



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

***LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY FROM THE PLANNING MANAGER  
RE: 2014 ANNUAL AMENDMENT***

February 24, 2014

Dear Community Members:

I would like to invite you to attend and provide comments at the following functions concerning the "2014 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code":

**Community Informational Session**

Wednesday, March 12, 2104, 5:00 p.m.  
Room 335, Tacoma Municipal Building

**Planning Commission Public Hearing**

Wednesday, March 19, 2014, 5:00 p.m.  
Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building

As many of you know, every year the City considers amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code (or "Zoning Code") through a single, consolidated package, which we refer to as the "Annual Amendment." There are nine proposals (or "applications") that have been assembled in the 2014 Annual Amendment package. Those applications are:

1. Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center
2. Point Defiance Park Land Use Policies
3. Mixed-Use Centers Code Review
4. Affordable Housing
5. Container Port Element
6. Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element
7. Sustainability Code Amendment
8. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update
9. Plan and Code Cleanup

The Tacoma Planning Commission has recently completed the initial technical analysis of the 2014 Annual Amendment package and would like you to weigh in on the proposals before they make a recommendation to the City Council. Here are just a few ways how you can to get involved:

- Visit the Planning Division's website at [www.cityoftacoma.org/planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/planning), and click on "2014 Annual Amendment" (or click on any other link to review the various exciting projects);
- E-mail us at [planning@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:planning@cityoftacoma.org) or call us at (253) 591-5682;
- Attend the Informational Session on March 12 to learn more about the 2014 Annual Amendment package and register your concerns;
- Testify at the Planning Commission's public hearing on March 19, 2014;

- Provide written comments by Friday, March 21, 2014, 5:00 p.m., via:
  - ✓ E-mail to [planning@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:planning@cityoftacoma.org);
  - ✓ Fax to (253) 591-5433; or
  - ✓ Letter to Planning Commission, 747 Market Street, Room 345, Tacoma, WA 98402;
- Request a meeting with staff. We can meet you at City Hall, or be happy to come to your meetings to provide a short briefing and solicit your comments, concerns and suggestions; or
- Get on the Planning Commission's E-mail Distribution List to receive the Commission's meeting agendas twice a month and other announcements.

Attached for your review is the **2014 Annual Amendment Summary** that includes an overview of the nine applications, the 2014 Annual Amendment schedule, and a summary sheet for each application. The complete text of the proposed amendments associated with each application, the corresponding staff analysis reports, as well as the environmental review of the 2014 Annual Amendment are compiled into a larger volume, the Public Review Document, which is posted at [www.cityoftacoma.org/planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/planning) (and linked to "2014 Annual Amendment").

For your additional information, the Comprehensive Plan is the City's official statement concerning future growth and development. It sets forth goals, policies, and strategies for the health, welfare, and quality of life of Tacoma's residents. It addresses a whole array of important issues such as land use, housing, neighborhoods, environment, transportation, capital facilities, historic preservation, and economic development. The Land Use Regulatory Code (Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code), along with other applicable development regulations and governing procedures, provide the key mechanism that implements and supports the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan and the Code are reviewed, evaluated and amended on an annual basis pursuant to the State Growth Management Act in order to remain current, relevant and responsive to changing circumstances.

We in the Planning Division appreciate your active involvement in this important work. We look forward to your continued support and shared efforts to realize the City of Tacoma's vision and our goal to guide community growth and development in a manner that protects environmental resources, enhances quality of life, promotes distinctive neighborhoods and a vibrant downtown, and involves citizens in the decisions that affect us.

