



City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

Agenda Item
D-2

To: Planning Commission
From: Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division
Subject: **Tacoma Mall Regional Center Subarea Plan and EIS**
Meeting Date: August 6, 2014
Memo Date: July 31, 2014

At the August 6th meeting, staff will present the scope of work, schedule and outreach plan for the Tacoma Mall Center Subarea Plan and EIS. This work is being funded by a \$250,000 National Estuaries Program Watershed Protection Grant, administered jointly by the State Departments of Ecology and Commerce. This effort will build upon the three subarea plans for downtown Tacoma, and will fulfill Tacoma's obligation to plan for designated Regional Centers.

Tacoma's successful grant application, under the theme of **Improving Land Use Management**, emphasized the important role that accommodating growth in urban centers plays in protecting natural and resources lands, and the health of the Puget Sound. The Puget Sound region is forecast to become home to 5 million people and 3 million jobs by 2040. The region's historic population growth has been associated with an outward urbanization of ecologically and agriculturally sensitive areas. **Vision 2040** is the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) plan to bend these trends, contain that outward expansion and direct growth to compact urban centers. The Tacoma Mall area is one of Tacoma's two designated Regional Growth Centers and a focal point for future jobs/housing concentration.

To accommodate growth sustainably, the Center must function well on many levels. Infrastructure, services, transportation choices, and neighborhood amenities must be adequate to support growth and make the area a desirable place to live, work and shop. At the outset, the City is aware of certain challenges. The Center is located within two sensitive stormwater basins: Flett Creek, an EPA Target Watershed which influences Chambers Creek, a salmon-bearing stream; and the Thea Foss Waterway, a superfund site that has been remediated at a cost of \$105 million dollars. The area includes some congested intersections, gaps in/barriers to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, the lack of some neighborhood amenities, and a relatively low income and transient residential population.

The Subarea Plan and EIS will be a community forum to collaboratively develop a vision, goals and strategies to guide growth and development, identify environmental impacts up-front on an area-wide basis, and target mitigation measures and other implementation steps.

Attached are a project overview, and PSRC's summary of the Center's key characteristics. If you have any questions, please contact me at 591-5389 or elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org.

Attachments (2)

c: Peter Huffman, Director

Tacoma Mall Regional Center Subarea Plan and EIS

Project Overview – August 6th, 2014

Objectives

- Promote sustainable growth within the 485-acre Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center
- Set the stage for a transition from an auto-centric regional shopping area and adjacent residential areas, into a compact, complete community
- Promote development consistent with VISION 2040, the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan
- Leverage public and private partnerships and investment to stimulate large-scale population and employment growth within the Center that:
 - Focuses new jobs and housing in areas with transportation choices
 - Promotes equity and housing affordability
 - Promotes salmon recovery and reduces stormwater impacts
 - Contributes to a healthy economy
 - Accelerates regional conservation as a Transfer of Development Rights receiving area
 - Contributes to a unique, vibrant and attractive urban center

Approach

- Develop a draft Sub-Area Plan for the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center
- Develop an environmental impact statement (EIS) identifying impacts and mitigation steps
- Identify a range of Implementation Strategies

Project Scope & Preliminary Timeline

<u>TASKS:</u>	<u>COMPLETE BY:</u>
• Identify available data, gaps and data gathering approaches:	October 14, 2014
• Public Involvement Plan and Outreach Strategy:	October 14, 2014
• Existing conditions report:	December 30, 2014
• Area-wide Transportation Strategy:	June 14, 2015
• Area-wide Stormwater Strategy:	June 14, 2015
• Draft Sub-area plan and EIS:	January 1, 2016
• Plan Implementation Strategy:	January 1, 2016
• Council Consideration of Subarea Plan & EIS:	July 1, 2016

Key stakeholders (preliminary):

- South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
 - Simon Corporation (Tacoma Mall)
 - Pierce and Sound Transit
 - Pierce County
 - WS Department of Transportation
 - Tacoma Housing Authority
 - Metro Parks Tacoma
 - Tacoma School District
 - Tacoma Pierce County Health Department
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Forterra
- CITY OF TACOMA:
- Long Range Planning
 - Stormwater Management
 - Traffic
 - Community and Economic Development
 - Neighborhood and Community Services

