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**Staff Contact:**

Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner  
747 Market Street, Room 345  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
Phone: (253) 591-5531  
Email: satkinson@cityoftacoma.org  
Website: www.cityoftacoma.org/planning
1. Introduction

The Purpose of Public Engagement

Often, when people think about planning, they focus on the things – the buildings, the streets, the green space, the roads, the transit. But planning is really about people – these are the communities we call home: Where we go to work every day, where our families will grow, and hopefully, where they’ll prosper. And where we’ll connect with one another.

As a result, the planning process must also be grounded in the needs of people, the locales where they live and work, and the broader community. It’s where what we can do connects with how we live, work, travel, and grow. And in order to understand the values and aspirations of a broader community or specific neighborhood, city, or locale, we need to engage the people from that context in that discussion.

People are experts in assessing the long-term needs of their personal experiences and interactions with the places they live and work. This public engagement plan recognizes people as full and equal partners in the city’s decision-making processes at all levels. Specifically, it outlines the responsibilities and commitments of the Planning Services Division to engage the public and key constituencies in city planning.

The following sections provide the context in which we plan (the state, regional, and local policy framework), information about key projects scheduled for the upcoming year, the adoption process and key decision-making authorities, and lastly, a strategy for coordinating public notification and engagement opportunities as part of this legislative process.
2. Planning Framework

Planning in Washington State involves multiple layered policy frameworks, intended to provide some consistency in planning goals across jurisdictions, while providing local flexibility in how we choose to accomplish these goals. In addition, many planning issues span multiple jurisdictions – transportation planning for example – and require shared cross-jurisdictional strategies.

Growth Management

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.

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.”

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.

One Tacoma Plan

The City’s Comprehensive Plan, One Tacoma, guides decisions on land use, transportation, historic preservation, economic development, housing, capital facilities, parks, and the environment. The plan establishes the basis for zoning and development regulations and guides City permit decisions.

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 offers a framework for the consideration of policy changes.
With the adoption of the One Tacoma Plan in 2015, the Planning work program is focused on implementing the goals and policies of the Plan through area-wide rezones, development regulation updates, ongoing management of public investments in infrastructure, and coordination with the plans and investments of other agencies, to ensure that growth happens in a beneficial, healthy, and sustainable way.

**Project Summary**

The 2019 Public Engagement Plan will be used to coordinate overall public involvement in the 2019 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code, which tentatively includes the following projects:

1. **Future Land Use Implementation (area-wide rezones)**
   - This project will include area-wide rezones to rectify inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan and the City’s Zoning Districts. This project will be conducted over two phases: The first phase, scheduled for 2019 completion will focus on residential areas, while a second phase (2020) will address commercial areas.

2. **Commercial Zoning Update**
   - The Commercial Zoning update will revise the design and development standards for the City’s Neighborhood and General Commercial zoning districts. The project will bring these districts into alignment with the goals and policies of the One Tacoma Plan to promote more context-sensitive commercial zoning standards. This first phase will focus on creating a new commercial zoning framework that would then be implemented through code changes and rezones in a next phase.

3. **Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review**
   - The State Shoreline Management Act requires local governments to periodically review their shoreline master programs and make any adjustments necessary to reflect changing local circumstances, new information or improved data, or any changes to state law. Note: The Shoreline Master Program is a joint City-State program and is conducted through a joint
adoption process, requiring Department of Ecology approval of proposed amendments.

4. **Historic Preservation Code Improvements**
   - This project seeks to improve the effectiveness of the Historic Preservation Program through a series of code amendments including enhanced demolition review, clarification of the nomination and designation processes, and updates to the Historic Conditional Use Permit process.

5. **Affordable Housing Amendments**
   - The City’s Housing Division is currently working with the City Council to put together a comprehensive Action Strategy on Affordable Housing. The Action Strategy, which is expected to be complete in Fall 2018, will identify and evaluate various methods for addressing this high priority issue that reflects better programmatic alignment throughout the City of Tacoma and its community partners. It is expected that this Action Strategy will include numerous items that directly relate to planning and zoning issues and potential code and/or plan amendments.

6. **Manitou Potential Annexation Area**
   - Pierce County and the City of Tacoma are planning to conduct a joint review of the Manitou Neighborhood in order to inform the decision for the potential annexation of the area to the City. The annexation study would include evaluation of issues such as appropriate zoning and plan designations and policies, utility infrastructure, services and costs, and community amenities, taxes and representation. The review is expected to be initiated by Pierce County Council and Tacoma City Council in September 2018.

7. **Minor Amendments**
   - This project will correct errors, improve clarity, and address other plan and code cleanup actions that improve the overall functionality of the Plan and Code.

These projects and activities are primarily mandated by legislation or initiated by the City Council and are within the Planning Commission’s review and recommendation authority. The Planning Work Program is subject to change, in response to changing conditions and factors, such as legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget constraints, staffing resources, and emergency situations.
Other Projects

It is important to note that these projects represent only those efforts that are expected to be adopted as part of the 2019 Amendment. There are other initiatives in the 2018-2020 Planning Work Program that may proceed on independent schedules, and outreach and engagement for those projects will be undertaken separately, though where there are opportunities to coordinate with this engagement plan joint efforts will be undertaken.

Other projects include:

- Accident Potential Overlay Zone
- Detached Accessory Dwelling Units – Permanent Regulations
- Tideflats Subarea Plan
- Urban Design Program
- Pacific Avenue Bus Rapid Transit – Corridor Plan

General Timeframe for the 2019 Amendments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-June 2018</td>
<td>The Planning Commission reviews the proposed scope of work and assessment report; a public hearing is held to solicit public input on the proposed scope of work; the Commission finalizes the work plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July – November 2018</td>
<td>The Planning Commission considers the available options to address the issues. The Commission determines the specific options to develop for public review. Staff conducts outreach efforts to solicit comments, feedback and suggestions from stakeholders, interested entities and the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November – January 2018</td>
<td>The Planning Commission develop the proposed Plan and Code Amendment exhibits and staff conducts a technical analysis and staff report evaluating the proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February/March 2019</td>
<td>The Planning Commission conducts a public hearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>April/May 2019</td>
<td>The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee and other pertinent City Council standing committees review the proposed amendments</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>City Council conducts a study session and a public hearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>City Council considers adoption of amendments</td>
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4. Community Engagement

Diverse Methods for Engagement

Tacoma is committed to authentic 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, and hopefully, collaboration. Finally, the city’s natural and built character and infrastructure are constantly evolving and continually require citizen input.

Tools for Notification

Website
Planning Services will maintain a calendar of events, project updates, advisory group meeting summaries and project documents on the Planning website. The website is available at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning.

Planning Manager’s Letter
The Planning Manager distributes a twice-yearly letter providing updates on projects, events, and accomplishments. The letter is distributed to numerous civic organizations throughout the City with an interest in planning issues and engagement.

Listserv
An electronic mailing list will be used to provide updates to interested parties regarding meetings, events and new products. Hard copy notices of important events such as public hearings will be mailed to interested parties. Utility mailings or other community newsletters may be used to disseminate information to a broader audience that includes tenants as well as property owners.

Taxpayer Notice
All taxpayers of record within an area proposed for a rezone or within 1000’ of a proposed rezone will be provided written notification of the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings. In addition, for the Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review, all taxpayers within shoreline jurisdiction or within 1000’ of...
the shoreline will be provided notification. Public notices shall also be distributed to libraries and community centers for display.

Media
Announcements for key events and document releases will be distributed to local media outlets including the Daily Index and The News Tribune, neighborhood newspapers and other outlets.

Social Media
Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter will be used to announce project news and promote and document events. Social Media will also be used to make connections to similar efforts, organizations and individuals in Tacoma.

60-Day Notice to the State
The City provides notice to the Department of Commerce Growth Management Services a minimum of 60 days prior to adoption of any proposed amendments to ensure that proposals may be circulated among state departments and other agencies for review and comment.

Opportunities for Engagement

Planning Commission Meetings
Planning Commission meetings occur on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Tacoma Municipal Building North, Room 16, beginning at 5:00 PM. These meetings typically allow for public comment on topics on the agenda at the start of the meeting.

Neighborhood and Business Groups
The project team will meet with Neighborhood Councils, Business Districts, and other neighborhood and business groups, to talk about the process upon request and seek their input. Staff will ensure that interested groups are made aware of project proposals and milestones, offer opportunities for submitting comments and attend community group meetings at key milestones.

Public Hearing and Comment Period(s)
Community members will have an opportunity to provide comments and testimony directly to the Planning Commission and City Council during the legislative process. In addition, both the Commission and Council accept comments at all meetings that pertain to items on that evenings agenda.
Community Events
During the course of the amendment process staff will attend community events as available and appropriate to provide additional information on the work program and status of review. These events will likely include the Sustainability Expo and Parking Day but may include other fairs, festivals, or attendance and presentation at meetings sponsored by partner agencies.

Neighborhood Planning Workshops
Staff will conduct planning workshops in each Neighborhood Council area that provides an in-depth discussion of what the proposed plan and code amendments would mean for these neighborhoods and to solicit input from community stakeholders.

Map-app Comment Form
An online map-app will be used to solicit public comments on proposed zoning during the Planning Commission public comment period.

Farmers Markets
Project descriptions and upcoming meeting dates will be distributed at Farmer’s Markets throughout the City. Staff will be available to answer questions and discuss current planning topics.

Committees, Boards and Commissions
The City of Tacoma utilizes a diverse set of citizen committees, boards (CBCs), and commissions to advise on topics ranging from land use issues to transportation, landmarks, the arts, parking, human rights and human services, among many others. These CBCs are comprised of volunteers who commit their time and expertise to serving the City and the residents of Tacoma.

Partner Agencies
The City of Tacoma is not the sole provider of services within the City of Tacoma. We work collaboratively with multiple agencies to ensure that plans, investments and actions are aligned and that all of the needs of our citizens are met. These partner agencies include the Tacoma School District, Metro Parks Tacoma, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and the Port of Tacoma, among others.

Consultation with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians
The City will provide proposed amendments to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and request formal consultation to ensure early and ongoing involvement of the Puyallup Tribe within the amendment process.
5. Decision Making Process

Planning Commission

The Tacoma Planning Commission is a nine-member citizen’s advisory body responsible for advising the City Council on all land use matters. The Commission’s meetings are open to the public and advertised on the City’s website. The Commission will make a formal recommendation to the City Council.

City Council

Final decisions regarding outcomes of the planning process will be made by the Tacoma City Council based on recommendations from staff, Project Advisory Committees, Planning Commission and public input. The City Council will review and discuss any recommended revisions at a study session. The study session meetings are open to the public. In addition, the full Council will hold at least one public hearing to receive further public comment before adopting any revisions to SMP policies and regulations. Public testimony will also be accepted at first and second reading of adopting ordinances.

Department of Ecology

The Shoreline Master Program is a joint local-state regulatory program. The Department of Ecology provides guidance on how to fully implement the policies of the Shoreline Management Act and local jurisdictions have the primary responsibility to undertake the public process and tailor a Program that is context-sensitive. To insure consistency with statewide interests, the Department of Ecology conducts a review of locally-adopted Master Programs and must approve locally-adopted Master Programs before they can take effect.

Plan Certification

To ensure that individual regional and local planning efforts are coordinated with Multicounty planning policies, the Puget Sound Regional Council reviews plan amendments. Plan certification is necessary to ensure ongoing eligibility for regional transportation funds.

To see upcoming Planning Commission meeting agendas visit: www.cityoftacoma.org/planning and link to “Planning Commission”.

To learn more about the Puget Sound Regional Council visit www.psrc.org.
6. Evaluation and Accountability

Feedback Loop

As part of this public involvement plan, staff will be responsible for gathering and disseminating the public’s input to decision makers and back to the public at large. This is a necessary component for a successful project. Staff will compile public comments throughout the planning process. Comments will be integrated into ongoing work and reported to the Project Advisory Committee. Staff will brief the Planning Commission and City Council on the progress of the plan, results of outreach efforts and public input. Commission and Council decisions will be communicated to stakeholders and the general public through the website, electronic/hard copy mailings and local media outlets.

Public Involvement Evaluation

Evaluation of the public involvement will be completed upon completion. Tools for evaluation will include:

- Informal feedback from stakeholders
- Short questionnaires following events
- Planning Commission feedback following recommendation
- Team debriefs following meetings and events to discuss needed adjustments
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.

The city’s commitment to diverse and inclusive public engagement is demonstrated by the Equity and Empowerment Initiative framework, which was adopted by City Council in September 2015 (see page 14). The framework has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan to guide the City’s outreach and engagement efforts.
WHAT IS EQUITY?
Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential.

VISION
Our vision is for Tacoma to be an inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play.

MISSION
Our mission is to achieve equity in our service delivery, decision-making and community engagement. We will do this by identifying and eliminating the underlying drivers within our community that perpetuate racial inequity and provide opportunity and advancement for all.

PRIMARY GOALS
If our proposed framework is successful, we believe that our municipal workforce and community will achieve five goals:

1. **City of Tacoma Workforce Reflects the Community it Serves**
   - Actively work to eliminate racial and other disparities and provide accommodations for people with disabilities in hiring, promotion, retention and contracting.

2. **Purposeful Community Outreach and Engagement**
   - Work with community partners and businesses to promote equity and inclusion within Tacoma and throughout the region, producing measurable improvements and disparity reductions.

3. **Equitable Service Delivery to All Residents and Visitors**
   - Provide guidance, education and assistance to all departments as they develop sustainable methods to build capacity in achieving equitable outcomes and services.

4. **Support Human Rights and Opportunities for Everyone to Achieve Their Full Potential**
   - Promote, support and build capacity for compliance with civil rights laws, ordinances and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, within the city of Tacoma.

5. **Commitment to Equity in Local Government Decision-Making**
   - Be transparent and collaborative with internal and external individuals and groups, holding ourselves and our partners accountable for measurable improvements and outcomes.

[Footer text: equity@cityoftacoma.org]
6. Coordinated Schedule and Engagement

**Plan and Code Development Phase**
- Assessment
- Concept and Options Development
- Plan and Code Development Phase
- Public Review and Recommendation
- City Council Consideration

**Engagement Opportunities**
- Community/Civic Organizations
- Map App Tools
- Farmers Markets
- Neighborhood Workshops
- Planning Commission
- Landmarks Commission
- Other Commissions
- Informational Meeting
- Public Hearing

**Notification Tools**
- TNT & Daily Index
- TV Tacoma Ads
- Taxpayer Notice
- Library and Community Center Notices
- Manager’s Letter
- Email Listserv
- Social Media Ads and Events Notices