To: Planning Commission
From: Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division
Subject: 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update
Date of Meeting: July 8, 2015
Date of Memo: July 1, 2015

At the July 8th Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, staff will be presenting a preliminary draft of the Comprehensive Plan for Commission review and discussion. A copy of the draft plan is attached.

At previous meetings the Commission has discussed draft versions of the Housing Element, the Environment Element, Parks and Recreation Element, as well as an overview of each element and element outlines. The presentation on July 8th will focus on those elements that have not been fully reviewed previously by the Commission. To help facilitate the review staff has provided some highlights below for the Commissioners to consider during the document review. In addition, staff will present a brief update on how the Mixed-use Centers Review will be integrated with the Comprehensive Plan and Greg Easton of Property Counselors will present his findings on the Mixed-use Centers Feasibility Analysis.

Content

- **Intent, Goals, and Policies** – For each chapter, how well do the goals support the overall intent and do the policies directly relate to the identified goal?

- **Future Land Use Map** – Does the Future Land Use Map successfully represent the policies in the Plan, specifically the Urban Form Element?

- **Arts and Culture** – Arts and culture policies are interspersed throughout the Plan, located prominently in the Urban Form, Design and Development and Economic Development Elements. Are there any other ways in which you would like to see arts and culture policies integrated or discussed in the draft?

- **Being Green** – Tree canopy, green infrastructure and integrating nature are themes that recur throughout the document. Do these sections feel redundant in any way or does it build a strong message throughout the document?

- **Design** – How well does the draft element position the City for future discussions of design guidelines and design review?

- **Growth Allocations** – Are the City’s growth allocations clear throughout the document and how well does the draft strike a balance between the desire to recognize and protect historic development patterns while accommodating the need to grow, change and adapt?

- **Prioritization and Focus** – The Public Facilities and Services Element outlines the level of service standard for different types of facilities and services and provides additional criteria for evaluating and prioritizing projects. These policies and criteria will be used in developing updates to the Capital Facilities Program. In addition, each chapter is
intended to provide policies on prioritization. How well do the chapters present areas of priority and focus and how well do you think the prioritization criteria in the Public Facilities and Services element follow from the prior chapters?

- **Environment and Economic Development Elements** – Staff is continuing to work with other responsible City departments to review, provide comments and to identify potential amendments to these chapters. On July 8th staff will provide an assessment of any remaining city staff comments on these chapters for Commission consideration.

- **Consistency and Voice** – Does the content flow well between chapters and does it feel like the overall messages are consistent throughout the Plan?

**Formatting**

- **Document Layout** – Chapters 1 and 5 provide examples of the proposed formatting. Other chapters are in working format as the draft continues to evolve.

- **Two Approaches to Goals** – Chapter 2 provides an example of goals that begin with a verb describing what will be achieved, whereas, in Chapter 3 goals are stated as sentences as though the goal has been achieved.

- **Sidebars** – The document will make use of sidebars and other graphics to illustrate points, define terms, or provide illustrative examples. There is a lot of data and information that could be provided, so please provide thoughts on the content that you consider essential for these sidebars.

**Work in Progress**

- Maps for each chapter are currently being produced.
- Sidebars, examples and other graphics are still to be developed.
- Maps and descriptions of the individual mixed-use centers are being produced for inclusion in the Urban Form Element based on the work conducted in the Draft Mixed-Use Center Profiles that the Commission has previously reviewed.

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

**Attachment**

c: Peter Huffman, Director
| 1   | Introduction + Vision ................................................................. | 1-1 |
| 2   | Urban Form ............................................................................... | 2-1 |
| 3   | Design + Development ............................................................... | 3-1 |
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INTRODUCTION + VISION
Introduction

In 2015, Tacoma is the second largest city in the Puget Sound region and the most important business employment center in the South Sound region. Over the past two decades, Tacoma has seen a significant renaissance, with substantial reinvestment in the downtown and increased growth and vitality in the city’s eclectic neighborhoods. Recognizing Tacoma’s role in the region, the Puget Sound Regional Council designated Tacoma as a Metropolitan City, serving as Pierce County’s civic, cultural and economic hub and a focal point for future population and employment growth. This Comprehensive Plan looks forward to Tacoma’s long-term future, ensuring that growth happens in a beneficial, healthy, and sustainable way.

This Comprehensive Plan builds on the City’s 2002 Comprehensive Plan, responds to community needs, and fulfills the Washington Growth Management (GMA) requirements for periodic review. It also conforms to Pierce County’s Countywide Planning Policies and guidance from the Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2040.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan guides a community’s character over the long term, addresses the entire community and describes how the community’s vision for the future is to be achieved. In short, it’s a blueprint for the future character of the city. It guides decisions on land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, parks, and the environment. It also sets standards for roads and other infrastructure, identifies how they’ll be paid for, and establishes the basis for zoning and development regulations.

Tacoma’s growth target is for 127,000 NEW RESIDENTS and 97,000 NEW JOBS by 2040.
The plan takes a long-range perspective on topics that address the physical, social, and economic health of the City. Plan guidance is intentionally general, providing broad policy direction. Policy guidance established in the plan will be translated into action through specific implementation programs or regulatory actions developed by the City to fulfill plan direction. A plan is also a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions, and offering a framework for the consideration of policy changes.

WHAT’S IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

In addition to this introduction, the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan contains eight chapters, or elements, with goals and policies identified for each element. The goals and policies are numbered and labeled according to their respective elements. Goals and policies are aspirational and provide the means for Tacoma to grow and prosper and yet maintain the unique character of the city for current and future generations. Book I elements are briefly summarized in Table 1 at right and Book II programs in Table 2 on the following page.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

WASHINGTON GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

Adopted in 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires municipalities to plan for accommodating growth and grants counties, in consultation with cities, the authority to assign growth allocations for population and employment. In general, GMA goals support focused growth in designated urban centers with adequate infrastructure, while preserving the rural area around the urban centers. The GMA identifies specific requirements for comprehensive plans, focused primarily on the required land use, housing, transportation, utilities and capital facilities elements. The City of Tacoma 2015 Comprehensive Plan update has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the GMA.
### TABLE 1. Book I Comprehensive Plan Elements and Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>ELEMENT FOCUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Form</strong></td>
<td>Equitable system of compact mixed-use and commercial centers; major corridors as vibrant urban places and key transportation connections; enhanced public realm; integrate nature into the city and link people, places and wildlife; description of overall development pattern and area character to inform and guide future investments and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design + Development</strong></td>
<td>Building and site design that promotes human and environmental health and safety and responds to local context; strong links between building and site design, streets and the public realm; historic and cultural resource and scenic view preservation; integration of nature into the built environment; energy and resource efficient neighborhoods and buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td>Planning, management and preservation of watershed functions, trees and forests, open space lands and habitat corridors, and natural resources including wetlands, streams, lakes, floodplains, fish and wildlife habitats, groundwater and geologic hazards; net gain in air and water quality, habitat functions and values, and tree canopy coverage; awareness of the urban forest and habitat lands, the benefits of the urban ecosystem; greenhouse gas emissions and anticipated impacts from climate change; coordination to promote preservation and restoration of Tacoma’s valuable environmental assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Housing diversity, equitable access to housing, housing stock that is safe and healthy, affordable housing and resource efficient and high performance housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Development</strong></td>
<td>Access to a diversity of economic opportunities; positive business climate; build upon employment in Downtown, manufacturing/industrial centers and mixed-use centers; leverage industrial strengths and assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>See description of the Transportation Master Plan in Table 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks + Recreation</strong></td>
<td>Safe and equitable access to high quality parks and recreational facilities, contribute to the health of all Tacomans, partnerships to enhance the quality of services, long-term maintenance of facilities, facilities consistent with community needs, a complete park system that serves diverse needs, special area and specific facilities consistent with adopted master plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Facilities + Services</strong></td>
<td>Public facilities and services needed to support current and future development, annexation areas, essential public facilities, prioritization criteria, economic development, facilities management, inventory of facilities, planned capital projects, financing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Container Port</strong></td>
<td>Long-term function and viability of the Port of Tacoma maritime industrial activities and services, compatible transition between maritime industrial area and surrounding development, essential capital facilities and an efficient multi-modal movement of goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement, Administration + Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Inclusionary and equitable community engagement, working in partnership with individuals and organizations, commitment to transparency and accountability. Steps in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, working in coordination within the city and with external partners, and maintaining/amending the Comprehensive Plan in order to make sure it stays useful and relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Downtown</strong></td>
<td>Supporting a balanced, health economy, achieving vitality downtown, sustainable city, city of the arts, urban design, downtown circulation and policies for each downtown district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 2. Book II Comprehensive Plan Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>PROGRAM FOCUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shoreline Master Program</td>
<td>Includes goals, policies and development regulations for all shoreline areas including Commencement Bay and its waterways, the Tacoma Narrows, and Wapato Lake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Facilities Program</td>
<td>Implements the Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities Element, documents priorities for the capital improvements the City intends to build in the next six years and plans for how to pay for these improvements. Functions as a budgeting tool, providing guidance for appropriations that are made through adoption of the budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Master Plan</td>
<td>Partnerships to serve all users of the regional transportation system; safe and healthy connections to places where people work, live and play; mobility options, accessibility, equity and economic vitality; fiscal, environmental and social sustainability; transportation demand management strategies; reinforce the land use vision and VISION 2040; implementation actions and a detailed project list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Regional Growth Center Subarea Plans</td>
<td>Smaller area plans to help implement the vision for the Downtown Regional Growth Center. Includes to North Downtown Subarea, South Downtown Subarea and Hilltop Subarea. Each subarea plan focuses on issues and opportunities at a scale that is responsive to the subarea’s specific needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation Plan</td>
<td>Defines the City of Tacoma’s preservation goals, policies and actions for preservation and neighborhood conservation. Provides a framework for organizations engaged in community based initiatives with interests in protecting and experiencing cultural resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISION 2040

VISION 2040 is the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) vision and strategy for accommodating the five million people and three million jobs that are expected to be present in the Puget Sound region by 2040, while promoting the “well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment.” The Tacoma Comprehensive Plan was developed to advance the overall direction established by VISION 2040, as described below.

VISION 2040 designates Tacoma as one of five Metropolitan Cities in the region. As a Metropolitan City, Tacoma is to serve as a focal point for accommodating forecast growth and helping to relieve development pressure on rural and natural resource lands. By planning for future population, housing and employment that align with VISION 2040 targets, the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan seeks to fulfill its role and responsibility as a Metropolitan City. At the same time, the Comprehensive Plan seeks to ensure that the vision for Tacoma’s character, services and quality of life are maintained and enhanced as the city grows. Accordingly, the Plan supports allocation of resources where the greatest amount of growth is forecast.

The Comprehensive Plan advances a sustainable approach to growth and future development. The plan incorporates a systems approach to planning and decision-making that addresses protection of the natural environment and commits to maintaining and restoring ecosystems, through steps to conserve key habitats, clean up polluted waterways, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan includes provisions that ensure that a healthy environment remains available for future generations of Tacomans.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses each of the policy areas in VISION 2040. Policies that address habitat protection, water conservation, air quality, and climate change. Environmentally friendly development techniques, such as low-impact landscaping, are identified. The plan calls for more compact urban development and includes design guidelines for mixed-use and transit-oriented development. Funding and investments to the regional growth centers is prioritized. The housing element commits to expanding housing production at all income levels to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents and establishes an affordable housing goal based on the 2040 planning horizon. The economic development element
supports creating jobs, investing in all people, creating great communities, and maintaining a high quality of life. The transportation element advances cleaner and more sustainable mobility, with strategies that advance alternatives to driving alone. The plan also includes provisions for complete streets, green streets, and context-sensitive design. Transportation planning is coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions, including our level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions.

The comprehensive plan also addresses local implementation actions in VISION 2040, including mode-split goals for designed centers and housing targets.

PIERCE COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

In accordance with the Washington GMA, the Pierce County Regional Council maintains the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to coordinate planning on a countywide basis. Last updated in 2012, the CPPs provide guidance to cities on a wide range of topics, including affordable housing, community and urban design, economic development, health and well-being, historic and cultural preservation, natural resources and transportation facilities. The Tacoma Comprehensive Plan has been prepared consistent with the guidance of the Pierce County CPPs.

VISION 2025

Prepared in 2014, Tacoma 2025 is a strategic plan and vision for the future of Tacoma. Tacoma 2025 was developed to guide the City in decision-making and resource allocation, as well as performance tracking and reporting. It focuses on seven focus areas: Health & Safety, Human & Social Needs, Economic Vibrancy & Employment, Education & Learning, Arts & Cultural Vitality, Natural & Built Environment, and Government Performance.

The Tacoma Comprehensive Plan supports the vision and direction of the Tacoma 2025. Through the long-range policy guidance provided by the Comprehensive Plan, future implementing actions will help to achieve the priorities identified in Tacoma 2025 and further the vision for each of the focus areas well into the future.
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An active community involvement program was an essential part of the 2015 comprehensive plan update. The goals of public outreach were to:

1. Enhance the quality of and support for the Comprehensive Plan through meaningful public and agency participation in the preparation of the Plan update.
2. Balance the interests of our community with the interests of the State and Region.
3. Identify issues early and resolve conflicts during the planning process.
4. Comply with and exceed all state laws and regulations related to public participation and agency coordination.

Activities included:

1. **Community Workshops.** A series of large community workshops were held in each of the five council districts, hosted by City Council members. Each workshop included a brief presentation and facilitated discussion of key issues.
2. **Web page.** Tacoma2040.com was developed to describe the Comprehensive Plan update purpose, process and opportunities to participate. Background materials and draft plan elements were posted on an ongoing basis and comments were invited. Web visitors could also sign up for an email update list.
3. **Community events and speakers forum.** [text to be provided]
4. **Citywide Forum.** [text to be provided]
5. **Planning Commission meetings.** [text to be provided]
Spring 2015 Community Workshops
Welcome to the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update website!

Here you can learn about the Plan update, find out about upcoming public meetings, sign up for email updates, and provide feedback on our comment page or blog.

You can also learn about the Plan update on the City’s website.

Bulletin Board

Planning Commission Meetings
The Planning Commission will be discussing the Comprehensive Plan update, as well as other business, at their upcoming meetings. All meetings are open to the public and begin at 4pm in the Tacoma Municipal Building North, Room 16. Learn more:

- June 3
- June 17
- July 1

Screenshot from the Tacoma2040.com Web Page

[placeholder for incoming text]
Tacoma is one of the nation’s healthiest, safest, and most playful cities. We have daily access to stunning natural surroundings and a great quality of life. We are Washington’s most diverse big city, with arts, culture, parks, and recreational opportunities that are envied by much larger cities. We recognize how lucky we are, but we know we can make it better.

—Tacoma 2025
This portrayal of Tacoma introduces *Tacoma 2025*, a strategic plan and vision for the future of Tacoma. The public discussion of Tacoma’s vision in this plan was extensive, touching over 2,000 residents through a dozen fairs and festivals, an online forum, a community survey and a series of visioning events. The outcome of this extensive public conversation was identification of core values and focus areas to achieve the vision.

Core values—consisting of opportunity, equity, partnerships and accountability—shaped the discussion of the future and are discussed on the following page. Rising from these core values, specific focus areas, illustrated in Figure 1, define and emphasize key areas and opportunities for the future.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes and builds on the thoughtful public discussion of Tacoma’s future incorporating the core values and focus areas established in *Tacoma 2025*. The Comprehensive Plan shares and supports the direction established in all of the *Tacoma 2025* focus areas:

- Natural and Built Environment
- Economic Vibrancy and Employment
- Health and Safety
- Arts and Cultural Vitality
- Human and Social Needs
- Education and Learning
- Government Performance

Working in concert with *Tacoma 2025*, Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan seeks to build on our assets, address our challenges and see the vision become a reality.

*FIGURE 1. Tacoma 2025 Core Values and Focus Areas*
The Comprehensive Plan supports the four core values identified in Tacoma 2025, as discussed below.

**OPPORTUNITY**
Tacoma abounds with opportunity and positions its residents to excel. Tacoma residents enjoy a spectacular natural setting and a world-class seaport. Tacoma is one of the most diverse major cities in the Pacific Northwest, and the City sustains a superior arts and cultural scene. Tacoma’s higher educational opportunities are excellent. Tacoma has remarkable access to the markets of the western United States and the Pacific Rim, yet benefits from a cost of living that is more affordable than nearby cities. Tacoma pursues its destiny from a foundation that is second to none.

**EQUITY**
Tacoma’s diversity is its greatest asset. In an increasingly global marketplace, Tacoma embraces its multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character. Communities of color and immigrant communities are fundamental to Tacoma’s entrepreneurial spirit, workforce, and long-term success. In Tacoma, equity and empowerment are top priorities, meaning that all Tacoma residents must have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential and share in the benefits of community progress.

**PARTNERSHIPS**
The City of Tacoma cannot achieve this vision alone. Effective partnerships with community organizations, neighborhoods, business groups, and other government agencies are essential. This plan is the shared product of community collaboration. In pursuing the visions outlined here, the City will work closely with its partners to efficiently use existing resources. Bringing Tacoma 2025 to reality will be a community effort.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
Tacoma has emerged from difficult times through fiscal discipline and hard decisions. Tacoma residents expect efficient and effective performance from their city government and the City’s officials and staff take this responsibility seriously. Pursuit of the city’s vision will be transparent and accountable.
Natural & Built Environment

The vision...

Tacoma is livable. Our residential and commercial neighborhoods are inviting, thriving and have a well-established sense of place. All residents have access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation and other services. Our downtown is a safe and vibrant regional center with a diverse array of employment and residential opportunity.

Tacoma is green. We have ensured the long-term health and quality of our community through protection of our natural environment, preservation of our tree canopy and responsible use of our natural resources. We live within the capacity of our natural systems, ensuring long-term environmental sustainability.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following natural and built environment community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Increase transportation options.** Tacomans need to be mobile, with transportation choices, including transit, bicycling and walking.
- **Sustain and improve Tacoma’s natural environment.** Tacoma residents treasure their outstanding parks and stunning natural setting; these must be sustained.
- **Growth and enhance the vitality of Tacoma’s neighborhoods.** Transit-oriented and infill development, as well as reuse of historic buildings and districts, provides housing, economic and environmental benefits.
- **Improve and maintain Tacoma’s streets.** Tacoma’s residents are concerned about the condition of their streets and maintenance is a top priority.
Economic Vibrancy & Employment

The vision...

Tacoma has a vibrant economy that provides economic opportunity for all its residents. Economic activity is rooted in a vibrant downtown core, complemented by active neighborhood business districts. Tacoma’s large employers provide livable wages for many of our residents. Similarly, small businesses are recognized and support as a significant driver of economic activity throughout the city. Tacoma’s economic vibrancy is based on the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole—including the skills, hard work, and creativity of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and an economic climate that foster both large and small business. The majority of Tacoma’s residents now work in the city where they live.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following economic vibrancy and employment community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Increase the number and quality of jobs throughout Tacoma.** Tacoma residents will have more economic opportunities—partners will strive to recruit, retain, and expand job opportunities throughout the community.
- **Diversify Tacoma’s living wage business base.** Providing jobs at living wages is a top priority; well paying jobs help the community meet multiple goals.
- **Improve neighborhood business districts.** A diversity of neighborhoods with vital business activity and housing options is essential to Tacoma.
- **Strengthen downtown Tacoma as a business core and residential option.** A successful downtown Tacoma is a driver of Tacoma’s economic health and quality of life.
Health & Safety

The vision...

Tacoma boasts high rates of human and environmental health. Residents enjoy equal access to Tacoma’s strong health care system and access to healthy, local and affordable food options. Tacoma’s great outdoor spaces, access to nature and recreational activities support residents in managing their own health. Healthy air quality means few worries about exercise, whether running along the Sound, hiking in Point Defiance or at a high school track practice. All of this has improved overall health and reduced health disparities. Tacoma is a place of health opportunities, healthy environments and healthy residents.

Tacoma is the safest city in Washington State. Strong and cohesive communities, where neighbors take care of each other and feel ownership in their neighborhood, coupled with sound investment in public services and facilities all contribute to a strong sense of safety and well-being. The benefits of Tacoma’s attention of the health and safety of its residents are seen in greater community cohesion, increased happiness and growth in new residents and businesses.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following health and safety community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Improve neighborhood safety.** Tacoma residents want to feel safe. This means that the rate of crime falls and people feel secure in their neighborhoods.
- **Increase active living.** Increasing active lifestyles is Tacoma’s greatest opportunity to improve the health of its residents.
- **Improve overall health.** Tacoma residents value an integrated system of wellness programs and health care as a means of supporting community health and wellbeing.
Arts & Cultural Vitality

The vision...

Tacoma is widely recognized for its flourishing arts and culture. A prolific arts scene is nourished by affordable housing and studio space. The revitalized theater and dome districts feature buildings that are gloriously restored, complemented by a vibrant museum campus that attracts visitors both locally and nationally. People from all walks of life enjoy exceptional access to a broad variety of cultural activities. Arts and heritage are fundamental to Tacoma’s character, attracting and retaining creative residents, stimulating economic development and neighborhood vitality, and encouraging a widespread embrace of the community’s ethnic diversity. Arts, culture and creativity are valued as essential keys to Tacoma’s unique and distinctive identity.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following arts and cultural vitality community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Increase participation in arts and culture.** Tacoma’s impressive arts and cultural scene offers opportunities than can enrich everyone’s lives.
- **Embrace Tacoma’s diversity of people, places and cultures.** Active celebration of Tacoma’s diversity will help the community success economically and socially.
- **Leverage and strengthen Tacoma’s arts and cultural assets.** Tacoma’s excellent collection of arts and cultural facilities and historic buildings provides an economic advantage in attracting residents and investments.
Human & Social Needs

The vision...

Tacoma has a strong and resilient social safety net and benefits from an integrated service delivery system that helps address multiple needs and gets people back on their feet quickly and with confidence. Measures are in place to support vulnerable families and reduce youth poverty and homelessness. Not every issue can be fully solved through social programs, but groups consistently work together to blunt the impact of circumstance.

All Tacoma families have resources for housing and shelter. Families in poverty increasingly find new economic opportunities and that—even during periods of struggle—their most basic needs are met.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following human and social needs community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Increase housing security.** Tacoma residents want everyone to have shelter and to feel secure in their housing options.
- **Improve services to youth and vulnerable populations.** Tacoma cherishes its youth and other vulnerable residents; providing services to them is a priority.
- **Reduce poverty.** Reducing poverty is the best way to ensure that all Tacoma residents have resources to meet their needs.
Education & Learning

The vision...

Tacoma has a rich learning environment, expanding beyond classroom walls and beyond even student homes. Strong partnerships between the formal K-12 school system and cultural institutions, governments, and non-profit organizations provide kids with a multitude of hands-on learning experiences. Children begin school excited and ready to learn because of great early learning experiences. Young adults emerge from the school system ready to pursue college, technical schools, or other forms of professional development. The community’s youth can follow their dreams, and have economic opportunities to do so locally if they choose, as Tacoma’s economy thrives on the well-trained talents of its youth.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following education and learning community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Close the education achievement gaps.** Helping all of Tacoma’s youth succeed through quality education is key to the community’s future.
- **Prepare people to succeed in Tacoma’s workforce.** All residents should be prepared to succeed in jobs that are located in Tacoma or anywhere.
Government Performance

The vision...

In 2025, Tacoma residents trust in their city government and civic institutions. Elected leaders and civil servants hold transparency and accountability as primary civic responsibilities. The community believes that local government is tackling the tough issues, and actively engaging residents and community partners in those endeavors. Residents engage in civic affairs, participate in government activities, and vote.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the following government performance community priorities identified in Tacoma 2025:

- **Ensure accountable, efficient and transparent city services.** Tacoma’s City Council and staff are committed to providing the city’s residents with outstanding service.

- **Engage residents, stakeholders and partners in the future of Tacoma.** Creating a better Tacoma requires engaged residents and strong partnerships.

- **Strengthen the City’s fiscal sustainability.** Tacoma’s ongoing stability requires increasing the tax base, managing costs and monitoring tax burdens closely.
2: Urban Form
Tacoma Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT June 2015

WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

This chapter describes the City’s intent to:

• Foster an equitable system of compact mixed-use and commercial centers across the city to increase access to community services and businesses and create more complete, healthy and connected neighborhoods.

• Improve Tacoma’s patterned corridors so that they become vibrant urban places and key transportation connections.

• Enhance Tacoma’s public realm, integrate nature into the city and link people, places and wildlife through active transportation facilities, green infrastructure investments and habitat connections.

• Describe the city’s overall development pattern and historic character to inform and guide future investments and to provide context for growth and development.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Tacoma’s identity now and in the future is significantly shaped by the historic design and physical structure of the city and its neighborhoods. How people live and get around is partly determined by the location of services and other destinations and the arrangement and design of buildings, streets and other public spaces. Together these design characteristics help determine whether: (1) a community is walkable, (2) children have safe places to play, (3) people have places to gather and (4) businesses are easy to access.

Where housing and services are built, where street networks are connected and how all of this is designed provides a key opportunity to: (1) enable people to meet more of their daily needs locally, (2) strengthen neighborhoods, (3) improve equitable access to services and (4) support healthy, active living.

This chapter includes policies that support enhancing centers across the city as anchors to complete neighborhoods, providing Tacomans with convenient access to local services. Clustering destinations in centers makes access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical and reduces the amount of driving needed to access services. Focusing growth and investments in centers and along connective corridors can also make good use of existing infrastructure capacity and encourage efficiency in new infrastructure investments.
GOALS + POLICIES

CITYWIDE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL UF-1  Guide development, growth, and infrastructure investment to support positive outcomes for all Tacomans.

Policy UF-1.1  Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map establishes and maintains land use designations that can accommodate planned population and employment growth. See Figure 2.1, Future Land Use Map.

Policy UF-1.2  Direct the majority of growth and change to centers, corridors, and transit station areas, allowing the continuation of the general scale and characteristics of Tacoma’s residential areas.

Policy UF-1.3  Strive for a built environment designed to provide a safe, healthful, and attractive environment for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy UF-1.4  Support energy-efficient, resource-efficient, and sustainable development and transportation patterns through land use and transportation planning.

Policy UF-1.5  Integrate nature and use appropriate green infrastructure throughout Tacoma.

Policy UF-1.6  Encourage high quality design and development that demonstrates Tacoma’s leadership in the design of the built environment, commitment to a more equitable city, and ability to experiment and generate innovative design solutions.

Policy UF-1.7  Leverage the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve the community’s interest while driving growth in a way that builds character and quality of place.

Policy UF-1.8  Evaluate the impacts of land use decisions on the characteristics of neighborhoods and current residents, particularly under-served and under-represented communities.
  a. Avoid or reduce negative development impacts, especially where those impacts inequitably burden communities of color under-served and under-represented communities, and other vulnerable populations.
  b. Make needed investments in areas that are deficient in infrastructure and services to reduce disparities and increase equity and where growth and development are desired.

Policy UF-1.9  Promote the development of compact, complete and connected neighborhoods where residents have easy, convenient access to many of the places and services they use daily including grocery stores, restaurants, schools and parks, that support a variety of transportation options, and which are characterized by a vibrant mix of commercial and residential uses within an easy walk of home.

CENTERS

Centers are compact, pedestrian-oriented urban places. They are connected by public transit and active transportation networks. They anchor complete neighborhoods with retail stores and
businesses (grocery stores, restaurants, markets, shops, etc.) civic amenities (libraries, schools, community centers, places of worship, etc.), housing options, health clinics, daycare centers, employment centers, plazas and parks and other public gathering places.

Centers will be the primary areas for growth and change in Tacoma over the next 25 years. Focusing new growth in centers helps achieve goals of having more Tacomans live in complete neighborhoods, use public transit and active transportation – walking, biking and rolling – to commute to work and complete errands, and it will help mitigate and prepare for the effects of climate change. Clustering destinations and housing within compact, walkable centers makes access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical and reduces the amount of driving needed to access services, reducing the impact on roadways, reducing congestion, and facilitating freight movement.

Centers range in scale from Tacoma’s Downtown to small four corner commercial nodes providing local access to services and allowing Tacomans across the City to live a healthy, active lifestyle. Neighborhood business districts and the commercial services they provide are the foundation of many centers, but centers, particularly larger centers, will also become a focus for public services, gathering places, and housing growth. In and around all centers, there will be change as areas urbanize and new services, shops and housing are developed.

Four types of centers are designated that vary in size, scale, service area, role, and density of residents and businesses. As shown in Figure 2.2 Centers, the four types of centers are:

- Downtown Regional Growth Center
- Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center
- Crossroads Center
- Neighborhood Center

Policies in this section identify essential elements and functions of centers that will be enhanced over time. Additional policies provide more detailed direction for specific types of centers.

**GOAL UF-2** Focus growth in a citywide network of centers that provide healthy, equitable and sustainable access to services and housing and preserve the city’s character and sense of place.

**Policy UF-2.1** Plan for a range of centers across the city to enhance local, equitable access to services, and housing opportunities.

**Policy UF-2.2** Connect centers to each other and to other key destinations, such as schools and parks, by frequent and convenient transit, bicycle sharing, bicycle routes, pedestrian trails and sidewalks, and electric and vehicle charging stations.

**Policy UF-2.3** Strictly limit the expansion of the core area boundaries except where it can be shown that the core has maximized its development potential, has achieved a full range of uses, and the proposed area of expansion will be developed to the fullest extent possible.

a. Support boundary expansion only when a center demonstrates a sustained level of growth consistent with the centers strategy and planned densities, where the demand for additional growth exists, and where the capacity for additional growth is limited.
What is a complete neighborhood?
The term “complete neighborhood” describes a neighborhood with safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life. This includes a variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, affordable transportation options and civic amenities. An important element of a complete neighborhood is that it is built at a walkable and bikeable human scale, and meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

GOAL UF-3

Enhance centers as anchors of complete neighborhoods that include concentrations of commercial and public services, housing, employment, gathering places, and green spaces.

Policy UF-3.1
Design centers to be compact, safe, attractive, and accessible places, where the street environment makes access by transit, walking, biking, and mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, safe and attractive for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy UF-3.2
Provide housing capacity for enough population to support a broad range of commercial services, focusing higher-density housing within a half-mile of the core.

Policy UF-3.3
Encourage residential development for mixed income levels in all centers.

Policy UF-3.4
Encourage the placement of services in centers, including schools and colleges, health services, community centers, daycare, parks and plazas, library services, and justice services.

Policy UF-3.5
Ensure that land use plans and infrastructure investments allow for and incorporate arts and culture as central components of centers and as identity forming creative processes.

Policy UF-3.6
Encourage public and private investment in infrastructure, economic development, and community services in centers to ensure that all centers will support the populations they serve.

Policy UF-3.7
Partner with Pierce Transit in providing development incentives and programs to improve transit-orientation and walking conditions in all centers.

Policy UF-3.8
Partner with employers within mixed-use centers to reduce dependence on automobile use and increase the use of transit, ridesharing, and nonmotorized transportation modes through aggressive implementation of Commute Trip Reduction programs and other efforts.

Policy UF-3.9
Where existing development patterns allow, mixed-use centers should include areas outside of the core where commercial uses are restricted and low rise multifamily development that is more compatible with the scale, massing and form of adjacent single family development is emphasized.

Policy UF-3.10
Integrate nature and green infrastructure into centers and enhance public views and connections to the surrounding natural features.

DOWNTOWN TACOMA REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER

The Downtown Regional Growth Center is the highest concentration of urban growth found anywhere in the city. It is the focal point for the city, the center of government, cultural, office, financial, transportation and other activities with a variety of day and night activities that attracts visitors from...
throughout the city and region. The interstate freeway and major arterials provides access and the center has both local and regional transit connections. Larger, often historic, buildings fronting on the sidewalk characterize the area. Pedestrian orientation is high and consideration for pedestrians is paramount.

The Downtown zoning districts are the most intensive in the city, allowing development heights from 90 feet in the Downtown Residential District to 400 feet in the Downtown Commercial Core. The Downtown Regional Center subarea plans have been developed in accordance with the Growing Transit Communities Compact and zoning capacity is sufficient to accommodate planned growth of 76,200 new residents and 67,900 new jobs by 2040.

Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Center is comprised of diverse neighborhoods and districts. New development should be sensitive to the context of these neighborhoods and districts and build on the strengths and character of these established areas, per the policies in the Downtown Element and the Downtown Tacoma Subarea Plans.

**Downtown Core**

With the highest intensity of urban uses in Tacoma, the Downtown Core functions as the center for governmental, cultural, business, and financial activities. The area is the visual and commercial focal point for the city and offers a variety of daytime and nighttime activities for locals and visitors, such as theater, art galleries, shopping, outdoor recreation and dining. The principal retail corridors are located along Pacific Avenue and Broadway south of 7th Avenue. The Downtown Core is the hub for important local and regional transit connections, including Tacoma LINK light rail and the Commerce Street Transit Center.

**Dome District**

The Dome District is hemmed in on its west and south sides by freeways, and on its north side by railroads. Portions of the Dome District were originally an intertidal area that was filled in the late-1800s to form the residential Hawthorne neighborhood. Over time, proximity to rail transportation and the construction of Interstate 5 contributed to a transition from residential to manufacturing and industrial uses. In 1981, a large portion of the neighborhood was razed to construct the Tacoma Dome. Today there are only a handful of housing units remaining in the entire District. The District has a rich mix of transit assets, including a Sounder commuter rail station, an Amtrak rail station, a Sound Transit LINK light rail station, and a terminal serving Pierce Transit and Sound Transit buses with two large parking structures. The Sounder Station is located in Freighthouse Square, a three-block-long former Milwaukee Railroad freight station, which also houses an eclectic mix of independent retail and restaurants. The most recent addition to the District is America’s Car Museum.

**Brewery District**

The Brewery district is named for the historic breweries built in the area starting in the late 19th Century. Although none of the original breweries are still operating, many of the historic red brick buildings remain, creating a distinct architectural character for the District. During the first few decades of the 20th Century, a variety of retail, service, and industrial establishments were built in the Brewery District, creating the gritty commercial character that persists to this day. The Brewery District is situated between the UWT/ Museum District and the Dome District, it and has the potential to serve as an important connector between them. There is currently very little housing in the Brewery District, with
the exception of a small residential area known as Knob Hill located in the southwest corner of the District. There is also a relatively high amount of vacant or underutilized property that presents numerous opportunities for redevelopment.

**UWT/Museum District**

This District encompasses the 46-acre University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) campus, as well as several major institutions, including the Tacoma Art Museum, the Children’s Museum of Tacoma, the Washington State History Museum, the Museum of Glass, the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, and historic Union Station, which now houses a U.S. District Court after an award-winning restoration in the 1990s. Established in 1990, the UWT campus has undergone an extraordinary transformation, earning numerous awards for the adaptive reuse of several century-old, brick railroad-era structures into modern classroom facilities. UWT has plans for continued expansion that will be a major driver for economic development in the area.

