

Public Comment regarding Ordinance 28770

Submitted for the 6/29/2021 City Council Meeting

I am writing in support of passing Ordinance 28770, to eliminate the Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption in "very high opportunity" areas.

In fact, I encourage going further, to eliminate all property tax exemptions for developers.

Years of such exemptions have done nothing to bring affordable housing to Tacoma.

There's also nothing assuring that labor hours/earnings are going to local laborers living/spending within Tacoma.

The one public comment (submitted last week) opposing this exemption, appeared to be on behalf of those benefiting from constructing luxury units, which we don't need more of.

However, we also shouldn't be offering tax exemptions for multi-family development in "low opportunity" areas, either, such as in South Tacoma (with some of the worst air pollution, highest illness and mortality rates) unfairly affecting the most disenfranchised residents with cheap, crowded living accommodations and removing much needed trees and green space.

The South Tacoma Mall Subarea has already seen massive in-fill with disastrous results.

So, I was confused by the councilmembers' comments (during last week's discussion of Resolutions 40804/05) about being pleased to see multi-family development in the south-end, since both of those permit locations are in the Tacoma Mall Subarea which is part of "South Tacoma" (not the "South End" part of Tacoma) and which has been undergoing a bad experiment in multi-family "growth" for many years.

The city should look there, first, to see the many problems needing to be addressed before ever moving forward with more multi-family development, especially city-wide.

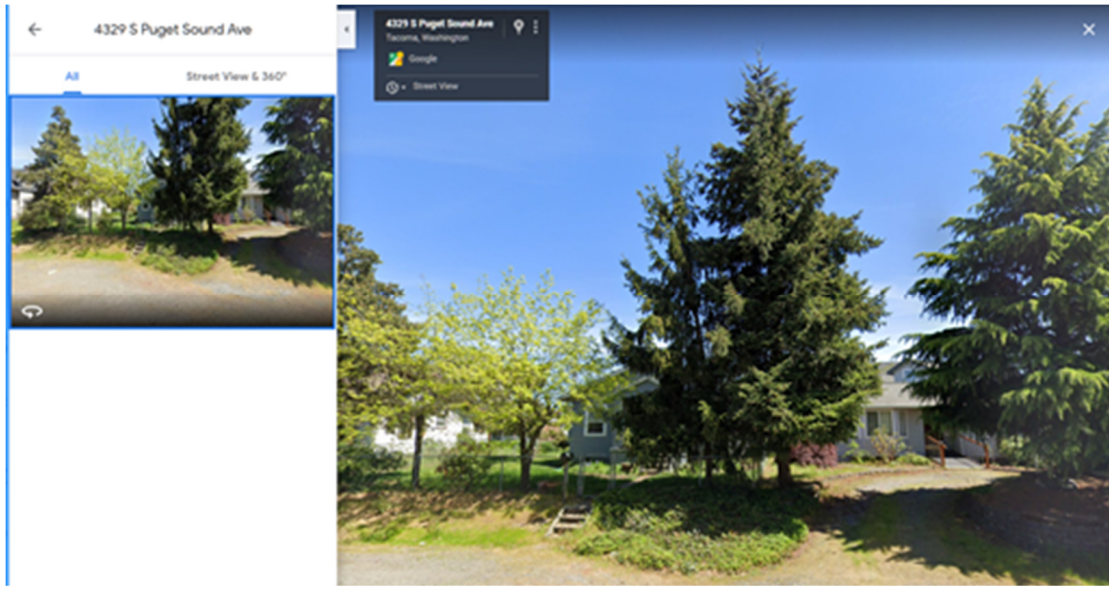
For example, results of for-profit multi-family housing (such as Resolutions 40804/05, which were passed at the 6/22/21 City Council Meeting) are in reality actually removing obtainable family-appropriate houses and green space, replacing them with small-unit, cheaply-made buildings which are high-rent and unsuitable for families.

