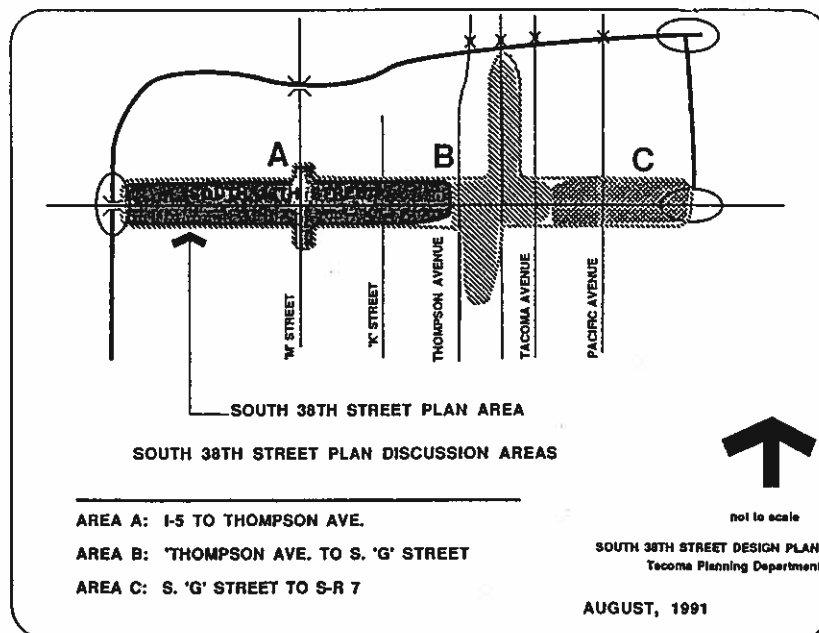
**Residential**

In the residential development pattern, dwelling structures are generally centrally-situated on the building lot and are separated from other structures by front, back and side yards. Often the dwelling structure is above or below the level of the street.

**Existing Conditions**

**Sub Areas:**

The South 38th Street plan area has three distinct sub-areas, each with its own character and special needs. These sub-areas are graphically depicted below.



## **Framework**

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### ***Sub Area A***

- Close Proximity to I-5 and Tacoma Mall
- Some Commercial Activities
- Suburban and Residential Development Pattern
- Established Single-Family Residential Near I-5

### ***Sub Area B***

- Primarily Commercial uses
- Primarily Traditional Commercial Development Pattern
- Parking Located on Street
- One to Two-Story Buildings

### ***Sub Area C***

- Close Proximity to SR-7
- Setback Suburban and Residential Development Pattern
- Multi-Family, Single-Family, and Commercial Uses
- One to Two-Story Buildings

## **Commercial Edge Treatment**

Edges refer to a line or zone where areas of different land uses meet and a transition is made from one to another. Both land uses are equally important.

In the 38th Street area, parking lots often are adjacent to residential areas and do not provide adequate screening. Many of these lots were developed prior to adoption of parking lot development standards and do not meet today's buffering and screening requirements.

Other conflicts arise in the 38th Street area where industrial properties are adjacent to residential areas. Proper screening is not provided and heavy truck traffic causes extensive noise and congestion.

Many of the commercial/retail businesses in the area front along South 38th Street with primary access from this main arterial. Several situations do occur where businesses are located on side streets abutting residential areas. These situations require special attention to buffers for noise and visual screening.

## **Intensities**

Land use plans usually distinguish developments based on general land use categories such as residential, commercial and industrial. The development intensity concept recognizes residential, commercial, industrial and other general land uses as different types of development, but it emphasizes the intensity of land use rather than the type of land use. Different types of land use may be located in the same area as long as the intensities of the uses are compatible and the character of surrounding development is retained. This approach permits greater flexibility in land use arrangements and encourages innovative techniques of land development through compatible design.

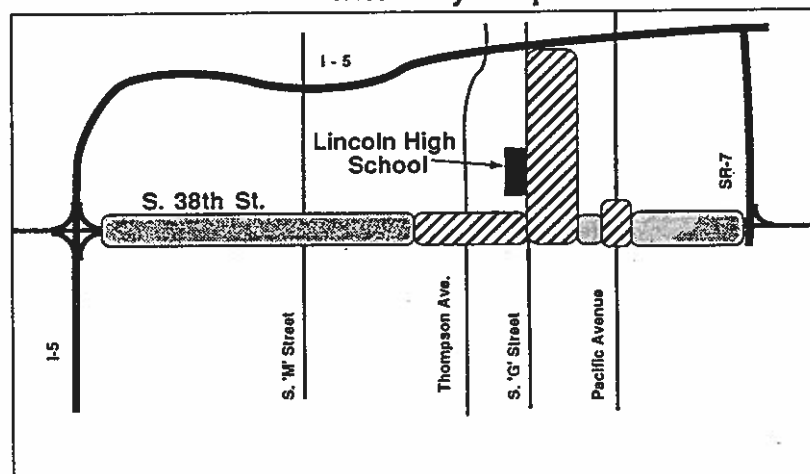
Development intensities relate to the character and degree of influence a development has, rather than the type of development. Factors that



determine the intensity level of a development include size, scale, bulk, nuisance level, amount of open space and traffic generation. For example, a ten-story apartment complex with little surrounding open space and high traffic generation would be viewed as a high intensity use while a typical, single-family detached home is regarded as a low intensity development.

Medium intensity development areas are characterized by land uses that have moderate activity patterns and traffic generation, commercial or industrial activity of community-wide significance and medium density residential development.

South 38th Street Design Plan Intensity Map



Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department August 1991

 Other Low Intensity  
 Medium Intensity

↑  
not to scale

## Circulation

### Vehicular

South 38th Street is one of the City's principal arterial streets. This street has two primary traffic functions: serving through traffic and providing access to the uses which front the street. These functions often conflict.

Within the plan area, South 38th Street has four traveling lanes with left turn lanes at various points. Major intersecting streets which provide a direct link to the downtown are

Other intersecting streets with signals include:

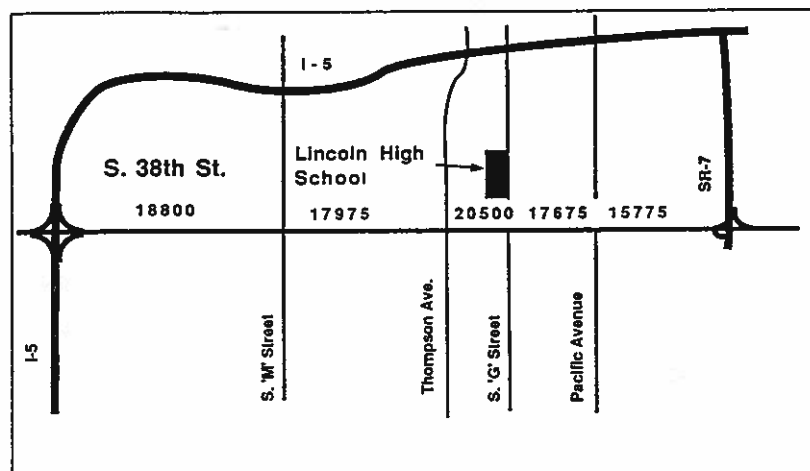
Tacoma Avenue,  
G Street,  
Yakima Avenue,  
South K Street,  
South M Street  
and Alaska Street.



## Framework

The map below shows the traffic volumes in the South 38th Street area.

### South 38th Street Design Plan Traffic Volumes



Tacoma Planning and Development  
Services Department  
AUGUST 1991



The speed limit is 35 mph from SR-7 to Pacific Avenue and drops down to 30 mph along the remainder of South 38th Street. The condition of the street surface is generally good. Curb conditions are fair.

### Public Transportation System

This area is well served by Pierce Transit bus service with many stops along South 38th Street. Only a few stops within the area have bus shelters. Bus service provides transport mainly to the downtown area and west towards Tacoma Mall.

### Parking

Parking opportunities are found in surface parking areas and in on-street spaces, which for the most part are time-restricted zones. Concerns regarding adequate parking were expressed by business owners during the development of this plan.

Regulations governing existing parking along South 38th Street are complex. The required parking stalls are determined by the square footage of the use. However, many of the buildings are required to provide little or no parking because they have been in existence prior to 1953 and have non-conforming use rights for parking. Any new construction would be required to comply with current parking requirements.

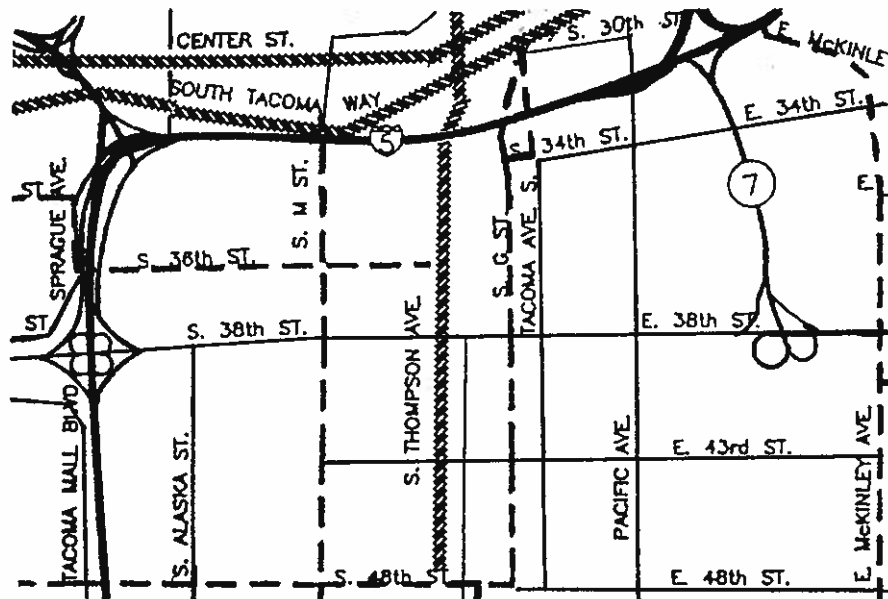
A survey of existing parking areas was conducted within the three sub-areas. Counts for each block between A and Cushman Streets show that there are approximately 476 public and 1,535 private parking spaces available for a total of 2,011 spaces. This information is included in the Appendix.



**Bicycle**

Tacoma's bicycle route system is a loop system which enables cyclists to return to their point of beginning by a different route. The system is designed to serve all sectors of the city, to include many major points of interest, and to connect with planned and existing bikeway routes in adjacent communities.

Use of local streets provides the most inexpensive bicycle route system. This approach has been used in the South 38th Street area. The map below depicts the designated bicycle routes in the area.



## Framework

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### Pedestrian

The enjoyment of the pedestrian experience is affected by the convenience of the route, the length of the trip, and the character of the buildings and surroundings.

The South 38th Street plan area is approximately one and one-half miles in length, over fairly flat topography with few inclines. Sidewalk conditions vary in condition from good to poor. Where properties have undergone redevelopment, many existing walks have been repaired and replaced.



