

## Draft MLK Subarea Plan Executive Summary

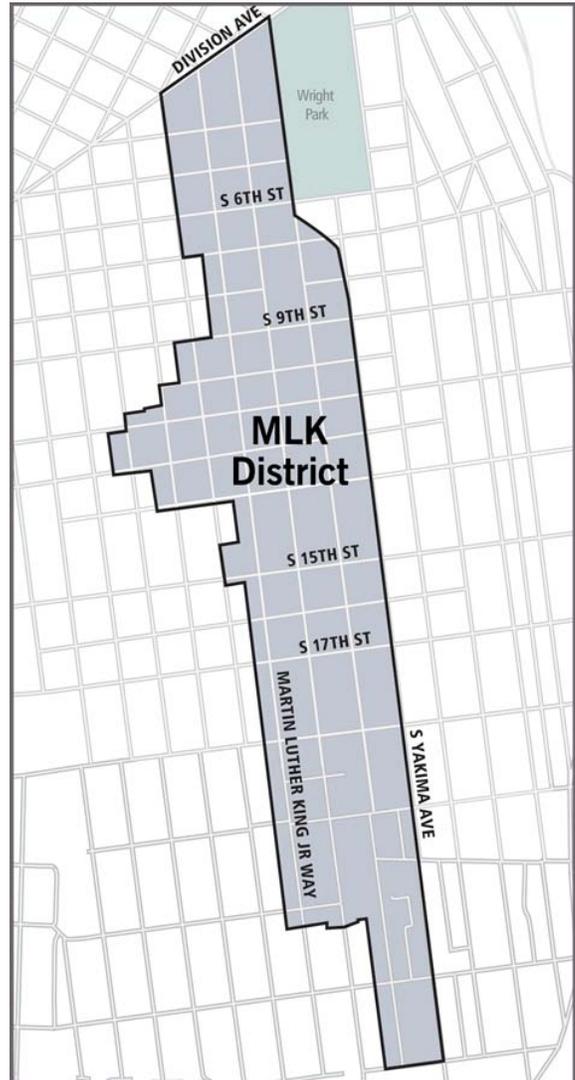
*December 18, 2012*

### Project Background

The City of Tacoma, in partnership with community stakeholders, has embarked on an exciting planning process that will build on existing plans and strategies to prepare the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) district for future growth and development.

The plan will anticipate, support and guide the long-term redevelopment of the MLK district. The plan will serve as a statement of the city’s commitment and direction for the area and as a resource for potential investors, property owners, the community, and other public agencies. This plan is also being accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will provide a means to expedite environmental review of future development projects.

The City of Tacoma is required by the Puget Sound Regional Council to plan for 60,000 new jobs and 70,000 additional people in Tacoma by 2030. Located in the Downtown Regional Growth Center, the MLK district is one of the City’s 17 Mixed-Use Centers and is well positioned for economic revitalization, growth, and development. The Mixed-Use Centers are at the heart of the City’s growth strategy. They are intended to accommodate a significant share of the Tacoma’s future growth by encouraging a more intense level of development that is well served by transportation options, housing choices, employment opportunities, and a mix of shops, services and public spaces. They are also receiving areas for Transfer of Development Rights(TDR).



### Location of the Proposal

The MLK subarea is centered on Martin Luther King Jr (MLK) Way from Division Avenue to south of South 23rd and South 27th Streets (see the map insert). The MLK subarea includes approximately 271 acres and acts as a major gateway into

downtown Tacoma and the greater Hilltop neighborhood. The area encompasses numerous significant community facilities, including Tacoma General & Mary Bridge Children's Hospitals, St Joseph Medical Center, the new Community Healthcare Center, and McCarver Elementary School.

## Project Purpose

The purpose of the MLK Subarea Plan is to anticipate, promote and guide the long-term redevelopment of the MLK subarea including the district core, hospitals, and residential neighborhoods. The proposed Subarea Plan will supplement current Tacoma policies governing the environment, land use, economics, transportation, design resources, parks and recreation, public services, and utilities to implement the MLK Subarea Plan and to conform to state requirements.

