



## AGENDA

**MEETING:** Regular Meeting

**TIME:** Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 4:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

### **A. Call to Order and Quorum Call**

### **B. Approval of Agenda and Minutes of February 15, 2017**

**C. Public Comments** (up to three minutes per speaker; must be pertaining to items on the agenda)

### **D. Discussion Items**

#### **1. Residential Infill Pilot Program Update**

Review the status of the pilot program implementation.  
(See "Agenda Item D-1"; Lauren Flemister, 591-5682, [lwung@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:lwung@cityoftacoma.org))

#### **2. Open Space Corridor Development Standards**

Review the scope of work for the project as part of the 2017-2018 Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code.  
(See "Agenda Item D-2"; Stephen Atkinson, 591-5531, [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org))

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

- (1) **Memo concerning the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan** (See "Agenda Item E-1")
- (2) **Applications for 2017-2018 Amendment** – The Planning Commission is accepting applications for the 2017-2018 Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code. Application deadline is March 31, 2017. (Read more at [www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning) > "2017-2018 Amendment")
- (3) **PDS Forums** – Three more Planning and Development Services Public Forums are scheduled for March 13, April 10, and May 8, 2017; the first one was held on February 13. (Read more at [www.cityoftacoma.org/PDSForums](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/PDSForums))
- (4) The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2017, at 4:00 p.m., in Room 16; tentative agenda includes: Demolition Review; and Code Cleanups.
- (5) The next Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2017, at 4:30 p.m., in Room 16; tentative agenda includes: Unified Development Code Update; Accident Potential Zone/JLUS; and 2016 Annual IPS Report.

### **F. Adjournment**







## **MINUTES** (Draft)

**TIME:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017, 4:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402  
**PRESENT:** Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen,  
Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley  
**ABSENT:** Jeff McInnis

### **A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL**

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. A quorum was declared.

### **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 1, 2017**

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meeting on February 1, 2017 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

### **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Beale opened the floor for public comments. The following citizens provided comments:

- (1) John Burkhalter:  
Mr. Burkhalter commented that he needed clear language on how the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan would be implemented and how the connectivity requirements would be triggered. He commented that they needed certainty that they could do tenant improvements and expand retail space without triggering requirements. He asked how nonconforming uses would be addressed in the plan.
- (2) Beverly Bowen-Bennett:  
Ms. Bowen-Bennett commented that since they were giving up their right of appeal once the subarea plan was passed, they needed a plan that was right for the residents, property owners, and business owners. She suggested that there be no front doors on alleys, that streets be accessible, and that they don't put streets through existing buildings. She commented that she was not against the plan, but that she wanted to make sure it was the best plan.

### **D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **1. Dialogue with the Sustainable Tacoma Commission**

Peter Hickman, Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC), reviewed that the STC was created in 2008 and that the initial focus was the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. He commented that with the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) they now had more elements that they were looking at. Mr. Hickman reviewed that they had six defined roles: to request research and analysis on sustainability issues from staff; to provide policy, program, and budget recommendations to the City Council; to request updates on implementation of sustainability policies and results; to provide an annual progress report to the public; to coordinate and encourage public involvement in sustainability initiatives; and developing an annual work program identifying Commission goals.

Mr. Hickman reviewed accomplishments of the STC from 2016. For the reusable bag ordinance, they had conducted outreach, hosted a survey, sent a letter to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee, held a world record bag build, and spoken to the City Council in favor of the Bellingham

model. For the proposed methanol plant, they had sent a letter to the Planning Department. For the EAP, they had conducted outreach, sent letters to the City Council and the Planning Commission, and sent a letter of recommended budget priorities. Kristi Lynett, Environmental Policy and Sustainability, added that their office had been successful in securing funding for some key EAP actions.

Priorities for 2017 were reviewed. Mr. Hickman reported that for the Building and Energy category they would prioritize green building advocacy, resource conservation management, and incentivizing energy conservation in rental properties. For education and outreach, they would prioritize supporting the South Sound Sustainability Expo, Bring Your Own Bag outreach, and the Sustainability Speaker Series. For Transportation, they would prioritize the Green Roads Community, development of electric vehicle programs, and incentives for fuel efficient and alternative fuel vehicles. The climate resiliency priority for the year was the Washington Coastal Resilience Grant. For the material management category, they would be prioritizing work on the Construction and Demolition Diversion program, requiring adequate space for recycling in new buildings, and reducing disposable bag use. For natural systems, they would develop the Urban Forestry Implementation Strategy and improve regulations for tree preservation. For the air and local food category, they would prioritize supporting urban agriculture. Alexandra Brewer, STC's Climate Resiliency Subcommittee, reported that there were climate resiliency goals in the EAP that examined if there was a role for zoning. She added that in her subcommittee it was a priority to establish relationships with the Planning Commission as they start to look at those objectives.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Chair Beale noted items from the 2017 priority list that were relevant to the Planning Commission including tree preservation, the construction and demolition diversion program, adequate space and receptacles for recycling, electric vehicle infrastructure, and green building advocacy.
- Chair Beale suggested that a member from the Planning Commission could attend one of the STC subcommittee meetings.
- Chair Beale commented that they could work together on code related issues and that the STC could also send written recommendations.
- Commissioner Waller asked how their work would affect the average person. Ms. Brewer responded that in subcommittees they had discussed issues related to renters and sustainability like the food composting initiative which was not accessible to renters.
- Commissioner Neal asked how they could tie in the public feedback that the STC receives for things like tree canopy goals and if there was a way to loop the STC in to see if they are meeting goals. Ms. Lynett responded that they had received funding to help write an urban forestry implementation strategy with a large stakeholder involvement process and parts of it would likely come to the Commission.
- Commissioner Santhuff noted that the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan had some elements around storm water, which had an eco-district quality, and that they also had the potential to strengthen policies on sharing systems across different property lines to be more sustainable. He expressed interest in the STC giving their thoughts as they worked on those items in the future.
- Commissioner Santhuff suggested that they could collaborate on developing criteria for acquisition priorities from an environmental and quality of life standpoint for privately owned forested areas and sensitive slopes.
- Commissioner Santhuff asked if any action was being considered to divert, in a more useful way, the recyclable and compostable waste from businesses that was going directly into the garbage. Ms. Lynett responded that a 2017 goal of the solid waste route supervisors was to have a conversation with every customer. Commissioner Neal asked if they had those conversations with the school district as well. Ms. Lynett responded that when the school district hired their sustainability manager they would seek to address that with them.
- Vice-Chair Wamback commented that there isn't a body sending the message that density is the cure for some environmental problems and that the STC had the opportunity to do that.
- Chair Beale commented that if they were working on an item and the STC saw a connection to the EAP, he would like to see letters from them on the relevant policy in the action plan.

