



Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance

City of Tacoma – Authorizing the Use of Development Agreements (RCW 36.70B.170-210)
SEPA File Number: SEP2009-40000134415

TO: All Departments and Agencies with Jurisdiction

SUBJECT: Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance

In accordance with WAC 197-11-340, a copy of the Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance for the project described below is transmitted:

Applicant: City of Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department
747 Market Street, Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 573-2478

Proposal: changes to the City's Development Regulations that would authorize the use of optional project review under RCW 36.70B.170-210 (amending Tacoma Municipal Code Chapters 13.05, 13.06, 13.06A, and 13.11). The purpose of these changes is to create an optional application procedure that could authorize certain major projects in key locations to be reviewed, rated, approved, and conditioned according to the extent to which they advance the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies. As currently proposed, qualifying projects must either have a footprint of over 15,000 square feet (and be over 75 feet in height) in the International Financial Services Area (IFSA), or in the Downtown area outside the IFSA where there is significant public ownership or control in addition to meeting these size thresholds, or be located Downtown and preserve a historic structure or assist in preserving an adjacent historic structure, or be an institution occupying more than five acres anywhere within the City.

Copies of the complete text of the proposed revisions are available from the Community and Economic Development Department at the below address and may also be viewed and downloaded at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning

Location: City of Tacoma

Lead Agency: City of Tacoma

City Contact: Ian Munce
Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department
747 Market Street, Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 573-2478

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The lead agency for this proposal has made a preliminary determination that this project does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2) (c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request. This Preliminary Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2). **Comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on October 30, 2009. The Responsible Official will reconsider the DNS based on timely comments and may retain, modify, or, if significant adverse impacts are likely, withdraw the DNS. Unless modified by the City, this determination will become final on November 6, 2009.**

Appeals may be filed at the Superior Court of the State of Washington for Pierce County within 21 days after the final determination. Appeals to the Superior Court shall be taken in accordance with procedures and limitations set forth in RCW 43.21C.075. A copy of the appeal shall be filed with the Department of Public Works, 747 Market Street, Tacoma, Washington 98402.

The Puyallup Tribe is notified that this initiates the consultation process.

Responsible Official: Ryan Petty

Position/Title: Director, Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department

Signature: 

SEPA Officer Signature: 

Issue Date: **September 30, 2009**

Comment Deadline: **5:00 p.m., October 30, 2009**

NOTE: The issuance of this Preliminary Determination of Nonsignificance does not constitute project approval. Future project applicants must comply with all other applicable requirements of the City of Tacoma and other agencies with jurisdiction prior to receiving development permits.

- c: Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department, Elton Gatewood, Reuben McKnight
- Tacoma Fire Department, Operations
- Tacoma Police Department, Operation Commander
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Director's Office
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Building and Land Use Services, Shirley Schultz
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Construction
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Engineering, Kurtis Kingsolver
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Environmental Services, Ryan Flynn
- Tacoma Public Works Department, Environmental Services Wastewater Management, Kirk Zempel