Implementation actions will revise zoning and apply organizational approaches, economic and business recruitment, arts and cultural promotions, historical preservation objectives, complete street typologies, multi-modal transportation plans and projects including streetcar, bike, and pedestrian facilities, sustainability measures, and initiate catalytic projects for city and privately owned key properties, among other measures.

The MLK Subarea Plan's planning period extends 20 years or from 2012 to the year 2032. Implementation will commence beginning with the adoption of the MLK Subarea Plan by the Tacoma City Council, which is expected to occur in June 2013.

This planning project also includes the adoption of a companion non-project, Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of doing environmental review at this early, planning stage is to incorporate environmental considerations early in the process with significant public input to shape quality, area-wide planning decisions, rather than at the project permit stage. Property owners and potential developers will be encouraged to redevelop in the MLK subarea as a result of the streamlined development process that takes place under this planned action process.

The Draft EIS, which has been issued along with the draft Plan, analyzes the impacts associated with future development in the MLK subarea, including additional development and increases in employment and population that are being planned to occur over the next twenty years. Preliminary growth targets for the area include 10,000 new jobs and 10,000 additional people and up to 10 million square feet of floor area for residential and commercial space by 2030.



## MLK Subarea Plan Vision

Throughout the process of developing the MLK Subarea Plan the community has been an invaluable asset. Through the scoping process, charrette exercises, surveys, and the MLK Working Group meetings the community has determined that the following elements are vital to successfully shaping future development in the MLK District.

- **A brand** - that establishes a positive MLK image and identity that reflects the community's past and potential.
- **Diverse populations** - including employment, housing, and community services to support all racial, ethnic, and religious populations.
- **Diverse ages** - providing housing and community services to support of all age groups including youth, young adults, family starters, middle families, empty nesters, and seniors.
- **Diverse households** - providing housing and community services to support all household types including single individuals, couples, single-headed families, and nuclear family households.
- **Mixed income** - with employment and housing opportunities to support all income levels.
- **Mixed use** - with sufficient retail, commercial, services, offices, and other land uses to support the MLK population and serve as a destination for surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Sustainable** - limiting the impacts on the environment from human activities using, and creating a community that is fiscally and economically self-sufficient.
- **Respectful** - preserving MLK history, significant landmarks, and culture as the community continues to develop and evolve.
- **An urban form** - that blends the various MLK elements including hospitals and other larger institutions with mixed residential uses, and major and minor transportation corridors such that MLK provides an identifiable and functional form to community residents and the rest of the city.
- **Human-scaled** - such that new infill urban development projects produces mass and form that respects existing developments and a human scale.
- **Public spaces** - incorporating public and privately-accessible open spaces, parks, plazas special event staging areas, and other features where the community may congregate.
- **Quality architecture** - that respects MLK historical buildings and features, a pedestrian scale, and the vistas and viewpoints within MLK and with the Downtown and other physical features.
- **Quality streetscape** - incorporating high quality walkways, street trees, artworks, signage, furnishings, and other improvements that are appropriate to and unique of MLK.
- **Multimodal** - creating a village that promotes walking, biking, and transit as a means of transportation in addition to vehicular.
- **Connected** - using all transportation modes to access MLK with the Downtown, South Downtown, and rest of Tacoma.

## MLK Subarea Plan Goals

To support the positive growth and redevelopment of the MLK district in a manner consistent with the community vision, the following goals have been identified:

1. Create local employment opportunities
2. Market and develop the Hilltop Business District
3. Engage MLK youth in education, employment, and civic opportunities
4. Create affordable, mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-household housing
5. Attract and promote MLK arts and cultural resources and potentials
6. Preserve MLK history and create history and art projects in MLK
7. Expand MLK parks and recreation opportunities
8. Complete MLK parks and recreation projects
9. Promote MLK sustainability opportunities and performance
10. Expand pedestrian networks within MLK and with the rest of the city
11. Implement a bicycle network within MLK and between MLK and the city
12. Implement Tacoma's Complete Streets typologies in MLK
13. Expand transit/street car service in MLK
14. Plan and coordinate infrastructure upgrades and replacement
15. Refine development regulations for the MLK district
16. Implement MLK catalytic development projects
17. Enhance MLK governance and support MLK Subarea Plan implementation

The Draft MLK Subarea Plan details each of these goals and the corresponding actions needed to be implemented in order to achieve the goals, lists those entities public and private which may best address the goal (Participating Parties), and sets in place a means by which to determine the progress made towards reaching each goal (Performance Measures).