Sincerely,



**BRIAN BOUDET, MANAGER**  
Planning Services Division

Enclosure

c: Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services Department  
Sean Gaffney, Chair, Tacoma Planning Commission



# 2014 ANNUAL AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LAND USE REGULATORY CODE

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS February 24, 2014

<b>1. Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center</b> (Application #2014-01)	Designating that portion of the former ASARCO property located in the City of Tacoma (a 29-acre site) as a Mixed-Use Center and a residential target area. (A private application by Point Ruston LLC).
<b>2. Point Defiance Park Land Use Policies</b> (Application #2014-02)	Adding a policy to the Comprehensive Plan to recognize Point Defiance Park as a unique asset and a regional destination; and clarifying in the Land Use Regulatory Code potential permitting pathways that Metro Parks Tacoma could utilize, including the City's Development Regulation Agreement (DRA) process. (A private application by Metro Parks Tacoma).
<b>3. Mixed-Use Centers Code Review (MUC-Lite)</b> (Application #2014-04)	Conducting an evaluation of the existing development requirements within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers, and particularly those applicable to mixed-use projects in the core of these districts.
<b>4. Affordable Housing</b> (Application #2014-06)	Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code to implement Affordable Housing incentive, bonus, and inclusionary strategies which are part of a package of initiatives recommended by the City Council's Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group.
<b>5. Container Port Element</b> (Application #2014-07)	Creating a new element in the Comprehensive Plan that specifically addresses and provides goals and policies relative to the 'Port Industrial Area'.
<b>6. Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element</b> (Application #2014-08)	Amending this element of the Comprehensive Plan to reaffirm the vision and goals, reflect progress and changing circumstances since its adoption, update inventories, and enhance guidance on implementation.
<b>7. Sustainability Code Amendment</b> (Application #2014-09)	Amending the Land Use Regulatory Code to encourage and incent sustainable development practices, advance City's goals for sustainable development, and promote public health and active living.
<b>8. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update</b> (Application #2014-10)	Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code to improve trees and landscaping related regulations.
<b>9. Plan and Code Cleanup</b> (Application #2014-011)	Amending various sections of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code to keep information current, correct minor errors, provide additional clarity, and improve administrative efficiency.

### Schedule

August 1, 2013	Applications due
August 14, 2013 and February 26, 2014	Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee review of Planning Work Program for 2013-2015, including the 2014 Annual Amendment proposals
August 21, 2013	Planning Commission review and approval of the Assessment Report
September 2013 – February 2014	Technical analyses of the proposals
February 11, 2014	Port Container Element at Council Study Session
February 19, 2014	Planning Commission authorizes proposed amendments for public review
March 12, 2014	Community Informational Session (pre-hearing)
March 19, 2014	Planning Commission Public Hearing
April 2, 2014	Planning Commission review of public testimony and considering modifications to the proposals
April 16, 2014	Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council
May – June 2014	City Council review process

**1. Point Ruston Mixed-Use Center**  
(Application #2014-01)

Designating that portion of the former ASARCO property located in the City of Tacoma (a 29-acre site) as a Mixed-Use Center and a residential target area. (A private application by Point Ruston LLC).

**Proposal**

The proposed amendment would designate that portion of the former ASARCO site located in the City of Tacoma (excluding the Slag Peninsula) as a Mixed-Use Center (MUC) and Residential Target Area. The proposed 29-acre Point Ruston MUC would encompass that portion of the City's S-15 Point Ruston / Slag Peninsula Shoreline District (effective as of October 15th, 2013) intended for mixed-use development as part of Point Ruston (see Exhibit A).

Specifically, the proposal would amend the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element of the Comprehensive Plan by adding "Point Ruston" to the list of Community Centers and revising the Growth Concept Map and the Generalized Land Use Plan Map. The revisions in the Generalized Land Use Plan Map would also be reflected in the corresponding maps in the Generalized Land Use and Transportation Elements.

In addition, Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Chapter 13.17 Mixed-Use Center Development would be amended to add the Point Ruston Community Center to the designated residential target area list (TMC 13.17.020.C). Inclusion on this list would make qualifying multifamily housing developments eligible for the multifamily tax exemption program. No changes to the site's S-15 zoning, or to the scope of development as previously reviewed by the City, are included in this proposal.