### Streetscape Conditions

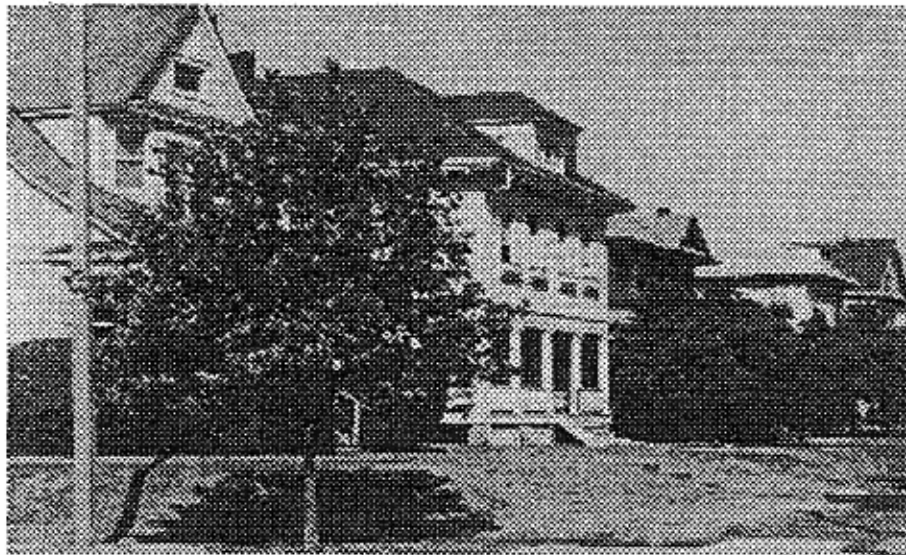
The streetscape is composed of all the elements which together form the visual environment of the street. These elements include buildings, lighting, street activities, landscaping, paving, street furnishings as well as the street circulation elements such as parking and traffic. All of these elements are important in themselves but it is how they function and interrelate which determines the character of the street.



### **Landscaping**

Plants with their natural beauty provide a pleasing complement to the built environment. Plants can soften edges and visually link diverse elements and areas. Continuous rows of trees visually soften unrelated structures by filtering light reaching the sidewalk. Properly chosen and located, plants can serve as a backdrop for other street amenities and unify the streetscape.

Landscaping is generally lacking in the commercial areas along South 38th Street. Within residential areas, the typical mix of lawn, trees and shrubs can be found in front of residences.



### **Lighting**

Different types of lighting serve different purposes. High, overhead lighting is generally used to illuminate roadways. This type of lighting produces an even distribution of light and provides for the safe movement of cars, but is of a large scale and harsh in brightness. Lighting to serve the pedestrian is at a lower height and lighting intensity during the day. Flood lighting the exteriors of buildings and landscaping can create striking effects and increase the public's enjoyment of special features at night.

Throughout the plan area, overhead street lights between 200 and 250 watts are found on steel, concrete and wooden standards. Although no pedestrian lighting is present along South 38th Street, pedestrian level historic lights are located along many residential side streets.



### Street Furniture

Street furniture encompasses all objects placed in and about the street including benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, telephone booths, planters, etc. Most street furnishings serve a useful function and because of their high visibility, they also serve an aesthetic function.

The plan area contains a few telephone booths, newspaper stands, transit shelters, and trash receptacles. None of the street furniture appears to be coordinated in design.

### Buildings

Buildings have the most visual impact on the street. Their height, bulk, materials, color, design, proportion, scale and type are the primary determinant of the character of the street.

Structures on South 38th Street appear in a myriad of colors, materials, styles and designs, with the majority of buildings limited to two stories. Most of the commercial structures along South 38th Street predate the 1940's and are in fair condition, with excellent potential for rehabilitation. Many have full or partial brick facades with awnings of various colors.

### Pedestrian Environment

One aspect to creating a pleasant environment for pedestrians is the ability of the business district to attract and encourage patrons to spend time browsing and to visit several of the stores and restaurants in one stop. The success of this aspect is primarily dependent on the appeal of the business,

how merchandise is displayed in store front windows and the appearance of the overall building. Facilities such as parking and access are secondary to these overall business practices.

The plan area, with the exception of the core commercial area, lacks a sense of unity and identity as a distinct and special district. Elements are present which detract from the pedestrian experience, such as interruptions in the building line by parking lots, lack of amenities such as landscaping and street furniture, and areas within the plan boundary which have four lanes of high speed traffic and no on-street parking.

### **Previous Plans and Studies**

The plan area has been previously analyzed in the Generalized Land Use Plan. The Generalized Land Use Plan addresses the physical utilization of land and the distribution of different types of land use intensities for the entire city. In developing the South 38th Street Design Plan, this document was reviewed.

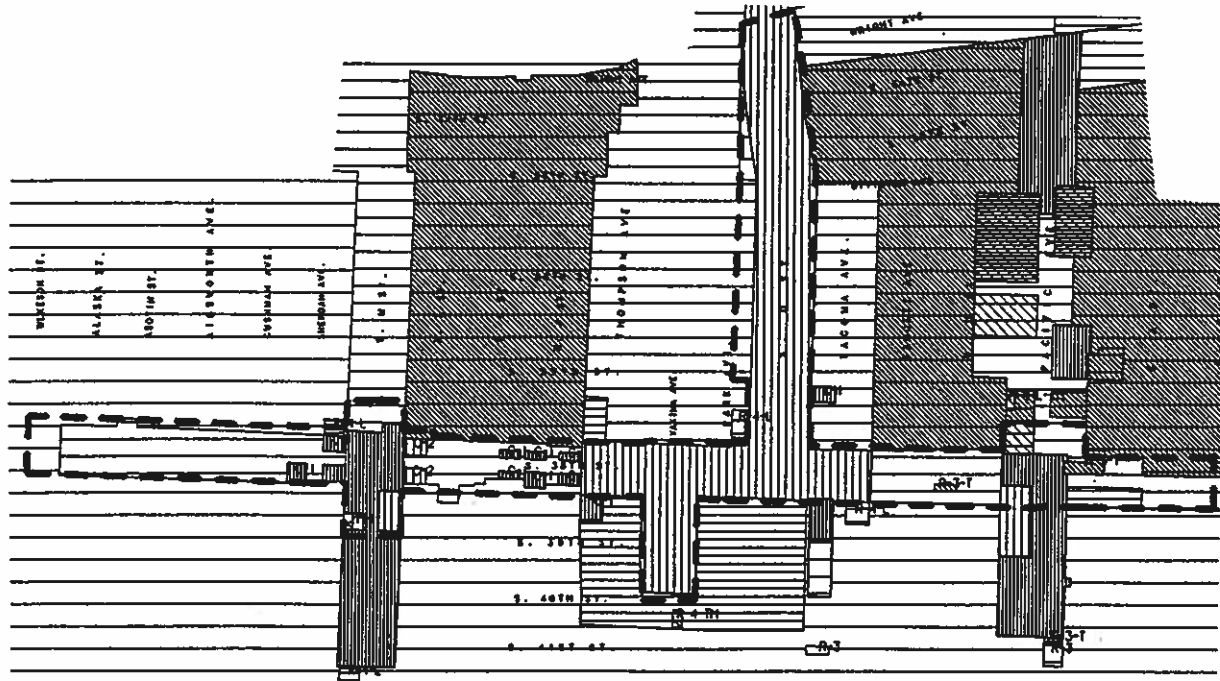
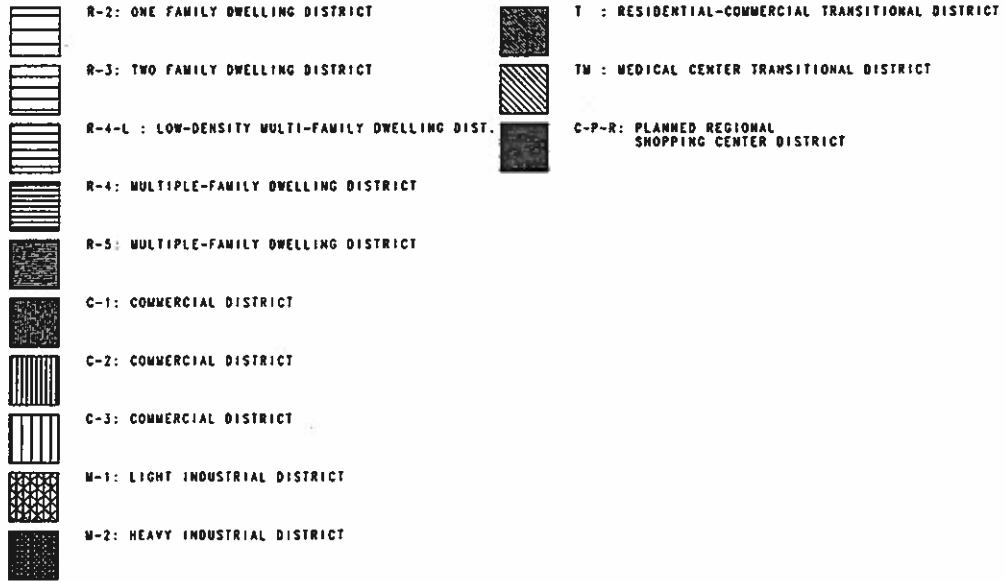
### **Existing Development Controls**

The extent of controls on private development greatly affect the appearance of the streetscape. It is important to understand the potential affect of regulations on future development and redevelopment along South 38th Street.

### **Zoning**

The zoning in the South 38th Street plan area consists of various residential and commercial districts, a light industrial district, and several transitional districts within or just outside of the plan area. The map on the following page depicts the zoning of the area.

## South 38th Street Design Plan Zoning Map





### **Commercial Sign Ordinance**

In 1985, the City adopted a new sign ordinance for commercial districts which regulates the number, type, size, and location of signs. Much of the signage found along South 38th Street predates the commercial sign ordinance.

### **Business Special Review District**

In 1987, an ordinance for creating business special review districts was adopted. The purpose of such districts is to enhance, stabilize and preserve the unique character and scale of established business districts. Business special review districts are intended to improve land use compatibility's between anticipated new commercial development or redevelopment and adjacent residential development. Continuous retail frontages, uninterrupted by vehicular accessways and parking facilities, are encouraged as are greater pedestrian orientation and access to the sidewalk and street.

### **Billboards**

The City recently amended the ordinance which regulates billboards in Tacoma. The ordinance mandates a cap on the number of billboards allowed in the City limits. The new regulations also include location, spacing and height limitations.

## **Assumptions**

### **Land Use Assumptions**

The South 38th Street plan area has a high potential for redevelopment. It can be expected that redevelopment and request for rezoning of residential properties to commercial uses will continue to occur. Some commercial expansion will take place north and south of the corridor adjacent to the residential areas but east-west commercial expansion will continue to be more predominant. Increased commercial expansion is expected along M and G Streets. The large variety of businesses will continue to exist and is expected to increase. The plan area is not expected to become a single area with the same character, but will be comprised of several sub-areas. The main commercial sub-area or core will continue to be located between Thompson Avenue and South G Street. Any new residential development that occurs along South 38th Street will be likely of a medium intensity nature.

### **Circulation Assumptions**

#### ***Vehicular***

South 38th Street will continue to have substantial volumes of traffic. Although recent developments have disrupted the continuity of the pedestrian environment by placing parking lots adjacent to the sidewalk and eliminating on-street parking, pedestrian orientation and access will continue to be important and will need to be protected and improved, particularly between Thompson and South G Street. Traffic volumes most likely will increase as the business district develops and the City continues to grow. Street widths will remain the same for the majority of South 38th Street.

## **Framework**

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The City is currently developing a Transportation Plan mandated as part of House Bill 2929 which will include development standards for all arterial streets in Tacoma. These future development standards may require improvements to the arterials in the South 38th Street corridor that are not currently anticipated by this plan and adjustments to this plan may have to be made as the transportation plan is developed.

### ***Public Transportation***

As the price of cars and gasoline continues to raise and as traffic congestion and pollution become more of a regional problem, public transportation will become increasingly important, as well as other forms of transportation such as walking and cycling. Close-in business districts will have a greater role in providing goods and services to the surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***Parking***

Parking opportunities will continue to be a vital concern to the South 38th Street business community. As new development and redevelopment occurs, the demand for parking will increase. Parking needs will compete the traffic and pedestrian needs.

