

2 Alternatives

2.1: Overview

Tacoma entered into this MLK subarea planning process to more directly address future environmental, economics, land use, transportation, public facilities, parks and recreation, and aesthetics of the MLK subarea.

In addition, as part of the MLK subarea planning process, and consistent with State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules, Tacoma will adopt a Planned Action Ordinance (PAO), which will streamline environmental review for development consistent with the proposed MLK Subarea Plan and regulations. The basic steps in designating planned action projects are:

- Prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS);
- Designate the planned action projects by ordinance; and
- Review permit applications for proposed projects as consistent with the designated planned action.

The intent is to provide more detailed environmental analysis during formulation of planning proposals, rather than at the project permit review stage.

This Draft Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), addresses the first step identified above, analyzing the environmental impact of two primary alternatives - Alternative 1: the No-action alternative or a continuation of existing plans and policies, and Alternative 2: the MLK Subarea Plan.

Tacoma City Council will select one of the alternatives to be the MLK Subarea Plan in accordance with Chapter 35.63 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the provisions of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Population - both alternatives

According to Tacoma's Community & Economic Development Department's moderate growth scenario, MLK subarea's population will increase from 2,903 persons in 2010 to 7,915 persons by 2040 or at an annual average rate of 3.4% for the projection period.

MLK will grow in accordance with recent and

expected trends which are optimistic but not maximum build-out. Maximum build-out could reach 14,520 persons by 2040 at an annual average rate of growth of 5.5%.

If the MLK subarea develops in accordance with the moderate growth scenario the additional 5,012 population would generate 4,977 households or 3,152 more than in 2010 where an MLK household presently includes 1.59 persons.

Should the MLK subarea reach the potential build-out the additional 11,617 population would generate 9,132 households or 7,306 more than in 2010 where an MLK household presently includes 1.59 persons.

Moderate	Population	Households
2010	2,903	1,826
2040	7,915	4,977
Differ	5,012	3,152
Build-out	14,520	9,132
Differ	11,617	7,306

Source: Tacoma Community & Economic Development Department 2012
Assumes 1.59 persons per household per 2010 Census for MLK