## **2. Hilltop Links to Opportunity Program**

Ian Munce, Planning and Development Services, reviewed that the Hilltop Links to Opportunity Program is a joint effort of Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma and that they had received a \$2 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration to improve social and economic development along the Tacoma Link Light Rail Expansion corridor, applying the recommendations of the Hilltop Subarea Plan. Mr. Munce reported that the majority of the grant funding would allow them to engineer what the streetscape would look like from the curb of the sidewalk to the building along Martin Luther King Jr. Way (“MLK”). They would also be coordinating street improvements with the developers of several mixed-use projects along MLK. He noted that to ensure successful work in streetscape design and engineering and workforce development, they would conduct comprehensive outreach as a critical component of the project. He reviewed that the Hilltop Engagement Committee established by the City Council was meeting monthly to guide the project. Mr. Munce reported that in the next several months they would be working on the conceptual design and that they would also be coming up with criteria to hire people with Hilltop connections. They also had small community grants to help work with some of the stakeholders so that they could conduct their own outreach.

Commissioner Neal asked if the bike lanes would be on the neighboring street since the width of MLK would not support a dedicated bike lane. Mr. Munce confirmed that they would locate the bike boulevard on South J Street, but would also consider that people would still ride bikes on MLK in the design parameters. Commissioner Neal asked if there would be funds for improvements on the bike boulevard. Mr. Munce responded that they had enough money to do conceptual design but not engineering.

Chair Beale asked if the Sound Transit had familiarity with labor agreements that require a certain percentage of contractors to be local. Mr. Munce noted that Sound Transit has their own requirement for labor agreements for each of their projects. He noted that the project labor agreement was the one crossover piece between the rail expansion and the streetscape enhancement projects.

Commissioner Winship asked if they would seek a grant for streetscape improvements. Mr. Munce responded that they would seek funding from a gas tax allocated by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

## **3. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan**

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, facilitated a discussion to continue reviewing the draft plan document, focusing on the development of medium and long term vision documents as well as residential development, housing, and neighborhood related issues.

The medium term vision concept was discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that it had been difficult for people to envision how they would get from the present to the long term plan and that they had developed a document to help explain how development would unfold over time. He discussed a map of the medium term vision which focused on improving what was already present with the addition of Tier 1 street connections and completion of short to mid-term capital projects. Commissioner Waller asked what the inspiration for the medium term concept was. Mr. Barnett responded that it was to show what City investment in the neighborhood’s street network could be done to improve what was already there.

The long term vision was discussed. Mr. Barnett commented that the long term vision map depicts a different development pattern where buildings had been replaced by redevelopment and there were new streets. He reported that they intended to develop some alternative layouts and street connections to convey that there was no single way to develop the street network. He noted that street improvements, Tier 2 connections, and concepts for site access connections would be shown on the map. Commissioner Santhuff commented that the street trees shown on South Pine Street and 38<sup>th</sup> Street suggested that they might be considered Tier 1 streets for improvements. Mr. Barnett responded that the medium term map included capital projects like improvements to Pine Street and 38th Street. Chair Beale expressed concern that there was still a lot of surface parking on the long term vision map, adding that if they were going to use it as a communication tool he would like them to think more about the density of buildings shown on the long term vision map. Commissioner Winship asked if there was a timeframe associated with mid-term and long term. Mr. Barnett responded that the distinction was not based on time but on the implementation actions that will have taken place. Vice-Chair Wamback noted several inconsistencies

between the two maps including the addition of low density housing along Fife Street in the medium term map.

Residential, neighborhood, and housing topics were discussed. Mr. Barnett stated that this grouping of topics was intended to address the key concerns and actions relevant to residents. Mr. Barnett stated that the following actions are intended to address residents goals and concerns: Improving streets and alleys; achieving better outcomes through future development; providing neighborhood amenities like parks and neighborhood serving businesses which are currently missing; empowering residents to take charge of their neighborhoods; and ensuring that the neighborhood remain affordable and diverse when growth occurs. Mr. Barnett commented that more recently they had heard about the need for more focus on near-term actions. Mr. Barnett then discussed the actions recommended in the Plan for each of those topics, as well as indicating additional recommended refinements to the Preliminary Draft.

Fixing alleys and streets was discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that issues included poor pavement conditions, incomplete sidewalk systems, and unpaved alleys. He commented that the medium to long-term actions recommended by the subarea plan included City capital projects, adding that the plan would position them to bring in funds for those projects. He noted that an \$8 million green roads grant for the Madison neighborhood had already been preliminarily approved. For private development, they would be enhancing their guidance and would be getting improvements as development occurs. However, those actions would take place over the course of years and would not be timely in addressing pressing concerns.

Allyson Griffith, Neighborhood and Community Services, discussed additional actions to improve street and alley conditions in the near-term. She reported that they would look at temporary fixes to better define street edges and garbage collection retrofits for some of the existing developments where it had not been well planned at the time of development. She briefly discussed the services offered by NCS through 311 and discussed green features including the street tree program, de-paving, and community gardens. Ms. Griffith noted that the Madison neighborhood had one community garden that they would look at moving as the medium term vision map showed South 40<sup>th</sup> Street going through the current space. Vice-Chair Wamback requested that they not open the street up without a new garden built in a location that is desired by the residents in the area.

Residential zoning changes intended to achieve better development outcomes were discussed. Mr. Barnett commented that the proposed zoning changes were based around the idea of identifying core areas where the current character is primarily residential and lower scale and having the zoning reflect that. In the Madison district the zoning was proposed to be changed from mixed-use to low density multifamily and the height limit would be reduced. In the Lincoln Heights district the proposal was for mid-density residential. There would also be transitions in terms of the scale of the areas immediately around those districts.

Chair Beale asked for an explanation on the change and whether they were meeting their targets for the Puget Sound Regional Council growth centers update. Mr. Barnett responded that the change was based on community input that reflected an appreciation for the residential character and scale in those two areas. Mr. Barnett noted that they had several times more development capacity in the current zoning than they were planning for even if they met the targets of doubling jobs and tripling residents by 2040.

Vice-Chair Wamback commented that if they wanted quality residential development they needed to allow for the height and the massing that would make it economically feasible to have that quality. He expressed concern that the proposal would allow the current pattern of development to continue while taking away the right of people who live in the area to appeal bad development. He added that it seemed unfair to put responsibility on commercial property owners to plan for a different future and then plan for a lower density residential area.

Chair Beale recommended that they bring the residential zoning changes back as a focus item.

Mr. Barnett discussed considerations that had gone into the proposed residential zoning changes including compatibility with existing development patterns; scaling the level of development to lower than downtown; and the connection between the density the green stormwater strategy. He indicated that the green roads approach would only work if the Madison area stays below a certain threshold of density.

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, commented that while they were talking about lowering density, the area would still become a dense neighborhood with the proposed zoning, adding that the proposed downzoning would not affect the residential capacity in a significant way. Vice-Chair Wambach commented that in the packet there was messaging that they were downzoning and limiting it to residential land uses, which sent the message that the district would no longer be mixed-use, which he felt was not appropriate for a regional growth center.