### ***Bicycle***

It is expected that use of local streets will continue to serve as the primary bicycle routes. As transportation costs rise higher and higher, citizens will look to alternative methods of transportation, such as the bicycle.

### ***Pedestrian***

Sidewalks will continue to be improved as new businesses are built or existing buildings are updated. Well designed pedestrian access through and between buildings to rear parking areas will be necessary.

### **Streetscape Assumptions**

The success of the plan area's economic climate will continue to be dependent, in large part, upon the streetscape appearance of the South 38th Street corridor. Amenities such as benches, planters, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, building orientation will be important unifying elements in creating a prosperous business district along South 38th Street. Improvements to building facades will enhance the appearance and increase the attractiveness of the shopping area to potential customers.

### **Development Control Assumptions**

A Business Special Review District, would be an appropriate tool to help achieve desired redevelopment and design improvements. It is assumed that development controls will be changed over time to accommodate changing conditions and the needs of the City.

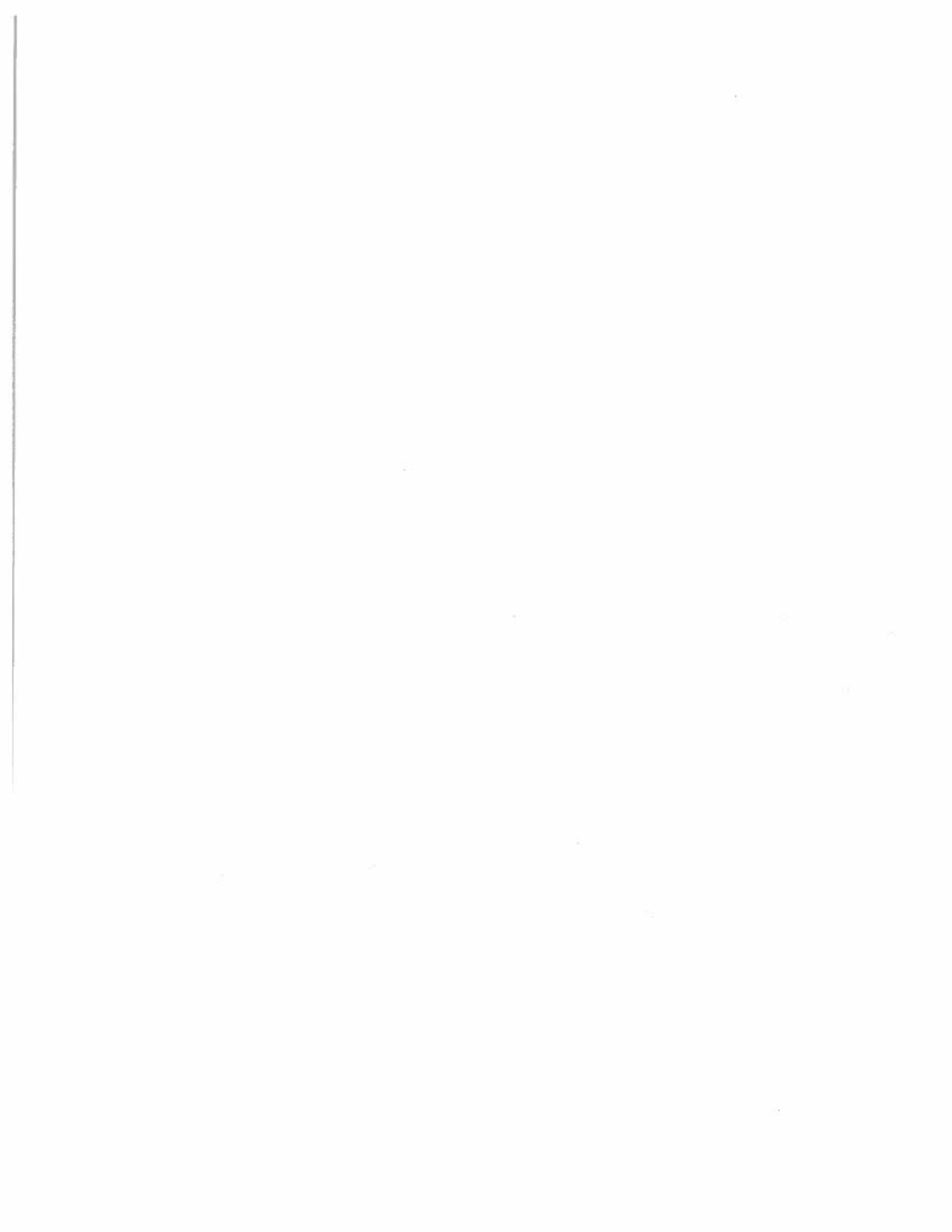
### **Public/Private Cooperation**

Public sector participation in private redevelopment projects is essential. Public participation may range from support and coordination to financial assistance. Private sector involvement will be necessary to the success of major public capital projects. Support from private property owners and businesses, including financial, will be necessary for any major public improvements of the streetscape.

# Design Guidelines and Recommendations

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### Design Concept

The design concept for the South 38th Street plan area is the "Neighborhood Center." The primary purpose of this concept is to strengthen the core area of the Lincoln business district as a focus of neighborhood commercial activity and as a pedestrian-oriented district. The concept envisions a unified and cohesive neighborhood center with a variety of cultural, social, and commercial uses and services to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and areas beyond.

The Lincoln area business district extends approximately from South Thompson Avenue to G Street along South 38th Street with extensions on G Street, Park Avenue and Yakima Avenue. To achieve the concept of this plan, it is recommended that new commercial growth locate within or near the core area contiguous to other commercial uses which over time will create a concentrated pedestrian-oriented district.

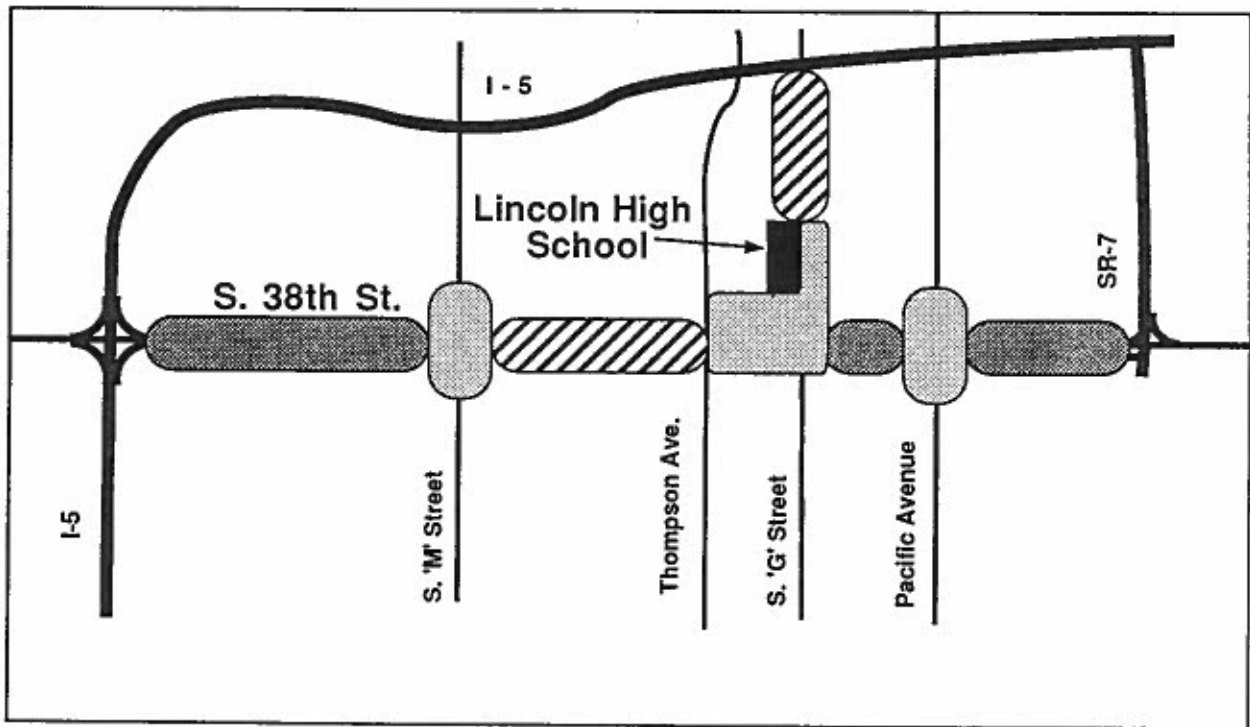
Two other smaller commercial nodes at Pacific Avenue and South M Street would also be strengthened by limiting commercial expansion along South 38th Street and also by targeting some public amenity projects to these areas. A mix of transitional and residential uses would be encouraged between South Thompson and South M Streets and along South G Street between South 36th Street and Interstate 5. These transitional areas should reflect the traditional development pattern.

Residential use between Sheridan Avenue and Interstate 5, Tacoma Avenue and Pacific Avenue, and east of the Pacific Avenue commercial area to the plan area boundary of the SR-7 interchange should be encouraged. These areas help to define the limits of commercial areas and provide a customer base for the shops and restaurants in the retail areas.




The pedestrian network should be expanded and upgraded, especially in the commercial areas to provide safe, attractive and pedestrian convenient access. For example, lighting and street furnishings of similar and compatible design are recommended to upgrade and unify each business district. Landscaping is recommended for some areas to add beauty and to screen objectionable or incompatible uses. Future development should use the traditional development pattern within commercial areas to reinforce pedestrian use and orientation.

The international flavor of this area should be encouraged and enhanced. This theme could be reflected in the selection or color of street furnishings, a special feature such as a symbolic arch or sculpture, and the organization and promotion of special international retail events.

### South 38th Street Design Plan Design Concept: "Neighborhood Center"



Tacoma Planning and Development  
Services Department  
August 1991

-  Commercial Concentrations
-  Transitional Areas
-  Residential Areas

  
not to  
scale

### Design Objectives

Specific objectives were developed in support of the design concept and were used to develop recommendations and guidelines for development activities. These objectives are as follows:

- Improve the core commercial district
- Protect and enhance residential areas
- Emphasize the area's best features
- Improve the safety of area
- Develop the area consistent with the design concept of this plan
- Improve circulation relationships

### Design Guidelines and Recommendations

The following section provides design guidelines and recommendations specifically intended for the planning, design and development of public and private improvements. The guidance is expressed in both illustrations and text. Design recommendations express specific actions that can be taken to achieve the design objectives. The design guidelines provide further clarification by expressing or illustrating desired characteristics and allow for flexibility and creativity.

#### Streetscape Improvements

##### *Lighting*

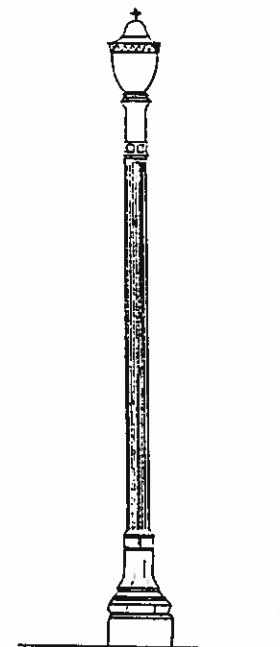
The addition of pedestrian level lighting would provide a greater sense of security for pedestrians, as well as provide a unifying design element. It is suggested that the historic style standards, which are found on the nearby residential streets, be repeated in the commercial area. The following map depicts streets with the core area which should be targeted for this lighting. Lighting of alleyways is also suggested. The Public Utilities Department has a program to rent lights to interested property owners and install the lights on existing public utility poles.

##### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Use the vintage style ornamental pedestrian level street light as the unifying element for the S. 38th Street design plan area.