**St. Helens Neighborhood**

St. Helens is a medium-density mixed-use neighborhood that looks out over the Thea Foss Waterway and provides a transition between the historic civic center of the Downtown Core and the more residential Stadium District on the bluff above. With its successful retail core along St. Helens Avenue, the neighborhood is home to an array of businesses and multi-family residential buildings, both condominiums and apartments.

**The Hillside District**

The Hillside District is a transition between Downtown to the east and the Hilltop neighborhood to the west. It is primarily low-density residential in character, with a smattering of commercial uses, mostly located along Tacoma Avenue. True to its name, the Hillside District lies on a steep east-west slope which provides stunning views of the Thea Foss Waterway, Mount Rainier, and Commencement Bay.

**The Thea Foss Waterway**

The Thea Foss Waterway, an inlet of Commencement Bay, has provided access to Tacoma’s deepwater port since the turn of the 20th century. Initially a thriving industrial center, the waterway languished midcentury and was largely abandoned by the 1980’s. Following the remediation of the waterway, today the west shore of the Foss Waterway is the site of a growing mixed-use downtown neighborhood, featuring new parks, waterfront esplanade, residential living, and office space.

**Stadium District**

The Stadium District is located just north of Tacoma’s downtown commercial core, adjacent to the North Slope and Hilltop neighborhoods to the west and the north. The district is named after Stadium High School, an architectural and historic icon which has been operating within the Tacoma School District for more than 100 years.

The district is situated on a bluff overlooking Commencement Bay and is significantly higher in elevation than much of the Downtown Core area. The neighborhood is located adjacent to Wright Park and the Seymour Conservatory and is home to a mix of retail and service businesses that meet the daily needs of the area’s large population of apartment-dwelling residents.
The Hilltop Neighborhood

The Hilltop neighborhood is located immediately adjacent to Tacoma’s downtown core, which is home to the City’s largest concentration of jobs, as well as most of its major cultural and educational institutions. Downtown Tacoma has undergone significant revitalization over the past few decades, and Hilltop is well-poised to capitalize on that new energy. Hilltop’s local assets include two of the City’s largest healthcare facilities, an established business district and residential neighborhood, strategic proximity to local and regional assets and destinations, a unique and dynamic history, and a future Sound Transit LINK light rail investment through the core of the community. Together, these endowments create an extraordinary opportunity for positive transformation in Hilltop.

GOAL UF-4  Promote the Downtown as Tacoma’s and the South Puget Sound’s largest center with the highest concentrations of housing and with a diversity of housing options and services.

Policy UF-4.1  Strive to achieve Downtown Tacoma’s regional allocation of housing and employment and continue its growth as a regional center for innovation and exchange through commerce, employment, arts, culture, entertainment, tourism, education, and government.

Policy UF-4.2  Enhance public places and the Thea Foss Waterway in Downtown as places of business and social activity and gathering for the people of its districts and the broader region.

Policy UF-4.3  Enhance the Downtown as a regional transportation hub and optimize regional access to Downtown Tacoma’s destinations.

Policy UF-4.4  Establish the Downtown as a series of interconnected neighborhoods and encourage development that recognizes and responds to the context of these unique subareas.

TACOMA MALL REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER

Lying approximately two miles southwest of the Downtown Tacoma regional growth center, the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center is an important retail district within the city and the region. The Tacoma Mall regional growth center will remain as the city’s major retail center and is planned to accommodate 8,000 new residents and 7,500 new jobs. The development of new office, supporting retail and multifamily residential uses is appropriate. After the Downtown center, the Tacoma Mall area is the next highest area of concentrated development in the city, with possible building heights up to 12 stories, and activity levels greater than in most areas of the city.

GOAL UF-5  Elevate the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center in its role as a regional center of employment, commercial and public services.

Policy UF-5.1  Strive to achieve the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center’s regional allocation of employment and population growth and continue its role as a retail destination while expanding economic opportunities and services. The center should have the largest concentration of housing in South Tacoma.
**Policy UF-5.2** Enhance both the internal pedestrian connectivity and connectivity to regional transportation facilities to promote cohesion of the center and to optimize access to the shopping and employment opportunities.

**Policy UF-5.3** Enhance the public realm to provide a better setting for business and social activity that serves South Tacoma and the region.

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**CROSSROADS CENTERS**

Crossroads Centers consist typically of commercial development focused at intersections of major arterials or highways. These are areas where a greater mix of uses, including significantly more residential use, is desired. Development within Crossroads Centers will be of smaller scale and less dense than developments within the Regional Growth Centers but still will be greater than found in areas surrounding the center. Crossroads centers are located throughout Tacoma to serve broad parts of the city. They are typically anchored by major employers, institutions, or full service grocery stores, and feature a wide range of commercial and community services. Development in Crossroads Centers is intended to be mid-rise in scale. Mid-rise development includes buildings from five to 8 stories in height, but most frequently ranging from five to six stories. Parking is typically located off street and internal to the development site. As the centers grow, large surface parking lots should transition to structured parking, to free additional space to be more efficiently used for new infill development. Parking lots should be designed to promote internal connectivity and walkability within the center.

Development of mid-rise multiple family development is anticipated within the core of Community Centers with townhomes and stacked flats at the edges. Overall, residential densities will vary depending on the characteristics of the center, location within the community and other factors. Individual site densities can range from about 25-42 units per net acre for townhomes and stacked flats to 60 units per net acre for mid-rise mixed-use structures. Densities of 25 units per net acre are envisioned for areas near single-family zones where building height should be limited to ensure compatibility. Higher densities are envisioned in other parts of the centers depending on the established height limit, with the highest densities occurring along pedestrian streets.

**GOAL UF-6** Establish Crossroads Centers as successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and a wider area and contain high concentrations of employment, institutions, commercial and community services, and a wide range of housing options.

**Policy UF-6.1** Provide for a wide range of housing types in Crossroads Centers, which are intended to generally be larger in scale than the surrounding residential areas. Ensure sufficient zoning within the combined area of a Crossroads Center and the area within a half-mile walking distance of the Center should be able to accommodate 5,000 households.

**Policy UF-6.2** Improve Crossroads Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that optimize access from the broad area of the city they serve and are linked to the region’s high-capacity transit system.

**Policy UF-6.3** Provide parks or public squares within or near Crossroads Centers to support their roles as places of focused business and social activity.
Designated Neighborhood Centers
Proctor
6th Ave
Lincoln
McKinley
Narrows
South Tacoma Way
Point Ruston

Neighborhood Centers are smaller centers that include a mixture of higher density commercial and residential buildings, typically coinciding with historic business districts. Buildings generally are to reach no more than six stories and should be designed to be compatible with the character of existing buildings within the center. A main focus for the neighborhood center is to encourage pedestrians and bicyclists. The neighborhood center should be designed in such a fashion that the preferred modes of transportation are walking, bicycling, and public transit. This means that the neighborhood center should remain especially compact and that amenities such as bicycle racks, landscaping, lighting, and others should be prominent in order to make walking and bicycling desirable as well as practical. Parking will be available within neighborhood centers, but should be primarily on-street, within structures, or in small lots behind or adjacent to buildings. In most instances, the neighborhood center should develop into a "mini" transfer center for local transit. Some neighborhood centers also may be directly served by the regional transit network.

GOAL UF-7 Promote Neighborhood Centers as thriving centers that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy UF-7.1 In Neighborhood Centers, provide for higher concentrations of development, employment, commercial and community services, and a wider range of housing options than the surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy UF-7.2 Provide for a wide range of housing types in Neighborhood Centers, which are intended to generally be larger in scale than the surrounding residential areas, but smaller than Crossroads Centers. Ensure sufficient zoning within the combined area of a Neighborhood Center a half-mile walking distance to accommodate 3,000 households.

Policy UF-7.3 Design Neighborhood Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that optimize pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods and are served by frequent-service transit.

Policy UF-7.4 Provide small parks or plazas within or near Neighborhood Centers to support their roles as places of local activity and gathering.

EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Tacoma’s location halfway between Olympia and Seattle provides it access to many modes of transportation, natural resources, economical power sources, and a deep, sheltered harbor, all of which have contributed to Tacoma’s development as a successful industrial, commercial and trading center. The modern city has its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was designated as Northern Pacific Railroad’s western terminus for its transcontinental railroad in 1873.

Tacoma continues its tradition as a West Coast hub for trade, with the Port of Tacoma among the most important in the nation and the Pacific Rim. Regional shopping centers such as the Tacoma Mall have emerged to provide goods and services for the city and the region, while the emphasis in downtown has changed to professional offices, international finance, government, education, and cultural facilities.

The city’s employment geographies are:
Downtown Tacoma

Downtown Tacoma has emerged as the economic engine for the City of Tacoma, Pierce County and the South Sound region. This cluster of economic activity with nearly 45,000 jobs includes financial services, health services, and professional services.

Manufacturing and Industrial Areas

Manufacturing/Industrial areas are in the low, flat areas along the Port/Tideflats and the Nalley Valley. The manufacturing and distribution sectors concentrate here. Manufacturing/industrial centers are intended to be well-served by major transportation facilities including rail, interstate and transit systems. Many of the industrial uses are land intensive in nature. To preserve land at these centers, large retail, residential or nonrelated office uses are discouraged.

Commercial Districts

Commercial development involves a wide variety of uses and can range in scale from small neighborhood convenience shops to regional shopping centers. Commercial areas are the activity centers of the community. Commercial districts should be safe, well designed, appropriately scaled, and integrated into the fabric of the community. Infill development and intensification of existing commercial areas will aid their continued economic viability. In some limited instances, physical expansion of existing areas may be permitted; however, linear expansion is to be strictly limited. Commercial development within the mixed-use centers is also guided by policies in Section II specifically addressing the designated centers.

- Convenience corners are small commercial nodes distributed throughout Tacoma’s neighborhoods, often along historic streetcar routes. These nodes are generally developed at a neighborhood scale, up to 3 stories in height, but more typically 1-2 stories, and serviced by on-street parking and small off-street lots. Convenience corners provide access to daily services, including religious services and small businesses, in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, as well as gathering places for community interaction and mingling, and focal points of neighborhood identity. Due to their small size, convenience corners are more widely dispersed throughout the City. Convenience Corners are not typically zoned for significant growth, but rather to retain and enhance the existing services.

- Neighborhood Commercial districts are characterized primarily by small-scale neighborhood businesses with some residential and institutional uses. Uses within these areas have low to moderate traffic generation, shorter operating hours, smaller buildings and sites, and less signage than general commercial or mixed-use areas. There is a greater emphasis on small businesses and development that is compatible with nearby, lower intensity residential areas. Building heights typically range from 1 to 3 stories. Neighborhood Business Districts typically exhibit a higher concentration of commercial uses than a convenience corner and service a broader area.

- General Commercial districts encompass medium to high intensity commercial uses which serve a large community base with a broad range of larger scale uses. These areas also allow for a wide variety of residential development, community facilities, institutional uses, and some limited production and storage uses. These areas are generally located along major transportation corridors, often with reasonably direct access to a highway. This designation is characterized by larger-scale buildings, longer operating hours, and moderate to high traffic generation.
Campus Institutions

Institutions in the health care and education sectors are concentrated in large hospital and college campuses and dispersed smaller facilities. Major institutions are large employers with campuses that vary from pastoral expanses to more concentrated urban grounds. They are located throughout the city, often in or adjacent to residential areas.

**GOAL UF-8**

Ensure the continued growth and vitality of Tacoma’s employment centers.

*Policy UF-8.1* Strive to capture 46% of Urban Pierce County’s employment growth by 2040.

*Policy UF-8.2* Ensure that there is sufficient zoning and development capacity to accommodate the 2040 employment growth allocations.

*Policy UF-8.3* Ensure an equitable distribution of employment throughout the City, with the highest concentration of job growth occurring in the Downtown Regional Growth Center.

*Policy UF-8.4* Consider the land development and transportation needs of Tacoma’s employment geographies when creating and amending land use plans and making infrastructure investments.

*Policy UF-8.5* Promote an economic geography that enhances access to services and employment opportunities and concentrates employment in close proximity to transit and other public services and amenities.

Policies for each of the employment areas are provided in the Economic Development chapter.

**TRANSIT STATION AREAS**

Transit stations provide access to high-capacity and high-frequency transit, which currently consist of light rail and commuter rail but in the future may also include bus rapid transit. These policies encourage housing and employment growth in transit station areas to maximize the ability of people to benefit from the regional connections they provide and to increase transit access to employment. The policies support a range of transit station area types, with differing priorities for growth, depending on the station type and context. Priority is given to growth in station areas located in centers since they provide more people with opportunities to be close to both transit and to commercial and public services. These stations have the highest potential for mixed use development. Center stations benefit from the concentration of local services and businesses as well as connections to other transit routes typically found on corridors.

**GOAL UF-9**

Promote future residential and employment growth in coordination with transit infrastructure and service investments.

*Policy UF-9.1* Encourage transit-oriented development and transit-supportive concentrations of jobs and housing, and multimodal connections, at and adjacent to high-frequency and high-capacity transit stations.

*Policy UF-9.2* Integrate transit stations into surrounding communities and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to provide safe access to key destinations beyond the station area.
Policy UF-9.3 Design transit areas to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and personal safety within the station and the station area.

Policy UF-9.4 Encourage transit stations in centers to provide high density concentrations of housing and commercial uses that maximize the ability of residents to live close to both high-quality transit and commercial services.

Policy UF-9.5 Encourage concentrations of jobs and employment-focused land uses in and around stations in employment areas.

Policy UF-9.6 Enhance connections between major destinations and transit facilities and strengthen the role of these stations as places of focused activity.

Policy UF-9.7 Encourage concentrations of mixed-income residential development and supportive commercial services close to high capacity transit stations that are not located in a center.

CORRIDORS

There are five types of designated corridors:
- Avenue
- Main Street
- Transit Priority
- Urban Residential
- Freight Corridor

Corridors, like centers, are areas where Tacoma will grow and change over the next 25 years. They are busy, active streets with redevelopment potential. They are close to neighborhoods and are places with transit, stores, housing and employers. They need to be planned, designed and improved to be places that benefit and become successful additions to surrounding neighborhoods. The largest places of focused activity and density along these corridors are designated as centers. Corridors are not intended to be long commercial strips or a single land use pattern, but to achieve a range of land use types and densities that vary along the corridor (see Figure 2.4, Corridors).

GOAL UF-10 Establish designated corridors as thriving places that support and connect Tacoma’s centers.

Avenue

Avenues are the city’s busiest, widest and most prominent streets. They provide major connections among centers, the rest of the City and the region. They support the movement of people and goods across the city, with high levels of traffic and, in some cases, pedestrian activity. Avenues provide opportunities for growth and transit-supportive densities of housing, commerce, and employment. Development along Avenues is intended to provide middle range housing densities and choices with buildings up to 45 feet in height. Abundant trees and high-quality landscaping beautify Avenues and offset the impacts of their large paved areas. These corridors exemplify the benefits of green infrastructure by cleaning and soaking up stormwater runoff and minimizing urban heat island effects, while also being enjoyable places to live, work and gather. Avenues are safe for all types of transportation. Avenue policies apply to the roadway, the public realm of the street and the buildings that line the Avenue.

Policy UF-10.1 Enhance Avenues as distinctive places with transit-supportive densities of housing and employment, and high-quality transit service and pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are models of ecologically-sensitive urban design.
Policy UF-10.2  Encourage public street and sidewalk improvements along Avenues to support the vitality of business districts, create distinctive places, provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment, and contribute to creating quality living environments for residents.

Policy UF-10.3  Improve Avenues as key mobility corridors of citywide importance that accommodate all modes of transportation within their right-of-way or on nearby parallel routes.

Policy UF-10.4  Maintain freight mobility, freight access, and freight capacity on Avenues that are also Freight Corridors.

Main Street

Main Streets are typically narrower than Avenues and connect neighborhoods with each other and to other parts of the city. They have transportation, land use and design functions that are important at a neighborhood or district level. They support neighborhood business districts and provide housing opportunities close to local services, amenities and transit lines. They are streets that include a mix of commercial and multi-family housing development.

This policy is intended to balance the important transportation functions of Main Streets with their roles in supporting the viability of business districts and residential livability.

Policy UF-10.5  Enhance Main Streets as important places that support vibrant neighborhood business districts with quality multi-family housing while providing transportation connections that link neighborhoods and public amenities.

Policy UF-10.6  Design Main Streets to support active retail storefronts, versatile use of public spaces for amenities and events, and to support concentrated pedestrian activity.

Transit Priority

Transit priority streets currently have or are planned to have frequent bus service, street-car routes, or other form of high capacity transit. These streets generally require design accommodations specific to the needs of transit. Policies related to transit priority corridors are provided in Chapter 9: Transportation.

Urban Residential

Urban residential streets are appropriate in areas predominantly characterized by existing or planned dense residential development, especially within and around designated mixed use centers.

Policy UF-10.7  Support an enhanced pedestrian environment, including wider sidewalks, vegetation, seating, public art.

Policy UF-10.8  Support opportunities for low impact development techniques.

Policy UF-10.9  Provide extra on-street parking for visitors of residents and customers of nearby businesses.

Policy UF-10.10 Safely accommodate bicycles and non-motorized transportation.

Policy UF-10.11 Explore innovative concepts for developing shared space or “woonerfs” for low speed vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
**Freight Corridor**

Freight Corridors are the primary routes into and through the city that supports Tacoma as an important West Coast hub and a gateway for international and domestic trade. While the forms of these streets are not expected to change significantly, they are integral to the growth of traded sector businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution industries. Policies related to freight are provided in Chapter 9: Transportation and Chapter 6: Economic Development.

**OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS**

Open Space Corridors are natural areas that provide safe, healthy places for resident and migratory fish and wildlife species that live in and move through the city. Maintaining diverse, connected habitat corridors will help fish and wildlife adapt to continued human population growth, development, and climate change. Open Space Corridors also benefit Tacomans by keeping air and water clean and cool, reducing the risks from landslides and flooding, and providing places for people to play, learn and experience nature. Open Space Corridors encompass the city’s most valuable and distinctive natural features – streams and sloughs, wetlands, and large forested areas, such as Hylebos Creek, Swan Creek, Wapato Lake, Snake Lake, China Lake, and the City’s many gulches. Other urban habitats are woven throughout the built environment and include things like street and yard trees, backyard plantings, parks, and bridges that provide opportunities for bird nesting. Enhancing or establishing new Open Space Corridors will involve preserving and restoring existing natural features, creating vegetated connections between tree canopy and greenspaces, and incorporating nature into the design of buildings and landscaping, streetscapes, parking lots, and infrastructure.

**GOAL UF-11**  
Preserve and protect open space corridors to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment and to provide opportunities for Tacomans to experience nature close to home.

**Policy UF-11.1**  
Create an integrated system of Open Space Corridors that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, offers a well-balanced range of experiences, and enriches the lives of Tacoma’s current and future citizens.

**Policy UF-11.2**  
Improve Open Space Corridors using a mix of tools including natural resource protection, property acquisition, natural resource restoration, tree planting and landscaping with native plants, and ecological design integrated with new development.

**Policy UF-11.3**  
Ensure that connections between Open Space Corridors, streets and trail systems are located and designed to support the functions of each element, and create positive interrelationships between the elements, while also protecting habitat functions, fish, and wildlife.

**Policy UF-11.4**  
Recognize and promote the multiple benefits Open Space Corridor preservation and restoration provides to the city, including more resilient plant and wildlife communities, community health and well-being, stormwater retention, active living, beauty, scenic resources, economic development, and sense of civic pride and identity.

See also the Environmental Element and Parks and Recreation Element.
SIGNATURE TRAILS

The city’s signature trails provide the most comfortable walking, rolling, and biking experience, suitable for people of all ages and abilities. These trails link neighborhoods throughout the city to the Downtown and major centers and destinations, providing recreation and commute options. Signature trails are enhanced by lush tree canopy and distinctive design elements.

GOAL UF-12  Create an integrated Signature Trail system that connects city neighborhoods to regional trail systems.

Policy UF-12.1  Create a network of distinctive and attractive Signature Trails that link centers, parks, schools, rivers, natural areas, and other key community destinations.

Policy UF-12.2  Create an integrated Signature Trail system that connects city neighborhoods to regional trail systems.

Policy UF-12.3  Design Signature Trails to provide multiple benefits that contribute to Tacoma’s pedestrian, bicycle, environmental health, and parks and open space systems.

Policy UF-12.4  Use design options such as distinctive path design, landscaping, tree plantings and scenic views, low impact development BMPs and other appropriate design options, to create Signature Trails that extend the experience of open spaces and nature into neighborhoods.

HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Tacoma has six distinct Historic Residential Areas. The development patterns and characteristics of these areas are influenced by the natural landscape and how and when these parts of the city were developed. Each Historic Residential Area has unique physical, social, cultural and environmental qualities that differentiate them and create their sense of place. In order to maintain and enhance the positive qualities and sense of place in each pattern area, it is desirable to have policies and regulations that respond to each area’s unique natural and built assets. The following policies identify key characteristics of each of Tacoma’s Historic Residential Areas that are relevant to decisions related to future development in these areas as well as special opportunities to enhance the residential environment.

GOAL UF-13  Promote the unique physical, social and cultural character Historic Residential Areas as integral to Tacoma’s sense of place.

Pattern Area 1: Post-War Slopes

These areas were primarily developed during the post-war period and is characterized by the prevalence of garages, curvilinear streets, and cul-de-sac development. The disrupted street grid limits route
directness but lends itself to a sense of privacy and security within neighborhoods. Houses tend to be ranch, double-ranch, or more contemporary building styles, often with garages more prominently situated at the front of the structure and facing the street, as alleys are rare. Many homes have long frontages and are typically 1-1.5 stories as the area includes view overlays.

**Policy UF-13.1** New development should be oriented to take advantage of the view of Commencement Bay and the Tacoma Narrows and to preserve significant public views.

**Policy UF-13.2** Preserve and restore the slopes and gulches for their aesthetic qualities, to provide wildlife habitat, and to expand passive recreational opportunities.

**Policy UF-13.3** Pursue funding to acquire open space properties and require easements as necessary to complete the West Slope and Northeast Tacoma trail systems consistent with Shoreline Public Access Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

**Policy UF-13.4** Complete pedestrian facilities and enhance bicyclist and pedestrian safety along Marine View Drive to improve opportunities to enjoy the waterfront and to learn about ongoing restoration efforts.

**Policy UF-13.5** Improve neighborhood bicycle and pedestrian access to the waterfront, especially to Narrows Marina, Titlow Park, Marine View Drive and Point Defiance.

**Policy UF-13.6** Improve the streetscapes along 6th Avenue and Pearl Street to support infill redevelopment opportunities and to create vibrant and distinctive public places.

**Policy UF-13.7** Protect the residential integrity of the Wedge neighborhood.

**Policy UF-13.8** Support the undergrounding of overhead utilities in areas targeted for development.

**Policy UF-13.9** Maintain and enhance the existing commercial areas while preserving the unique features of these neighborhoods.

**Pattern Area 2: Mixed-Era Transition**

This area contains a generous mix of pre-war and post-war housing, including a mix of mid-century homes. Much of the area includes alley-ways, with the garages often located at the rear of the property, facing the alley. This area is slightly less compact that Pattern Area 3 and also holds far fewer large or land-use intensive homes. Though this area shares many street grid characteristics with Pattern Area 3, sidewalks are sometimes undeveloped.

**Policy UF-13.10** Preserve the area’s urban fabric of compact blocks and highly interconnected grid of streets.

**Policy UF-13.11** Enhance and expand the Mason Signature Trail as an anchor for the neighborhoods.

**Policy UF-13.12** Maintain the predominant single family residential character of the area, with multifamily and commercial uses concentrated along S 19th Street, S 12th Street, 6th Ave and N 26th Street.

**Policy UF-13.13** Identify opportunities for new neighborhood parks that serve the daily needs of the residents.

**Policy UF-13.14** Enhance wayfinding to parks and recreation facilities.

**Policy UF-13.15** Identify gaps in the existing sidewalk network and complete high priority sidewalks that improve safe routes to schools, transit, parks and other community destinations.
Encourage development and right-of-way design that incorporates extensive tree canopy, including evergreens.

Pattern Area 3: Pre-War Compact

This is Tacoma’s most historic section of residential development, and also some of the densest neighborhoods in Tacoma, containing homes ranging from pre-1900 to the current era. The street grid is very well connected and blocks tend to be fairly short, supporting a highly walkable environment. This area has a variety of pre-zoning non-conforming lot sizes, prevalent alleyways, many large historic homes, and a mix of residential types and non-residential uses blended within the historic fabric. A significant portion of this area is built on dramatic slopes with home designs emphasizing views of Commencement Bay and Puget Sound.

Maintain and enhance the streetcar era pattern of street-oriented buildings.

Preserve the area’s urban fabric of compact blocks and highly interconnected grid of streets.

Fill gaps in the urban fabric through infill development on vacant and underutilized sites.

Integrate new development into the districts’ historic development patterns.

Continue the pattern of small, connected blocks and the regular lot patterns.

Maintain and enhance the quality and character of the business districts, with good street frontages and pedestrian amenities.

Promote the retention of the existing tree canopy. Retain large, mature trees, except when they block views or pose a hazard.

Use the extensive street, sidewalk, and trail system to make connections to Downtown Tacoma and other major destinations. Enhance the gulches along Ruston Way to provide a respite from the built environment and to promote connectivity between the neighborhoods and the shoreline.

Preserve historic bridges that cross the gulches. In particular, restore the lighting standards and plaques on the North Proctor Bridge that crosses over Puget Gulch.

Preserve and expand historic street lighting along both arterial and neighborhood streets in historic districts.

Encourage the conversion of electrical substations for recreational purposes if the sites are no longer needed for their intended purpose.

Pattern Area 4: Pre-War Expansion

This area contains a large share of historic homes, but at a similar time period as in Pattern Area 3, but typically smaller in size. Homes in this area are primarily bungalow style or reference this type of modest residential design. Land is developed less intensely than in Pattern Area 3 and though neighborhoods are walkable within themselves, they tend to be discontinuous, as they are edged by large, busy thoroughfares. Blocks are longer than in other historic neighborhoods. This Pattern Area is generally on flat land, and the prominence of alleyways allows for garages to be located at the rear of the property. Some neighborhoods have also relocated powerlines into the alleyways creating a clear line of sight.
**Policy UF-13.28** Support housing rehabilitation programs to improve and maintain the historic housing stock.

**Policy UF-13.29** Enhance access from the neighborhood to centers and other community destinations by ensuring that corridors have safe and accessible pedestrian facilities and creating additional connections that provide low-stress pedestrian and bicycle access.

**Policy UF-13.30** Promote new multifamily infill along corridors that takes advantage of the proximity to high frequency transit service and business districts.

**Policy UF-13.31** Pursue a façade improvement loan program and tenant improvement loan program to support the business district revitalization.

**Policy UF-13.32** Promote multifamily residential infill along the bluffs overlooking downtown to take advantage of the view opportunities.

**Policy UF-13.33** Expand the neighborhoods tree canopy and coordinate plantings to create distinctive neighborhood character.

**Policy UF-13.34** Seek opportunities for recreational facilities within the area to support active, healthy living and to address any park and recreation service gaps.

**Policy UF-13.35** Explore artist live/work opportunities within the centers and business districts as a catalyst for adaptive reuse of historic structures.

**Policy UF-13.36** Support the development of Pacific Avenue as a growing business and employment center and enhance streetscapes to improve pedestrian safety and to promote the corridor as a civic focal point.

**Policy UF-13.37** Preserve the historic bridges that cross the gulches.

**Policy UF-13.38** Enhance the village character of the neighborhoods’ small commercial districts and increase opportunities for more people to live within walking distance of these neighborhood anchors.

**Pattern Area 5: Mid-century Expansion**

This area contains a general mix of residential styles, though mid-century homes are fairly common. These post-war homes frequently emphasize garages, and though alleyways exist throughout, though to a lesser extent, they are used less than in other areas. The street grid begins to shift in this area, and blocks become longer, limiting more walkable route directness.

**Policy UF-13.39** Guide the evolving street and block system in Pattern Area 5 in ways that build on positive aspects of the area’s large blocks, such as opportunities to establish mid-block open space patterns and create new connections through blocks that make it easier to access community destinations.

**Policy UF-13.40** Preserve, enhance, and connect the area’s network of habitat areas and corridors, streams, parks, and tree canopy.

**Policy UF-13.41** Enhance the area’s distinctive system of trails to expand mobility, access to nature, and active living opportunities in the area.

**Policy UF-13.42** Promote Wapato Lake as a City-wide recreation destination and provide safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian access from residential neighborhoods and commercial areas adjacent to the Park.
Policy UF-13.43 Seek opportunities to expand access to smaller neighborhood parks and/or community gardens to create smaller neighborhood gathering places and focal points.

Policy UF-13.44 Enhance wayfinding for the Signature Trails to encourage use of the trails as comfortable walking and biking options.

Policy UF-13.45 Preserve, enhance, and connect the area’s network of habitat areas and corridors, streams, parks, and tree canopy.

Policy UF-13.46 Enhance the village character of the neighborhoods’ small commercial districts and increase opportunities for more people to live within walking distance of these neighborhood anchors.

Policy UF-13.47 Promote Portland Avenue as a patterned corridor that provides housing options and commercial services in proximity to parks, recreation and transit.

Policy UF-13.48 Support enhanced transit service on Portland Avenue to provide access to Downtown and other destinations, including Point Defiance and the Tacoma Mall.

Policy UF-13.49 Provide midblock crossings along designated Avenues to improve route directness and facilitate a safer pedestrian experience.

Policy UF-13.50 Promote the Sounder Station as a focal point for employment and high-density residential development.

Policy UF-13.51 Housing densities greater than six units per acre or any concentrations of more than 25 people per hour/per acre in any given 24-hour period are discouraged in the Accident Potential Zone II (APZ II).

Pattern Area 6: Suburban Fringe

This area is comprised of a fairly disrupted street grid. In some cases, blocks are 3-4 times the size of blocks in compact, historic areas. While there are some historic homes interspersed in this area, much of the development is post-war. Some residents benefit from large, nearly rural lots. Some blocks have been developed as Planned Residential Developments, with new, similar-styled, but closely developed homes. This area has some flag lot and pipe stem development to make use of space within extremely deep blocks. This area tends to be fairly auto-oriented due to its less-connected streets.

Policy UF-13.52 Street, block and lot pattern: further street vacations should be limited until such time as the City can review and determine which undeveloped rights of way must be maintained and improved to promote enhanced walkability and route directness.

Policy UF-13.53 Strive to complete a 300 by 600 foot grid block length.

Policy UF-13.54 Expand access to open spaces for passive recreation and for stewardship of the areas wetlands and open space corridors.

Policy UF-13.55 Seek opportunities to create new public gathering sites and or recreation facilities.

Policy UF-13.56 Promote the revitalization of the Fern Hill Business District and the intensification of uses along Pacific Avenue to diversify the services and amenities available to the neighborhoods.

Policy UF-13.57 Encourage the use of planned residential developments as a means to completing the grid system and providing greater connectivity and route directness.
Policy UF-13.58 Promote cottage housing and planned residential development as a strategy to accommodate new residential infill while protecting and preserving the areas significant wetlands, open space and tree canopy.

Policy UF-13.59 Encourage development and right-of-way design that preserves and incorporates extensive tree canopy, including evergreens, to maintain a strong sense of nature and privacy.

MAPS TO BE ADDED

- Figure 2.1 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map
- Figure 2.2 Centers
- Figure 2.3 Downtown Regional Growth Centers
- Figure 2.4 Corridors
WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City’s intent to:

- Encourage building and site design that promotes human and environmental health and safety and responds to local context.
- Promote strong links between building and site design, streets and the public realm.
- Guide historic and cultural resource and scenic view preservation.
- Encourage the integration of nature into the built environment.
- Reduce carbon emissions and promote energy and resource efficient neighborhoods and buildings.
- Create public spaces that promote a sense of community and support the goals of community health and sustainability.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Development and design shapes how Tacoma looks and functions. Past development, in combination with the natural landscape, has shaped how the city is experienced. Future development, and the treatment of built and natural heritage, has the potential to create a better, healthier, more efficient and more pleasant Tacoma. New development and redevelopment can promote vibrant, accessible urban places for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, while also enhancing natural resources, providing aesthetically pleasing experiences, protecting health and safety and promoting resilience. As a metropolitan city that is expected to accommodate a significant share of regional growth forecasts, Tacoma faces design and development challenges, as well as opportunities. The policies in this chapter encourage development that respects context, preserves historic and cultural resources, engages innovation and creativity, reduces carbon emissions, improves resource efficiency, minimizes risk from natural hazards, limits impacts to wildlife and natural systems, and integrates nature into the urban environment.
GOALS + POLICIES

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The design of buildings and other development can affect the safety, health, and quality of life of building users, neighbors and the environment. The following policies guide building and site design to promote accessible and attractive public environments. They also encourage site and building designs that contribute to a welcoming and attractive public realm and respond to current and historical contexts.

GOAL DD-1  New development is designed to respond to and enhance the distinctive physical, historic, aesthetic and cultural qualities of its location, while accommodating growth and change.

Buildings

Policy DD-1.1  Encourage building and site designs that respect the unique built natural, historic, and cultural characteristics of Tacoma’s historic residential areas, centers, and corridors as described in the Urban Form chapter.

Policy DD-1.2  Encourage the development of aesthetically sensitive and character-giving design features that are responsive to place and the cultures of communities.

Policy DD-1.3  Encourage development that responds to and enhances the positive qualities of site and context—the block, the public realm, and natural features.

Policy DD-1.4  Enhance the pedestrian experience throughout Tacoma, through public and private development that creates accessible and attractive places for all those who walk and/or use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Policy DD-1.5  Encourage development, building and site design that promote active living.

Policy DD-1.6  Provide for public access to light and air by managing and shaping the height, and mass of buildings, while accommodating urban scale development.

Policy DD-1.7  Encourage building and site designs that limit reductions in privacy and solar access for residents and neighbors, while accommodating urban scale development.

Policy DD-1.8  Encourage building and site design approaches that help prevent crime.

Policy DD-1.9  Encourage building and site design that improves fire prevention and life safety.

Policy DD-1.10  Encourage the continued use of alleys for parking access and expand their use as the location of accessory dwelling units and as multi-purpose community space.

Parking

Policy DD-1.11  Promote site design that minimizes the impacts of vehicular access and parking lots on pedestrian safety and the visual environment:

b. Locate parking lots to the side or rear of developments and within walking distance of the activities they serve.

c. Limit the number and width of driveways to those necessary to effectively serve development.
d. Incorporate design treatments that break up large parking lots into smaller components.
e. Parking, loading, storage, and utility service areas should be screened from view and landscaped.

**Policy DD-1.12** Design commercial areas with an internal pedestrian circulation system that provides attractive connections between buildings, through large parking areas, connections to the street, and linkages to surrounding properties and neighborhoods.

**Policy DD-1.13** Utilize landscaping elements to screen and shade parking lots, loading areas, utility service and storage from the street view and adjacent uses, to create visual appeal, de-emphasize the prominence of the parking lot, and to enhance the pedestrian environment.

