



## **AGENDA**

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting

**TIME:** Wednesday, August 20, 2014, 4:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

### **A. Call to Order**

### **B. Quorum Call**

**C. Approval of Minutes** – Regular Meeting on August 6, 2014

### **D. Discussion Items**

#### **1. North Downtown Subarea Plan**

Review and approve of the draft Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report and the draft Letter of Recommendation, and make a recommendation to the City Council.

(See "Agenda Item D-1"; Cheri Gibbons, 591-5379, [cgibbons@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:cgibbons@cityoftacoma.org))

#### **2. Mixed-Use Centers Review**

Review the scope of work, schedule and outreach strategy for the project.

(See "Agenda Item D-2"; Stephen Atkinson, 591-5531, [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org))

#### **3. Land Use Designation (Phase 2)**

Review the scope of work, schedule and outreach strategy for the project.

(See "Agenda Item D-3"; Stephen Atkinson, 591-5531, [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org))

### **E. Communication Items & Other Business**

- 1) Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee meeting, August 27, 2014, 4:30 p.m., Room 16; agenda includes: Six-Year Transportation Program; Construction Contracts Review; and Complete Streets Quarterly Update.
- 2) Planning Commission meeting, September 3, 2014, 4:00 p.m., Room 16; agenda may include: 2015 Annual Amendment (Assessment of Applications); and Affordable Housing Policy and Regulations (Phase 3).

### **F. Adjournment**





## **MINUTES** (Draft)

**TIME:** Wednesday, August 6, 2014, 4:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402  
**PRESENT:** Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Donald Erickson, Benjamin Fields, Alexandria Teague, Erle Thompson, Stephen Wamback  
**ABSENT:** Sean Gaffney (Chair), Tina Lee

### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Winship called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

### **B. QUORUM CALL**

A quorum was declared.

### **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the regular meeting and public hearing on July 16, 2014 were approved as submitted.

### **D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **1. North Downtown Subarea Plan**

The Planning Commission had conducted a public hearing on July 16, 2014, on the Draft North Downtown Subarea Plan and kept the record open through July 18 for written comments. Cheri Gibbons, Planning Services Division, facilitated the Commissioners' review of the Public Comments and Staff Responses and Suggestions Report that summarized public comments, provided staff responses, and suggested modifications to the draft plan where appropriate.

Public comments centered on the following three issues: (a) the Stadium Way hillside; (b) revised Stadium Business District boundaries; and (c) on-street parking within the Stadium District. Ms. Gibbons also distributed supplemental information concerning the Stadium District Parking that had been provided by Mr. Denny Faker of the Stadium Business District, in response to the Commission's request at the August 6<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting. The supplemental information included a map and associated statement detailing where parking has been removed in the District from Mr. Faker's perspective.

The Commissioners discussed and considered the above issues, brought up another issue relating to the boundaries of the Reduced Parking Area (RPA), and contemplated potential modifications to the draft plan. Upon concluding the discussions, the Commission reached a consensus on the following suggestions and directives:

- Stadium Business District boundaries: After discussion at the meeting of the revised boundaries and Neighborhood Business District program, the Commissioners determined that including revised boundaries for the Business District Association in the North Downtown Plan would conflict with the criteria in the Tacoma Municipal Code 1.47, which sets standards for establishing the Business District, including size limitations. As a result of discussions with the Commission, the section describing the proposed Stadium Business District Boundary Revision was to be removed from the Plan.

- Recommendation LU-5 regarding on-street parking in the Stadium District: After reviewing materials provided by Ms. Gibbons regarding on-street parking in the Stadium District, public comments, existing parking requirements, and the Plan's recommendations regarding multi-modal transportation and parking management. It was proposed that Recommendation LU-5 be modified by removing the reference to the goal of adding a specific number of on-street parking spaces in the district and adding a provision that supports future transit and multi-modal improvements.
- Reduced Parking Area Expansion: After discussion, the Commissioners decided to add a goal statement to the North Downtown Plan to revisit the boundaries of the RPA boundaries by 2020 or the construction of the Link Light Rail Expansion, whichever comes first. This goal statement was added after concluding that the St. Helens neighborhood, where the revised RPA boundary will not extend, is mostly residential in nature, mostly built out, and will have the LINK expansion route passing through it.
- Based upon a public comment from Ms. Jane Moore, the Commission added a clarification that pedestrians are also allowed to use streets that are not "Designated Pedestrian Streets". This addition will assist readers in their reading of the Plan and eliminate confusion about the intent of Pedestrian Streets.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Ms. Gibbons stated that a Findings and Recommendations Report for the North Downtown Subarea Plan would be brought back to the Commission for review on August 20, 2014.

## **2. Tacoma Mall Center Subarea Plan and EIS**

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the scope of work, schedule, key issues, and outreach strategy associated with the Tacoma Mall Center Subarea Plan and EIS project. He stated that a consultant team will be selected soon, and the project will take about two years concluding in mid-2016. The next update to the Planning Commission will likely be toward the end of 2014 or in early 2015. The project will follow the approach taken with the three Downtown Subarea Plans, and will be comprehensive in scope. Key issues include the vision for the area, transportation, stormwater management, economic development, housing, parks and open space, and access to schools. The product will be a subarea plan, programmatic environmental review under and area-wide Environmental Impact Statement, and implementation steps.

Discussion ensued. The Commissioners provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Consideration should be given to modifying the boundaries of the study area, potentially to incorporate more industrial areas to the south and west, and commercial areas across I-5.
- Branding, or refining the vision, for the area as more than just the mall itself will be important
- Incorporate policies pertaining to site design, urban form, and landscaping into the plan
- Open space, parks, bicycles and pedestrians connectivity are major issues
- Public rights-of-way are a major opportunity to accomplish multiple goals
- Explore "de-paving", or removing pavement, and adding landscaping and green features
- Gentrification may be an issue as housing costs increase
- Should the EIS encompass the entire area?
- Consider during the EIS process opportunities for setting aside areas for parks, schools, and other priorities
- Dumping is an issue

Dana Brown, Public Works Engineering, spoke about a proposal to add HOV lanes connected to I-5, and suggested expanding the study to include the I-5/S. 38<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange.

Mr. Barnett concluded the presentation by suggesting a site visit to the area, to which the Commissioners concurred.

## **E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, provided the following information:

- (a) A letter from Mayor Marilyn Strickland and T.C. Broadnax, City Manager, to Sound Transit, dated July 28, 2014, regarding Comments on Sound Transit Long-Range Plan Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.
- (b) Agenda for the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee meeting, August 13, 2014.
- (c) Agenda for the Planning Commission meeting, August 20, 2014.

Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager, reported that the City Council has adopted the 2014 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code on July 22, 2014. The Council appreciated the Planning Commission's analyses and recommendations on the subject.

Mr. Boudet reported that the City's strategic planning project, "Tacoma 2025", conducted a community workshop on July 30, 2014, and that pertinent information and outcomes of the project will be incorporated into the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update. He indicated that the City is soliciting consultants for the 2015 Update and will invite the Chair of the Commission or his designee to participate in the consultant interview and selection process.

Commissioner Erickson referred to the Mayor's letter to Sound Transit, wherein it was indicated that the Transportation Commission, the City Council's Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee, and citizens of Tacoma had been consulted. He pointed out that the Planning Commission was never consulted on this important transportation issue before the letter was composed and sent out, and suggested that in the future City staff ensure better coordination among pertinent groups on relevant matters like this.

Commissioner Beale suggested that the Commission receive briefings on how effective are the adopted subarea plans and EISs in meeting challenges, assisting in development project reviews, and producing expected outcomes.

Commissioner Wambach requested clarifications on the membership and operations of the Community Working Group that is being established to assist the City in the review of the billboard regulations.

Commissioner Thompson indicated that he participated in the "Tacoma 2025" Community Workshop on July 30 and looks forward to seeing the report.

## **F. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 p.m.



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-1**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Ian Munce, Special Assistant to the Director  
**Subject:** **North Downtown Subarea Plan**  
**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2014  
**Memo Date:** August 14, 2014

At the next meeting on August 20, 2014, the Planning Commission will consider making a recommendation to the City Council for adopting the proposed North Downtown Subarea Plan as a new, important element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Attached for the Commission's review and approval are a draft Letter of Recommendation and a draft Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report. Please note, all of the five exhibits associated with the Report have been reviewed by the Commission; they are not being provided in this agenda packet, but will be included in the packet to be forwarded to the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 573-2478 or [imunce@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:imunce@cityoftacoma.org).