## MLK Subarea Plan Actions:

### Goal: Create local employment opportunities

1. **Databases:** Inventory available mixed use properties, buildings, and resources in the MLK subarea to create a local database with which to identify opportunities during business and developer recruitment efforts.
2. **Business outreach:** Integrate public, nonprofit, and private business efforts and communications in the economic recruitment process to maximize impacts and allocate resources.
3. **Economic sustainability:** Recruit businesses that employ technical, professional, and managerial skills offered by and/or able to be developed for MLK residents to facilitate live/work sustainability in MLK.
4. **Medical/health sector:** Retain and recruit businesses that support and can expand the health related services and products offered by the MultiCare and Franciscan Health Systems and Community Health Care as well as the growth of these institutions proper in the MLK area.
5. **Education sector:** Retain and recruit businesses that can support and expand on the opportunities created by the association of UW Tacoma, Evergreen State College Tacoma, and Bates Technical College with MLK subarea business and employment development potentials.

### Goal: Market and develop the Hilltop Business District

6. **Marketing:** Identify and recruit businesses to fill critical gaps in retail sales and services such as coffee shops and restaurants, entertainment, personal and professional services as well as women's and children's clothing, etc.
7. **Design:** Initiate a competitive grant and low cost loan program, potentially using BID funds (see #10), to enhance retail storefronts including signage, display windows, building facades, and other improvements, with a focus on the core area around MLK and 11th.
8. **Promotion:** Initiate and expand retail sales and other events and activities including sidewalk cafes and vendors, farmers' and public markets to attract customers within and into the MLK area.
9. **Organization:** Adopt the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street 4-Point program by the Hilltop Business District Association to organize marketing, design, and promotion strategies.
10. **Financing:** Adopt a Business Improvement District (BID) or Business Improvement Area (BIA) with which to assess benefiting properties and businesses for the cost of instituting coordinated marketing, design, and promotional activities and physical improvements and maintenance in the MLK
11. **Interim storefronts:** Continue working with Spaceworks and other entities to institute temporary artist galleries or similar uses in vacant storefronts or buildings in order to provide visual

Goal: Engage MLK youth in education, employment, and civic opportunities

12. **Education:** Expand school/community relations to include volunteer mentor and peer group support with the participation of the Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Housing Authority, UW Tacoma, Evergreen State College Tacoma, Bates Technical College, and others to improve educational opportunities, test scores, and the reputation of McCarver School in the community and marketplace.
13. **Employment:** Create a youth job placement service offering part and full-time internships and employment opportunities with MLK businesses and organizations for area youth.
14. **Civic participation:** Create youth civic participation opportunities where youth can mentor children or adults, promote events or social outreach, construct projects or enhance the environment, network careers or occupations, or create fine and performance art as youth members of MLK public and private organizations.
15. **Social activities:** Expand youth social and recreation oriented activities and facilities that offer evening and after school peer group interactions and events



Goal: Create affordable, mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-household housing

16. **Housing options:** Increase housing choice by type, price, tenure, and location to house a mixed age, household, and income population in or near employment centers, transit corridors, and recreational sites to provide increased live/work/play opportunities in the MLK area.
17. **Affordable housing:** Award additional density, reduced parking requirements, reduced permit fees, and/or other measures for new housing projects that promote rental and sale workforce housing for moderate income working households employed or resident within MLK.
18. **Distribution affordable housing:** Incorporate moderate and low income housing opportunities in mixed use and mixed income building and project developments to avoid creating “housing project” concentrations and market image associations



19. **Special populations:** Continue to provide social services and housing assistance for homeless, addicted, mentally ill, and domestic violence individuals and households by MLK social service agencies and organizations.