Characteristic features of the Tacoma Mall Subarea



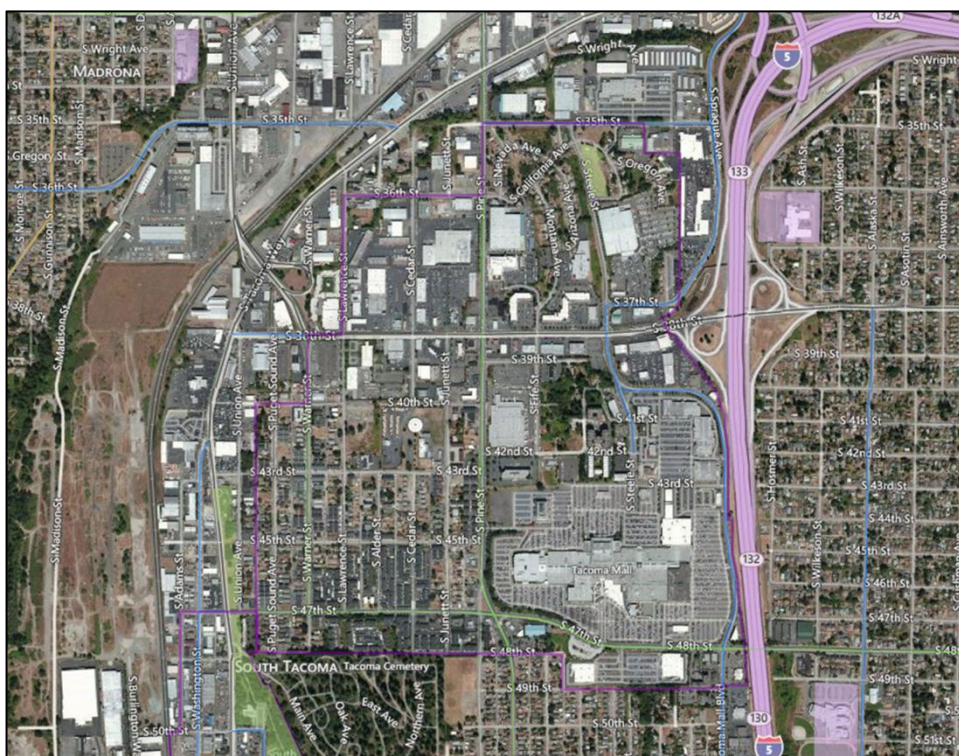
S. 38th Street



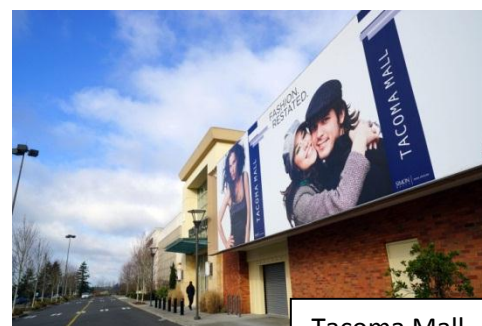
Police Station



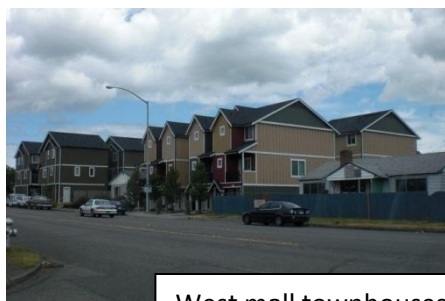
Lincoln Heights



Tacoma Mall Blvd



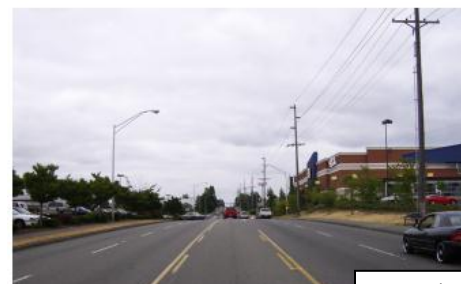
Tacoma Mall



West mall townhouses



Pacifica Apartments



S. 48th Street

Tacoma Mall

The City of Tacoma is the region's second most populous city and Pierce County's seat. Tacoma's location halfway between Olympia and Seattle provides it access to many modes of transportation, natural resources, economical power sources, and a deep, sheltered harbor, all of which have contributed to Tacoma's development as a successful industrial, commercial and trading center. The modern city has its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was designated as Northern Pacific Railroad's western terminus for its transcontinental railroad in 1873. The city itself was incorporated in 1884. Tacoma continues its tradition as a hub for trade, with the Port of Tacoma among the most important in the nation and the Pacific Rim. Regional shopping centers such as the Tacoma Mall have emerged to provide goods and services for the city and the region, while the emphasis in downtown has changed to professional offices, international finance, government, education, and cultural facilities. The city has many historic neighborhoods and a number of colleges and universities.

Lying approximately two miles southwest of the Downtown Tacoma regional growth center, the Tacoma Mall area is an important retail district within the city. Tacoma anticipates that the Tacoma Mall regional growth center will remain as the city's major retail center, and that it will accommodate future growth. The city plans for the center to accommodate the development of new office, supporting retail and multifamily residential uses. After the Downtown center, the Tacoma Mall area is seen as the next highest area of concentrated development in the city, with a possible range of building heights between one and 10 stories, and activity levels greater than in most areas of the city.

Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity

Tacoma Mall is a medium-sized regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (485 acres) with a net developable acreage of 394 acres (81% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city, the Tacoma Mall regional center contains 1.5 percent of the city's overall land area, 2 percent of the population, 2 percent of the housing, and 7 percent of the city's employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Tacoma Mall has a smaller number of total activity units (10,932), with mostly employment-oriented activity (66% jobs/33% residents) and a moderate density of activity (22.5 units per gross acre).

Urban Form

Tacoma Mall's average parcel size is 0.4 acres, which is significantly smaller than the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. Tacoma Mall provides a moderately walkable pedestrian environment, with a very limited network of sidewalks (64% coverage) and very large blocks with a 10.5 acre average size.

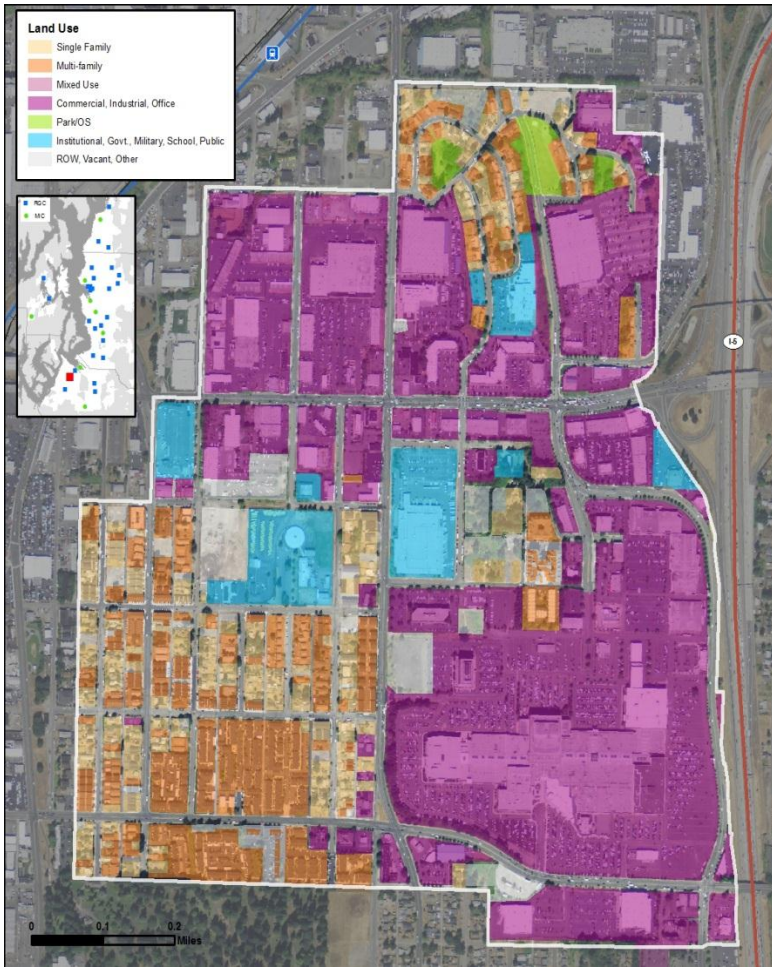
2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	485
Average block size (acres)	10.5
Average parcel size (acres)	0.4
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.52 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	22.5
Population	
Total population	3,761
Population density/acre	7.8
Change (2000–2010)	739
Housing	
Total housing units	1,916
Housing unit density/acre	4
Change (2000–2010)	605
Employment	
Total employment	7,171
Employment density/acre	14.8
Change (2000–2010)	-558
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	65%
Employee access to transit	89%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	79% • 9%
Walk & Bike / Transit	5% • 7%

Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	30
Grocery	5
Cafes & Bars	11
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	1
Laundry & Haircuts	7
Home supplies	9
Clothing & Shoes	49
Banks	6
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	7
Electronics & Toys	3
Bookstores & Libraries	4
Arts & Culture	-
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	8
Schools & Childcare	3
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	1
Pharmacy	1
Healthcare	18
Residential Care Centers	-

The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Tacoma Mall has a moderate set of urban amenities (163 total amenities / 0.34 amenities per gross acre). Home (41%) and Food/Drink (33%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Clothing/Shoes, Restaurants, Healthcare, and Cafes/Bars.



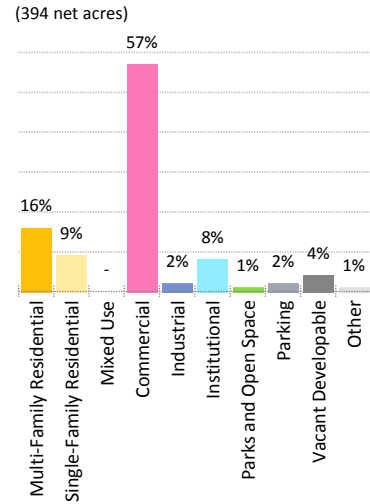
Land Use

The major land uses in Tacoma Mall are commercial (57%), multi-family residential (16%), single-family residential (9%) and institutional (8%). About 67 percent of the center’s 394 net acres are in employment-related use. Approximately 25 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

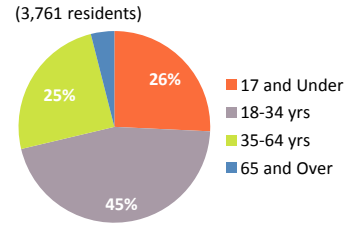
Demographics

The total population in Tacoma Mall is 3,761, and has grown by 739 residents over the past 10 years. The center has slightly younger residents than the region as a whole, with the largest share of youth (26%) and a very small share of seniors (4%). The age of residents is predominantly 18-34, followed by 35-64 (71% for both age groups

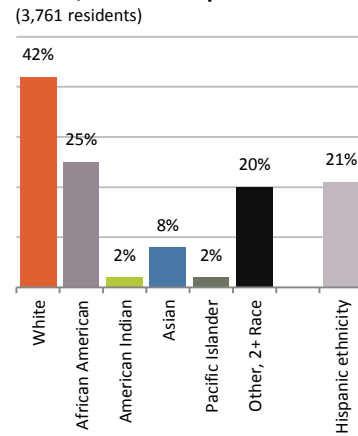
Current Land Use



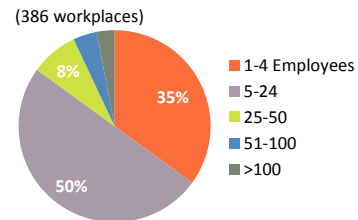
Age of Residents



Racial/Ethnic Composition



Size of Businesses



combined). At 58 percent, Tacoma Mall's racial diversity is significantly greater than the region's 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Tacoma Mall are White (42%), African American/Black (25%), and Other (21%). Twenty-one percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

Employment

The total employment in Tacoma Mall is 7,171, and it has decreased by 570 jobs over the past 10 years. The major industry sectors are Retail (45%), Services (26%) and Government (18%). Major employers are retailers located in the Tacoma Mall.