Attachments

c: Peter Huffman, Director



City of Tacoma  
Planning Commission

**Agenda Item  
D-1**  
Draft for Planning Commission's  
Review on August 20, 2014

August 20, 2014

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I am forwarding the proposed North Downtown Subarea Plan for your consideration for adoption as a new, important element of the City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan. Also recommended for your consideration is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Subarea.

The Subarea Plan and the FEIS are the result of an approximately two-year planning process co-led by the City of Tacoma and Bates Technical College, involving analyses, thorough research, rigorous deliberations, and extensive outreach efforts. The Plan will serve as a statement of the City's commitment to and direction for future development in the North Downtown Subarea in addition to serving as a resource for potential investors, property owners, the community and other public agencies

The Subarea Plan and the FEIS will capitalize on the potential of North Downtown, proactively making the area well poised to accommodate future growth and development. Specifically, the Subarea Plan will supplement current policies and regulations governing transportation, land use, affordable housing, open space, brownfields, capital facilities, and utilities and will fulfill Growth Management Act and Vision 2040 requirements. The FEIS, under the State Environmental Policy Act or SEPA, is a "Planned Action" with the objective of eliminating the need for subsequent environmental review associated with site-specific development or redevelopment; it will provide certainty for future development, simplify and expedite the permitting process, and foster high quality urban development in the area.

Enclosed is the "*Planning Commission's Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report, August 20, 2014*" that summarizes the North Downtown Subarea Plan, the review process and outreach efforts for the Subarea Plan and the associated FEIS. The Planning Commission believes that our recommendations will help achieve the City's strategic goals for a safe, clean and attractive community and a diverse, productive and sustainable economy.

Sincerely,

SEAN GAFFNEY  
Chair

Enclosure



**NORTH DOWNTOWN SUBAREA PLAN  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)**

**Agenda Item  
D-1**  
Draft for Planning  
Commission's Review on  
August 20, 2014

**DRAFT**  
TACOMA PLANNING COMMISSION  
FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
*For Planning Commission's Review on August 20, 2014*

**A. SUBJECT:**

Approval of the North Downtown Subarea Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The proposed Plan would become an element of the Comprehensive Plan and includes Land Use Regulatory Code changes.

**B. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

**Subarea Plan**

The purpose of the North Downtown Subarea Plan is to anticipate, support, and guide the long-term community development in the North Downtown Subarea, including the Downtown commercial core, stadium district core, and residential neighborhoods, and to complete a pre-development environmental review that will identify how to address environmental and community issues while reducing development uncertainty and risk. The Subarea Plan provides innovative planning and policy interventions to help the North Downtown Subarea achieve its potential for community development, an outcome that will deliver a broad range of equitable social and environmental benefits at both the local and regional scales. The Plan will serve as a statement of the City's commitment to and direction for future development in the North Downtown Subarea in addition to serving as a resource for potential investors, property owners, the community and other public agencies.

The Subarea Plan supplements current Tacoma policies governing the environment, land use, economics, transportation, parks and recreation, public services, and utilities. The Plan supports the City's Comprehensive Plan, while focusing on issues and opportunities at a scale that is responsive to the Subarea's specific needs. The Project plans for significant growth in the Subarea based on allocations established by the PSRC and Pierce County to conform to the State Growth Management Act (GMA), which requires regions, counties, cities and towns to plan for forecasted growth. The two regional plans put forth by PSRC are VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040; planning frameworks intended to support the accommodation of forecasted growth in a manner that best meets the needs of the central Puget Sound region as a whole. Both plans have been analyzed and approved through an exhaustive EIS process.

Proposed implementation actions in the Subarea Plan will apply economic development, recreation and open space, and historical preservation objectives as well as multi-modal transportation plans and projects including streetcar, bike, and pedestrian facilities, sustainability measures, and initiate catalytic projects for City and privately owned properties, among other measures. When taken together with the Hilltop Subarea Plan, the North Downtown Plan helps to set the stage for the needed Federal, State, and regional funding applications for the planned LINK light rail extension through the Stadium and Hilltop neighborhoods.

**Environmental Impact Statement**

The City of Tacoma and Bates Technical College, as co-lead agencies, issued a non-project EIS for the North Downtown Subarea Plan on July 2, 2014. A non-project EIS involves a cumulative environmental impact and mitigation analysis for the entire Subarea, rather than piecemeal analysis on a project-by-project basis.

The Subarea Plan proposes development thresholds to trigger requirements for Transportation Management Programs (TMP) intended to reduce the share of tenants and employees who drive alone. The Subarea Plan also proposes the monitoring of transportation performance along with thresholds of significance for impacts to public transit speed, reliability and capacity, and connections to the state highway system. Multiple possible mitigation measures are also proposed.

The Subarea has an amount of affordable housing that exceeds the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies target. To ensure that a sufficient supply of affordable housing is maintained as the Subarea builds out, the Subarea Plan proposes that the City monitor affordable housing over time, and establish policies and regulations that are activated when trends indicate that corrective action is necessary. Currently in North Downtown there is sufficient utility infrastructure, transportation capacity, and open space to serve anticipated growth, for the next 5 to 10 years. Public Utilities and Public Services can be expanded to meet the anticipated demands of the future buildout in the North Downtown as needed over time.

The non-project EIS provides developer certainty and predictability, thereby streamlining the environmental review process and furthering the goals of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the GMA. The non-project EIS is subject to RCW 43.21C.420, known as "Transit Infill Review." Recognizing that RCW 43.21C.420 (5) (a) and (b) include a sunset provision, the lead agency has also proceeded under RCW 43.21C.031 (planned action) and RCW 43.21C.229 (infill exemption), to provide additional SEPA tools if provisions in RCW 43.21C.420 (5) (a) and (b) expire.

For a non-project EIS completed under RCW 43.21C.420, the SEPA-based appeal opportunity occurred in conjunction with issuance of the non-project Final EIS on July 2, 2014. Consistent with RCW 43.21C.420, a proposed development will not be subject to project-specific SEPA-based administrative or judicial appeals if the proposed development is (1) proposed within 10-years of the issuance of the subarea Final EIS, (2) situated within the subarea, and (3) appropriately addresses the adopted subarea plan and development regulations. Similarly, there are no SEPA noticing requirements for subsequent, site-specific development or redevelopment within the subarea that appropriately addresses the subarea plan and development regulations.

#### **C. LOCATION:**

The geographic area of the North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS project encompasses an area of approximately 520 acres. The subarea extends north from South 15<sup>th</sup> Street downtown to North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in the Stadium District and extends from Yakima Avenue in the west to the Thea Foss Waterway in the east. This area includes the Bates Technical College campus, the downtown commercial core, the Thea Foss Waterway, Stadium District, Hillside District, St. Helens District, and Wright Park.

#### **D. FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- 1. Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations** – The *Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 1993 by Ordinance No. 25360 and amended by ordinance once every year thereafter, is Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan as required by the State Growth Management Act (GMA) and consists of several plan and program elements. As the City's official statement concerning future growth and development, the Comprehensive Plan sets forth goals, policies and strategies for the health, welfare and quality of life of Tacoma's residents. The *Land Use Regulatory Code*, Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), is the key regulatory mechanism that supports the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2. Planning Mandates and Guidelines** – GMA requires that any amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and/or development regulations conform to the requirements of the Act. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and/or development regulations must also be consistent with the following State, regional and local planning mandates and guidelines:
  - The State Growth Management Act (GMA);
  - The State Environment Policy Act (SEPA);
  - VISION 2040, the Growth Management, Environmental, Economic, and Transportation Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region (adopted on April 24, 2008, and amended on May 28, 2009);
  - Transportation 2040, the action plan for transportation in the Central Puget Sound Region (adopted on May 20, 2010);
  - The Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County;
  - The City Council's guiding principles for planning the future growth: (1) to protect neighborhoods, (2) to protect critical areas, (3) to protect port, industrial and manufacturing uses, and (4) to

increase densities in the downtown and neighborhood business districts (Resolution No. 37070, December 19, 2006); and

- TMC 13.02 concerning the procedures and criteria for amending the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations and for area-wide zoning reclassifications.