Commissioner Santhuff stated he was generally supportive of the residential enclaves concept, and recommended several refinements to the proposed land use map, suggesting that major boundaries on alleys should be shifted to streets instead. He asked why they were leaving the small area of URX south of 47<sup>th</sup> Street when it could be made UCX instead, allowing more density. He questioned if they needed the Neighborhood Mixed-Use area in the center of the Madison residential enclave, suggesting that they could move it to 43rd and Lawrence if the zone was still needed in the neighborhood.

Townhouse design was discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed recommended changes for townhouse design standards including requiring that building frontages connect to the street; allowing front doors on alleys only if the alley is like a small street with a sidewalk and landscaping; and requiring a clear pedestrian pathway to front doors. Mr. Barnett added that the code language regarding utility and garbage collection siting would need to be strengthened. He discussed landscaping and yards, reporting that they were proposing requiring street trees for 1, 2, and 3 family residences; proposing 15% onsite canopy coverage; and strengthening the standards for functional yard space. Commissioner Santhuff noted that utility lines can impact height of trees, asking if they had a goal of undergrounding utilities. Mr. Barnett responded that the plan did call for undergrounding as the preferred way to handle utilities. He added that overhead utilities, when present, would not make it infeasible to meet the proposed canopy requirement since there was flexibility in the City's methodology for canopy calculation and a fee in lieu option if it was not feasible.

Community Vitality was discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that the community vitality chapter focused on actions including fostering a positive identity; bringing in more arts and culture; increasing local serving goods and services; improving safety; looking at the Madison School site as a hub; empowering the community; and improving parks, open space, and recreation. For the Madison school site he reported that staff would develop several redevelopment scenarios for the site as the Commission had previously requested.

For the parks and open space chapter, Mr. Barnett commented that they were proposing to make a stronger statement regarding the need for park space; replacing the parks system map with a more schematic map showing a generalized concept of a parks system; researching parks level of service alternatives; and strengthening the language for connections to other parks. Commissioner Santhuff commented that the sites shown in three of the quadrants of the long term vision map made sense from a development standpoint and that he hoped that the plan would identify them so that the City could work with Metro Parks to secure them. Commissioner Woolley asked if they had coordinated with public agencies that already have a stake in two of the four quadrants. Mr. Barnett responded that they had been communicating with Metro Parks and the school district to come up with the details of the parks approach. Chair Beale asked if there was a master plan for Lincoln Heights Park, noting that people who live in the area go to Wapato Hills Park and that similar features could help.

Housing was discussed. Mr. Barnett reviewed that housing was relatively affordable in the area, but that that it was a low income area with many cost burdened residents. Actions proposed included promoting development where transit was available; reaching out to developers and using existing tools through the Housing Division and public housing providers to encourage incorporation of community and green spaces; meeting a 25% affordability target and incorporate affordability into development; providing for low income and special needs housing; and monitoring the supply of affordable housing. Minor modifications recommended by the Housing Division included revising the previous proposed "no net loss" of affordable housing with a benchmark of 25% of housing being affordable, and developing a safety net for cost burdened households.

Mr. Barnett noted that for community empowerment, actions would include calling for the development of an implementation committee. Proposed modifications include dedicating more city resources to support

neighborhood empowerment and committing to regular implementation updates from staff every two years to neighborhood groups as well as to Council.

Chair Beale asked if the Transportation Commission had seen the updated connectivity proposal. Mr. Barnett responded that he had presented to them several times, with the last time being a few months ago. Chair Beale requested that he loop them back in at some point, possibly when they have a draft available for review.

#### **E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Boudet updated the Commission on the following items:

- (1) The UWT Urban Studies forum on immigrant labor in the economy would be on February 16.
- (2) The City Council had appointed Elizabeth Pauli to be interim city manager.
- (3) The first of the Planning and Development Services public forums had been held on February 13<sup>th</sup> and the next was scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup> at Gray Middle School.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:38 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-1**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Lauren Flemister, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Residential Infill Pilot Program**  
**Meeting Date:** March 1, 2017  
**Memo Date:** February 23, 2017

At the Planning Commission's meeting on March 1, 2017, staff will provide an update on the Residential Infill Pilot Program. The purpose of the Pilot Program is to promote innovative residential infill development types, while ensuring that such development demonstrates high quality building and site design that is responsive to and harmonious with neighborhood patterns and character.

The City is accepting infill pilot program applications through March 10, 2017. Interested parties are required to submit a Statement of Interest by February 3 and schedule a pre-application meeting with staff before submitting a complete application. To date, staff has received 20 Statements of Interest and is currently in the midst of preliminary review of projects through pre-application meetings and technical research.

At the meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>, staff will provide an overview of some details and findings of potential projects based on information gathering and the application process. Staff will also outline the next steps for the program, which include public engagement and the Project Review Committee process.

General information about the program is available at [www.cityoftacoma.org/infill](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/infill). If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 905-4146 or [lflemister@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:lflemister@cityoftacoma.org).

c. Peter Huffman, Director





City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-2**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Open Space Corridors Project**  
**Meeting Date:** March 1, 2017  
**Memo Date:** February 23, 2017

In 2009 the City designated Habitat Corridors throughout the City. These Corridors connected steep slopes, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands and streams, as well as passive and active recreation areas. The Habitat Corridors became the basis for the Parks and Open Space designation in the Future Land Use Map of the One Tacoma Plan. As part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, these Habitat Corridors were renamed Open Space Corridors and the policies reflected the multiple functions and services that these lands provide. However, while the City has had longstanding policies pertaining to these lands, implementation has been lagging.

First, this project seeks to fill the gaps in current standards. Current critical area standards apply when development activity is likely to occur within or have an impact on the function of a designated critical area (flood plains, geologic hazards, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, streams, aquifer recharge areas). However, these standards create a patchwork approach to regulating open spaces and are not adequate to limit the overall tree and vegetation removal or to ensure unfragmented corridors.

Second, as steep slopes comprise a significant portion of the City's designated Open Space Corridors, the City is partnering with Department of Commerce and the Washington Sea Grant to compile the best available science for managing geologic hazard areas and to understand the ways that climate change is likely to impact the risks and vulnerabilities of the City's steep slopes and open spaces. This review will likely lead to amendments to the City's submittal requirements and development standards for geologic hazard areas.

Staff will be providing an overview of the project need, purpose and intent for consideration as part of the 2017-2018 Amendment cycle.