**Policy DD-1.14** Promote an efficient use of developable space by minimizing the amount of land devoted to automobile parking. Strategies may include: transportation demand management, parking reductions for locating near transit services, reducing minimum parking requirements or implementing maximum parking requirements, utilizing multilevel parking structures and on-street parking to meet demand, use of compact stalls, implementing a parking management strategy including shared parking facilities, and other methods as appropriate.

**Policy DD-1.15** Develop parking management plans for centers and commercial areas that address pricing, enforcement, parking duration and turnover, strategies for preventing spillover into surrounding residential areas (such as Residential Parking Zones), revenue and cost sharing options, and that identify SEPA mitigation opportunities.

**Policy DD-1.16** Recognize the availability and cost of parking substantially influences public transit’s viability as a transportation alternative.

**Signs**

**Policy DD-1.17** Signs should effectively contribute to the aesthetics of the development and minimize negative impacts on adjacent uses and all modes of transportation. Specifically:

a. Emphasize wall mounted over freestanding signs.

b. Limit the height of freestanding signs and integrate such signs with landscaping elements.

c. Provide for wall mounted signs that are sized and placed in proportion and appropriate to the façade of the building.

d. Encourage signage that contributes to the pedestrian environment.

e. Encourage creativity in signage design.

f. Encourage the use of high quality materials that are durable and enhance the aesthetics of the development.

**RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

There will be development and change, even in relatively stable lower density residential areas. These policies encourage designs and development that continue the existing development pattern. They also address design and development in lower density residential areas outside of centers and corridors.
GOAL DD-2  Neighborhoods and development are designed and built to enhance human and environmental health. They are designed and built to protect safety and livability, support local access to healthy food, limit negative impacts on water and air quality, reduce carbon emissions, encourage active and sustainable design, and integrate nature and the built environment.

Policy DD-2.1  Encourage more housing choices to accommodate a wider diversity of family sizes, incomes, and ages. Allow adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the creation of accessory dwelling units to serve the changing needs of a household over time.

Policy DD-2.2  Encourage residential infill development that complements the general scale, character, and natural landscape features of neighborhoods. Consider building forms, scale, street frontage relationships, setbacks, open space patterns, and landscaping. Allow a range of architectural styles and expression, and respect existing entitlements.

Policy DD-2.3  Support resource efficient and healthy residential design and development (see also Goal DD-5 and supporting policies).

Policy DD-2.4  Provide sufficient rights-of-way, street improvements, access control, circulation routes, off-street parking and safe bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways for residential developments.

Policy DD-2.5  Promote the site layout of residential development where residential buildings face the street and parking and vehicular access is provided to the rear or side of buildings. Where multifamily developments are allowed in established neighborhoods, the layout of such developments should respect the established pattern of development, except where a change in context is desired per the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy DD-2.6  Emphasize the natural physical qualities of our city (for example, trees, marine view and natural features) and the site in locating and developing residential areas, provided such development can be built without adversely impacting the natural areas. Where possible, development should be configured to utilize existing natural features as an amenity to the development.

Policy DD-2.7  Provide on-site open space for all types of residential uses. Specifically: - For single family uses and duplexes, this includes private rear yard areas and landscaped front yards. - For triplexes and townhouses, this includes landscaped yard space, patios, balconies, rooftop decks, porches, and/or common open spaces. - For multifamily uses, this includes balconies, patios, rooftop decks, and/or shared common open space.

Policy DD-2.8  Promote multifamily residential building design that is compatible with the existing patterns of the area. Building design should incorporate: - Façade articulation that reduces the perceived scale of the building and adds visual interest. - For infill residential in established neighborhoods, encourage the use of similar façade articulation and detailing as existing structures. - Covered entries visible from the street and/or common open space. - Utilize building materials that are durable and provide visual interest.

Policy DD-2.9  Utilize landscaping elements to improve the livability of residential developments, block unwanted views, enhance environmental conditions, provide compatibility with existing and/or desired character of the area, and upgrade the overall visual appearance of the development.
**Policy DD-2.10** Encourage the diversity of design in multi-unit residential developments. Examples include provisions for a diversity of façade treatments and architectural styles that can add visual interest and diversity to the neighborhood.

**Policy DD-2.11** Encourage the inclusion of affordable spaces for artists and creative entrepreneurs such as artist live-work and/or work-live units, studio work spaces, or assembly/performance spaces in multi-family projects through incentives.

**DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CENTERS AND CORRIDORS**

Centers and corridors are places where large numbers of people live, work, and visit. Careful attention to the design of centers and corridors is necessary to ensure that they become places where people want to live and gather, and where getting around by walking, biking, or wheelchair is an attractive choice. These policies also encourage the development of centers as places that reflect the character and cultures of the surrounding neighborhoods.

**GOAL DD-3** Buildings, streets, and open spaces are designed to ensure long-term resilience. They are designed to adjust to changing demographics, climate, and economy, and withstand and recover from natural disasters.

**Policy DD-3.1** Focus services and higher-density housing in the core of centers to support a critical mass of demand for commercial services and more walkable access for customers.

**Policy DD-3.2** Encourage development in centers and corridors to include amenities that create a pedestrian-oriented environment and provide places for people to sit, spend time, and gather.

**Policy DD-3.3** Promote building and site designs that enhance the pedestrian experience in centers and corridors, with windows, entrances, pathways, and other features that provide connections to the street environment.

**Policy DD-3.4** Encourage development in centers and corridors that is responsive to street space width, allowing taller buildings on wider streets.

**Policy DD-3.5** Provide frequent street connections and crossings in and within walking distance of centers and corridors.

**Policy DD-3.6** Site and design new developments with safe, convenient, connected and attractive pedestrian access. Specifically:

a. Locate and orient buildings towards the street for pedestrian convenience and enhance the spatial definition of the street.

b. Provide safe walkways and pedestrian areas that are visible, well-lit, accessible, conveniently located, and buffered from vehicular traffic.

c. Provide attractive and well-maintained landscaping along pedestrian routes.

   d. Promote the use of amenities along pedestrian routes including street furniture and public art.

e. Design pedestrian routes with sufficient widths to accommodate the anticipated long term pedestrian activity.
f. Design buildings along pedestrian routes with attractive and interesting façades including plenty of transparent window areas, weather protection elements, and ground level detailing.

g. Design large developments with an internal pedestrian circulation system that provides attractive connections between buildings, through large parking areas, connections to the street, and linkages to surrounding properties and neighborhoods, where possible.

h. Encourage the development of gathering spaces such as pedestrian malls and plazas in commercial areas to enhance the pedestrian experience and sense of community.

i. Encourage developments to provide spaces for creative activity, such as artist studios, creative retail, performance and more.

j. Designated pedestrian streets warrant the greatest attention to pedestrian needs and interest in terms of sidewalk widths, adjacent building transparency, weather protection, and adjacent façade detailing.

k. Encourage developments to provide bicycle facilities, including paths, parking, employee showers, and changing areas

Policy DD-3.7 Improve the livability of places and streets with high motor vehicle volumes. Encourage landscaped front setbacks, street trees, and other design approaches to buffer residents from street traffic.

Policy DD-3.8 Integrate natural and green infrastructure, such as street trees, native landscaping, green spaces, green roofs, gardens, and vegetated stormwater management systems, into centers and corridors.

Policy DD-3.9 Locate public squares, plazas, and other gathering places in centers and corridors to provide places for community activity and social connections. Encourage location of businesses and services adjacent to these spaces that relate to and promote the use of the space.

Policy DD-3.10 Protect and enhance defining places and features of centers and corridors, including landmarks, natural features, and historic and cultural resources.

Policy DD-3.11 Protect, restore, and improve historic buildings in centers and corridors on adopted inventories.

Policy DD-3.12 Encourage new development and public places to include design elements and public art that contribute to the distinct identities of centers and corridors, and that highlight the history and diverse cultures of neighborhoods.

Policy DD-3.13 Promote building design that is compatible with the existing and/or desired character of the area. Building design standards and/or guidelines should incorporate the following elements:

a. Façade articulation options that reduce the perceived scale of buildings and add visual interest.

b. For infill development in established areas, encourage the use of similar façade articulation and detailing as existing structures, where consistent with specific center policies or guidelines.

c. Covered building entries visible from the street and/or common open spaces.

d. Utilize building materials that are durable and provide visual interest.
**Policy DD-3.14** Strengthen the continuity of development and streetscape by using architectural features, street furniture, and other elements that unify and connect individual areas.

**Policy DD-3.15** Within core commercial areas, encourage uses at street level that generate pedestrian activity and support transit ridership.

**Policy DD-3.16** Centers must remain compact enough to increase densities, facilitate economical and efficient provision of utilities, public facilities and services, and support more walking, bicycling, and transit use.

**Policy DD-3.17** Provide incentives to encourage a variety of development within designated mixed use centers

a. Mixed-use centers are appropriate “receiving areas” for the transfer of development rights from other locations in the City, county and region.

b. Provide the multifamily tax incentive only within designated mixed use centers that are found to lack sufficient housing opportunities.

c. Incentives may include reduced parking requirements, fee waivers, height increases, density bonuses, property tax exemptions, capital improvements and other techniques.

**SCENIC RESOURCES**

Tacoma’s signature views of Mount Rainier, the Olympic Mountains, Commencement Bay and the Tacoma Narrows and other bridges, gulches, streams, and forested slopes is important to the city’s identity. They strengthen connections to the regional landscape. These policies encourage the recognition, enhancement and protection of public views and significant scenic resources.

**GOAL DD-4** Designated significant scenic resources, including public views and scenic sites, are protected.

**Policy DD-4.1** Enhance and celebrate significant places throughout Tacoma with symbolic features or iconic structures that reinforce local identity, histories, and cultures and contribute to way-finding throughout the city. Wherever possible, engage artists to create context sensitive additions that enhance these places. Consider these especially at:

a. High-visibility intersections

b. Attractions

c. Bridges

d. Rivers

e. Viewpoints and view corridor locations

f. Historically or culturally significant places

g. Neighborhood boundaries and transitions

**Policy DD-4.2** The following scenic views over public property and rights-of-way are recognized as publicly beneficial to Tacoma. Other public views which can be demonstrated to have a similar value to the public may also be considered Public Views:

a. Views from Stadium Way of Commencement Bay, Browns Point and Mt. Rainier
b. Panoramic views from Ruston Way of Commencement Bay, Vashon and Maury Islands, Mt. Rainier

c. Views from N Stevens St of Mason Gulch, Commencement Bay and Browns Point

d. Views from Marine View Drive of the Port, Commencement Bay, and Downtown Tacoma

e. Views from Narrows Drive of The Narrows, bridges and Gig Harbor

f. Views from designated viewpoints within Point Defiance Park

g. Views of downtown, Commencement Bay and the Cascades from McKinley Hill

h. Views of the Cascades from East Grandview Drive

**Policy DD-4.3** Encourage new public and private development to creating new public views of Mt. Rainier, Commencement Bay, Tacoma Narrows, bridges, gulches, the Downtown skyline and other landmark features.

**Policy DD-4.4** Consider the impacts of new landscape plantings on designated public views and scenic resources and provide allowances for the pruning of trees and shrubs to maintain or enhance designated public views.

**Policy DD-4.5** Maintain designated scenic views, sites and corridors by encouraging the placement of utility lines underground.

**Policy DD-4.6** Maintain public views of prominent landmarks and buildings that serve as visual focal points within streets or that terminate views at the end of streets.

**Policy DD-4.7** Protect the integrity and stability of steep slopes during view enhancement through creation of partial views and reforestation with view friendly vegetation.

**RESOURCE EFFICIENT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

These policies support resource efficient design and development, from the location of development to the types of building materials. They apply to new development as well as the continued and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

**GOAL DD-5** New development and redevelopment occurs in a sustainable and resource-efficient manner.

**Policy DD-5.1** Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings, especially those of historic or cultural significance, to conserve natural resources, reduce waste, and demonstrate stewardship of the built environment.

**Policy DD-5.2** Promote seismic and energy efficiency retrofits of historic buildings and other existing structures to reduce carbon emissions, save money, and improve public safety.

**Policy DD-5.3** Encourage use of technologies, techniques, and materials in building design, construction, and removal that result in the least environmental impact over the life cycle of the structure.

**Policy DD-5.4** Encourage use of natural, resource-efficient, recycled, recycled content, and non-toxic building materials and energy-efficient building practices.
Policy DD-5.5 Encourage site and building designs that make efficient use of water and manage stormwater as a resource.

Policy DD-5.6 Encourage new development to optimize the range of benefits from solar and renewable resources, tree canopy, green roofs, and building design.

Policy DD-5.7 Encourage and promote energy efficiency through the Building Code and the use of solar and other renewable resources in individual buildings and at a district scale.

Policy DD-5.8 Encourage and promote development that uses renewable resources, such as solar, wind, and water to generate power on-site and to contribute to the energy grid.

SAFER BY DESIGN

Proper design not only can reduce the fear of crime but also has been found to deter the incidence of crime. Creating an environment in which people feel safe and opportunities for crime are reduced can be achieved through the application of safety-oriented design principles. One such program is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which promotes the use of four fundamental strategies: natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement and maintenance. These principles are intended to work in concert with each other. Properly implemented safer-by-design practices can yield long term cost savings for the City by reduced management and maintenance costs as well as reduced calls for service, and promote enhanced public safety.

GOAL DD-6 Development practices contribute to an environment in which people feel safe and opportunities for crime are reduced.

Policy DD-6.1 Encourage building and site design approaches in new public and private development that foster positive social interaction and help to prevent crime.

Policy DD-6.2 Maintain landscaping, lighting and other features in public spaces to ensure the continued effectiveness of safety-oriented design components.

Policy DD-6.3 Promote an understanding of the benefits of CPTED among design, development, and investment interests.

Policy DD-6.4 Promote natural sightlines and visibility through the design and placement of features on sites in ways that provide opportunities for people to observe the space, uses, activities, and people around them.

Policy DD-6.5 Clearly delineate private spaces from public and semipublic spaces using techniques such as paving treatments, landscaping, art, signage, screening, and fencing.

Policy DD-6.6 Use design features to encourage access to buildings and spaces at designated entrances and exits.

Policy DD-6.7 Focus should be given to projects located in areas where community safety is an issue and on spaces associated with private development that are intended for use by the general public.

Policy DD-6.8 Promote the voluntary integration of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles for new development and

CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to reducing the incidence and fear of crime through environmental design. CPTED principles of design consider a range of site design techniques including lighting, landscaping, fencing, windows, entryways, and creating a sense of ownership and community ownership.
substantial improvements to existing projects, particularly for multifamily housing and projects that attract large numbers of people.

TRANSITIONS AND OFF-SITE IMPACTS

These policies address transitions between areas of differing types of activity and scale of development, such as where centers and corridors interface with adjacent lower-intensity residential zones. These policies also address the consideration and mitigation of offsite impacts from development.

GOAL DD-7 Development character and land use patterns support compatible and graceful transitions between differing densities, intensities and activities.

Policy DD-7.1 Create transitions in building scale in locations where higher-density and intensity development is adjacent to lower scale and intensity zoning. Ensure that new high-density and large-scale infill development adjacent to single dwelling zones incorporates design elements that soften transitions in scale and strive to protect light and privacy for adjacent residents.

Policy DD-7.2 Improve the interface between non-residential activities and residential areas, in areas where commercial or employment areas are adjacent to residential zoned land.

Policy DD-7.3 Use land use and other regulations to limit and mitigate impacts, such as odor, noise, glare, air pollutants, and vibration that the use or development of a site may have on adjacent residential or institutional uses, and on significant fish and wildlife habitat areas.

Policy DD-7.4 Minimize the impacts of auto-oriented uses, vehicle areas, drive-through areas, signage, and exterior display and storage areas on adjacent residential areas.

Policy DD-7.5 Protect non-industrial zoned parcels from the adverse impacts of activities on industrial zoned parcels.

Policy DD-7.6 Buffer between designated Manufacturing/Industrial Centers and adjacent residential or mixed use areas to protect both the viability of long-term industrial operations and the livability of adjacent areas.

Policy DD-7.7 Encourage building and landscape design and land use patterns that limit and/or mitigate negative air quality and noise impacts to building users and residents, particularly in areas near freeways, high traffic streets, and other sources of air pollution.

Policy DD-7.8 Encourage lighting design and practices that reduce the negative impacts of light pollution, including sky glow, glare, energy waste, impacts to public safety, disruption of ecosystems, and hazards to wildlife.

Policy DD-7.9 Where uses, densities or intensities adjoining the city differ significantly from planned or existing development patterns inside the city, work in collaboration with adjoining jurisdictions ensure appropriate transitions and compatibility between uses. For example, McChord Field, part of Joint
Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), is located near the city’s south border and development patterns in this area of Tacoma should be compatible with airfield activity.

Policy DD-7.10 Mitigate the visual impact of telecommunications and broadcast facilities near residential areas through physical design solutions.

HEALTHY FOOD

Access to healthy food is important for many reasons. A nourishing diet is critical to maintaining good health and avoiding chronic disease later in life. This leads to better long term public health outcomes and lower healthcare costs. Food behaviors are shaped at an early age. Children who are exposed to healthy foods are more likely to develop healthful food behaviors than those who are not. These policies promote a range of approaches for improving access to healthy food through buying and growing.

GOAL DD-8 All citizens have nearby, convenient and equitable access to healthy foods.

Policy DD-8.1 Recruit and or/retain and expand grocery stores and neighborhood-based markets offering fresh produce in or in close proximity to designated centers.

Policy DD-8.2 Encourage small, neighborhood-based retail food opportunities, such as corner markets, food co-ops, food buying clubs, and community-supported agriculture pickup/drop off sites, to fill in service gaps in food access across the city.

Policy DD-8.3 Increase opportunities to grow food for personal consumption, donation, sales, and educational purposes.

Policy DD-8.4 Encourage and support the expansion of community gardens throughout the City, in appropriate locations, and ensure that community gardens are allowed in areas close to or accessible via transit to people living in centers and other high-density areas where residents have few opportunities to grow food in yards.

Policy DD-8.5 Encourage new affordable housing units to contain designated yard or other shared space for residents to garden.

HAZARD-RESILIENT DESIGN

Tacoma has varied topography, with hills, gulches, abundant trees, and vegetation. It is also located at the tidewaters of the Puyallup River watershed. As a result, there are periodic floods and landslides. The city is also in a seismically active region, at risk of earthquakes from local faults and the Cascadia Subduction Zone in the Pacific Ocean. These policies direct development away from hazard-prone areas, seek to reduce hazard risks and impacts, and improve resilience to disasters and climate change.

GOAL DD-9 Hazard-resilient design has resulted in reduced risk to people, property and the environment.

Policy DD-9.1 Evaluate slope and soil characteristics, including liquefaction potential, landslide hazards, and other geologic hazards.

Policy DD-9.2 Limit development in or near areas prone to natural hazards where practicable, using the most current hazard and climate change-related information and maps.
Policy DD-9.3 Encourage development approaches that will enhance the ability of people, wildlife, natural systems, and property to withstand and recover from a natural disaster or other major disturbance.

Policy DD-9.4 Encourage development, building, and infrastructure design that reduces urban heat island effects.

Policy DD-9.5 Facilitate effective disaster recovery by providing recommended updates to land use designations and development codes, as warranted, in preparation for natural disasters.

**DESIGN WITH NATURE**

Incorporating natural features and functions into development yields tangible social, environmental and economic benefits. It improves human and watershed health. How this integration looks and functions depends on local conditions and characteristics. Regardless, designing with nature provides or enhances ecosystem services, such as stormwater management, cooling of air and water, reduction of landslide and flooding risks, protection or improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, and the ability of Tacomans to enjoy nature in their daily lives. These policies encourage development and design that enhances the identity and beauty of Tacoma’s neighborhoods, while improving environmental health and preparing for the effects of climate change. Additional goals and policies about the integration of nature into the built environment are found in Environment, Element 4.

**GOAL DD-10** Development is harmonious and integrated with the natural environment.

Policy DD-10.1 Encourage design and site development practices that enhance and avoid the degradation of watershed health and ecosystem services, that maintain natural landforms, retain native vegetation, and preserve open space.

Policy DD-10.2 Encourage flexibility in the division of land, the siting and design of buildings, and other improvements to reduce the impact of development on environmentally sensitive areas.

**HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Historic and cultural landmarks, conservation and historic districts help create a sense of place, contribute to neighborhood character, and recognize past history and events. More than half of Tacoma’s buildings are over 50 years old, creating a vast pool of potentially significant properties. These policies support the protection of all resources of statewide significance and encourage preservation of historic and culturally significant resources.

**GOAL DD-11** Design and development character incorporates historic and cultural character to support Tacoma’s sense of place, livability, sustainability and economic vibrancy.

Policy DD-11.1 Encourage the protection and restoration of high-quality historic buildings and places that contribute to the distinctive character and history of Tacoma’s evolving urban environment.

Policy DD-11.2 Encourage development that fills in vacant and underutilized gaps within the established urban fabric, while preserving and complementing historic resources and neighborhood patterns.
Policy DD-11.3  Protect significant historic structures from demolition until opportunities can be provided for public comment, pursuit of alternatives to demolition, or actions that mitigate for the loss.

Policy DD-11.4  Keep City-owned historic resources in a state of good repair. Promote the use of best management practices in the City’s stewardship of these resources.

Policy DD-11.5  Survey and inventory historic resources as part of future sub-area or neighborhood planning projects, with a focus on areas of anticipated growth and change.

Policy DD-11.6  Expand historic preservation inventories, regulations, and programs to encourage historic preservation in areas that are under-represented by current historic preservation efforts.

Policy DD-11.7  Work with Tacoma’s diverse communities to identify and preserve places of historic and cultural significance.

Policy DD-11.8  Encourage the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage structures and sites as valuable and important public assets.

Policy DD-11.9  Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic community structures, such as meeting halls and places of worship, for arts, cultural, and community uses that continue their role as anchors for community and culture.

Policy DD-11.10 Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place, especially those sites and objects associated with American Indian cultures.

CREATIVE PLACE-MAKING, PUBLIC ART AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Arts and cultural activities are essential to making meaningful places and can help transform shared spaces into vibrant and nurturing communities. Physical places that are well designed, include the thinking of artists and public art early in the process and result in aesthetically pleasing and context relevant spaces where people want to convene and linger, are successful. Remembering and celebrating the role that people play in placemaking is essential.

The City’s built environment should be infused with creative expression and designed to allow for expressions of creativity.

Public art and cultural amenities enrich people’s lives. They offer educational experiences, enliven public spaces, and foster creativity. This helps build a sense of community and identity for an area. These policies support including public art in development and support creative place-making.

GOAL DD-12  Infuse the City’s built environment with creative expression and design that encourages expressions of creativity and results in vibrant public spaces where people want to be.

Policy DD-12.1  Increase the opportunities for public to provide placemaking in neighborhoods and business districts to help reflect, define and celebrate distinct areas.

Policy DD-12.2  Consider the public art component early in planning phase to ensure the biggest impact and in addition to creating distinct works of art, leverage existing construction budgets to benefit from artful design. I.e. street furniture, concrete, bulb outs, etc. Provide
access to the creative process and cultural resources for all neighborhoods, cultural communities, and segments of the city and its populations.

*Policy DD-12.3* Support and leverage the use of vacant and/or underutilized buildings, facades and leftover spaces in public rights-of-way for creative expression and activities that transform blighted spaces and re-engage community.

*Policy DD-12.4* Encourage diversity of public art throughout the City that includes a variety of materials, styles, approaches and artists.

*Policy DD-12.5* Provide incentives for public art as a component of public and private development projects.

*Policy DD-12.6* Require new public projects to incorporate public art or provide 1% of the construction costs to support public art projects.

*Policy DD-12.7* Leverage the creative talent of artists and designers to shape the identity of place, enliven a sense of belonging, and drive a compelling vision for the built environment.

*Policy DD-12.8* Create spaces that are consistently interesting and have active presences to the street to promote more pedestrian activity and create public perception of safety and animation.

*Policy DD-12.9* Design civic spaces to include public art and to highlight the culture of neighborhoods and diverse communities and enable and encourage opportunities for engagement by the community.

*Policy DD-12.10* Foster an urban environment and cultural activities that are true to the values and needs of our citizens to encourage and sustain authentic experiences unique to Tacoma.

*Policy DD-12.11* Develop and implement arts experiences that shape the identity of a place.
4: Environment
Tacoma Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT June 2015

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER?

The purpose of the Environment Element is to:

- Preserve, protect, and improve the health and general welfare of the public by promoting the planning, management and preservation of watershed functions, trees and forests, open space lands and habitat corridors, and natural resources including wetlands, streams, lakes, floodplains, fish and wildlife habitats, groundwater and geologic hazards.
- Set policy to achieve a net gain in air and water quality, habitat functions and values, and tree canopy coverage.
- Increase the awareness of the urban forest and habitat lands, the benefits of the urban ecosystem, and how our actions affect the health and livability of Tacoma and surrounding areas.
- Prepare the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma community for the anticipated impacts from climate change and reduce our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Facilitate communication and coordination among Tacoma community members, agencies, and Native American tribes to promote preservation and restoration of Tacoma’s valuable environmental assets.

WHY IS THIS CHAPTER IMPORTANT?

Situated in the Puget Sound Lowlands, at the mouth of the Puyallup River Valley and the tidal waters of Commencement Bay, and adjacent to some of the most fertile agricultural land in the world, Tacoma’s wealth of natural resources provides an array of ecologically, economically and aesthetically valuable ecosystem services. Our rivers, streams and floodplains convey and store water and provide critical habitat for native fish and aquatic species. Our wetlands, trees, and vegetation clean and cool Tacoma’s air and water, stabilize hillsides, soak up rainwater and provide habitat for an abundance of birds and other wildlife. The deep waters of support international trade and commerce. Many of these resources also trap carbon and reduce urban heat island effects, which are increasingly important given the potential impacts of climate change. These natural resources are key contributors to Tacoma’s identity, economy, reputation and sense of place.

The City has a long-standing commitment to maintaining a high-quality environment; however many of Tacoma’s natural resources have been lost over time or are currently at risk. Urbanization has filled floodplains, contributing to seasonal flooding damage. Stormwater runoff from paved areas and rooftops has eroded our stream channels and polluted our streams, many of which are unable to support healthy fish populations. There is concern that anticipated growth and development will result in substantial tree removal, continued habitat loss, and negative impacts on at-risk plant and animal species.
The City’s land use plans and investments have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in helping contribute to improvements in air and water quality over time, and in preserving natural resources. In addition, the City and community have made substantial investments of time and money to restore our watersheds. The goals and policies in this chapter protect these investments and help the City meet various regulations to protect public health and the environment. With thoughtful guidance, the community can work together to achieve and sustain healthy watersheds and a healthful environment for all Tacomans as the city grows.

GOALS + POLICIES

PLANNING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Tacoma’s quality of life depends on maintaining clean air, water, soil, and a healthy environment overall. The policies in this section will preserve and maintain environmental quality by emphasizing protection of natural resources and their functions, consistent with widely accepted ecological principles and scientific literature. These policies call for an up-to-date natural resource inventory and actions to protect air, water, soil, climate, biodiversity, and existing high value natural resources. They also call for consideration of tradeoffs in developing environmental protection programs.

GOAL EN-1  Tacoma’s built and natural environments will function in complementary ways and are resilient in the face of climate change and natural hazards.

Planning

*Policy EN-1.1*  Protect air, water, and soil quality and associated benefits to public and ecological health and safety.

*Policy EN-1.2*  Recognize the multiple benefits of the City’s ecosystem services, including economic impacts, reducing pollution, storing carbon, saving energy, and reducing stormwater runoff.

*Policy EN-1.3*  Promote equitable, safe, and well-designed physical and visual access to nature while also protecting high value natural resources, fish, and wildlife.

*Policy EN-1.4*  Consider the impacts of climate change and the risks to the city’s environmental assets in all phases of plans, programs and investments.

*Policy EN-1.5*  Maintain self-sustaining populations of native plants, native resident and migratory fish, and wildlife species, including at-risk species and beneficial insects such as pollinators.
Policy EN-1.6  Protect the quantity, quality, and function of high value environmental assets identified in the City’s natural resource inventories, including:

a. Rivers and streams
b. Floodplains
c. Riparian corridors
d. Wetlands
e. Groundwater
f. Native and other beneficial vegetation species and communities
g. Aquatic and terrestrial habitats, including special habitats or habitats of concern, including large anchor habitats, habitat complexes and corridors, rare and declining habitats such as wetlands, native oak, and habitats that support special-status or at-risk plant and wildlife species
h. Other resources identified in natural resource inventories

Policy EN-1.7  When planning for growth, direct development activities away from important natural features such as steep slope areas and unstable soils, wooded areas, shorelines, aquatic lands and other unique and high value natural areas.

Policy EN-1.8  Consider Tacoma’s environmental assets as important resources and components of the City’s infrastructure

Policy EN-1.9  Ensure adequate resources to manage Tacoma’s environmental assets and to educate the public about the benefits of Tacoma’s natural resources.

Policy EN-1.10  Develop hazard mitigation plans that reduce exposure of Tacoma citizens to future disasters or hazards (e.g., flooding, earthquakes, winds).

Geologic Hazards

Policy EN-1.11  Minimize the risk of damage to life and property by establishing robust development standards that ensure avoidance and/or minimization of potential geologic hazards.

Policy EN-1.12  Require appropriate levels of study and technical analysis as a condition to permitting construction within geologically hazardous areas, ensure sound engineering principles are used based on the associated risk in these areas, and limit land uses within or near geologically hazardous areas.

Policy EN-1.13  Special building design, construction, maintenance and operational measures, and critical area regulations should be used to minimize the risk of structural damage, fire, and injury to occupants, impacts to natural resources, and to prevent post-seismic collapse in areas with severe seismic hazards.

Policy EN-1.14  Require site-specific seismic hazard preparedness studies for essential public facilities and services that are vital to the health and safety of the community (such as power lines, water lines, roads, and communication channels).
**Policy EN-1.15** Promote soil stability by retaining vegetation in erosion-prone areas.

**Policy EN-1.16** Protect existing natural gulches, watercourses, ravines, and similar land features from the adverse erosional effects of increased storm water runoff that is generated by new development.

**Policy EN-1.17** Establish setbacks around the perimeter of site-specific landslide hazard areas to avoid the potential to undermine these areas, cause erosion and sedimentation problems to downstream or downhill land uses, and avoid the risk to human life and safety. Establish broader setbacks in areas at risk for mass wasting.

**Policy EN-1.18** Recognize that the extraction of mineral resources is necessary to meet the needs of the entire public.

**Flood Hazards**

**Policy EN-1.19** Regulate development in the 100-year floodplain to avoid substantial risk and damage to public and private property, loss of life, and fish and wildlife habitat. Ensure these regulations, as a minimum, comply with state and federal requirements for floodplain regulations.

**Policy EN-1.20** Direct uses that require substantial improvements or structures away from areas within the 100-year floodplain.

**Policy EN-1.21** Require that construction, maintenance, and operation of development in the 100-year floodplain minimize hazards to persons and property within the 100-year floodplain and the entire community.

**Policy EN-1.22** Encourage compensatory floodplain storage for all projects constructed within the 100-year floodplain.

**Coordination**

**Policy EN-1.23** Coordinate, cooperate, and partner with federal, state, regional and local governmental jurisdictions, and the public to manage the City’s environmental assets and to achieve the goals and policies herein.

**Best Available Science**

**Policy EN-1.24** Assess and periodically review the best available science for managing critical areas and utilize the science in the development of plans and regulations while also taking into consideration Tacoma’s obligation to meet urban-level densities and other requirements under the Growth Management Act.

**Policy EN-1.25** Evaluate climate data in the development of the best available science and consider climate risks in the development of regulations, plans, and programs.

**Policy EN-1.26** Evaluate trends in watershed and environmental health using current monitoring data and information to guide improvements in the effectiveness of City plans, regulations, and infrastructure investments.

**Natural Resource Inventory and Land Acquisition**

**Policy EN-1.27** Maintain an up-to-date inventory of environmental assets by identifying the location and evaluating the relative quantity and quality of environmental assets.
What are the climate change risks Tacoma could face?

Several recent studies have concluded that rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) have warmed the earth. These studies also conclude that increases in greenhouse gases are causing rising sea levels; melting snow and ice; and more extreme storms, rainfall, and floods. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns are projected to have wide-ranging impacts on the Puget Sound region in the coming decades. Anticipated climate change impacts in Tacoma include more extreme precipitation events (i.e., wetter winters and drier summers), an increased risk of mudslides, and greater flood risk in the Green and Puyallup Rivers (Dalton et al. 2014, Snover et al. 2013). The unique surficial glacial geology in portions of Tacoma allows for significant initial infiltration of rainfall, but can result in groundwater flooding in the hours and days after a heavy rainfall event, and changes in peak rainfall may aggravate this process. Meanwhile, changing amounts and timing of streamflow due to glacial retreat, reduced snowpack, and earlier snowmelt in the Cascades could affect Tacoma’s municipal water supply. Sea level rise and storm surge may result in greater coastal flooding, erosion, destabilization of shoreline bluffs, and inundation of low-lying infrastructure. An anticipated 4.3 to 5.8 degree Fahrenheit increase in average temperature by mid-century will be accompanied by more frequent and prolonged summer heat events, contributing to increased wildfire risk as well as increased building cooling costs, and posing risks to the health of elderly residents and other particularly vulnerable individuals (Mote et al. 2013).

Policy EN-1.28  Develop and maintain a prioritized list of natural resource types, target areas, and/or properties desirable for public acquisition to support long-term natural resource protection, and establish a process for coordinating acquisition with other programs including strategies to maintain employment land capacity, programs to protect water quality, and programs to reduce exposure to flooding hazards.

Policy EN-1.29  Develop environmental protection plans, programs and regulations that specify high value natural resources to be protected and the types of protections to be applied, based on the best data and science available, and on an evaluation of the potential consequences of allowing conflicting uses.

Watershed Plans

Policy EN-1.30  Develop management plans for each of the City’s watershed basins. Conduct watershed characterizations that evaluate the current conditions of the watersheds in Tacoma and use the findings of the watershed characterizations to inform decisions about future land use, stormwater planning, and urban forest and open space management.

Climate Action

Policy EN-1.31  Incorporate climate change considerations into City comprehensive and operational plans.

Policy EN-1.32  Promote community resiliency through the development of climate change adaptation strategies.

Policy EN-1.33  Protect processes and functions of Tacoma’s environmental assets (wetlands, streams, lakes) that control stormwater runoff, improve water quality, and protect public and private properties from flooding events in anticipation of climate change impacts.

Policy EN-1.34  Maintain, implement and periodically update a climate action plan and greenhouse gas inventory.

Policy EN-1.35  Assess the risks and potential impacts on both city government operations and on the larger Tacoma community due to climate change, with special attention to social equity.

Policy EN-1.36  Develop strategies that can be used by both the public and private sectors to help
minimize the potential impacts of climate change on new and existing development and operations, including programs and strategies that encourage retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure to adapt to the effects of climate change.