### **3. Public Outreach Efforts:**

Staff has conducted extensive outreach efforts to ensure early and continuous public participation in the subarea planning process. The outreach efforts included providing project updates and overviews of the Subarea Plan and EIS to neighborhood councils, interested parties, regular meetings with a steering committee, periodic stakeholder meetings, open houses, and business group outreach. Throughout the process participants were encouraged to voice concerns, provide suggestions, and to discuss particular issues. The entities that staff has approached and worked with include, but are not limited to: Stadium Business District, Bates Technical College, Centro Latino, Chamber of Commerce, Evergreen State College, Historic Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, Multicare Health Systems, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council, Tacoma Housing Authority, Tacoma Urban League, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, University of Washington, Tacoma, Wedge Neighborhood District, Port of Tacoma, Affordable Housing Consortium of Pierce County, Cross Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County, Hillside Development Council, Downtown Merchants Group, Downtown on the Go, Washington State Department of Transportation, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Regional Council, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Pierce County as well as the City's Public Works Department, Environmental Services Department, Community and Economic Development, Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Legal Department, and Tacoma Public Utilities.

### **4. Public Notification Process:**

Public notification for the Subarea Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was provided jointly throughout the project.

- (a) An initial Community Meeting was held on May 29, 2013, at Bates Technical College. Notice of the Community Meeting included general illustrations and descriptions of buildings that are generally representative of the maximum building envelope that could be allowed under the Subarea Plan and notice was posted on major travel routes within the Subarea. In addition, notice was mailed to all:
  - Property owners and renters of record within the Subarea and within 400 feet of the boundaries of the Subarea;
  - Licensed businesses within the Subarea, including small businesses as defined in RCW 19.85.020
  - Affected federally-recognized tribal governments whose ceded area is within on-half mile of the boundaries of the Subarea;
  - Agencies with jurisdiction over future development within the Subarea;
  - All preservation and development authorities established under chapter 43.167 RCW, TMC 13.12.560(d) (2).
  - the Tacoma Public Library
  - The Department of Ecology
  - Neighborhood Councils, qualified neighborhood community organizations, and business districts
  - The Puyallup Tribe for substantial actions defined in the Agreement between the Puyallup Tribe, Local Governments in Pierce County, the State of Washington, the United States of America, and certain taxpayers, dated August 27, 1988
  - Email notice was sent to community groups, stakeholders, and other interested parties.

(b) An initial Scoping Meeting was held on June 26, 2013, at Bates Technical College. Notice of the Scoping Meeting was mailed to:

- Property owners and renters of record within the Subarea and within 400 feet of the boundaries of the Subarea;
- Licensed businesses within the Subarea, including small businesses as defined in RCW 19.85.020
- Affected federally-recognized tribal governments whose ceded area is within on-half mile of the boundaries of the Subarea;
- Agencies with jurisdiction over future development within the Subarea;
- All preservation and development authorities established under chapter 43.167 RCW, TMC 13.12.560(d) (2).
- the Tacoma Public Library
- The Department of Ecology
- Neighborhood Councils, qualified neighborhood community organizations, and business districts
- The Puyallup Tribe for substantial actions defined in the Agreement between the Puyallup Tribe, Local Governments in Pierce County, the State of Washington, the United States of America, and certain taxpayers, dated August 27, 1988.

The Scoping meeting Notice was published in the Daily Index and The News Tribune

Email notice was sent to community groups, stakeholders, and other interested parties.

(c) A Notice of Availability of the issuance of the Draft Subarea Plan, Draft EIS and subsequent Public Hearing, was mailed on May 15, 2014, to:

- Property owners and renters of record within the Subarea and within 400 feet of the boundaries of the Subarea;
- Licensed businesses within the Subarea, including small businesses as defined in RCW 19.85.020
- Affected federally-recognized tribal governments whose ceded area is within on-half mile of the boundaries of the Subarea;
- Agencies with jurisdiction over future development within the Subarea;
- All preservation and development authorities established under chapter 43.167 RCW, TMC 13.12.560(d) (2).
- the Tacoma Public Library
- The Department of Ecology
- Neighborhood Councils, qualified neighborhood community organizations, and business districts
- The Puyallup Tribe for substantial actions defined in the Agreement between the Puyallup Tribe, Local Governments in Pierce County, the State of Washington, the United States of America, and certain taxpayers, dated August 27, 1988.
- A notice was published in the Daily Index and The News Tribune
- Email notice was sent to community groups, stakeholders, and other interested parties.

- (d) A Notice of availability was mailed upon issuance of the Final EIS and included notice of the Final Draft Subarea Plan Planning Commission Public Hearing held on July 16, 2014. The notice was mailed in accordance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) of 1971, Chapter 43.21C of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) (as revised in 1983), and SEPA Guidelines (effective January 16, 1976 and as revised April 4, 1984), Chapter 197-10, Washington Administrative Code (WAC). On July 2, 2014, the notice was mailed to:
- Property owners and renters of record within the Subarea and within 400 feet of the boundaries of the Subarea;
  - Licensed businesses within the Subarea, including small businesses as defined in RCW 19.85.020
  - Affected federally-recognized tribal governments whose ceded area is within on-half mile of the boundaries of the Subarea;
  - Agencies with jurisdiction over future development within the Subarea;
  - All preservation and development authorities established under chapter 43.167 RCW, TMC 13.12.560(d) (2).
  - the Tacoma Public Library
  - The Department of Ecology
  - Neighborhood Councils, qualified neighborhood community organizations, and business districts
  - The Puyallup Tribe for substantial actions defined in the Agreement between the Puyallup Tribe, Local Governments in Pierce County, the State of Washington, the United States of America, and certain taxpayers, dated August 27, 1988.
  - A notice was published in the Daily Index and The News Tribune
  - Email notice was sent to community groups, stakeholders, and other interested parties.
  - **Public Notice Signs** – Public notice signs were installed throughout the Subarea prior to the initial Community and Scoping Meetings in 2013.
  - **60-Day Notices** – A “Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendment 60 Days Prior to Adoption” was sent to the State Department of Commerce on July 2, 2014 (per RCW 36.70A.106), to the Puget Sound Regional Council on July 2, 2014 (per the Plan Review Requirements and Process in VISION 2040).
  - **Website** – The public hearing notice and all information associated with the North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS were posted on the Planning and Development Services’ website at [www.cityoftacoma.org](http://www.cityoftacoma.org) “click on North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS”.
  - **Environmental Review** – The Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for Tacoma’s North Downtown Subarea Plan was prepared in compliance with: the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) of 1971 (Chapter 43.21C, Revised Code of Washington); the SEPA Rules, effective April 4, 1984, as amended (Chapter 197-11, Washington Administrative Code); and rules adopted by the City of Tacoma implementing SEPA (Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapter 13.12 Environmental Code). Whereas the City of Tacoma and Bates Technical College are co-lead agencies for SEPA compliance, the City served as the nominal SEPA Lead Agency for the North Downtown Subarea Plan EIS. Both the City and the College have determined that this EIS has been prepared in a responsible manner using appropriate methodology. As nominal SEPA Lead Agency, the City has directed the areas of research and analysis that were undertaken in preparation of this EIS. The Final EIS accompanies the proposed North Downtown Subarea Plan and should be considered in making final decisions concerning the Subarea Plan, as well as new policies and regulations, and site-specific projects proposed within the North Downtown Subarea. The FEIS was issued on July 2, 2014.

## 5. Public Hearing Comments:

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on July 16, 2014, regarding the Draft North Downtown Subarea Plan and kept the record open through July 18, 2014, to receive additional written comments. Five people provided oral testimony at the public hearing and seven written comments were received during the comment period. It is also noted that staff organized a public hearing on May 29, 2014, at Bates Technical College and kept the record open through June 16, 2014 to receive additional written comments. Staff also prepared a Public Comments and Staff Responses Report which summarized public comments and staff's responses, and where appropriate, staff's suggested revisions to the Plan. The Public Comments and Responses Report was provided to the Commission at the August 6, 2014, meeting. Full-text copies of the comments received from the Planning Commission and staff-led comment periods are compiled in Exhibit E.