General information about the project is available at [www.cityoftacoma.org](http://www.cityoftacoma.org). If you have any questions, please contact Stephen Atkinson at (253) 591-5531, or email [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org).

c. Peter Huffman, Director

Attachments:

- A. Project Description and Process
- B. Open Space Corridors Mapfolio





# Open Space Corridors Project

## Project Description and Process

The Open Space Corridors (OSC) Project is one of the City’s initial steps to implement the Parks and Open Space designation of the new Comprehensive Plan, *One Tacoma*. The Parks and Open Space designation includes a variety of areas within the City, including active park and recreation areas, passive open spaces, critical areas, steep slopes, and other important habitat areas. Many of these lands remain privately owned and zoned to encourage development. While some sites are protected by critical area standards, others currently lack development standards that would adequately protect and retain the multiple important functions and values these lands provide.

Over the next 20 years, the number of people and jobs will grow significantly in Tacoma, increasing development pressure within sensitive and important open spaces within the City. In addition, climate change is likely to increase landslide and erosion risks, placing even greater importance on taking actions now to protect life and property. Where past policy approaches have typically relied on direct acquisition of properties to preserve functions, this project will evaluate other regulatory approaches.

### Project Process

The Open Space Corridors Project is being conducted in four major phases.

#### 1. Research and Assessment

- December 2016 to March 2017
- Assessment Report, April 2017



- Evaluate current critical area development standards and identify Open Space Corridors currently not subject to CAPO.
- Identify development scenarios and map public/private land, development risk.
- Research best practices and zoning approaches that other cities have used to limit development in designated open space corridors.

#### 2. Concepts Development

- April to July 2017
- Concepts Report, August 2017

- Develop a draft conceptual framework for regulating Open Space Corridors.

#### 3. Code Development

- September to January 2018
- Discussion Draft, February 2017

- Revise Tacoma Municipal Code to implement the Open Space Corridor proposed regulatory framework.

#### 4. Public Hearings/Adoption

- PC Hearing, March 2018
- Council Hearing, June 2018

- The public may testify in person on the draft Open Space Corridors standards at the Planning Commission and Tacoma City Council public hearings.

**Planning and Development Services**  
 City of Tacoma, Washington  
 Marilyn Strickland, Mayor • Peter Huffman, Director



**Project Manager**  
 Stephen Atkinson, Senior Planner  
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[www.cityoftacoma.org/planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/planning)

## Washington State Growth Management Act

The Washington State Growth Management Act identifies the following as planning goals: maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural and fisheries industries [RCW 36.70A.020(8)]; encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses [RCW 36.70A.020(8)]; encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks [RCW 36.70A.020(9)]; and, protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water [RCW 36.70A.020(10)].

## Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) are goals, objectives, policies, and strategies to guide the production of the County and municipal comprehensive plans. The CPPs include goals and policies relating to the identification, designation, and conservation of open space and environmentally sensitive lands. The CPPs also identify strategies that municipalities may use to achieve the goals of the CPPs, including the use of buffers, development restrictions, incentives, transfer of development rights, and education among others.

## One Tacoma Planning Policies

As part of the City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan update, Parks and Open Space corridors were identified and integrated into the Future Land Use Map of the One Tacoma Plan. These areas are further defined as Open Space Corridors in the Environment and Watershed Health Element of the Plan and were designated consistent with the purpose and intent of the Growth Management Act and the Washington Administrative Code. Goals and policies supporting the preservation and enhancement of designated Open Space Corridors are integrated throughout the One Tacoma Plan.

### **Planning**

Policy UF-11.1 Create an integrated system of Open Space Corridors that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, offers a well-balanced range of experiences, and enriches the lives of Tacoma's current and future citizens.

Policy UF-11.4 Recognize and promote the multiple benefits Open Space Corridor preservation and restoration provides to the city, including more resilient plant and wildlife communities, community health and well-being, stormwater retention, active living, beauty, scenic resources, economic development, and sense of civic pride and identity.

Policy EN-1.17 Assess and periodically review the best available science for managing critical areas and natural resources and utilize the development of plans and regulations while also taking into consideration Tacoma's obligation to meet urban-level densities under the Growth Management Act.

Policy EN-1.30 Promote community resilience through the development of climate change adaptation strategies. Strategies should be used by both the public and private sectors to help minimize the potential impacts of climate change on new and existing development and

## *What tools does the City utilize to protect Open Space Corridors?*

- Transfer of Development Rights
- Current Use Assessment
- Property Acquisition and Management
- Critical Areas Development Regulations

## *Critical Areas in Tacoma include:*

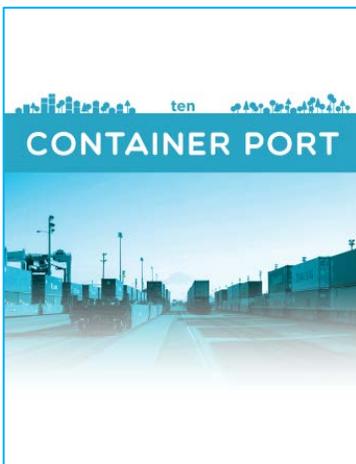
- marine habitats,
- freshwater rivers,
- streams and lakes,
- wetlands,
- aquifer recharge areas,
- frequently flooded areas,
- geologic hazardous areas, and
- fish and wildlife habitat areas.



Tacoma Environmental Action Plan 2016



Tacoma's Environmental Action Plan includes a target to adopt and implement code that discourages development where such development would endanger life, property or infrastructure, or where important ecological functions or environmental quality would be adversely affected.



The Container Port Element of the One Tacoma Plan identifies the steep slopes along Commencement Bay and Marine View Drive as a preferred natural buffer between industry and residential neighborhoods.

operations, include programs that encourage retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure to adapt to the effects of climate change.

### ***Manage Environmental Hazards***

Policy EN–2.1 Minimize the risk of damage to life and property by establishing robust development standards that ensure avoidance and/or minimization of potential geologic hazards.

Policy EN–2.2 Require appropriate levels of study, technical analysis, best available science and all known available and reasonable methods of prevention control and treatment (AKART) as a condition to permitting construction within geologically hazardous areas, ensure sound engineering principles are used based on the associated risk in these areas and limit land uses within or near geologically hazardous areas.

Policy EN–2.8 Regulate development in the 100-year floodplain to avoid substantial risk and damage to life, public and private property, infrastructure, and fish and wildlife habitat. Ensure these regulations, as a minimum, comply with state and federal requirements for floodplain regulations.

### ***Protect Assets***

Policy EN–3.1 Ensure that the City achieves no-net-loss of ecological functions over time.

Policy EN–3.5 Discourage development on lands where such development would pose hazards to life, property or infrastructure, or where important ecological functions or environmental quality would be adversely affected:

- a. Floodways and 100-year floodplains
- b. Geologic hazard areas
- c. Wetlands
- d. Streams
- e. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- f. Aquifer recharge areas
- g. Shorelines

Policy EN–3.6 Limit impervious surfaces within Open Space Corridors, shorelines and designated critical areas to reduce impacts on hydrologic function, air and water quality, habitat connectivity and tree canopy.

Policy EN–3.7 Encourage site planning and construction techniques that avoid and minimize adverse impacts to environmental assets.