**Goal: Attract and promote MLK arts and cultural resources and potentials**

20. **Marketing:** Conduct regular market surveys of resident and out-of-area attendees to MLK community events, festivals, and facilities such as Ethnic Fest, People’s Park, People’s Community Center, and Wright Park to determine their characteristics, expenditure patterns, sources of information, and other behavior with which to maximize their attraction to MLK and their beneficial economic impact on MLK businesses and activities.



21. **Design:** Redefine the MLK (and Hilltop) brand to include arts and historical based themes and install artworks, gateways, way-finding signage, walking tours, maps, and streetscape at the entrances into and of significant landmarks in MLK.



22. **Promotion:** Create an MLK arts website and utilize social media such as Google maps, Facebook, and Twitter to announce, promote, and attract out-of-area residents and tourists to an expanded year-round calendar of events and festivals for performing, literary, culinary, fine, and other arts interests.
23. **Organization:** Create a central clearinghouse organization with which to coordinate schedules, advertisements, events, productions, and other theatrical, literary, culinary, fine, and other promotions in order to maximize MLK arts potential and promotional effectiveness.

**Goal: Preserve MLK history and create history and art projects in MLK**

24. **Art and history walking tours:** Design and create audio and phone apps for walking tours of MLK historical sites, buildings, and other visually interesting and significant landmarks for local recognitions as well as for historical tourist attractions.

25. **Preservation of key historic resources:** Complete the ongoing city-wide historic resources inventory and then conduct a focused



evaluation of and community discussion about historic buildings within the MLK district to identify the most critical buildings to be retained and explore incentives, such as historical transfer of development rights (TDR), and regulatory tools to support their preservation and continued use.

- 26. **Artist live/work:** Develop affordable artist live-work-teach-display-sell galleries and workshops as well as live-work housing opportunities to retain and attract young and emerging talent in MLK.
- 27. **Farmers/Public Market:** Establish A seasonal and possible year round farmer/public market with all weather structures, available parking, and increased visibility to provide expanded access to locally-produced and healthy foods, serve residents and attract out-of-area customers into the MLK district.

**Goal: Expand MLK parks and recreation opportunities**

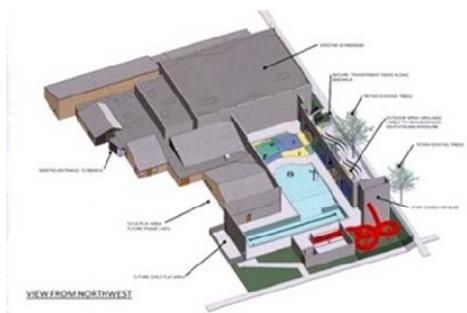
28. **Greenways:** Designate a system of coordinated open spaces, conservation corridors, greenways and green streets to link MLK parks and community facilities, and connect the MLK district to adjacent neighborhoods, the Prairie Line Trail, UW Tacoma and the Thea Foss Waterway.

29. **Community gardens:** Plant community or pea patch gardens on vacant sites as well as other available lands within MLK to restore habitat, grow healthy foods for local use, and improve visual appearances, in some cases to serve as temporary uses on sites waiting for redevelopment.



**Goal: Complete MLK parks and recreation projects**

30. **Peoples Community Center Plaza:** Redevelop the green space in front of People’s Community Center into a more formal plaza type park with active features such as picnic shelters, tables, benches, splash fountain, and play equipment in accordance with the proposals in the People’s Community Center master plan.



31. **Peoples Community Center Pool:** Resolve a financial source of funds to finish refurbishment, retrofit, and expansion of the existing facility to include indoor leisure pool elements, party rooms and concessions as proposed in the People’s Community Center master plan.