11. RES40804

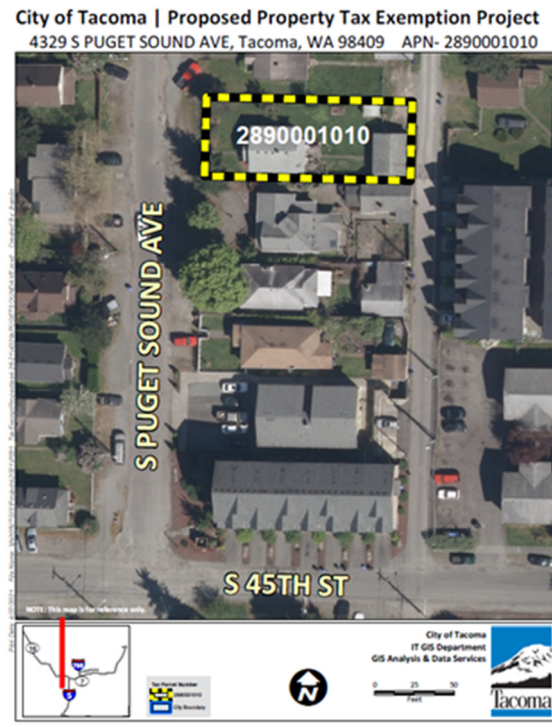
*A resolution authorizing the execution of a Multi-Family Housing 12-Year Limited Property Tax Exemption Agreement with CJG LLC, for the development of 20 multi-family market-rate and affordable rental housing units, located at **4329 South Puget Sound Avenue**, in the Tacoma Mall Mixed-Use Center.*

4329 S Puget Sound Ave:

This viable single-family house (which might have been affordable to a family with children, and which offered yard space and trees) will be demolished by a developer:



These houses (in the "designated growth area") are being systematically destroyed and dumped into our overflowing landfills (construction debris being the largest contributor).



Low-income families cannot out-bid corporate construction competitors, so affordable houses will continue to be lost and families' quality-of-living options becoming that much more limited.

The second example (from the same recent agenda) is another moderate-priced single-family home suitable for a family... also soon to be destroyed:

12. RES40805

*A resolution authorizing the execution of a Multi-Family Housing 12-Year Limited Property Tax Exemption Agreement with 4312 S Puget Sound Ave, LLC, for the development of 20 multi-family market-rate and affordable rental housing units, located at **4312 South Puget Sound Avenue**, in the Tacoma Mall Mixed-Use Center.*

4312 S Puget Sound Ave:



Besides actual affordable houses being demolished (thus taken from families who deserve the opportunity for space and investment), every tree being removed also interrupts the stability of urban animal pathways, especially the flight path of bird populations severely affected.



The result is nothing like the pretty pictures from the city's-proposed vision, but instead no required design standards, no transitioning, no green-space and the cheapest possible construction (photos from Tacoma Mall Subarea):



These low-quality multi-family buildings (replacing moderate homes) have expensive rent, smaller unit size with no open-space, yet cost more than the former houses' monthly mortgages would have been.



At least this "development" is presently primarily confined to the "designated growth area" for now, but the latest permit report has pages and pages of additional pending multi-family structures. It will be terrible to allow this to continue taking over the area.

Developers are in business to make a profit, which they will continue to do regardless of the previously misapplied tax exemptions.

Tacoma would do much better collecting those missing exempt taxes and putting them toward purchasing buildings for a truly affordable, flat-rate (income percentage) and/or transitional free-housing, since affordable housing will obviously never be produced via for-profit construction.

See: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/02/how-finland-solved-homelessness/>
"How Finland Solved Its Housing Problem"

The same could be done with the estimated \$1.7million in costs for two-years of the proposed TEMS site (as quoted from the June 23rd NCS community meeting) which would also be better invested in permanent city-owned housing.

Until the current growth areas are better managed, "Home in Tacoma" should not move forward - and - Tacoma should no longer be giving tax-breaks for simply "more housing" but should focus on the currently designated growth centers while finding a way to not destroy some of the last possibly affordable houses/yards available to low-income families.

Thank you,
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(See attached document.)

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<Public Comment regarding ORD 28770.pdf>