

**Revised Draft**

# SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN

Tacoma Shoreline Master Program Update

Prepared for: City of Tacoma

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**DRAFT**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public access to the shoreline is one of the three main goals described in the Shoreline Management Act (SMA). The State requires local governments to provide opportunities for shoreline recreational development (WAC 173-26-241(3)(i)) and to increase public access to publicly owned shoreline areas within Shorelines of Statewide Significance (RCW 90.58.020, WAC 173-26-191(1)(b))<sup>1</sup>. Local shoreline master programs are to include a public access element and a recreational element. The recreational element is to provide for “the preservation and enlargement of recreational opportunities, including but not limited to parks, tidelands, beaches and recreational areas” (WAC 173-26-191(1)(c)).

Local shoreline master programs are required: “To the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally, protect the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of shorelines of the state, including views of the water,” (WAC 173-26-221 (4)(iii)).

The State defines public access to the shoreline as “the ability of the general public to reach, touch, and enjoy the water's edge, to travel on the waters of the state, and to view the water and the shoreline from adjacent locations” (WAC 173-26-221(4)(a)). The principles listed within (WAC 173-26-221(4)(a)) include considerations for public safety and navigational needs when developing a public access plan to the shoreline. Please see Attachment 2 for further information on State requirements for shoreline public access.

This Shoreline Public Access Plan reviews goals and policies for shoreline public access and identifies existing and potential public access along Tacoma’s shoreline. Finally, this Plan includes criteria for prioritizing public access projects and a strategy for implementation.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS GOALS

There are unique opportunities and potential for public access to the extensive shorelines in Tacoma. The City follows three overall principles regarding shoreline public access and recreation:

- Protect the public’s opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shorelines, including views.
- Increase public access to publicly owned areas of the shorelines by giving priority to developing paths and trails to shoreline areas, developing linear access along the shorelines for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, developing upland parking, and by locating new major development inland from the ordinary high water mark so that public access is improved.

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<sup>1</sup> All of Tacoma’s shorelines are considered Shorelines of Statewide Significance, with the exception of Wapato Lake.

- Increase recreational opportunities for the public on the shorelines by planning for and encouraging and implementing development of facilities for water-oriented recreational use.

Key shoreline public access goals for Tacoma’s parks aim to:

- Provide accessible, convenient, safe, and attractive parks and facilities;
- Foster stewardship of community assets and historical/cultural resources;
- Provide affordable and high-quality recreation and educational experiences for a diverse community;
- Partner in responsible economic and community development;
- Create diverse, stable, and predictable funding strategies to provide the resources required to build, maintain, and operate our system of parks and programs;
- Maximize the benefits provided by Tacoma’s unique park and recreation resources; and
- Maximize community resources through partnerships to provide a system of parks and recreation opportunities.

### **3.0 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE OF PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN**

The state shoreline guidelines provide a general framework and planning process to address public access (WAC 126-73-221(4)(c)). This plan has been prepared consistent with the state shoreline guidelines. The City of Tacoma will use this plan to guide the development of new public access opportunities along the shoreline, and to increase public access to the shoreline over time. In general, this plan is intended to be implemented on public lands.

This Public Access Plan will also inform development of policies and development regulations as part of the City’s overall SMP update process. The plan will inform decisions about public access in private developments when required under the City’s shoreline regulations. Other public access groups or agencies, such as those identified in this plan, could use the identified goals, policies and opportunities to guide their actions.

### **4.0 PUBLIC ACCESS GOALS AND POLICIES**

This section identifies existing guidance in the Comprehensive Plan and Metro Parks Strategic Plan that is relevant to shoreline public access. These two plans include comprehensive and specific direction for increasing water-oriented recreational opportunities in the city consistent with State guidelines. No changes to citywide goals and policies are proposed as they are consistent with the State’s guidelines (WAC 173-26) for shoreline recreation and public access.

## 4.1 Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of shoreline public access and retention of the natural environment as growth and development occurs. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies for shoreline public access within several elements, including the Master Program for Shoreline Management, Generalized Land Use, Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element, Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan and Shoreline Trails Plan.

### 4.1.1 Master Program for Shoreline Management

As discussed above, the Master Program for Shoreline Management Element in the Comprehensive Plan includes three overall principles regarding shoreline public access and recreation along shorelines of statewide significance:

- Protect the public’s opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shorelines, including views.
- Increase public access to publicly owned areas of the shorelines by giving priority to developing paths and trails to shoreline areas, developing linear access along the shorelines for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, developing upland parking, and by locating new major development inland from the ordinary high water mark so that public access is improved.
- Increase recreational opportunities for the public on the shorelines by planning for and encouraging and implementing development of facilities for water-oriented recreational use.

The City’s general shoreline use goal is to:

- Develop the full potential of Tacoma’s shoreline in accord with the unusual opportunities presented by its relation to the City and surrounding area, its natural resource values, and its unique aesthetic qualities offered by water, topography, views, and its maritime character; and to develop a physical environment which is both ordered and diversified and which integrates water, shipping activities, and other shoreline uses with the structure of the City.