##### **GUIDELINES**

- Use a light intensity sufficient to provide visibility and safety to pedestrians
- The standard should be 14 feet in height
- Select lighting standard colors to reflect the international flavor of the area
- Concentrate lighting improvements to the core commercial area



## Design Guidelines and Recommendations

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### Landscaping

The addition of landscaping in the South 38th Street area will help to soften harsh building lines and provide buffers between residential and commercial uses.

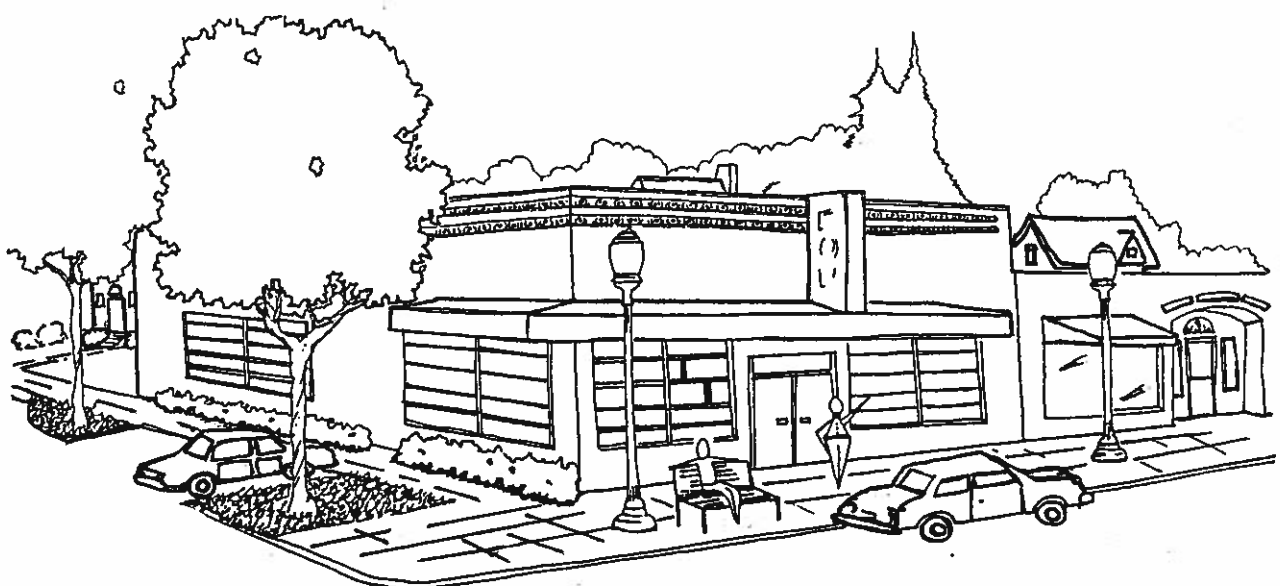
For the 38th Street planning area, street trees and other types of landscaping need to be selected based on specific site conditions and space allowances. Moneys are available to business districts each year through the Six-Year Street Program for street trees. Many areas within the core are limited by utility wires, signs and building location and which may limit the number of trees which can be planted.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

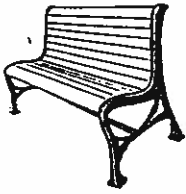
- Provide street trees throughout the plan area.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- *Tree species according to specific site constraints:*
  - *Narrow areas with wires:*  
*Columnar European Hornbeam, Malus species*
  - *Narrow areas without wires:*  
*Red Sunset Maple, Upright English Oak*
  - *Large planting areas with wires:*  
*Eastern Redbud, Mt. Fuji Cherry, Kwanzan Cherry*
  - *Large planting areas without wires:*  
*Globe Norway Maple, Little Leaf Linden, Emerald Green Norway Maple*
- *Concentrate planting efforts in the core commercial area.*

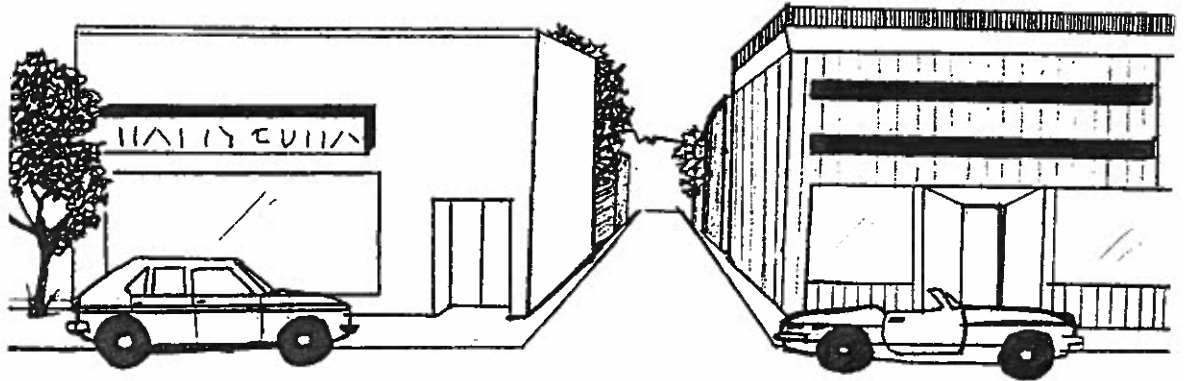
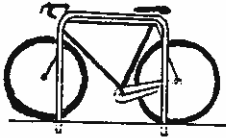






### ***Street Furniture***

Although street furniture is not currently a high priority among the residents and businesses, if these elements are added over time, they will greatly enhance the area as a pedestrian oriented district. The street furnishings proposed for the South 38th Street area are benches, bicycle racks and trash receptacles. The repetition of these elements should be consistent through the district and help to establish the district's identity. Location of street furniture must be where it is convenient, accessible and where it relates to the surroundings. Lack of space for furnishings along some sidewalks make location very important so as not to interfere with pedestrian movement. Sidewalks may need to be widened in some areas to accommodate street furniture.



### ***RECOMMENDATION:***

- **Require new buildings and building renovations to be architecturally compatible with the character of the district.**

### ***GUIDELINES***

- *Ensure consistency in size, and scale to existing buildings*
- *Require similar roof lines, windows, and the repetition of architectural features*
- *Provide consistency of sidewalk treatment and streetscape improvements*

### ***Building Design***

Architecturally compatible design successfully blends new buildings with the existing architecture, each of which contributes to the overall character of the district. In so doing, the renovation of existing buildings is encouraged, as well as the construction of new structures which complement their existing counterparts.

New buildings should be consistent in size, scale, bulk and proportion, to existing buildings. The location and orientation of proposed construction

## Design Guidelines and Recommendations

or renovation as it relates to the existing buildings should also be considered.

New construction and renovation should be built with compatible building materials; similar roof lines, roof types, windows, and doors; cornices, parapets, awnings, canopies, arcades and other architectural features present in existing buildings. New construction should also provide decorative features and finishes; be consistent sidewalk and streetscape improvements; and, provide other unifying elements which reflect the design of the existing district.

### *Special Features*

Lincoln Park and Lincoln High School together serve important functions by providing recreational facilities for school and community use. Some improvements to both these facilities are proposed in the Recreation and Open Space Facilities Plan, 1983 and the Wright and Lincoln Parks Plan, 1989. These improvements include landscaping and parking for Lincoln Park and parking, landscaping, trails and reforestation for Lincoln High School. Improvements should also include strong pedestrian linkages between the park and school and between the park and business area. This can be accomplished by widening sidewalks and implementing repairs to existing ones. Landscaping and lighting can help to visually link these areas. Sidewalks should be developed along South 37th and Thompson.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Use a distinctive sign to serve as an identifier of the South 38th Street area.

#### **GUIDELINES**

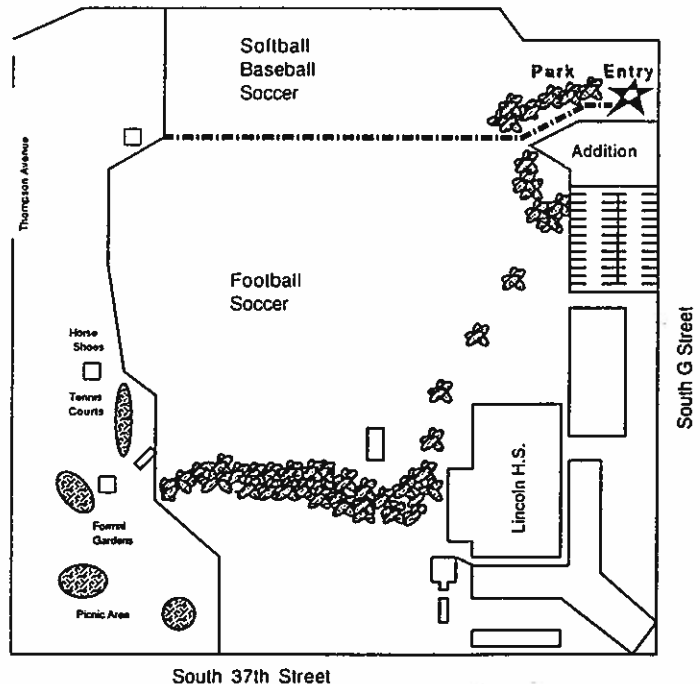
- Provide signage at the east and west entrances of the plan area
- Incorporate a district logo
- Provide multi-lingual signage

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Enhance Lincoln Park and Lincoln High School.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- Add sidewalks to the south and west perimeters of the park
- Provide street trees along South "G" Street
- Strengthen visual links to business area with landscaping and lighting
- Emphasize the entrance from the school into the park with a formal path and lighting



Recognizing the significance and benefit of Lincoln Park to the community; a long-term comprehensive plan has been developed by the Metropolitan Park District for the management of the tree collection in this park. This plan will be used as a guide for ongoing maintenance and management.

In addition to reforestation of portions of Lincoln High School grounds, efforts should also be made for increased maintenance of the grounds, including the adjacent parking lot.

### *Signage*

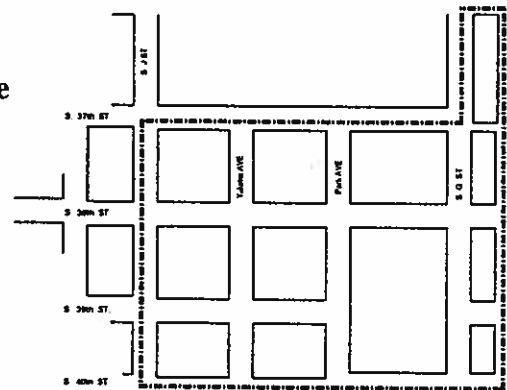
Informational and directional signs can contain common formats and a Logo which reflects the international flavor of the area. These signs would help direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as helping to identify the district as a unique place.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Consider reclassifying the core commercial area to a Special Review District.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

- Design features mentioned in this plan such as architectural compatibility, commercial edge treatment, and street scape amenities should be incorporated in the development of the Special Review District



### **Circulation**

South 38th Street will continue to have substantial volumes of traffic, but should not be widened to accommodate additional traffic, as the district concept emphasizes pedestrian-orientation.

Concerns about vehicular circulation are primarily focused on those intersections located along South 38th Street without traffic signals. South Park Avenue between South 38th and South 37th Streets is of particular concern, as traffic volumes at certain times of the day cause heavy congestion and sight distance is a problem. It is therefore suggested that this section of Park Avenue become one-way going north, which would alleviate the congestion problem and increase the potential of on-street parking.

### **Public Transportation**

The area is generally well-served by public transportation, although there seems to be a lack of bus stops at the east end of the plan area. This area should be studied as to whether additional stops are needed.