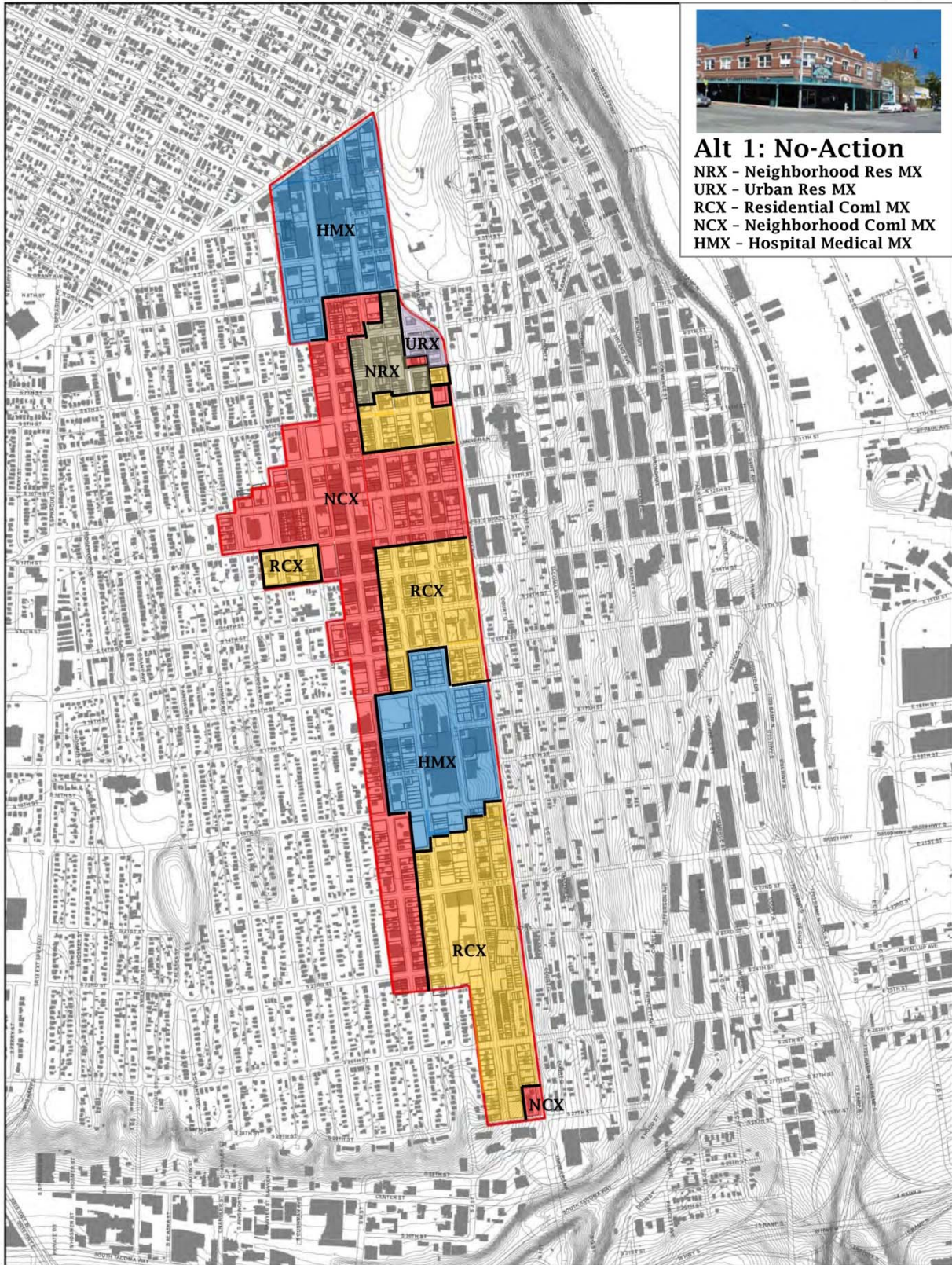
2.2: Alternative 1: No-Action

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requires a No-Action alternative be considered within the environmental review process. Under a No-Action alternative, the prevailing 2012 Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map, Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title specifying zoning districts, development and parking regulations, and mixed use design standards would remain in effect and all MLK planning and implementation policies would continue to be coordinated with these documents.

The present plan and policies or no-action would result in the following:

Land use and zoning

- **Neighborhood Residential Mixed Use (NRX) zoning** - would remain as designated in the current zoning map including the classification of the single and multiple family neighborhood, generally located between South 6th and 9th Streets, and the alley between MLK and J Street to Yakima Avenue.



The NRX zoned area would likely retain much of the existing single and multifamily housing stock.

- **Residential Commercial Mixed Use (RCX) zoning** - would remain as designated in the current zoning map generally including most of the neighborhoods located east of the alley between MLK and J Street to Yakima Avenue, from South 9th Street to the north edge of St Joseph's Hospital at South 17th Street, and from the south edge of the hospital to South 27th Street.

A partial block of RCX is zoned east to the alley from Yakima Avenue south of South 8th Street, and west from South L Street to the alley east of M Street between South 12th/Brazill and 13th Streets.

The RCX zoned area would likely retain much of the existing single and multifamily family housing stock on blocks where the structures remain in good condition.

Underdeveloped or "soft" properties would likely be redeveloped throughout the zone for buildings with ground floor "platforms" providing parking and some retail or related use with wood or steel framed upper floor residential uses up to 5 or more floors to the maximum allowable 70-80 foot height where bonus provisions are met.

- **Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use (NCX) zoning** - would remain as designated in the current zoning map including the MLK Way corridor between the alleys on the west and east from South 6th Street to across South 23rd Street.

The NCX district extends east from MLK between South 6th and 7th Streets to the alley between I and J Streets, east from MLK between South 10th to South 12th/Brazill Streets, west from MLK to include Peoples' Park and the Tacoma Housing Authority, west from MLK between South 10th to South 12th/Brazill Street to the alley west of South Sheridan, and west from MLK to L Street between South 14th and 15th Streets.