The following existing shoreline policies are relevant to public access and recreation:

- To seek public acquisition of shoreline property wherever it can be assembled into a logical pattern of public ownership and wherever otherwise generally feasible.
- To establish public access to and along the City’s shorelines where appropriate.
- To encourage close cooperation and coordination between both public and private shoreline interests including private property owners, the City, the Metropolitan Park District and the Port of Tacoma in the overall management and/or development of Tacoma’s shoreline.

- To be concerned with and to seek ways to satisfy the growing need for aquatic recreational facilities.
- To preserve views of the water and scenic waterfront routes.
- To provide safe, reasonable and adequate circulating systems to shorelines where routes will have the least possible effect on unique or fragile shoreline features and existing ecological systems, while contributing to the functional and visual improvement of the shoreline.

The Public Access and Circulation section provides for public access to and along shorelines, including physical, visual, upland and boater access. Stated public access goals are:

- To incorporate public access and view access in shoreline development where appropriate, to provide pedestrian and other non-motorized access to and along shorelines, to provide and/or retain view corridors.
- To improve access to shoreline areas from other parts of the City.
- To provide standards for uniform recognizable design and signage elements in public access areas.

Public Access policies include:

- a. Recognize and protect the public's right to the use of navigable waters.
- b. Preserve to the greatest extent feasible the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines of the City.
- c. Recognize the unique opportunity to establish in Tacoma a linear system of public access, starting with high-density intensive-use urban activity on Thea Foss Waterway, moving to moderate use urban paved sidewalk on Schuster Parkway, to a high-density intensive-use paved pathway on Ruston Way, then to a moderate intensity promenade in Point Defiance park from the boathouse to Owen Beach, culminating in completely natural beach walk from Owen Beach to Salmon Beach. Protect and promote the use of these diverse shoreline areas as an attraction unique to Tacoma.
- d. Work to establish a continuous waterfront bicycle/pedestrian route from Owen Beach at Point Defiance Park to join a Pierce County pathway along the Puyallup River.
- e. Require public access elements to and along the waters edge in public and private developments where appropriate.
- f. Abandoned or unused road or railroad rights-of-way in the shorelines should be acquired and/or retained to provide public access where feasible.



- g. Record on Deed of Title and on the face of the plat or short plat as a condition running with the life of the project all dedications, easements and permit conditions which secure public access.
- h. Encourage appropriate mitigation including off-site access, for any diminishment of public access for water-oriented developments in which access requirements would cause unavoidable safety or security hazards.
- i. Locate and design public access to shorelines so as to preserve or improve environmental quality.
- j. Encourage development of a system of vistas, view areas, scenic drives, trails and bike paths to take advantage of the siting of Tacoma and its unique relationship to Puget Sound.
- k. Retain existing street ends for public use where feasible. Require removal of uses which are unlawfully encroaching on such public areas.
- l. Set standards for access, including but not limited to: width of sidewalks, trails, paths, and promenades; building setbacks from pedestrian paths; minimum distances between pedestrian paths linking adjacent streets with the waters edge.
- m. Set standards for view access in water-oriented public and private development including but not limited to building location, orientation and design; and viewing structures such as decks and roof gardens; distance between view corridors from street to water and width of such corridors.
- n. Set standards for design elements and landscaping of parks, beaches, piers, wharves, docks, floats, public areas and public access ways.

The goals of the Recreation section of the current Program are:

- To make the shoreline an asset to adjoining areas and to the entire City and attractive to its visitors.
- To acquire, administer and/or develop designated portions of the shoreline as major water-oriented recreational and open space assets of the City.
- To promote improvement of the unique view potential of the physical location of Tacoma.

Current recreation policies include:

- a. Locate only water-oriented recreational uses on the shorelines.
- b. Insure that any recreational use is consistent with the ability of the shoreline to support that use. Inventory shorelines for unique attributes and qualities especially valuable for recreational uses and assign acquisition priorities accordingly.

- c. Encourage development of marina and boat launch facilities where appropriate, where physical space is available to alleviate unmet needs, and where it can be accommodated with minimal damage to the environment.

#### **4.1.2 Generalized Land Use Element**

The Generalized Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes a goal regarding the provision of open space and quality of life:

LU-MUD-3 – Open Space: Provide a diverse array of usable open spaces including small parks, plazas, playgrounds, and others within centers to balance higher density development, enhance the quality of the living environment and provide social and recreational opportunities for residents, employees and visitors.

#### **4.1.3 Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element**

The current Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element includes the following general policies regarding public access and open space:

ROS-G-3 – Design and Development: Promote design and development of recreation and open space facilities that provide for play that will enhance Tacoma’s natural setting and that complement the ecology and unique features of the site or area.

ROS-G-4 – Scenic View and Vistas: Develop and maintain a system of scenic view sites and vistas in order to take advantage of the natural beauty of Tacoma and its siting in the Puget Sound Region.

ROS-G-7 – Accessible Linkages: Encourage the development of pedestrian, bicycle or equestrian linkages wherever possible, appropriate within and between recreation, and open space sites.

ROS-PB-2 – Trail Corridors: Develop new corridors for bicycles/pedestrian trails and take advantage of available corridors such as existing park trails, greenbelt areas, railroads, pipelines, power lines and street rights-of-way.