**Goal: Promote MLK sustainability opportunity and performance**

- 32. **Native habitat:** Plant street trees, reforest open spaces, remove invasive species, and promote use of native and drought resistant plants to restore wildlife habitat in and around MLK’s public facilities and within MLK’s green, urban, and parkway street corridors.
- 33. **Stormwater:** Develop rain gardens, green roofs and walls, bio-filtration swales, and other green development features in and around the MLK subarea’s public facilities and within the MLK area’s green and urban streets as well as in new project developments.
- 34. **Brownfields:** Identify all known sites of hazardous materials including former gas stations and laundries, develop appropriate mitigation strategies, and create a funding source for proactively mitigating the sites to support redevelopment.



**Goal: Expand pedestrian networks within MLK and with the rest of the city**

- 35. **Walkways and sidewalks:** Improve and complete key connections on 11th, 15th, 19th, 25th Streets, and MLK Way from the neighborhoods to the west of the MLK subarea, and from the MLK subarea to the downtown, UW Tacoma, Thea Foss Waterway, Murray Morgan Bridge, and other major walking destinations including a Safe Routes to School program for McCarver Elementary School.
- 36. **Crosswalks:** Install special paving materials, flashing light crossing strips, pedestrian activated signals, median and curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety, increase visibility, and calm traffic at major intersections throughout the MLK subarea, especially on MLK and Yakima Avenues, and South 11th and 19th Streets.