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Tacoma Public Works Department, Solid Waste, Rick Coyne
Tacoma Public Works Department, Streets and Grounds, Hardy Hanson
Tacoma Power, Nick Tomanelli
Tacoma Power, Click! Network
Tacoma Rail
Tacoma Water
AT&T Broadband, Outside Plant Engineer - South Region, 410 Valley Avenue NW #12, Puyallup, WA 98371-3317
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. c/o Rebecca Schwan, Staubach Global Services, 999 Third Avenue, Suite 2120, Seattle, WA 98104
McChord Air Force Base, Lang Tran, Chief of Comprehensive Planning and Programs, Air Force Civil Eng., 62 CES/CECP, 555 Barnes Blvd., McChord AFB, WA 98438-1325
City of Federal Way, Greg Fewins, Senior Planner, P.O. Box 9718, Federal Way, WA 98063-9718
City of Fife, Community Development, 5411 23^d Street East, Fife, WA 98424
City of University Place, 3715 Bridgeport Way West - Suite B-2, University Place, WA 98466
City of Lakewood, 6000 Main Street SW, Lakewood, WA 98499
City of Fircrest, 115 Ramsdell Street, Fircrest, WA 98466
Town of Ruston, 5117 North Winnifred Street, Tacoma, WA 98407
City of Tacoma Neighborhood Council Chairs and contact persons
Asarco Consulting, Inc., Karen Pickett, 5219 North Shirley Street, Suite 100, Tacoma, WA 98407
Environmental Protection Agency, Kris Flint, EPA - ECL-111, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101
Metro Parks, Marci Ludwig, 4702 South 19th Street, Tacoma, WA 98405
National Marine Fisheries Service, SEPA Coordinator, Kathe Howe, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
Pierce County Office of the Assessor-Treasurer, Barbara Blecha, 2401 South 35th Street, Room 142, Tacoma, WA 98409-7460
Pierce County, Planning and Land Services, 2401 S. 35th, Tacoma, WA 98409
Pierce Transit, Land Use Review, Capital Development, PO Box 99070, Lakewood, WA 98499
Sound Transit, Perry Weinberg, 401 South Jackson, Seattle, WA 98104
Port of Tacoma, P.O. Box 1837, Tacoma, WA 98401
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Attn: John Anderson, 110 Union Street - Suite #500, Seattle, WA 98101-2038
Puget Sound Energy, Cheryl Paras, 3130 South 38th Street, Tacoma, WA 98409
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Bill Sullivan, Natural Resources Director, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Raul Ramos, Land Use Director, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, David Duenos, Building Official, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Judy Wright, Historic Preservation, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Jeffrey Thomas, Fisheries, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Theodora Wallace, Planning, 3009 E. Portland Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98404
Qwest, Attn: Land Eng. Clerk, 2510 84th Street South, Suite #18, Lakewood, WA 98499
Tacoma Public School District #10, Pete Wall, 3223 South Union Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98409
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Nedda Turner, EH-3128 (3), 3629 South "D" Street, Tacoma, WA 98418-6813
Tahoma Audubon Society, Bryan Flint, 2917 Morrison Road West, University Place, WA 98466-4619
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Attn: Judy Lantor, 510 Desmond Drive SE #102, Lacey, WA 98503
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: Regulatory Branch, Ron Wilcox, P.O. Box C-3755, Seattle, WA 98124
U.S. Coast Guard, District Planning Office, 915 Second Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101
U.S. Postal Service (AMS), Jo Coburn, Address Management Systems, P.O. Box 90304, Seattle, WA 98109-9321
Washington Department of Ecology, Peg Plummer, Environmental Review Section, P.O. Box 47703, Olympia, WA 98504-7703
Washington Department of Ecology, Kim Varzwalenburg, SWRO, P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-7775
Washington Department of Ecology, Gretchen Lux, P.O. Box 47703, Olympia, WA 98504-7703
Washington Department of Ecology, Bob Warren, SWRO, P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Dave Molenaar, 48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, WA 98563
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Travis Nelson, PO Box 73254, Puyallup, WA 98373

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Washington Department of Natural Resources, SEPA Coordinator, P.O.Box 47015, Olympia, WA 98504-7015

Washington Department of Transportation, Environmental Services, P.O. Box 7331, Olympia, WA 98504-7331

Washington State Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, Stephenie Kramer, 1063 S. Capital Way, Suite 106, Olympia, WA 98501

File: Building and Land Use Services

Environmental Checklist

Amendments to City of Tacoma Development Code: Authorizing Development Regulation Agreements

SEPA FILE NUMBER: SEP2009-40000134415

Community and Economic Development Department
747 Market Street, Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402-3793
253-573-2478

September 23, 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

City of Tacoma Development Regulations Amendment Authorizing the use of Development Regulatory Agreements pursuant to RCW 36.70B.170-210

2. Proponent/applicant:

City of Tacoma
Community and Economic
Development Department
747 Market St., Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402-3793

3. Contact:

Ian Munce
City of Tacoma
Community and Economic
Development Department
747 Market St., Room 1036
Tacoma, WA 98402-3793
Phone: (253) 573-2478
Fax: (253) 591-2002
E-mail: imunce@cityoftacoma.org