#### **4.1.4 Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan**

The proposed Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan amendment (that would replace the current Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element) sets forth updated goals, policies, and implementation plans for Tacoma municipal open spaces and natural areas. The Plan was drafted to meet Goals Nine and Ten of the GMA. Goal Nine encourages cities and counties to retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water and develop parks and recreation facilities. Goal Ten encourages cities and counties to protect the environment and enhance Washington’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water. An overall goal of the Plan is to provide a balance between natural area protection, urban public recreation opportunities and aesthetics. The objectives of the plan do not address public access to the

shoreline specifically. The plan’s general open space policies for recreation are relevant to the shoreline; the plan also includes policies specific to shoreline public access:

OS-MUC-5 Reconnect the Waterfront – Seek opportunities to re-connect downtown and the Thea Foss Waterway through developing multi-functional open spaces, trails and/or recreational facilities that provide or enhance pedestrian connectivity between downtown and the waterfront.

OS-SH-1 Water Access – Develop opportunities for public access to the Puget Sound for water-oriented recreation, including public access to beaches, non-motorized boating, SCUBA diving, and other activities.

OS-SH-3 Shoreline Trail Connections – Recognizing that many of Tacoma’s existing and planned trails follow the shoreline or connect shoreline and upland areas, partner to develop and maintain trails oriented to the shorelines, slopes and gulches. Development of trails should be coordinated with habitat restoration efforts.

#### **4.1.5 Shoreline Trails Plan**

The goal of the Shoreline Trails Plan in the Comprehensive Plan is to tie trail segments together into a unified, urban pedestrian network, joining the north and west slopes of the city together.

#### **4.1.6 Destination Downtown**

The Comprehensive Plan includes specific goals and objectives for public access along the Thea Foss Waterway, in particular, capitalizing on its proximity to the downtown area. Within the Destination Downtown chapter, the Plan states:

“Pedestrian connections at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street should be improved to provide enhanced access and mobility between the commercial core and the Foss Waterway Esplanade.”

#### **4.1.7 Metro Parks Tacoma Strategic Plan**

The Metro Parks Tacoma Strategic Plan (2006) includes ten overall goals. The goals specifically relevant to providing shoreline public access are:

- *Provide accessible, convenient, safe, and attractive parks and facilities.* Accessibility, convenience, and safety are essential to a positive recreation experience. Metro Parks Tacoma will provide clean and inviting parks and facilities--including quality signature facilities that foster community pride and are conveniently located for easy access to people of diverse backgrounds.
- *Foster stewardship of community assets and historical/cultural resources.* Tacoma is fortunate to have a wealth of cultural and historical resources that enrich the community. Metro Parks Tacoma will provide opportunities to enhance appreciation of these resources and promote community stewardship.

- *Provide affordable and high-quality recreation and educational experiences for a diverse community.* Metro Parks Tacoma will provide affordable recreation and educational experiences that meet the needs of our diverse community, including residents of all ages, abilities, family compositions, and economic and cultural backgrounds. These experiences will reflect quality and excellence.
- *Partner in responsible economic and community development.* Parks and recreation help fuel the region’s economy and make a community more livable. Diverse recreation and cultural opportunities and quality attractions bring residents, businesses, and tourists to the City. For these reasons, Metro Parks Tacoma will be an important partner in promoting economic development throughout the region, by providing services, parks, and open spaces to improve the quality of life for workers in business areas and residents in our neighborhoods.
- *Create diverse, stable, and predictable funding strategies to provide the resources required to build, maintain, and operate our system of parks and programs.* MPT will use a variety of long and short term funding strategies to provide dependable funding for parks and programs. These strategies may include grants, private contributions/donations, foundations (public-private partnerships), bonds, voter approved measures, maintenance and operating levies, property and sales taxes. The District will pursue new or expanded regional funding strategies for both facilities and programs that serve citizens from beyond MPT borders. A fee schedule should be created that balances cost recovery goals with the needs of the community. Some programs and facilities will continue to be subsidized, while others may fully recover costs or even generate revenues that can be used to serve residents with financial needs. New revenue generating and entrepreneurial projects and ventures should also be explored and considered as one funding strategy.
- *Maximize the benefits provided by Tacoma’s unique park and recreation resources.* Special facilities, such as Point Defiance and Wright Park, help define Tacoma’s unique character. While attracting people from outside the region and contributing to Tacoma’s livability, they also generate revenue and enhance the economic vitality of the entire community. Regional parks and signature facilities provide the benefits associated with high quality recreation and educational experiences. Making the most of these parks will be given special attention by the District.
- *Maximize community resources through partnerships to provide a system of parks and recreation opportunities.* Partnerships are a key means the District will use for leveraging community resources, while minimizing duplications in effort. MPT will be a leader in forging and fostering partnerships that forward the District’s mission. MPT will move toward formalized partnerships that ensure equity and tangible benefits to both parties.

Actions in the Strategic Plan that pertain to the shoreline are:

Action 1.2.5 Provide public access to the Puget Sound for water-related recreation and trail uses, including boating facilities along Thea Foss Waterway, Ruston Way, Point Defiance Park and other community parks.

Action 1.3.9- Recognize the importance of other regional parks and greenspace not currently owned or maintained by MPT in satisfying overall citywide park needs. Some examples include Fireman’s Park, the Chinese Reconciliation Garden (under development), the proposed Thea Foss Esplanade extension, and other greenspace.

