Grapevine
A newsletter for neighborhoods

Councils receive an additional $400,000

The City Council has announced it will award each of the City's eight Neighborhood Councils a special $50,000 re-allocation from one-time funds to support street improvements such as lighting and sidewalks. The Councils are encouraged to leverage this money with other sources of funding so they may maximize the impact of these improvements.

In an effort to minimize overhead costs, projects must cost at least $15,000 to be considered for this special funding. Some projects, such as speed humps, guard rails and variable message signs are exempt from the $15,000 minimum since the City currently has on-call contracts for these items that enable Public Works to install them in a timely and cost-effective manner. Public Works has compiled a list of cost estimates for several popular projects so that the Councils can get a better idea of what these improvements cost.

The Neighborhood Councils must select their proposed projects by Oct. 5, and the projects must be complete by October, 2008. For additional information, please contact your Neighborhood Council board members or Elton Gatewood in the Neighborhood Council office at 591-5229 or egatewoo@cityoftacoma.org.

City planners look at mixed-use centers

City planners are in the midst of an extensive review of those areas that are currently designated in the City's Comprehensive Plan as mixed-use centers (those that incorporate both residential and commercial uses) to evaluate how effective these areas have been in implementing the City's future growth strategy.

Mixed-use centers are intended to locate growth and its accompanying density into areas that are near public transportation sources. In addition to downtown, there are currently 13 mixed-use centers around the city, including areas such as Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 6th and Pine, and three new ones are proposed at 34th and Pacific and in the McKinley and Narrows (6th and Jackson) areas.

Successful mixed-use centers feature a variety of higher density housing along with pedestrian-friendly streetscape designs and amenities that create safe, interesting and walkable environments. As part of their review process, planners have looked at the City's existing centers to see if they meet these criteria and have found there is no "one size fits all" solution to achieving this kind of success, especially since market demand varies among centers.

> ***"We understand residents' concerns about parking and traffic, which is why as part of the review process, we are looking at holistic parking management plans that not only look at the current supply and demand, but future needs as well."***
>
> Donna Stenger, City Planner

In meetings with the affected Neighborhood Councils, business district associations and other community groups, they have also seen that parking and traffic are legitimate concerns for residents of these areas and their surrounding neighborhoods.

"We understand those concerns, which is why as part of the review process, we are looking at holistic parking management plans that not only look at the current supply and demand, but future needs as well," says Donna Stenger of the City's Planning Division.

The review process is expected to take approximately 12 months, during which time the planners will also look at existing policies, regulations and zoning to see if they should be revised to help stimulate development.

For a complete update on the review process, including a look at the presentation that was made to the Planning Commission at its June 6 meeting, go to www.cityoftacoma.org and type "Mixed Use Review" in the search box.

Across the Fence

A look at what Tacoma's Neighborhood Councils are doing

Central

Thanks to the work of Sectors One and Two of the Tacoma Police Department, several problem houses in the area have been identified and the occupants have moved. Sector Two gang unit members and detectives are also addressing graffiti problems on the new Scott Pierson Trail. Overall, however, TPD reports that burglaries, vehicle theft and vandalism numbers are all down from last year…As debate over the replacement of the Titlow pool continues, Central residents are encouraged to offer their thoughts on possible north/west/central pool locations at www.metroparkstacoma.org.

Eastside

At its annual retreat, the Council identified five major goals: safety, cleanup activities, land use, communication and economic development. Several initiatives are already underway in support of those goals, including: a commitment by the City to conduct nuisance abatement in the area of 38th to 56th streets from Portland to McKinley avenues; hiring a consultant to study the implementation of additional alcohol impact areas in the neighborhood; and the recent award of a $5,000 grant from Pierce County for crime prevention training…The Council has discontinued the use of the ENACT acronym and now is officially known as the Eastside Neighborhood Council.

New Tacoma

The Council continues to monitor the impact the Tacoma/Pierce County Needle Exchange Van is having on New Tacoma neighborhoods. The NTNC is not opposed to the services offered by the van, but rather how its location has negatively impacted the neighborhood surrounding the current site. Efforts are also underway to gather signatures of those who oppose (or support) the van's presence in the community…The Tacoma Police Department continues to work with several local building owners to eliminate criminal activities on their properties.