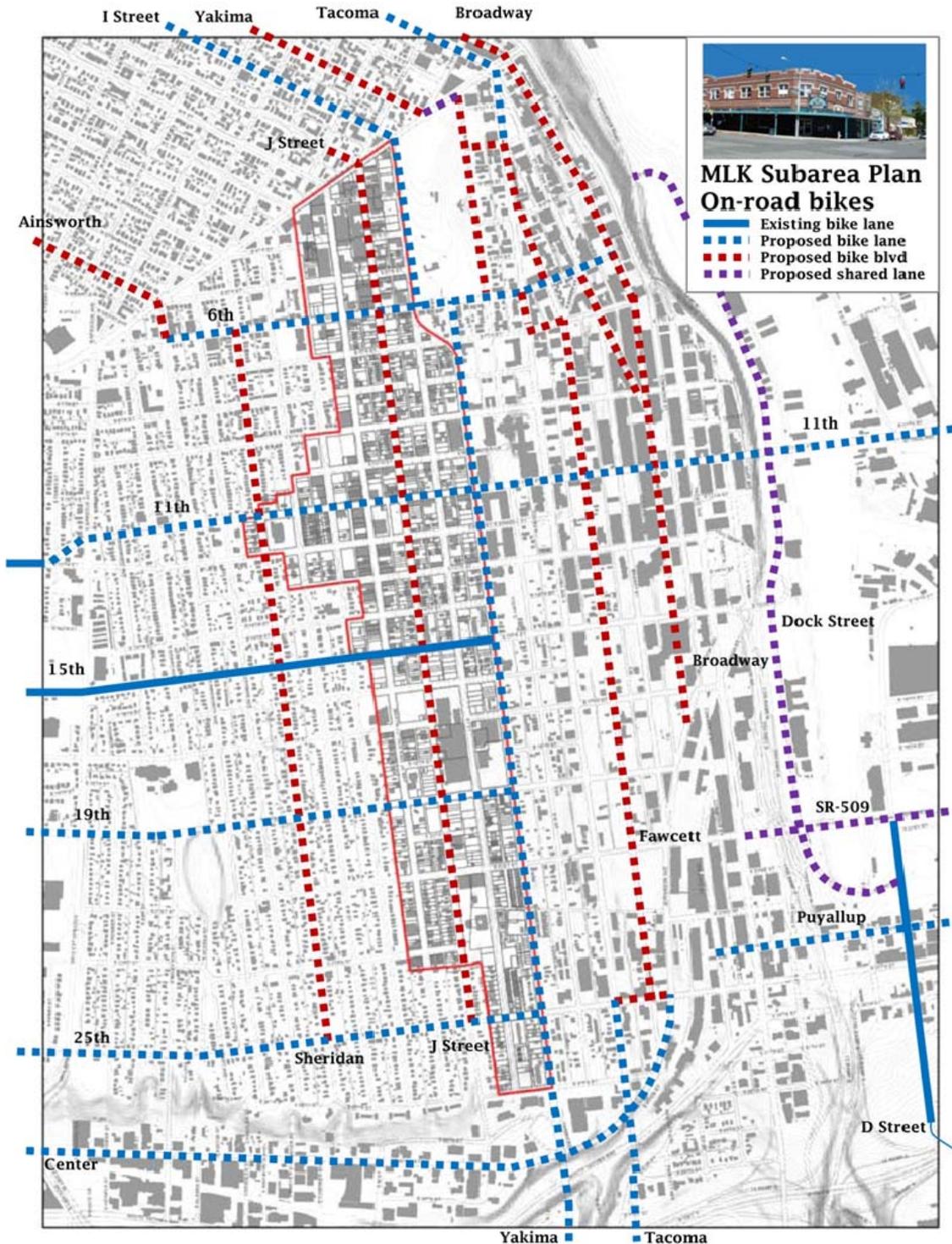


- 37. **Trails:** Extend and connect the MLK subarea’s walkways on South 6th, 11th, 15th, 19th, and 25th Streets to the neighborhood to the west and the downtown to the east and explore extension of the proposed UW Tacoma hillclimb into the district to provide connections to the Prairie Line Trail, UW Tacoma, South Downtown, and Thea Foss Waterway.



**Goal: Implement a bicycle network within MLK and between MLK and the city**

38. **Bikeway network:** Institute bike lanes on 6th, 11th, 19th, and 25th Avenues, I Street and Yakima Avenue, and bike boulevard on J Street to complete key connections to and the MLK district, schools, parks, and other major commuter and recreational destinations as well as with the downtown and larger city system. Develop the J Street bike boulevard in conjunction with MultiCare and Franciscan Health Systems to account for emergency access to the hospitals.