The NCX zoned area would retain some of the older, possibly historic retail and apartment structures along MLK Way and South 11th Street that are in good condition and rented.

Considerable underdeveloped or "soft" properties would be redeveloped throughout the zone for buildings with ground floor "platforms" providing frontage retail uses with rear alley accessed parking with wood or steel

framed upper floor residential uses up to 3 floors to the maximum allowable 45 foot height along the corridor, or up to 5 floors to the maximum allowable 65 foot height where bonus provisions are met within 200 feet of the MLK Center core pedestrian street.

Redevelopment pressure would be exerted on and could fragment the compact "hard" single family housing blocks of MLK Way front St Joseph Hospital between South 17th and 19th Streets, and the single family residential neighborhood extending south of South 19th Street to 23rd Street.

- **Hospital/Medical Mixed Use (HMX) zoning** - would remain as designated in the current zoning map including the property surrounding MultiCare Health System's Mary Bridge and Tacoma General Hospital between South L and I Street/Yakima Avenue from Division Avenue south to South 6th Street including the block south of South 6th to 7th Streets between L Street and MLK Way.

HMX zoning also includes the property surrounding Franciscan Health System's St. Joseph Hospital including the blocks between MLK Way and Yakima Avenue from South 17th to 19th Street including the block between South J and I Street between South 16th and 17th Streets, and frontage properties south of South 19th Street from the alley east of MLK to the alley west of Yakima Avenue.

The north HMX zone does not include all of MultiCare Health Systems property holdings. MultiCare has acquired scattered properties west of South L Street and across Division Avenue that are, in some cases, used for off-site surface parking lots. These scattered parking lots impact nearby properties and reduce the cohesiveness and integrity of adjacent residential areas.

The north HMX zone includes a number of older and possibly historic churches and multifamily apartment buildings that front Division Avenue and South I Street across from Wright Park that are not compatible with potential hospital expansion development.

By contrast, the south HMX zone includes and contains all existing Franciscan Health System property holdings and St Joseph Hospital facilities and parking lots and structures.

Housing

- **Single family housing** - including low density detached and attached housing products would be retained in the residential neighborhoods west of MLK and possibly in blocks within the NRX and RCX zones where a preponderance of structures are in good condition.

However, some of these blocks could be fragmented by redevelopment of multifamily structures up to 45-85 feet in the NCX and 60-80 feet in the RCX zones that would reduce the viability of remaining single family low density structures, particularly along MLK and J Street south of South 19th Street, and the west side of I Street south of South 23rd Street.

- **Multifamily housing** - including older 3-5 floor structures would likely be retained along MLK Jr Way, within the HMX zone fronting Wright Park, and within the RCX zone fronting South 11th Street and Yakima Avenue where the structures are in good condition and rented.

New 3-5 floor platform buildings would likely be developed on “soft” properties in the NCX and RCX zones where there is the ability to package larger sites and particularly where the sites have view potential on the downhill ridge.

However, most of these new mixed use developments will likely not be developed with ground floor retail or other pedestrian-oriented uses particularly along I and J Streets within the residential neighborhoods, and along MLK outside of the business district due to a lack of market interest and demand.

Similarly, new mixed use developments will likely not be developed adjacent to the hospital zones, particularly MultiCare properties, due to the prevalence of hospital owned surface parking lots and the uncertainties about future hospital development and expansion.

Road network

- **Street typologies** - would remain unchanged retaining MLK district streets as multipurpose, undifferentiated for form or function to reflect thorough traffic, rubber-tire, streetcar, or rail transit, bikeways, walkways and streetscapes, urban on-street residential parking, or green street low impact development potentials or standards.

Transit routes

- **MLK transit service** - would continue to be based on Pierce Transit’s rubber-tire transit routes that pass through the MLK district bound

for the downtown, waterfront, or other city areas.