4. Date checklist prepared:

September 23, 2009

5. Agency requesting checklist:

City of Tacoma
Community and Economic
Development Department

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

This environmental checklist addresses programmatic actions to amend the *City of Tacoma Development Regulations* by amending portions of Sections 13.05, 13.06, 13.06A, and 13.11 in order to authorize the use of Development Regulation Agreements (DRAs) pursuant to RCW 36.70B.170-210. These amendments are to be considered and subject to adoption by the City Council in the first quarter of 2010.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

The current proposal only authorizes the use of DRAs under the following circumstances:

1. Proposed projects located within the International Financial Services Area (IFSA), as defined in City Ordinance No. 27825, with a building footprint of at least 15,000 square feet and a proposed height of at least 75 feet; or
2. Proposed projects located within the "Working Definition of Downtown," as set forth in Figure 1 in the Downtown Element of the City Comprehensive Plan, provided that the real property involved is subject to a significant measure of public ownership or control, and provided that the project includes a building footprint of at least 15,000 square feet and a proposed height of at least 75 feet; or
3. Proposed projects located within the IFSA or the Working Definition of Downtown where the City Landmarks Commission formally certifies that the proposed project is either a historic structure or is directly associated with, and supports the preservation of, an adjacent historic structure; or
4. Proposed projects located on a public facility site, as defined in Section 13.06.700.P, that is at least five acres in size and is not a public utility site.

However, these criteria may be revised (by ordinance following standard public participation requirements) over time, based on the City's experience with DRAs.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

Downtown Comprehensive Plan Element DNS/SEPA Checklist-SEP: 2008-40000119984 (September 10, 2008)

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

Not known. Further, this proposal is not property or project specific.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

None

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site.

The proposed amendment would: (1) add provisions in 13.05.095 that will control the use of Development Regulation Agreements (DRAs), (2) add an authorization in 13.06.601 for the use of DRAs for public facility sites at least five acres in size anywhere within the City of Tacoma, (3) add an authorization in 13.06A.020 for the use of DRAs in Downtown areas,

and (4) amend 13.11.130 to make it clear that critical area issues are to be addressed within the DRA review process and that a separate critical areas permit is not required.

First and foremost, a DRA involves a process that is entirely optional for both a developer and the City. Next, it should be pointed out that if the DRA option is selected by both the developer and the City it results in a binding contract between both parties, a contract that typically covers larger projects that have the potential to command extensive public interest and benefits. The developer is able to negotiate for some flexibility in regulatory standards, other than life-safety standards, and to secure a commitment that the regulatory standards set forth in the contract will not change for a certain period of years.

The City for its part is able to negotiate for firm commitments to public benefits and amenities that go beyond the standard requirements associated with a particular project and to provide a permit review option that should be attractive to those looking to invest in Tacoma. Procedurally, the City Council is the final decision maker, after extensive public participation is sought and a formal public hearing held before the City Council.

12. Location of the Proposal:

Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site.

1. Proposed projects located within the International Financial Services Area (IFSA), as defined in City Ordinance No. 27825, with a building footprint of at least 15,000 square feet and a proposed height of at least 75 feet; or
2. Proposed projects located within the “Working Definition of Downtown,” as set forth in Figure 1 in the Downtown Element of the City Comprehensive Plan, provided that the real property involved is subject to a significant measure of public ownership or control, and provided that the project includes a building footprint of at least 15,000 square feet and a proposed height of at least 75 feet; or
3. Proposed projects located within the IFSA or the Working Definition of Downtown where the City Landmarks Commission formally certifies that the proposed project is either a historic structure or is directly associated with, and supports the preservation of, an adjacent historic structure; or
4. Proposed projects located on a public facility site, as defined in Section 13.06.700.P, that is at least five acres in size and is not a public utility site.

13. Assessor Parcel Numbers:

This proposal is not property or project specific.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

This is a non-project action. Nevertheless, some general comments are made on citywide characteristics and some specific comments are made on Downtown Characteristics. The Downtown area is the particular focus of this proposal.

1. Earth

- a. **General description of the site (underline one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:**

The proposed amendment is a non-project action affecting properties in the City of Tacoma.

- b. **What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**

The proposed amendment is a non-project action affecting properties in the City of Tacoma.

- c. **What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.**

The soils in Tacoma consist of gravel, sand, clay, silt, peat and muck. There are no known areas of prime farmland or agricultural soils.