Northeast

Council members worked with the Tacoma Fire Department to reduce the use of illegal fireworks, which were a major problem in Northeast neighborhoods last summer…The Council's planning committee members continue to monitor the on-going dispute between the City and the developer of a planned residential community with 800 homes on the site of the Northshore Golf Course. Following a ruling by the City's pro-tem hearing examiner who ruled the developer's original application was complete, the case is now slated to go before the Pierce County Superior Court…The Council's beautiful new website is up and running at www.netacoma.org.

North End

The Council is monitoring the mixed-use center review by the City's Planning Department and how it might impact the Proctor district, which was one of the City's six original officially-designated neighborhood business districts. Of particular concern to residents is how parking and height requirements might impact the look and feel of Proctor's character. The Council's land use committee has written a letter to the City Council indicating the neighborhood's commitment to closely follow any proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan's mixed-use centers regulations.

South End

Residents continue to make neighborhood safety one of their top priorities. They have worked with the Tacoma Police Department to get "no trespass" orders for four problem properties within the Council area and have organized picketing campaigns to raise public awareness of other problem businesses. Council members have worked to have six pay phones removed from area businesses and have been successful in getting three others to be converted to outgoing calls only. In addition, a major clean up from 38th to 46th streets was held this summer to remove trash and other sources of blight in the area.

South Tacoma

The Council invited a representative of the City's Solid Waste division to attend its May meeting to answer residents' questions and concerns regarding issues such as illegal dumping and trash collection rates…Members of the City's Planning Department gave Council members a briefing on the review of the City's mixed-use centers that is underway. South Tacoma has several designated mixed-use centers, including South Tacoma Way/56th Street and the Tacoma Mall area…The Council hosted a candidates' forum at its July meeting for those running in the primary election on Aug. 21.

West End

The Council has been following closely work on the City's new Planned Residential Development (PRD) ordinance since there is a 10-acre parcel in the vicinity of Hunt Middle School that is up for sale. The Council voiced its opposition to an early plan to build 700 apartments on the site and will continue to lobby for development that is consistent with the scale and infrastructure of traditional West End neighborhoods…Council members are still advocating for a suitable location for the new north/west/central pool that will replace the aging Titlow Pool.

Make a note of it!

Neighborhood Council meetings

Central:
Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.
Snake Lake Nature Center
S. 29th and Tyler Street
www.cnc-tacoma.com

ENACT:
Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
Pool at Stewart Heights Park
402 E. 56th St. at Railroad Crossing
www.eastsidetacoma.com

New Tacoma:
Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:45 p.m.
Tacoma Municipal Building
7417 Market St. 7th Floor Conference Room
www.NewTacoma.org

Northeast:
Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
The Centre at Norpoint
4818 Nassau Ave. NE
www.netacoma.org

North End:
Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m.
Tacoma Police Sector 2 Substation
5136 N. 26th St.
www.nenc.org

South End:
Board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.
General meetings are scheduled quarterly
Fire Station Eight
4911 S. Alaska St.
www.sencotacoma.com

South Tacoma:
Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. 7634 S. Fife.
General meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
South Park Community Center
4851 S. Tacoma Way

West End:
Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m.
Fire Station 16
7217 Sixth Ave.
www.westendtacoma.tripod.com

City Scoop:

News and Notes from City offices

City Council adopts new PRD amendments

On July 10, the City Council adopted a series of new amendments to the City's land use regulatory code with regard to planned residential developments (PRD). Among the major changes adopted are:

- Specific open space requirements for PRDs which now clarify the types of areas that should be considered open space, their uses and their minimum size requirements.
- Stipulations that require that these common open space areas shall be maintained and available for the use and enjoyment of all the residents of the development or the general public and held in common by all the development's property owners.
- Additional, more specific guidance regarding the types of modifications to PRD districts that would be considered "significant" and therefore require public notice, a public hearing, formal review by the Hearing Examiner and approval by the City Council.
- Amended public notice provisions which now provide that notice of major modifications to a PRD district will be given to all property owners within the PRD district as well as owners of property surrounding the PRD district.
- New decision criteria regarding major modifications to an existing PRD district.