Action 2.2.17- Outdoor water-related facilities with Sound access to include kayaking, canoeing, scuba diving, rowing and other non-motorized watercraft/boating. These facilities, which can be developed as part of a Sound-related Nature and Environment Center, should generate revenue.

Action 6.2.2- Collaborate with the City of Tacoma and others to create a connected system of urban parks in the downtown and Thea Foss areas, incorporating landscaped public spaces as developments occur, such as pedestrian linkages, boulevards, public amenities, and art work, to meet recreational needs and support livability.

Action 6.2.5- Provide more public access to waterfront and greenspace, where possible, near dense urban areas to enhance the livability of the City.

Action 6.2.6- Revitalize downtown parks, such as Wright Park and Thea’s Park, for the enjoyment of downtown residents, employees, and visitors.

Action 9.1.1- Continue to work with public and private partners to build and plan other public park spaces along the Thea Foss Waterway to create an integrated and connected esplanade for public enjoyment.

Action 9.1.2 Encourage partners to complete the development of the Chinese Reconciliation Garden so as to enhance the unique waterfront experience at Ruston Way for both the residents and visitors.

## **5.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS**

### **5.1 Overview of Public Access Opportunities**

Existing shoreline public access and future demand are discussed in the Shoreline Use Analysis technical memo (October 2008). See also Table 1 and Attachment 1, Map 1. Existing Shoreline Public Access. Consistent with the State’s guidance, this plan identifies opportunities for increasing public access along Tacoma’s shorelines. Table 1 and Attachment 1, Map 2. Conceptual Public Access Opportunities, summarize the types and locations of public areas and facilities which could be pursued to improve access over time within each shoreline district. This plan includes the opportunity types that are listed below (by type of public access provided).

#### **Viewing the shoreline:**

- View points and corridors
- Habitat observation points

**Accessing and enjoying the shoreline:**

- Piers and docks
- Areas where water-oriented recreational uses could be expanded or improved in existing parks or public facilities
- Transient moorage
- Hand boat launches
- Motor boat facilities
- Proposed trails
- Trail connection or improvement
- Street ends that should be retained for public use
- Esplanade expansion or repair
- Improved signage to identify parks and public facilities

Along with the existing goals and policies for Tacoma’s shorelines (described previously in this plan), the Draft Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element (August 2008) provides significant information and guidance for the development of these shoreline public access concepts. The Draft Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element includes a Needs Assessment that identifies general opportunities for preserving or establishing new recreation sites in the City.

**5.2 Public Access Opportunities by Shoreline District**

**5.2.1 Western Slope South (S-1)**

Public access in S-1 is provided by a public boat launch located at Narrows Marina. There is demand for improved facilities for hand launch and trailerable boats. A shoreline trail is proposed within this district. There are public street ends in S-1.

**5.2.2 Western Slope Central (S-2)**

Titlow Park is the predominant shoreline use in S-2. The park provides public beach access for sunbathing, picnicking, launching kayaks and canoes, shellfish harvesting, SCUBA diving and other water-oriented recreation. The north end of the park is leased by Metro Parks to the Tacoma Outboard Association, a private organization that provides a two-lane boat launch and other facilities to its members.

In the future, enhancements for motorized recreational boating could be provided at the Tacoma Outboard Association site or encouraged by modifying shoreline regulations for recreational boating facilities. The Metro Parks capital program includes a project to provide new facilities in

Titlow Park, such as new picnic facilities and trails. A specific shoreline trail is proposed within this district.

### **5.2.3 Western Slope North (S-3)**

There is no developed shoreline public access in S-3. Although the tidelands are in public ownership, new recreational access would not be feasible or compatible on the beach due to steep bluffs, railroad and residential uses. A shoreline trail along the bluff is proposed within this district and there may be opportunities for new viewpoints.

### **5.2.4 Point Defiance – Natural (S-4)**

Point Defiance Park is a public wilderness beach area. Public access is provided via a series of hiking trails, a five-mile loop drive and view points. No new trails or boating facilities are proposed.

### **5.2.5 Point Defiance – Conservation (S-5)**

Key public access in S-5 includes Owen Beach (beach access and parking), the Point Defiance boat ramp and the Boathouse Marina – all located in Point Defiance Park. Outside of the Park are the Breakwater Marina and Tacoma Yacht Club.

Future public access could be provided on Slag Peninsula as it is owned by Metro Parks. There is a preliminary design for Peninsula Park which could include a fishing pier, a habitat observation point (along with habitat enhancements) and other public access facilities. The Metro Parks Strategic Plan also proposes boating facility improvements in S-5.

### **5.2.6 Ruston Way (S-6)**

Metro Parks owns half of the shoreline area in S-6, including a series of interconnected parks, trails and recreational boating opportunities. Public access and recreational boating facilities could be enhanced as redevelopment occurs. Structural and public safety improvements are planned for Old Town Dock.

### **5.2.7 Schuster Parkway (S-7)**

Public access within S-7 is limited, although parks are located at either end of the district. Existing trail access is located on the upland side of the road and railroad and does not provide direct access to the waterfront, but the trail does provide views of Commencement Bay. There is a key gap in the trail to the east of Commencement Park.