Housing

Tacoma Mall has 1,916 total housing units, with a density of four housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by 605 units (46% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Tacoma Mall has a large share (54%) of single family and 2- to 4- unit multifamily dwellings and a significant share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily (45%). In terms of unit affordability, Tacoma Mall's owner-occupied housing tends to be significantly less expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 is 92 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 category is 0 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

Transportation

For work-based trips, the Tacoma Mall regional center's travel characteristics are similar to the region as a whole. The region's single-occupant vehicle (SOV) share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 79 percent. The region's non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center's non-SOV share is 21 percent, with 7 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from Tacoma Mall are slightly focused on destinations in regional centers (19% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (9%) and trips that go to other centers (9%).

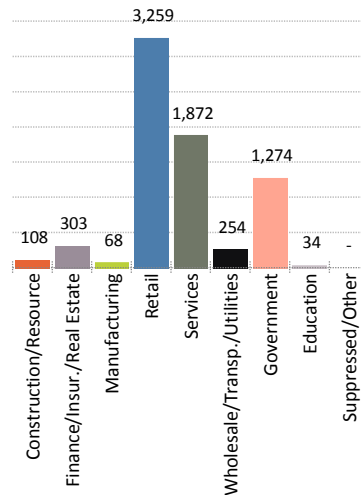
In terms of employee access to transit, Tacoma Mall has almost complete access, with 89 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For residential, Tacoma Mall has partial access, with 65 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk. For the 1/2 mile walkshed, the center has complete levels of residential access to transit (100%).

Plan Overview and Comparison to Center Plan Checklist

The city's primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.

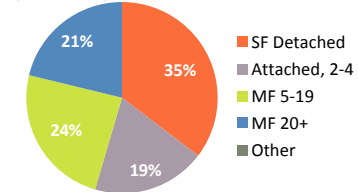
Jobs by Sector

(7,171 jobs)



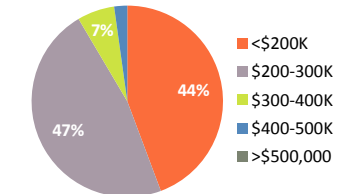
Housing Units, by Type

(1,798 units)

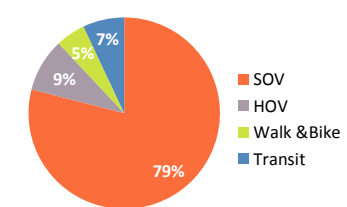


Value of Owner-Occupied Units

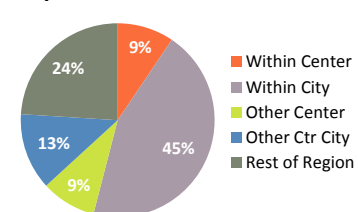
(318 units)



Mode Shares



Trip Destinations



Although the comprehensive plan has policies to guide development in the center, Tacoma does not yet have a specific subarea plan for its Tacoma Mall regional growth center. The city's comprehensive plan provides several policies in the Generalized Land Use element that apply to the Tacoma Mall regional growth center within the context of the city's hierarchy of mixed use centers. The Generalized Land Use element includes a policy specifically calling for the city to develop a subarea plan for this center. The comprehensive plan Neighborhood element also contains a section addressing South Tacoma subareas, including a discussion of the Tacoma Mall area.

Several aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist have been addressed by policies in the comprehensive plan. The plan introduction includes a discussion on the role and expectations of regional growth centers, and the plan includes a commitment to develop a subarea plan for the center. Policies address planned housing and employment densities, though specific growth targets have not been set for the center yet. The Generalized Land Use element includes policies that call for pedestrian-oriented design, compact form and mix of uses, and an integrated transportation network.

The plan addresses items on the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are topics that the comprehensive plan does not address or that could be strengthened through a dedicated regional growth center plan. This includes a market analysis and several land use topics on the checklist. As the city moves forward on planning for the center, additional detail could be provided on the economy, public services, and transportation strategies. Housing could also be further addressed in the plan, or references could be made to the center-related housing policies in the comprehensive plan provide more clarity regarding the housing strategy for the center.

Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies

As noted by the city in a 2011 survey, Tacoma identified challenges relating to limited market demand, fragmented parcel ownership, enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and securing funding for local transit and mobility connections.

Tacoma has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of the Tacoma Mall regional growth center, including increasing allowed building height and establishing design policies.