To view the complete amended code, please go to www.cityoftacoma.org and type in "PRD districts" in the search box.

Volunteer to help recognize Tacoma's volunteers

The City's Citizens Recognition Committee, which plans and coordinates the nomination and selection of winners for the annual City of Destiny Awards, has three openings. The open spots, to be filled by Tacoma residents, represent neighborhoods and citizen-at-large positions.

The City Council will review all applications and select the three committee members who will begin serving upon appointment. The Citizens Recognition Committee meets at 4 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month.

Interested citizens can contact the Community Relations Office at (253) 591-5064 for more information or visit www.cityoftacoma.org/commissions.

To apply, contact Cynthia Leingang, City Manager's Office, Room 1200, Municipal Building, 747 Market St., Tacoma 98402, (253) 594-7848. All applications must be received by the City Manager's Office by Aug. 17, 2007.

City amends graffiti code

In an effort to crack down on the increasing number of graffiti cases in the city, the City Council recently approved an ordinance that treats graffiti complaints the same as other nuisances such overgrown and trash-covered yards.

As with all compliance issues in the city, the City's goal is to work with property owners to gain voluntary compliance. The City provides a tip sheet to property owners which outlines ways to prevent graffiti, ways to remove the graffiti, and sources of free paint.

Under the terms of the new ordinance, if the City does not gain voluntary compliance, it can now force property owners whose properties have been "tagged" or hit with graffiti to clean the vandalism up in just a matter of 18 days. If they fail to do so, the City can do the removal and charge the property owners for the work.

The amended ordinance also gives any of the City's code enforcement officers the ability to address any incident of graffiti they see in the course of their other inspections. Under the old ordinance, graffiti cases were handled essentially by one designated graffiti officer.

Graffiti is a crime, so if you observe this vandalism as it is occurring, please call 911 immediately. If you notice graffiti on public or private property within the city, write down its exact location and report it to the Police non-emergency number at 798-4722.

2007 City of Destiny winners

In May, the City of Tacoma honored some of its best and most dedicated volunteers during the 21st Annual City of Destiny awards ceremony, including several members of the Neighborhood Councils. The winners were recognized for their contributions of time and energy, not money. Since 1987, almost 200 outstanding volunteers have earned City of Destiny awards.

This year's winners were:

• Marty Campbell (Adult Leadership)
As the owner of Stadium Video and Buzzard's CDs and Videos, Campbell has served with a variety of groups that focus on downtown revitalization, civic engagement and the arts. He currently serves as the vice chair of the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council and is also chair of the Downtown Merchants Association, where he encourages residents and visitors to go downtown to shop, appreciate art, and enjoy cultural opportunities. Marty helped start Live After 5 and Light Up Tacoma, helped form Promote Tacoma Arts, and serves as the vice chair of the Tacoma Arts Community, a team dedicated to the economic sustainability of the arts in Tacoma. He is also a board member of the Grand Cinema and is the first vice chair of the Tacoma Film Club.

• Iris Figueroa (Youth Leadership - tie)
This 17-year-old is an outspoken advocate for gang prevention, abstinence and other contraceptive choices, as well as the importance of encouraging Latino students to attend school. She formed the Latino Education Alliance Club at Lincoln High School, organized a parent education night with speakers from various college and community organizations, and she's met with legislators to lobby for bills that affect youth. In 2006 Iris was selected to receive the Achievers Scholarship, a state program that rewards commitment to academic excellence and civic engagement among low-income students. She's also a student representative to the South End Neighborhood Council and one of the first youth members of the newly organized Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

• Ben Weymiller (Youth Leadership – tie)
After seeing how much comfort mothers and children get from rocking chairs, especially his cousin Mary Grace, who has Downs syndrome, Ben Weymiller decided he would donate $45 saved from his $10-a-month allowance money toward a rocking chair fund at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital. After making his cash donation, Ben decided he would do more. He suggested a rock-a-thon to the Mary Bridge Children's Foundation. During three days and 12 hours of rocking at the Festival of Trees, Ben raised $85,000 — enough to purchase 113 rockers.