Active recreation opportunities could be improved in S-7 by adding small boat launches or access for hand launched watercraft, although new parking and access would be constrained by the proximity of the railroad to the shoreline. A shoreline trail is proposed within this district to link existing segments. Signage could be added to improve public safety and encourage trail use. There is one public street end in S-7. Regulations could be revised to allow and encourage recreation in this district.

### **5.2.8 Thea Foss Waterway (S-8)**

Tacoma’s Draft Shoreline Public Access Plan for the Thea Foss Waterway describes a wide variety of existing and potential public access sites along the Thea Foss Waterway in detail (see Appendix A).

There are specific proposed public access projects for the west and east side of the Thea Foss Waterway that are undergoing permit review or final planning efforts, including an extension of the esplanade, two proposed access corridors, a public pier adjacent to Dock Street, and a non-motorized public boat launch at the new 21<sup>st</sup> Street Park along the west side of the Foss Waterway. On the east side of the Foss Waterway, there will also be extensions of the existing esplanade and construction of a non-motorized public boat launch at Waterway Park. Other identified opportunities for Thea Foss public access include further esplanade repair and expansion to fill gaps, improved pedestrian connections to the commercial core, a public access corridor aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> Street, a new ferry terminal, new public access points and open space, improved connections between the east and west sides of the Foss, and street and right-of-way improvements. There are multiple public street ends in this district. Regulations could be revised to allow and encourage recreation in S-7.

### **5.2.9 Puyallup River (S-9)**

Although much land in S-9 is in public ownership, public access is limited. There are no developed parks in S-9, but some parcels are classified as greenbelt and common areas by the County Assessor. Public access for habitat observation is provided at the Gog-le-hi-te wetland restoration site and there is an existing levee trail along the river [note: this levee trail is not mapped].

There are multiple public street ends in S-9, but there are no proposed trails. Regulations could be revised to clarify recreation goals in this district.

### **5.2.10 Port Industrial and Hylebos Creek (S-10)**

There are no developed recreational sites in S-10 and public access is limited. There is one private marina in the Hylebos Waterway. Habitat observation points could be further developed and signage added to encourage public use of the shoreline. There are multiple public street ends in this district.

### **5.2.11 Marine View Drive South (S-11)**

There are full service commercial marinas that provide recreational boating opportunities and supporting uses. There are no parks in this district, but public access to the beach is available via the Marine View Drive right-of-way.

A shoreline trail is proposed along the bluff above this district which would provide exceptional views of Commencement Bay, Mount Rainier and downtown Tacoma. The City owns many of the large, undeveloped parcels along the bluff. Boating facilities could be enhanced to meet high demand, and signage could be incorporated along Marine View Drive to improve awareness of access opportunities (in the right-of-way) and public safety issues.



### **5.2.12 Marine View Drive North (S-12)**

There are no parks in district S-12, but public access to the beach is available in the Marine View Drive right-of-way. The potential for trails and viewpoints and need for signage are similar to that described for S-11.

### **5.2.13 Wapato Lake (S-14)**

The majority of the area surrounding Wapato Lake is park land. In the future, uses could continue to be limited to water-oriented recreation and a habitat observation point could be incorporated near associated wetlands.

### **5.2.14 Browns Point-Dash Point UGA**

There are two parks that provide public access to the shoreline in the UGA: Browns Point Lighthouse Park and Dash Point Park. Both parks provide beach access. Access for hand launched watercraft is available. The Metro Parks Strategic Plan capital program proposes various improvements at Browns Point Lighthouse and Dash Point Park. There are no proposed trails in this area, although there are multiple public street ends.

**Table 1. Existing and Potential Shoreline Public Access**

Shoreline District	Area (excluding water) (acres)	EXISTING SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS										
		Saltwater Trail Access Point*	Cascadia Marine Trail Access Point*	Park/Trail Access Point**	Public Beach (approx. miles)	Trails (miles)	Public Marina	View Point	Habitat Observation Point	Shore diving Area	Public Dock	Park (acres)
S1 – Western Slope South	24	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	3
S2 – Western Slope Central	107	1	0	0	0.9	1.0	0	0	0	2	0	85
S3 – Western Slope North	97	0	0	0	0.0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
S4 – Point Defiance – Natural	105	0	0	1	2.2	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	92
S5 – Point Defiance – Conservation	58	2	1	0	1.7	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	32
S6 – Ruston Way	134	2	0	2	0.6	2.2	0	0	0	0	3	58
S7 – Schuster Parkway	48	1	0	1	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	10
S8 – Thea Foss Waterway	112	1	0	1	0.0	0.8	6	0	0	0	1	7
S9 – Puyallup River	122	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	1	0	0	0
S10 – Port Industrial (Hylebos Creek)	608	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0
S11 – Marine View Drive South	43	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S12 – Marine View Drive North	86	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S14 – Wapato Lake	74	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	60
Browns Point-Dash Pont UGA	NA	3	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>347</b>