On-road bicycle routes

- **On-road bike lanes** - currently include designated bike lanes on South 15th Street from Sprague to Yakima Avenue. All other streets are undesignated or improved with most on-road commuting and recreational users riding in-lane on undesignated streets within the MLK district and between the MLK district, the downtown, and rest of the city.

Pedestrian walkways and sidewalks

- **Sidewalks** - are provided throughout the MLK subarea though of varying condition, width, and enhancement - especially those extending down the steep hillside between the MLK district and the downtown, UWT, and Thea Foss Waterway.

Streetscapes, gateways, and wayfinding

- **Streetscapes** - have been partially improved along MLK Way with some street trees and pedestrian light standards within the business district, and on South 6th, 11th, and 15th Streets between the MLK district and the downtown.

- **Gateways** - have not been installed or proposed to be installed anywhere within the MLK subarea or between the MLK district and major entrances from the neighborhoods to the west, the downtown, or South Tacoma.

- **Wayfinding signs** - have not been installed or proposed anywhere within the MLK subarea or between MLK and major destinations in the downtown, UWT, or waterfront. The Hilltop Business District Association has installed banners on light standards, on 11th Avenue, however, which feature the Hilltop Business District logo.

Parks and open spaces

- **Major gathering places** - would remain as currently developed with Wright and Peoples Parks providing the major multipurpose gathering places within the MLK subarea.

- **Indoor recreation facilities** - would continue to be provided at Peoples Community Center (pool, gym, and physical conditioning), McCarver School (gymnasium), and the nearby Boys & Girls Club (gymnasium) in Stanley Park.

- **Athletic fields and facilities** - including basketball courts and soccer/baseball fields would continue to be provided at Mc Carver

School, Stanley Park, and Stadium High School within a 3 mile service radius of the MLK subarea.

- **Children's playgrounds** - and play equipment would continue to be provided in Wright Park, Neighbor's Park, People's Park, Lots for Tots, McCarver Scholl, and Sheridan Park which are generally within a convenient 0.25 mile radius walking distance of residential areas.
- **Community gardens** - would continue to be sponsored by Tacoma Metro Parks and on private properties adjacent to the MLK business district, at McCarver School, and east of MLK above UWT.
- **Park plazas** - would continue to be provided by MultiCare Health Systems on the walkway between their facilities on MLK Way.

2.3: Alternative 2: MLK Subarea Plan

The proposed MLK Subarea Action Plan would supplement the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map, Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title dealing with revised zoning districts, form-based mixed use design standards, and other implementing measures to accomplish the following:

Land use and zoning

- **NCX to URX zoning** - for the blocks located south of South 19th Street on MLK Way to reflect existing good condition single family committed structures and protect the integrity of the neighborhood from fragmentation.
- **NCX zoning will be retained** - however, for the corner lots on MLK Way at South 23rd Street to retain the neighborhood stores that were developed to serve historical streetcars lines on MLK Way.
- **RCX to URX zoning** - would be designated for the blocks located south of South 19th Street on J Street and on the west side of I Street south of South 23rd Street to reflect existing good condition single family committed structures and protect the integrity of the neighborhood from fragmentation.
- **HMX zoning and MLK subarea boundaries will be expanded west** - to include MultiCare Health System properties that have been acquired west of South L Street and north of South 6th Avenue that are viable and supportable for hospital related developments.

- **HM and HMX zoning may be revised** - west of South L and M Streets to C-2 commercial and R-4 and R-4L moderate density housing to reflect existing uses in these parcels not owned by and/or necessary for the MultiCare campus.