PROTECTING TACOMA’S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS IN DEVELOPMENT SITUATIONS

The following policies provide guidance for land use regulations that address high value natural resources where new development is proposed. They will help ensure that the potential adverse impacts of development are well understood, and avoided where practicable. These policies also call for an evaluation of design alternatives to minimize impacts, and mitigation approaches that fully mitigate unavoidable impacts.

GOAL EN-2 All Tacomans will have access to clean air and water, can experience nature in their daily lives, and benefit from development that is designed to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and environmental contamination and degradation.

Avoiding or Minimizing Impacts

Policy EN-2.1 Ensure that the City achieves no-net-loss of ecological functions over time.

Policy EN-2.2 Evaluate the potential adverse impacts of proposed development on Tacoma’s environmental assets, their functions, and the ecosystem services they provide.

Policy EN-2.3 Require that new development avoid and minimize adverse impacts to existing nature resources, critical areas, and shorelines through site design prior to providing mitigation to compensate for project impacts.

Policy EN-2.4 Encourage mitigation approaches that maximize the intended ecosystem benefits. Require on-site or use of established approved mitigation banks versus off-site mitigation; unless off-site mitigation within the same watershed will improve mitigation effectiveness.

Policy EN-2.5 Discourage development on lands where such development would pose hazards to life or property, or where important ecological functions or environmental quality would be adversely affected: (a) floodways and 100-year floodplains, (b) geologically hazard areas, (c) wetlands, (d) streams, (d) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and (e) aquifer recharge areas.

Policy EN-2.6 Limit impervious surfaces within open space corridors, shorelines and designated critical areas to reduce impacts on hydrologic function, air and water quality, habitat connectivity, and tree canopy.

Policy EN-2.7 Encourage site planning and construction techniques that avoid and minimize adverse impacts to open space, native vegetation, tree cover, habitats and natural landforms.
Policy EN-2.8 Manage the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff entering Tacoma waterbodies, so as to protect public health and safety, surface and groundwater quality, and the ecological functions of natural drainage systems.

Policy EN-2.9 Encourage building, site, and infrastructure design and practices that provide safe fish and wildlife passage, and reduce and/or mitigate hazards to birds, bats, and other wildlife.

Policy EN-2.10 Minimize and manage ambient light levels to protect the integrity of ecological systems and public health without compromising public safety.

Policy EN-2.11 Promote the use of integrated pest management plants that provide guidelines for monitoring and treating pests and evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment program on land the City of Tacoma owns or maintains.

Policy EN-2.12 Consider limiting the development of new sensitive uses (like schools, childcare centers, nursing homes, senior housing, etc.) near existing sites that generate hazardous materials.

Policy EN-2.13 Avoid locating new sensitive uses in proximity to sources of pollution (e.g., Interstate-5, Interstate-705, State Route-509, State Route-16, State-Route 7, truck routes, rail yards) and vice versa. Where such uses are located in proximity to sources of air pollution, use building design, construction and technology techniques to mitigate the negative effects of air pollution on indoor air quality.

Urban Forest

Policy EN-2.14 Require the use of best management practices in the location, design, planting, maintenance and removal of trees and vegetation in public rights-of-way consistent with the City’s adopted Urban Forest Manual, public works design manual, and land use codes.

Policy EN-2.15 Retain as many mature trees as practicable and appropriate during development of City owned land and street rights-of-way.

Policy EN-2.16 Discourage removal of safe, healthy, and appropriate trees located on City property or within rights-of-way, while recognizing the abutting property owners’ discretion to remove street trees with proper permitting.

Policy EN-2.17 Protect rare and threatened tree species from the impacts of urbanization.

Policy EN-2.18 Seek to prevent human-induced native soil loss, erosion, contamination, or other impairments to soil quality and function.

Policy EN-2.19 Encourage retention and use of native soils and discourage compaction of soils in areas intended to be used for plants.
What is low impact development?

Low impact development is a stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes by emphasizing conservation, use of on-site natural features, site planning, and distributed stormwater management practices that are integrated into a project design. Low impact development best management practices emphasize pre-disturbance hydrologic process of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and transpiration. Common low impact development best management practices include: bioretention, rain gardens, permeable pavements, minimal excavation foundations, vegetated roofs, and rainwater harvesting.

Wetlands, Streams and Lakes

Policy EN-2.20  Protect and retain wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes through use of best management practices, managing and treating stormwater runoff, protecting adjacent native vegetation, removing invasive plant species, and limiting the use of fertilizers/pesticides or other chemicals.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Policy EN-2.21  Promote integration of development projects into their surrounding environments, promoting a "greenbelt natural corridor" for movement and use by species. These areas should use native plants that support native species of birds and animals.

Policy EN-2.22  Encourage protection of habitat improvement project sites in perpetuity.

Policy EN-2.23  Encourage informational and educational programs and activities dealing with the protection of wildlife. An example of such a program is the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program established by the state’s Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Groundwater

Policy EN-2.24  Protect and preserve the quantity and quality of Tacoma's groundwater supply.

Policy EN-2.25  Encourage the retention of surface water runoff in wetlands, regional retention facilities, detention ponds, and low impact development stormwater facilities, or use other similar stormwater management techniques to promote aquifer recharge assure a continued adequate groundwater supply.

Policy EN-2.26  Encourage the development and use of alternative mechanisms for preventing and reducing the risk of groundwater contamination (e.g., by process or product changes) and disposal (e.g., through resource recovery and recycling).

Policy EN-2.27  Encourage water reuse and reclamation for irrigation and other non-potable water needs.

Policy EN-2.28  Prevent groundwater contamination through performance criteria and guidelines for siting, design, construction and operation of commercial and industrial structures and activities.

Policy EN-2.29  Support an ongoing effort to monitor groundwater quality in order to determine the effectiveness of the groundwater program over time.

Policy EN-2.30  Protect the quality of groundwater used for public water supplies to ensure adequate sources of potable water for Tacoma and the region. Ensure that the level of protection provided corresponds with the potential for contaminating the municipal water supply aquifer.
IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The following policies are intended to support improving environmental quality over time as the city grows. They provide direction to enhance the condition, capacity, and resilience of Tacoma’s air and water and to restore hydrology, water quality, habitat and biological communities. These policies call for more effectively preventing incremental environmental degradation, including the spread of invasive species, soil loss, habitat fragmentation, and introduction of hazards to wildlife. They support a healthy urban forest and recognize that healthy natural systems reduce natural hazard risks. They also help the City mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Preventing additional environmental degradation will be more successful and cost-effective than addressing problems as they increase in severity. These policies will help the City avoid exacerbating adverse and disproportionate impacts on under-served and under-represented communities. While some of the impact areas listed below are regulated by other agencies, the City’s land use plans and investments can help avoid or reduce impacts, while also improving conditions over time.

GOAL EN-3  Tacoma achieves the greatest possible gain in environmental health city-wide over the next 25 years through proactive planning, investment and stewardship. Tacomans will feel empowered to actively participate in efforts to maintain and improve the environment, including watershed health.

Policy EN-3.1  Encourage landscaping designed to complement local wildlife and native vegetation and help offset the loss of wildlife habitat areas that results from development.

Policy EN-3.2  Encourage voluntary cooperation between property owners, community organizations, and public agencies to restore or re-create habitat on their property, including removing invasive plants and planting native species.

Policy EN-3.3  Proactively seek not only to reverse the decline but to achieve the greatest possible gain in habitat functions city-wide over the next 20 years.

Policy EN-3.4  Enhance native vegetation along wetlands, rivers, streams and lakes. The City may require new planting of native vegetation and/or removal of non-native species to restore ecological functions of riparian buffers where such activities will enhance the corridor’s function.

Air Quality

Policy EN-3.5  Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve air quality and reduce exposure to air toxics, criteria pollutants, and urban heat island effects. Consider air quality related health impacts on all Tacomans.

Policy EN-3.6  Achieve criteria air pollutant reductions in both municipal operations and the community at large.

Water Quality

Policy EN-3.7  Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve watershed hydrology by achieving more natural flow and enhancing conveyance and storage capacity in rivers, streams, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater aquifers. Minimize impacts from development and associated impervious surfaces, especially in
areas with poorly infiltrating soils and limited public stormwater discharge points, and encourage restoration of degraded hydrologic functions, where practicable.

**Policy EN-3.8** Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve water quality in rivers, streams, floodplains, groundwater, and wetlands, including reducing toxics, bacteria, temperature, metals, and sediment pollution. Consider water quality related health impacts on all Tacomans.

**Policy EN-3.9** Encourage the identification and characterization of all contaminated sites which adversely affect the City’s shoreline areas, surface waters, groundwater, and soils.

**Policy EN-3.10** Restore surface waters that have become degraded to provide for fish, wildlife, plants, and recreational opportunities.

**Policy EN-3.11** Reduce the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers to the extent feasible and identify alternatives that minimize risks to human health and the environment.

### Habitat Connectivity and Open Space Corridors

**Policy EN-3.12** Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat connectivity for fish and wildlife by:

a. Preventing habitat fragmentation.

b. Improving habitat quality.

c. Weaving habitat into sites as new development occurs.

d. Creating and enhancing open space corridors that allow fish and wildlife to safely access and move through and between habitat areas.

**Policy EN-3.13** Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve the diversity, quantity, and quality, of fish and wildlife habitat and open space corridors, especially rare and declining habitat types and habitats that support at-risk plant and animal species and communities.

**Policy EN-3.14** Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to prevent the spread of invasive plants, and support efforts to reduce the impacts of invasive animals and insects.

**Policy EN-3.15** Encourage public access provisions in open space corridors where such access will complement and avoid negatively disrupting fish, wildlife, and plants.

**Policy EN-3.16** Target habitat-related resources and programs within the designated Open Space Corridors as depicted on the Open Space Corridors Map by prioritizing areas with the greatest potential to reach their target habitat community and condition.

*View of vegetated buffer along Tacoma’s shoreline*
Policy EN-3.17  Engage in and encourage activities that improve environmental connectivity of, and encourage public access to Open Space Corridors.

Policy EN-3.18  Consider goals and policies regarding habitat connectivity in all decisions regarding street vacation requests and disposition of surplus City properties.

Policy EN-3.19  Reconnect shorelines and upland areas and water courses through habitat conservation and restoration efforts.

Urban Forest

Policy EN-3.20  Ensure that plans and investments are consistent with and advance efforts to improve the quantity, quality, and equitable distribution of Tacoma’s urban forest:

- Strive to achieve a citywide tree canopy cover of 30 per cent by the year 2030 ("30-by-30").
- Requires or encourage the preservation of large healthy trees, native trees and vegetation, tree groves, and forested areas as an element of discretionary land use reviews.
- Coordinate plans and investments with efforts to improve tree species diversity and age diversity.
- Invest in tree planting and maintenance, especially in low canopy areas, neighborhoods with underserved or under-represented communities, and within and near open space corridors.
- Promote the restoration of native trees and vegetation in high value natural resource areas.
- Encourage planting of native trees and vegetation generally, and especially in open space corridors.
- Identify priority areas for tree preservation and planting in the development of subarea, neighborhood, and watershed plans.

Policy EN-3.21  Increase awareness of urban forest best management practices, including proper plant selection, planting practices, and maintenance, invasive species, insects and diseases, and appropriate use of native species. Provide public education about the detriment of invasive and noxious weed species to the urban forest.

Policy EN-3.22  Recognize and increase the awareness of the benefits of street trees and the urban forest, and the threats to their health.

Policy EN-3.23  Continue to participate in the Tree City USA program which helps the City manage Tacoma’s urban forest and educate the community about the value of tree resources.
**Policy EN-3.24** Work with the Washington State Department of Commerce and Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program to manage and improve Tacoma’s urban forest as part of the Evergreen Communities Act.

**Policy EN-3.25** Emphasize use of techniques which can effectively achieve multiple urban forestry, open space, water quality and stormwater management objectives.

**Policy EN-3.26** Encourage residents and property owners to plant and maintain trees on their own property.

**Policy EN-3.27** Encourage the identification and preservation of specimen trees of historic merit and/or outstanding size and heritage trees.

**Policy EN-3.28** Encourage or require the removal of invasive species and noxious weeds to protect native plant and animal habitat. Contribute to, and preserve the integrity of, the native remnant forest both within and adjacent to the right-of-way. Encourage the planting of native species, or compatible trees and plants.

**Policy EN-3.29** Encourage the selection of project, location, and site condition appropriate species as well as a diverse set of plant species, especially those that support wildlife habitat.

**Policy EN-3.30** Encourage use of soils amended to be supportive of tree health and other plants.

**Low Impact Development/Stormwater**

**Policy EN-3.31** Encourage use of low-impact development, habitat-friendly development, bird-friendly design, and green infrastructure, especially for City-owned, managed, or funded facilities.
Stewardship and Coordinated Management

Policy EN-3.32 Coordinate plans and investments with other jurisdictions, air and water quality regulators, watershed councils, soil conservation organizations, and community organizations and groups to maximize the benefits and cost-effectiveness of watershed environmental efforts and investments.

Policy EN-3.33 Coordinate transportation and stormwater system planning in areas with unimproved or substandard rights of way to improve water quality, pedestrian safety, and enhance neighborhood livability.

Policy EN-3.34 Encourage voluntary cooperation between property owners, community organizations, and public agencies to restore or re-create habitat on their property, including removing invasive plants and planting native species.

Policy EN-3.35 Continue to partner with other public and non-profit organizations to inform citizens of the stewardship needs of Tacoma’s environmental assets, and to develop, offer and support restoration training opportunities and practical information resources.

Policy EN-3.36 Work with partners and encourage community members to provide open space lands for protection and restoration of Tacoma’s environmental.

Policy EN-3.37 Coordinate with state and federal public agencies and tribal governments when reviewing permits to ensure streamlined permit review and avoid redundant regulatory requirements.

WATERSHED PLANNING

The following policies address unique critical issues affecting the health of the eight different watersheds in Tacoma by identifying approaches to restoring degraded natural resources and protecting intact watershed functions.

GOAL EN-4 Tacoma will plan at a watershed scale to restore and protect natural resources that contribute to watershed health.

General

Policy EN-4.1 Develop a watershed-based assessment of the city’s existing conditions to determine the level of degradation and importance of water flow (surface storage and groundwater recharge), water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat processes and functions.

Volunteer Stewardship Programs

Existing volunteer stewardship programs include those established by the Metro Parks Tacoma (CHIP-in!), Citizens for a Healthy Bay (Adopt-A-Wildlife Area program, Stormwater Education program, and Citizen Keeper program), City of Tacoma Adopt-A-Spot and Splash Grant programs, and Washington State Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway program.

WATERSHEDS

A watershed is a geographic region within which water drains into a particular river, stream or body of water. Tacoma is located within the lower watershed of Puyallup and Chambers/Clover Watersheds.

The upper watershed receives the highest amount of rain and snow which feed numerous small, steep mountain streams.

In the middle watershed, smaller streams flow together to form larger streams. These streams are less steep, often located in small valleys with wetlands, and provide fish and wildlife habitat.

The lower watershed has larger rivers with broader floodplains that drain into the Puget Sound. The Puget Sound and the rivers and their floodplains provide critical salmon habitat.

There are eight different basins, or watersheds, located within the city limits of Tacoma.
Policy EN-4.2 Improve protections to watershed processes by tailoring zoning and subdivision regulations, sensitive area protections, clearing and grading limitations, and storm drainage standards that are appropriate for each watershed based on the findings of the watershed-based analysis, the community’s vision for population and job growth, and the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

Policy EN-4.3 Create an educational outreach program and incentives that encourage property owners to use low impact development best management practices for improved stormwater systems by establishing voluntary programs, and partnering with not-for-profit organizations and governmental agencies.

Policy EN-4.4 Implement goals and policies for restoring ecologically impaired shorelines as adopted in the City’s Shoreline Master Program Restoration Plan.

Flett Creek

The Flett Creek watershed is the second largest watershed in the City (7,153 acres) and is one of two watersheds in Tacoma that do not contain saltwater shorelines. The watershed is predominately residential with commercial and light industrial uses in localized areas. Flett Creek itself occurs within the City of Lakewood and flows into Chambers Creek, but the historic headwaters of the creek were located in Tacoma. Snake Lake and associated wetlands provide important habitat for fish and wildlife as well as educational opportunities at the Tacoma Nature Center.

Critical issues in the Flett Creek watershed include chronic water quality issues in Wapoto Lake that currently keep the lake closed to fishing and swimming, and loss of wetlands and riparian forest.

Policy EN-4.5 Decrease pollutant loading of Wapato Lake through low impact development and water quality improvement techniques.

Policy EN-4.6 Restore existing wetlands and riparian forest associated with Wapato Lake.

Policy EN-4.7 Preserve existing and establish new habitat corridors near Snake Lake.

Leach Creek

The Leach Creek watershed within the City boundaries covers 1,728 acres and comprises residential and commercial land uses. Like the Flett Creek watershed, this watershed does not contain any saltwater shorelines.
Critical issues in the Leach Creek watershed include localized contamination (Tacoma Landfill Superfund site) and degradation of riparian corridors that are important for salmon spawning.

**Policy EN-4.8** Provide outreach and education to Tacoma residents about Leech Creek salmon and their habitat.

**Northeast Tacoma and Joe’s Creek**

The Northeast Tacoma watershed covers 2,641 acres. The upper watershed consists primarily of residential land uses with open spaces and undeveloped land while the lower watershed supports industrial uses along the Hylebos Waterway, which connects Hylebos Creek with Commencement Bay. Much of the watershed contains steep slopes and bluffs and several intermittent streams that flow into Commencement Bay. Joe’s Creek watershed is the smallest in the City at just 157 acres. It contains single and multiple-family residential land uses with some open space and undeveloped land. Joe’s Creek supports salmonids.

Critical issues in the Northeast Tacoma include erosion and sediment problems caused by flooding from heavy rain events in the upper watershed, and improving habitat for salmon while continuing industrial uses in the Hylebos Waterway. A critical issue in Joe’s Creek watershed is degradation of riparian conditions.

**Policy EN-4.9** Amend land use and zoning codes to further reduce risks associated with development of new or current properties adjacent to or on steep slopes.

**Policy EN-4.10** Continue to implement coordinated restoration of the watershed, including all nearshore and upland areas through the comprehensive cleanup strategy.

**North Tacoma**

On the west shoreline of Commencement Bay the North Tacoma watershed covers 4,766 acres and includes residential and commercial land uses. Major features include Point Defiance Park, the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant and the former ASARCO smelting site, which is part of the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund Site. There are several water bodies including Ruston Creek, Asarco Creek, Puget Creek, Mason Creek and the stream associated with Garfield Gulch. Puget and Mason Creeks are perennial and have steep slopes associated with them.

Critical issues in the North Tacoma watershed include impaired nearshore habitats along the shoreline of Commencement Bay, erosion and sediment problems on steep slopes in the northern portion of the watershed, historic contamination, and fish access.

**Policy EN-4.11** Amend land use and zoning codes to further reduce risks associated with development of new or current properties adjacent to or on steep slopes.

**Policy EN-4.12** Promote a functioning and sustainable ecosystem with a diversity of habitat types in the industrialized estuary of the Commencement Bay environment through continued implementation of coordinated restoration of the watershed.

**Policy EN-4.13** Encourage actions to restore various habitat components of the Commencement Bay ecosystem that benefit natural resources injured by releases of hazardous substances.

**Policy EN-4.14** Prioritize habitat preservation and improvement actions within Commencement Bay that reflect the historical functions and current physical conditions of the estuary, the
needs of a variety of selected species or groups of species, the consideration of strategically located habitats in the estuary, the concept of diversity on an ecosystem basis, and bay-wide planning and siting criteria.

**Policy EN-4.15** Encourage, through restoration, a diversity of sustainable habitat types and species within the Commencement Bay ecosystem to improve fish and wildlife resources.

**Thea Foss Waterway**

The Thea Foss watershed is one of Tacoma’s larger watersheds (approximately 5,751 acres) and includes residential and commercial land uses, the I-5 corridor, and the Thea Foss Waterway that supports industrial and commercial businesses.

Critical issues include water quality and degraded conditions along the nearshore and adjacent upland areas.

**Policy EN-4.16** Encourage improvement of the environmental quality of Commencement Bay, its associated waterways, and the Thea Foss watershed, including all nearshore and adjacent upland areas through comprehensive cleanup strategies.

**Tideflats**

The Tideflats watershed covers 2,112 acres and is the most highly industrialized and commercialized portion of the city. The majority of the city’s heavy industrial facilities are located here along the Sitcum, Blair, and Hylebos Waterways. Hylebos and Wapato Creeks are present. The Milwaukee Waterway was filled and capped during 1993-1995.

Critical issues include water quality and degraded conditions along the nearshore and adjacent upland areas.

**Policy EN-4.17** Encourage improvement of the environmental quality of Commencement Bay, its associated waterways, and the Tideflats watershed, including all nearshore and adjacent upland areas through comprehensive cleanup strategies.

**Lower Puyallup**

The Lower Puyallup watershed covers 2,971 acres and contains the Puyallup River, a critical waterbody for a variety of salmonids including spring Chinook and bull trout which are listed as endangered. Portions of the watershed are predominately residential with some undeveloped open space and a few small commercial areas while industrial activity dominates the former estuary.

Critical issues in the Lower Puyallup watershed include degraded estuary and nearshore habitat and riparian habitat for salmonids.

**Policy EN-4.18** Provide outreach and education to Tacoma residents about Puyallup River fish species and their habitat.
Policy EN-4.19  Protect and improve the Swan Creek riparian corridor.

Policy EN-4.20  Encourage actions which protect and improve Tacoma’s environmental assets in both the upper and lower areas of the Puyallup River watershed and strengthen connections within and between them.

Western Slopes

The Western Slopes watershed covers 2,090 acres and is the only Tacoma watershed that drains to the Narrows Passage. The watershed is predominately residential with many steep slopes that contain underground springs and near surface groundwater. Several small creeks are present.

Critical issues include development near steep slopes and sediment deliver interruption from bulkhead installation.

Policy EN-4.21  Amend land use and zoning codes to further reduce risks associated with development of new or current properties adjacent to or on steep slopes.

Policy EN-4.22  Encourage restoration and re-establishment of sediment supply and delivery processes through bulkhead removal or soft-shore armoring approaches.

Policy EN-4.23  Encourage restoration and re-establishment of habitat-forming processes (e.g., long-term sources of large woody debris, riparian forest, backshore vegetation) through coordinated voluntary programs, and partnering with not-for-profit organizations and governmental agencies.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CRITICAL AREAS

Aquifer Recharge Areas

The Clover-Chambers Creek Watershed aquifer system is a large groundwater resource area which encompasses central Pierce County, areas to the south and west of Tacoma, and extends into Tacoma city limits, most notably in the South Tacoma area, see Figure 4-1.

Numerous individual and public water systems in Pierce County, including the City of Tacoma, use this aquifer as a water supply. The aquifer provides a significant amount of drinking water for Tacoma, supplying as much as 40 percent of the total water demand during periods of peak summer use. Therefore, protection of both the quantity and quality of this groundwater aquifer is imperative.

Climate change has and will continue to impact water resources in Tacoma, led by changes to the timing and quantity of snow accumulation in the Cascade mountains, soil moisture, and streamflow. Changes in water availability in turn will impact all resources that rely on surface water such as aquifer recharge areas. In general, higher temperatures will likely cause an increasing portion of precipitation to fall as rain rather than snow, resulting in continued decreases in spring snowpack and earlier snowmelt to west side rivers. At this time it is unknown whether these changes will have any effect on the City’s drinking water supply.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Fish and wildlife habitat areas are located in open spaces, parks, steep slopes, stream corridors, lakes, the Puget Sound coastline, and other natural areas throughout the city. Streams and lakes provide a natural drainage system in the city. They also provide opportunity for recreation and habitat for fish and wildlife (such as coho salmon, cutthroat trout, beaver, wood duck and other diving ducks). There are two major stream systems in Tacoma, Puyallup River and Hylebos Creek, and a number of perennial and seasonal streams (see Figure 4-2).

These areas provide habitat for either resident species or seasonal migratory species or both. In general, most of the land in Tacoma has been greatly affected by human activity. Consequently, native plant cover and its dependent wildlife species have been severely reduced from historic conditions and in some cases restricted to relatively small, often steep-sloped or marshy areas. Because of steepness, unstable soil, or high ground water conditions, such areas are generally difficult and expensive to use for building purposes but lend themselves well to open space, greenbelt, and wildlife preservation. Their relatively small area and linear configurations, however, limit the type and amount of vegetation and wildlife able to exist there. Consequently, what is found in these
areas is a complex of native and invasive species of plants and animals able to withstand exposure and competition with limited territorial requirements. Tacoma provides habitat for many common fish and wildlife species including amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals as well as sensitive species and species listed under the Endangered Species Act (salmonids).

The changing climate affects fish and wildlife habitats in many ways including changes in water availability as described previously, changes in temperature and precipitation that affect forest species composition and overall plant assemblages, changes to the growing season for some plants, and changes to the volume and timing of stream flows and stream temperatures. Among other effects, these changes are expected to affect the habitat needs of aquatic species and alter the timing of migration for some salmonid species (Snover et al. 2013).

Wetlands

Wetlands include small lakes, ponds, streams, wet meadows, shallow or deep marshes, bogs swamps, and other areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (see Figure 4.3).

Wetlands are productive biological systems and are extremely important to the food chain. They also slow and store floodwaters, reduce shoreline erosion from wind and tidal action and help recharge groundwater supplies. Wetlands function naturally to improve water quality by filtering out sediments, using excess nutrients and breaking down some toxic chemicals. Wetlands are a scenic destination and contribute to a productive commercial and recreational fishery. They also provide important educational and research opportunities.

Loss of wetlands can result in degraded water quality, soil erosion, increased public safety and property damage risk, and loss of open space and wildlife habitat.

A variety of Federal and State laws are now in effect which help control wetland loss. The rate of loss from conversion of wetlands to other uses has greatly decreased since implementation of these laws. The majority of the city's wetlands were filled and developed for commercial, industrial or residential land uses prior to these regulations. In freshwater wetlands, losses were due primarily to commercial and residential development.

Climate change may lead to reductions in the extent of wetlands and ponds due to reduced snowpack and the altered runoff timing as described previously. Coastal wetlands are under additional risk from increased inundation and erosion due to sea level rise, which are expected to cause habitat loss and shifts in habitat types (NRC, 2012).

Geologically Hazardous Areas

Geologically hazardous areas include the following:

- Landslide-prone areas are sloping areas with soil conditions that are susceptible to failure and represent a potential hazard to people and property. Inappropriate development activities may
disturb these areas and trigger landslides, which in turn may result in erosion, high run off, and stream siltation.

- Erosion hazard areas where the soils are so erosion-sensitive that urban development is not appropriate.
- Steep slope areas are hillsides that are either naturally unstable, or susceptible to instability when disturbed.
- Seismic hazard areas are areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of seismic-induced settlement, shaking, lateral spreading, surface faulting, slope failure, or soil liquefaction.
- Volcanic hazard areas are areas subject to pyroclastic flows, lava flows, debris avalanche, and inundation by debris flows, lahars, mudflows, or related flooding resulting from volcanic activity.

Geologically hazardous areas have been mapped along much of the Puget Sound shoreline, along stream corridors, and in limited pockets throughout the city (see Figure 4.4).

Climate change is expected to increase rainfall intensity and raise sea level, both of which could cause an increase in landslides in Tacoma. Increased rainfall intensity could also make erosion-sensitive areas to be more susceptible to erosion.

**Flood Hazard Areas**

Flood hazard areas generally include the 100-year floodplain and other known frequently flooded areas, see Figure 4.5). These areas are important for minimizing adverse impact to public health, safety, and public infrastructure such as roads. Frequently flooded areas provide habitat for fish and wildlife included listed fish species such as salmon.

Climate change is expected to bring increases in river flooding that will increase the risk of damage and service interruptions for infrastructure (e.g., levees) located in or near current floodplains. For coastal areas, such as Commencement Bay, sea level rise will exacerbate these risks. Direct impacts will include increased storm surge and increased extreme precipitation resulting in temporary flooding of low-lying areas.

**Mineral Resources Lands**

Mineral resources in Tacoma consist of rock and gravel deposits. These resources support industries that are an important part of Tacoma's economy, providing jobs and needed products for local use and export. Because of their economic benefits, mineral resource lands are recognized as an important element of the City's growth and development plans.

**OPEN SPACE**
Open space lands in Tacoma typically provide habitat value as well as serving other open space functions. While some lands contain habitat for rare or endangered species, many lands with habitat value can also appropriately serve other open space functions. Habitat areas, in turn, can benefit from appropriate access and low-impact recreation through increased community stewardship, safety, and a heightened sense of community ownership. The numerous functions provided by open space are a fundamental benefit contributing to a complete and livable urban environment.

Open space lands in Tacoma include:

- Parks and recreational lands with passive uses like trails and viewpoints
- Natural areas regulated under the City’s Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance;
- Areas used for the conservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species;
- Areas used for ecologic and other scientific study purposes;
- Areas of outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, scientific and/or educational value;
- Areas providing a natural separation or buffer between land-uses;
- Rivers, streams, wetlands, bays and estuaries;
- Forested areas, oak woodlands, meadows;
- Areas providing important habitat connectivity, including utility easements and unimproved rights-of-way; and
- Marine beaches, lake shores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.

Open space lands that provide habitat functions support, nurture and preserve natural wildlife habitats and vegetation. Habitat areas can range in size from a few hundred square feet to many acres and provide a broad range of benefits to the people of Tacoma, including low-impact recreation; health benefits; waterfront access; bird and wildlife observation; climate regulation; increased property values; improved air and water quality; and, a greener, more livable city. Often referred to as “ecosystem services,” these are benefits that, without functional and healthy habitat areas, would not be available or would have to be provided by human actions.

Many of the functions and values provided by habitat areas are dependent on connectivity with other habitat areas. Habitat Corridors are generally larger, geographically connected or contiguous, defined areas that typically combine multiple habitat functions and features (such as streams, wetlands, slopes and larger contiguous habitat areas). Tacoma’s Habitat Corridors were identified based on factors including the size of the undeveloped area, the presence of environmental features, potential connectivity with other habitat areas, and current ownership and land uses (see Figure 4.6 and 4.7).
Open space habitat areas often contain critical areas such as streams, wetlands, steep slopes, and animal and plant habitat. Thus, there is a strong link between the City’s critical area and open space goals.

**URBAN FOREST**

Trees are an integral part of our communities and the ecological systems in which they exist. They provide significant economic, social, and ecological benefits, such as carbon sequestration, reduction of the urban heat island effect, energy savings, reduction of stormwater runoff, improvement of water quality, psychological healing and calming qualities, and increased value of business and residential properties. Planting and maintaining trees helps a city become more sustainable and reduce the negative impacts on the ecosystem from urban development. Trees are as necessary as water, infrastructure, and energy to sustaining healthy communities. The health of the urban forest is directly linked to the health of the Puget Sound.

Our urban forest is a collection of individual trees and plants that could be living in traditional landscape settings or forest remnants in parks, open spaces, and private property (see Figure 4.8). It encompasses the living components of the complex urban landscape and is an integral part of Tacoma’s infrastructure. Our urban forest influences and is influenced by the built environment that surrounds it.

Tacoma’s urban forest exists on different types of property that are managed differently depending on ownership, uses, and the vegetation present. Properties where the urban forest can be found include City-owned property, other publicly-owned property such as parks and schools, private property, and non-City-owned rights-of-way.

Urban forests and forests in developing areas face a number of challenges that rural or wilderness forests do not. A rural forest area is often owned by a single owner or limited number of owners and can be managed through relatively simple single-purpose policies. In contrast, our urban forest is overlaid with a complex set of ownerships, values, and goals with differing maintenance levels and approaches towards tree planting and preservation. Urban forest growing conditions vary greatly from the natural forest processes and are often in conflict with other needs and management goals; therefore, a multi-faceted approach to management of our urban forest needs to be utilized to create a high-quality human habitat and to strike a balance between the needs of the community and the needs of individuals.

Climate influences the structure and function of forest ecosystems. The projected changes in climate may affect the species composition of urban forests as some species could be lost or gained depending on their climatic suitability (Snover et al. 2013). It is expected that periods of drought could increase or become longer, which may affect the growth of some species, but overall the potential impacts to urban forests in Tacoma are unknown at this time.
MAPS TO BE ADDED

Figure 4.1  Aquifer recharge areas
Figure 4.2  Streams
Figure 4.3  Wetlands
Figure 4.4  Geologically hazardous areas
Figure 4.5  Flood hazard areas
Figure 4.6  Fish and wildlife conservation areas
Figure 4.7  Open space corridors
Figure 4.8  Tree canopy

A SERIES OF MAPS WILL BE ADDED TO THE CHAPTER THAT SHOW ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS FOR EACH WATERSHED BASIN (wetlands, streams, geologically hazardous areas, flood hazard areas, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, open space corridors, tree canopy)
HOUSING GOALS

GOAL H–1 HOUSING DIVERSITY. Tacomans have access to high-quality affordable housing that accommodates their needs, preferences, and financial capabilities in terms of different types, tenures, density, sizes, costs, and locations.

GOAL H–2 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HOUSING. Tacoma ensures equitable access to housing, making a special effort to remove disparities in housing access for people of color, low-income households, diverse household types, older adults, and households that include people with disabilities.

GOAL H–3 HEALTHY CONNECTED CITY. Tacomans live in safe, healthy housing that provides convenient access to jobs and to goods and services that meet daily needs. This housing is connected to the rest of the city and region by safe, convenient, affordable multimodal transportation.

GOAL H–4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING. Tacoma has an adequate supply of affordable housing units to meet the needs of residents vulnerable to increasing housing costs.

GOAL H–5 HIGH-PERFORMANCE HOUSING. Tacoma residents have access to resource efficient and high performance housing that is well integrated with its surroundings, for people of all abilities and income levels.
WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City’s intent to:

- Ensure adequate access to a range of housing types for a socially- and economically-diverse population.
- Support fair, equitable, healthy, resource efficient and physically-accessible housing.
- Concentrate new housing in and around centers and corridors near transit and services to reduce the housing/transportation cost burden.
- Increase the amount of housing that is affordable, especially for lower income families and special needs households. Promote a supply of permanently-affordable housing for Tacoma’s most vulnerable residents.
- Expand the number and location of housing opportunities, both market rate and assisted, for families and individuals throughout the city.

While a place to live is a basic human need, not all Tacomans have safe and healthy housing. Ensuring a fair and equitable housing market is essential to providing the opportunities and security people need to live healthy and successful lives. Economic, social and physical barriers limit many Tacomans’ access to adequate housing. Income, physical disabilities, immigration status, limited English proficiency, and discrimination based on race and sexual orientation can also limit choices.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide policies that will help Tacoma meet its need for quality, affordable homes for a growing and
socioeconomically-diverse population, and to help ensure equitable access to housing. The Future Land Use Map allows for a more-than-adequate supply of housing to meet the future needs. The challenge is to provide housing with a diverse range of unit types and prices in locations that help meet the needs of all, including low-income populations, communities of color, and people of all ages and abilities.
GOALS + POLICIES

DIVERSE + EXPANDING HOUSING SUPPLY

The City is planning to accommodate up to 59,800 new households between 2010 and 2040. This figure includes new units necessary to replace units lost as a result of new development.