**Table 1. Existing and Potential Shoreline Public Access, continued**

Shoreline District	CONCEPTUAL SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES***							
	Public Street End	View Points/ Corridors (X)	Habitat Observation Points (X)	Transient Moorage or New Motor Boat Facilities (X)	Hand Boat Launches (may include storage) (X)	Piers/ Docks (X)	Proposed Trails (approx. miles)	Priority Trail Connection (X)
S1 – Western Slope South	1				X		0.4	
S2 – Western Slope Central	0			X			3.1	X
S3 – Western Slope North	0	X					2.5	
S4 – Point Defiance – Natural	0						0.0	
S5 – Point Defiance – Conservation	1		X			X	0.2	
S6 – Ruston Way	0			X			1.1	X
S7 – Schuster Parkway	1				X		0.6	X
S8 – Thea Foss Waterway	3	X		X	X	X	2.9	X
S9 – Puyallup River	5						0.0	X
S10 – Port Industrial (Hylebos Creek)	9	X	X				0.0	
S11 – Marine View Drive South	0	X		X			0.0	
S12 – Marine View Drive North	0	X					0.0	
S14 – Wapato Lake	0						0.0	
Browns Point-Dash Pont UGA	8					X	0.0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>						<b>10.7</b>	
*Identified by Pierce County or the Washington Water Trails Association to show key water trail access points. The Cascadia Marine Trail access points are intended for non-motorized watercraft.								
**Identified by Pierce County to show park and trail access or entry points.								
*** 'X' indicates that there is an opportunity to provide new public access of a given type.								

## **6.0 PRIORITIES FOR PROVIDING NEW SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS**

Priorities for providing new shoreline public access in Tacoma are derived from existing goals and policies. Common themes from the Comprehensive Plan and Metro Parks Strategic Plan are emphasized, including:

- Connecting existing public lands and facilities to and along the shoreline;
- Balancing shoreline restoration and public access;
- Improving views;
- Meeting demonstrated demand for new shoreline access and providing a variety of water-oriented types of access; and
- Maximizing public access funds.

Public access prioritization criteria below are organized according to the five themes; they are not listed in order of importance. Implementation criteria from the 2006 Metro Parks Strategic Plan were used as the basis for this guidance.

### **6.1 Connecting existing public lands and facilities to and along the shoreline**

- Does the project facilitate additional access to existing parks?
- Is the project appropriately located and accessible to residents within the identified service areas?
- Does the project promote an interconnected system of parks, greenspaces, trails, and community facilities?
- Does the project improve access to Tacoma’s valued water resources?
- Is upland parking available?

### **6.2 Balancing shoreline restoration and public access**

- Would the project inhibit a moderate or high priority restoration action?
- Would the project incorporate shoreline protection or restoration elements?
- Does the project include a management plan to protect or restore shoreline resources?

### **6.3 Improving views**

- Does the project provide a new view point of the shoreline?
- Would the project enhance an existing view point or view corridor?

### **6.4 Meet demonstrated demand for new shoreline access and providing a variety of water-oriented types of access**

- Is the project consistent with identified shoreline use demands?
- Is the project accessible to diverse community members, including diverse cultures, ages, abilities, income levels, and individuals and families?
- Would the project provide recreation opportunities that would bring residents, businesses, and tourists to the City?
- Would the project increase the array of public access opportunities in the given shoreline district?

### **6.5 Maximizing public access funds**

- Is the site already in public ownership and underutilized (such as a public street end)?
- Does the project include improvements to an existing park or facility such that its lifecycle is extended or its recreation value is increased?
- Does the project add recreational or educational value to other projects underway or planned?
- Does the project expand fiscal resources by leveraging other funding resources? Would funding this project attract additional funds, such as matching grant funds or special donations?
- Are funds identified for the maintenance and operations of the park or facility?
- Could the project generate funds in the future?
- Does the project provide opportunities for community sponsorship, education and/or volunteerism?
- Would the project support existing partnerships or attract additional ones that will help the City goals?

## 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This section discusses the funding need, implementation timeline and performance measurement in implementing the Shoreline Public Access Plan. Strategies from the 2006 Metro Parks Strategic Plan and Draft Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element were used as the basis for this guidance.

### 7.1 Funding

The Shoreline Public Access Plan will be implemented via existing park and recreation programs. Many of the shoreline parks and facilities currently owned by Tacoma are maintained by Metro Parks Tacoma. Metro Parks maintains a 6-year comprehensive capital projects list to implement recommendations in the Metro Parks Strategic Plan; this capital program includes public access projects located along the shoreline. Most funding resources for these projects are limited in scope and can only be used to fund specific types of projects or improvements. Metro Parks continues to investigate all available funding options, including maintaining and expanding District general fund support, aggressively seeking grants, partnerships and donations, and being prepared to act as opportunities arise. Other funding sources for Metro Parks include bond proceeds, the State Recreation and Conservation Office, the State legislature (through special capital allocations), federal grants, State and local grants, and private partnerships. Via its service contract with Metro Parks, the City of Tacoma will continue to contribute funds to the District's capital program.

Funding approaches to implement the Shoreline Public Access Plan will take into consideration and be consistent with the funding strategies outlined in the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan. These strategies include identifying and pursuing new funding sources and strategies, utilizing City funds to leverage other public, private and non-profit funding sources whenever feasible; and partnering with other local agencies (Pierce County, Port of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Utilities, Tacoma Housing Authority) and educational institutions.