• Pat Flynn (Adult Sustained Service)
Pat Flynn began volunteering as a child and hasn't stopped yet. While in college she read to the blind and later gave her time to the Municipal League, her church, the PTA, and school levy and bond issue campaigns. In the early 1980s, Pat chaired the successful effort to have Tacoma named an All-America City. In 1985, she was asked by a local surgeon to help form a team relay to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Today the event is known as the Relay For Life, a phenomenon that has raised a combined $3 billion for cancer research and spread to 4,700 communities in the United States and hundreds more in 22 foreign countries. Pat is the second inductee into the National Relay for Life Hall of Fame in Atlanta, and a new member of Delta Gamma's Order of the Rose, the highest national honor bestowed upon an alumnae.

• Brandon Brown (Youth Service)
Brandon, 17, has volunteered more than 400 hours with Metro Parks Tacoma's Leadership Experience Apprenticeship Program LEAP. He tutors younger kids after school and is a regular presence at a host of Metro Parks events throughout the year, such as Freedom Fair, Ethnic Fest, carnivals and Movies-In-The-Park. He runs the popcorn machine, sets up tables, hangs banners, directs traffic and hands out fliers. Over the summer, Brandon won an internship with Metro Parks Tacoma to serve as a youth leader at South Park Community Center, where he befriended the youngsters and engaged and entertained them with his creativity.

• Stewart Heights Neighborhood Coalition (Neighborhood Group or Community Partnership)
David Cantlin and other residents in Tacoma's Stewart Heights area, with the help of Safe Streets and Metro Parks Tacoma, set out to take back their streets—and their community park. With David as their block leader they were soon hard at work cleaning up the area to make it safer for neighborhood residents and less appealing to those who wanted to use it for illegal activity. Metro Parks donated a search light, flashlights and vests for a citizens' patrol group that conducts half-hour patrols of the area several times a week to check for unfamiliar vehicles or suspicious activities that are then reported to the police.

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Editor's Box
The Grapevine is published by the City of Tacoma's Economic Development Department as part of the Neighborhood Council Program. For more information on the resources and programs available through the Neighborhood Council Program, contact Elton Gatewood at 591-5229.

Editor-in-Chief:
Elton Gatewood

Editor and Writer:
Kate McDermott

Production:
Graphic Services Division

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City of Tacoma
Neighborhood Council Office
747 Market Street, Room 1036
Tacoma, Washington 98402-3793

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City of Destiny Awards

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• Puyallup Tribe of Indians (Corporation, Business or Entrepreneur)

Joan Staples and four other Native women noticed that Natives needed a place where they could eat, wash clothes, use the computer, watch TV, get referrals to Tribal services and visit with other Natives in a supportive and comforting environment. The women opened the Tahoma Indian Center for urban Native Americans where 50 to 60 people visit each day to get help with job and housing searches and efforts to return to school. The Puyallup Tribal Government has helped support the drop-in center since 1996 and many individual employees of various Tribal services also have offered their support over the years by donating backpacks filled with personal hygiene items, sponsoring an annual rafting trip to enjoy the wilderness, and hosting community dinners.

• Washington State Patrol (Employee or Union Group)

Communications Officer Laurie Langlois and her colleagues with the Tacoma Communications Center of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), District 1, began volunteering at the Women's Support Shelter of the YWCA Pierce County seven years ago, decorating for the annual Thanksgiving dinner for the resident families. They also collected holiday toys for the children and gifts for the women and hosted an Easter egg hunt inside so the kids could enjoy the tradition within the security of the building. Then Laurie and some of her colleagues began to make weekly visits. What started as a craft time for the youngest children became popular with the older children as well. This past fall, the group worked with Costco, the Washington State Patrol Association and the Patrol's local employees to collect school supplies for shelter residents. Because of the size of their donation, the YWCA will have enough school supplies to outfit the children who will be residents next fall, too. In 2006, the WSP team volunteered more than 100 hours of their time.