Point Ruston, LLC's initial application included an additional 12 acres (parcel 8950003322) within the proposed MUC. However, after discussions with City staff the applicants have removed that parcel from the proposal. Located just southeast of Point Ruston, it was initially included because it is part of Point Ruston LLC's ownership. However, the parcel is mostly marine waters and the zoning is not appropriate for residential development.

**Outreach**

Outreach for this application will build on the extensive public processes that have already taken place for Point Ruston. Point Ruston, LLC has engaged McCament and Rogers, a consultant firm, to assist with the process. City staff are coordinating with them to identify the stakeholders. Staff notes that the vision and plans for Point Ruston are well established and broadly supported, and this proposal would not change the scope of development already approved. Furthermore, the objections raised to the original 2008 Point Ruston MUC proposal have now been substantially resolved.

To date, staff and the applicants have identified and had preliminary discussions with the following stakeholders:

- West End Neighborhood Council
- City of Ruston
- Ruston Pearl Business District
- Metro Parks District
- Citizens for a Healthy Bay
- Tacoma Housing Authority
- Pierce Transit
- Planning Commission discussion

Staff will continue to work with the stakeholders identified, as well as conduct additional outreach as part of the overall 2014 Annual Amendment package.

**Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on January 8, 2014; concurred with staff's analysis with minor modifications; and authorized the distribution of the staff report for public review.

**2. Point Defiance Park Land Use Policies**  
(Application #2014-02)

Adding a policy to the Comprehensive Plan to recognize Point Defiance Park as a unique asset and a regional destination; and clarifying in the Land Use Regulatory Code potential permitting pathways that Metro Parks Tacoma could utilize, including the City's Development Regulation Agreement (DRA) process. (A private application by Metro Parks Tacoma).

**Proposal**

The Parks District has submitted this application, which would add recognition to the City's Comprehensive Plan for Destination Point Defiance and for the unique role that Point Defiance Park plays as a significant citywide destination, as a preparatory step to submitting applications for City permits. The proposal would also clarify potential City permitting pathways that MPT could utilize, including the City's Development Regulation Agreement (DRA) process. Metro Parks Tacoma's (MPT) long range plan and vision for the 768-acre park, generally referred to as Destination Point Defiance, was developed through a multi-year, broadly inclusive public process. The conceptual plan for Point Defiance Park enjoys very consistent, strong public and stakeholder support and was officially approved by the MPT Board in 2008.

Specifically, this amendment would add a new policy to the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan expressing support for Destination Point Defiance and recognizing the unique role and destination function that Point Defiance Park plays. In addition, the proposal would modify the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.06.560 Parks, recreation and open space section by clarifying that the DRA process is available for Parks, Recreation and Open Space land uses. TMC 13.06.560 provides guidance on permitting requirements for park and recreation uses, and makes a distinction between park features that are allowed by right in residential zones, and larger or more intensive park and recreation features that require a Conditional Use Permit. While the DRA process is also currently available to park, recreation and open space uses, it is currently not explicitly cited in TMC 13.06.560.

**Outreach**

Outreach for this application will build on the extensive public process for the Destination Point Defiance project which was started in 2005 and again in 2008. In addition, MPT has engaged BCRA, a consultant firm, to assist with the public process.

MPT reports that the stakeholder and public input has been consistently positive. Overall, MPT summarizes the input into 3 Guiding Principles: 1 - Preserving the Character of the Park; 2 - A pedestrian focus by creating safe and easy access throughout the park; 3 - Providing activities year-round.

For this application, staff and the applicants have identified and had preliminary discussions with the following stakeholders:

- Community Council - endorsement for plan
- West End and North End Neighborhood Councils
- Town of Ruston
- Puyallup Tribe
- Ruston Pearl Business District

Staff's preliminary outreach has revealed general support. Staff will continue to work with the stakeholders, and conduct additional outreach as part of the 2014 Annual Amendment package.

**Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on January 8, 2014; concurred with staff's analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

**3. Mixed-Use Centers Code Review (MUC-Lite)**  
(Application #2014-04)

Conducting an evaluation of the existing development requirements within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers, and particularly those applicable to mixed-use projects in the core of these districts.

**Proposal**

The purpose of this Mixed-Use Centers Code Update Project was to conduct a focused evaluation of the existing development requirements applicable within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers, and particularly those applicable to mixed-use projects in the core of these districts. The evaluation utilizes prototype development scenarios as examples to help identify potential barriers that could be removed and/or alternatives that could be pursued that would support this type of development without sacrificing the long-term community vision and core principles for the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers.

The proposed code amendments include the following key elements:

Core Pedestrian Street: first level use limitations

- Revise the requirements for street level use on designated core pedestrian streets to allow for work/live units

Yard Space Standards

- Expand the exemptions from the requirement to provide on-site yard space to include:
  - Projects with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) above 3.0
  - Projects located within 1/4-mile of a park or school with recreational facilities (current exemption is at 300 feet)
  - Mixed-use projects that provide ground floor retail or restaurant uses
- Reduce the per-unit yard space requirement for multi-family and mixed-use structures from 100 square feet to 50 square feet
- Provide more flexibility in the types of features that can be provided to meet the yard space requirement (courtyards, roof decks, balconies, etc.)

Mass Reduction: Upper Floor Street-front Stepbacks

- Revise the current stepback exemption for a “tower” feature to allow it to be located anywhere along the pedestrian street frontage (currently limited to just the corner of the building)
- Clarify that one per street frontage is allowed

Residential Transition Standards: Upper Story Stepbacks

- Revise the method for calculating this additional height restriction as follows:
  - Revise the starting location of measurement from the edge of the building to the zone transition line
  - Revise the starting height from 25 feet to 35 feet (the standard height limit for residential zones)

Off-Street Parking

- Revise the parking exemption for buildings within ten feet of the right-of-way on designated core pedestrian streets to include projects that provide commercial space within ten feet of the right-of-way on all designated pedestrian streets
- For extra parking provided by a project, increase the allowed maximum percentage of compact stalls from 30% to 50%

**Outreach**

Staff have discussed the 2014 Annual Amendment package with various stakeholder groups, including the Master Builders Association (MBA), other development industry representatives, and Neighborhood Councils. In addition, planning staff has reached out to the Community Council, the Cross District

Association, and Neighborhood Business Districts, informing them of the 2014 Annual Amendment process and offering presentations on the proposed amendments at their board meetings. Additional outreach will occur through and during the Planning Commission and City Council's public hearing and notice processes.

### **Planning Commission's Review**

- The Commission reviewed the application staff report on February 5, 2014; concurred with staff's analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

#### 4. Affordable Housing (Application #2014-06)

Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code to implement Affordable Housing incentive, bonus, and inclusionary strategies which are part of a package of initiatives recommended by the City Council's Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group.