Finally, shoreline regulations will explore the potential for creating a shoreline public access funding source by allowing developers to pay a fee in lieu of providing on-site public access (a fee-in-lieu public access program). Funds raised would be directed to priority projects identified in this Shoreline Public Access Plan.

[Further discussion to be included regarding the potential for creating a “1% for shoreline public access” tax program]

### 7.2 Timeline

Tacoma's Shoreline Public Access Plan will be formally reviewed and updated every 7 years, along with the full Shoreline Master Program, as required under RCW 90.58.080. Further, shoreline public access plan goals and priorities will be shared with Metro Parks Tacoma for consideration in the District's 6-year capital facilities planning process. Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan actions along the shoreline, such as new trails, will be phased over that plan's 20

year planning horizon and reviewed on a biennial basis. The Public Access Plan could also be consulted during the City’s biennial budget process for capital projects.

### **7.3 Measuring Performance and Success**

To gain an understanding of its effectiveness, the Shoreline Public Access Plan calls for ongoing monitoring and reporting of progress towards goals, in coordination with the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan. This practice will provide information to be used to refine the plan and improve results. In addition, monitoring will increase the accountability of the City and its partner agencies and help build public understanding of issues, goals and challenges.

Key shoreline public access goals are to:

- Provide accessible, convenient, safe, and attractive parks and facilities;
- Foster stewardship of community assets and historical/cultural resources;
- Provide affordable and high-quality recreation and educational experiences for a diverse community;
- Partner in responsible economic and community development;
- Create diverse, stable, and predictable funding strategies to provide the resources required to build, maintain, and operate our system of parks and programs;
- Maximize the benefits provided by Tacoma’s unique park and recreation resources; and
- Maximize community resources through partnerships to provide a system of parks and recreation opportunities.

Data used to measure success is organized according to these goals. In general, the types of data to be used include public participation in or use of shoreline recreational resources, revenue/costs, facility and property type and condition, customer satisfaction and staff assessment. Measuring the City’s performance in implementing the Shoreline Public Access Plan will be coordinated with Metro Parks and Open Space Habitat and Recreation survey and monitoring efforts.

#### **Provide accessible, convenient, safe, and attractive parks and facilities**

- Percentage of community members and customers who rate shoreline park/facility safety, cleanliness and maintenance as good or excellent on customer satisfaction surveys.
- Percentage of shoreline parks and facilities with a staff condition assessment rating of good or excellent.
- Percentage of shoreline parks that are accessible via pathways, sidewalks and bike lanes.

**Foster stewardship of community assets and historical/cultural resources**

- Number of shoreline recreation opportunities that promote awareness, appreciation or stewardship of historical or cultural resources.
- Number of participants attending shoreline events or programs that promote or celebrate customs, traditions, arts/culture and history.
- Number of interpretive signs and facilities provided to inform residents about shoreline cultural and historical resources.

**Provide affordable and high-quality recreation and educational experiences for a diverse community**

- Percentage of customers or program participants reporting that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with shoreline recreation opportunities in customer satisfaction surveys.
- Numbers of seniors, youth, members of diverse ethnic groups and people with disabilities participating in shoreline recreation programs and activities.

**Partner in responsible economic and community development**

- Number of total visitors visiting shoreline parks and recreational sites.
- Percentage of visitors who rate visits, services and programs at shoreline parks as good or excellent on customer satisfaction surveys.

**Create diverse, stable, and predictable funding strategies to provide the resources required to build, maintain, and operate our system of parks and programs**

- Total annual value of gifts and donations dedicated to shoreline public access.
- Percentage of shoreline parks and recreation facilities meeting participation and cost recovery goals.

**Maximize the benefits provided by Tacoma’s unique park and recreation resources**

- Revenue generated annually through shoreline parks and recreation facilities.

**Maximize community resources through partnerships to provide a system of parks and recreation opportunities**

- Dollar value of partnerships with public, private and non-profit sectors in support of shoreline public access.
- Number of shoreline park sponsorships.



- Number of volunteer hours (FTE's) in maintenance and programming at shoreline parks and recreation facilities.
- Estimated dollar value of annual volunteer services at shoreline parks and recreation facilities.

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## **ATTACHMENT 1. SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS MAPS**

**Map 1. Existing Shoreline Public Access**

**Map 2. Conceptual Shoreline Public Access Opportunities**

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FILE NAME: Tacoma\_PublicAccess\_existing.ai  
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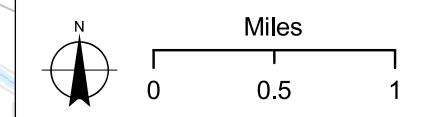
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 SOURCE: Beckwith Consulting, 2001; City of Tacoma GIS, 2006; ESA Adolfsen, 2008; Geo Engineers, 2004; King County, 2005; Pierce County, 2005-2008; TFD, TED, 2008; Wayne Clifford, 2005; WDOH; WDNR, 2007.