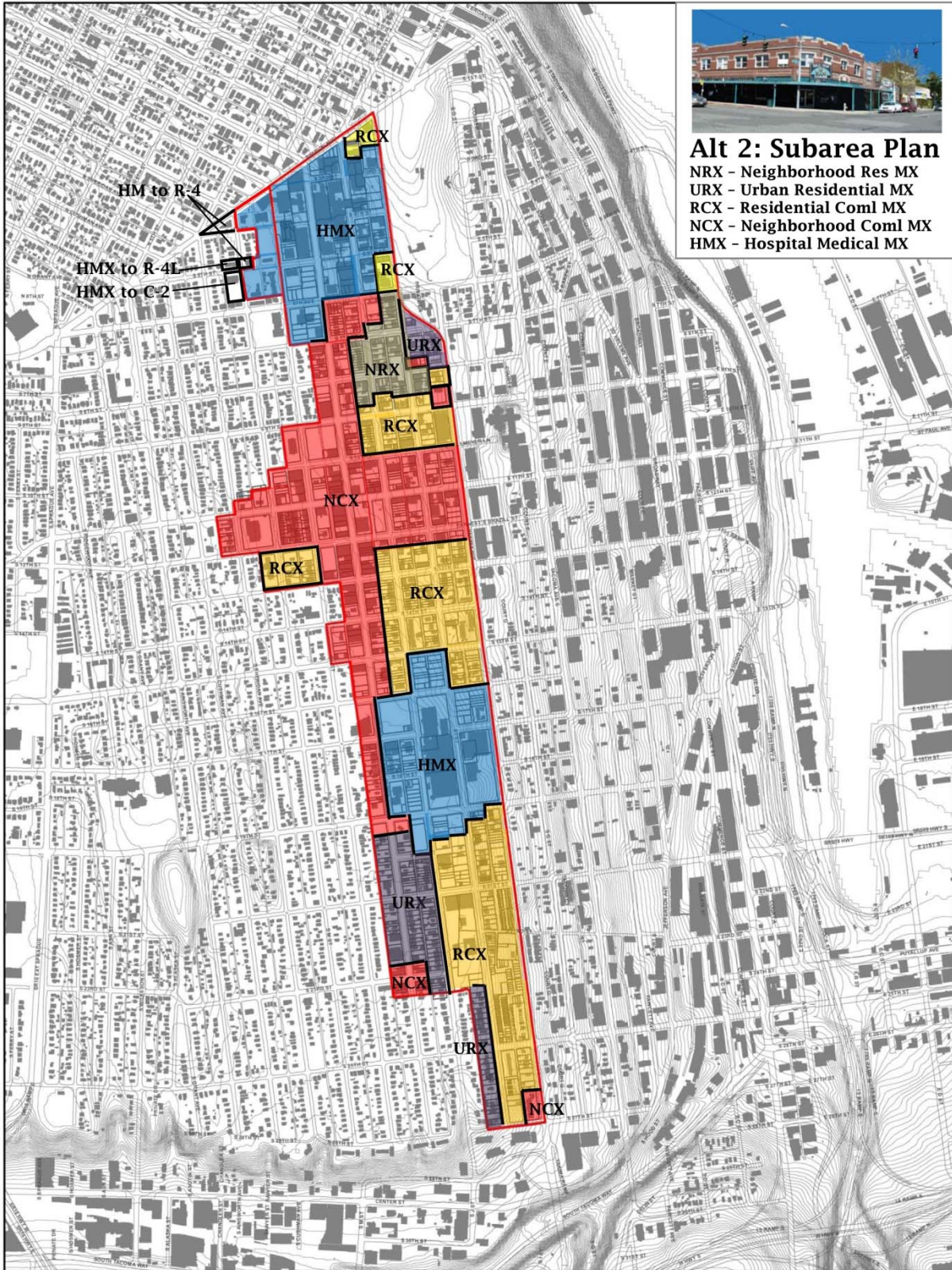
- **HMX zoning will be revised** - along the east boundary with South I Street to exclude the churches and existing apartment buildings located on Division Avenue and I Street/Yakima Avenue that are not owned by MultiCare Health Systems and which are not viable or necessary to a functional MultiCare hospital plan. These properties would be rezoned RCX to reflect current and future church and residential uses.