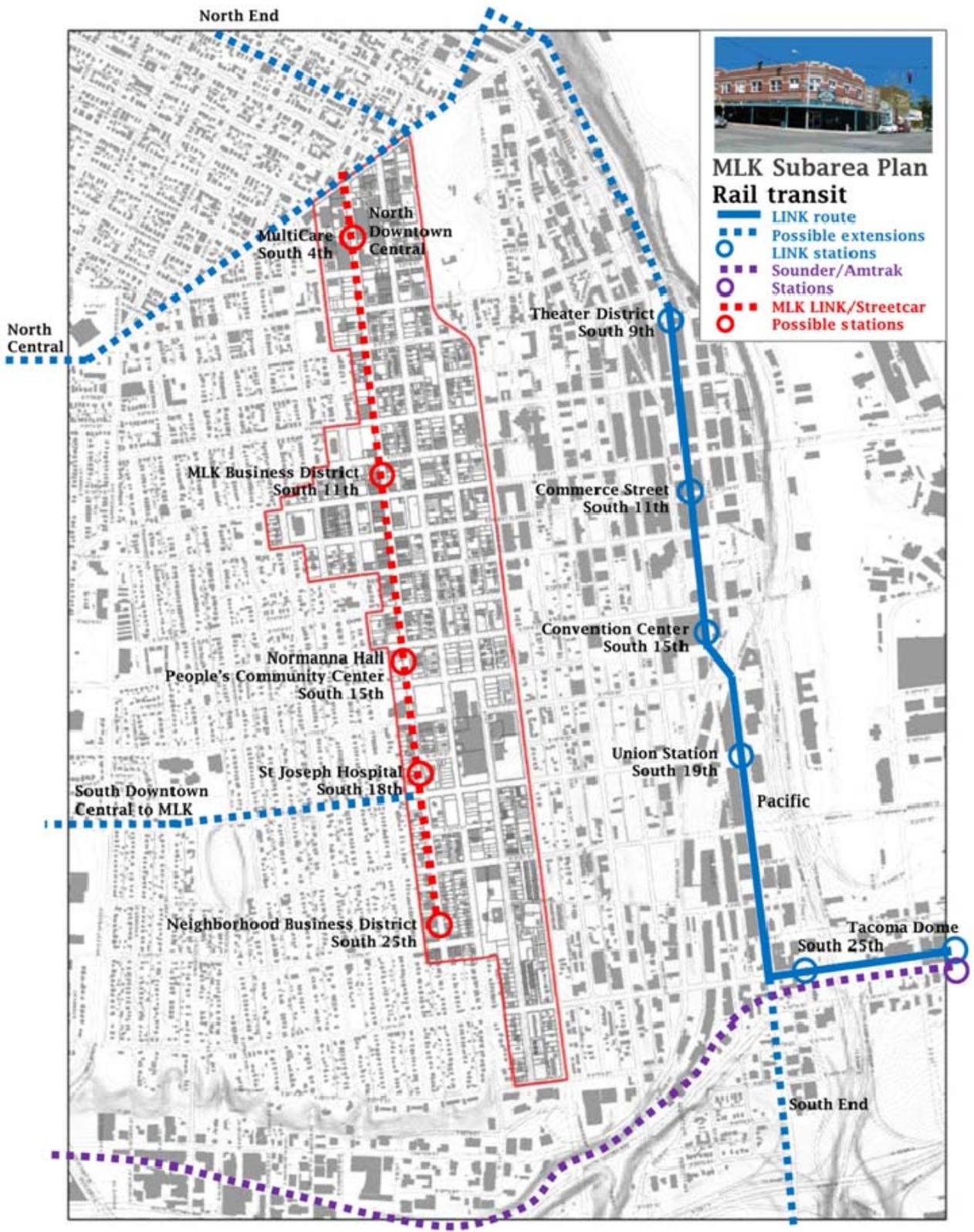
## Goal: Implement Tacoma's Complete Streets typologies in MLK

39. **Street maintenance:** Institute a citywide financing strategy with which to maintain life cycle pavement conditions, with a focus on MLK residential streets and roads including South I and J Streets, and South 19th, 21st, and 25th Streets east of the MLK district
40. **MLK retail/pedestrian/transit:** Reconfigure MLK to expand and improve sidewalks, particularly in the business district, retain on-street parking, install bulbouts and curb extensions and median turn lanes and planting strips with street trees in accordance with a retail, pedestrian, transit street designation that promotes pedestrian uses and anticipates the eventual development of a streetcar (or LINK) connection.
41. **Connectors:** Reconfigure 6th, 9th, 11th, 15th, 17th, 19th, and 25th Streets to provide sidewalks, turn lanes, transit stops and other features to support vehicle and bus access from the neighborhoods to the west to the MLK subarea, and from MLK to the downtown.
42. **Parkway:** Improve Yakima Avenue to reduce on-street parking, install bike lanes, expand sidewalks, plant street trees next to the curbs and in the medians to create a parkway boulevard from Wright Park south.
43. **Urban residential streets:** Reconfigure L Street and MLK Jr. Way south of 19th Street to expand on-street parking, improve sidewalks, and plant street trees to calm traffic, improve pedestrian and bike access, and establish a character to these residential neighborhood streets.
44. **Green streets:** Reconfigure South I and J Streets, and the wider right-of-way in 14th, 21st, and 25th Streets (historical streetcar routes) to expand on-street parking, improve sidewalks, plant street trees, and develop bio-swale rain gardens to calm traffic, improve pedestrian and bike access, and establish a "green and park-like" Green Complete Streets character to these residential neighborhood streets.