### **Comments received at the May 29, 2014, staff-led public hearing and associated written comment period:**

- Marty Mattes, Director of Facilities & Operations, Bates Technical College: Mr. Mattes expressed his general support for the Plan and process and stated that the SEPA process an important one for the college and that the Plan will aid with the Master Plan for the Downtown Bates Campus.
- Elizabeth Burris, Chair, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council: Ms. Burris shared general support for the Plan and process and was happy to see the inclusion of the Neighborhood USA award won by the 6<sup>th</sup> and ST. Helens intersection design in the Plan.
- Denny Faker, Stadium Business District: Mr. Faker supported the Plan and process and Staff's efforts. Mr. Faker also stated that there is not enough on-street parking in the district and that there is a need to at least maintain existing on-street parking.
- Corine Dixon, Resident: Ms. Dixon believes that it makes no sense to not require off-street parking in the Stadium area. She also expressed support for the Stadium Hillside Design Standards.
- Ben Han, Pierce Transit: Mr. Han stated his support for the Pan and process and stated that it reflects the City's willingness to listen.
- Jori Adkins, Dome District: Ms. Adkins believes that the City is in a transition phase and there is currently a push-pull effect happening with cars and transit. She is in support of the LINK extension through the subarea.
- Ruby Chambers, Business Owner: Ms. Chambers expressed that she is honored to have been involved with the project and that she is proud of how it's shaping the neighborhood.
- Mr. and Mrs. Seviles, Residents: Stated concerns about views from their Stadium Way residence that their view is shrinking, that the underbrush on the hillside is friendly to transients, but that they support a trail down the hillside.
- Jane Moore, Resident: Ms. Moore pointed out various typos and corrections to be made to the Plan. The majority of Ms. Moore's comments related to the Mobility Chapter of the Plan. She also provided feedback that the Pedestrian Street designation should be clarified and that sections describing intersection improvements should be updated.
- Greg Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer: Mr. Griffith recommended expanding language in the plan that supports historic preservation and preservation strategies. Mr. Griffith also provided corrections to the Historic Preservation section and titles found within it.
- Sue Comis, Sound Transit: Ms. Comis stated that the Plan will be useful for Sound Transit's Small Starts grant application and that Sound Transit supports Recommendations M-2 regarding LOS and Recommendation M-5 regarding Adaptive Management. She also stated that Recommendation M-11 should be deleted and that Sound Transit cannot commit to share responsibility for access improvements but welcomes the City committing to improvements described. Sound Transit strongly supports Recommendation M-13 to designate the Link expansion alignment as a Transit Priority Streets and that siting and design of Link expansion will be done by Sound Transit in collaboration with the City. Lastly, Ms. Comis stated that the Plan should recognize that a specific number of parking spaces is not

- as important as achieving the goals of providing multi-modal transportation system and a balance among modes. The Plan should recognize that the public right-of-way is limited and transit stops may inevitably impact some on-street parking.
- Liz Underwood, Puget Sound Regional Council: Ms. Underwood explained that Vision 2040 calls for mode split goals for regional growth centers. The provision of these goals could be addressed regional center-wide through other elements, such as the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Kristina Walker, Downtown on the Go: Downtown on the Go is excited to see mobility and transportation options as a key goal in the Plan but find it problematic that a specific number of on-street parking stalls is listed as a goal [LU-5]. The organization would rather see language to the effect of: "Maintain access to businesses through parking management and a diverse set of transportation options that has a positive effect on economic development." Lastly, they encourage the inclusion of a recommendation for a Transportation Demand Management plan to ensure Adaptive Management and Mitigation Program investments are understood and utilized.
  - Curt Anderson, Owner, and Corinne Dixon, Chair, One Stadium Way Condo Association: Trees along Stadium Way interfere with views and they request that the City and Metro Parks Tacoma proceed with the Vegetation Management Plan for the hillside. They desire to protect quality of life for citizens along Stadium Way corridor with its view and vegetation and to protect investment of property owners.

**Comments received at the July 16, 2014, Planning Commission public hearing and associated written comment period:**

- Department of Ecology, Southwest Regional Office: the Department of Ecology recognizes the North Downtown Plan's EIS as a non-project action and recommends that a typo in the Environmental Impact Statement on page 3.2-7 should be corrected and that the City of Tacoma should consider adopting additional policies related to the Tacoma Smelter Plume contamination.
- Curtis M. Anderson, Resident: The North Downtown Plan seems to advocate impairing efficient automobile usage by minimizing parking for the area and making Stadium Way a Transit Priority Street.
- Chris Karnes, Vice-Chair, Pierce Transit Advisory Committee: Mr. Karnes expressed concern regarding proposed Goal LU-5 which would seek to establish a specific number of on-street parking stalls in the Stadium District and urged the Commission to remove Goal LU-5. Mr. Karnes also stated that he understands concerns about customer vehicular access in the area but has never personally had a problem while walking, biking, or using the bus.
- Jane Ann Moore and Justin D. Leighton, Tacoma Transportation Commission Co-Chairs: Think the area can develop into a model neighborhood that includes facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. Having options for all modes will improve the flow of traffic and create a more vibrant area. They expressed concern about Goal LU-5 as it lists a specific number of on-street parking stalls. Also stated that managing parking includes a diverse set of solutions and transportation options and encourage Transportation Demand Management plan as a project goal.
- Andrew Austin, Policy Director, Transportation Choices: Mr. Austin expressed concern regarding proposed policy Goal LU-5 that establishes a specific number of on-street parking stalls in the North Downtown Subarea and that this policy will facilitate the introduction of angled parking. He also stated that parking should not be the number one priority; people should be and cited the Mobility Master Plan as support. Lastly, he concurs with that Tacoma Transportation Commission's recommendation to remove Goal LU-5 and to add a recommendation for a Transportation Demand Management plan in the Subarea.
- Michael Garrity, Chair, Pierce County Chapter, Washington Conservation Voters: Mr. Garrity expressed concerns regarding Goal LU-5 as it could harm long-term development of sustainable transportation options within the District. He also expressed concern that the goal could incentivize angle parking and stated that the Mobility Master Plan prioritizes pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists over single-occupancy vehicles.

- Justin Leighton, Resident: Mr. Leighton is opposed to Goal LU-5 which would introduce a specific number of on-street parking spaces a goal of the Plan and is in favor of a parking management program for the area.
- Bill and Helen Abbott, Residents: Mr. and Mrs. Abbott expressed concern that the Link light rail construction could affect the stability of the hillside below Stadium Way.
- Jane Moore, Resident: Ms. Moore supports the plan overall and City's efforts. She also believes that parking requirements in the proposed Plan are inconsistent and that a Parking Management Plan for subarea is needed. Ms. Moore is in favor of pedestrian connection to Schuster from Stadium Way but has concerns about unreasonable tree removal and pointed out the need to clarify language about Pedestrian Streets.
- Denny Faker, Stadium Business District: Mr. Faker stated that the Stadium area is a dense neighborhood and there has been concern for some time about on-street parking and that 50 stalls have been lost in the last 24 months. Mr. Faker asked the City to maintain the number of stalls that currently exist with a goal of putting some back that were lost.
- Marty Mattes, Director of Facilities & Operations, Bates Technical College: Mr. Mattes stated that the SEPA process is a significant and important one for the college and that the Plan will aid with the Master Plan for the Downtown Bates Campus.

#### **6. Additional Information:**

During the planning process and public outreach for the project, concerns were expressed regarding several key issues within the North Downtown Subarea. After consideration of the public comments and staff's suggested modifications, the Commission determined that additional modifications be made to the Draft Plan on these key issues, as summarized below. For a list of all revisions being made the Plan refer to Attachment A.

- On-Street Parking Within the Stadium Neighborhood. The Stadium neighborhood currently has approximately 397 on-street parking stalls according to the City's Public Works Department's preliminary parking study, completed in July 2013. As business owners, residents, and employees of businesses in the area expressed concerns that there is not adequate on-street parking to meet the area's needs Recommendation LU-5 was added to the Plan. Recommendation LU-5 states: Maintain the current number of on-street parking spaces in Stadium District with a target total of 420 spaces. However, after discussion at the August 6 meeting, the Planning Commission determined that removing a specific number of stalls from the Recommendation is appropriate given the desire to support all modes of transportation in the District. The Commission felt that language that aspired to keep as many on-street stalls as feasible while not inhibiting future transit or multi-modal improvements was more appropriate. The revised language was also deemed favorable by the Commission given the Plan's support for Transportation Demand Management and Parking Management programs, which were also supported by multiple public comments.
- Expansion of the Reduced Parking Area (RPA). The city of Tacoma adopted a Reduced Parking Area (RPA) Downtown that sets parking minimums to zero for residential and commercial uses, although accessible parking is still required. The RPA supports many of the goals for North Downtown and would eliminate a barrier to new investment and move the City toward a market-based parking system. The North Downtown Subarea Plan proposes to expand the existing RPA boundary west to Yakima Avenue and north to 6th Avenue. However, public comments were received expressing concern that the RPA boundary and that is not proposed to encompass the entirety of the Downtown Zoning Districts in the subarea. The RPA proposed to end at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave and to leave out portions of the Downtown Residential zoning in the St. Helens neighborhood north of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. After discussion at the August 6<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the Commission determined that given the residential nature and the expansion of the LINK light rail through the neighborhood, it would be appropriate to add a policy to the Plan that supports a 'revisiting' of the RPA expansion in 2020 or when the Link Light Rail expansion is in operation.