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- Conceptual Opportunities for Public Access Areas**
- VIEWING THE SHORELINE**
- VIEW POINT/CORRIDOR
  - HABITAT OBSERVATION POINT
- ACCESSING/ENJOYING THE SHORELINE**
- PIER/DOCK
  - IMPROVE/EXPAND WATER-ORIENTED RECREATION
  - PROVIDE TRANSIENT MOORAGE
  - HAND BOAT LAUNCH
  - MOTOR BOAT FACILITIES
  - PRIORITY TRAIL CONNECTION OR IMPROVEMENT
  - PROPOSED TRAIL
  - RETAIN PUBLIC STREET END
  - ESPLANADE EXPANSION OR REPAIR
  - PROVIDE/IMPROVE SIGNAGE

- Existing Public Access Areas**
- PARK/TRAIL ACCESS POINT
  - SHOREDIVING AREA
  - SALTWATER TRAIL ACCESS POINT
  - CASCADIA MARINE TRAIL ACCESS POINT
  - HABITAT OBSERVATION POINT
  - VIEWPOINT
  - SALTWATER TRAILS (PIERCE COUNTY)
  - PUBLIC BEACHES OR RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH HARVEST AREAS
  - PRIVATE MARINA
  - PUBLIC MARINA
  - PUBLIC DOCK/PIER
  - TRAILS: EXISTING
  - PARKS
  - SHORELINE DISTRICTS
  - RAILROAD
  - MAJOR ROAD
  - STREET
  - WATERBODIES
  - COUNTY BOUNDARY



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## ATTACHMENT 2. STATE SHORELINE PUBLIC ACCESS PROVISIONS (WAC 173-26-221(4))

### (4) Public access.

(a) **Applicability.** Public access includes the ability of the general public to reach, touch, and enjoy the water's edge, to travel on the waters of the state, and to view the water and the shoreline from adjacent locations. Public access provisions below apply to all shorelines of the state unless stated otherwise.

(b) **Principles.** Local master programs shall:

(i) Promote and enhance the public interest with regard to rights to access waters held in public trust by the state while protecting private property rights and public safety.

(ii) Protect the rights of navigation and space necessary for water-dependent uses.

(iii) To the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally, protect the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of shorelines of the state, including views of the water.

(iv) Regulate the design, construction, and operation of permitted uses in the shorelines of the state to minimize, insofar as practical, interference with the public's use of the water.

(c) **Planning process to address public access.** Local governments should plan for an integrated shoreline area public access system that identifies specific public needs and opportunities to provide public access. Such a system can often be more effective and economical than applying uniform public access requirements to all development. This planning should be integrated with other relevant comprehensive plan elements, especially transportation and recreation. The planning process shall also comply with all relevant constitutional and other legal limitations that protect private property rights.

Where a port district or other public entity has incorporated public access planning into its master plan through an open public process, that plan may serve as a portion of the local government's public access planning, provided it meets the provisions of this chapter. The planning may also justify more flexible off-site or special area public access provisions in the

master program. Public participation requirements in WAC 173-26-201 (3)(b)(i) apply to public access planning.

At a minimum, the public access planning should result in public access requirements for shoreline permits, recommended projects, port master plans, and/or actions to be taken to develop public shoreline access to shorelines on public property. The planning should identify a variety of shoreline access opportunities and circulation for pedestrians (including disabled persons), bicycles, and vehicles between shoreline access points, consistent with other comprehensive plan elements.

(d) **Standards.** Shoreline master programs should implement the following standards:

(i) Based on the public access planning described in (c) of this subsection, establish policies and regulations that protect and enhance both physical and visual public access. The master program shall address public access on public lands. The master program should seek to increase the amount and diversity of public access to the state's shorelines consistent with the natural shoreline character, property rights, public rights under the Public Trust Doctrine, and public safety.

(ii) Require that shoreline development by public entities, including local governments, port districts, state agencies, and public utility districts, include public access measures as part of each development project, unless such access is shown to be incompatible due to reasons of safety, security, or impact to the shoreline environment. Where public access planning as described in WAC 173-26-221 (4)(c) demonstrates that a more effective public access system can be achieved through alternate means, such as focusing public access at the most desirable locations, local governments may institute master program provisions for public access based on that approach in lieu of uniform site-by-site public access requirements.

(iii) Provide standards for the dedication and improvement of public access in developments for water-enjoyment, water-related, and nonwater-dependent uses and for the subdivision of land into more than four parcels. In these cases, public access should be required except:

(A) Where the local government provides more effective public access through a public access planning process described in WAC 173-26-221 (4)(c).

(B) Where it is demonstrated to be infeasible due to reasons of incompatible uses, safety, security, or impact to the shoreline environment or due to constitutional or other legal limitations that may be applicable.

In determining the infeasibility, undesirability, or incompatibility of public access in a given situation, local governments shall consider alternate methods of providing public access, such as off-site improvements, viewing platforms, separation of uses through site planning and design, and restricting hours of public access.

(C) For individual single-family residences not part of a development planned for more than four parcels.

(iv) Adopt provisions, such as maximum height limits, setbacks, and view corridors, to minimize the impacts to existing views from public property or substantial numbers of residences. Where there is an irreconcilable conflict between water-dependent shoreline uses or physical public access and maintenance of views from adjacent properties, the water-dependent uses and physical public access shall have priority, unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary.

(v) Assure that public access improvements do not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions.

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**APPENDIX A. CITY OF TACOMA SHORELINE PUBLIC  
ACCESS PLAN FOR THE THEA FOSS WATERWAY  
(NOVEMBER 2008)**

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