#### **Proposal**

1. Mixed-Use Centers vehicular parking exemption for Group Housing, Student Housing, and small Multi-family Housing (250-450 square feet). The total number of units within a single building that could use this exemption would be limited to 20 dwellings or 50 percent of the total dwellings in the building (whichever is greater).
2. Update Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) requirements: ADUs offer an approach to increase residential densities and housing choices in a manner consistent with neighborhood character. ADUs are currently allowed in all zones where residential development is permitted (Detached ADUs are not currently allowed in single-family zoning districts). This year, a package of changes to ADU design standards and development requirements is proposed to increase flexibility and reduce the cost of development, while still providing for neighborhood compatibility. Specifically, the proposal would:
  - Increase Detached ADUs to 25 feet with design standards (currently requires a Conditional Use Permit)
  - Remove ADU parking requirement
  - Reduce minimum ADU size to 200 sf (currently 300 sf)
  - Allow ADUs on Small Lots meeting design standards (4,500-5,000 sf in R-2 Districts)
  - Allow Attached ADUs on substandard lots (with no increase to building footprint)
  - Allow Home Occupations (businesses) in both the main dwelling and ADU
  - Provide flexibility for pedestrian walkways
  - Relax design requirements for Detached ADUs (allow them to “complement” rather than “match” the main building)
  - Remove the current 10 percent limit on Detached ADU building footprints (rely instead on Accessory structure limits already in place)
  - Streamline the application process
  - Update parking requirements for Group Housing and Multi-family Housing: This item would reduce parking requirements for these affordable housing types and create a new parking reduction bonus option.
  - Update Small Lot standards: This item would add flexibility to the City's Residential and Small Lots code provisions, in order to encourage infill development and promote housing affordability and choice, while adding design criteria to promote neighborhood compatibility. Key changes proposed include:
    - Add flexibility and enhance design standards for Single-family Small Lot Residential Development:
      - Sliding scale for minimum average lot width from 35 feet in R-2 to 25 in R-5
      - Sliding scale for minimum lot size: 6,750 sf in R-1; 4,500 sf in R-2; down to 2,500 in R-5
      - Additional design standards for Small Lot development
    - Add flexibility and enhance design standards for Two-family and Three-family Dwellings in multi-family districts
      - Make two- and three-family development more consistent with approach to townhouses
      - Sliding scale for minimum lot size for two-family and three-family in multi-family zones (from 6,000 sf to 3,500 sf)
      - Make two-family and three-family development subject to standards currently applicable in MUC Districts

## **Outreach**

The Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group, an inter-disciplinary group including both market-rate and subsidized-housing professionals, has collaborated with staff and the Planning Commission on this effort and continues to provide input. In addition, staff have worked closely with the City's Housing Division. Staff also received direction from the City Council Neighborhood and Housing Committee.

## **Planning Commission's Review**

- The Commission reviewed the application staff report on January 8, and January 22, 2014; concurred with staff's analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

**5. Container Port Element**  
(Application #2014-07)

Creating a new element in the Comprehensive Plan that specifically addresses and provides goals and policies relative to the 'Port Industrial Area'.

**Proposal**

This amendment will create a new element in the Comprehensive Plan that specifically addresses and provides goals and policies relative to the 'Port Industrial Area'. The Container Port Element will establish a policy framework that will ensure that local land use decisions consider the needs of container ports and ensure that container ports and freight corridors continue to function effectively alongside vibrant city waterfronts and adjacent areas.

By adding a new Container Port Element to the Comprehensive Plan, the City seeks to: (1) define and protect the core areas of port and port-related industrial uses within the city; (2) provide reasonably efficient access to the core area through freight corridors within the city limits; and, (3) identify and resolve key land use conflicts along the edge of the core area, and minimize and mitigate, to the extent practicable, incompatible uses along the edge of the core area. This work is mandated by a 2009 addition to the Growth Management Act relating to land use and transportation planning for marine ports in Seattle and Tacoma, and is being accomplished in collaboration with the Port of Tacoma.

**Outreach**

The City and Port have conducted some community outreach and used this feedback in developing the specifics of the Draft Container Port Element.

The Department will conduct an extensive community outreach for the 2014 Annual Amendment Package, including this proposal. Staff has scheduled presentations and briefings with groups such as the Neighborhood Councils, and Chamber of Commerce, through March 2014.

**Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on October 16, 2014; concurred with staff's analysis; and authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

**6. Open Space Element**  
(Application #2014-08)

Amending this element of the Comprehensive Plan to reaffirm the vision and goals, reflect progress and changing circumstances since its adoption, update inventories, and enhance guidance on implementation.

**Proposal**

The proposed amendment would update the *Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element* of the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to ensuring that the Element reflects the community's park, recreation and open space priorities, and provides consistent and effective guidance on implementation. The amendments would reaffirm the vision and goals as developed in 2008, reflect progress and changing circumstances since its adoption, update inventories, and provide enhanced guidance on implementation. In addition, this update will provide a forum for interested stakeholders to help refine the City's park and open space vision, goals and objectives.