- Stadium Business District Boundary Revision. The Neighborhood Business District program, administered by the Community and Economic Development Department (CED), seeks to improve economic growth and redevelopment by assisting independent, local small businesses to organize into professional organizations. In order for a Business District to be recognized by the City, it must comply with criteria found in Chapter 1.47 of the Tacoma Municipal Code and Business District boundaries that typically follow the existing Mixed-Use zoning (Neighborhood Mixed-Use - NCX) in an area. Through the North Downtown Subarea Plan outreach process, the Stadium Business District requested their boundaries to be revised to reflect membership. The expanded boundaries included Tacoma General Hospital, the ST. Helens neighborhood, and the McMenamin's Elks property. Through the drafting of the North Downtown Plan, staff proposed language for the Plan that described the desired, revised Stadium Business District boundaries and language that indicated that the Business District is working with CED to revise the boundaries. However, after discussion at the August 6, 2014, meeting, the Planning Commission determined that including revised boundaries for the Business District Association in the North Downtown Plan would conflict with the criteria in the Tacoma Municipal Code 1.47, which sets standards for establishing the Business District, including size limitations. As a result of discussions with the Commission, the section describing the proposed Stadium Business District Boundary Revision has been removed from the Plan.

#### **E. CONCLUSIONS:**

1. The Planning Commission concludes that the proposed North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and part of the Downtown Regional Growth Center.
2. The Planning Commission concludes that the proposed Plan and EIS properly reflected the community's desire and will position the City well for potential funding opportunities, and are aligned with the regional vision as set forth in VISION 2040.
3. The Planning Commission concludes that the Subarea Plan accurately reflects the intent of and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies.
4. The Planning Commission concludes that effective implementation of the policies within the Subarea Plan should improve the attractiveness, use, and overall quality of development within the Subarea, and result in an enhanced, interconnected public access system that provides an attractive amenity for the recruitment and retention of businesses and residents to the City of Tacoma.
5. The Planning Commission concludes that the North Downtown Subarea Plan will facilitate transit-oriented development through its policies that support transit and transit agencies, transportation mode-shifting, reduced parking requirements, and complete streets.
6. The Planning Commission concludes that the Subarea Plan is the policy document that enables the actions needed to achieve the Vision of the North Downtown Subarea as it provides a long-term, coordinated framework to promote the ongoing revitalization of the area.
7. Concerning the proposed code changes associated with the North Downtown Subarea Plan, the Planning Commission concludes that the proposed amendments to the Land Use Regulatory Code will adequately address the goals and desires of the citizens of Tacoma and will improve the cohesiveness of the Code.
8. The Planning Commission further concludes that the proposed North Downtown Subarea Plan, as described above, is consistent with the Growth Management Act, will benefit the City as a whole, will not adversely affect the City's public facilities and services, and is in the best interests of the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Tacoma.

**F. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the North Downtown Subarea Plan, as set forth in Exhibit A, as a new element of the Comprehensive Plan and adopt the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapters 13.06A Downtown Tacoma, as set forth in Exhibit B. The Planning Commission also provides the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the North Downtown Subarea Plan, Issued July 2, 2014*, as set forth in Exhibit C, for the City Council's reference.

**G. EXHIBITS:** *(compiled separately from this report)*

- Exhibit A. Draft North Downtown Subarea Plan
- Exhibit B. Proposed Amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code Chapters 13.06A
- Exhibit C. Final Environmental Impact Statement for the North Downtown Subarea Plan, Issued July 2, 2014
- Exhibit D. Minutes of the Planning Commission's Public Hearing, July 16, 2014
- Exhibit E. Written Comment Letters received on the Draft Subarea Plan



## 2014 North Downtown Subarea Plan

PLANNING COMMISSION  
PLAN CHANGES SUMMARY  
August 20, 2014

### **Planning Commission Recommendations:**

The proposed changes to the North Downtown Subarea Plan described below are the result of discussion at the August 6, 2014, Planning Commission meeting and comments received during the public comment periods for this project. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing for the North Downtown Subarea Plan on July 16, 2014, and kept the record open through July 18, 2014, to accept written comments. It is also noted that staff organized a public hearing on May 29, 2014, at Bates Technical College and kept the record open through June 16, 2014 to receive additional written comments. The following is a summary of the proposed changes:

### **Changes Required by the Planning Commission:**

#### **Chapter 3 Land Use:**

- The revision of Goal LU-5: The original recommendation stated a target of retaining 420 on-street parking spaces in the Stadium District. However, the reference to a specific number of spaces has been removed and the language has been revised as follows: Retain as many on-street parking spaces as feasible within the Stadium District without inhibiting future transit or multi-modal improvements. ~~Maintain the current number of on-street parking spaces in Stadium District with a target total of 450 spaces.~~
- The addition of a new LU Action that supports reviewing the Reduced Parking Area (RPA) boundaries in the North Downtown Subarea in the future. The language will read as follows: Review the Reduced Parking Area boundaries in the North Downtown Subarea at such time as the Link Light Rail expansion through the district is in full operation or 2020, whichever is first.

#### **Chapter 4 Economic Development:**

- The removal of the reference to the proposed Stadium Business District boundary revision.
- The removal of Recommendation ED-4 from the Plan. Recommendation ED-4 referred to the proposed revision of the Stadium Business District boundaries.
- This removal of Figure 4-13 and 4-14 showing existing and proposed Stadium Business District boundaries.

#### **Chapter 8 Mobility:**

- The addition of clarifying language to the Designated Pedestrian Streets section making it clear that pedestrians are invited to use streets other than those designated as “Pedestrian”. The added language will state: Pedestrians are allowed to utilize streets that are not designated Pedestrian Streets and all other public sidewalks and rights-of-way within the Subarea.

### **Clarifications Proposed by Staff:**

#### **Changes to the Entire Plan:**

- The revision of all Maps throughout the Plan to reflect the revised Downtown Regional Growth Center. This change will affect Figures: 1-2, 2-2, 2-14, 3-3, 3-4, 3-7, 3-11, 4-19, 5-7, 6-6, 7-2, 8-4, 8-5, and 8-14.

- The restatement of “Recommendations” found throughout the Plan as “Actions” for consistency with the South Downtown and Hilltop Subarea Plans and to convey the intent of the Plan to be an action-based document.
- Updating Table “1-1 North Downtown Recommendations” to reflect the changes described herein. This table will be also renamed “1-1 North Downtown Actions”.

### **Chapter 2 Context:**

- The addition of a description of the “Hillside” Character Area located within the subarea. The description will read: The Subarea includes the northern half of this District, bounded by two of downtown Tacoma’s signature streets: Yakima and Tacoma Avenue, Abutting Wright Park on the north, the Hillside District is a transition zone between downtown to the east and the Hilltop neighborhood to the west. It is primarily low-density residential in character, with a smattering of commercial uses mostly located along Tacoma Avenue. True to its name, the Hillside District lies on a steep east-west slope which provides stunning views of the Thea Foss Waterway, Mount Rainier, and Commencement Bay.
- The addition of a description of, and reference to, the Historic Preservation Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan to the Existing Plans and Policies section of the North Downtown Subarea Plan.

### **Chapter 3 Land Use:**

- The addition of a summary of off-street parking regulations found in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.06A Downtown Tacoma to the Off-Street Parking Section of the Plan. Currently the Plan details the parking regulations found in TMC 13.06.510 Off-street Parking which apply to the Mixed-Use Centers within the subarea but not the regulations for Downtown Tacoma zoning districts.

### **Chapter 5 Historic Resources:**

- The revision of a paragraph in the Historic Resource Conservation section describing the costs associated with renovating historic structures to make it clear that renovation costs are often perceived to be high but in reality are not necessarily higher than costs of new construction. This change based upon comments from the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
- The addition of Action HR-14 which reads: Work with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Historic Tacoma, State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and other agencies/organizations to stimulate economic activity by preserving, rehabilitating, and interpreting historic properties within the subarea.
- The addition of Action HR-15 which reads: Work with property owners and developers to make sure infill construction in historic districts and conservation areas are sensitive to the character of the district or nearby historic properties.
- The addition of a paragraph to the Development Capacity section of this chapter that states that while complete redevelopment of many sites containing historic structures is inappropriate, rehabilitation of historic structures is appropriate when protective mechanisms and review are in place.