Goal 4 of the Washington State Growth Management Act requires that cities promote a variety of residential densities and housing types and to ensure that cities provide sufficient capacity to accommodate 20-year housing growth forecasts. The City of Tacoma is planning for a longer horizon, consistent with Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2040, which designated the City of Tacoma as a Metropolitan City with a significant share of regional population and employment growth.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

PERCENTAGES ARE EXAMPLES. Consequa tusdæ volorpor ad quæ corum quam facias sequi doloreh enisimi, quae labo. Peri que exceat. Aboress itecatem. Ut laborem volest facea autas si od milicta temodit optia sincto incototae pre nis et aute re nat. Isimillecus aperest porernatioribus imil evelesci apit doluptas expersp elest, tempos ventiusdae si doloribus as poribus aut autento riasesdi ventur, solutentis alia pe voles et lit, conse esed que senit.
VISION 2040 allocates 127,000 new residents to Tacoma by 2040. These allocations are significantly higher than current forecasts and represent a shift in current trends.

Current housing trends have favored continued suburban sprawl in unincorporated areas. According to the 2002 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, Pierce County was projected to grow by 259,604 people between 1997 and 2017. Of this projected growth, 55% of the total County growth was designated to occur in cities and 45% in unincorporated areas. To the contrary, 55% of the County’s growth since 1997 has occurred in unincorporated Pierce County. Only 7% of the County’s growth has occurred in Tacoma.

Tacoma’s current housing mix is also predominantly single family—65% of Tacoma’s housing units are detached single family structures, representing 88% of Tacoma’s residential land. The majority of housing structures are either single family detached or high density multifamily structures. Accommodating planned growth will require predominantly multifamily construction over the next several decades and expanding the range of housing choices will be essential to meeting the evolving demographics of our region.

The policies below set expectations for housing supply and growth. They identify specific types of housing needed to serve a variety of households, including multi-generational, small and large households with children, older adults and households that include people with disabilities who may need independent living services, assisted living and skilled nursing care facilities.

GOAL H–1 HOUSING DIVERSITY. Tacoma’s have access to high-quality affordable housing that accommodates their needs, preferences, and financial capabilities in terms of different types, tenures, density, sizes, costs, and locations.

Policy H–1.1 Maintain sufficient residential development capacity to accommodate Tacoma’s housing targets.

Policy H–1.2 Strive to capture at least 35 percent of Urban Pierce County’s residential growth.
Policy H–1.3 Encourage new and innovative housing types that meet the evolving needs of Tacoma households and expand housing choices in all neighborhoods. These housing types include single family dwelling units; multi-dwelling units; small units; accessory dwelling units; pre-fabricated homes such as manufactured, modular; co-housing and clustered housing.

Policy H–1.4 Promote the maintenance and improvement of the existing housing stock and encourage the adaptation of the existing housing stock to accommodate the changing variety of household types.

Policy H–1.5 Apply zoning in and around centers that allows for and supports a diversity of housing types.

Policy H–1.6 Allow and support a robust and diverse supply of affordable, accessible housing to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities, especially in centers and other places which are in close proximity to services and transit.

Policy H–1.7 Consider land use incentives (e.g. density or development bonuses, lot size reductions, transfer of development rights, height or bulk bonuses, fee waivers, accelerated permitting, parking requirement reductions, and tax incentives) in appropriate locations to facilitate the development of new housing units.

HOUSING ACCESS

Housing supply and household income are not the only factors determining access to housing. Discrimination in the housing market, gentrification, and the changing nature of households over time also influence access to desired housing. The following policies address discriminatory barriers to fair and equitable access to housing and the impact of gentrification and displacement, particularly for under-served and under-represented populations.

GOAL H–2 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HOUSING. Tacoma ensures equitable access to housing, making a special effort to remove disparities in housing access for people of color, low-income households, diverse household types, older adults, and households that include people with disabilities.
Policy H–2.1 Foster inclusive communities, overcome disparities in access to community assets, and enhance housing choice for people in protected classes throughout the city by coordinating plans and investments with fair housing policies.

Policy H–2.2 Support barrier-free access for all housing consistent with the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA). Consider additional actions to increase access such as implementation of visitability and universal design features.

Policy H–2.3 Coordinate plans and investments with programs that prevent avoidable, involuntary evictions and foreclosures.

Policy H–2.4 Evaluate plans and investments, and other legislative land use decisions to identify potential disparate impacts on housing choice and access for protected classes.

Policy H–2.5 Evaluate plans and investments for the potential to cause displacement in areas with concentrations of communities of color, low- and moderate-income households, and renters.

Policy H–2.6 When plans and investments are anticipated to create neighborhood change, pursue corrective actions to address involuntary displacement of under-served and under-represented people. Use public investments, incentives, and programs, and coordinate with nonprofit housing organizations, to mitigate the impacts of market pressures that cause involuntary displacement.

Policy H–2.7 Encourage a range of housing options and supportive environments to enable older adults to remain in their communities as their needs change.

HOUSING LOCATION

Housing that is located in a walkable neighborhood near active transportation, employment centers, open spaces, high-quality schools and various services and amenities enhances the general quality of life for its residents. Neighborhoods in Tacoma offer varying levels of opportunity (see Figure X-X), with housing in moderate and high opportunity neighborhoods tending to be expensive compared to more affordable housing in areas that offer fewer opportunities.
The following policies support efforts to provide equitable access to locational opportunities in Tacoma.

**GOAL H–3 HEALTHY CONNECTED CITY.** Tacomans live in safe, healthy housing that provides convenient access to jobs and to goods and services that meet daily needs. This housing is connected to the rest of the city and region by safe, convenient, affordable multimodal transportation.
Policy H–3.1 Meet the housing needs of under-served and under-represented populations living in high poverty areas by coordinating plans and investments with housing programs.

Policy H–3.2 Locate higher density housing, including units that are affordable and accessible, in and around designated centers to take advantage of the access to transportation, jobs, open spaces, schools, and various services and amenities.

Policy H–3.3 Promote transit supportive densities along designated corridors that connect centers, including duplex, triplex, cottage housing, and townhouses.

Policy H–3.4 Strive to accommodate 80% of the City’s housing targets within and around designated centers.

Policy H–3.5 Improve equitable access to active transportation, jobs, open spaces, high-quality schools, and supportive services and amenities in areas with high concentrations of under-served populations and an existing supply of affordable housing.

Policy H–3.6 Locate new affordable housing in areas that are opportunity rich in terms of access to active transportation, jobs, open spaces, high-quality schools, and supportive services and amenities.

Policy H–3.7 Provide incentives (e.g. density or development bonuses, lot size reductions, transfer of development rights, height or bulk bonuses, fee waivers, accelerated permitting, parking requirement reductions, and tax incentives) to promote the development of higher density multifamily housing in designated centers.

Policy H–3.8 Discourage the concentration of facilities for “high risk” populations in any one geographic area.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual gross income on housing. Families that pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Large portions of Tacoma’s
population do not have sufficient income to afford the housing available in Tacoma’s private market at a cost of no more than 30 percent, or even 50 percent or more, of their income.

While home values, median rents, and median home payments are typically more affordable in Tacoma in comparison to the Region, 43% of all Tacoma households are considered cost-burdened and a disproportionate share of Black/African American households experienced a severe cost burden. Renters are more likely to be cost-burdened than homeowners.

The City, through its policies and programs, is supportive of increasing the supply of housing that is affordable to its citizens. While the City recognizes the ongoing need by government and nonprofit corporations to provide housing and community support services, especially for households who pay more than 30% of their income for housing, it also recognizes the need to enlist the engine of private market rate developments to include a measure of affordable units. Reducing household cost-burdens requires a multi-pronged strategy: 1) expanding and diversifying the housing supply, 2) expanding household prosperity through the location of new housing units in opportunity rich areas and promoting resource efficient housing, 3) direct investments in subsidized and permanently affordable housing, and 4) economic development strategies improving employability, job growth and connecting people to living wage jobs in close proximity to their residence.

The following policies support the City’s goal to provide an adequate supply and diversity of affordable housing choices.

GOAL H–4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING. Tacoma has an adequate supply of affordable housing units to meet the needs of residents vulnerable to increasing housing costs.

Policy H–4.1 Preserve and produce affordable housing to meet the needs that are not met by the private market by coordinating plans and investments with housing providers and organizations.

Policy H–4.2 Ensure that at least 25% of the 2040 housing targets are affordable to households at 80% AMI.
1. **Affordable Housing is Vital to Important Civic Interests**

   The City’s welfare requires an adequate supply of well built and well managed affordable housing serving the full range of incomes appearing among its residents. An adequate supply of this housing is vital to the following important civic needs or values:
   - The City’s prosperity, economic development and growth of employment opportunities;
   - The appropriate management of the City’s projected population growth and transportation needs;
   - The City’s fulfillment of its legal obligations under the Growth Management Act to make “adequate provisions for existing and projected [housing] needs of all economic segments of the community” and to comply with the related directives of the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies;
   - The survival of green spaces throughout the City and Pierce County;
   - The success of the City’s schools;
   - The effectiveness of the City’s emergency services;
   - The City’s ability to continue its accommodation of a population that is increasingly diverse by income, race, ethnicity, ability, disability, and age;
   - The City’s ability to accommodate a population that, in the aggregate, is getting older; and
   - The City’s values of social justice.

2. **Affordable Housing is Attractive, Innovative + Well Managed**

   Affordable housing developments by nonprofit developers, public and private, in the City, region and nation have been among the most attractively designed, most environmentally innovative and best managed in the market place.

3. **The City Needs to Enlist the Engine of Private Development**

   Nonprofit developments of affordable housing will never likely be adequate to meet the City’s need. The City also needs a companion strategy to enlist the engine of private market rate developments to include a measure of affordable units. These strategies also provide the added benefit of economic and demographic integration.

4. **Affordable Housing Developments Spur Other Investments**

   Affordable housing developments have spurred the revitalization of neighborhoods, encouraging both public and private investment, helping the City attain its desired density, and furthering a neighborhood’s economic development.

5. **The City Should Welcome Affordable Housing Developments**

   Affordable housing is an asset to be encouraged and not a detriment to be tolerated and controlled.

6. **Every City Neighborhood Needs Affordable Housing Developments**

   The City should promote the development of affordable housing in every City neighborhood.

7. **Affordable Housing as Innovative Design**

   In seeking the appropriate balance, the City should not have to compromise important neighborhood design standards in order to promote affordable housing. Instead proper design should allow affordable housing to show the way for all developments serving all incomes toward a greener, more sustainable urban future that accommodates the appropriate density that the City’s planning documents anticipate to be necessary for the City’s projected population allocations.

8. **Affordable Housing as a High City Priority amid Competing Interests**

   In a complex community like Tacoma, interests and policies often clash. Good governance is the effort to balance them appropriately. In doing so, the City should give a very high priority to the promotion of affordable housing development.
**Policy H–4.3** Evaluate plans and investments for their impact on household cost, and consider ways to reduce the combined cost of housing, utilities, and/or transportation.

**Policy H–4.4** Facilitate the expansion of a variety of types and sizes of affordable housing units, and do so in locations that provide low-income households with greater access to convenient transit and transportation, education and training opportunities, Downtown Tacoma, manufacturing/industrial centers, and other employment areas.

**Policy H–4.5** Encourage income diversity in and around centers and corridors by allowing a mix of housing types and tenures.

**Policy H–4.6** Facilitate and support regional cooperation in addressing housing needs in the Tacoma metropolitan area and greater Puget Sound, especially for the homeless, low- and moderate-income households, and historically under-served and under-represented communities.

**Policy H–4.7** Promote a range of affordable housing strategies that extend from basic emergency shelter for the homeless to temporary transitional housing to permanent rental housing and to home ownership.

**Policy H–4.8** Prevent homelessness and reduce the time spent being homeless by ensuring that a continuum of safe and affordable housing opportunities and related supportive services are allowed and appropriately accommodated, including but not limited to transitional housing, emergency shelters, and temporary shelters.

**Policy H–4.9** Increase the supply of permanently affordable housing where practicable.

**Policy H–4.10** Encourage development and preservation of small resource-efficient and affordable single family homes throughout the City.

**Policy H–4.11** Align plans and investments to support homeownership rates and locational choice for people of color and other groups who have been historically under-served and under-represented.

**Policy H–4.12** Encourage a variety of ownership opportunities and choices by allowing and supporting the creation of condominiums, cooperatives, mutual housing associations, limited equity cooperatives, land trusts and sweat equity.

**TO BE ADDED:**
Discussion of regional affordable housing efforts and current distribution of subsidized housing, and discussion of transportation costs as part of affordability.
Policy H–4.13  Pursue a variety of funding sources and mechanisms to preserve and develop housing units and various assistance programs for households whose needs are not met by the private market.

Policy H–4.14  Pursue incentives and mechanisms to enlist the private market as a partner in the provision of affordable housing units.

HEALTH, SAFETY + EFFICIENCY

Having a place to live does not guarantee health and safety. A critical connection exists between the quality of the housing unit and the health of its occupants. A safe housing unit is largely free of hazardous materials, such as lead and radon. It is also free of mold, is not in a state of disrepair, and offers emergency safety features, such as carbon monoxide monitors, smoke alarms, and emergency exits. Access to open spaces, opportunities for social interactions, green features, and adaptability also influence the health of a community. The following policies focus on building and maintaining Tacoma’s housing stock in ways that foster community health.

GOAL H–5  HIGH-PERFORMANCE HOUSING. Tacoma residents have access to resource efficient and high performance housing that is well integrated with its surroundings, for people of all abilities and income levels.

Policy H–5.1  Encourage development and maintenance of housing, especially multi-dwelling housing, that protects the health and safety of residents and encourages healthy lifestyles and active living.

Policy H–5.2  Encourage housing that is protected from noise, pests, hazardous environmental conditions and materials.

Policy H–5.3  Encourage housing that provides features supportive of healthy and active living, such as high indoor air quality, useable open areas, recreation areas, community gardens, and crime-preventative design.

Policy H–5.4  Encourage energy efficiency, green building practices, materials, and design to produce healthy, efficient, durable, and adaptable homes.

TO BE ADDED:  
Discuss the City’s rehabilitation loan programs and other efforts to improve efficiency, such as programs run by utilities and the Health Department.
**Policy H–5.5** Encourage active transportation in residential areas through the development of pathways, sidewalks, and high-quality onsite amenities such as secure bicycle parking.

**Policy H–5.6** Encourage site designs and relationship to adjacent developments that reduces or prevents social isolation, especially for groups that often experience it, including older adults, people with disabilities, communities of color, and immigrant communities.

**Policy H–5.7** Support a strong housing code enforcement program to reduce substandard housing through repair and rehabilitation.

**Policy H–5.8** Promote the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of the City’s existing housing stock. Pursue financial incentives and funding for housing improvement programs, especially for low-income households.

**Policy H–5.9** Promote innovative development techniques to better utilize land, promote design flexibility, preserve open space and natural features and conserve energy resources.
WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

This chapter serves as an overarching rationale for Tacoma’s various economic development efforts to date and provides guidance to inform future efforts. The policies and accompanying analysis included in this chapter support the City’s goals to:

- Expand and diversify employment in growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers and commercial districts by developing land uses and infrastructure to support the needs of businesses that Tacoma seeks to retain, grow and attract.
- Increase access for Tacoma citizens to diverse economic opportunities that will boost household prosperity and improve quality of life.
- Foster a positive business climate that will attract and retain high quality firms and encourage local entrepreneurship.
- Leverage Tacoma’s industry sector strengths and assets to position Tacoma as a leader and innovator in the local, regional and state economy.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Tacoma has initiated myriad efforts in recent years to recruit new businesses, support local companies and revitalize its neighborhoods. The city’s goal to create a diversified economy with a wide variety of living wage jobs will help to improve the livelihoods of Tacomans and make Tacoma a key employment center in the larger Puget Sound region. The goals and policies in this Economic Element provide high-level support for all of these ongoing efforts and serve as a guide for the development of new strategies to ensure that they are well-coordinated and supported by the City’s land use policy.

Economic development is a complex endeavor that requires extensive collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors. The City has unique capabilities to spur economic development, but its efforts alone will not produce the type of economy desired. The involvement of local businesses, educational institutions and other organizations is essential. Thus, many of the policies in this chapter emphasize working with a variety of partners so that the City’s economic development plans can be successfully implemented. Additionally, coordination and linkage between other elements of the Comprehensive Plan are absolutely essential because land use, transportation and housing, to name a few, all play critical roles in fostering a thriving economy.
ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS

How has Tacoma Approached Economic Development?

The City of Tacoma has initiated a variety of efforts related to economic development and adopted a number of these. The text box at right provides a brief snapshot of efforts and organizations tied directly to economic development. In addition, the City has developed a number of neighborhood-specific subarea plans in addition to strategic documents such as Tacoma 2025. The goals and policies established for the Economic Development Element are tailored to provide high-level support of all of these efforts, regardless of scale, so that they are well coordinated and supported by the City’s land use policy.

Considerations for Integrating the Economic Element

- Consider how the economic development element is communicated not only within the Comprehensive Plan, but through all of the City’s economic development efforts.
- Coordinate all of the City’s economic development efforts in one place in order to effectively track and monitor progress.
- The economic development element is not a strategy, but it can be leveraged to justify and support an actionable economic development strategic plan for the City.

Figure 6.1 illustrates how the Economic Development Element will serve the City and integrate with other established economic development efforts in the City.

Figure 6.1. Integration of the Economic Element
BACKGROUND ON EMPLOYMENT IN TACOMA

Average total employment in the Tacoma-Lakewood metropolitan division was slightly below 290,000 in 2014. Since 2000, employment in the metropolitan area has grown at an average rate of 1.1%, outpacing growth for Washington State and the larger Seattle metropolitan area (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1.  Total Non-Farm Employment, Tacoma, WA Metropolitan Division and comparisons, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Covered Employment (1000s)</th>
<th>2000-2014 Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma-Lakewood</td>
<td>289.3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue</td>
<td>1,841.4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>3,076.5</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Employment in Tacoma is concentrated geographically in and around Downtown Tacoma, Tacoma Mall, the South Tacoma MIC and Port of Tacoma MIC. Additional employment hubs are centered around Tacoma Community College’s campus in James Center to the west; University of Puget Sound near 6th Ave and Pine Street to the north; and the Emerald Queen Casino in Lower Portland Avenue to the east (Figure 6.2).

Tacoma’s jobs to housing balance (the ratio of employment in the City to the number of housing units) is similar to that of the central Puget Sound region at 1.1 in 2013. While higher than Pierce County, other cities in the larger metro area have greater numbers of jobs relative to housing, suggesting that they are attracting employees from throughout the region (Figure 6.3). As the economy continues to recover from the recent recession, Tacoma’s ratio is likely to continue to evolve as new housing is added to the City. Encouraging growth of a diversity of jobs in proximity to housing growth allows people to live near their workplace, reducing commute times.

A significant employment center of note is Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Though outside of Tacoma city bounds, according to the recent JBLM Joint Land Use Study, it was the largest employer in Pierce County and the second largest employer in the state, as of 2012. JBLM employed around 75,000 military and civilian workers in 2013 and, in 2014, had contracts totaling over $228 million with private firms located within Pierce County, primarily for construction services.

According to the most recent data, around a third of Tacomans live and work in Tacoma, while 10% commute to Seattle (Figure 6.4). Other employment destinations include Lakewood and communities north Tacoma, such as Fife and Federal Way. Of those who work in Tacoma, over a quarter live in Tacoma, with most of the remainder traveling from communities in north Pierce County and south King County (Figure 6.5). Generally, the data indicates that those that live in Tacoma work throughout the region and their places of employment are more dispersed. Alternatively, those that live in Tacoma are generally more concentrated in Pierce County, with fewer people commuting from the Seattle and Bellevue area.
Figure 6.2. Employment Density Map, City of Tacoma, 2015


Figure 6.3. Jobs to Housing Ratio, City of Tacoma and Comparison Cities, 2000-2013

Figure 6.4. Place of work for residents of Tacoma, Top 10 Destinations, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Way</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puyallup</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tukwila</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census LEHD Data.
Figure 6.5. Place of residence for workers in Tacoma. Top 10 Destinations, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Place</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hill CDP</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland CDP</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Way</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puyallup</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanaway CDP</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census LEHD Data.
GOALS + POLICIES

The organizing principles of the Economic Development Element are built upon the establishment of core focus areas that goals and policies can address. As previously mentioned, alignment with Tacoma 2025 as well as other planning documents related to or supporting economic development is also a key element of the framework.

- Focus Area I Diversifying and Expanding Opportunity
- Focus Area II Access to Economic Opportunity
- Focus Area III Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction
- Focus Area IV Key Industries

DIVERSIFYING AND EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY

The industries and businesses prevalent in Tacoma are located across a diverse range of geographies within the City. Within Tacoma there are existing and emerging employment centers where industry clusters have grown and taken shape. Figure 6.6 illustrates the geographic location of major employment sectors and their relationship with the City’s designated Mixed Use and Manufacturing and Industrial Centers. For example, retail employment is most concentrated in the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center, while Industrial employment is largely limited to the City’s two Manufacturing Industrial Centers.

The ability to strengthen and diversify these distinct employment centers is directly related to the City’s land use policy and infrastructure investments. As these employment centers continue to evolve, having policy that supports the infrastructure and land use needs of existing and future businesses will be an integral piece of the city’s overall economic landscape. Through its economic development efforts, the City will need to work to retain, grow and attract employers that will offer Tacomans a wide range of employment opportunities. Strengthening employment centers through sound land use policy will result in a stronger and more diverse economic base for the city. In addition, concentrating employment supports development of mixed use districts where people can live, work, shop and play. Table 6.2 illustrates the city’s employment growth allocations wherein almost all employment growth in the city is being directed to the city’s designated Centers (both Regional Growth Centers and Mixed Use Centers).

Table 6.2. Table of Employment Capacity in Mixed Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Parcel Area (acres)</th>
<th>% of Total Allocation</th>
<th>2030 Allocation</th>
<th>2040 Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Tacoma</td>
<td>24,053</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>64,200</td>
<td>97,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers</td>
<td>6,812</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>63,348</td>
<td>95,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Centers</td>
<td>17,241</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>1,287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council
Figure 6.6. Employment Centers by Major Industry, City of Tacoma, 2013
GOAL EC-1  Expand and diversify employment in growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers and commercial districts by developing land uses and infrastructure to support the needs of businesses that Tacoma seeks to retain, grow and attract.

Diverse and Expanding Economy

Policy EC-1.1  Strive to capture 46% of Urban Pierce County’s employment growth by 2040.

Policy EC-1.2  Ensure that there is sufficient zoning and development capacity to accommodate the 2040 employment growth allocations.

Policy EC-1.3  Ensure an equitable distribution of employment throughout the City, with the highest concentration of job growth occurring in the Downtown Regional Growth Center.

Policy EC-1.4  While expanding employment opportunities generally, seek to increase the share of jobs that pay higher wages and provide greater employment security.

Employment Growth Areas

Regional Growth Centers

Policy EC-1.5  Promote the concentration of housing, employment, commercial uses and cultural activities in Downtown with the intent of increasing and maintaining the vitality of the community.

Policy EC-1.6  Concentrate the greatest amount of employment in Tacoma’s Downtown Regional Growth Center and position it as the preeminent employment center for the South Sound.

Policy EC-1.7  Continue to carry out the policies of the Downtown Element and implement the Downtown Subarea Plans.

Policy EC-1.8  After the Downtown Regional Growth Center, the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center should have the highest concentration of employment, providing a local and regional employment destination.

Policy EC-1.9  Maintain and expand the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center as a regional retail destination.

Policy EC-1.10  Improve linkages to local and regional transit.

Policy EC-1.11  Support the development of ancillary businesses that build on the strength of the current retail attractions.

Policy EC-1.12  Support additional high density residential infill that drives new markets for commercial development.

Policy EC-1.13  Conduct a subarea plan for the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center and pursue funding, incentives and strategies to implement the plan.

Commercial Districts

Policy EC-1.14  Provide for the growth, economic equity, and vitality of the City’s Commercial Districts.

Policy EC-1.15  Continue to support efforts of Commercial Districts to improve their physical attributes, creating more walkable places that enhance neighborhood livability.
**Policy EC-1.16** Provide for neighborhood business districts and small commercial convenience corners in areas between centers to expand local access to goods and services.

**Policy EC-1.17** Create strong multimodal circulation linkages to and within commercial areas to encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly environments.

**Policy EC-1.18** Encourage infill, adaptive reuse, redevelopment and/or revitalization of commercial land and, where applicable, preserve the character of historic commercial areas.

**Policy EC-1.19** Prioritize commercial revitalization investments in neighborhoods with limited access to goods and services and in centers that are planned for significant employment growth.

**Policy EC-1.20** Encourage collaborative approaches to align land use and neighborhood economic development for residents and business owners to better connect and compete in the regional economy.

a. Encourage broad-based community coalitions to implement land use and economic development objectives and programs.

b. Enhance opportunities for cooperation and partnerships between public and private entities that promote economic vitality in communities most disconnected from the regional economy.

c. Encourage cooperative efforts by area businesses, business associations, and neighborhood associations to work together on commercial revitalization efforts, sustainability initiatives, and transportation demand management.

**Policy EC-1.21** Encourage concentrations of commercial services and employment opportunities in centers.

a. Encourage a broad range of neighborhood commercial services in centers to help residents and others in the area meet daily needs and/or serve as neighborhood gathering places.

b. Encourage the development and retention of grocery stores and local markets as essential elements of centers.

c. Enhance opportunities for services and activities in centers that are responsive to the needs of the populations and cultural groups of the surrounding area.

d. Require that ground-level building spaces in core areas of centers accommodate commercial or other street-activating uses and services.

e. Encourage employment opportunities as a key function of centers, including connections between centers, institutions, and other major employers to reinforce their roles as vibrant centers of activity.

**Manufacturing/Industrial Centers**

**Policy EC-1.22** Provide industrial land that encourages industrial business retention, growth and traded sector competitiveness as a West Coast trade and freight hub, a regional center of diverse manufacturing, and a widely accessible base of living wage jobs, particularly for under-served and under-represented people.

**Policy EC-1.23** Encourage investment in transportation systems and services that will retain and expand Tacoma’s competitive position as a West Coast trade gateway and freight distribution hub.
Policy EC-1.24  Maintain properties currently developed with industrial users in manufacturing/industrial centers as permitted uses and recognize that industrial activities and needs change over time.

Policy EC-1.25  Encourage reinvestment and intensification of industrial land use, as measured by output and throughput per acre and jobs per acre.

Policy EC-1.26  Strictly limit Comprehensive Plan Map amendments that convert industrial land and consider the potential for amendments to otherwise diminish the economic competitiveness or viability of prime industrial land.

Policy EC-1.27  Protect and preserve sufficient land use capacity for water-dependent and related industrial uses within the City's industrial shorelines.

Policy EC-1.28  Strive to offset the reduction of development capacity as needed, with additional prime industrial capacity that includes consideration of comparable site characteristics.

Policy EC-1.29  Facilitate industrial site development by promoting and allowing environmental mitigation banks that serve industrial land uses within designated manufacturing and industrial centers.

Policy EC-1.30  Provide incentives, technical assistance and direct support to overcome financial-feasibility gaps to enable remediation and redevelopment of brownfields for industrial growth.

Policy EC-1.31  Encourage improvements to the cleanliness, safety, and ecological performance of industrial development and freight corridors by facilitating adoption of market feasible new technology and design.

Policy EC-1.32  Facilitate concurrent strategies to protect and improve industrial capacity and watershed health in the Puyallup River Tideflats.

Policy EC-1.33  Maintain and enhance major natural areas, open space corridors, slopes, and constructed features as boundaries and buffers for the Port/Industrial and South Tacoma MIC areas and to buffer adjacent neighborhoods from the impacts of industrial activity.

Transportation

Policy EC-1.34  Ensure that priority transportation projects identified by Tacoma’s Transportation Master Plan are in alignment with economic development goals.

Policy EC-1.35  Maintain and improve the road network as necessary to facilitate the efficient movement of goods and attract economic activity.

Policy EC-1.36  Coordinate with BNSF Railroad, UP Railroad, Washington Utilities and Trade Commission (WUTC), and Sound Transit to ensure maximum transportation efficiency on both roads and rails.

Policy EC-1.37  Minimize potential conflicts between over-land and rail freight with other transportation modes to increase safety, access and mobility of commercial activities.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Policy EC-1.38  Use innovative finance methods and seek regional funding opportunities for Tacoma’s infrastructure to support the city’s continued economic vitality.
Policy EC-1.39  Anticipate infrastructure systems and facilities needs and prioritize public investments necessary to support catalytic economic development and redevelopment projects.

Policy EC-1.40  Promote development or redevelopment of vacant, underutilized or surplus properties, particularly those with potential to serve as a catalyst for economic development. Collaborate with local communities to identify economic and service needs that could be met through the marketing and development of such sites.

Policy EC-1.41  Improve the competitiveness of the vacant and underutilized sites located in Tacoma’s employment areas through the use of incentives and regional and state assistance for needed infrastructure and site readiness improvements.

ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Compared to the county and larger region, Tacoma has a larger proportion of households with incomes below $35,000 (Figure 6.7). A third of Tacoma’s households fall into this income bracket, whereas the share is 28% for Pierce County and 25% for the central Puget Sound region. Tacoma also has a higher percentage of residents with a high school diploma or less (Figure 6.8). These two socioeconomic indicators are related, as level of education is strongly correlated with income. Policies in this section focus on increasing access to education, training and other components essential for livability so that Tacoma’s residents well-positioned to attain higher paying jobs.

Figure 6.7. Household Income Distribution, City of Tacoma and Region, 2013

Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2015
Figure 6.8. Educational Attainment, City of Tacoma and Region, 2013

Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2015

GOAL EC-2 Increase access for Tacoma citizens to diverse economic opportunities that will boost household prosperity and improve quality of life.

Equitable Household Prosperity

Policy EC-2.1 Improve access to living wage levels and career ladders for low-income people by maintaining an adequate and viable supply of land for employment and public facilities to support and expand opportunities in Tacoma for middle and high wage jobs that do not require a 4-year college degree.

Policy EC-2.2 Evaluate plans and investments for their impact on middle and high wage job creation and retention.

Policy EC-2.3 Encourage investment in and alignment of public efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, gender and disability-related disparities in income and employment opportunity.

Policy EC-2.4 Encourage investment in and alignment of poverty-reduction efforts that address economic development, land use, transportation, housing, social services, public health, community development and workforce development.

Educational Attainment

Policy EC-2.5 Support local educational institutions to maintain and enhance the quality and relevance of education at all grade levels.

Policy EC-2.6 Enhance access to continuing education in the community through collaboration with educational institutions and other organizations.

Policy EC-2.7 Facilitate the connections between artists, arts organizations, cultural/heritage groups and the local education community.
Policy EC-2.8  Encourage investment in local public and private schools to expand arts and cultural experiences and experiential learning.

Housing and Livability

Policy EC-2.9  Provide the land use capacity and development regulations that support the accommodation of a variety of housing styles, densities, sizes and prices so those who work in Tacoma can also live in Tacoma.

Policy EC-2.10  Improve access to affordable living, including housing, health care and effective transportation in order to serve and support the growth of Tacoma’s growing creative class and burgeoning urban population.

Policy EC-2.11  Support a connective land use pattern that integrates housing and transportation with natural amenities, opportunities for employment and retail as well as recreational facilities.

Workforce Development and Training

Policy EC-2.12  Facilitate efforts of businesses, educational institutions, neighborhood organizations and major civic/government entities in the development of programs that meet the current and future needs of employers and employees, as well as those seeking employment.

Policy EC-2.13  Encourage educational institutions and organizations to develop programs that prepare veterans of all levels to successfully transition into the civilian workforce.

Policy EC-2.14  Support efforts by educational institutions and other public and private organizations to develop educational opportunities in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Policy EC-2.15  Encourage educational institutions, government and local employers to introduce local youth, particularly in underrepresented communities, to a wide variety of employment and business opportunities.

Policy EC-2.16  Encourage links between schools and local businesses for training and job skill programs.

Policy EC-2.17  Promote expansion and addition of higher education programs at institutions in industries with growing demand, such as computer science and healthcare.

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION

Recently, Tacoma has seen the most growth in services-related employment, gaining almost 4,000 jobs between 2000 and 2013 (Figure 6.9). The government sector has experienced the second greatest increase in jobs, with a gain of around 2,400 jobs. Services, which include health care, clearly dominate in terms of total jobs and will likely continue to expand for the foreseeable future given current demand. However, a resilient economy needs a diverse array of employers, both small and large, that can offerTacomans a wide range of employment options. Policies in this section seek to create a business-friendly environment that will encourage local companies and entrepreneurs to grow in place and attract firms that offer living wage jobs.
Figure 6.9. Net Change in Employment, City of Tacoma, 2000-2013


GOAL EC-3  Foster a positive business climate to attract and retain high quality firms that offer living wage jobs and encourage local entrepreneurship to increase innovation.

Business Climate

Policy EC-3.1 Promote partnerships with the state, the Puget Sound Regional Council, Pierce County, other cities and organizations to advance regional competitiveness and mutual economic development goals.

Policy EC-3.2 Ensure that economic development strategies are reviewed regularly to be flexible and to respond to changes in the market.

Policy EC-3.3 Provide a positive, accessible and customer-oriented atmosphere to those seeking municipal services.

Policy EC-3.4 Foster a culture throughout the City organization that continuously improves the quality, predictability, timeliness and cost of the development process.

Policy EC-3.5 Encourage predictability and consistency in the City’s land use regulations, while also allowing for flexibility and creativity in the site development process.

Policy EC-3.6 Review development regulations periodically to ensure that uses not previously anticipated, yet are consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, can locate within the city.

Policy EC-3.7 Provide a mix of uses in a range of zones that allow for the daily needs of residents to be met within Tacoma and support the expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of regional, national and international businesses.
Policy EC-3.8 Encourage active cooperation between the City and local businesses concerning economic development issues, including the support of businesses that have specialized infrastructure, building design and transportation needs.

Policy EC-3.9 Monitor the city’s strengths and weaknesses for various economic sectors, and promote specific industries or industry clusters that capitalize on Tacoma’s strengths and create higher paying, living wage jobs.

Policy EC-3.10 Acknowledge and support the role that temporary markets (farmers markets, craft markets, flea markets, etc.) and other temporary or mobile vending structures play in enabling startup business activity. Also acknowledge that temporary uses are assumed to be replaced ultimately by more permanent development and uses.

Policy EC-3.11 Facilitate the retention and growth of small and locally-owned businesses.

Marketing and Recruitment

Policy EC-3.12 Explore opportunities to recruit and attract large regional companies in targeted sectors (see: Target Industries) to locate in Tacoma.

Policy EC-3.13 Support activities that retain and expand existing businesses. Target recruitment activities toward new businesses that provide living wage jobs.

Policy EC-3.14 Develop and expand programs to recruit creative entrepreneurs associated with target sectors to build an entrepreneurial culture locally and encourage relocation from higher cost locations.