Specifically, updates are proposed to various sections of the Element, including the following: Open Space Definition; Open Space System; Vision; Community Gardens; Waterfront open Spaces and Shoreline Access; Habitat Areas; Strategic Action Program; Partnerships; Acquisition and Management of Land and Facilities; and, Implementation, as well as minor refinements to other sections. In addition, the proposal would create a new section titled *Plans for Specific Areas*, which will summarize recreation and open space plans that have been developed for specific locations or sites. Finally, the proposal would refine the City's lists of Open Space Projects and Open Space Inventories, and incorporate them into the Element (these are currently contained in the City's Capital Facilities Program). This is intended to enhance the Element as a decision-making tool for policy-makers.

**Outreach**

This update will include public outreach and stakeholder consultation to reaffirm the vision and goals of the Element, and to update its policies to ensure they reflect the vision and goals. Staff have engaged with key stakeholders including the Green Tacoma Partnership, the Port of Tacoma and MPT in developing these proposed updates. In addition, staff will consult with the City of Tacoma's Sustainability Commission, and will hold an open house in February, as a complement to the Planning Commission's public outreach process. To date, no significant concerns or issues have been raised with the proposed approach.

**Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on January 8, 2014; concurred with staff's approach and analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

### **Proposal**

1. **Electric vehicle parking and infrastructure provision:** Currently, electric vehicle charging stations and battery exchange stations are permitted under existing municipal code. These proposed amendments would add design and location standards for new electric vehicle parking and charging stations, including requirements for accessibility, as well as establish parking quantity requirements that will ensure that a percentage of new parking spaces either provide level 2 charging facilities or are constructed with the capacity to accommodate a future level 2 charging station. The quantity requirements are focused on trip origins and destinations, with a particular focus on providing electric vehicle infrastructure at new multifamily developments.
2. **Bicycle start and end of trip infrastructure:** The current bicycle parking requirements are based on a percentage of the required auto parking. Over time the City of Tacoma has been steadily decreasing auto parking requirements, and in some cases has removed parking minimums altogether. Therefore, by default, as auto parking requirements are decreased, bicycle parking requirements have decreased as well. The proposed amendments would de-couple the bicycle parking requirements from the auto parking requirements and reset the quantity requirements in-line with the City's goals for urban design, healthy living, transportation mode shifts, and greenhouse gas reduction. Further, the amendments would distinguish between short and long term bicycle parking, as envisioned in the Mobility Master Plan, and require shower and changing facilities at trip destinations when a certain amount of long-term bicycle parking is required.
3. **Setback and height exception for exterior insulation:** This proposed amendment would provide a setback and height exception for insulation added to the exterior of a structural frame to improve energy efficiency and to better facilitate the retrofit of existing structures to reduce energy demands.
4. **Low impact development barriers:** New guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency ([http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/sg\\_stormwater\\_BMP.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/sg_stormwater_BMP.pdf)) substantiates the position that compact urban development and smart growth principles, including residential infill and mixed-use development, are regional stormwater best management practices that help to curtail the expansion of the urban footprint into non-urban areas, thereby lessening overall stormwater impacts. The proposed amendments include minor code revisions that will remove barriers within the zoning code to using low impact development techniques, specifically pervious pavement and rainfall catchment systems, and to identify code sections that are supportive of low impact stormwater management, consistent with EPA's guidance, and to amend the purpose and intent statement of specific code sections to reflect this support.

### **Outreach**

Staff has discussed the 2014 Annual Amendment package with various stakeholder groups, including the Master Builders Association (MBA), other development industry representatives, and Neighborhood Councils. In addition, planning staff have or plan to reach out to the Community Council, the Cross District Association, and Neighborhood Business Districts, informing them of the 2014 Annual Amendment process and offering presentations on the proposed amendments at their board meetings. Additional outreach will occur through and during the Planning Commission and City Council's public hearing and notice processes.