### **Chapter 8 Mobility:**

- An update to the Intersection Improvements section to remove the intersection of Tacoma Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street as a “medium-term” improvement project. Improvements to this intersection were already completed through the Stadium Way street project.
- The addition of an Action to the Transportation Demand Management section that further supports Transportation Demand Management. The added language reads: Develop a Transportation Demand Management plan to ensure that Adaptive Management and Mitigation Program investments are understood and utilized.

- The addition of street classification type descriptions to the Roadways section. The types of street classifications currently found in the City's Comprehensive Plan to be added/described to the North Downtown Plan are: Transit Priority, Connector Street, Pedestrian/Retail, Bicycle Boulevard, and Urban Residential. This change is intended to provide additional information about street classification types already mentioned in the Plan.
- The addition of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street on-ramp access to I-705 to the Roadways section.



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-2**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Associate Planner, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Mixed-Use Centers Review**  
**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2014  
**Memo Date:** August 13, 2014

At the request of Council Members Ibsen and Mello, City staff will be conducting a comprehensive review of the City's Mixed-Use Centers, to include possible modifications to the number, location and types of designated centers. On August 20, 2014 staff will present the draft scope of work for this review, to be conducted as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

In accordance with the State Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2040, the City of Tacoma is required to plan for 60,000 new jobs and 70,000 new residents by 2030. The City's Comprehensive Plan calls for accommodating a significant share of this future population and employment growth within compact and well-connected mixed-use centers.

The mixed-use centers are intended to be areas that provide a range of housing choices, employment opportunities, transit-supportive development, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and a mix of shops, services and public spaces. Renewing and transforming the mixed-use centers into functional, vibrant, sustainable urban villages is critical to achieving the City's long-term goals and vision for its future.

The Plan currently identifies 17 Mixed-Use Centers, which are spread throughout the City and divided into four basic types or levels: the downtown center, the urban center (Tacoma Mall), and the community and neighborhood centers.

Unfortunately, while most of the mixed-use centers were created in the mid-1990's they have seen relatively limited new growth, particularly the type of compact, mixed-use growth that was envisioned. In order to achieve the community's long-term goals, ensure that the community can accommodate new growth in a positive manner, and focus the limited redevelopment tools and staff resources in a way that can be most effective, it is time to review, reevaluate and potentially refine the designated mixed-use centers.

Makers Architecture and Urban Design will be consulting on the project to provide technical resources and analysis.

Key questions:

What characteristics define the vision for a mixed-use center and which existing centers best exhibit these characteristics?

Which of these characteristics, when lacking, poses the greatest constraint to achieving the vision?

Which tools are most effective for enhancing the specific characteristics?

What amount of total population and household density is needed within and adjacent to the mixed-use center to support the desired commercial activity?

What amount of total population and household density is needed within and adjacent to the mixed-use center to support transit ridership?

Is there an optimal number and distribution of mixed-use centers given the size of our community and the existing development activity?

Where and what type of growth has been occurring within the City's mixed-use centers compared to growth outside the mixed-use centers?

The purpose of the discussion with the Commission at the August 20, 2014 meeting is to review the draft scope of work and identify any additional information, analysis, or research questions that the Commission desires in order to better evaluate the Mixed-Use Centers and provide a recommendation to Council. Attached is the Council's CCR and the draft scope of work with Makers Architecture and Urban Design. If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 591-5531 or [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org).

Attachments

c. Peter Huffman, Director



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST (CCR)**

**TO:** Mayor & City Council  
**FROM:** Council Member Ibsen, District 1  
Council Member Mello, At-large Position 8  
**COPIES TO:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager; Executive Leadership Team; file  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Mixed-Use Centers Review  
**DATE:** July 12, 2013

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**ITEM/ISSUE PROPOSED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:**

**The following item will be scheduled on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Committee Of The Whole:**

I respectfully ask for City Council concurrence to have staff and the Planning Commission research and bring to City Council their recommendations on possible modifications to the number, location and types of designated mixed-use centers. This review and the resulting recommendations should be coordinated with the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee.

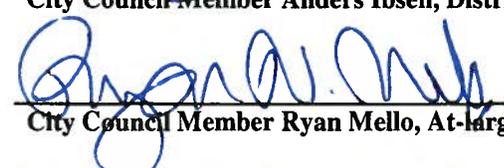
**BRIEF BACKGROUND:**

The Mixed-Use Centers are at the heart of the Comprehensive Plan's growth and development strategy. They are intended to accommodate a significant share of Tacoma's future population and employment growth by encouraging a more intense level of development that is well-served by transportation options. The mixed-use centers are designed to be areas that provide a range of housing choices, employment opportunities, transit-supportive development, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and a mix of shops, services and public spaces.

However, there are currently 17 separate mixed-use centers spread throughout the City. Most have seen relatively limited new growth since their creation nearly 20 years ago, and even fewer have seen the type of dense mixed-use development that is envisioned. While this mixed-use vision is likely still appropriate in many of the mixed-use centers, it may not be appropriate in all of them based on factors such as their current development patterns, market conditions, surrounding zoning and density, and infrastructure. It is also unrealistic for the City and community to focus the limited number and types of redevelopment tools needed to jump start these centers in so many different areas. It is time to comprehensively reevaluate the City's mixed-use centers, how many of them we should have, which ones are the most appropriate and feasible, and whether the current vision for them is realistic in all cases.

**SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Council Member Anders Ibsen, District 1

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Council Member Ryan Mello, At-large Position 8

# Tacoma Mixed Use Center Review

# DRAFT Scope of Work

## Goals:

To refine the mixed-use centers strategy to align with the neighborhood and commercial districts that best exhibit the conditions necessary to achieve a compact and complete mixed use center.

- To accommodate 80% of the City's growth allocations within compact and complete mixed use centers that offer walkable and transit oriented neighborhoods with plenty of services to meet most residents' basic needs, such as parks, schools, shopping and dining.
- To develop strategies that better integrate the Mixed-Use Centers into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- To integrate the closely-connected needs of land use and transportation and to make the most efficient use of land and financial resources.

## Outcomes:

- Possible outcomes include:
  - Mixed-use center designation and zoning boundary amendments;
  - Revisions to the location and distribution of designated mixed use centers;
  - Prioritization of designated centers;
  - New land use designation classifications;
  - Individualization of centers and center-strategies.

## Task Elements:

1. Finalize Scope and Schedule
  - Meet with City staff to discuss project, schedule, outreach and final deliverables.
2. Data Review
  - Conduct field visit to the mixed use centers (MUCs).
  - Compile and assess data and findings from previous mixed-use center review and identify data gaps.
3. Coordination with other ongoing City planning initiatives
  - City of Tacoma Strategic Plan
  - Transportation Master Plan
  - Multifamily Tax Credit Incentive review
  - Land Use Designation review

#### 4. Mixed-Use Center Evaluation

- Develop criteria for evaluating the mixed-use centers for the following 6 factors: Density, Destinations, Design, Demographics, Distribution and Distances.

*Product: Metrics, criteria or other means to evaluate MUC's relative to the 6 factors.*

- Apply the criteria to each individual MUC.

*Product: Map-folio and summary for each MUC presenting the results of the evaluation.*

#### 5. Market Analysis

- From a market and economic perspective, identify, in general terms, the potential for development and/or sustained economic performance of each MUC. Categorize MUC's as "established", "emerging", or "limited" based on economic conditions and development potential. Establish baseline population and employment densities needed to support desired vision for commercial activity within each MUC and for transit supportive nodes. Compare targets to existing conditions.

*Product: Brief report summarizing the market conditions and likely development potential of each MUC. The findings will be stated in general terms without quantitative projections.*

- For up to 4 sites selected by City staff and the consultant team, perform a feasibility analysis that examines economic performance of a specific development proposal on each site. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the conditions that affect development feasibility and what could be done to enhance development opportunities.

*Product: Sketch development plans and feasibility evaluation for up to 4 sites.*

#### 6. Mixed-Use Center Report

- Prepare a report summarizing the findings from Tasks 2 – 4.
- Prepare final fact sheets and profile for each MUC including area wide vision, assessment of existing conditions, barriers and constraints, development potential, opportunity sites, and potential policy interventions.
- Present findings to the Planning Commission and City Council.

*Product: Draft Mixed-Use Center Report*

#### 7. Land Use Designation Review

- For those MUCs where boundaries or regulatory changes are requested by staff, the Planning Commission, or City Council, prepare draft recommendations for those changes.