### ***Improve Environmental Quality***

Policy UF–11.2 Improve Open Space Corridors using a mix of tools including natural resource protection, property acquisition, natural resource restoration, tree planting and landscaping with native plants, and ecological design integrated with new development.

## 19%

The City's estimated existing tree canopy coverage

### Climate Impacts

Anticipated climate change impacts in Tacoma include more extreme precipitation events (i.e., wetter winters and drier summers), an increased risk of mudslides, and greater flood risk in the Puyallup River (Dalton et al. 2014, Snover et al. 2013). Sea level rise and storm surge may result in greater coastal flooding, erosion and destabilization of shoreline bluffs.



Steep slopes on Tacoma Narrows

## Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of the Open Space Corridors project is to:

- Maintain contiguous open space corridors that provide for uninterrupted forests, slopes, streams, and species migration;
- Support the City's target of 30% tree canopy by 2030 (30x30);
- Establish standards for tree preservation and vegetation clearing that gives clear guidance to city staff and property owners during the permit review process;
- Address Open Space Corridors at a landscape scale rather than through the site by site review that occurs with critical area standards;
- Allow for reasonable use of private property that is currently designated for Parks and Open Space with a clear methodology for determining reasonableness;
- Update steep slope and geologic hazard application submittal requirements and development standards given the City's forecasted climate changes and the impacts climate change may have on increasing the risks to human life and property.

### Geologic Hazards Best Available Science Review

Geologic Hazards, including steep slopes and potential landslide hazard areas, are frequently located within areas designated as Open Space in the One Tacoma Plan. City staff are currently involved in two projects that will help to compile the best available science specifically for geologic hazards.

#### ***Department of Commerce Critical Areas Handbook***

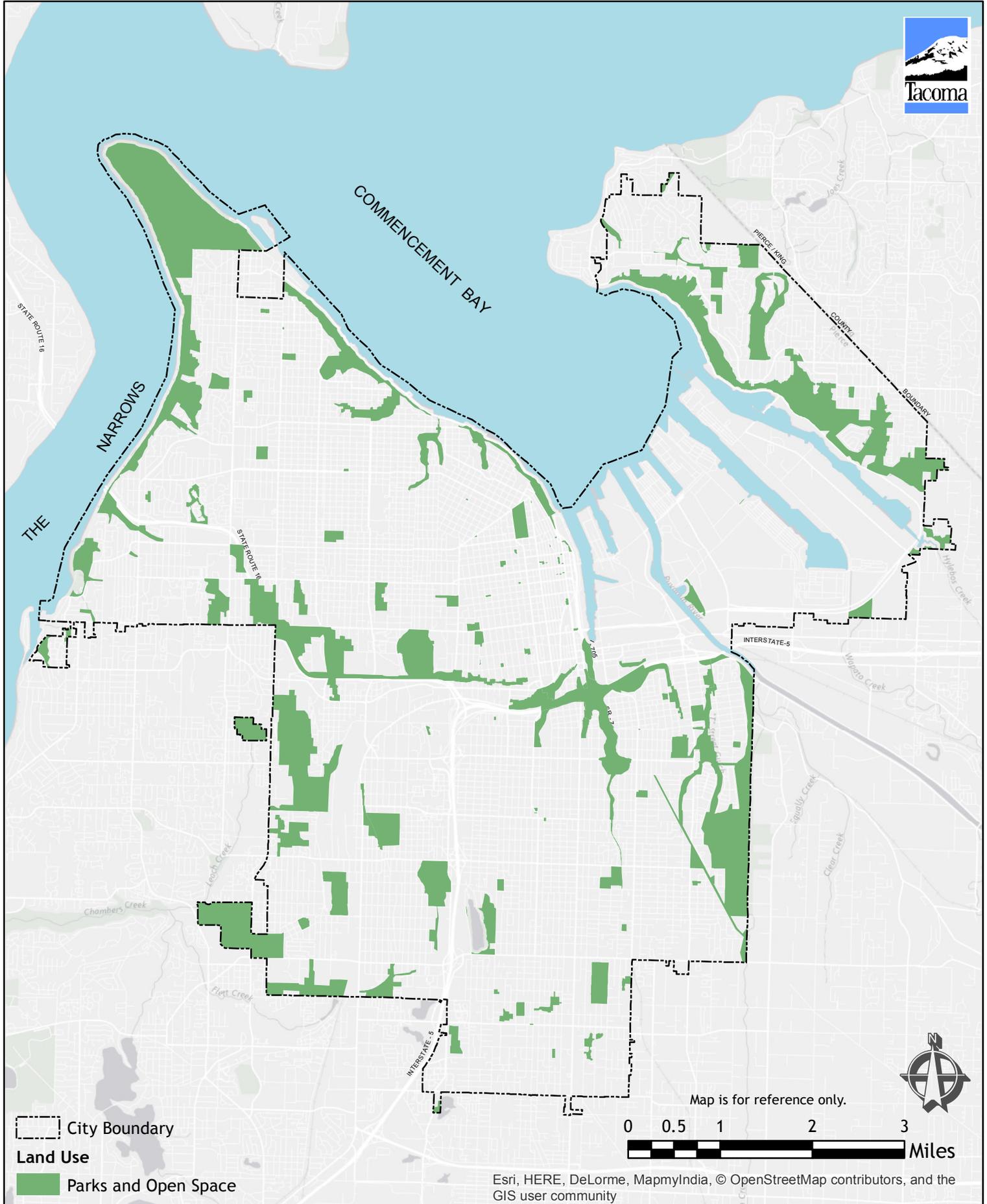
City staff is participating in a sounding board for the Department of Commerce to help guide an update to the Department of Commerce Critical Areas Handbook. In 2017 this sounding board is expected to review findings related to recent Growth Management Hearings Board decisions and court cases as well as review draft chapters on each topic to be updated. A point of emphasis in this scope of work is to update guidance on managing geologic hazards.