### **Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on January 8, and February 5, 2014; concurred with staff's approach and analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

## 8. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update (Application #2014-10)

Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code to improve trees and landscaping related regulations.

### **Proposal**

This proposal includes amendments to the Land Use Regulatory Code to improve trees and landscaping regulations applicable to development activities, with a focus on achieving such policy intents as incentives, flexibility, quality, and tree health. The proposed changes are intended to make the code more effective in achieving urban forestry objectives, in the following ways:

#### Planting More Trees (and other plants)

While the primary thrust is on vegetation health, quality, and landscaping code flexibility, the following limited expansions of current landscaping requirements are proposed:

- Require Street Trees with the construction of new full roadways and sidewalks (per Complete Streets)
- Extend Street Tree requirement to the M-2 Industrial District and to key corridors in the PMI Industrial District
- Standardize parking lot landscaping requirements to include both interior and perimeter plantings in most districts

#### Plant Better Trees (variety, larger sizes, right-tree right-place)

Proposed changes seek to optimize the urban forestry benefits from landscaping by enhancing requirements related to plant selection, planting locations, spacing and installation. Changes proposed include clarifying plant selection criteria; adding specificity regarding Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); removing barriers for Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater approaches; expanding the focus on “right tree-right place” to promote survival and reduce conflicts; and, creating a new distinction based on tree size. The Small, Medium and Large Tree distinction would be linked to a sliding scale for the number of trees required, providing an incentive to plant larger trees, and providing flexibility for site development.

#### Health, Survival and Maintenance of Trees

These changes seek to optimize the urban forestry benefits from required landscaping by expanding code provisions to better ensure the health, survival and proper maintenance of trees and other landscaping. Key changes include requiring landscaping maintenance plans with permit applications; strengthening language prohibiting excessive pruning and tree topping; and, clarifying responsibilities on maintenance and replacement.

#### Incentives and flexibility

These changes seek to promote desired features through code-based incentives and flexibility. The Small, Medium and Large Tree sliding scale creates significant new flexibility for site design by reducing the number of trees required if Large Trees are selected. In addition, optional bonuses would be available to reduce the total number of trees and/or amount of landscaped area, and/or allow plantings to be more clustered on the site, in exchange for tree retention, LID stormwater techniques, and/or planting evergreens. A Fee-In-Lieu option would be created to allow an administrative option to address sites with unique challenges to meeting landscaping requirements. Finally, an option would be available to public agencies to shift some required landscaping from the development site to a more appropriate site identified in their own urban forestry plans.

#### Provide an Understandable and Predictable Approach

The proposal includes reorganizing the landscaping code for greater clarity, consistency and ease of use. The code would be organized as follows:

- Intent and Applicability
- General landscaping section on Process, Plant Material Selection, Installation and Maintenance
- Credits and Flexibility
- Requirements by zoning district

In addition, technical guidance would be made available through a separate Urban Forest Manual to be developed in support of the code, by the Environmental Services Department – Urban Forestry Program.

Specifically, the proposal is to repeal the current *TMC 13.06.502 Landscaping and/or Buffering Standards*, and replace the section with revised code language. While a substantial amount of the existing code would be retained, the proposal includes reorganizing the section for greater clarity. Therefore, it is more readable to present the proposed new code language without track changes format. In addition, supportive changes are proposed to TMC 13.06.700 Definitions, and to TMC 13.06A Downtown Tacoma, which are shown in track changes.

### **Outreach**

This effort started with the extensive public and stakeholder input generated through the 2011-12 policy development effort. More recently, staff have consulted with Metro Parks Tacoma and the Port of Tacoma. In addition, staff have engaged with City departments including Code Enforcement, Traffic, and Environmental Services in particular discussing the resource issues associated with street trees and with monitoring and enforcement generally. Moving forward, staff will reach out to all of the stakeholders who participated in the 2011-12 discussion, in addition to the Planning Commission public outreach process.