*Product: Additional material for the fact sheets that suggests proposed modifications to the land use designations and regulatory measures, as well as other measures to encourage MUC development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

*Product: Updated Centers Map.*



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-3**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Associate Planner, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Land Use Designations - Phase 2**  
**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2014  
**Memo Date:** August 14, 2014

In 2013 the Planning Commission recommended and Council approved Phase 1 of an overhaul of the City's land use designations, establishing a framework to shift from a development "intensity" concept to a scheme based on more traditional and understandable land use categories. The proposed new land use designation framework will provide the ability for policy-makers and the community to clearly express the overarching goals and intended character for the various areas while maintaining some of the important flexibility that the existing intensity scheme provides.

The specific amendments adopted in 2013 include:

- Creating separate land use designations for the four different types of mixed-use centers (neighborhood, community, urban, and downtown)
- Adding a new land use designation for shoreline areas
- Modifying the land use designation for properties within the mixed-use centers and shoreline areas based on these new designations (this will effectively remove the "underlying" intensity designations in these areas, recognizing the more detailed and specific policy guidance already provided for the shoreline areas and mixed-use centers)
- Creating a new land use designation framework to guide subsequent phases of the project, including a comprehensive review of the land use patterns and substantial re-designation of properties in the City.

The second phase, to be completed as part of the 2015 annual amendment, involves complete incorporation of the new framework into the Comprehensive Plan. This will necessitate a comprehensive review of the existing and proposed land use patterns against the new designation framework, as well as substantial re-designation of properties in the City based on the new framework. The recently completed 2014 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report will also provide important data for the evaluation of the land use designations and zoning.

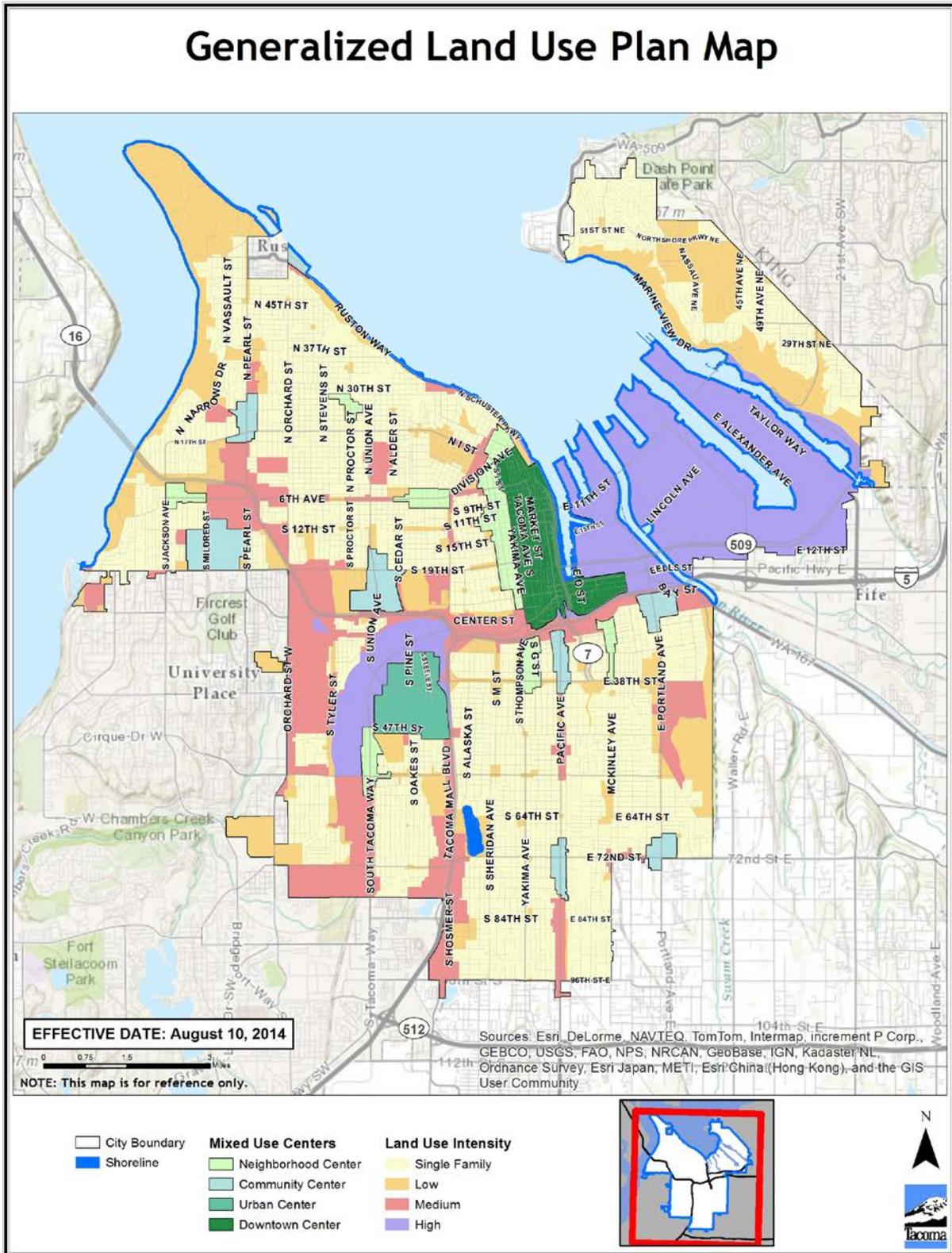
In addition to the general need to carry through the change in designation framework, this is an opportunity to rectify existing inconsistencies between the intensities and the zoning. As part of the 2013 City review, the intensity designations were compared to the zoning to identify two types of inconsistencies: 1. Situations where the zoning was more intensive than the designation allowed (example: C-1 zoning in a single family designation), or 2. Situations where the zoning was less intensive than the designation (example: R-2 zoning in a medium intensity designation). This analysis has been updated to account for the changes to the designations adopted in 2013.

Staff's discussion with the Commission at the August 20, 2014, meeting will summarize some of the key trends in the analysis and examples of the policy recommendations to be made through this process. Attached is an excerpt from the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element of the Comprehensive Plan which includes a map of the existing land use designations and the framework for applying the new designation classifications. If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 591-5531 or [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org).

#### Attachments

- c. Peter Huffman, Director

# Generalized Land Use Plan Map



Plot Date: 7/23/2014

File Name: \\Geobase-win\CED\GADS\R2014\R298\GLUP.mxd

Created By: CEDD, GIS ANALYSIS & DATA SERVICES

## Appendix

### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Framework

The City has embarked on a multi-phase, multi-year project intended to revise and update the Comprehensive Plan's land use designation approach, from the *Land Use Intensities* system to a more simplified and easily understood classification system.

The first phase has been accomplished as part of the 2013 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City Council on June 25, 2013, per Ordinance No. 28158.

This first phase amended the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element of the Comprehensive Plan by:

1. Creating separate land use designations for the four different types of mixed-use centers (neighborhood, community, urban and downtown);
2. Adding a new land use designation for Shoreline areas;
3. Modifying the land use designation for properties within the mixed-use centers and shoreline areas based on these new designations (effectively removing the "underlying" intensity designations in these areas, recognizing the more detailed and specific policy guidance already provided for the shoreline areas and mixed-use centers); and
4. Creating a new land use designation framework to guide subsequent phases of the project, including a comprehensive review of the land use patterns and substantial redesignation of properties in the City. The new Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Framework includes the following designations:
  - Single-Family Residential
  - Multi-Family (low-density)
  - Multi-Family (high-density)
  - Neighborhood Commercial
  - General Commercial
  - Downtown Mixed-Use Center
  - Urban Mixed-Use Center
  - Community Mixed-Use Center
  - Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center
  - Light Industrial
  - Heavy Industrial
  - Parks and Open Space
  - Shoreline