- d. **Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity?**

Tacoma is designated as a Zone 3 Seismic Hazard Zone, as is the entire Puget Sound region. This designation is based on life safety and the potential for property damage as a result of seismic activity. Zone 1 includes those areas that are least likely and Zone 4 includes those that are most likely to experience injury and/or building damage as a result of a seismic event. The City's geologically hazardous areas are generally mapped in the Environmental Policy element of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- e. **Describe the purpose, type and approximate quantities of filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**

No grading or filling is proposed by this non-project action. Site-specific impacts of any filling or grading will be assessed as part of the review of a future development proposal.

- f. **Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

The proposed development regulations amendment is a non-project action. Erosion controls based on the City's adopted stormwater manual and development codes will be made a requirement by the City at the time of permit approval and construction. Specific impacts will be assessed at project development stage.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

The proposal is a non-project action. Calculations of impervious surfaces would be prepared and evaluated at the time of development application review.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:**

The proposed development regulations amendment is a non-project action. Future development proposals will be required to meet the grading and erosion control requirements of the City of Tacoma at the time of development.

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities, if known.**

Impacts will be assessed at the project development stage. Future development may result in localized increases in air pollution due to construction activity and vehicular traffic.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.**

Carbon monoxide has historically been a consideration for downtown Tacoma, but current levels are below Federal standards.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any.**

Development proposals will be reviewed concerning the applicability of local and state regulations regarding emissions.

3. Water

a. Surface

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

Tacoma is a peninsula surrounded on the west by portions of Puget Sound, including the Narrows, and on the east by Commencement Bay. Additionally there are several lakes, including Wapato Lake, Snake Lake, and China Lake; numerous streams and rivers such as the Puyallup River, Swan Creek, Puget Creek and Hylebos Creek; and a significant number of seasonal and perennial streams and wetlands. The Downtown area includes the Thea Foss Waterway.

- 2) Will the project require any work in or adjacent to (within 200 feet) of the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.**

Does not apply because this is a non-project action.

- 3) **Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

Does not apply because this is a non-project action.

- 4) **Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities, if known.**

This does not apply because this is a non-project action.

- 5) **Does the proposal lie within a 100-year flood plain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

The 100-year flood plain within the city does not extend into the Downtown area.

- 6) **Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

Does not apply. The proposal is a non-project action. Drainage impacts will be evaluated at the time of development review of site-specific proposals. Existing federal, state and local laws are expected to mitigate potential impacts. Any project related impacts will be mitigated in accordance with City ordinances and the *City of Tacoma Stormwater Management Manual*.

b. Ground:

- 1) **Will the ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities, if known.**

The proposal does not involve ground water withdrawal or discharge. Specific impacts will be assessed at project development stage.

- 2) **Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any. For example: domestic sewage, industrial, containing the following chemicals . . . agricultural; etc. Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served, if applicable, or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

The proposal is a non-project action. Sanitary waste would be discharged into the City's sanitary sewer system. Projects developed under the proposal will comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations regarding discharge of waste material.

c. Water Runoff (including storm water):

- 1) **Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. The storm drainage system impacts from development proposals that occur will be evaluated at the time of application.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters?

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. City sanitary sewer hook-up would be required at the time of future development proposals. Stormwater runoff would need to comply with City regulations including the *City of Tacoma Stormwater Management Manual*.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any.

City ordinances require hook-up to sewer and any proposed development will be required to ensure that stormwater discharge will meet the City's stormwater requirements found in the *City of Tacoma Stormwater Management Manual*, including applicable Department of Ecology Best Management Practices (BMPs).

4. Plants

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site.

- ☒ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
☒ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
☒ shrubs
☒ grass
☐ pasture
☐ crop or grain
☐ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
☐ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
☒ other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

The proposal is a non-project action. No specific removal projects are planned. Impacts will be reviewed at the development proposal stage.

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

The proposal is a non-project action. There are no known threatened or endangered species within Downtown Tacoma. A site specific review would be conducted at the development proposal stage.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Screening and other landscaping to address land use conflicts and site aesthetics may be required at the time of future development.