### **Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on January 22, 2014, and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

**9. Plan and Code Cleanup**  
(Application #2014-011)

Amending various sections of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code to correct minor errors, provide additional clarity, and improve administrative efficiency.

**Proposal**

The proposed amendments involve changes to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and changes to various sections in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), Chapters 13.04, 13.05, 13.06, 13.11, and 13.12. These minor amendments are intended to address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, and improve provisions that, through administration and application of the Zoning Code, are found to be unclear or not fully meeting their intent.

A general summary of the proposed amendments is as follows:

1. Changes to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan:
  - Updating the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) section to reflect the latest regulatory requirements and program opportunities approved by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
2. Changes to Chapter 13.04 Platting and Subdivisions, including:
  - Clarification of the submittal requirements for short plats.
  - The requirement that a vicinity sketch is included on the notice has been removed.
  - Standards for pipe stem lots have been added.
3. Changes to 13.05 Land Use Permit Procedures, including:
  - Updating the Expiration of Permits chart to ensure accuracy and consistency within other code sections.
  - Clarification the Hearing Examiner's authority to hear appeals of Short Plat decisions.
  - The addition of code language which changes the permitting process for Major Modifications to Conditional Use Permits.
4. Changes to 13.06 Zoning, including:
  - The addition of provisions requiring single-family dwellings to be oriented to the adjacent street or right-of-way.
  - A clarification to the Home Occupation Standards that on-premises sales of products associated with a Home Occupation are accessory to a service offered. For example, a home occupation engaged in hair salon services would be allowed to sell hair products and accessories.
  - The addition of work-live units to the use Chart. Work-live units are allowed in most commercially zoned districts.
  - Changes include the removal of references and regulations pertaining to the Urban Center Mixed-Use - Tacoma Dome (UCX-TD) zoning designation as it was eliminated through the South Downtown Subarea Plan process. The UCX-TD zoning district was rezoned to Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU).
  - The addition of Work-live units to the use charts.
  - The revision of fencing standards language to ensure consistency with the Downtown (13.06A) code.
  - Removal of references to the zoning designation Urban Center Mixed-Use - Tacoma Dome (UCX-TD) as it has been replaced with Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU).
  - The addition of reference to an applicable part of the code was added to the sign table. This will ensure applicable regulations are found with ease.
  - The addition of a definition for 'work-live unit' which is a combined living and work unit that includes a kitchen and a bathroom.
5. Changes to 13.06A
  - Clarification of the regulations for work-live units in the Downtown by removing references to the Mixed-Use Centers.

6. Changes to 13.11 CAPO, including:
  - Changes making the CAPO compliant with the new Shoreline Master Program and code.
  - The removal of and all invalid references to critical areas that are now regulated under the shoreline code (Refer to 13.11.190.D).
  - The CAPO changes will include minor corrections due to scrivener's errors, duplication of code citation, and clarification of intent and regulatory application for certain code citations that in practice have revealed unintended interpretation errors.
7. Changes to 13.12 SEPA, including:
  - The clarification of the appeals process for Shoreline Substantial Development Permits. Appeals of Shoreline Substantial Development Permits are appealable to the Shoreline Hearings Board.

### **Outreach**

Staff have discussed the 2014 Annual Amendment package with various stakeholder groups, including the Master Builders Association (MBA), other development industry representatives, and Neighborhood Councils. In addition, planning staff have or plan to reach out to the Community Council, the Cross District Association, and Neighborhood Business Districts, informing them of the 2014 Annual Amendment process and offering presentations on the proposed amendments at their board meetings. Additional outreach will occur through and during the Planning Commission and City Council's public hearing and notice processes.

### **Planning Commission's Review**

Reviewed on February 5, 2014; concurred with staff's approach and analysis; and authorized the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.