Entrepreneurs

Policy EC-3.15 Support and expand incubator space in Tacoma for existing and future small businesses, particularly those seeking to commercialize innovative products and services.

Policy EC-3.16 Encourage live/work and work/live opportunities that are compatible with residential neighborhoods. Manage potential adverse impacts to maintain the appearance of residential neighborhoods.

Policy EC-3.17 Expand Tacoma’s current business assistance programs and support a robust network of entrepreneurs and independent local businesses.

Policy EC-3.18 Facilitate development of programs to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly minority-women-owned businesses and retired military personnel.

Policy EC-3.19 Support the establishment of small-scale/craft manufacturing industries.

Policy EC-3.20 Continue to grow artists, micro-enterprises and small arts organizations as businesses and support iconic cultural institutions to sustain and grow Tacoma’s cultural vitality.

Policy EC-3.21 Use creative talent and assets to increase the competitiveness of other key clusters in Tacoma.

Policy EC-3.22 Promote a climate that encourages the establishment and operation of creative businesses in Tacoma through innovative regulations, use of incentives and other strategies.

Policy EC-3.23 Support and encourage training of artists, arts sector and creative entrepreneurs to thrive in Tacoma.
Policy EC-3.24 Nurture the development of creative talent and a pipeline of creative workers.

Major Campus Institutions

Policy EC-3.25 Provide for the stability and growth of Tacoma’s major campus institutions as essential service providers, centers of innovation, workforce development resources and major employers.

Policy EC-3.26 Protect the livability of surrounding neighborhoods through adequate infrastructure and campus development standards that foster suitable density and attractive campus design.

Policy EC-3.27 Encourage campus development that provides amenities and services to surrounding neighborhoods, emphasizing the role of campuses as centers of community activity.

Policy EC-3.28 Provide for context-sensitive, transitional uses and development at the edges of campus institutions to enhance their integration into surrounding neighborhoods, including mixed-use and neighborhood-serving commercial uses where appropriate.

Policy EC-3.29 Encourage the development of long-range plans (i.e. master plans) for hospitals, universities and other major institutions as part of project review to insure compatibility with adjacent land uses in the neighborhood area, to provide predictability and reduce piecemeal permits.

Policy EC-3.30 Collaborate with major institutional employers, such as museums and other cultural centers, to ensure that Tacoma is well-positioned to accommodate future expansion plans.

TARGET INDUSTRIES

Tacoma’s employment mix is dominated by health care and social assistance, which represents over 23% of the city’s total covered employment in 2013 (Figure 6.10). MultiCare Health System and CHI Franciscan Health, which operates St. Joseph Medical Center as well as a network of smaller specialty clinics, are two of the major anchors in this industry. Government employment, specifically with the City and County, accounts for close to 13% of employment of employment in the City. Other industries of note are retail trade, which had the third largest share of employment, and Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation, which grew 6% in 13 years. The latter category includes businesses that provide services for other companies, such as customer service and job placement. The policies in this section provides policies to industries the City actively seeks to grow. They are designed to support ongoing efforts to attract external investment for some target industries while also allowing for flexibility as employment trends evolve over time.
Figure 6.10. Employment Mix, City of Tacoma, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>% of Total Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services (Private)</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Resource</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. and Support and Waste Man. and Remediation Serv.</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (WTU)</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Public)</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


GOAL EC-4  
Leverage Tacoma’s industry sector strengths and assets to position Tacoma as a leader and innovator in the local, regional and state economy.

General

Policy EC-4.1  
Diversify the city’s employment base while building on Tacoma’s strengths.

Policy EC-4.2  
Identify and regularly update Tacoma’s target industries to better leverage the city’s economic position within the region.

Policy EC-4.3  
Actively seek outside investment to grow Tacoma’s presence in target industries identified by the City.

Policy EC-4.4  
Align plans and investments with efforts to improve the city and regional business environment for traded sector and export growth. Participate in regional and statewide initiatives.

Policy EC-4.5  
Encourage partnerships to foster the growth, small business vitality, and diversity of traded sectors.

Policy EC-4.6  
Encourage local goods production and service delivery that substitute for imports and help keep the money Tacomans earn in the local economy.

Bio-medical and Medical

Policy EC-4.7  
Coordinate with Tacoma’s existing healthcare institutions to ensure that they receive the support needed so that the sector can grow, thrive and diversify.
Policy EC-4.8 Support development and expansion of programs at educational institutions that prepare students for employment in the bio-medical and medical fields.

**Information Technology**

Policy EC-4.9 Attract new and support existing research and higher education institutions, especially in sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) that will form the foundation for greater employment opportunities and innovation.

Policy EC-4.10 Ensure that employment centers, such as Downtown Tacoma, are well-positioned to accommodate emerging industries, such as cyber security.

**Professional Services**

Policy EC-4.11 Promote greater amenities in areas adjacent to existing and planned office space within Downtown and mixed-use centers to attract a range of professional services firms that will serve the South Puget Sound region, such as financial services and insurance.

Policy EC-4.12 Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings for use as professional offices.

**Industrial**

Policy EC-4.13 Protect the existing inventory of industrial parcels from conversion to non-industrial uses.

Policy EC-4.14 Pursue regional capital improvement opportunities to provide a competitive advantage for Tacoma’s industrial districts.

Policy EC-4.15 Ensure that industrial districts have the necessary infrastructure and capacity to support businesses engaged in activities such as transportation, logistics and international trade.

Policy EC-4.16 Promote targeted business retention and expansion efforts for industrial firms located in Tacoma’s manufacturing/industrial centers.

Policy EC-4.17 Collaborate with established firms as well as JBLM to retain, expand and attract investment in the aerospace and defense sectors.

Policy EC-4.18 Provide allowance for limited commercial retail uses that directly support and are compatible with manufacturing and other industrial uses.

**Tourism and Hospitality**

Policy EC-4.19 Collaborate with partner organizations to promote the city’s distinctive character, historic inventory, public art, cultural and recreational activities, retail businesses, business districts and attractions to make Tacoma a destination city.

Policy EC-4.20 Utilize public art in Tacoma as a tourist attraction and develop marketing strategies to raise the visibility of the artwork. Give people the tools to learn about and engage with the art.

Policy EC-4.21 Advance Tacoma’s historic districts, landmarks and neighborhoods as destinations for visitors and tourists.

Policy EC-4.22 Promote Tacoma as an international city, highlighting diverse cultural attractions, traditions and communities in the neighborhoods and business districts as well as downtown.
**Arts and Culture**

*Policy EC-4.23*  Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance and office space for artists, arts organizations and creative industry businesses.

*Policy EC-4.24*  Provide incentives for the development of resources such as artist live/work spaces, cultural incubators, arts accelerator, resource centers and other innovative centers of creativity.

*Policy EC-4.25*  Promote a climate that encourages the establishment and operation of creative businesses in Tacoma through innovative regulations, use of incentives and other strategies.

*Policy EC-4.26*  Encourage the growth of artists, micro-enterprises and small arts organizations as businesses.

*Policy EC-4.27*  Support landmark cultural institutions that contribute to Tacoma’s cultural vitality.

*Policy EC-4.28*  Strengthen stability and sustainability for arts-related organizations both downtown and in the neighborhoods.

*Policy EC-4.29*  Identify opportunities for potential zones and cultural districts to develop creative clusters and encourage economic development in these neighborhoods and within mixed-use centers, such as the Lincoln Neighborhood Center.

**The Port and International Trade**

*Policy EC-4.30*  Coordinate with the Port to market and recruit businesses to vacant and undeveloped Port-owned properties.

*Policy EC-4.31*  Take advantage of trade relationships established by the Port of Tacoma to promote other cultural and trade exchanges.

*Policy EC-4.32*  Encourage international investments and resources in Tacoma.

*Policy EC-4.33*  Coordinate with public and private sector to promote international partnerships.

*Policy EC-4.34*  Promote and administer a sister cities program that encourages international partnerships and exchanges focused on education, culture and trade.

*Policy EC-4.35*  Enhance the cultural and aesthetic character of the community through participation in the exchange of symbols of international goodwill, such as public art, plaques and other amenities.

**Clean Water Technology**

*Policy EC-4.36*  Explore expansion of the Urban Clean Water Technology Innovation Partnership Zone and continue to support marketing of available properties.
TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The Transportation Chapter consists of the Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan is being updated and the draft may be viewed at this link:

WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City’s intent to:

- Set clear standards for service delivery and expansion of parks and recreation facilities and services
- Achieve interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the provision of park and recreation facilities.
- Provide more equitable service delivery in areas that are currently deficient in services or are anticipated to be deficient in services based on anticipated growth and development.
- Promote park and recreation facility design that reflects the City’s unique cultural communities and ecological settings.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Good parks and recreation services foster economic benefits and promote tourism. Environmentally, they provide green infrastructure and help manage climate change. Socially, they revitalize communities, create safer neighborhoods, help children learn and grow, improve public and environmental health, and support smart growth. Culturally, open space and program services can nurture a sense of place in the community, and provide opportunities to engage the public of diverse backgrounds.

The City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma together manage more than 3000 acres of developed parks and natural areas, as well as local and regional trails, the urban tree canopy, and community gardens. Programs are offered for all ages at community centers, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities. Parks and natural areas give life and beauty to the city and are essential assets that connect people to place, self and others.

The following policies ensure this legacy is preserved for all Tacomans and future generations and that the City and Metro Parks will rise to meet the challenges posed by growth and change within the City and region.
Partnerships

With a history of successful partnership that extends over 100 years, the City and Metro Parks Tacoma are committed to working together to create healthy opportunities for Tacoma residents to play, learn and grow.

Other key partners include the Port of Tacoma, the Tacoma School District, Tacoma Public Utilities, and other public and private partners.
Policy P-2.1  Jointly plan for new park and recreation facilities and services that contribute to the health and well-being of Tacomans of all ages and abilities

Policy P-2.2  Continue to work in close partnership with Metro Parks Tacoma, including supporting updates to long term plans for the parks and open space system.

Policy P-2.3  Encourage public-private partnerships to develop and operate publicly-accessible recreational facilities that meet identified public needs.

Policy P-2.4  Partner with public and private entities to encourage, sponsor, and support a range of public activities and events within appropriate open spaces, as well as within temporary closed streets, such as markets, festivals and parades.

Policy P-2.5  Support and encourage the use of streets and sidewalks, on a temporary and intermittent basis, for a range of activities, such as markets, festivals, shopping, dining and recreation, while ensuring safety and balancing street and sidewalk use for transportation.

Policy P-2.6  Coordinate the planning and improvement of trails with corridor improvements.

Policy P-2.7  Recognize public school fields and play areas as a valuable part of the City’s park system. Seek opportunities to work with the school districts to enhance the recreational value of these facilities.

With over 50 developed school campuses and school sites, Tacoma Public Schools’ play areas and fields are an important part of all Tacoma neighborhoods. Figure 8.1 shows the relationship between the public park system and school campuses.

Policy P-2.8  Maintain an accurate inventory of the city’s park and recreation facilities in coordination with Metro Parks Tacoma and other providers.

FUNDING AND CAPITAL PLANNING

GOAL P-3  Preserve and expand parklands and facilities to ensure the long-term viability of the park system to serve Tacoma’s current and future population.

Policy P-3.1  Maintain a long-range park capital improvements program that balances acquisition, development, and operations; provides a process and criteria for capital improvements project selection; and emphasizes creative and flexible financing strategies.

Please see the Public Services and Utilities Element for information on parks and recreation capital facility projects.

Policy P-3.2  Seek funding for new parks and recreation facilities through a variety of sources and consider innovative strategies for the provision of new facilities:

a. Develop zoning incentives, controls and/or funding mechanisms, such as transfer of development rights, to create highly functional urban parks and amenities within mixed use centers, downtown and planned residential developments.

b. Consider adopting a fee-in-lieu program that would allow development to contribute toward open space, park, community garden or recreational space within a mixed-use center rather than providing on-site open space.
Policy P-3.3  Evaluate opportunities to acquire and/or develop lands declared surplus by other public agencies, or offered as donation by private owners, if consistent with policies herein.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

GOAL P-4  Develop and operate park and recreational facilities in a manner that is responsive to the site and the needs of the community.

Policy P-4.1  Improve parks, recreational facilities and natural areas in accordance with current master plans, management plans, or adopted strategies that reflect user group needs, development priorities, development and maintenance costs, program opportunities, financing strategies, and community input.

Policy P-4.2  Encourage park and recreation facilities design that complements the natural features of the site.

Policy P-4.3  Provide amenities at parks and recreation facilities, such as restrooms, lighting, seating, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, bicycle parking, and shelters when possible, feasible and appropriate to extend the hours of use and service quality.

Policy P-4.4  Incorporate green building practices into park design and construction, including green demolition and disposal practices, use of local and recycled products and low impact development techniques.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

GOAL P-5  Facilitate a multi-faceted inclusive community conversation to ensure that park and recreation facilities are responsive to community interests and needs

Policy P-5.1  Regularly solicit and incorporate community members’ knowledge about park and recreation needs to ensure a system that is responsive to community interests and needs.

Policy P-5.2  Employ a diverse array of outreach methods that recognize different communication styles and increase convenience for citizens.

Policy P-5.3  On a regular basis, evaluate park and recreation preferences, needs and trends through assessment of usage and participation rates, surveys and other methods.

Examples of diverse outreach methods:
- Walking tours
- Storytelling and listening sessions
- Social media
- Video
- Festivals
- Partnering with community organizations

NATURAL AREAS

GOAL P-6  Manage natural areas and urban forest to protect unique urban habitats and offer Tacomans an opportunity to connect with nature.

Policy P-6.1  Preserve, enhance, and manage natural areas and resources to protect and improve their ecological health and to provide compatible public access.

Please see the Environment Element for discussion of natural open space areas and the urban forest.
COMPLETE PARK SYSTEM

GOAL P-7  Establish and maintain a complete park and recreation system to serve the diverse needs of Tacoma residents.

Functioning within a highly urbanized setting, the City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma partner together to offer a complete park and recreation system, ranging from low-impact, natural resource-driven habitat areas to recreation-oriented, high-impact parks and sport complexes.

This system is made up of both public and private ownerships. On the public side, the City and Metro Parks are the primary owners of most of those lands categorized below. In addition, the Tacoma School District owns school properties that serve residents’ recreation needs during non-school hours. The Port of Tacoma, Tacoma Public Utilities and other public agencies also manage open space and recreation assets. This spectrum of publicly-owned open space is complemented by lands managed by private landowners, with whom the City will continue to partner.

A brief description of each different type of facilities, together with supporting policies is provided below. Please see also Figure 8.2, Park and Recreation Facilities, and Table 8.1, Inventory of Park and Recreation Facilities, for more information.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide daily convenient access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents by foot or bicycle. Generally small in size, neighborhood parks are developed primarily for spontaneous and non-structured recreation activities. Sawyer Tot Lot and Optimist Park are examples of neighborhood parks.

Policy P-7.1  Neighborhood parks should be designed to enhance neighborhood identity, preserve neighborhood open space and improve the quality of life of nearby residents.

Policy P-7.2  Neighborhood parks should be located and distributed to provide convenient, daily walking access to basic recreational opportunities for nearby residents living within a 3/4-mile radius of the park.

Community Parks

Community parks are usually more than five acres, preferably ten to 15 acres, providing visitors with access to high and low impact recreation opportunities. Community parks should be designed to enhance community identity and preserve community open space. As a sub-category of community parks, Signature Community Parks have a wider community appeal providing a unique benefit which often contribute to the identity of a planning area and enhance the quality of life of District residents. McKinley Park is an example of a community park and Wapato Park a signature community park.

Policy P-7.3  Community parks should be sited and designed to serve those residents living within a 1.5-mile radius of the park and to provide a wider range of recreational opportunities to accommodate large group activities, structured recreation programs, and major outdoor recreation facilities, such as sports facilities.

Policy P-7.4  Community park sites should front onto a public street, preferably a collector or arterial street complete with sidewalks and bicycle lanes, or easily accessible by public transit.
Urban Parks

Offering outdoor breathing space in an otherwise concrete built environment, urban parks are a special type of open space serving the unique lifestyles and recreation needs of those who live or work in or close to downtown and designated centers. While urban parks often serve as neighborhood parks for their nearby residents, they may also provide opportunities for community events and district-wide gatherings. They contribute to place-making by enhancing the quality of life and the identity of the urban core and the mixed-use districts. Creating a network of linear urban parks connected with public squares, gardens and plazas will allow urban residents or workers to walk to public spaces or destinations designed for art displays and other leisure pursuits. Urban parks may be developed and/or managed by other public or private agencies or in partnership with them, depending on their locations and forms of development. Thea’s Park is an example of an urban park.

Policy P-7.5  Plan for the acquisition and design of urban parks within the Downtown and designated centers based on forecast growth and adopted growth assumptions.
   a. Establish specific targets for open space, park, and recreation facilities to meet needs within mixed-use centers.
   b. Identify potential locations and opportunities for further action and use innovative methods and partnerships to fund the identified needs.
   c. Ensure park and recreation opportunities are provided in the mixed-use centers as the population in the center increases.

Policy P-7.6  Develop nodal urban parks for social gathering and linear urban parks for active recreation such as walking and bicycling.

Policy P-7.7  Locate and design nodal urban parks to create a focal point and distinctive sense of place for each center.

Policy P-7.8  Coordinate the development of linear urban parks with the design of designated corridors and signature trails.

Regional Parks

Regional parks, usually over a hundred acres, provide visitors with access to unique regional features and attractions. Regional parks often accommodate large group activities and have infrastructure to support special events and festivals. Contributing to economic development through tourism, regional parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. Point Defiance Park, with 760 acres and a wide variety of attractions, is an example of a regional park.

Policy P-7.9  In addition to those facilities normally encouraged in community and neighborhood parks, unique and high quality amenities, landscape improvements and gardens, and infrastructure to support events and festivals should be provided. Sports fields, lit or unlit, may also be included within regional parks.

Community Gardens

Land gardened by a community group for food, plant or fiber production, either for personal or charitable uses. Community gardens provide access to fresh produce; encourage a connection to the
environment; support general health and wellbeing through outdoor activity and the therapeutic benefits of gardening; provide safety and beautification benefits; create healthy soil, which helps with stormwater management; and adds to a neighborhood’s livability. Properly designed and managed, community gardens can greatly enhance a neighborhood’s vitality and can be created on their own or in coordination with neighborhood parks, playgrounds, housing developments or apartment complexes.

**Policy P-7.10** Enhance existing and support new community gardens within parks and on appropriate public and private lands.

**Policy P-7.11** Support creative approaches to managing gardens, such as support by educational institutions or volunteer management by community organizations.

**Special Recreation Facilities**

Outdoor or indoor facilities offer opportunities for programmed activities to promote active living, an appreciation for nature and the environment, and to foster respect for culture and heritage amongst all ages. These facilities can be free-standing or sited within a community or regional park and are usually managed by Metro Parks Tacoma.

**Policy P-7.12** Give priority for the location of new special recreation facilities to areas that are currently underserved.

**Policy P-7.13** To the extent feasible, locate new destination facilities within or in close proximity to designated centers.

**Trails**

Trails serve both a recreation and an active transportation function. Walking and bicycling provide many benefits to individuals as well as to the community. In Tacoma, trails provide opportunities for walking, bicycling, jogging, in-line skating, dog walking and wildlife watching. An integrated, safety-oriented multi-purpose trail increases mobility choices, reduces reliance on single-occupant vehicles, provides convenient access to schools, centers, transit, parks and other destinations, and encourages regular physical activity to enhance health and wellness.

**Policy P-7.14** Establish, improve, and maintain a citywide system of public trails that are a component of a larger network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This citywide trail system should connect Tacoma’s neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, commercial areas, regional trail system, and other key places that Tacomans access in their daily lives. Please see Figure 8.3, Citywide Trails Map.

**Policy P-7.15** Utilize Tacoma’s natural topography to connect Tacomans to natural areas and the waterfront.

**Policy P-7.16** Design specific trails according to the purposes served and the location.

a. Trails developed primarily for low-impact access to or through habitat areas should be developed to minimize their impact to the environment through location choices, narrower width, and use of pervious surfaces.
b. Trails developed as non-motorized transportation corridors should be wide enough for the projected use and developed with a durable hard surface.

**Policy P-7.17** Locate and develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide on- and off-road recreation for the community

**Policy P-7.18** Develop new trails and recreation facilities to accommodate rollerblading and skateboarding without posing conflicts to other recreational uses.

**Open Space Corridors**

Lands that support, nurture and preserve natural and wildlife habitats and native vegetation. Open Space Corridors usually contain environmental assets, such as wetlands, streams, wildlife, native and forested habitats, that are managed for stewardship and conservation via best management practices. These lands often provide opportunities for environmental research and interpretative programs, in addition to low-impact recreational activities.

**Policy P-7.19** Encourage public access provisions in open space corridors where such access will complement, not negatively disrupt fish, wildlife and plants.

**Policy P-7.20** Provide opportunities for Tacomans to engage with and experience nature and wildlife amid varied natural settings.

**Policy P-7.21** Provide opportunities for education and continuous learning about Tacoma’s environment assets and geographic setting.

**Waterfront**

Tacoma’s shorelines and waterfront areas are a source of economic activity, entertainment and recreation, as well as providing invaluable ecological and cultural functions. As such, the promotion of shoreline access and recreation is a major priority for Tacomans. The City’s waterfront provides opportunities for recreation and the experience of nature that cannot be replicated in other areas of the City and region. Recognizing the multiple benefits and values of its shorelines, the City and others have made substantial investments to clean up environmental pollution and improve shoreline access, recreation and cultural opportunities. Given the strong connection many people feel to shorelines, investments like these will provide benefits that will be enjoyed and appreciated by a great number of people, improving Tacoma’s livability and long-term prosperity.

**Policy P-7.22** Recognize the strong community connection to Tacoma’s shorelines and waters as cultural, historic, recreational, educational, economic, natural and aesthetic assets of tremendous value

**Policy P-7.23** Enhance Tacoma’s identity as a waterfront community, including designating and enhancing shoreline areas for public access, recreation, educational and interpretive displays, public art, community events, habitat restoration and other activities

**Policy P-7.24** Develop and enhance opportunities for swimming, boating including use of Tacoma’s water trails, fishing, SCUBA diving, educational activities, wildlife observation and other shoreline and water-dependent activities
Policy P-7.25  Implement the priority actions identified in the Shoreline Master Program Public Access Alternatives.

MASTER PLANS

GOAL P-8  Provide specific area and signature facilities according to adopted master plans.

Over time, the City and partners have identified and conducted will improve the capacity to achieve the goals of this Element by developing plans for specific areas. This list is intended for larger, signature parks and open space sites. It is not exhaustive, and is intended to be updated regularly. Other public agencies, in particular Metro Parks Tacoma, maintain separate projects lists which should be consulted as well.

Inclusion in this section is intended to convey the City Council’s support for and recognition of the policy direction in these plans, and to convey that they are planning and implementation priorities. Inclusion in this section lends support to applications for City approvals such as conditional use permits, rezones and development regulation agreements meeting the intent of these plans, as well as the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This section also provides a forum for the Council to refine their policy direction on a given site, in consultation with the Planning Commission and other stakeholders.

Policy P-8.1  Point Defiance Park

MPT’s conceptual plan for their signature 768-acre park, referred to as Destination Point Defiance, was developed over multiple years with broad public input and support. It includes commercial, educational and recreational features (including the zoo, a lodge, eating establishments, gift shops, a visitor’s center, additional pavilion buildings, a farmers market, entertainment and educational facilities, and bike and kayak rental facilities) that broaden the use of the park and expand its function as a unique destination.

While the current (2014) Land Use Intensity Designation is Low, the City recognizes the unique role that Point Defiance Park plays as a citywide and regional destination. Therefore, or until the Land Use Designation changes, alternative review processes such as Development Regulation Agreements may provide an appropriate avenue for City review of more intensive, destination-oriented features within the park.

Policy P-8.2  First Creek Action Plan

In 2011-12 the City collaborated with community stakeholders to develop a consensus vision and framework for action to improve East Tacoma’s 3.5 mile First Creek corridor. The plan identifies actions to be implemented by multiple stakeholders over a 5-10 year planning period.

Policy P-8.3  Wapato Hills Conceptual Plan

In 2013 the City and MPT collaborated to update the 1996 conceptual plan for the 80-acre Wapato Hills. The final conceptual plan recognizes that Wapato Hills functions primarily as a natural area for recreational walking on a system of trails and viewpoints. The conceptual plan also includes the existing park in the southwest corner and a proposed visitor center on the eastern side.
Policy P-8.4  Downtown Subarea Plans
From 2011 to 2014, the City has worked to develop the South Downtown, Hilltop and North Downtown Subarea Plans and EIS’s. The South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS was adopted in December 2013, the Hilltop Subarea Plan and EIS was adopted in May 2014, and the North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS is slated for adoption in late 2014. These plans provide thorough guidance on open space and recreation issues and priorities for the respective subareas.

Policy P-8.5  Shoreline Public Access Alternatives
In 2013 the City adopted updates to the Shoreline Master Program (SMP), including the Shoreline Public Access Alternatives. This plan thoroughly addresses open space and recreation issues and priorities in Tacoma’s Shoreline Districts.

Policy P-8.6  Tacoma Landfill Land Use Plan
This 1998 plan represents incorporation of ideas gathered for the future uses of the closed portions of the City Landfill. The plan reports that over 151 acres will eventually be filled and capped. After landfilling ceases, much of the area may be utilized as a recreation and open space asset.

Policy P-8.7  Port of Tacoma Public Access Plan
In 2013 the Port Commission adopted a public access plan to identify specific needs and opportunities to provide public shoreline access. The plan will guide Port actions to meet the City of Tacoma’s SMP requirements for the Port to provide public access to shorelines.

Policy P-8.8  Swan Creek Master Plan
Swan Creek Park is a 383-acre greenspace nestled on the boundary between East Tacoma and Pierce County with a salmon bearing stream, wooded canyon, upland forest, paved and natural trails, and a community garden. In 2011 MPT adopted a long-term vision and plan for future site development, stewardship, and programming.

TO BE ADDED

Figure 8.1  Public Park System and School Campuses
Figure 8.2  Park and Recreation Facilities (based on City/MPT data)
Figure 8.3  Citywide Trails Map
Table 8.1  Inventory of Park and Recreation Facilities (based on City/MPT data)

Others
1. Description of role and distribution of different types of facilities (based on MPT Plan)
2. Discussion of emerging trends, including demographics, special needs, health trends, linear parks, changes in sports trends
4. Park and recreation facility images
WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

The Public Facilities and Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan makes the rest of the plan a reality by identifying infrastructure investments that support and implement many of the goals and policies in other elements of the Plan.

The Public Facilities and Services Element fulfills the GMA requirements for capital facilities and utilities. Throughout this element, the term “public facilities” includes all types of public infrastructure, including utilities.

The Public Facilities and Services Element uses two components to comply with GMA requirements for capital facilities. The first component is this chapter which contains the goals and policies.

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City’s intent to:

• Set clear goals for service delivery and system expansion for public rights-of-way, sanitary and stormwater systems, water, parks and recreation, public safety and emergency response, solid waste management, school facilities, technology access, and energy infrastructure.
• Ensure that public facilities and services support the local and regional growth planning objectives.
• Emphasize the development of facilities that serve multiple goals.
• Advance an adaptive management approach to improve reliability and resilience.
• Provide more equitable service delivery.
• Reduce risks to human and environmental health and safety.

The second component is the background information in this chapter. The background information is based in large part on the City’s Capital Facilities Program, which is a separate document and is adopted by reference. The background information fulfills the requirements of GMA to:

• Provide an inventory of existing public facilities.
• Identify deficiencies in capital facilities and the actions necessary to meet such deficiencies.
• Forecast future needs for facilities.
• Propose capital improvements and their costs.
• Plan for financing proposed capital improvements.
• Inform the capital budget process.
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

High-quality and dependable basic public services, like clean water and reliable sewer and stormwater management services, are essential to Tacoma’s future success. Cost-effective and dependable services improve quality of life, affordability, and make Tacoma a more attractive place to do business. Well-built and well-maintained facilities also help the city recover from damaging natural events and emergencies.

The City’s public facilities and services can also help create a vibrant public realm. The City’s public facility systems provide water, sewer, transportation, parks and civic services. Public facilities include the varied and extensive networks of streets and pipes, as well as parks and natural areas that not only manage stormwater and flooding, but also help provide places for recreation. Public services include things like public transportation and police, fire, and emergency response. In addition, services such as access to broadband technology, electricity and natural gas, and comprehensive waste, recycling, and composting services are essential for households and businesses. It takes the collective and coordinated effort of multiple agencies and regulated utilities to maintain and operate the complex systems used to manage and provide these necessities to Tacomans.

Public agencies aim to provide basic services to all Tacomans. However, for a variety of reasons, not all services are distributed equitably across the city. The agencies charged with managing public facility systems must balance the need to maintain existing services and infrastructure with the need to bring new or improved services to under-served communities, and to new residents and businesses. In addition, these improvements must be made in ways that meet federal, state, and regional regulations.

Given the likelihood of environmental, economic, and technological change in the next twenty years, the agencies that deliver, build, and manage services and facilities must reinvent systems and facilities to satisfy multiple uses, withstand environmental stress, and adapt to changing circumstances. The goals and policies in this chapter support the equitable, efficient, and adaptive management approaches that are needed to provide high-quality facilities and services to all Tacomans, including those in future generations.

The public facilities and services will meet the community’s current and future needs by providing acceptable levels of service in a reliable, effective, efficient, economic and environmentally responsible manner for existing and future residents, visitors and businesses.

The Public Facilities and Services Element is also important because Tacoma’s public facilities and services must address the requirements of the Growth Management Act, state, regional and county planning, and they must relate to other elements of Tacoma’s comprehensive plan. They must also fulfill the capital improvement requirements of the City of Tacoma.

GOALS + POLICIES

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Development depends on the availability and adequacy of necessary facilities and services to support growth. As growth and development occurs, existing facilities may need to be upgraded or expanded, and new facilities may be needed.
Tacoma’s urban growth area is an area surrounding the city that is characterized by urban growth. The Growth Management Act states that cities should be the primary providers of urban services within urban growth areas. Tacoma intends to meet this provision of the Act by becoming the primary provider of public facilities and services in its urban growth areas over time, and to provide the same level of service as it provides within the City limits.

Tacoma already provides some facilities and services in its urban growth areas. Tacoma encourages other service providers within Tacoma’s urban growth area to provide similar level of service standards that the City provides for those facilities and services provided by the City in its urban growth area. For its urban growth area, the City intends to jointly plan the provision of public facilities and services with Pierce County, other jurisdictions and service providers.

Annexation of new areas will have an impact upon the provision of facilities and services. The City of Tacoma encourages and accommodates annexations. Newly annexed areas are intended to be served at the same level of service standards as those imposed within the city limits. However, if necessary, the level of service may be phased in over time.

Regional public facilities are designated by GMA as essential public facilities. The City realizes that these facilities are often difficult to site, but they provide needed public services. Tacoma will coordinate with other jurisdictions in the region to site public facilities and will not exclude such facilities from its jurisdiction.

Facilities for Land Use

**GOAL PFS-1**  
Provide public facilities and services necessary to support existing and new development envisioned in the Urban Form Element.

**Policy PFS-1.1**  
Plan public facilities and services that have the capacity and are located to serve existing development and future growth planned in the Urban Form Element.

**Policy PFS-1.2**  
Provide public facilities and services that are the responsibility of the City, and coordinate with other agencies for their provision of public facilities and services for which they are responsible.

**Policy PFS-1.3**  
Coordinate and cooperate with federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions, private industry, businesses and citizens in the planning, siting, design and development of facilities serving and affecting the community.

**Policy PFS-1.4**  
Adopt by reference the capital facilities plans of the following providers of public facilities and services in Tacoma.

a. Parks: Metropolitan Park District.

b. Schools: Tacoma School District.

c. Transportation: Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, and Washington State Department of Transportation.

Annexation Areas

**GOAL PFS-2**  
Be the primary provider of urban services within Tacoma’s designated urban growth area and provide the same level of service standards as within the City limits.
Policy PFS-2.1  Promote growth and development within Tacoma’s urban growth area that is consistent with the City’s adopted policies, the County-wide Planning Policies for Pierce County, and Vision 2040 in order to discourage sprawl, direct higher intensity and density uses into designated centers, and support enhanced public transit.

Policy PFS-2.2  Anticipate public facility and service needs of possible future annexation areas through long range planning, and when feasible develop facility capacities within the city to meet these needs prior to or after annexation.

Policy PFS-2.3  Coordinate planning with Pierce County and other adjacent jurisdictions for land use development, transportation and services within urban growth areas to ensure development is orderly, compatible and sufficiently served, and consistent with City plans.

Policy PFS-2.4  Ensure through interlocal agreement or other mechanism, the compatible development of land including the rate, amount, type and location of growth, and the provision and phasing of service within Tacoma’s urban growth area, are consistent with the adopted policies and standards and tier designations of the city.

Policy PFS-2.5  Extension of utility services within Tacoma’s urban growth areas shall occur only upon annexation or if a commitment for annexation is in place.

Policy PFS-2.6  Provide for active participation by affected residents and property owners in the joint planning, annexation proposals, or agreements for service within Tacoma’s urban growth area.

Policy PFS-2.7  Expand the city’s boundaries within established urban growth areas in a manner that will benefit both the citizens of Tacoma and the citizens of the area to be annexed.

**Essential Public Facilities**

**GOAL PFS-3**  Collaborate with regional partners to site essential public facilities in an equitable and practical manner.

Policy PFS-3.1  Actively participate as stakeholders in processes for determining the location of public facilities of regional or statewide importance, also known as essential public facilities.

Policy PFS-3.2  Consider land use compatibility, capital facility needs and financial costs when siting essential public facilities.

Policy PFS-3.3  Essential public facilities shall be developed in a timely and orderly manner and arranged efficiently so as not to adversely affect the safety, health, or welfare of the citizens residing in the surrounding community.

Policy PFS-3.4  Major essential public facilities that generate substantial travel demand should be sited along or near major transportation and public transit corridors.

Policy PFS-3.5  If Tacoma is selected as a site for a regional or statewide essential public facility, or is otherwise impacted by a regional or statewide facility’s development, expansion, or operation, ensure that impacts on Tacoma are mitigated.

Policy PFS-3.6  Active public involvement at the earliest point in the siting process shall be encouraged through timely notification, public meetings, and hearings.
Policy PFS-3.7  Tacoma shall notify and coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions that are affected by the siting of an essential public facility. Equitable distribution of facilities for the populations they serve will be cooperatively established through inter-local agreements in order to ensure that all jurisdictions share the burden of providing essential public facilities.

NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Tacoma strives to provide adequate public facilities and services, as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, to serve both existing and new development. Such facilities and services will be designed to meet the capital facility needs of the community and to support Tacoma’s land use growth and development concept. In situations where the public facility is not owned directly by the City, the City will encourage the provision of adequate services and coordinate with the responsible agency. Additionally, the City requires certain public facilities and services to be available concurrent with development (shown in Table 1).