- **NCX zoning will designate Pedestrian Street ground floor retail required corridors** - to consist of South 11th Street and MLK Way within the MLK business district. Mixed use developments on these corridors would be required to incorporate retail or similar uses on the street frontage to protect and establish a pedestrian-oriented retail street business district. Mixed use developments on the side streets and balance of MLK Jr Way could provide retail ground floor use as an option, or other pedestrian-oriented or even ground floor artist live/work or residential units that address the street but which do not dilute retail market potential to occupy the critical street frontage within the MLK business district.

- **Mixed use upper floor housing parking requirements** - will be waived or reduced for new structures and for the reuse of existing structures, particularly those along the key streets within the business district core. Parking for residential or upper floor office uses will generally be provided in mixed use structure platform parking decks.

- **Mixed use ground floor and pedestrian-oriented parking** - will be provided in on-street parking in front of the building including provisions for expanded road right-of-way vacations, if necessary, and angled street parking on side streets.

- **Form-based mixed use design guidelines** - will be developed as an overlay district to govern the design and development of new structures within the MLK zones including particulars designating building mass and articulations, materials, ground floor retail facades, entries, awnings, streetscapes, furnishing, street trees, and landscaping - as well as supporting solar applications, historic compatibility, green roofs and walls, rain gardens, and other low impact and energy saving technologies.



Housing

- **Housing options** - will be promoted within the MLK mixed use zones to develop a wider variety of form-based products to house a wider variety of urban household types including single adults, adult couples, family starters (with young children), and empty nesters of all ages and incomes.
- **Incentive provisions** - will be fine tuned to allow increased height and density when the development incorporates affordable housing, uses transfer development credits to preserve historical buildings, and/or provides public amenities.
- **Assisted-income population distribution** - will be promoted where for-profit and nonprofit housing developers are encouraged by catalytic project examples to jointly develop mixed income and income-assisted population projects to avoid creating income-assisted population concentrations and stigmas within MLK.
- **Special population project distribution** - will be promoted where nonprofit housing developers are encouraged to distribute projects throughout the MLK subarea to avoid creating special population concentrations and stigmas within MLK.

Road network

- **Street typologies** - will be established for each street within the MLK subarea using the definitions developed in the Tacoma Complete Streets Manual to specify retail-pedestrian-transit, retail-pedestrian, transit priority, connectors, parkway, urban residential, and green street low impact development potentials or standards.
- **MLK Way** - will be designated a retail-pedestrian-transit corridor incorporating the streetcar design concepts developed by the Tacoma Public Works Department. The roadway could be reconfigured to provide alternating curbside parking or streetcar stops with a vehicular moving lane in each direction, median turning lanes at major intersections, extended curbs at crosswalks, and expanded streetscape enhancements.
- **Collector typology** - will be designated on South 6th, 9th, 11th, 15th, 17th, 19th, and 25th Streets to consist of a vehicular moving lane in each direction with curbside parking and transit stops, median turning lanes at MLK, extended curbs at crosswalks, and expanded streetscape

or walkway enhancements from Sprague Avenue to MLK, and the same though 2 vehicular moving lanes in each direction from MLK past Yakima Avenue into the downtown.

- **Parkway typology** - will be designated of South I Street/Yakima Avenue from Division Avenue south through the MLK subarea past South 27th Street into south Tacoma with a moving lane in each direction with curbside parking and transit stops, median turning lane at South 6th Street, extended curbs at crosswalks, and expanded walkway enhancements from Division Avenue to South 6th Street.

From South 6th Street south, the roadway will be reconfigured to provide 2 vehicular moving lanes in each direction, a median with street trees and ground cover, median turning lanes at connector street intersections, extended curbs at crosswalks, and expanded walkway enhancements with street trees and pedestrian light standards.

- **Urban residential typology** - will be designated of South L Street from South 4th Street to South 27th Street and of MLK Way from South 19th to 27th Street to consist of a vehicular moving lane in one or both directions with curbside or angled parking on one or both sides, extended curbs at crosswalks, roundabouts within some neighborhood street intersections, sidewalks at the right-of-way edge and street trees as well as other ground cover enhancements.