Ridership counts could be used to determine priorities for improvements to existing stops. The addition of shelters in this area would enhance the rider's experience immensely. Shelters provide protection from the rain and splashing of passing cars, and give a sense of security from the arterial street with large traffic volumes. Other improvements to these areas could

## Design Guidelines and Recommendations

include the replacement of unpaved waiting areas with pavement as well as lighting of the shelters.

### **Parking**

Cooperation of Private employers and nearby residential property owners need to work together to develop a coordinated parking program that would accommodate employee, customer, and residential needs.

Alternatives for providing additional parking opportunities include off-street surface lots and the provision of additional on-street spaces by reconfiguring certain side streets. Parking may also occur at the edge between the business district and the adjacent residential neighborhoods which will have to be developed to the satisfaction of both parties. Many existing lots within the area should be upgraded with paving and adequate striping.

On-street parking is currently allowed on South 38th Street and the adjacent side streets. All of the on-street parking is parallel parking, with the exception of angle parking on one side of South Yakima Avenue north of South 38th Street.

For safety reasons, it is undesirable to install angle parking on arterial streets; however, angle parking could be installed on adjacent non-arterial streets, provided the streets were widened sufficiently. Because most of the non-arterial streets in the area are not within the core and because most of the arterial streets provide access through the area, suggestions for on-street angle parking additions are limited.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Investigate methods to relieve congestion, and improve traffic flow in the 38th Street district

#### **GUIDELINES**

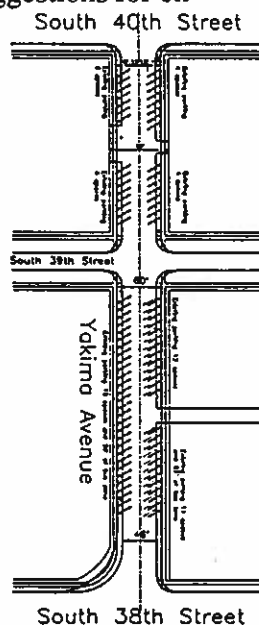
- Do not eliminate on-street parking
- Evaluate existing signals for efficiency

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Provide additional on-street parking along South Yakima Ave.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- Target the area between South Yakima between South 38th and South 40th Street
- Limit the extent of street widening



Prior to establishing any on-street angle parking, these side streets would have to be widened to accommodate the change. Associated costs may be funded through a private contract, a local improvement district or an alternate source and usually would be the responsibility of the adjacent businesses. From time to time, public funds may be available to fund or partially fund such improvements.

### **Bicycle Circulation**

Conflicts between vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation often occur because roads sometimes do not properly accommodate bicycles.

Signage of existing routes, drainage grate direction and the addition of bicycle routes, should be considered. Additionally, bicycle racks should be considered for the core area in front of buildings with bicycle rider high use. Extension of routes in the area would best be located parallel to 38th Street.

### ***Pedestrian Circulation***

Pedestrian access and safety to sites can be enhanced in many ways. A planting strip between the sidewalk and curb provides a physical separation between motorists and pedestrians, while improving the aesthetics of the area.

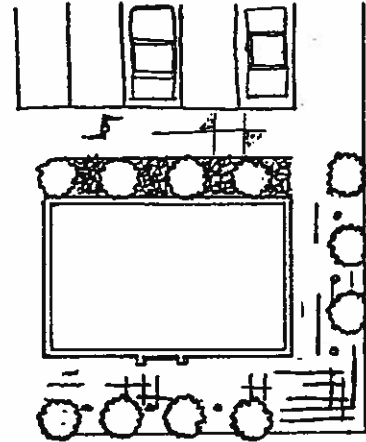
Widening of sidewalks is a safety benefit. Sidewalks should be widened to the maximum extent possible along South 38th Street. The right-of-way along South 38th Street is 80 feet and current road width is 56 feet. This would allow development of 12 foot sidewalks on either side of the street without extending sidewalk into the street, thereby improving the pedestrian environment.

#### ***RECOMMENDATION:***

- **Improve existing sidewalks and walkways to increase pedestrian access and safety.**

#### ***GUIDELINES***

- *Widen sidewalks to a minimum width of 12 feet*
- *Concentrate sidewalk improvements in the core*
- *Walkways within a site should be a minimum of 5 feet in width*



Pedestrian circulation through and within sites should be accommodated by sidewalks of at least five feet in width. These walkways should be protected from vehicular circulation and provide direct access to buildings from the public sidewalk. Proper sight distance is also required at driveways to avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. New developments should consider existing pedestrian circulation and how the building relates to adjacent properties in terms of access.

### **Development Pattern**

#### ***Traditional Development Pattern***

The traditional commercial development pattern is the desired method of development. Buildings should enclose South 38th Street and incorporate features that emphasize pedestrian use. Large undefined spaces and parking areas along the street are to be avoided in new development. The existing newer commercial uses which are set back from the street and residential developments should be upgraded to provide pedestrian access to street, landscaping, and street trees. Over the long term, as new commercial development and renovation occurs, the traditional commercial development pattern is encouraged so as to provide a continuity of building facade.

## Design Guidelines and Recommendations

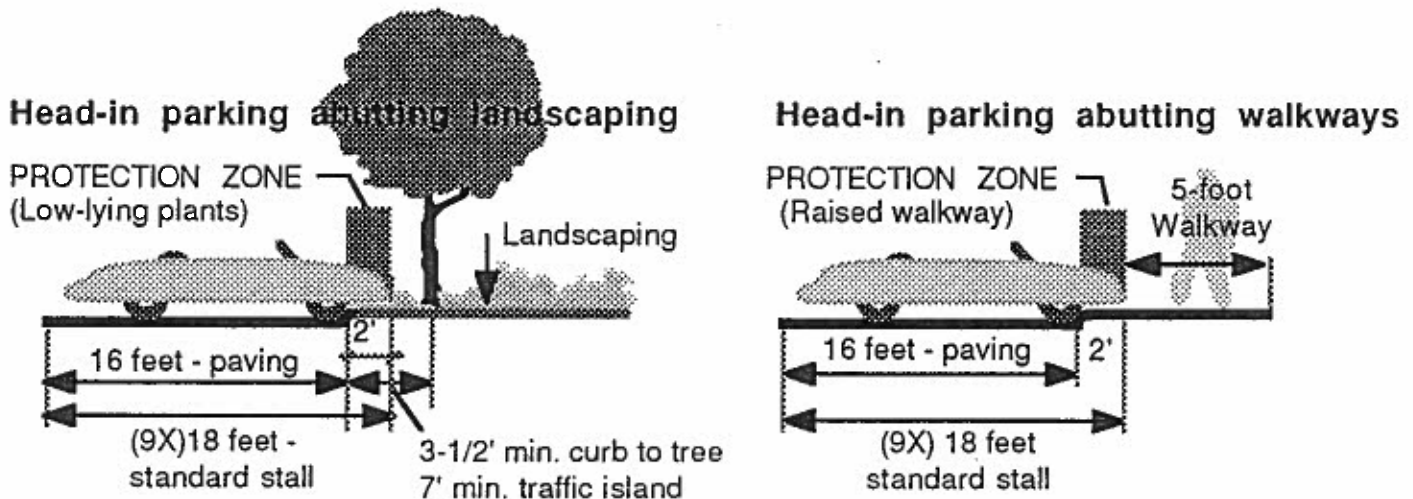
The intent of the plan is to concentrate the core commercial district between Thompson and South G Streets along South 38th Street. This can be accomplished through the application of a Business Special Review District. This overlay is a key tool to maintaining the business character of the area as regulates site layout, landscaping, parking and building character.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- Provide buffers between commercial and residential developments

### **GUIDELINES**

- Ensure compatible building character
- Use landscaping to screen parking lots and soften building lines
- Direct lighting away from residential areas



Lighting should be shielded or directed away from residential areas to prevent glare. Mechanical equipment or outdoor activities such as storage, loading, utilities and trash containers, which may be visually obtrusive or which create disturbing noises or odors should be oriented away from single-family areas. Such equipment should be integrated into the design of the building, soundproofed and screened from view in an attractive and effective manner.

### Land Use

#### *Intensities*

Land use intensities and zoning should be consistent with the concept of this plan. Intensity and zoning should be addressed when an area plan is developed for South Tacoma to ensure the intent of this design plan is carried out.

A mix of housing types, ages and styles adds interest to an area and provides housing opportunities for people of all income levels. This diversity promotes a healthy social environment, adds interest to the area and encourages pride of ownership.

#### *Housing*

The Comprehensive Housing Plan, adopted by the City Council on May 22, 1990, represents a major shift in policy for the City of Tacoma. Responding to the critical need for affordable housing in Tacoma, the City Council has established housing as one of its priority concerns for the 1990s. The Comprehensive Housing Plan redirects available resources and establishes a system for generating new resources to address the pressing need for affordable housing.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Target the 38th Street Area for expenditure of housing funds**

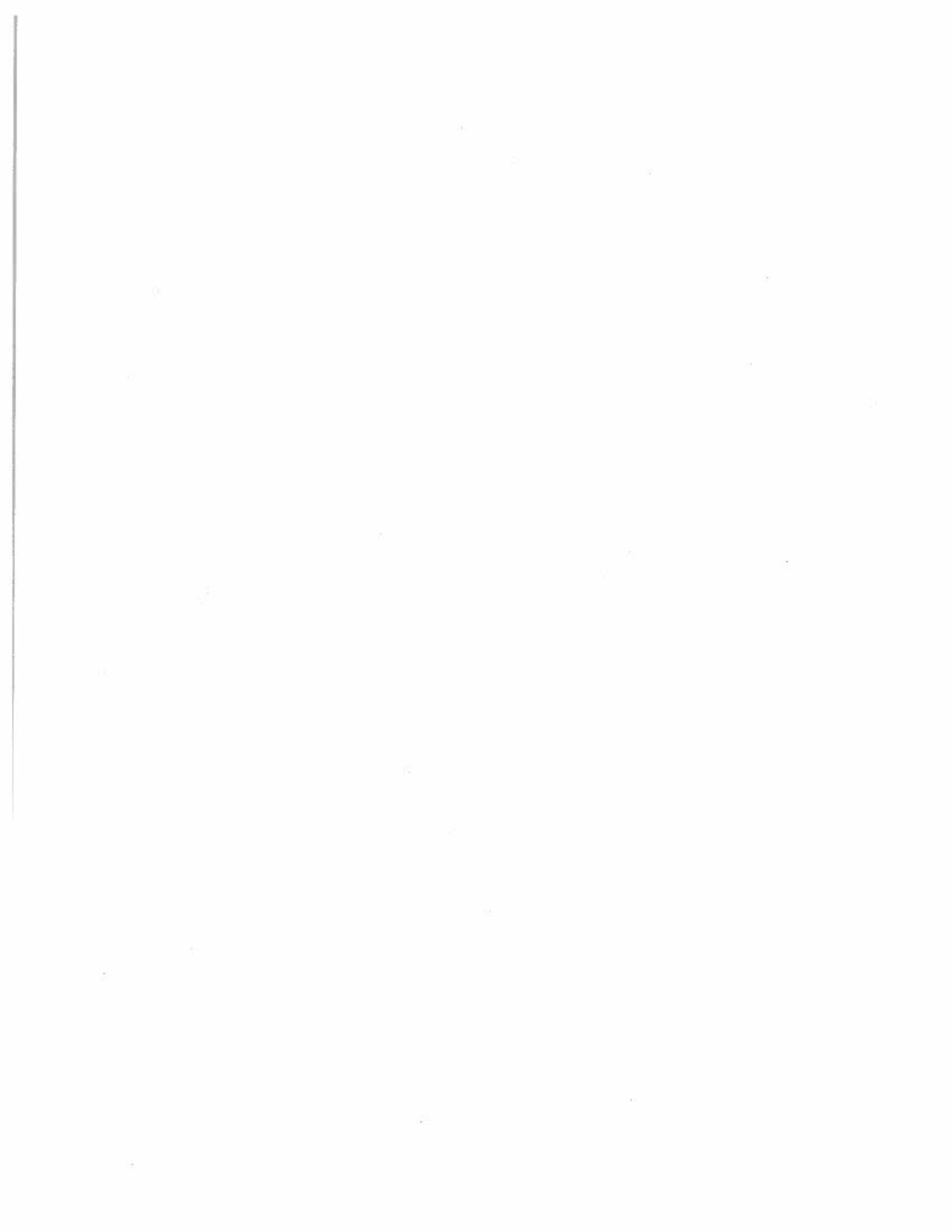


The proximity of housing to the commercial core is an asset to these businesses. By targeting the South 38th Street Design Plan area for housing funds, this will provide a diversity of affordable housing.