#### ***Washington Regional Coastal Resilience Grant***

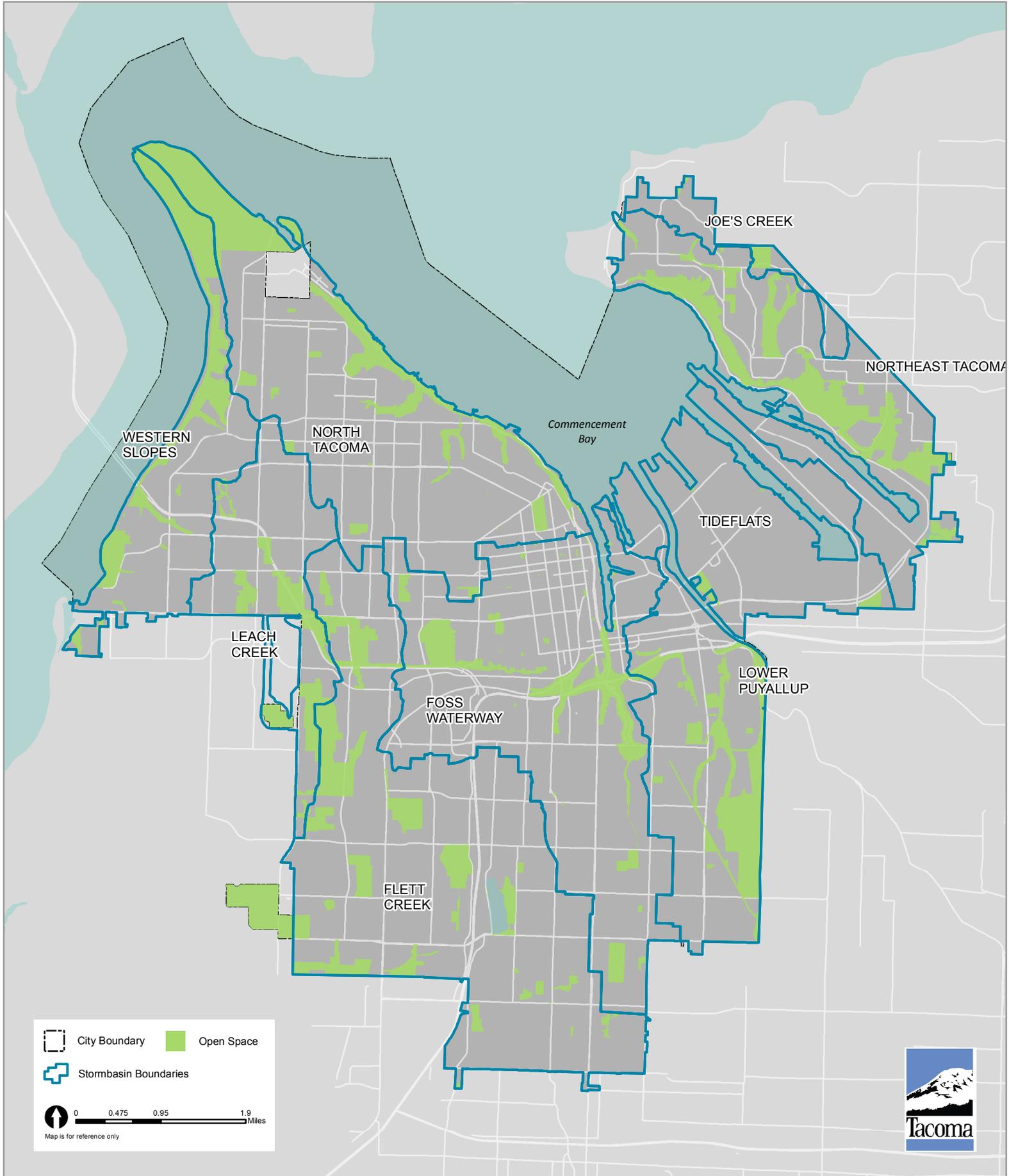
City staff from Planning and Development Services and Environmental Services are partnering with the Washington Sea Grant to:

- 1) identify the relationship between increased sea level rise and slope stability; and
- 2) identify what information is needed for regulators to make decisions that incorporate climate change risks when evaluating development permit proposals on steep slopes.

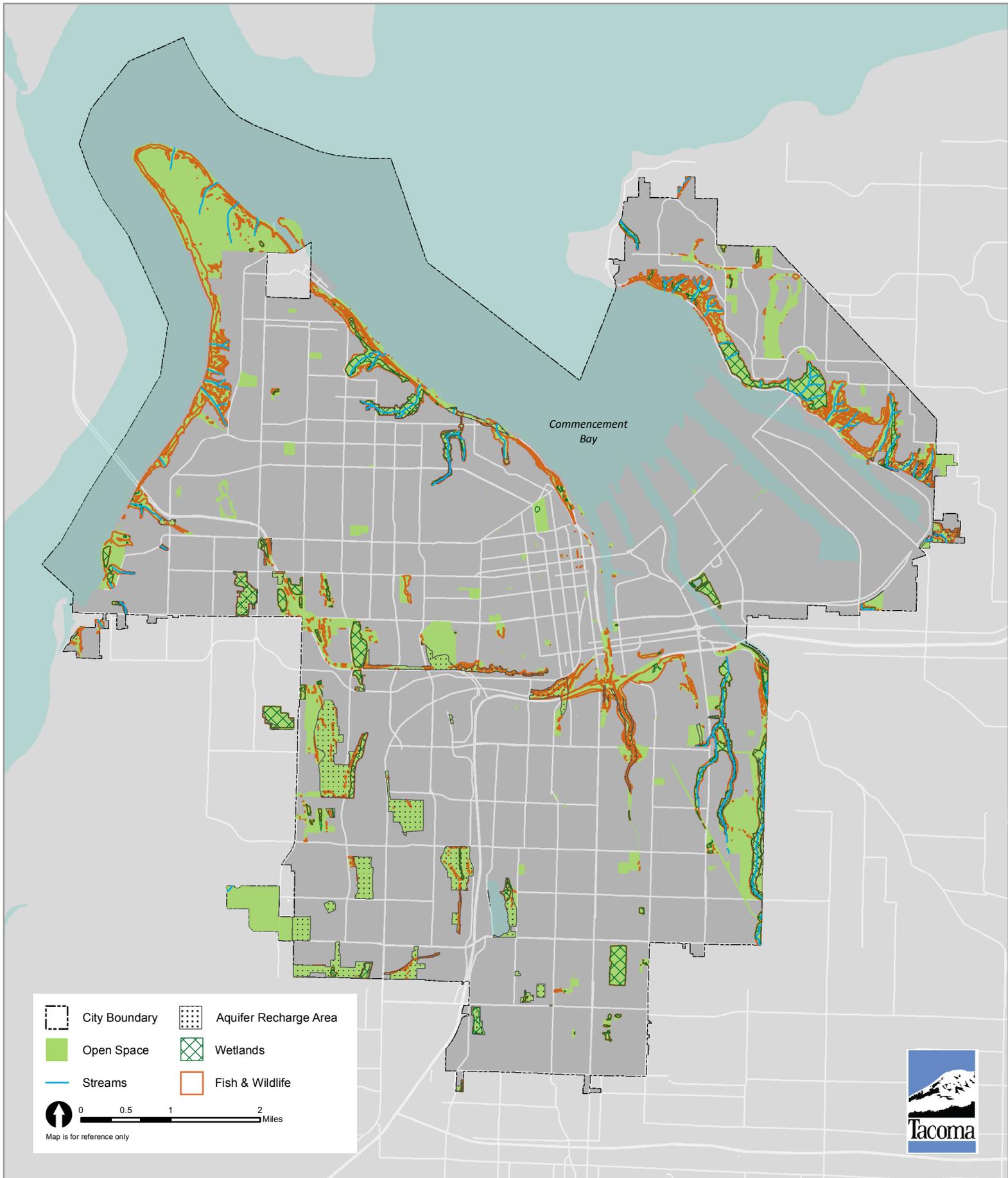
# Lands Designated for Parks and Open Space