5. Animals

a. Underline any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

birds: hawk, bald eagle, songbirds, other: seagulls, crows, pigeons

mammals: bear, elk, beaver, other: squirrel, raccoon, opossum, rodents, dogs
cats
fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, other

b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

The proposal is a non-project action. There are no known threatened or endangered species in the downtown area.

Commencement Bay and its waterways (e.g., Thea Foss Waterway) support several types of salmon species and occasional visits by Southern Resident Orcas. Both the Orcas and Chinook salmon are listed as endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

The City of Tacoma is within the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds. Adult salmon, including listed Puget Sound Chinook and Bull trout, migrate along the shorelines and within Commencement Bay to the Puyallup River and other waterways.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any.

The proposal is a non-project action. Future development proposals would be reviewed for compliance with City ordinances including the Critical Areas Protection Ordinance.

6. Energy and Natural Resources

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs:

The proposal is a non-project action. Energy demand of future development proposals will be typical of urban buildings with potentially some expansion of manufacturing or other industrial uses.

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

The proposal is a non-project action. Specific impacts would be considered during permit review and if needed, mitigation may be required.

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.

The proposal is a non-project action. Specific impacts will be assessed at the project development stage.

7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.**

The proposal is a non-project action. Specific hazards will be assessed at the project development stage. At project development stage, all requirements of the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) and Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) (and if applicable, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) if the site is located within the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Study Area) will be complied with. In addition, the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) will provide general requirements regarding development of the site that shall be met by the applicant.

- 1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.**

None. The proposal is a non-project action.

- 2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:**

Existing federal, state and local laws are expected to mitigate potential environmental health hazards from site specific developments that would occur under the proposed revised regulations. In addition, SEPA allows the City to attach mitigation measures at time of development proposal, if needed. This issue would be evaluated at the development proposal stage.

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project, (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

The predominant sources of noise in Tacoma are vehicular traffic and aircraft over flights. Noise is also present adjacent to the mainline train tracks.

- 2) What types of levels would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or long-term basis (i.e., traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.**

The proposal is a non-project action.

- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any.**

Noise impacts will be evaluated at the development proposal stage and mitigation required in accordance with City ordinances.

8. Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site?**

Downtown Tacoma consists of an urbanized area that is primarily built-out with a variety of office, commercial, institutional and residential buildings. The area is served by a detailed street network laid out in a grid pattern connected to major arterials and freeways. A portion of the Downtown area includes the Thea Foss Waterway and Wheeler Osgood Waterway which support marinas and other maritime trades.

b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

The downtown area has not been used for agriculture in over one hundred years.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Downtown Tacoma is primarily built-up with mostly multi-story structures and parking structures and lots, roads and other infrastructure.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

The proposal is a non-project action. Future development projects consistent with the proposed amendment could result in the demolition of existing structures.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Current downtown zoning districts are: Downtown Commercial Core (DCC), Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU), Downtown Residential (DR), Warehouse/Residential (WR).

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Downtown Tacoma applies to areas designated High and Medium Land Use Intensity.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

The shoreline master program designates areas 200 ft. landward of the ordinary high water mark as districts S-1 to S-14. In the downtown area, Schuster Parkway is designated S-7 and the Thea Foss Waterway area is designated S-8. Any project subject to a DRA will still need to comply with Shoreline master plan regulations and permit requirements.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. Impacts to critical areas associated with development will be assessed at the project review and approval stage. Specifically, critical areas outside a shoreline district that involve a development activity that is reviewed pursuant to 13.05.095 (Development Regulation Agreements) will be considered during the DRA review process; a separate critical areas permit is not required. However, any approval(s) pursuant to 13.05.095 must, to the maximum extent feasible, avoid potential impacts to critical areas and any unavoidable impacts to critical areas must be fully mitigated, either on or off-site.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

The proposed amendment would not directly result in an increase in employment because this is a non-project actions and no construction would directly occur.

However, the DRA process is designed to encourage development, and redevelopment, in Downtown Tacoma (a Regional Growth Center designated under PSRC's VISION 2040).

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. Displacement could occur depending on future development proposals.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any.

No specific measures are needed or proposed at this time. This issue would be reviewed at time of proposed site specific development, and is dependent upon what existing housing is present at each site at the time development is proposed.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land use and plans, if any.