### Development Controls

#### *Zoning*

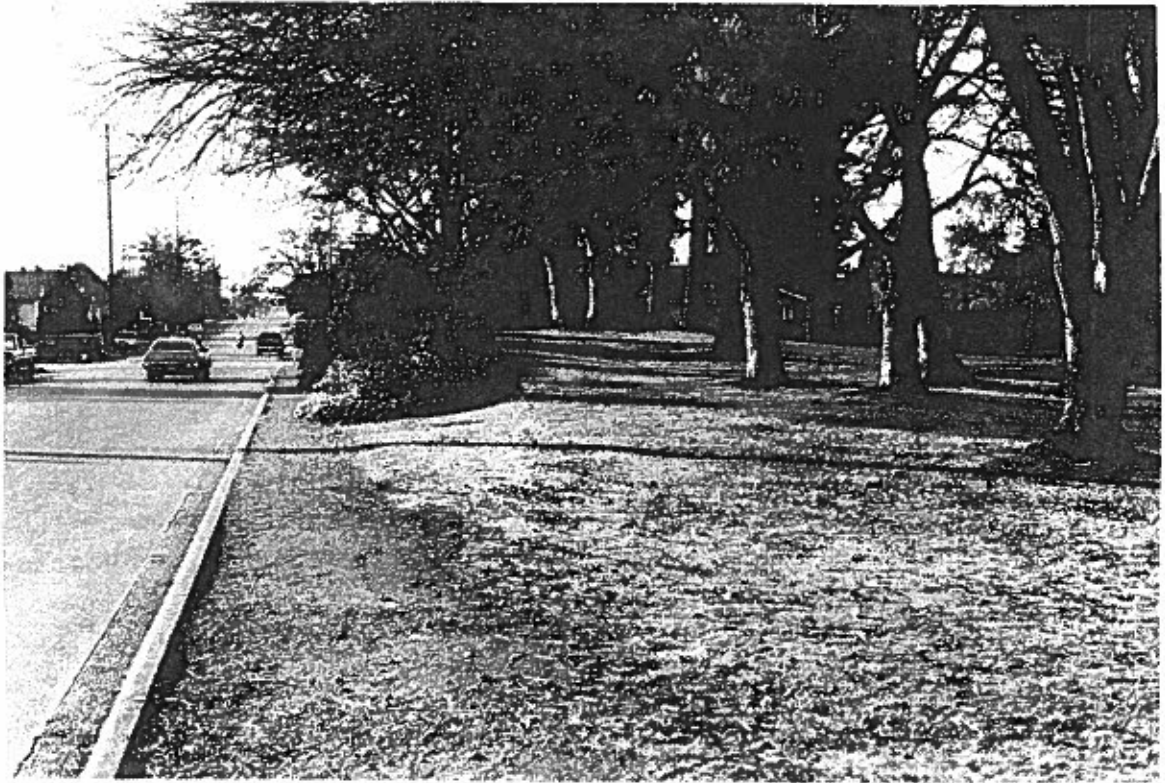
A Business Special Review should be pursued upon adoption of this plan and be applicable to the core commercial areas.

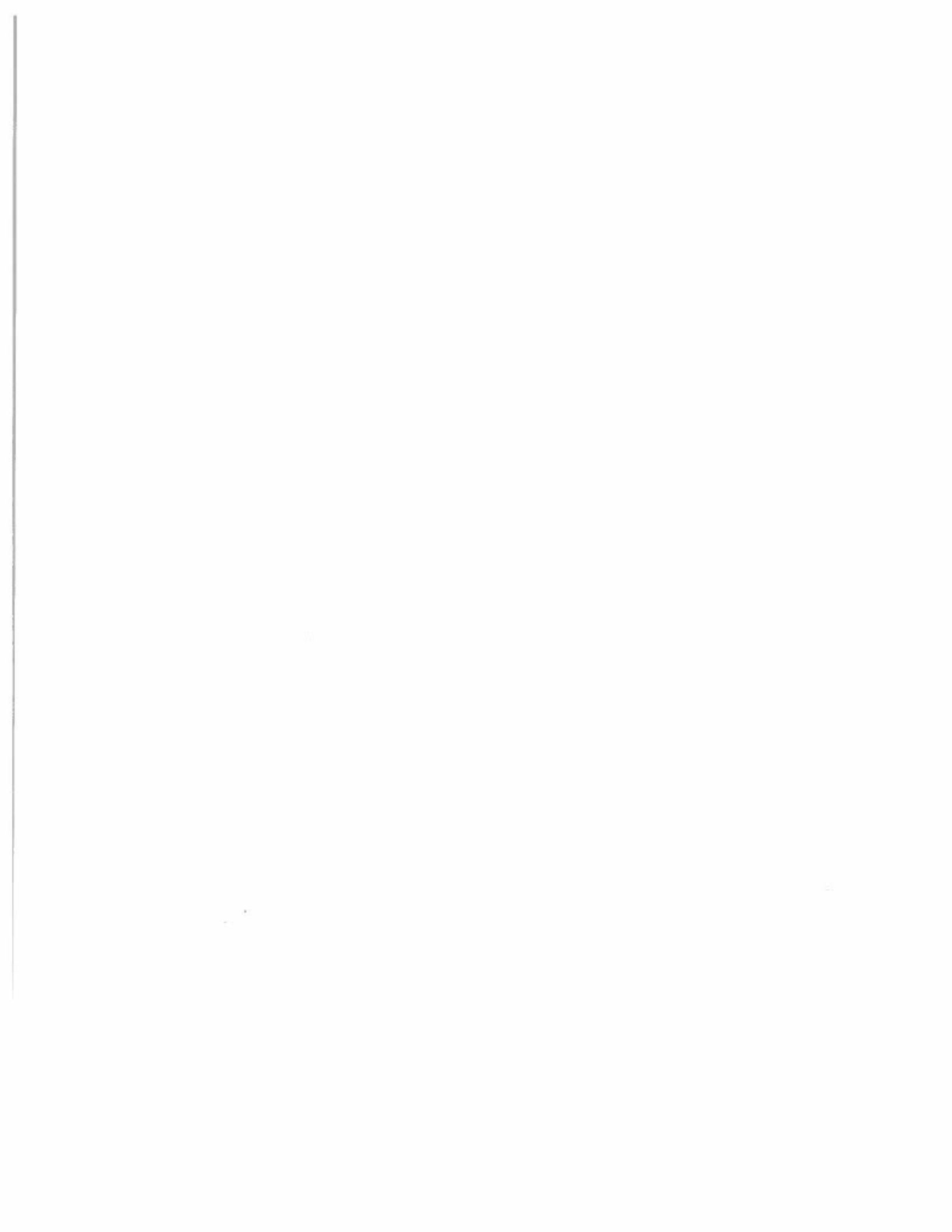




# Implementation

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The guidelines and recommendations contained in this plan are intended to facilitate 38th Street's development into an unique pedestrian-oriented business district. The recommended improvements are designed to reinforce the South 38th Street Design Plan area's image, secure its competitive edge with regard to other shopping areas in the city and strengthen its relative economic position. From the point of view of the South 38th Street business community, the benefits from these improvements can best be expressed in terms of potential for increases in sales and property values. From the point of view of the surrounding residential community, the improvements would help make the South 38th Street business district a more pleasant place for shopping as well as contributing to a better community environment.

The successful implementation of these recommended improvements is dependent upon development timing and funding constraints, and the amount of interest expressed by property owners. Public and private sectors working together in a partnership manner will also be required. The private sector must be willing to actively support the revitalization of the area, make capital investments, and share the cost of public improvements. The public sector must continue and strengthen its intent to implement the plan by actively seeking and identifying funds for improvements and providing coordination between private property owners and public officials.

### **Implementation Methods**

The previous section of this plan indicated several actions that should be undertaken to accomplish the proposed improvements along 38th Street. These recommendations are suggested in the text and illustrated in design drawings. The recommendations range from the general to the specific and from the short range to those that are long-range in scope. It is expected that some of the recommendations may need to be modified before being carried out, and some may never be carried out, due to changing conditions, further analysis and other constraints.

Translating the intents and recommendations into action requires the application of a wide variety of implementing methods. Each method approaches plan implementation from a slightly different perspective. Each, however, may be appropriate from time to time to carry out the plan.

### **City Cooperation and Assistance**

The economic health of neighborhood commercial districts is important in the preservation of neighborhood character and livability. Neighborhood commercial districts need to be competitive with outlying commercial developments.

Successful and vital commercial areas will help to stabilize and maintain the quality of life in the city's residential areas. Therefore, it is important that the City provide assistance in revitalization efforts in the 38th Street area and within other neighborhood commercial districts.

The following recommendations are implementation methods that the City can undertake to assist the revitalization of 38th Street.

- Investigate methods to establish a funding source to assist neighborhood commercial district revitalization efforts.

## Implementation

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- Designate funds in the biennial capital budget for infrastructure improvements in neighborhood commercial districts.
- Initiate or support citizen petitions for formation of a local improvement district to provide streetscape improvements.
- Actively support Federal and State legislation which would provide funding and assistance for commercial revitalization, such as the main street program.
- Review City funding policy regarding installation and maintenance of supplemental lighting for pedestrian safety and convenience and other street scape features.

### Development Controls

The South 38th Street Design Plan can be further implemented through a variety of development controls. This may include several variations of and innovations in zoning such as special or overlay districts.

Control techniques vary by degree of specificity and administrative requirements. When review of individual projects is not required, regulatory mechanisms take the form of traditional zoning. Where project reviews are desired to ensure more sensitive compliance with the goals of the plan area, the regulatory mechanism may involve special controls or zoning for specific areas, i.e., South 38th Street.

### *Business Special Review Districts*

The use of special or overlay zoning districts provides a technique for imposing more appropriate standards for a certain designated area than those specified under basic zoning. Special districts may preserve and direct special or unique features in specified areas such as land use, landscaping, building location, size and facade treatment. Special or overlay districts may also require mandatory design review of all proposed development.

Because the 38th Street corridor is not unlike many older neighborhood business districts in Tacoma, which are deserving of special attention; the South 38th Street Design Plan recommends that a Business Special Review District be applied to the area between Thompson Avenue and South G Street to help achieve the design objectives of this plan. This district would be in addition to existing zoning regulations. This overlay district includes requirements for consistent street improvements and design elements; special site access requirements; special sign controls; facade improvement guidelines; restrictions on type of uses allowed; requirements for pedestrian improvements (as related to sidewalks, street lights, street trees and other street furniture); and specific parking development requirements.

### *Zoning Districts*

Zoning regulations generally specify permitted uses, building heights, setbacks and required parking. Taken together these constraints define the maximum size and type of development that may occur in a given district.