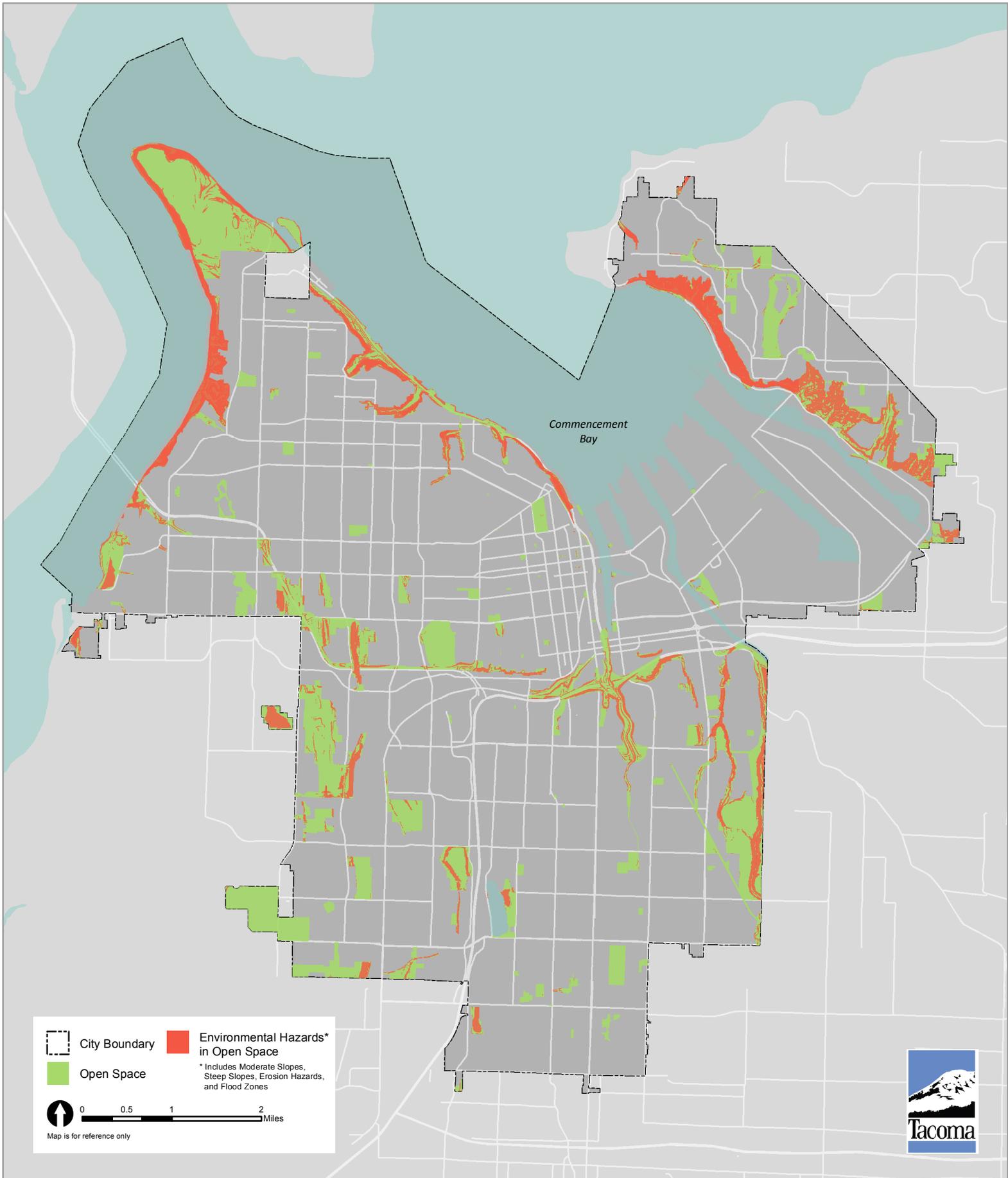
# Open Space and Stormbasin Boundaries



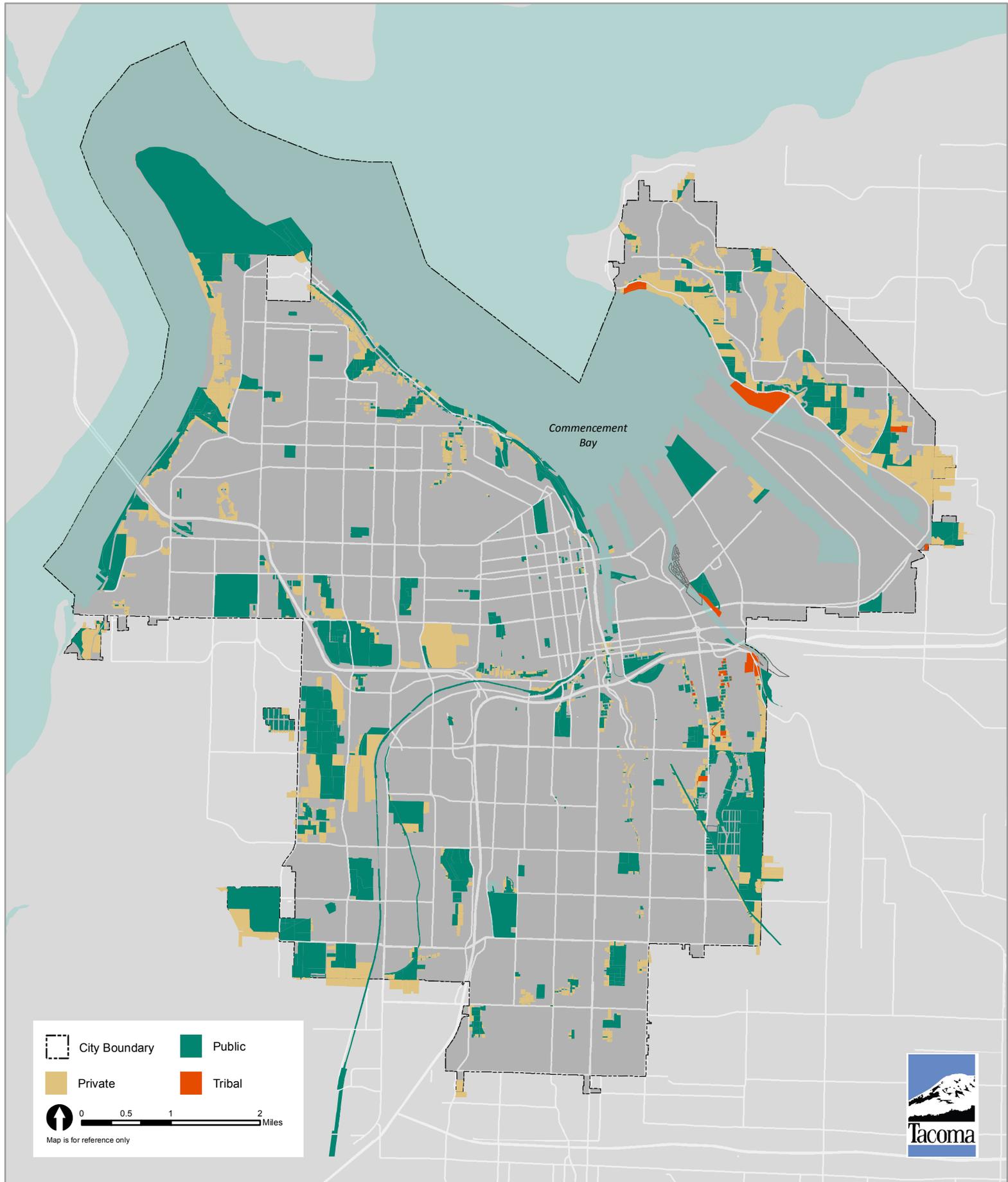
# Open Space and Environmental Assets



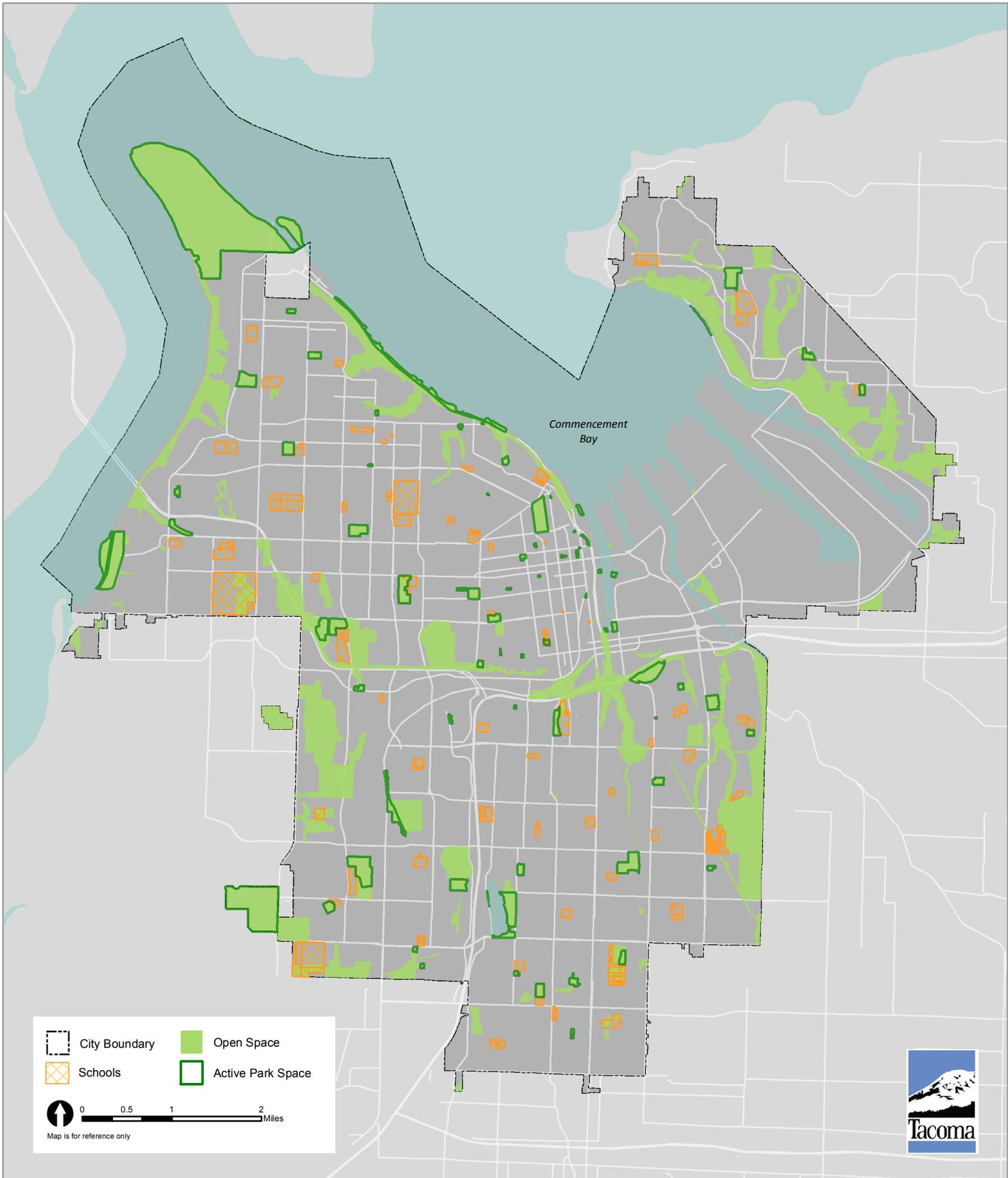
# Open Space and Environmental Hazards



# Open Space: Public, Private, and Tribal Lands



# Open Space and Active Parks + School Properties





City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
E-1**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and EIS**  
**Meeting Date:** March 1, 2017  
**Memo Date:** February 23, 2017

The Planning Commission has been reviewing the preliminary draft of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan since mid-December 2016 and has met three times to discuss a range of topics. The Commission has also received a significant amount of public comments during the “Public Comments” segment of each meeting when this subject was on the agenda. As part of the Commission’s discussions, deliberations and interactions with the public, a number of questions and concerns have been raised that require additional staff analysis to address. In order to facilitate the Commission’s continued review and to move systematically through decision-making on the key points of the preliminary draft, staff proposes the following approach as a path forward.

The City is committed to facilitating a robust public discourse on the Subarea Plan. To that end, staff are proposing to take some extra time to check in with the Planning Commission in a more structured and focused setting. Over the next several weeks, staff will conduct listening sessions with individual or small groups of Commissioners to garner their perspective on the vision, goals, policies, development strategies, implementation actions, and major issues associated with the draft plan. Staff will then conduct additional analysis and research as needed to respond to the Commission’s input and direction.

Once that work is complete, staff will bring forward a cohesive summary of recommendations and perhaps a decisions checklist for the Commission’s use. The next meeting date is to be determined but likely will be two to three months from now. During this time, staff will continue to actively engage with the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood stakeholders.

We appreciate the Commission’s support and advocacy for the project. We hope the proposed approach will result in positive outcomes and help the Commission strengthen your position to advocate for the project and eventually present the best recommendation to the City Council.

General information about the project is available at [www.tacomamallneighborhood.com](http://www.tacomamallneighborhood.com). If you have any questions, please contact Elliott Barnett at (253) 591-5389, or email [tacmallneighborhood@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:tacmallneighborhood@cityoftacoma.org).

c. Peter Huffman, Director