



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

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PRESENTATIONS and HANDOUTS

Regular Meeting of September 2, 2015

- 1. 2015 Annual Amendment – Summary of Public Comments Received to Date
(Handouts; for Discussion Item D-1)**



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**2015 ANNUAL AMENDMENT
TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LAND USE REGULATORY CODE**

**SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED TO DATE
(AUGUST 31, 2015)**

Prepared for Planning Commission's Review on September 2, 2015

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The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on August 19, 2015, concerning the Proposed 2015 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code and kept the record open through September 11, 2015 to accept written comments.

Compiled below is a summary of public comments received to date (i.e., August 31, 2015). It identifies major issues and concerns that citizens and stakeholders have expressed so far over various proposed amendments. Staff expects to receive more comments through September 11, 2015, and will identify additional issues and concerns, if any, for the Commission's consideration.

Comments are summarized in four categories:

- A. Comprehensive Plan and Mixed-Use Centers
- B. Regulations for Infill Development and Housing Affordability
- C. Narrowmoor Conservation District
- D. Land Use Regulatory Code Cleanup

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A. Comprehensive Plan and Mixed-Use Centers

- Substantial concern expressed over the 65-foot height allowance in the Proctor Mixed-Use Center as well as the tax exemption and height bonus program.
- Substantial concern expressed over the impacts of growth, including parking, traffic and public safety, in Proctor.
- Substantial testimony requesting a moratorium on new development over 45-foot in height in Proctor.
- Some general support for Tacoma's mixed-use centers as appropriate locations to grow and develop as a counterbalance to continued sprawl.
- Some questions over how Comprehensive Plan policies are to be implemented, and how the City holds itself accountable to track and measure performance.
- Support for potential design review program.
- Continue giving priority to Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Concern over the factors used in developing the Puget Sound Regional Council's opportunity maps and how this applies in Tacoma.
- Provide clearer policies on enhancing water quality and conservation, including support for permeable paving and de-paving efforts.

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B. Regulations for Infill Development and Housing Affordability

1. Summary:

The proposal has generated substantial attention, press coverage, and comments. Significantly more comments express opposition rather than support. The majority of the concerns pertain to infill within designated Historic Districts (these comments are summarized together*). Other aspects received support, both opposition and support, or no specific comments.

2. Infill Proposals:

Overall comments

- Both general support and general opposition to infill approaches
- Infill proposals will not necessarily support the goal of promoting housing affordability
- Tacoma already has adequate affordable housing
- Proposals will benefit developers only
- Concerns about density impacts (such as parking)
- Streets and infrastructure are not adequate to support additional density
- Concerns about aesthetics, the city's capacity to ensure good design
- Infill/development should occur downtown, in centers, and/or in less developed areas
- New infill potential could accelerate demolition of older, affordable houses
- Public notification and environmental review was not adequate

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADUs) (Residential Infill Pilot Program)*

- Support for DADUs (source of income, housing for caregivers, family, affordable options)
- Further study/refinements to DADUs proposals (such as size, height, lot width, parking, alleys)

Smaller lots (lot size flexibility) with design standards updates*

- Support for allowing smaller lots as a neighborhood infill approach
- Concern that smaller lot sizes will lead to demolition of older houses

Special Review Districts – minimum lot size reduction to 3,500 square feet*

- Support for allowing smaller lots as a neighborhood infill approach
- Oppose – could lead to substantial change, additional density, impacts

Cottage Housing (Residential Infill Pilot Program)*

- If Infill proposals are adopted, cottage housing not appropriate in the North Slope

Special Review Districts - 2-family and 3-family development Conditional Use Permit criteria*

- Oppose – concerns about renters, harm to property values, density impacts

2-family as Conditional Use on corners in the R-2 District (Residential Infill Pilot Program)

- Support—method to integrate housing choice sensitive to single-family character
- Oppose – concerns about loss of single-family character, demolition of existing houses

Multifamily as Conditional Use in R-3 District (Residential Infill Pilot Program)

- No specific comments received

* Infill within Historic Districts:

Over 50 comments and a survey with 630 signatures express opposition to changes that would affect the North Slope Historic district. Several express similar opposition to infill within the Wedge Historic District, and other older neighborhoods. Key comments expressed include:

- Strong opposition to Historic Mixed-Residential Special Review District (HMR-SRD) changes
- Some support for infill options within historic districts
- Single-family house conversions to 2-family or 3-family will harm historic character (exterior and interior)
- Reduced lot sizes could disrupt the historic patterns of development
- DADU's not consistent with historic patterns and will impact backyards/privacy
- North Slope Historic District already has a mix of housing types, affordability, high density
- Infill proposals would undermine the intent to protect historic character
- Infill proposals constitute a rezone, upzone, or re-do of the HMR-SRD zoning district
- New construction cannot replicate the look and feel of historic houses
- The HMR-SRD Zoning District should be renamed to further emphasize historic preservation
- Landmarks Preservation Commission should have review and approval authority
- If some infill proposals are enacted within the NSHD, several steps should be taken:
 - Demolition review process (within and outside the Historic Districts)
 - Small lots, small houses
 - Small lots should be limited to non-contributing properties; LPC review
 - CUP criteria for 2-family and 3-family conversions should be strengthened
 - HMR-SRD definition changes proposed should be removed
 - DADU's should be further reviewed for backyard shading and historic compatibility

3. Affordable Housing Incentives and Upzones:

Overall comments

- General support expressed for affordable housing incentives
- Proposal doesn't go far enough

Downtown – Floor Area Ratio bonus:

- No specific comments received

Residential Upzones – require inclusion of affordable housing:

- No specific comments received

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C. Narrowmoor Conservation District

The majority of the comments received supported the proposed Narrowmoor Addition Conservation District. The following is a summary of the supportive comments:

- The conservation district would preserve the topography, low density development, open space, and streetscape, which are important character elements that need protection.
- The conservation district is consistent with the Comprehensive plan, Generalized Land Use Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, and West End Plan.
- The conservation district reinforces the existing covenants.
- The neighborhood needs protection against inappropriate development/remodeling.
- Views should be protected.
- Variance criteria for TMC 13.06.645 should be amended to include historic and conservation district guidelines.

The following is a summary of the comments against the proposed Narrowmoor Addition Conservation District.

- The conservation district and design guidelines would create excessive requirements and undue burdens and costs for property owners.
- The covenants are already adequate protection.
- The cost of creating and administering the conservation district is not justified by the public benefit.
- The district should be called the “Narrowmoor Addition Historical Preservation District” and not a “conservation district.”
- The proposal goes further than view protection.

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D. Land Use Regulatory Code Cleanup

- Concerning TMC 13.04.190 (Dead-end/cul-de-sac public or private streets or ways, or permanent easements), consider tying the code provisions into the six-year Transportation Improvement Plan to ensure the City is getting transportation improvements consistent with the City’s planning process.
- Concerning TMC 13.04.190, consider a fee in lieu program so that monies from streets not tying into a network could be used for developing planned multi-modal transportation systems.
- Consider code revisions to ensure that development of multi-modal streets occur consistent with the City’s planning process.
- Remove barriers and incorporate financial incentives for Low Impact Development scenarios into the building and other projects to help decrease storm water effects.
- Sunset clause for conditional use permits should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis as some permits for parks and projects might not have the same effects as permits for development projects.