A significant factor in determining the need for and priorities among capital improvements is the level of service. It is an indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by a facility. The levels of service are the minimum thresholds necessary to adequately serve future development, as well as the minimum thresholds to which the City will strive to provide for existing development.

The City will select and budget capital projects through the preparation of the Capital Facilities Program, which is the City’s multi-year plan for capital improvements.

GOAL PFS-4  Provide public facilities that address past deficiencies, meet the needs of growth and enhance the quality of life through acceptable levels of service and priorities.

Policy PFS-4.1  Use the following levels of service, in combination with current needs analysis of providers, to determine the need for public facilities, test the adequacy of such facilities to serve proposed development concurrent with the impacts of the development, and ensure that appropriate levels of capital resources are allocated.
### Table 9.1. Level of Service Standards for Concurrency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Facilities</th>
<th>Level of Service Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electric Utilities</strong></td>
<td>Voltage level + or - 5%; Average annual system outage duration 75 minutes or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>Note: To be updated with LOS standard from the Transportation Element, once finalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto/Freight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanitary Sewers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Month Flow</td>
<td>200 gallons per capita per day (GPCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Hydraulic or Peak – Instantaneous Flow</td>
<td>400 gallons per capita per day (GPCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solid Waste</strong></td>
<td>1.13 tons per capita per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storm Water Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private facilities less than 24 inches in diameter</td>
<td>10 year, 24 hour design storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All public facilities, and private facilities greater than or equal to 24 inches in diameter</td>
<td>25 year, 24 hour design storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water (Potable)</strong></td>
<td>442 gallons per day per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) and/or as contained in Tacoma Water’s current Washington State Department of Health approved water system plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: These LOS standards are subject to periodic review and updates by providers. This table will be updated to reflect current information as part of the annual Comprehensive Plan review process.*

**Policy PFS-4.2** Maintain level of service standards and provide capital improvements needed to achieve and maintain the standards for existing and future populations.

**Policy PFS-4.3** Use the following levels of service to assist in determining the need for public facilities, and as a management tool for monitoring the sufficiency of the facilities:

### Table 9.2. Level of Service Standards Not Subject to Concurrency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Facilities</th>
<th>Level of Service Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Medical Services (EMS)</strong></td>
<td>0.000016 units per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>0.000109 apparatus per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
<td>0.288580 square feet of facility space per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>0.06 square feet per circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>0.003 acres per capita, and within ¼ mile of all residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>0.007 acres per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space/Wildlife Habitat</td>
<td>0.002 acres per capita</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: These LOS standards are subject to periodic review and updates by providers. This table will be updated to reflect current information as part of the annual Comprehensive Plan review process.*
Policy PFS-4.4  Coordinate with other agencies to ensure that the levels of service are consistent between the providers’ plans and this Element, and that the providers can continue to achieve their level of service over the 20-year timeframe of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy PFS-4.5  Identify needs for additional public facilities and services based on adopted levels of service and forecasted growth, and determine the means and timing for providing needed additional facilities.

Policy PFS-4.6  Provide public facilities and services that achieve the levels of service concurrent with development as defined in City code and Washington State Law.

Policy PFS-4.7  Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy or use, or within a reasonable time as approved by the City, without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

Policy PFS-4.8  Jointly develop with other jurisdictions level of service standards for City of Tacoma owned utilities that provide service within their boundaries.

Policy PFS-4.9  Prioritize capital improvements that meet one or more of the following criteria:
   a. Addresses a public health or safety concern.
   b. Is needed to correct existing public facility and services deficiencies, replace key facilities that are currently in use and are at risk of failing, or provide facilities needed for future growth.
   c. Aligns with Tacoma 2025 and other City priorities.
   d. Is required or mandated by law.
   e. Has a high level of public support.
   f. Improves geographic equity.
   g. Is financially responsible, for instance by leveraging grant funding or other non-City funding sources, reducing operating costs, avoiding future costs, or by having a sustainable impact on the operating budget.
   h. Is environmentally responsible and helps to meet the goals of the Environment Element.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Public facilities and services are one of the most direct ways to help develop and sustain a safe, healthy and livable community, as well as a balanced and vibrant economy. Strategic use of public funds that assist and encourage private investment and development will foster economic diversity and vitality and preserve quality neighborhoods.

Since a deteriorating infrastructure may well be an economic deterrent, it is desirable for the City to maintain its facilities to both attract and retain private enterprise and residents. Tacoma will use its limited resources to its best advantage by strengthening the link between economic development planning and public facilities planning, and emphasizing the support role that infrastructure and capital improvements provide to development and neighborhoods.
**GOAL PFS-5**  
**Strengthen the economic base, diversify industrial and commercial enterprises, increase employment opportunities, increase the income level of residents, and enhance and revitalize neighborhoods and mixed-use centers.**

*Policy PFS-5.1*  
Encourage projects which stimulate the economy by expanding employment opportunities, strengthening the tax base or providing for private investment opportunities.

*Policy PFS-5.2*  
Encourage the development of capital improvement projects that promote tourism and convention trade.

*Policy PFS-5.3*  
Encourage capital improvements in areas in need of neighborhood revitalization and provide services to neighborhoods at a level commensurate with the respective needs of each.

*Policy PFS-5.4*  
Emphasize capital improvement projects which promote the conservation, preservation or revitalization of commercial, industrial, residential, and natural habitat areas of the city.

*Policy PFS-5.5*  
Initiate and encourage programs that improve and maintain the physical environment of the business community.

*Policy PFS-5.6*  
Use capital facility improvements within mixed-use centers to enhance and revitalize these areas, support compact development and encourage transit use.

*Policy PFS-5.7*  
Identify and implement infrastructure improvements which enhance the viability and attractiveness of manufacturing/industrial centers and stimulate growth of new and existing manufacturing and industrial businesses.

**FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE**

Public facilities and services are expensive, and their costs generally increase from one year to the next. But the money to pay for the growing costs is subject to many limits. State and federal grant funds are usually restricted to specific types of improvements and are often one-time funds for unique purposes. The amount of grant funding has decreased with changes in policies at state and national levels. Real estate excise taxes and impact fees are the only additional sources provided by GMA, and both are subject to the ups and downs of the real estate market. Citizens are reluctant to tax themselves further to pay for expensive facilities unless there are compelling reasons for the improvements. In spite of the financial obstacles facing local governments today, the City needs to provide funding for public facilities and services to meet existing and future needs.

**GOAL PFS-6**  
**Ensure that planned public facilities are financially feasible.**

*Policy PFS-6.1*  
Identify specific sources and realistic projected amounts of public money that will provide full funding for the capital improvement projects needed for existing and future development.

*Policy PFS-6.2*  
Identify the public process and actions needed to develop and implement new or increased sources of revenue that are needed to make the Public Facilities and Services Element financially feasible.
**Policy PFS-6.3** Ensure that existing and future developments pay for some or all of the costs of capital improvements or new facilities that are deemed necessary, by reason of their respective developments, to reduce existing deficiencies or replace obsolete facilities.

**Policy PFS-6.4** Consider specific funding strategies subject to the policy criteria described for each of the following:

a. Charge impact fees when the City Council determines that new development should pay its proportionate share of the public facilities that it needs.

b. Use grants, public/private partnerships, and investments by businesses locating in Tacoma to leverage local funding.

c. Use debt when the City Council determines that it is appropriate to advance the construction of priority capital improvements and to amortize the cost over the life of the public facility.

d. Encourage public-private partnerships to finance infrastructure and public facilities which fulfill mutual interests of the public and private sectors.

e. Facilitate the formation of local improvement districts to construct needed infrastructure improvements.

**Policy PFS-6.5** If projected funding is inadequate to finance needed public facilities that provide the City’s adopted levels of service, adjust the level of service, the planned growth, and/or the sources of revenue to maintain a balance between available revenue and needed public facilities.

**Policy PFS-6.6** Use the City’s Capital Facilities Program as the short-term processes for implementing the long-term Public Facilities and Services Element.

**Policy PFS-6.7** Work with other providers of public facilities to ensure that their individual capital improvement plans are financially feasible.

**Policy PFS-6.8** Consider the fiscal impacts of major public projects or projects involving the expansion of capacity or service areas as a major factor in the selecting and budgeting of capital projects.

**Policy PFS-6.9** Programming flexibility shall be provided for appropriate public facilities projects to allow for contingent expenditures needed to respond to emergency situations or to obligate unexpected funds that become available.

**Policy PFS-6.10** Ensure that the operating and maintenance costs of a facility are financially feasible prior to constructing the facility.

**DESIGNED AND LOCATED FOR COMMUNITY VALUES**

Tacoma needs public facilities and services that are equitably distributed throughout the community; located and designed to be safe and convenient to the people they serve; provide flexible use and maximum efficiency; and are compatible with adjacent uses and the environment.

Tacoma can also pursue alternatives to developing additional facilities. Design standards and conservation can be used as mechanisms to defer additional facilities.
The built environment also has an aesthetic role in the community. The use and appearance of public utilities which are exposed to public view or have public access can enrich our lives through attention to use, design, aesthetics and location. Facilities can be located and designed to complement the aesthetics, social interactions and urban design of the community.

Older public facilities sites, structures or equipment may have historical or cultural values that deserve physical or photographic preservation.

**GOAL PFS-7**

*Design, locate and provide public facilities with features and characteristics that support the environment, energy efficiency, aesthetics, technological innovation, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.*

**Policy PFS-7.1** Design natural infrastructure into projects whenever feasible to mimic ecological processes and minimize the need for built infrastructure.

**Policy PFS-7.2** Incorporate consideration of physical health and well-being into decisions regarding the location, design, and operation of public facilities.

**Policy PFS-7.3** Provide public facilities that support and implement sustainability, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental stewardship, and evaluation of their carbon footprints.

**Policy PFS-7.4** Reduce energy use and consumption of potable water by city buildings and operations, and promote the use of renewable energy sources.

**Policy PFS-7.5** Use environmentally sensitive building techniques and low impact surface water methods.

**Policy PFS-7.6** Design public facilities that are oriented towards and accessible by transit and non-motorized modes of travel.

**Policy PFS-7.7** Ensure that public facilities preserve registered historical sites and provide cultural enrichment.

**Policy PFS-7.8** Promote the co-location of public facilities, when feasible, to enhance efficient use of land, reduce public costs, reduce travel demand, and minimize disruption to the community.

**Policy PFS-7.9** Promote water reuse and water conservation opportunities that diminish impacts on water, wastewater, and surface water systems.

**Policy PFS-7.10** Consider maintenance, replacement, rehabilitation or reuse of existing facilities to meet the projected needs before planning for major investments in new facilities.

**Policy PFS-7.11** Support and encourage habitat restoration within utility properties and corridors which are intended to remain relatively undeveloped and can support significant habitat functions while accommodating vegetation management necessary for the safe operation and maintenance of utility features.

**Policy PFS-7.12** Design, locate and build public facilities that are models for the private sector.

**Policy PFS-7.13** Encourage the coordination of utilities when undergrounding utility lines.
MAINTAINED FOR THE FUTURE

Maintenance of public facilities is important to protect the public's investment in them. A comprehensive maintenance program includes: 1) an inventory and assessment of existing facilities; 2) a routine preventative maintenance schedule; and 3) an evaluation of the maintenance needs of proposed new facilities.

GOAL PFS-8  Maintain public facilities so that they are reliable, functional, safe, sanitary, clean, attractive, and financially sustainable.

Policy PFS-8.1  Maintain public spaces and public facilities and enhance their appearance.

Policy PFS-8.2  Develop, adopt and use schedules and plans for replacement of public facilities upon completion of their useful lives.

Policy PFS-8.3  Provide public facilities that minimize operating and maintenance costs of the facility.

Policy PFS-8.4  Operate and manage public facilities to minimize their carbon footprints.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Note: Initial draft; further work is pending in the areas noted below.

OVERVIEW

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires communities to plan for capital facilities and utilities to ensure that there is an adequate level of public facilities and services in place to meet community needs over time. As shown in Table 9.3, public facilities and services in Tacoma are provided by the City and by other entities. The following pages contain background information about these different types of public facilities and services. The information, together with the provider plans that are adopted by reference in this element, is intended to meet GMA requirements and provide a discussion of location and capacity of utilities as well as a discussion of inventory, future needs, capital projects and financing for capital facilities.

Table 9.3. List of public facilities and services providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provided by City</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Municipal Facilities</td>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Fire Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste</td>
<td>Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater</td>
<td>Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater</td>
<td>Environmental Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provided by City &amp; Other Entities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks (including special public assembly facilities)</td>
<td>Public Works Department, Environmental Services Department, Metro Parks Tacoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Utilities, Private providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Public Works Department, Tacoma Public Utilities, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provided by Other Entities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas</td>
<td>Puget Sound Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: based on feedback received on this initial draft, we are planning to add information from the Capital Facilities Program about the following types of facilities to the general municipal facilities section: arenas, stadiums, theaters, exhibition and convention facilities, community and human service facilities and community development projects.

Over the next 20 years, the City plans to continue to work with service providers to maintain existing infrastructure and invest in expanded or new infrastructure to support planned growth and the
development patterns that are called for in the Land Use Element. The City will also continue providing water, electric and telecommunications services to areas outside of its boundaries through Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) in coordination with the relevant jurisdictions.

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU)

TPU was formed in 1893 when the City of Tacoma purchased the water and electrical systems of the Tacoma Water and Light Company for $1.75 million. TPU provides water, electric, telecommunications and rail service to the greater Tacoma area, including nearby cities and portions of unincorporated county land. The Tacoma City Charter provides for Tacoma Public Utilities to be governed by a five-member Public Utility Board. The Tacoma City Council appoints the five Public Utility Board members to five-year terms. While the Public Utility Board is the governing body and provides policy guidance, some matters, such as issuing bonds and fixing utility rates, also require formal Tacoma City Council approval.

Annexation Areas

Note: to be updated, and accompanied by a map showing annexation areas.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY

Electricity

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program and TPU’s 2011 Transmission and Distribution Horizon Plan and 2013 Integrated Resource Plan provide an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. These plans are adopted by reference herein. A summary of this information is provided below.

TPU’s power utility serves a 180 square mile area that includes the cities of Tacoma, University Place and Fircrest; portions of the cities of Fife, Lakewood, Federal Way and Steilacoom; Joint Base Lewis-McChord; and portions of Pierce County as far south as Roy. The area is diverse, ranging from industrial and high-density urban areas to sparsely populated rural areas.

TPU acquires its power from a diverse mix of resources. The utility’s present power requirements are supplied from seven hydroelectric dams owned by TPU, purchases from hydroelectric resources owned by others, purchases from the Bonneville Power Administration, and through contractual arrangements with the Grand Coulee Project Hydroelectric Authority and Grant County Public Utility District. Additional power supplies are procured from the wholesale energy market through both short-term and medium-term contracts as needed. TPU’s transmission system is interconnected with the regional transmission network and includes high voltage 230 kV facilities and high voltage 115 kV facilities. The transmission facilities provide wholesale transfer service, integrate generation and serve retail loads. TPU also owns, operates, and maintains overhead and underground distribution facilities to serve its customers. This includes both 12.5 kV and 13.8 kV distribution lines, which are fed from distribution substations.

From the 1990s to the early 2000s, TPU’s overall load decreased from around 660 aMW per year to around 550 aMW. TPU’s conservation efforts were likely partially responsible for the decrease, as well as the economic recession. Conservation is an integral component in TPU’s resource strategy. From 1990 to 2012, the utility spent approximately $101.2 million on conservation. Because of these expenditures, TPU’s overall load in 2012 was estimated to be 35 aMW lower than it would otherwise have been.
TPU has sufficient surplus energy to meet forecast loads well into the 2020’s. Over the past decade, the utility has experienced load growth. Loads are forecasted to reach pre-2000 levels again around 2028. The South Service Area (which includes communities south of Tacoma), Tideflats (which includes the Port of Tacoma), and downtown Tacoma are expected to experience the most load growth. Tacoma Power anticipates transmission constraints in meeting future load growth, system reliability and operational flexibility. It will be necessary to address these transmission constraints in order to operate and maintain a reliable and safe system. Certain high load growth areas will also require one or more new distribution substations and expansion of the existing distribution substations to meet the future load. Furthermore, aging electrical facilities require replacement programs to ensure the system is reliable. Projects planned for the next six years are shown in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4. 2015–2020 power capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLICK! Network &amp; Electrical Systems Reliability</td>
<td>$19,879,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Plant Improvements</td>
<td>43,458,440</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Generation Facility Improvements</td>
<td>170,394,700</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Management</td>
<td>87,565,800</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmission and Distribution Projects</td>
<td>242,012,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Technology Services—Smart Grid</td>
<td>58,279,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>621,588,940</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program

Note: More detailed information about funding sources for all types of public facilities in this Element to be provided
Note: More detail about long term facility plans (7-20 years) to be provided, as available

General Municipal Facilities

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.

The City’s general municipal facilities provide locations to directly serve the public and to house City employees. The City has five such facilities, including the Fleet Services located at 3639 S Pine St, Municipal Service Center located at 1224 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma Municipal Building located at 747 Market St, Union Station located at 1717 Pacific Ave and Tacoma Municipal Building North located at 733 Market St.

Within the next six years, there is the need to maintain existing facilities. Also, the City plans to construct a new consolidated Public Works Maintenance Facility. The proposed facility is approximately 28,500 square feet and will provide parking for service vehicles (location of facility to be provided). Given the City’s population growth target, it is likely that additional capital improvements including new or expanded general municipal facilities will be needed by 2040. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.5.
Table 9.5. 2015–2020 general municipal facility capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA Transition Plan Implementation</td>
<td>$2,754,166</td>
<td>Debt financing (2010 LTGO Bond D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Deferred Maint</td>
<td>2,680,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Elevator Upgrades</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
<td>City fund 3211 (capital projects), City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations), REET contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Exterior</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Fire Pump Replacement</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Interior &amp; Access Improvements</td>
<td>1,298,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Mechanical &amp; Electrical Replacement</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Shower and Locker Facility</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations), city fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Complex—Various Tenant Improvements</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works, Proposed New Maintenance Facility</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>Debt financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works, Streets Operations, Deferred Maintenance¹</td>
<td>1,676,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,008,166</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program*

¹ Deferred maintenance refers to maintenance projects that were previously planned but postponed due to lack of funding or other factors.

*Note: More detailed information about funding sources for all types of public facilities in this Element to be provided.

*Note: More detail about long term facility plans (7-20 years) to be provided as available.

Fire and Emergency Medical Service

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program and the Tacoma Fire Department’s Facilities Master Plan provide an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. The Tacoma Fire Department’s Facilities Master Plan is adopted herein. A summary of this information is provided below.

The Tacoma Fire Department is responsible for delivering fire protection, emergency rescue and EMS to residents of a 71.6 mile service area including Tacoma, Fife, Fircrest and the unincorporated area of Pierce County protected by Pierce County Fire District 10. The Department’s inventory of fire assets includes 18 fire stations, a marine security joint operations center, alarm repair building, central fire...
alarm, radio repair facility, training center, vehicle shop, prevention center and 32 fire apparatus (ladder trucks, engines, fireboats, command units, air units, hazardous materials units, water tender units, technical rescue support vehicles, and emergency medical support vehicles and units). Additionally, two fire stations located in Fife and Fircrest, owned by Pierce County Fire District No. 10 and the City of Fircrest respectively, provide fire protection and emergency medical service though joint service agreements with those. Fire Station 6 (1015 E. “F” Street) has been temporarily closed as a result of reductions in the General Fund 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 budgets due to the impact of the Great Recession.

The Department’s mission drives its service delivery model—an operational structure and response system that ensures it is always prepared and ready to respond to any type of emergency. The Department recently completed a comprehensive assessment of its facilities needs with a goal of more effectively mitigating risk to the community and as part of its Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) reaccreditation effort. The assessment included development of a Facilities Master Plan and Standards of Cover (level of service standards). It found that the Department needs to replace and remodel existing facilities and create a campus facility to improve operational efficiency. Seventy-two percent of existing fire stations and facilities are 40 to 100 years old and many are well beyond their useful life expectancy.

The Department’s Facilities Master Plan calls for replacing Stations 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and creating one new station; remodeling Stations 3, 5, 8, 12, 16, 17, 18; and creating a campus facility. The estimated combined cost for these projects is $180-190 million. City staff were planning to propose a multi-year levy or capital bond to help finance the projects but this financing strategy was delayed due to the Great Recession. Projects planned for the next six years are focused on maintaining existing facilities and are shown in Table 9.6. The City will consider the projects called for in the Department’s Facilities Master Plan during the Comprehensive Plan timeframe (2015-2040).

*Table 9.6. 2015–2020 fire capital projects and funding sources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire Facilities Deferred Maintenance¹, Exterior Repairs</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>City debt financing (2010 LTGO Bond E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Facilities Deferred Maintenance, HVAC Repair</td>
<td>640,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Facilities, Deferred</td>
<td>8,280,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Security Operations Center</td>
<td>4,700,000</td>
<td>City debt financing (2009 LTGO Bond D, 2010 LTGO Bond E), federal grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Area Fire Station Improvements</td>
<td>3,200,000</td>
<td>*Funding sources TBD, if no funding is secured the project will be delayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation &amp; Remodeling of Existing Fire Stations</td>
<td>1,129,844</td>
<td>City fund 3211 (capital projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,449,844</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program*

¹Deferred maintenance refers to maintenance projects that were previously planned but postponed due to lack of funding or other factors
Libraries

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. Tacoma Public Library staff provided updated input on forecast of future needs as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. A summary of this information is provided below.

Tacoma Public Library provides library services to residents of Tacoma. There are currently eight library facilities open to the public. The main library is located at 1102 Tacoma Ave and the other seven are distributed in neighborhoods throughout the City. In recent years the City has struggled to maintain existing facilities with limited funding. It has had to reduce open hours and to close two library facilities –the Martin Luther King Branch at 1902 S Cedar and the Swan Creek Branch at 9828 Portland Ave E. Tacoma Public Library has seen an increase in use of digital resources and services in recent years and anticipates that this demand will continue to grow. The library is partnering with institutions and schools to increase patrons’ ability to access library resources.

Over the coming years, the City plans to maintain existing library facilities. There is a need to develop a capital facilities plan with a detailed strategy for maintenance and repairs. If buildings are properly maintained, the library system has the capacity to meet increasing demand through 2040 by expanding open hours and by increasing digital access. Currently, facilities are open 40-45 hours per week and could be open as much as 65-70 hours per week with the proper funding. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.7.

Table 9.7. 2015–2020 library capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fern Hill Library Refurbishment</td>
<td>$450,900</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobetich Branch Refurbishment</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries Automatic Doors Replacement</td>
<td></td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Heat Pump Replacements Master Plan</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Parking Lot Resurfacing Master Plan</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Branch Refurbishment</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Library Elevator Upgrade</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore Branch Refurbishment</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Tacoma Library Refurbishment</td>
<td>309,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swasey Library Refurbishment</td>
<td>1,071,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelock Refurbishment</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,525,900</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program
Police

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.

The Tacoma Police Department provides law enforcement for the City of Tacoma. Police facilities include the Police Headquarters located at 3701 South Pine Street, five substations, a firing range and a warehouse. Their combined square footage is 85,043 feet. Tacoma’s level of service standard for police facilities is 0.28858 square feet per capita. Based on the city’s population growth target, the City will require an additional 9,582 square feet by 2040. The City will consider expanding existing facilities or constructing a new facility to meet the projected need for additional police facilities. The police department has adequate capacity for the next six years and more. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.8 and are focused on maintaining existing facilities.

Table 9.8. 2015–2020 police capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Headquarters, LEED EBOM</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700 (municipal building acquisitions and operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Sector 4 (McKinley), Deferred Maintenance¹</td>
<td>$707,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police-Fleet Warehouse, Deferred Maintenance¹</td>
<td>$765,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police-Fleet Warehouse, Rooftop Unit Replacements</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
<td>City fund 5700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,422,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program

¹Deferred maintenance refers to maintenance projects that were previously planned but postponed due to lack of funding or other factors

Solid Waste

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.

The City provides solid waste collection service for single and multi-family housing units, commercial and industrial customers and all other solid waste customers within the City limits. Every other week garbage collection service is mandatory for all residents. Recycling and yard waste collection is an optional biweekly service that is available at no additional cost to residential customers.

The City owned and operated the Tacoma Landfill at 3510 S Mullen St from 1960 to 2013. Since the closure of the active landfill, the site continues to operate as a base of operations and as a transfer station and material recovery facility. The City, under a 20-year contract with Pierce County that was established in 2000, delivers all items that cannot be processed, non-recyclable materials, and waste to the 304th Street Landfill located in Pierce County.
Current landfill capacity is expected to be sufficient for at least six years. Before the City’s contract with Pierce County expires in 2020, the City will have the option to extend or renegotiate the contract, or to put out a bid for alternative landfill services. The City does not anticipate constructing a new landfill in the future. The City is currently working to develop a waste management plan and is studying ways to divert waste from the landfill, which may help to reduce the rate of increasing demand for solid waste service between now and 2040. There is only one capital project planned for the next six years, as shown in Table 9.9.

Table 9.9. 2015–2020 solid waste capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrades and Maintenance to 3510 S Mullen St Facility</td>
<td>$18,453,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program

Stormwater

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.

The City’s stormwater infrastructure includes over 775 miles of pipe and ditch flow paths, 26 holding basins, four pump stations, 660 outfalls, over 11,000 manholes and over 22,500 catch basins. Once it enters the system, stormwater is conveyed to various water courses or bodies in and around the City. All stormwater eventually ends up in Puget Sound. There are a limited number of streets within the City that have no storm pipes or ditches. Surface water on these streets flows to the nearest stormwater facility or is absorbed into the ground. These streets are not concentrated in any particular area.

The City is constantly working to maintain, upgrade and expand its stormwater system. It anticipates continuing to do so for the foreseeable future, with an increasing emphasis on green infrastructure. Determinations are made by the City on a case-by-case basis regarding whether there is adequate capacity to serve new development within established level of service standards. If this cannot be accomplished, detention facilities are required that comply with the current State Surface Water Management Manual. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.10.

Table 9.10. 2015–2020 stormwater capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt Plant Site Cleanup</td>
<td>$741,672</td>
<td>State grant, City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Management Program</td>
<td>44,728,700</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Projects</td>
<td>12,260,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing LID/Extension Projects</td>
<td>10,155,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment and Low Impact Projects</td>
<td>12,323,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>80,208,372</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program
Wastewater

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.

Tacoma’s wastewater facilities include the Central, North End and Western Slopes Wastewater Treatment Plants, over 3.5 million feet of main and sewer flow paths and 45 pump stations. The Central and North End Wastewater Treatment Plants provide sanitary sewer service to Tacoma, Ruston, Fircrest, Fife, Milton, parts of Federal Way and parts of unincorporated Pierce County including Dash Point and Browns Point. Wastewater from Tacoma’s Western Slopes service area is conveyed to the Pierce County Chambers Creek Facility for treatment. The Western Slopes Wastewater Treatment Plant was taken out of service in 1990.

Between the Central and North End Wastewater Treatment Plants and the City’s agreement with Pierce County, the City currently has a total permitted peak hydraulic treatment capacity of 179.9 MGD. This treatment capacity, and the capacity of the overall collection system, is sufficient to meet anticipated demand for the next six years or more. However, collection system capacity is not uniformly distributed throughout the system and no guarantee can be made that there is capacity in every line for every new development. Determinations are made by the City on a case-by-case basis for new developments to ensure that capacity is either available in the existing collection system or is required to be provided by the applicant.

The City is planning to develop a comprehensive sewer plan in the next few years. This plan will provide a long-term strategy for the City’s wastewater facilities. It is anticipated that expanded wastewater capacity will be required before 2040. To meet this need, the City will consider upgrading existing facilities, contracting for additional service or building new facilities. The City also plans to maintain and expand the existing collection system to serve projected growth. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.11.

Table 9.11. 2015–2020 wastewater capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Treatment Plant Projects</td>
<td>$37,270,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection System Projects</td>
<td>3,550,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North end Treatment Plant Projects</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pump Station Projects</td>
<td>56,100,000</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>102,920,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program

Water

The City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. A summary of this information is provided below.
TPU provides water service to residences, businesses and industries located in the cities of Tacoma, University Place, Puyallup, Bonney Lake, Fircrest, Lakewood, Federal Way, the town of Ruston and portions of Pierce and King Counties. TPU also provides wholesale water supplies to independent water purveyors operating in Pierce and King Counties, and is a participant in a regional partnership known as the Regional Water Supply System formed by Tacoma Water, the Lakehaven Utility District, the City of Kent and the Covington Water District.

TPU’s water utility facilities include two office buildings located at S 35th St and S Union Ave and at 130th Ave E and Reservoir Road, 1.2 miles of distribution mains, 150 miles of smaller distribution lines, 25 pump stations, 12 reservoirs, five standpipes and 32 wells. The Green River, located in King County, is TPU’s primary source of water. TPU’s Green River First Diversion Water Right can supply up to 73 million gallons of water each day, but is subject to minimum river flows as established in an agreement reached with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. The supply under this water right can be replaced with water from seven wells when water in the Green River is turbid, or cloudy. TPU’s Green River Second Diversion Water Right can provide up to 65 million gallons of water each day. The supply under the Second Diversion Water Right is subject to minimum streamflow standards and is the source of supply for the Regional Water Supply System. This water right allows water to be stored in the spring behind the Howard Hanson Dam for use in the summer. In addition to surface and groundwater sources in the Green River Watershed, TPU’s wells have a short-term combined pumping capacity of approximately 60 million gallons a day. Based a demand forecast conducted by TPU in 2012 that took into account peak day requirements, the utility has sufficient water capacity through 2060.

TPU’s Water Strategic Plan, completed in April 2012, establishes the direction and focus for Tacoma Water capital facilities planning. Capital projects planned for the next six years are listed in Table 9.12. Over the next twenty years, TPU plans to build a decant facility, water facilities for the Tehelah community in east Pierce County, a fish restoration facility and 4,800 linear feet of distribution mains in a newly acquired service area in Puyallup previously served by Andrain Road Water Association.

Table 9.12. 2015–2020 water capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Improvements</td>
<td>$14,786,491</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWSS Cost Share Eligible Projects</td>
<td>2,496,524</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Distribution</td>
<td>58,873,450</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>3,110,170</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Supply/Transmission/Storage</td>
<td>37,246,144</td>
<td>Utility participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>116,512,779</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY AND OTHER ENTITIES

Parks

Park service in Tacoma is provided by the City and by Metro Parks Tacoma. For City-owned facilities, the City of Tacoma’s 2015 Capital Facilities Program provides an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of
future needs, proposed projects and financing for proposed projects. The Green Vision 2030 plan provides the same information for Metro Parks Tacoma, in combination with Metro Parks Tacoma’s current Capital Improvement Plan. These plans are adopted by reference herein. A summary of this information is provided below.

The City of Tacoma owns 704 acres of urban parks and 466 acres of open space. Many of these sites are managed in partnership with other agencies including Metro Parks Tacoma and the Tacoma School District. Park and open space areas are distributed throughout the City, however there are concentrations of urban parks in the downtown and waterfront areas and there are concentrations of open space within steep slope areas and gulches.

Metro Parks Tacoma manages a total of 66 park and open space sites, including seven in northeast Tacoma, 33 in northwest Tacoma, 15 in southeast Tacoma, ten in southwest Tacoma and the NW Wildlife Trek facility located in Eatonville about 35 miles southeast of Tacoma. Of these facilities, 44 percent are neighborhood parks, 18 percent are community parks, 7.5 percent are signature community parks, 1.5 percent are urban parks, three percent are regional parks, twelve percent are natural areas and 14 percent are other open space facilities.

Insert results of gap analysis and needs info from Green Vision 2030

Capital projects planned for the next six years by the City are listed in Table 9.13.

Table 9.13. 2015–2020 City parks capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>2015–2020 Expenditures</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Park Phase II—Foss Master Plan</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td>Metro Parks Tacoma, other funding to be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Reconciliation Park Phase III</td>
<td>518,000</td>
<td>City fund 3211 (capital projects), city fund 1195 (open space), grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Reconciliation Park Phase IV</td>
<td>4,155,247</td>
<td>City fund 1195 (open space), other funding to be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireman's Park and Totem Pole Stabilization</td>
<td>297,500</td>
<td>City fund 3211 (capital projects), city fund 1060 (public art), city fund 1195 (open space), city fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Davis Pier - Dive Park, Tire Removal</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>City fund 0010 (general fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Access and Active Use Improvements</td>
<td>75,500</td>
<td>City fund 1195 (open space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 1 Park Phase 2</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Private contribution, grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium Way—Schuster Promenade Connector</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>Grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tollefson Plaza Improvements</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>City fund 3211 (capital projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterway Park</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>Private contribution, grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,726,247</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tacoma 2015 Capital Facilities Program
Metro Parks Tacoma has over 70 capital projects planned for the time period of 2015 to 2025, according to their current Capital Improvement Plan. Planned projects include improvements to existing facilities and construction of new facilities. Projects with estimated costs over $10,000,000 are shown in Table 9.14. The total estimated cost of all projects (including those estimated to cost under $10,000,000) is $483,550,691. Anticipated funding sources include a 2014 bond, state funding, federal grant funding, Metro Parks Tacoma Foundation support, partnerships, donations, funding from the City of Tacoma and other sources.

Table 9.14. 2015–2020 City parks capital projects and funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects with Estimated Costs Over $10,000,000</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastside Community Center</td>
<td>$30,000,000</td>
<td>Bond, state funding, MPT foundation funding, partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition and Development Program</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
<td>Bond, state funding, MPT foundation funding, City funding, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Maintenance Facilities</td>
<td>12,000,000</td>
<td>Bond, MTP general operating fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North &amp; West Community Center</td>
<td>18,620,000</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Defiance Marina</td>
<td>11,500,000</td>
<td>Bond, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Defiance Park</td>
<td>121,695,000</td>
<td>Bond, state funding, federal grants, partnerships, donations, City funding, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium</td>
<td>85,400,000</td>
<td>Bond, MPT foundation funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South End Recreation &amp; Adventure (SERA) Campus</td>
<td>49,393,240</td>
<td>Bond, state funding, federal grants, MPT foundation support, partnerships, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$343,608,240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Metro Parks Tacoma 2015-2025 Capital Improvement Plan

Telecommunications

Telecommunications utilities in the City are provided by private companies and by TPU’s Click! service. The majority of Tacoma is served by private telecommunication providers. Their infrastructure is located throughout the City and includes lines, poles, cables, antenna, towers and system hubs. The City has a franchise agreement with private cable provider Comcast. Century Link is another private cable provider that serves the City; it is not required to have a franchise agreement under State Law due to the length of time the company has been in operation. The City also has franchise agreements with private telephone providers including Integra, Sprint, Level 3, Zayo, TW Telecom and LS Networks. The City is currently renegotiating its franchise agreement with ATT. The number of franchise agreements promotes competition among providers.