The proposed amendment is dependent on the application of criteria drawn from the Comprehensive Plan and applied in such a manner as to ensure compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan.

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

This is a non-project action that will not directly result in the construction of new units. However, the DRA process is designed to encourage development, and redevelopment, in Downtown Tacoma (a Regional Growth Center designated under PSRC's VISION 2040).

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Does not apply because this is a non-project action.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any.

The proposed amendment to the City's development regulations is a non-project action. Specific impacts will be assessed at the project development stage.

10. Aesthetics

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

The proposal is a non-project action. No structures are proposed.

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

View impacts will be evaluated at the development proposal stage and mitigation required in accordance with City ordinances and SEPA.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any.

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. Specific project impacts will be assessed at the project development stage. More specifically, though, this optional process will allow more discussion to occur regard aesthetics and design and will allow for site specific design factors to be explicitly addressed.

11. Light and Glare

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. Light and glare impacts will be evaluated at the development proposal stage and mitigation required in accordance with City ordinances.

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

Does not apply because this is a non-project action. Impacts will be evaluated at the project development stage.

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

Does not apply because this is a non-project action.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any.

Existing City ordinances regulate light and glare hazards and require mitigation, if needed.

12. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Most recreational opportunities in the downtown area are along the Thea Foss Waterway. There are a variety of parks and public spaces scattered throughout including Fireman's Park, Pugnetti Park, and Tollefson Plaza as well as many small pocket parks. There is a signature community park, Wright Park, with a conservatory located just south of Division St. Other parks include People's neighborhood park, Lots for Tots greenspace and a community garden in the vicinity of Yakima and 19th St. Walking is popular throughout much of the downtown area.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

Does not apply. The proposal is a non-project action.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any.

Does not apply. The proposal is a non-project action.

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site?

The proposed amendment is a non-project action. The downtown study area contains several historic districts. The Old City Hall Historic District is listed on the national, state and Tacoma registers of historic places and contains approximately 60 individual properties (approximately 47 buildings). The Union Depot – Warehouse Historic District is listed on the national, state and Tacoma registers of historic places and contains approximately 51 individual properties (approximately 32 buildings).

b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

This is a non-project action. Landmark buildings in Tacoma depict the history of the city from the 1880s to the present. Architectural surveys conducted between 1981 and the present have identified approximately 1,600 properties that are potentially eligible for listing.

The area in which the City of Tacoma is located also has many locations of ethnographic, scientific and cultural importance. Archaeological site records for the Tacoma area are maintained by the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any.

The proposed amendment is a non-project action. The City of Tacoma is a Certified Local Government that maintains an active Landmarks Commission, professional historic preservation staff, a historic preservation ordinance that governs the treatment of historic properties, and provides public access and educational outreach. The City actively updates its architectural survey data. Local and federal tax incentives for historic preservation are available for building renovations and preservation. Designated buildings and properties with designated local districts are subject to design approval for exterior modifications by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Office serves as a consulting party for Section 106 review and SEPA review.

Tacoma has three local historic special review districts and one conservation district. The Historic Special Review District, an overlay zoning district, is intended to protect the historic character through design review and the application of requirements for exterior building modifications, new structures, and streetscape elements.

This proposal allows historic structures and structures adjacent to historic structures, irrespective of size or height, to qualify for use of the DRA process. This has been done in order to provide an additional incentive for historic preservation.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**

The proposal is a non-project action that would not alter the existing roadway system. Public streets serve the downtown area. There are over 15 major north-south arterials and over 17 east-west arterials that provide access throughout the City of Tacoma. These arterials provide primary access to a complete grid of minor arterials and local access roadways as well as to major regional freeways including two interstate freeways I-5 and I-705, as well as four State Routes including SR-509, SR-16, SR-167, and SR-7.

- b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**

Local and regional transit services are available citywide, through Pierce Transit and Sound Transit. Within the City of Tacoma there are five transit centers including: Tacoma Community College, Tacoma Mall, Downtown Tacoma, Tacoma Dome Station, and 72nd & Portland. Sound Transit provides commuter rail service north to Seattle and starting in 2012 will provide service south from the Tacoma Dome Station to South Tacoma (at S 59th Street) and to a terminus station in Lakewood.