## Goal: Expand transit/street car service in MLK

45. **Streetcar (LINK):** Re-install streetcar (or LINK) service on MLK Jr. Way in shared lanes with vehicles or in a dedicated median lane with stops at least serving MultiCare Health System, People's Park, the Business District core, People's Community Center, Franciscan Health System, and 23rd Street. The streetcar (or LINK) service should connect the MLK district with local employment and residential areas and destinations, such as the Stadium District, Downtown core, UW Tacoma, Brewery District, Thea Foss Waterway, and the Dome District (where there are regional connections with Sound Transit, Greyhound, and Amtrak). The system should also be designed to allow potential loop configurations and future expansions west into the neighborhoods and to other commercial districts, mixed-use centers, and destinations.
46. **Pierce Transit:** Retain and expand Pierce Transit's schedules and stops to include hours and routes that support MLK district employees and residents, particularly at MultiCare and Franciscan Health System's Hospitals, Community Health Care and within the business district core.



**Goal: Plan and coordinate infrastructure upgrades and replacement**

- 47. **Utilities:** Develop a district-wide infrastructure plan sufficient to service the level of development planned for this district, including the undergrounding of power lines in areas where overhead lines conflict with planned development. Prioritize the replacement and upgrading of infrastructure within the MLK district, focus infrastructure investments based on economic development opportunities, partner with private property owners and other agencies to coordinate utility projects, and support the use of alternative financing and construction mechanisms, such as local improvement districts (LIDs).

**Goal: Refine development regulations for MLK district**

- 48. **Ground floor retail requirements:** Designate Pedestrian Street mixed use ground floor retail requirements to reflect market capacity and desired concentrated retail corridor locations, with a focus on MLK Jr. Way and South 11th Street in the business district core.
- 49. **Design standards:** Create and adopt a design overlay for the district that utilizes a hybrid “form-based” approach that illustrates building and street-level design objectives using examples to better address historic character, pedestrian vibrancy, compatibility and design quality issues within a flexible administrative procedure that recognizes innovation.



- 50. **View corridors:** Identify public view corridors, focused on the key east-west streets in the MLK subarea and create appropriate view protection measures to preserve and protect them.

**Goal: Implement MLK catalytic development projects**

- 51. **Hospital planning and coordination:** Work 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 Business District.
- 52. **Browne’s Star Grill/Pochert Building:** Subject to feasibility assessments, 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
- 53. **Municipal Service Center:** Subject to feasibility assessments, redevelop the city property housing the Municipal Services Center at MLK Jr. Way and South 13th Street for mixed use including ground floor retail with upper floor mixed income housing.

54. **MLKHDA:** Subject to feasibility assessments, support the redevelopment of the vacant properties on MLK Jr. Way and J Street at 11th Avenue for mixed use with ground floor retail, street level artist live/work housing, an educational center, and/or upper floor office and mixed income housing activities and the possible retention and incorporation of the Tally Ho Tavern building.
55. **Allen Renaissance Center:** Support the restoration of the former Valhalla Hall for ground floor coffee shop and restaurant, and upper floor performing arts, science and computer lab, and other outreach educational activities.
56. **Other private development opportunities:** Promote the redevelopment of underutilized surface parking lots, vacant lands, or underused buildings for new development projects, that help to create a dense mix of uses throughout the district, including retail, restaurants, office, personal services, medical facilities, and mixed-income housing, such as those illustrated for the Save-a-Lot and Safeway sites in the catalytic project envelope studies.

### Goal: Enhance MLK governance and support Subarea Plan implementation

57. **NGO participation:** Integrate nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Hilltop Business District Association, Central Neighborhood Council, Hilltop Action Coalition, and others, including property owners, businesses, residents and significant institutions into the implementation of the MLK subarea plan actions and strategies.
58. **Communication:** Establish effective public information and feedback materials and conduct frequent town halls, public open houses, and other events at locations in the MLK subarea to encourage public access and facilitate dialogue on MLK Subarea Plan implementation policies, programs, projects, and budgets.
59. **Strategy development:** Extend and coordinate the implementation resources of public, nonprofit, and private organizations to continue strategizing and implementing the MLK Subarea Plan.
60. **Assess performance results:** Conduct regular “State of MLK district” program, project, and budget assessments including public, customer, and business surveys to determine the effectiveness, performance, and priority of subarea plan actions.