- **Green street typology** - will be designated on South J Street from South 6th Street to 25th Street and of South I Street from South 7th to 27th Street, and of South 13th Street from South L Street to Yakima Avenue, South 21st Street from MLK Way to Yakima Avenue, and South 25th Street from South L Street to MLK Way (in former streetcar wide rights-of-way) with a vehicular moving lane in each direction, rain garden or bio-swales, curbside or angled parking on one side, extended curbs at crosswalks, roundabouts within some neighborhood street intersections, sidewalks at the right-of-way edge, and street trees and ground cover enhancements.

- **Local street typology** - will be designated of remaining streets within the MLK subarea which may combine elements of the urban residential or green street typology depending on each road's function and character.

- **Woonerf typology** - portions of some streets within the hospital campuses may be

converted into a “woonerf” that combines pedestrian and vehicular movement within a single pavement designation and improvement.

Transit routes

- **Streetcar service** - will be restored on MLK Way from Division Avenue south to South 23rd Street with stops at major destinations including MultiCare Health System’s Mary Bridge and Tacoma General Hospitals, Peoples Park/MLK business district, People’s Community Center, Franciscan Health System’s St Joseph Hospital, and the McCarver neighborhood. Streetcars may run in both directions on the outside lane(s) with curbside stops or down a median with in-median stops depending on the outcome of feasibility studies.
- **LINK service** - will be expanded north of Commerce Street on Stadium Way to Division Avenue then west to MLK depending on feasibility studies being conducted by Sound Transit. LINK could also run on MLK down a median with in-median stops instead of streetcars depending on Sound Transit and Public Works feasibility studies.
- **Pierce Transit service** - will continue to include rubber-tire transit routes that pass through MLK bound for the downtown, waterfront, or other city areas. Depending on funding, Pierce Transit may restore the bus shuttle loop between the downtown and MLK or interface bus routes and stops with streetcar or LINK stops to achieve the same service potential.

On-road bike lanes

- **On-road bike routes** - will be designated and improved in accordance with the recently adopted Mobility Plan including typologies for bike lanes, bike boulevards, and shared in-lane or “sharrow” streets.
- **Bike lanes** - will be designated on South I Street/Yakima Avenue from Division Avenue south to South 6th Street then south on Yakima Avenue through the MLK subarea to South Tacoma. Bike lanes will also be designated on South 6th Street from South Ainsworth to Broadway Avenue, on South 11th Street from Sprague Avenue east through the downtown and across the Murray Morgan Bridge into the Port, on South 19th Street from Sprague Avenue to MLK Way, and on South 25th Street from Sprague Avenue to MLK Way.
- **Bike boulevards** - including thorough bike lanes will be designated on South Sheridan Avenue from South 6th to 25th Street, on South J Street from Division Avenue to South 27th

Street, and on South G Street/Fawcett Avenue from Division Avenue to South 25th Street.

- **Sharrow** - or shared bike and vehicle lanes will be designated on all other streets in the MLK subarea including those designated for Safe Routes to School for McCarver Elementary School.

Pedestrian walkways and sidewalks

- **Sidewalks** - will be maintained or replaced throughout the MLK district depending on walkway conditions and in accordance with street typologies. Sidewalks will be expanded from the curb and furnished with street trees along the connector streets; installed at the right-of-way edge and furnished with street trees on urban residential; and installed on the right-of-way edge and furnished with rain gardens and street trees on green streets

Streetscapes

- **MLK district streetscape** - will be enhanced with street trees, pedestrian light standards, benches, artworks, and other furnishings and extended from Division Avenue to South 25th Street from the curb to the right-of-way edge. Special paving accents and other improvements will be installed on a graduated basis with the lowest impact located at the ends of MLK Way and the most intense designs in the MLK business district core at MLK Jr Way and South 11th Street.
- **Yakima Avenue streetscape** - will be enhanced with street trees along the walkway and in the median, pedestrian light standards, and other furnishings befitting the parkway street typology from Division Street to South 27th Street and the approach to the bridge over Interstate 5.
- **East corridor road streetscape** - will be upgraded and enhanced with additional street trees, pedestrian light standards, benches, planter boxes, and other furnishings reflecting the downtown context from the MLK district east on South 6th, 11th, 15th, 19th, and 25th Streets to Pacific and Market Avenues with connections to the Prairie Line Trail and Bridge of Glass. Benches and planter boxes may be incorporated into the walkways to provide resting areas for pedestrians making the steep hill climbs.
- **West corridor road streetscape** - will also be upgraded and enhanced with street trees and pedestrian light standards on the major corridor streets that extend into MLK from the neighborhoods to the west on South 11th, 15th, 19th, and 25th Streets.