The 38th Street planning area has a wide variety of different zoning districts. While the SRD would only be applied to a specific section of the plan area, the design guidelines and recommendations should be utilized when considering any land use action. Specifically street trees, architectural compatibility, location of building on the site, parking lot

layout, and appropriate pedestrian circulation can all be recommended as a part of any land use review.

### ***Policy for Multi-Family Development***

This policy was developed to lessen the impact of multi-family developments and to ensure compatibility with the character of surrounding neighborhoods. This policy is used by the Hearings Examiner and City Council when considering requests for multiple-family dwelling developments.

Design guidelines included in the policy are considered and applied as appropriate. They address: site layout, parking screening, landscape buffering, lighting, and mechanical equipment screening.

### **Revisions to the Zone Code and existing Regulations**

#### ***Landscaping***

Landscaping requirements, which are located in various parts of the code, are inadequate to meet Tacoma's needs. These requirements will be reviewed over the next few years and upgraded. Areas of specific interest are the size, amount and location of landscaping. These code changes will have a profound influence on new development in the area.

#### ***Parking***

Parking requirements need to be more flexible in order to support alternative forms of transportation. Cars are smaller now and emphasis on public transportation is increasing. Changing requirements for the number of stalls required and allowing for more impacts will be the first step towards improving our requirements.

#### ***Commercial Development Standards***

The Urban Design Section of the Growth Management Division will be establishing citywide design guidelines which will affect commercial development. These guidelines will address issues such as site layout, pedestrian access, parking, landscaping and compatibility.

### **Organization of the Area**

#### ***Business District***

Neighborhood business districts have suffered in competition from shopping centers, shopping malls and centers which offer convenient location, adequate parking and a wide range of goods and services. These newer retail developments have attracted customers away from traditional neighborhood shopping areas. The challenge for the neighborhood shopping districts is to build upon what the area is and what it has to offer, to provide the convenience and the amenities and to broaden the range of goods and services available.

One approach for neighborhood commercial district revitalization that has had considerable success in communities across the country is the Main Street Program. This approach evolved from a pilot commercial revitalization project initiated in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Main Street approach is a comprehensive management program addressing four areas of concern: organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring.

## Implementation

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Planning and organizing activities are the first steps for successful revitalization. They involve a careful assessment of the needs of the district and can include the following activities.

- Establish overall goal or mission statement for the business district.
- Create a nonprofit business district organization.
- Establish a neighborhood or community policy concerning crime and drugs.
- Prioritize the business district needs and develop strategies to address these needs.
- Identify monetary resources necessary to address needs and determine the district's existing technical and monetary resources.

Various types of projects can benefit the revitalization of a business district. The most effective and feasible projects are determined by the organization's planning efforts and can include:

- A safety and security, litter clean-up, maintenance, program.
- An organized marketing, advertising and promotions program.
- Sponsorship of special events.
- A coordinated building improvement and maintenance programs.
- A parking management program for signage, lighting, clean-up and landscaping. Development of additional parking.
- A pedestrian environment improvement program for street tree plantings, coordinated landscaping and other improvements.

After resources of the district and the organization have been identified and put to work for the revitalization of the district, the organization may require additional resources to fulfill the need areas in their revitalization efforts. Some of these outside resources include the following:

- Business operator technical assistance (including marketing, accounting and bookkeeping, tax planning, financing, personnel and training, etc.)
- Local Improvement Districts for street, curb and street light improvements and maintenance.
- Parking and Business Improvement Area for finance, marketing and parking opportunities.
- Other technical and financial assistance, including:
  - Capital Improvement Program funds
  - Community Development Block Grant funds
  - Economic Development Administration funds
  - Small Business Administration
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - State Main Street Program

A Parking Management Association could work toward developing a more efficient use of the existing business district parking supply and establishing joint parking management policies as well as an allocation policy to ensure fair distribution of spaces to merchants not owning off-street parking in the district.

There are many ways to organize such an association. Interested merchants and property owners could engage an attorney to draft and file a charter forming a nonprofit corporation with a broad range of capabilities including the ownership. The operation of the association should be based on continuing negotiations and discussions among members with the following possible functions:

- Manage L.I.D./B.I.A. funded parking
- Lease and operate additional parking lots
- Coordinate the use of exclusive-use parking; negotiate its use during off peak hours and off-times.
- Establish uniform rates for paid parking
- Manage parking lots and on-street parking to assure frequent turnover of available spaces
- Establish common parking and directional signage to available parking
- Advertise the location and availability of parking

The operating responsibilities of the parking management association could be undertaken by a paid staff or could be contracted to one of several professional parking management firms. Revenues come from the parking under direct management or from members' contributions. Contributors could be weighted so that those members without parking pay a disproportionate share of the costs to compensate members who own parking for their capital investment.

Security inspections are provided by the Crime Prevention Unit of the Tacoma Police Department, upon request, and provide helpful, practical suggestions for obtaining security in the home.

Business security inspections and seminars provide businesses with current physical security recommendations, information on how to organize procedural methods to prevent stock theft, inventory losses, and burglary and robbery prevention. Personal protection methods and procedures to prevent muggings, rape and purse snatching are also provided, as well as employee training on personal protection. Additional programs for Asian persons and the elderly covering personal protection may also be provided upon request.

Crime prevention and safety will be the primary responsibility of each citizen and business. By organizing into neighborhood groups and business associations, common problems and solutions can be more effectively reached.

Because many different languages are spoken in this area, persons who are unable to speak English may be viewed as a target because they may be easily confused. Crime prevention services can be provided in different languages.

## **Implementation**

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Many areas in the South 38th Street corridor are currently under-lit. Moneys are available on a limited basis through the Tacoma Police Department for lighting of commercial areas.

Appropriate landscaping, such as ground cover, low growing shrubs (no higher than 2 feet) and/or trees which provide visibility between 2 feet and 6 feet above ground elevation are suggested forms of landscaping abutting buildings to eliminate hiding places for criminals.

An organized association would also give businesses an opportunity to work on common problems - joint advertising and marketing, property maintenance, changing parking, restrictions, security, letter, and leave businesses more time to focus on recruiting new businesses to the area.

Special events could be organized by the business association which emphasize the international flavor of this area. These events would help identify the area as a unique district and attract persons who have never shopped in the area.

Organization of a litter program could help improve the appearance of the district and provide a positive image of the area.

It is suggested that a business watch be formed similar to the concept of a neighborhood watch. The idea is to have businesses keep an eye out for one another in order to help prevent crime.

Formation of an official neighborhood group would allow the group to be recognized as an official group by the City of Tacoma. Residents would receive information and ideas about what other neighborhood associations are doing throughout the City, as well as being eligible to apply for Community Development Block Grant Funds for physical improvements to the neighborhood, such as street tree plantings, sidewalk improvements, etc. It is also suggested that a neighborhood watch be formed in the area to reduce the crime potential.

### **Identify Potential Funding Sources**

#### ***Annual Capital Improvement Procedures (CIP) Budget***

The City Council can appropriate money for capital improvement projects. The primary source of Capital Improvement Program funds has been the City's General Fund and is limited by the amount of money the City is able to commit to capital improvements in any given year. Projects are submitted on a citywide basis by City departments and agencies, citizen committees and the public. Requests for funds far exceed the amount of money available and competition is keen. Projects are evaluated on need, benefits and cost.

Capital improvement funds may be used for public improvements such as parks, sewers, streets beautification, and public buildings.

#### ***LIDs/BIAs***

Funding of the property owners' and merchants' share of improvements can best be accomplished by forming a Local Improvement District (L.I.D.) Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) which may have advantages for improvements dealing with parking development. Both alternatives are proven tools, which allow the district to borrow money at rates much lower than the standard market rate. Assessment can be paid off in one lump sum or in installments which normally are extended over 10-20 years.



### ***Other Funding Sources***

Other funding sources may become available from time to time, such as federal moneys through Community Development Block Grants and from State resources. Bond moneys, City government general fund moneys, or even private foundation moneys can also be sources. Since funding sources change frequently, this should be considered a representative list of funding sources. It should be noted; however, that funding criteria usually limit the usage of money to specific types of projects. Moreover, public and private funds are limited and competition for these moneys is great.

### **Other Implementation Tools**

#### ***Urban Forestry Management Program***

This project is aimed at giving the City of Tacoma basic information relating to an ongoing Urban Forest Management Program. The plan shall document existing conditions and management practices, consider the needs and desires of the entities involved, recommend the role and structure for an ongoing urban tree management plan, prioritize an inventory schedule, and provide supervision of the first round of inventory and assessment.

As a result, street trees may be recommended for the South 38th Street area, as well as the administrative structure to provide ongoing maintenance.

#### ***Six-Year Street Program***

A component of the Six-Year Street Program allocates \$200,000 per year for arterial street tree plantings. \$15,000 is set aside for each year for Neighborhood Business Districts. Priorities are established annually by the City Council. Street trees for the South 38th Street area would be funded using this program.

### **Cost Estimates**

Preliminary estimates for accomplishing all the improvements recommended in this plan is \$1,008,900. All improvements and developments identified in this plan will not occur simultaneously. Smaller elements of larger projects may occur over a period of time and some projects may never occur. Certain elements, while highly desirable, are very costly. Approval by City Council is necessary prior to implementation. Costs are affected by annual inflation rates and are dependent upon which alternative development proposals. Detailed cost analysis will be required at the time of implementation to accurately determine project costs.

The source and availability of funds as well as the source will impact the type of future projects, therefore, priorities have not been established. It is anticipated that funding preference will be given to improvements planned in areas where development or rehabilitation of private properties is imminent. Property owner willingness and ability to participate in the funding of public improvements will affect the timing of the improvements.

The attached cost estimate reflects a complete array of public improvements recommended for the South 38th Street Design Plan area. This is not to preclude the phasing of improvements within the core area and each subsequent block along South 38th Street.