The following chart outlines the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Framework, along with the general intent statement for each of the designations and the corresponding zoning classifications that would commonly fit within each plan designation.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning
<p><b>Single Family Residential</b></p> <p>Qualities associated with single-family residential neighborhoods that are desirable include: low noise levels, limited traffic, large setbacks, private yards, small scale buildings, and low-density development. Much of the city's land is strongly committed to single-family development and has been determined to be deserving of special protection from incompatible land uses. Community facilities, such as parks, schools, day cares, and religious facilities are also desirable components of single-family neighborhoods. Limited allowances for other types of residential development are also provided with additional review to ensure compatibility with the desired, overarching single-family character.</p>	<p><b>R-1</b> Single-Family Dwelling District  <b>R-2</b> Single-Family Dwelling District  <b>R-2SRD</b> Residential Special Review District</p>
<p><b>Multi-Family (low-density)</b></p> <p>This district enjoys many of the same qualities as single-family neighborhoods such as low traffic volumes and noise, larger setbacks, and small-scale development, while allowing for multi-family uses and increased density (generally up to 15 dwelling units/net acre) along with community facilities and institutions. The Multi-Family (low-density) district can often act as a buffer between the single-family designation and the greater density and higher intensity uses that can be found in the Multi-Family (high density designation) or commercial or mixed-use designations.</p>	<p><b>R-3</b> Two-Family Dwelling District  <b>R-4L</b> Low-Density Multiple-Family Dwelling District  <b>HMR-SRD</b> Historic Mixed Residential Special Review District</p>
<p><b>Multi-Family (high-density)</b></p> <p>This designation allows for a wide range of residential housing types at medium and higher density levels, along with community facilities and institutions, and some limited commercial uses and mixed-use buildings. It is characterized by taller buildings, higher traffic volumes, reduced setbacks, limited private yard space, and greater noise levels. These areas are generally found in the central city and along major transportation corridors where there is increased access to public transportation and to employment centers.</p>	<p><b>R-4</b> Multiple-Family Dwelling District  <b>R-5</b> Multiple-Family Dwelling District</p>
<p><b>Neighborhood Commercial</b></p> <p>This designation is characterized primarily by small-scale neighborhood businesses with some residential and institutional uses. Uses within these areas have low to moderate traffic generation, shorter operating hours, smaller buildings and sites, and less signage than general commercial or mixed-use areas. There is a greater emphasis on small businesses and development that is compatible with nearby, lower intensity residential areas.</p>	<p><b>C-1</b> General Neighborhood Commercial District  <b>T</b> Transitional District</p>

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning
<p><b>General Commercial</b></p> <p>This designation encompasses areas for medium to high intensity commercial uses which serves a large community base with a broad range of larger scale uses. These areas also allow for a wide variety of residential development, community facilities, institutional uses, and some limited production and storage uses. These areas are generally located along major transportation corridors, often with reasonably direct access to a highway. This designation is characterized by larger-scale buildings, longer operating hours, and moderate to high traffic generation.</p>	<p><b>PDB</b> Planned Development Business District</p> <p><b>HM</b> Hospital Medical District</p> <p><b>C-2</b> General Community Commercial District</p>
<p><b>Downtown Mixed-Use Center</b></p> <p>The downtown center is the highest concentration of urban growth found anywhere in the city. It is the focal point for the city, the center of government, cultural, office, financial, transportation and other activities. This variety of day and night activities attracts visitors from throughout the city and region. The interstate freeway, major arterials, provides access and the center has both local and regional transit connections. Larger, often historic, buildings fronting on the sidewalk characterize the area. Pedestrian orientation is high. Parking is found along the street and within structures.</p>	<p><b>DR</b> Downtown Residential District</p> <p><b>DMU</b> Downtown Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>WR</b> Warehouse/Residential District</p> <p><b>DCC</b> Downtown Commercial Core District</p> <p><b>UCX-TD</b> Downtown Mixed-Use District</p>
<p><b>Urban Mixed- Use Center</b></p> <p>The urban center is a highly dense self-sufficient concentration of urban development. Buildings can range from one to twelve stories and activity is greater than in most areas of the city. It is an area of regional attraction and a focus for both the local and regional transit systems. Many major city arterials connect to the urban center and nearby freeway access is present. Parking is provided both in surface lots and within structures. Internal streets and pathways provide connections among the developments within the center.</p>	<p><b>UCX</b> Urban Center Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>RCX</b> Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>URX</b> Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p>
<p><b>Community Mixed- Use Center</b></p> <p>The community center is a concentration of commercial and/or institutional development that serves many nearby neighborhoods and generally includes a unique attraction that draws people from throughout the city. Some residential development may already be present, and there is a goal to have more residential development. It is directly accessible by arterials and local transit. Pedestrian accessibility is important within the center, but because of its focus on larger scale commercial development, the community center continues to provide for automobile parking, preferably within structures.</p>	<p><b>CCX</b> Community Commercial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>RCX</b> Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>HMX</b> Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>URX</b> Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p>

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning
<p><b>Neighborhood Mixed- Use Center</b></p> <p>The neighborhood center is a concentrated mix of small- to medium-scale development that serves the daily needs of center residents, the immediate neighborhood, and areas beyond. Development contains a mix of residential and commercial uses, and the majority of parking is provided within structures. Buildings are generally up to six stories along the commercial corridors, up to three stories at the periphery of the centers near single-family districts, and up to four stories in areas between the core and the periphery. They are designed with a compatible character to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The design of the neighborhood center encourages pedestrians and bicyclists and its location on a major arterial makes it a convenient and frequent stop for local transit. The regional transit network also may directly serve some neighborhood centers.</p>	<p><b>NCX</b> Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>RCX</b> Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>CIX</b> Commercial Industrial Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>HMX</b> Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>URX</b> Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p> <p><b>NRX</b> Neighborhood Residential Mixed-Use District</p>
<p><b>Light Industrial</b></p> <p>This designation allow for a variety of industrial uses that are moderate in scale and impact, with lower noise, odors and traffic generation than heavy industrial uses. This designation may include various types of light manufacturing and warehousing and newer, clean and high-tech industries, along with commercial and some limited residential uses. These areas are often utilized as a buffer or transition between heavy industrial areas and less intensive commercial and/or residential areas.</p>	<p><b>M-1</b> Light Industrial District</p>
<p><b>Heavy Industrial</b></p> <p>This designation is characterized by higher levels of noise and odors, large-scale production, large buildings and sites, extended operating hours, and heavy truck traffic. This designation requires access to major transportation corridors, often including heavy-haul truck routes and rail facilities. Commercial and institutional uses are limited and residential uses are generally prohibited.</p>	<p><b>M-2</b> Heavy Industrial District</p> <p><b>PMI</b> Port Maritime &amp; Industrial District</p>

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning
<p><b>Parks and Open Space</b></p> <p>This designation is intended to conserve and enhance open, natural and improved areas valuable for their environmental, recreational, green infrastructure and scenic character and the benefits they provide. The designation encompasses public and private parks and open space lands, with lands set aside for these purposes by the City of Tacoma and the Metropolitan Parks District forming the core of the designation. As more land is placed in conservation status by these agencies as well as other public and private entities, the extent of the designation will be expanded to include them.</p> <p>The designation supports Tacoma’s vision of an integrated parks and open space system that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, supports and nurtures plant and wildlife habitat, enhances and protects trees and the urban forest, preserves the capacity and water quality of the stormwater drainage system, offers recreational opportunities, and provides pedestrian and bicycle connections. Lands within this designation include both natural open space areas and active use parks and recreational areas. Natural open space is intended to be conserved and enhanced through habitat restoration and vegetation management to maximize its environmental and stormwater benefits, along with low-impact public access such as natural area trails and viewpoints, when appropriate. Parks and recreation lands are intended to provide opportunities for active recreation such as playfields and sports facilities, and urban amenities such as plazas, pocket parks and community gardens.</p> <p>Additional, more specific policy direction regarding these types of areas is contained within the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element.</p>	<p>This designation is appropriate in all zoning classifications.</p>

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning
<p><b>Shoreline</b></p> <p>The city’s shoreline areas provide great social, ecological, recreational, cultural, economic and aesthetic value, both at the local and regional level. It is the community’s intent to use the full potential of these areas in a manner that is both ordered and diversified, supports the community’s ability to enjoy the water and the unique setting it creates, and which integrates water and shoreline uses while achieving a net gain of ecological functions. In addition, these areas are intended to balance the overarching goals outlined in the State Shoreline Management Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure an adequate land supply for water-dependent uses;</li> <li>• To promote and enhance the public’s opportunities to access and enjoy the water; and</li> <li>• To protect and preserve natural resources.</li> </ul> <p>This designation includes areas that support deepwater port and industrial sites, habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, archaeological and historical sites, open space, recreation and community activities, and some commercial and residential development. Recognizing the limited nature of this important resource, use and development of the shoreline areas must be carefully planned and regulated to ensure that these values are maintained over time.</p> <p>The Shoreline Master Program has been developed to provide additional and more detailed policy direction regarding the city’s shoreline areas, along with specific zoning and development standards. The Shoreline Master Program utilizes a system of “environment designations” which further guide the character, intensity and use of individual shoreline segments. These classifications include Natural, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, High Intensity, Aquatic, and Downtown Waterfront and are based on the existing development patterns, natural capabilities and goals and aspirations of the community for its shoreline areas.</p>	<p><b>S1 – S14</b> Shoreline Zoning Districts</p>