Neighborhood and Community Services Stakeholder Interview Summary

• Vision of Tacoma’s environment in 20 years.
  o Cleaner Tacoma with increased outdoor activity and more access to natural elements and active open space including trails and waterways.
  o Community stewardship that reconnects the community with the land through increased and focused outreach promoting engagement from invested communities.
  o Educational efforts showing the value of a clean and safe environment combined with suggested activities and practices community members can utilize as we come to the realization our environment is everyone’s responsibility.
  o Increased efforts and programs to help residents be more stable in their home.
  o Increased enforcement on more stringent neighborhood standards.

• Environmental Services strengths, weaknesses, and potential opportunities.
  o Dedicated and proactive staff who have formed good relationships with NCS. (strength)
  o Lack of understanding when it comes to the services ES provides and the value they have to the environment and the community. (weakness)
  o Mission specific to utility funding sources limit flexibility to move the needle and potentially excludes disadvantaged or vulnerable populations from receiving service or fitting in programs. (weakness)
  o Leverage similar services with other stakeholders and utilize volunteers for more efficient and cost effective service. (opportunity)

• Areas of improved communication and cooperation.
  o Improved understanding of each other’s roles, processes, and agendas.
    ▪ Consider a cross training program.
  o Identify overlap and duplicate efforts so we can best utilize resources.
  o Consistent utilization of IT services and programs. Shared access to current, past, and future work items.
    ▪ Shared map based tracking.
  o Collaborative effort working on budget to eliminate unnecessary spending.

• Ways to provide better service to customers.
  o Collaborative, proactive, and streamlined efforts among departments.
  o Understand how other groups are may be impacted by internal decisions.
• Plans in the next 20 years that may impact ES, such as initiatives, policies, or codes.
  o Changes to vacant lots standards, Adopt a Spot program, and an increase in productive use properties.
  o New programs to stabilize residents in homes.
  o New bring your own bag program.
  o Increased enforcement on more restrictive codes.

• Summary of NCS’s role and impacts to the community and environment.
  o Liaison for the community and the City.
  o Large portion of work around the “built environment”. Buildings, property, and road use.
  o Develop and implement programs that improve quality of life and ensure compliance.
  o Provide education, outreach, and assistance to residents and community groups.

• Changes in business practices in recent years.
  o Looking at 3 year history instead of 1 to identify repeat offenders.
  o Shifting to more of a good neighbor approach providing education and resources for voluntary compliance before taking an enforcement driven approach. Enforcement by itself can have a spiraling effect.

• Strategies and programs intended to engage communities.
  o Interactive part of 60 neighborhood groups.
  o Community Cleanup, Adopt a Spot, and Tool Borrowing programs currently available.

• NCS’s goals to ensure economic sustainability and community support.
  o Educate and empower residents before enforcement.
  o Identify and address barriers upfront to avoid repeat offenders.
  o Affordable services, incentive programs, and elderly assistance.
  o Avoid financial penalties that have unintended consequences.