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?**

The proposal is a non-project action and does not include the construction or removal of parking. The need for and location of parking to serve future individual development proposals will be addressed during the project review and approval stage.

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**

This is a non-project action and no new roads, streets or improvements to existing roads or streets would be constructed as part of the proposed action. Specific impacts and improvement requirements will be assessed at the project development stage.

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.**

The proposed amendment is a non-project action that will not affect water, rail, or air transportation. Future impacts by specific project actions will be evaluated at the development proposal stage and mitigation required in accordance with City ordinances.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.**

The proposal is a non-project action and would not generate new trips.

- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.**

The proposal is a non-project action. Traffic impact studies may be required depending on future development proposals based on the size and scope of the project. Specific impacts and mitigation will be assessed at the project development stage.

15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (i.e., fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.**

The proposal is a non-project action. Specific impacts will be assessed at the project stage.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.**

The proposals is a non-project action. Specific impacts will be assessed at the project stage.

16. Utilities

- a. Underline utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.**

The downtown area is served by all of the above services (except septic systems) or can be connected at the time of development.


- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.**

The proposal is a non-project action. Specific utility services required for future development in the downtown area will be identified and evaluated at the time of development application review.

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: 
Ian Munce, AICP
Community & Economic Development Department

Date: September 23, 2009

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment. When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal that would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Adoption of the proposed Development Regulations amendment would not directly affect discharges, emissions, hazardous substances, or noise. Evaluation of any impacts from future developments would be subject to additional environmental review.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

Existing City, State and Federal regulations will be applied at the time of a development project's approval. Components of the proposed amendment address sustainability, first as a qualifying factor and then as a rating factor.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Adoption of the proposed amendment would not have a significant impact on plants, animals, fish, or marine life.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

Each project developed under the proposed amendment will be reviewed at time of application and, if required, mitigation for impacts to natural areas (steep slopes, streams, wetlands and associated buffers) will be part of the approval process. Specifically, critical areas outside a shoreline district that involve a development activity that is reviewed pursuant to 13.05.095 (Development Regulation Agreements) will be considered during the DRA review process; a separate critical areas permit is not required. However, any approval(s) pursuant to 13.05.095 must, to the maximum extent feasible, avoid potential impacts to critical areas and any unavoidable impacts to critical areas must be fully mitigated, either on or off-site.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Specific development proposals allowed under the amended Development Regulations may require more energy than current land uses require due to increased development intensity. Increases, if any, are not expected to be significant.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Existing City ordinances require energy efficient buildings and limitations on the use of unnecessary power for lighting. Considerations for environmental impacts will be addressed during the permit review process. Further, meeting LEED silver standard, or equivalent, is a DRA requirement and meeting DRA gold standard could be a factor in the scoring necessary for a project to pass the eligibility threshold.

- 4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?**

The proposed amendment would not directly affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated for governmental protection.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

The Tacoma Land Use Regulatory Code includes standards to protect environmentally sensitive areas when development is proposed. Additionally, state and federal regulations may apply. Development applications will be reviewed concerning the applicability of local, State, and federal regulations and standards.

- 5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?**

The proposed amendment has the potential to encourage change to existing land uses (i.e., mixed use developments) and increase land use intensities. Future development in shoreline areas adjacent to or part of the downtown would be required to comply with the Shoreline Master Program.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

Specific impacts will be evaluated at the time of review of development proposals. Consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations will be determined during the project specific proposal review. Further, the project eligibility and rating factors were drawn from the Comprehensive Plan policies and these policies are to be applied in such a manner as to ensure avoidance or reduction.

- 6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

Increased development intensities are supported by the proposed amendment and that would likely increase use of mass transit.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Concurrency review and normal evaluation of development proposals for compliance with City requirements are required for transportation and utility impacts.

- 7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.**

The proposal would not conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements. Rather, the proposed amendment enacts procedures that are authorized and encouraged by the state Growth Management Act and will facilitate economic development, commercial investment,

and high-density housing. The Development Regulations amendment will open up a new opportunity to better align the Development Regulations with the City's Comprehensive Plan and with the Downtown Economic Development Strategy.