



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

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May 1, 2013

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I am forwarding our recommendations on the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code for 2013 (the "2013 Annual Amendment"), which encompass the following significant actions and intents:

1. Strengthen the regulatory standards for drive-through facilities and reduce their impacts;
2. Better define digital signs (electronic changing message center) and establish standards pertaining to hours of operation, height, size limitation, and brightness;
3. Increase the maximum short subdivision size from four to nine lots and improve associated standards to facilitate an expedited permitting process and increase development opportunities;
4. Develop the Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines and the Public Access Alternatives Plan as primary implementing strategies for the Shoreline Master Program;
5. Simplify the Comprehensive Plan land use designation system to better align the designations for Mixed-Use Centers, shorelines and other uses of land with their corresponding zoning classifications;
6. Streamline the legislative processes for the adoption and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan, area-wide rezones, moratoria, and interim zoning;
7. Review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure its consistency with the Countywide Planning Policies;
8. Update the unfunded transportation projects to maintain their funding eligibility and incorporate "environmental justice" in transportation policy provisions to be consistent with VISION 2040; and
9. Clean up the Land Use Regulatory Code to address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, and improve administrative efficiency.

These proposed amendments are the result of intensive analyses, thorough research, and rigorous deliberations performed by the Planning Commission and City staff over the past eight months. Extensive outreach efforts have been conducted to engage stakeholders, interested parties and concerned citizens, and to ensure early and continuous public participation in the review process. The Planning Commission also held a public hearing on March 20, 2013 to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments. We appreciate all the comments received. We also recognize that there may be ways to further improve the public notification procedures. We recommend that the City make the most of the available technology and media resources and consider cross-promoting news regarding public hearings in a more prominent fashion on both the City's website and TV Tacoma.

Enclosed is the "*Planning Commission's Findings and Recommendations Report, May 1, 2013*" that summarizes the proposed amendments, the public review process, and the Planning Commission's deliberations. The Planning Commission believes the 2013 Annual Amendment will help achieve the City's strategic goals for a safe, clean and attractive community and a diverse, productive and sustainable economy. We respectfully request the City Council adopt the 2013 Annual Amendment as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Donald K. Erickson, AICP, Chair
Tacoma Planning Commission

Enclosure