



City of Tacoma  
Planning and Development Services

**Agenda Item  
D-2**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division  
**Subject:** **2015 Comprehensive Plan Update – Policy Element Overview**  
**Meeting Date:** June 3, 2015  
**Memo Date:** May 28, 2015

At the June 3 Planning Commission meeting, staff will be presenting an overview of the proposed Comprehensive Plan elements and a summary of the policy direction and key policy shifts for each chapter as well as chapters not proposed for amendment and topics to be addressed in future work programs.

The Commission has previously discussed topics related to Housing, Environment, Land Use Designations, Transportation, and Mixed-Use Centers. The focus of this presentation will be those elements of which the Planning Commission has not yet fully reviewed or discussed, including the Vision and Introduction, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Urban Form, Design and Development, and the Public Engagement, Administration and Implementation chapters. Attached is a summary of each element.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (253) 591-5531 or [satkinson@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:satkinson@cityoftacoma.org).

Attachments (1)

c: Peter Huffman, Director





## Overview of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Elements and Policy Directions

The following topics represent proposed policy elements of the Comprehensive Plan and a brief discussion of the proposed policy directions and key policy shifts related to these elements.

### **Vision and Introduction**

Key updates:

- Core Values of Tacoma 2025 and integration of Focus Areas.
- Regional planning context and Tacoma's role within the region.
- Setting the stage for growth and development – the sustainable cities model.

### **\*NEW\* Urban Form – Replacing the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element**

Key updates:

- Emphasize the importance of urban design at the neighborhood/community scale
- Centers – Describe role of centers in anchoring complete neighborhoods
  - Fully incorporate Stadium and Hilltop as subareas of the Downtown Regional Growth Center
  - Simplify the centers typology
  - Identify implementation actions for mixed-use centers
  - Recognize and promote Convenience Corners
- Apply new Land Use Designation framework
  - Address inconsistencies between designations and zoning (assess/verify correct land use designations to set stage for compatible rezoning as part of 2016 Annual Amendment)
  - Promote additional land supply for multi-family along corridors
  - Implement new "Parks and Open Space" designation
  - Create and implement new "Major Institutional Campus" designation
- Describe Historic Neighborhood Pattern Areas based on physical characteristics and recognize the diverse uses and housing types within established residential neighborhoods
- Promote "Patterned Corridors" that support diverse uses and vibrant urban places
- Emphasize the importance of better integrated land use and transportation planning

### **\*NEW\* Design and Development – Replacing Generalized Land Use Element**

Key Policy Updates:

- Emphasize the importance of design at the project/site/building scale
- Expand scenic resource policies to include architectural and cultural resources
- Integration of policies related to public art and creative place-making
- Promote sustainability through design – hazard resilient design, resource efficient design and designing with nature
- Promote access to healthy food



### **Housing Element**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Incorporate new housing targets and data
- Incorporate countywide 25% affordable housing goal
- Strengthen policies supporting mixed-income communities throughout city
- Support full range of housing types (including the “missing middle”) and where (density in proximity to centers and corridors)
- Housing programs and funding should support the City’s growth strategy.
- Include prioritization principles and criteria for reviewing projects to ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plan.

### **Environment and Watershed Health**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Co-locate and reorganize policies related to the City’s critical areas, watersheds, Open Space Corridors, and tree canopy.
- Planning for protection of City’s environmental assets – consideration of climate change, need for data collection, monitoring and inventory of environmental assets and quality throughout City.
- Preserving existing environmental assets – Avoid and minimize impacts, fully mitigate, apply approach more broadly to protect Open Space Corridors.
- Use Watersheds as a core framework for policies, analysis, and mitigation approaches
- Watershed plans – promote the development of watershed basin plans based on the best available science.
- Discourage development in hazard prone areas.
- Promote the development of hazard mitigation.

### **\*NEW\* Parks and Recreation – Extracted from current Open Space, Habitat and Recreation Element**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Stronger recognition of the shared responsibility for meeting recreational needs (traditional parks + schools + open spaces + trails + complete streets + community facilities + private facilities)
- Stronger focus on equitable distribution and access to parks and recreation facilities
- Park and recreation level of service that is tied to both proximity to parks as well as population density
- Updated inventory and goals for recreation (to meet RCO requirements)



### **\*NEW\* Public Facilities and Services – Replacing Capital Facilities Element and Utilities Element**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Consider equity in the provision of new public facilities and services.
- Provision of public facilities and services should support the City's growth strategy.
- Simplification of Level of Service standards – remove Level of Service where not required for concurrency and replace with other performance measures.
- Include a forecast of future facility and service needs from all major facility and service providers.
- Include prioritization principles and criteria for reviewing projects to ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plan.

### **Economic Development – First update since 2001.**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Update employment and economic trends since 2000.
- Situate Tacoma's economy within the regional context.
- Incorporate employment targets and promote jobs within proximity to housing.
- Diversify and expand Tacoma's employment base.
- Connect people to economic opportunities.
- Promote investments in employment centers to stimulate development.
- Identify key industries to promote and expand.
- Attract firms that provide living wage jobs.
- Economic development programs and funding should support the City's growth strategy.
- Include prioritization principles and criteria for implementation programs to ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plan.

### **\*NEW\* Public Engagement, Administration and Implementation**

#### Key Policy Updates:

- Focus on equity and outreach to traditionally underserved communities.
- Focus on proactive outreach in all phases of planning.
- Address coordination and joint planning with other agencies, organizations and jurisdictions.
- Outline Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code amendment procedures
- Describe the relationship of Comprehensive Plan policies to other program and implementation strategies, including the relationship between Land Use Designation and Zoning.

### **No proposed change this year**

- Downtown Element
- Historic Preservation Program Element
- Subarea Plans
- Container Port Element



### **Elements proposed to be rescinded as stand-alone elements of the Comprehensive Plan**

- Arts and Culture (*incorporated into multiple elements*)
- Neighborhood Element (*Projects should be incorporated into Capital Facilities Program in 2016; Some specific policy issues are addressed generally in the Plan or are integrated into Neighborhood Pattern Areas; Neighborhood Actions Strategies should be updated or reconceived*)
- Tacoma Dome Area Plan (*replaced by South Downtown Subarea Plan*)
- Community Facilities Plan (*incorporated into Public Facilities and Services*)
- MLK Design Plan (*effectively replaced by Hilltop Subarea Plan*)
- South 38<sup>th</sup> Street Design Plan (*to be replaced by Lincoln Revitalization Plan*).
- Sixth Avenue Design Plan

### **For 2016 work program and beyond**

- Consider an update to the Neighborhood Action Strategies or an appropriate way to continue neighborhood based planning initiatives.
- Zoning and development regulation amendments to bring zoning classifications into consistency with land use designations, to address pedestrian-oriented development standards, and to modify use allowances.
- Amendments to Downtown Element and Subarea Plans to address potential inconsistencies in policies and references. Fully incorporate street typology networks and design concepts into the subarea plans.
- Partner with Environmental Services to conduct a climate risk assessment, develop the Environmental Action Plan, and support the development of watershed basin plans.
- Begin implementation of identified Mixed-use Center work program recommendations.