TPU’s Click! network is a state-of-the-art, carrier-grade hybrid fiber coaxial telecommunications network. It is used by TPU’s power utility for transporting data from substations, remote terminal units and other intelligence gathering devices to a central Energy Control Center for load monitoring and management. The network also supports one of the largest two-way smart meter pilot projects in the country. While designed to support power services, TPU also uses Click! to offer telecommunication services to the public including cable television, high-speed data transport and Internet access. The system presently extends along public rights-of-way throughout the cities of Tacoma, University Place, Fircrest, Fife and portions of Lakewood and unincorporated Pierce County.
**Natural Gas**

Natural gas service is provided to Tacoma residents and businesses by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). PSE is a private utility providing natural gas and electric service to homes and businesses in the Puget Sound region of Western Washington and portions of Eastern Washington, covering 8 counties and approximately 6,000 square miles. As of March 2015, PSE provides natural gas service to approximately 38,920 customers within the City of Tacoma. PSE’s operations and rates are governed by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). PSE natural gas utility operations and standards are further regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), including the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration (PHMSA).

To provide the City of Tacoma and adjacent communities with natural gas, PSE builds, operates, and maintains an extensive system consisting of transmission and distribution natural gas mains, odorizing stations, pressure regulation stations, heaters, corrosion protection systems, above ground appurtenances and metering systems. Transmission and distribution mains are located along public right of way throughout the City.

PSE updates and files an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) with the WUTC every two years. The IRP identifies methods to provide dependable and cost effective natural gas service that address the needs of retail natural gas customers. Currently, PSE’s supply/capacity is approximately 970 MDth/Day at peak. PSE purchases 100 percent of its natural-gas supplies. About half the natural gas is obtained from producers and marketers in British Columbia and Alberta, and the rest comes from Rocky Mountain States. All the gas PSE acquires is transported into PSE’s service area through large interstate pipelines owned and operated by Williams Northwest Pipeline. PSE buys and stores significant amounts of natural gas during the summer months, when wholesale gas prices and customer demand are low, and stores it in large underground facilities and withdraws it in winter when customer usage is highest; ensuring a reliable supply of gas is available.

To meet the regional and City of Tacoma’s natural gas demand, PSE’s delivery system is modified every year to address new or existing customer growth, load changes that require system reinforcement, rights-of-way improvements, and pipeline integrity issues. The system responds differently year to year and PSE is constantly adding or modifying infrastructure to meet gas volume and pressures demands. Major construction activity that is anticipated in the City of Tacoma in the next 20 years includes the following: four miles of 16” high pressure gas main to serve a new liquid natural gas facility located in the Port of Tacoma and to provide system reliability to the southern service area; a new liquefied natural gas plant; potential mitigation due to Interstate-5 High Occupancy Vehicle Lane settlement; and providing new service to the Point Ruston development. PSE also plans for ongoing work to maintain the integrity of its natural gas system.

**Schools**

Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is the third largest district in Washington State serving more than 28,000 children in kindergarten through grade 12. The district has 35 elementary schools, nine middle schools, five comprehensive high schools and 14 alternative learning sites. These schools are located throughout...
neighborhoods in Tacoma and Fircrest. TPS has more than 5,000 employees and is one of the largest employers in Tacoma.

In 2013 voters approved a $500 million bond issue that will replace or modernize 14 schools and make nearly 200 facility improvements to many other schools in the district. There are five schools that are not planned for improvements due to recent construction or high quality condition. The 14 schools planned for replacement or modernization have an average age of 74 years. They are shown in Table 9.15. Improvements to Washington Elementary School were completed in 2014. According to the District’s construction schedule, improvements to the remaining 13 schools are planned to take place between 2015 and 2020.

The school district is in the process of developing a new 30 year master plan. The plan is targeted for completion in winter 2015/16. The City will incorporate new information from this plan into the Capital Facilities Element as part of its annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Table 9.15. Location of schools planned for replacement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastside Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>Boze Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Lyon Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South End Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>Birney Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stewart Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Tacoma Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>Arlington Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>McCarver Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West End Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>Hunt Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downing Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science and Math Institute (SAMI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilson High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tacoma Neighborhood of Tacoma</td>
<td>Grant Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Neighborhood</td>
<td>Browns Point Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Fircrest</td>
<td>Wainwright Elementary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the City’s population growth target, it is likely that there will be a need for additional school capacity between 2020 and 2040. The district has a number of tools it could use to meet this need, including changing programming to free up classroom space, boundary adjustments, grade reconfiguration, adding portables, expanding existing facilities and building new facilities.

MAPS TO BE ADDED

- Key public facilities
- Parks
- Annexation areas
10: Container Port
Tacoma Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT June 2015

WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

This chapter describes the City’s intent to:

• Protect the long-term function and viability of the Port of Tacoma maritime industrial activities and services.
• Provide for a compatible transition for the Port of Tacoma maritime industrial area to development in the larger surrounding area.
• Ensure the provision, protection and preservation of capital facilities and essential public services within the Port of Tacoma maritime industrial area.
• Provide for efficient multimodal movement of goods within, to and from the Port of Tacoma.
• Protect the habitat and shoreline areas in the Commencement Bay area

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Port and port-related industrial activities play a vital role in the Tacoma and Pacific Northwest economy, contributing thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenues and state and local taxes to the region. Preservation of available industrial waterfront land for port and port-related container and industrial activity is vital to the City’s economy. This element provides policy guidance to help “...ensure that local land use decisions are made in consideration of the long-term and widespread economic contribution of our international container ports and related industrial lands and transportation systems and to ensure that container ports continue to function effectively alongside vibrant city waterfronts.”

This element describes how the City of Tacoma and Port of Tacoma can work collaboratively to ensure the continued long-term viability of the Port, while providing for effective buffers and transition to surrounding non-industrial uses and protecting Commencement Bay, a unique shoreline environment containing river deltas, tidal creeks, freshwater and salt marshes.

GOALS + POLICIES

CORE MARITIME INDUSTRIAL AREA

GOAL CP-1 Identify the core port and port-related container industrial area and protect the long-term function and viability of this area. [Insert Figure 10.1. Container Port Core Area]

1 Revised Code of Washington, 36.70A.085.
Policy CP-1.1 Prioritize, protect and preserve existing and planned port uses, port-related container and industrial uses and rail-related uses. Uses should consist primarily of cargo port terminal, port-related container and industrial activity, compatible manufacturing, industrial-related office, cargo yard, warehousing, transportation facilities, and other similar uses.

Policy CP-1.2 Prohibit uses that would negatively affect the availability of land for the primary port and port-related cargo and industrial function of the Core Area. Encourage aggregation of industrial land for future development as cargo port terminals and supporting uses.

Policy CP-1.3 Clearly identify and prohibit uses that are entirely incompatible with the Core Area uses. Examples may include those that attract people to the area for non-industrial purposes or that would be incompatible with typical industrial area impacts (noise, truck movement, etc.). These may include residential, general retail, temporary lodging or other similar uses.

Policy CP-1.4 Reduce the potential for land use conflicts between industrial development and surrounding nonindustrial uses by providing for adequate Industrial/Commercial Buffer areas, and clear public commitment to continuation of Port and port-related cargo and industrial uses in the designated Core Area.

Policy CP-1.5 Do not allow unrelated uses to gradually encroach on the Core Area through incremental development and modifications of the Core Area boundary. Consider boundary adjustments only in collaboration with the Port of Tacoma and as part of a comprehensive review of long-term port and port-related cargo and industrial land needs.

Policy CP-1.6 In the Core Area, allow for localized impacts associated with industrial activities, including noise, odor and visual character, that are appropriate and expected in heavy industrial areas but would not be allowed in other parts of the city. Noise and odor may be associated with transportation and manufacturing facilities. Visual character may include outdoor storage, relatively large building mass and impervious surface area. While localized impacts are permitted, continue to require Core Area industrial uses to be developed in a manner that protects the environment and preserves public health and safety from a citywide and regional perspective.

Policy CP-1.7 Continue to work in close collaboration with the Port of Tacoma to ensure that port and port related cargo and industrial uses remain viable and that land use development along the edges of the Core Area is thoughtfully planned to avoid land use conflicts and incompatibility. Consider collaborative efforts to develop landscape and street standards that recognize the special working character of the Core Area.

Policy CP-1.8 Within the Core Area, the Port should assume a greater role in setting level of service and concurrency standards as established in the Public Services and Utilities Element.

Policy CP-1.9 In order to ensure that the Core Area continues to serve future port needs, encourage the Port of Tacoma to develop and periodically update a comprehensive long-range maritime development program that assesses future cargo market demand, developing technologies, geographic constraints and other factors affecting future intermodal cargo opportunities, and land and capital investment necessary to permit Tacoma to continue to serve port and port-related cargo and industrial needs.
INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL BUFFER AREA

GOAL CP-2 Establish an Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area around the Core Area that will protect the continued viability of the Core Area while providing for a compatible Industrial/Commercial Buffer to development in the larger surrounding area.

Policy CP-2.1 Work in collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions, including Pierce County and the City of Fife, to ensure a good Industrial/Commercial Buffer from the Core Area to larger surrounding areas.

Policy CP-2.2 In general, natural buffers, such as change in topography, vegetated areas and water bodies are preferred as a means to buffer and separate incompatible uses. The Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area designation is needed only where the existing geography does not provide an effective buffer. Ensure that unrelated uses in the Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area are not allowed to gradually encroach on the Core Area boundary. The industrial/Commercial Buffer Area should remain of sufficient size to provide a long-term buffer for the Core Area.

Policy CP-2.3 Development standards for industrial and commercial activities in the Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area should ensure compatibility with the activity levels and physical character of adjacent less intensive community character.

Policy CP-2.4 Recognizing the importance of industrial activity to the local and regional economy, industrial uses in the Industrial/Commercial Buffer area should be preserved and promoted. Industrial uses, including non-water related industry, is compatible with and can support maritime industrial uses in the Core Area, as well as contributing to the region’s economy as a whole.

Policy CP-2.5 While the Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area provides for a wider range of uses than the Core Area, incompatible uses that would be impacted by the potential noise, odor and visual character of industrial areas should continue to be prohibited. This may include residential or other sensitive uses.

Policy CP-2.6 Establish development or performance standards to allow for continued viability of the Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area, while protecting the livability of adjacent areas.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

GOAL CP-3 Promote the continued growth and vitality of port and port-related industrial activity.

Policy CP-3.1 Work in partnership with the Port of Tacoma to target and recruit new businesses that support port and port-related industrial activity.

Policy CP-3.2 Identify and consider opportunities to remove obstacles to development and to incentivize businesses that support container port and port-related industrial activity.

Policy CP-3.3 Consider coordinating an industrial development workforce program for local citizens. Act as a facilitator between businesses, educational institutions, trade associations and residents in order to reduce the workforce development burden of individual businesses and expand employment opportunities for citizens.
**Policy CP-3.4**  In order to build on the port area’s reputation as a prime location of port related industry, seek opportunities, such as speaking engagements, articles and others, to highlight economic development success stories in the port area.

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**GOAL CP-4**  Work in partnership with the Port of Tacoma and other property owners to promote protection, restoration and enhancement of native vegetative cover, waterways, wetlands and buffers.

**Policy CP-4.1**  Encourage the use of low impact development standards and stormwater features.

**Policy CP-4.2**  Partner with the Port of Tacoma and other interested stakeholders to establish environmental improvement goals for Commencement Bay, including providing for greater baywide diversity of ecosystems, restoration of historic functions and improvement of physical conditions. Support efforts to identify funding mechanisms and legislative support for strategies to achieve these goals.

**Policy CP-4.3**  Consider development of measures, such as LID development standards, energy efficient lighting technologies, and transportation design features, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the port area.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**GOAL CP-5**  Provide, protect and preserve the capital facilities and essential public services needed to support activities within and beyond the Core Area.

**Policy CP-5.1**  Partner with the Port to identify required new infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support port activities within the Core Area, as well as priorities for maintenance and preservation of existing infrastructure, facilities and services. By partnering with the Port, the City can make sure that future infrastructure investments are targeted and prioritized to meet the needs of the Port and the Core Area.

**Policy CP-5.2**  Coordinate with the Port to identify the location and jurisdiction of major utility easements that are located in the Core Area; and develop and implement a utility access plan to ensure that utility providers have access at all times to all major utilities.

**Policy CP-5.3**  Establish and implement design standards for new roadway infrastructure and developments in the Core Area that will include utility corridors and utility access plans.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**GOAL CP-6**  Identify, protect and preserve the transportation infrastructure and services needed for efficient multimodal movement of goods within and between the Core Area, Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area, and the regional transportation system.

**Policy CP-6.1**  Coordinate with state and local agencies to emphasize the importance of regional freight truck corridors to state and local economic health, and support improvements planned on these corridors that enhance freight mobility. These corridors are those designated with a T-1 tonnage classification (carrying over 10 million tons of freight per
year) by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)\(^2\) as well as the roads that connect the Port to the regional road System, i.e. first/last mile connector routes.

*Policy CP-6.2* Support improvements to the freight truck corridors that are designated as Heavy Haul Routes, as they are critical to efficient movement of goods within and between the Core Area and Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area.

*Policy CP-6.3* Support and encourage intermodal facilities and the transport of cargo via rail to help minimize the roadway traffic impacts related to growth in Port throughput.

*Policy CP-6.4* Emphasize freight truck mobility on Heavy Haul Routes. Coordinate with the Port to develop strategies to minimize truck queues and other traffic elements that could interfere with mobility along these routes.

*Policy CP-6.5* Place high priority on preservation of existing roads that serve freight movement within the Core Area and Industrial/Commercial Buffer Area; and encourage the use of reinforced Portland Cement Concrete pavement along Heavy Haul Routes to maintain improved roadway conditions over longer periods of time.

*Policy CP-6.6* Identify and prioritize improvements in efficiency to the roadway system, such as traffic signal timing and phasing improvements, which will improve roadway freight operations without requiring major capital investment.

*Policy CP-6.7* Support recommendations from the Tideflats Area Transportation Study (TATS), for improvements that will preserve and enhance freight mobility in the region.

*Policy CP-6.8* Coordinate with state, regional and adjacent local jurisdictions to seek joint funding opportunities for projects that enhance freight mobility in the region, including the completion of SR 167 and the I5 – Port of Tacoma Road Interchange Reconfiguration project.

**TO BE ADDED**

Figure 10.1 Container Port Core Area Map

11: Engagement, Implementation + Administration
Tacoma Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT June 2015

WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT?

This chapter describes the City's intent to:

- Conduct engagement efforts that increase the community's meaningful participation in
decisions that shape Tacoma’s future.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for involvement in planning for the future, including
seeking feedback in non-traditional spaces and through innovative mediums.
- Provide transparent and thoughtful public processes in planning for the future that are
respectful of people's right to know and be heard.
- Achieve greater equity in decision-making by intentionally engaging across the different
demographic, cultural and economic spectrums that make up our community.
- Work on building trust and fostering positive relationships between citizens and the City.
- Leverage existing opportunities to engage with residents, such as community events and
meetings of appointed citizen advisory groups, such as the Planning Commission, Landmarks
Preservation Commission and the Transportation Commission.
- Coordinate among City departments and with partner agencies to implement the
Comprehensive Plan.
- Update the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it remains relevant and is consistent with
current regulatory and policy frameworks.
- Provide guidance on allocating appropriate funding resources for public engagement and
Comprehensive Plan implementation.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Decisions are better – more equitable, resilient and accountable – when all interested parties are
involved in considering the issues and weighing in on decisions. Collaborative and inclusive community
participation are essential to supporting Tacoma’s core values of opportunity, equity, partnerships and
accountability, as well to as creating and sustaining a prosperous, healthy and equitable Tacoma.

“Public engagement is a process through which community members are empowered to own the
change they want to see and involves communication, problem-solving, governance and decision-making
skills and strategies.”

Policy Link's Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities
In order to consider all community members’ needs and concerns, particular efforts must be made to improve communication with traditionally under-represented and under-served groups, including low-income communities and communities of color. Meaningful engagement is inclusive of voices in our community that may have been historically marginalized and excluded. Consistent with the City’s core values and vision for government performance, deep and inclusive community involvement is essential to transparency and equity in long-range planning decisions. It also makes it possible to create and work towards a shared vision for the future.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Comprehensive Plan anticipates land use and significant capital project investment needs for the next 20 years. It is generalized so that it can apply to variety of circumstances and provide flexibility in implementation. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that Comprehensive Plan will remain relevant for 20 years without amendments and revisions to reflect changing conditions and community needs. This chapter provides guidance on how to implement and amend the Plan.

GOALS + POLICIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive and equitable community engagement

Tacoma is committed to active public engagement and recognizes that the complexity and changing character of planning issues, technology and the city itself requires thoughtful innovation to ensure inclusive and equitable community engagement. Increasingly diverse demographics, as well as past failures to fully engage all members of the community, point to the need for new approaches to citizen engagement that promote inclusive participation. Changes in communication technology allow, and even require, the city to offer new avenues for engagement. Finally, the city’s natural and built character and infrastructure are constantly evolving and continually require citizen input. The following policies challenge City staff to assess current practices and develop new tools through an ongoing evaluation and improvement of public engagement methods.

GOAL AD-1  Tacoma engages the interests of the entire community in planning for the future.

Policy AD-1.1 Create, maintain and actively implement a community involvement program manual that details how to conduct inclusive and equitable community involvement.

Policy AD-1.2 Ensure that community engagement opportunities are broadly accessible and incorporate a range of locations, times and formats, including accommodations that allow people with disabilities, people with childcare responsibilities, and people with first languages other than English to fully participate.

Policy AD-1.3 Provide broad and timely notification of public meetings and events through a variety of methods.

Policy AD-1.4 Consult with communities to design culturally appropriate processes to meet the needs of traditionally under-served and under-represented groups.
Policy AD-1.5  Develop and document innovative methods, tools, and technologies for community involvement processes, as well as reaching out to our community partners to learn what has worked for them.

Policy AD-1.6  Where they are effective at enhancing awareness and understanding, use new and emerging technologies to promote engagement.

Policy AD-1.7  Collect data on participant demographics in order to assess whether the City is successfully engaging all members of the community in its engagement efforts.

Policy AD-1.8  Evaluate community involvement processes on a regular basis, considering available data, feedback and lessons learned to determine whether any changes are needed to City practices in order to enhance future involvement efforts.

Policy AD-1.9  Utilize community members’ knowledge and input on policy priorities to update the Comprehensive Plan and ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with community needs.

Partnerships

By building and maintaining partnerships with individuals and organizations that represent a wide variety of interests, the City gains a better understanding of diverse needs and concerns and the community as a whole benefits from more equitable decision-making. The following goal and policies support building and maintaining strong and supportive relationships with the many individuals and organizations that represent the diverse interests in Tacoma.

GOAL AD-2  Tacoma has robust partnerships with individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, institutions and other government agencies.

Policy AD-2.1  Maintain partnerships and engagement with:
   a. Individual community members
   b. Historically under-served and under-represented communities, which may include low-income communities and communities of color
   c. Neighborhood and business associations, including groups without formal affiliations
   d. Businesses, unions, employees and related organizations
   e. Interest and affinity organizations and groups
   f. Institutions, governments, and tribal sovereign nations

Policy AD-2.2  Work with neighborhood associations and business districts to better reflect demographic diversity and diverse interests within the areas they represent.

Transparency and accountability

Consistent with Tacoma’s core values, the city is committed to transparency in community involvement processes. When community members have a good understanding of a process, they are better able to participate effectively. Improved transparency and communication allows the city to better understand community opinions and needs.
GOAL AD-3  City decision-making processes are clear and transparent, with good understanding from the community about who is responsible for making decisions and how community input is taken into account.

Policy AD-3.1  Establish and communicate clear roles, rights, responsibilities and timeframes for participants and decision-makers.

Policy AD-3.2  At each stage of the planning process, identify what topics can be influenced or changed through community input, and what ones are being guided by established regulations or policies.

Policy AD-3.3  Following decisions, communicate to participants in a timely fashion about the issues raised in the community involvement process, how public input affected outcomes, and the rationale used in making decisions.

Policy AD-3.4  Communicate to participants how decisions can be challenged and, if a decision is outside of City control, explain how citizens can engage with the jurisdiction or agency that makes the final decision.

IMPLEMENTATION

How is the Plan Implemented?

City officials, staff and citizens are responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Tacoma’s blueprint for the future. It helps to focus, coordinate and direct City actions by providing a comprehensive and common vision. It guides decisions concerning land use regulations, programs, capital improvements and functional plans.

Land Use Regulations

Land use regulations are laws that establish what can or can’t be built in a given location. The key regulatory mechanism that implements the Comprehensive Plan is Tacoma’s Land Use Regulatory Code. This code contains the development regulations that govern the manner by which land is used, developed, or redeveloped in the City. This code is found in Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code and includes regulations for platting, zoning, shorelines and critical areas.

Programs

City programs must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In fact, most City programs are tools for implementing the Plan. Examples include City programs for community services, economic development, health and human services and environmental stewardship.

A plat is the subdivision of land into individual lots.

Zoning regulates where and kind of uses can be developed, as well as standards for building development.

Shoreline regulations protect the shoreline area and describe what can be developed within designated shoreline areas.

Critical areas regulations protect fish and wildlife habitat areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, wetlands, streams, and areas that drain to aquifers used for drinking water.
Capital Improvements

All capital improvements undertaken by the City must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including those for public facilities and services. This ensures that the City provides adequate public services and that the City’s infrastructure supports the land use pattern envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

Functional Plans

Functional plans are detailed plans for facilities and services in the City. Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan provides overarching guidance for the City’s many other plans, including the Capital Facilities Program Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Economic Development Strategic Framework, Shoreline Master Program, Human Services Strategic Plan, Climate Action Plan, Urban Forest Manual, Surface Water Manual, Public Works Design Manual, Tacoma Public Utilities system plans, and various subarea plans. These plans must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. As such, implementation of functional plans supports implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The plans of non-City entities that provide services in the City should also be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan. Such plans include the Tacoma School District’s Strategic Plan, Metro Parks’ Green Vision 2030, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s Community Health Improvement Plan and Pierce Transit’s Destination 2040.

City and Partner Relationships

The City Council plays a key role in Plan implementation by adopting the City’s budget, levying taxes, and making appropriations for programs and services. The City Council considers amendments to land use regulations and planning policies recommended by the Planning Commission and also considers actions to support the Comprehensive Plan that are recommended by other citizen advisory groups and the community at large.

The City’s Planning and Development Services Department is responsible for many actions that help to implement the Comprehensive Plan, such as enforcing land use regulations and developing and maintaining functional plans such as subarea plans and the Shoreline Master Program. Other City Departments that maintain functional plans that support the Comprehensive Plan include Community and Economic Development, Environmental Services, Neighborhood and Community Services, Office of Management and Budget, and Public Works. Effective coordination between departments is needed to ensure that these different functional plans are consistent with each other.

Coordination between the City and partners such as other local governments, regional organizations, the business community and community organizations is also key to successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It is the responsibility of the City and partners to share information and work to
ensure that planning efforts are mutually supportive. For example, the City’s plans should feed into Sound Transit’s plans for expanding light rail in Tacoma, and vice versa. The same is true for Metro Park’s Tacoma’s plans for maintaining and expanding the parks and recreation system, for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s plans for improving health outcomes in the community, and the Tacoma School District’s long term plans for school service. Citizens can participate in partner planning efforts to help ensure that they are supportive of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation

GOAL AD-4  Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan is implemented in accordance with state law and in the best interests of City residents.

Policy AD-4.1  Develop and document a strategy for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, including a proposed schedule and priorities.

Policy AD-4.2  Ensure that City development regulations, programs, budgets and functional plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
   a. Implement Comprehensive Plan land use designations through the zoning designations and target densities shown in Table 11.1, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations and Corresponding Zoning.

Policy AD-4.3  Ensure that proposed regulatory or administrative actions do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private property.

Coordination

GOAL AD-5  Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan is implemented in a coordinated and efficient manner by City officials, staff and partners.

Policy AD-5.1  Engage in regular interdepartmental communications to share information about City functional plans and to ensure that they are consistent with one another.

Policy AD-5.2  Collaborate with City partners to address local and regional policy issues and to ensure that planning efforts are mutually supportive. City partners include city, county, state, federal and tribal governments; regional entities; the private sector; non-profit organizations; research institutions and community groups.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic document. It provides predictability for citizens, developers and policy makers about the City’s long-term strategy for the future. At the same time, the goals and policies in the Plan are designed to be flexible enough to respond to changing conditions. Also, the Plan is reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it addresses changing conditions in the City, new information and current state and regional policy guidance. The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing the plan and recommending amendments as necessary.

Amendments can include modifications to policies, the addition of new policies, or the deletion of policies. They can also involve the addition of new Plan elements. As required by the Washington State Growth Management Act, a municipality’s Comprehensive Plan generally can be modified only once annually; however there are a few exceptions as outlined in Tacoma Municipal Code 13.02.045.
Proposed amendments are reviewed simultaneously so that the cumulative effect of all amendments can be considered. Both the Planning Commission and the City Council hold public hearings on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Annual Amendments**

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan can be initiated by individual citizens, neighborhood groups, Neighborhood Councils, the Planning Commission, the City Council or City staff. Staff initiated amendments usually involve responding to State or federal laws, including changes to these laws, addressing deficiencies and inconsistencies, updating information, responding to a change in existing conditions or community desires, or addressing a combination of these factors.

**8-Year Plan Revision Cycle**

In addition to yearly amendments, RCW 36.70.A.130 requires that the City revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations every eight years. The revision process includes updating the plan to reflect current growth targets, policy requirements, information and conditions in the community. The revision process provides the opportunity to conduct a more extensive update to the Plan than happens during the yearly amendment process. As with yearly Plan amendments, citizen involvement is an important aspect of the revision process. The next scheduled Comprehensive Plan revision is in 2023.

**Amendments**

**GOAL AD-6**  
Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan is efficiently maintained in order to ensure that it remains relevant and is consistent with current regulatory and policy frameworks.

**Policy AD-6.1**  
Maintain the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that current community conditions, information, and regional, state and federal policies and regulation are reflected in the Plan.

**Policy AD-6.2**  
Consider proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments concurrently so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be determined.

**Policy AD-6.3**  
All proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments should include adequate information upon which to base a decision, such as a description of the proposed amendment, statement of need, description of how the proposed amendment enhances the community, demonstration of consistency with the current Comprehensive Plan, community outreach conducted, and response to public review and comment on the proposed change.

**Policy AD-6.4**  
Ensure proposed Comprehensive Plan policy amendments are accompanied by any related and required implementation actions.
Table 11-1. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations and Corresponding Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations</th>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Family Residential</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Qualities associated with this designation that are desirable include: low noise levels, limited traffic, large setbacks, private yards, small scale buildings, and low-density development. These areas are part of larger neighborhoods in which community facilities, such as parks, schools, day cares, and religious facilities, broader housing choices and commercial services are also desirable. Limited allowances for other types of residential development are also provided in this designation with additional review to ensure compatibility with the desired, overarching single-family character. | 5–10 dwelling units/net acre | R-1 Single-Family Dwelling District  
R-2 Single-Family Dwelling District  
R-2SRD Residential Special Review District  
HMR-SRD Historic Mixed Residential Special Review District |
| **Multi-Family (low-density)**           |                |                     |
| This district enjoys many of the same qualities as single-family neighborhoods such as low traffic volumes and noise, larger setbacks, and small-scale development, while allowing for multi-family uses and increased density along with community facilities and institutions. The Multi-Family (low-density) district can often act as a transition between the single-family designation and the greater density and higher intensity uses that can be found in the Multi-Family (high density designation) or commercial or mixed-use designations. This designation is more transit-supportive than the Single Family Residential areas and is appropriate along transit routes and within walking distance of transit station areas. | 12–15 dwelling units/net acre | R-3 Two-Family Dwelling District  
R-4L Low-Density Multiple-Family Dwelling District |
| **Multi-Family (high-density)**          |                |                     |
| This designation allows for a wide range of residential housing types at medium and higher density levels, along with community facilities and institutions, and some limited commercial uses and mixed-use buildings. It is characterized by taller buildings, higher traffic volumes, reduced setbacks, limited private yard space, and greater noise levels. These areas are generally found in the central city and along major transportation corridors where there is increased access to public transportation and to employment centers. | 24–46 dwelling units/net acre | R-4 Multiple-Family Dwelling District  
R-5 Multiple-Family Dwelling District |
| **Neighborhood Commercial**              |                |                     |
| This designation is characterized primarily by small-scale neighborhood businesses with some residential and institutional uses. Uses within these areas have low to moderate traffic generation, shorter operating hours, smaller buildings and sites, and less signage than general commercial or mixed-use areas. There is a greater emphasis on small businesses and development that is compatible with nearby, lower intensity residential areas. | 24–36 dwelling units/net acre | C-1 General Neighborhood Commercial District  
T Transitional District |
### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Commercial</th>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This designation encompasses areas for medium to high intensity commercial uses which serves a large community base with a broad range of larger scale uses. These areas also allow for a wide variety of residential development, community facilities, institutional uses, and some limited production and storage uses. These areas are generally located along major transportation corridors, often with reasonably direct access to a highway. This designation is characterized by larger-scale buildings, longer operating hours, and moderate to high traffic generation.</td>
<td>30–46 dwelling units/net acre</td>
<td>PDB Planned Development Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HM Hospital Medical District</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-2 General Community Commercial District</td>
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</table>

### Downtown Regional Growth Center

The downtown center is the highest concentration of urban growth found anywhere in the city. It is the focal point for the city, the center of government, cultural, office, financial, transportation and other activities. This variety of day and night activities attracts visitors from throughout the city and region. The interstate freeway, major arterials, provides access and the center has both local and regional transit connections. Larger, often historic, buildings fronting on the sidewalk characterize the area. Pedestrian orientation is high. Parking is found along the street and within structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90–125 dwelling units/net acre</td>
<td>DR Downtown Residential District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DMU Downtown Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WR Warehouse/Residential District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DCC Downtown Commercial Core District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UCX-TD Downtown Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center

The Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center is a highly dense self-sufficient concentration of urban development. Buildings can range from one to twelve stories and activity is greater than in most areas of the city. It is an area of regional attraction and a focus for both the local and regional transit systems. Many major city arterials connect to the urban center and nearby freeway access is present. Parking is provided both in surface lots and within structures. Internal streets and pathways provide connections among the developments within the center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60–100 dwelling units/net acre</td>
<td>UCX Urban Center Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Crossroads Mixed-Use Center

The crossroads center is a concentration of commercial and/or institutional development that serves many nearby neighborhoods and generally includes a unique attraction that draws people from throughout the city. Some residential development may already be present, and there is a goal to have more residential development. It is directly accessible by arterials and local transit. Pedestrian accessibility is important within the center, but because of its focus on larger scale commercial development, the community center continues to provide for automobile parking, preferably within structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Density</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40–60 dwelling units/net acre</td>
<td>CCX Community Commercial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HMX Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Mixed- Use Center</strong></td>
<td>30–45 dwelling</td>
<td>NCX Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>units/net acre</td>
<td>RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CIX Commercial Industrial Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HMX Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NRX Neighborhood Residential Mixed-Use District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light Industrial</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>M-1 Light Industrial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy Industrial</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>M-2 Heavy Industrial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and Open Space</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>PMI Port Maritime &amp; Industrial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The neighborhood center is a concentrated mix of small- to medium-scale development that serves the daily needs of center residents, the immediate neighborhood, and areas beyond. Development contains a mix of residential and commercial uses, and the majority of parking is provided within structures. Buildings are generally up to six stories along the commercial corridors, up to three stories at the periphery of the centers near single-family districts, and up to four stories in areas between the core and the periphery. They are designed with a compatible character to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The design of the neighborhood center encourages pedestrians and bicyclists and its location on a major arterial makes it a convenient and frequent stop for local transit. The regional transit network also may directly serve some neighborhood centers.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial</td>
<td>This designation allow for a variety of industrial uses that are moderate in scale and impact, with lower noise, odors and traffic generation than heavy industrial uses. This designation may include various types of light manufacturing and warehousing and newer, clean and high-tech industries, along with commercial and some limited residential uses. These areas are often utilized as a buffer or transition between heavy industrial areas and less intensive commercial and/or residential areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Industrial</td>
<td>This designation is characterized by higher levels of noise and odors, large-scale production, large buildings and sites, extended operating hours, and heavy truck traffic. This designation requires access to major transportation corridors, often including heavy-haul truck routes and rail facilities. Commercial and institutional uses are limited and residential uses are generally prohibited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Open Space</td>
<td>This designation is intended to conserve and enhance open, natural and improved areas valuable for their environmental, recreational, green infrastructure and scenic character and the benefits they provide. The designation encompasses public and private parks and open space lands, with lands set aside for these purposes by the City of Tacoma and the Metropolitan Parks District forming the core of the designation. As more land is placed in conservation status by these agencies as well as other public and private entities, the extent of the designation will be expanded to include them.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| The designation supports Tacoma’s vision of an integrated parks and open space system that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, supports and nurtures plant and wildlife habitat,
### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehesive Plan Land Use Designations</th>
<th>Target Density</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enhances and protects trees and the urban forest, preserves the capacity and water quality of the stormwater drainage system, offers recreational opportunities, and provides pedestrian and bicycle connections. Lands within this designation include both natural open space areas and active use parks and recreational areas. Natural open space is intended to be conserved and enhanced through habitat restoration and vegetation management to maximize its environmental and stormwater benefits, along with low-impact public access such as natural area trails and viewpoints, when appropriate. Parks and recreation lands are intended to provide opportunities for active recreation such as playfields and sports facilities, and urban amenities such as plazas, pocket parks and community gardens.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>S1–S14 Shoreline Zoning Districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional, more specific policy direction regarding these types of areas is contained within the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element.

### Shoreline

The city’s shoreline areas provide great social, ecological, recreational, cultural, economic and aesthetic value, both at the local and regional level. It is the community’s intent to use the full potential of these areas in a manner that is both ordered and diversified, supports the community’s ability to enjoy the water and the unique setting it creates, and which integrates water and shoreline uses while achieving a net gain of ecological functions. In addition, these areas are intended to balance the overarching goals outlined in the State Shoreline Management Act:

- To ensure an adequate land supply for water-dependent uses;
- To promote and enhance the public’s opportunities to access and enjoy the water; and
- To protect and preserve natural resources.

This designation includes areas that support deepwater port and industrial sites, habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, archaeological and historical sites, open space, recreation and community activities, and some commercial and residential development. Recognizing the limited nature of this important resource, use and development of the shoreline areas must be carefully planned and regulated to ensure that these values are maintained over time.

The Shoreline Master Program has been developed to provide additional and more detailed policy direction regarding the city’s shoreline areas, along with specific zoning and development standards. The Shoreline Master Program utilizes a system of “environment designations” which further guide the character, intensity and use of individual shoreline segments. These classifications include Natural, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, High Intensity, Aquatic, and Downtown Waterfront and are based on the existing development patterns, natural capabilities and goals and aspirations of the community for its shoreline areas.
No revisions to the Downtown Element are proposed as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Downtown Element may be viewed at this link: