BREWERY DISTRICT RENAISSANCE

A once vibrant brewery and warehouse area in south downtown Tacoma is coming to life again. The Brewery District between South 21st and South 27th streets from Pacific to Tacoma avenues will welcome new residences, retail establishments and breweries within the next three to five years. To some, the area evokes images of Old World Europe with its historic brick buildings, artesian wells and village-like character. To others, infill development enables fulfilling new market needs generated from an adjoining thriving university district to the north and an active medical center to the west. “Some of the best downtown development opportunities are here, and the time to invest is now,” said City of Tacoma Community and Economic Development Director Ricardo Noguera. Here are several projects in the process of development.

TWO BREWERIES TO OPEN IN 2016

Seas Brewing, 2101 Jefferson Ave. Gig Harbor entrepreneurs Mike Runion and Travis Guterson plan to open their second brewing facility and taproom in Spring 2016. This $4 million project includes the acquisition and renovation of the 80,000 square foot former Jet Building (1958), which would allow the company to increase its brewing capacity tenfold to 80,000 barrels per year. The firm’s long-range plan incorporates adding a marketplace within the building, similar to Melrose Market in Seattle. An estimated 40 full-time jobs will be created.

RAM Brewing, 2416 South C St. The company recently acquired the former Nisqually Power Station (1911) for adaptive reuse to add brewing capacity and a taproom to its popular chain of brewpubs. Owner Jeff Iverson, Jr. is working with the City of Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission to reactivate the historic south downtown structure. Anticipated opening is 2017.

UW TACOMA CONTINUES TO EXPAND

Urban Solutions Center, 1700 block of Jefferson Ave. Groundbreaking for the $26.1 million renovation of the Tacoma Paper & Stationery Building (1904) will be held on Feb. 19, 2016 at 4 p.m. This project celebrates the restoration of the last historic warehouse on the University of Washington Tacoma campus. The 40,000 square foot, four-story building formerly housed the Old Spaghetti Factory for 40 years, which relocated to Pacific Plaza at South 13th Street and Pacific Avenue. Soon, it will provide the critical multi-classroom, lab and academic support space to accommodate UW Tacoma’s expanding Biology and Information Technology Departments. “This talent is essential to meet the needs of businesses growing here in the South Sound, and enables graduates to enjoy professional challenges in a much more reasonably priced environment than King County,” said UW Tacoma Director of Physical Planning and Sustainability Milt Tremblay.
TOWN CENTER WITH A UNIVERSITY FOCUS

Town Center Development, Brewery District, South 21st to South 23rd Streets Between Tacoma and Jefferson Avenues. Progress continues on the redevelopment of a 6.4-acre site, just south of the University of Washington Tacoma campus, for a $125 million mixed-use urban village that will meet the needs of the growing academic population, which includes more than 5,000 students. Developer North America Asset Management LLC quickly recognized the opportunity to serve students, as well as fill gaps in the downtown retail market. In addition, the Wuhan, China-based team is setting aside land to develop office space for firms that want to be near UW Tacoma. Up to 400 high density residential units and up to 200,000 square feet of retail space are planned to be constructed beginning in Fall 2016. Approximately 500 full-time jobs are anticipated to be created. Kidder Mathews is currently seeking retail tenants. This prime location will accommodate students, downtown residents and employees, and workers migrating from King County who demand urban amenities without the high cost. The area has easy access to I-5 and the Link light rail, where commuters can access Pierce Transit or Sound Transit public transportation to Seattle within one hour. For more information on acquiring or leasing properties in the downtown, contact Business Development Manager Elly Walkowiak at (253) 591-5209 or ewalkowiak@cityoftacoma.org. A tour of properties available throughout the Brewery District can be provided upon request. See Project Location Map below for highlights.

NEW START-UP ACCELERATOR

SURGE Launch, 2367 Tacoma Ave. South. Success for start-up tech firms in the South Sound will be enhanced through the creative efforts of Eli Moreno, founder of SURGE Launch, a new tech accelerator in the Brewery District developed in collaboration with the University of Washington Institute for Technology, local tech firms and real estate professionals. This program is unique compared to other accelerators because of its diverse mentor program and resources available to start-ups. Seasoned entrepreneurs, angel investors and venture capitalists comprise the mentor pool. In addition to mentoring, each company accepted into the program will receive between $20,000 to $80,000 in seed capital and over $100,000 in perks in exchange for up to a 9 percent equity stake. SURGE Launch is expected to facilitate the development of many new start-up tech firms in Tacoma and also develop an ecosystem designed to sustain them into the future. “We’re all in this together,” said Eli Moreno. “Having strong working relationships with community partners is in the best interest of entrepreneurism and the greater community.” The first cohort of start-ups is being launched in early 2016. Companies interested in participating may apply at surgetacoma.com.