Gateways and wayfinding

- **Gateways** - that include signature artworks and an MLK logo element will be installed on the major entrances into MLK on Division Avenue, South 6th, 11th, 19th, and 27th Streets.
- **Wayfinding signs** - incorporating elements from a MLK logo will be installed on MLK Way and Yakima Avenue, and on Division Avenue, South 6th, 11th, 19th, and 27th Streets, and throughout the MLK subarea to identify routes to major destinations and activities.

Parks and open spaces

- **Major gathering places** - will be enhanced with the possible development of all-weather structures to support a Farmers' or Public Market in People's Park. The green swale in front of Peoples Community Center will be retrofit to provide a more formal plaza type park and gathering place with active features such as picnic shelters, tables and benches, play equipment, artworks, and possible splash fountain.
- **Indoor recreation facilities** - will be retrofit and enhanced including Tacoma Metro Parks project to replace the existing pool with an indoor/outdoor leisure pool facility and expanded physical conditioning.
- **Community gardens** - will be expanded on vacant lots throughout MLK to produce food and enhance visual and green experiences.
- **Linear parks and greenways** - will be defined by the connection of green street typologies the length of South J and I Streets fronted by mixed use buildings and activities.
- **Additional publicly accessible parks or activity areas** - will be created by private developments along MLK Way and within the higher density projects in the RCX zone using height and density bonus allowances. Public plazas may be located along the street frontages, in courtyards, and/or on rooftops.
- **Hospital campus park elements** - including plazas, overlooks, woonerfs, and other publicly accessible spaces will be created by MultiCare and Franciscan Health Systems on their hospital campuses in accordance with hospital master plan development agreements.

Catalytic projects

Hospital coordination and planning - will be conducted with MultiCare and Franciscan Health Systems and any other significant, campus-like institutions to evaluate more collaborative processes with the city and community, such as development agreements, to better define and support the long-range needs of these institutions, mitigate future development impacts as appropriate, and address how such future development can allow institutions to participate in the revitalization of the MLK district.

- **Browne's Star Grill/Pochert Building** - subject to feasibility assessments, will retain as much of the Browne's Star Grill and Pochert historical buildings as possible and redevelop the remaining city property for mixed use including ground floor retail, upper floor office and/or mixed income housing..
- **Municipal Service Center** - subject to feasibility assessments, will redevelop the city property housing the municipal services center at MLK and South 13th Street for mixed use including ground floor retail with upper floor residential.
- **MLK Housing Development Association (MLKHDA)** - subject to feasibility assessments, will support the redevelopment of the vacant properties on MLK and J Street at South 11th Street for mixed use with ground floor retail and upper floor office and housing activities and the potential for a community educational facility and the restoration of the Tally Ho Tavern.
- **Allen Renaissance Center** - will support the restoration of the former Valhalla Hall building for ground floor coffee shop and restaurant, and upper floor performing arts, science and computer lab, and other outreach educational activities.
- **Other private opportunities** - will promote the redevelopment of underutilized surface parking lots, vacant lands, or underused buildings for new mixed use development projects along MLK providing ground floor retail, upper floor office and/or mixed income housing activities such as illustrated for Save-A-Lot and Safeway in the catalytic project envelope studies.

Organization

- **Partnerships or joint ventures** - will be promoted for the implementation of portions or

all of a number of the MLK Subarea Plan projects with a variety organizations and entities including the Hilltop Business District Association, Tacoma Housing Authority, and Allen Renaissance Center, among others.