## Implementation

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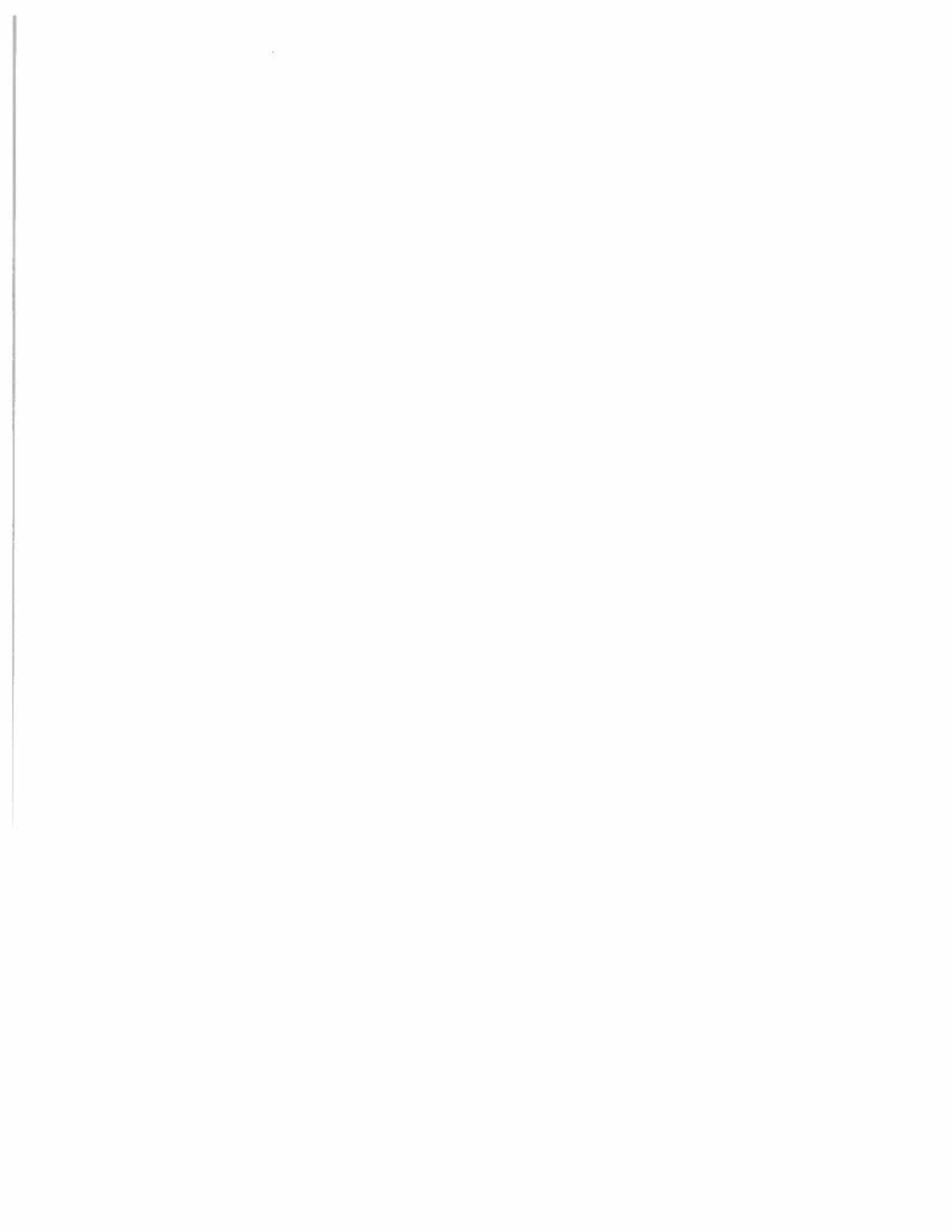
### COST ESTIMATE

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>#/block</u>	<u># of blocks</u>	<u>total #</u>	<u>total cost</u>
Light Fixture	\$5,000	4	19	76	\$380,000
Trash Recept.	\$800	2	19	38	\$30,400
Trees	\$200	7	19	133	\$26,600
Benches	\$700	4	19	76	\$53,200
Bike Racks	\$250	4	19	76	\$19,000
Subtotal					<u>\$509,200</u>
Taxes@7.8%					\$39,718
Installation @15%					\$76,380
Engineering @ 20%					<u>\$101,840</u>
Grand Total					<u>\$727,138</u>

# Appendices

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## PARKING SURVEY

Public spaces are those located on the street while private spaces are found in parking areas for individual businesses. Spaces were counted on 38th Street and intersecting side streets to a depth of one block. The parking areas range from those that are fully-developed with paving, striping, landscaping and lighting to those that are virtually undeveloped. The undeveloped lots are not paved, or well-marked. These areas are uninviting to the public.

Existing Parking			Potential Parking		Block No.							
public	private	verified	public	private	area =	N.S.E.W.						
							0	30	30	yes	38th	17 s
					38th	1 n	0	46	46	yes	38th	18 n
					38th	1 n	0	14	14	yes	38th	18 s
					38th	2 n					38th	19 n
					38th	2 s					38th	19 s
					38th	3 n					38th	20 n
					38th	3 s					38th	20 s
					38th	4 n	22	65	87	yes	38th	21
					38th	4 s	26	75	101	yes	38th	22
8	0	8			38th	5 n	28	11	39	yes	38th	23
10	0	10	yes		38th	5 s	3	0	3		38th	24
5	36	41			38th	6 n	10	17	27	yes	38th	25
52	169	221			38th	6 s	3	8	11		38th	26
39	8	47			38th	7 n	13	10	23	yes	38th	27
14	54	68			38th	7 s	6	0	6	yes	38th	28
0	15	15			38th	8 n	0	0	0	yes	38th	29
0	0	0			38th	8 s	5	0	5		38th	30
2	13	15	yes		38th	9 n						
2	21	23			38th	9 s						
2	25	27			38th	10 n						
1	60	61			38th	10 s						
17	41	58			38th	11 n						
38	116	154			38th	11 s						
46	262	308			38th	12 n						
53	42	95			38th	12 s						
35	92	127	yes		38th	13 n						
8	65	73			38th	13 s						
11	127	138	yes		38th	14 n						
12	65	77			38th	14 s						
5	9	14			38th	15 n						
0	18	18			38th	15 s						
0	0	0			38th	16 n						
0	0	0			38th	16 s						
0	21	21	yes		38th	17 n						

Total

476 1535

15

## Appendix

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Addendum to the  
Generalized Land Use Plan EIS  
for the adoption  
of the South 38th Street Design Plan

### Introduction

This addendum to the Generalized Land Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is for the purpose of adopting the South 38th Street Design Plan in compliance with the policies set forth in the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and its implementing rules (Chapter 197-11 WAC) applicable to the action described below. From a SEPA Rules perspective, the Generalized Land Use Plan is a non-project action for which an EIS was prepared in 1980.

### Proposed Action

The proposed action is the adoption of the South 38th Street Design Plan as an element of the City's long-range comprehensive Land Use Management Plan. This plan assesses and makes recommendations for improving the design, appearance, aesthetic quality and economic vitality of South 38th Street from Interstate 5 to SR-7. The South 38th Street Design Plan is a non-project action as defined by SEPA Rules.

### Location

The location of the South 38th Street Design Plan area is the South 38th Street corridor from Interstate 5 to SR-7, also included are extensions on South M and South G Streets, Pacific Avenue and Yakima Avenue. The north-south intersecting streets up to one half-block in depth as may be warranted by design considerations are also included within the plan area.

### Responsible Official:

Rodney M. Kerslake, Acting Director of Planning and Development Services

### Contact Person:

Lisa Wojtanowicz/Bart Alford  
Tacoma Planning and Services Department  
747 Market Street, 9th Floor  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
Telephone: 591-5364

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## Background

The City of Tacoma adopted a citywide land use document known as the Generalized Land Use Plan (GLUP) in 1980. When the GLUP was developed, it was purposefully generalized to provide flexibility so as to increase its usefulness in making long-range, land use decisions. Its emphasis is on land use intents and policies, which were based on an analysis of existing land use and zoning, development trends, anticipated land use needs and desirable growth and development goals.

The policies provide a rational basis for an additional element of the plan, known as the GLUP map. The GLUP map depicts the City's intended future land use patterns through the geographic distribution of three levels of land use intensities. This map and related policies serve as a base for more detailed neighborhood planning efforts, such as the South 38th Street Design Plan.

The South 38th Street Design Plan proposes a further refinement to the level of planning provided by the Generalized Land Use Plan. Like the GLUP, this plan is also a non-project action. The purpose of the plan is to address specifically improvement in the design, appearance and economic vitality of South 38th Street. Design and development principles such as building patterns, appearance, district edge conditions, pedestrian environment, vehicular circulation and special features are addressed.

The purpose of both documents, however, remains the same, i.e., promoting desirable growth, development and redevelopment and providing direction in the land use decision-making process. The design concept of the South 38th Street Design Plan recognizes that major land use patterns already exist and the basic intensity areas were previously established by the GLUP. Since this past planning effort in the South 38th Street planning area was specifically considered in developing the South 38th Street Design Plan, the Final EIS for the GLUP is applicable to the proposed action at hand and is hereby adopted as such.

## Discussion

Since the specific recommendations contained in the draft South 38th Street Design Plan were not included, nor were they intended to be a part of the GLUP, it is appropriate that additional analysis regarding those recommendations be contained in this addendum.

The design concept for the South 38th Street Plan area is the "Neighborhood Center." The primary purpose of this concept is to strengthen the core area of the Lincoln business district as a focus of neighborhood commercial activity. The Lincoln area business district extends approximately from South Thompson Avenue to South G Street along South 38th Street with extensions on M Street and Pacific Yakima Avenue. The concept encourages new commercial growth to locate within or near the core area contiguous to other commercial uses which over time will create a concentrated pedestrian-oriented district. The concept envisions a unified and cohesive neighborhood center with a variety of commercial uses and services to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and areas beyond.

## Appendix

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Two other smaller commercial nodes at Pacific Avenue and South M Street would also be strengthened. Commercial expansion linearly on South 38th Street would be generally discouraged. A mix of commercial, transitional and residential uses would be encouraged between South Thompson and South M Streets and along South G Street between South 36th Street and Interstate 5.

The design concept emphasizes strengthening the pedestrian circulation system, maintaining/restoring the integrity of identified districts, development patterns, and land uses, and using street furnishings as design elements which will provide visual continuity and tie diverse land uses together. These streetscape amenities could include pedestrian level lighting, sidewalk paving patterns, and bicycle racks. Landscaping is recommended to beautify the area and screen objectionable uses such as trash receptacles. Landscaping and screening are also recommended to demarcate the edges of the commercial districts to visually and physically distinguish business areas from the abutting residential neighborhoods.

### Analysis

The recommendations contained in the South 38th Street Design Plan propose a further refinement to the recommendations for land use growth, development and redevelopment along South 38th Street, set forth and analyzed in the Final EIS for the GLUP. This refinement includes special emphasis given to improving the commercial areas through design, identifying parking opportunities, enhancing the common boundary between the business district and the adjacent residential community, and to accommodating pedestrians. In addition to assisting in deliberations concerning land use policy and decisions, the plan also is intended to help the business community access its strengths and weaknesses and make decisions concerning the long term future of the South 38th Street commercial areas.

The recommendations contained within the proposed document clarify the attainment of the purpose and intent for the South 38th Street Design Plan and those reflected in the GLUP. The recommendations range from general in nature to specific, some may require capital expenditures, while others require administrative or legislative changes, or both. It is recognized further environmental analysis, either in the form of a checklist or EIS development, may be necessary at the time of implementation for a recommendation with community-wide significance. This addendum and its supporting elements serve to fulfill the SEPA requirements for public sector actions with regard to implementing the South 38th Street Design Plan recommendations. Private projects within the South 38th Street planning area will be subject to SEPA on an individual project basis as it relates to the area, adjacent projects, and mitigating measures.

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-635, the following studies, plans and environmental documents are herein incorporated by reference.

1. Land Use Management Plan: Goals and Policies for Physical Development (1983). This plan replaces 1975 document and reflects the adoption of several plan elements developed by the Planning Commission. It is a description and reference document containing an overview of the City's planning process and a collection of summaries of adopted plan elements.



2. Generalized Land Use Plan (1980). This plan sets forth goals, policies, and guidelines to assist in orderly and desirable residential, commercial and industrial development. An element of the City's Land Use Management Plan, it sets forth a basic development concept for Tacoma and outlines general areas of high, medium, and low intensity development. It also sets forth policies to guide the various types of development within these intensity areas.

The above documents are available for public inspection at the City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department, 9th Floor, Municipal Building, Tacoma, WA 98402.

## **Appendix**

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### **Attachment #1**

The plan area runs along South 38th Street from the Interstate 5 overpass to the State Route 7 overpass. Included are South M Street extending from South 38th Street to South 39th Street, South Yakima Avenue extending from South 38th Street to South 40th Street. South G Street extending from South 38th Street north to the Interstate 5 overpass, and Pacific Avenue extending from South 38th Street north approximately one-half block. Also included within the plan area are the north-south and east-west intersecting streets up to one-half block in depth as may be warranted by design considerations.

### **Attachment #2**

Description of document (or portion) being adopted: The Final EIS for the General Land Use Plan sets forth the anticipated impacts on the environment and mitigating measures associated with the adoption of the plan which is no-project action. This plan is used to guide future land use development by providing goals and policies that are designed to promote desirable growth and development in Tacoma.