



## Planning Commission Annual Report 2021-2022 and Work Program 2022-2024

*(Approved by the Planning Commission, August 3, 2022;  
Concurred by the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee, August 10, 2022)*

This report, prepared pursuant to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Section 13.02.040.L, highlights the Planning Commission's accomplishments between July 2021 and June 2022 and outlines the Commission's work program for the general timeline of July 2022 through December 2024.

### Part I. Accomplishments 2021-2022

#### A. Major Projects Reviewed:

##### 1. 2022 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code ("2022 Amendment") ([www.cityoftacoma.org/2022Amendment](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/2022Amendment))

The Commission reviewed various applications included in the package during May 2021 through May 2022, conducted a public hearing in April 2022, and made a recommendation for adoption to the City Council on May 4, 2022. The Council adopted the package on June 28, 2022, based largely on the Commission's recommendations. The package included the following applications:

- (1) **"NewCold"** – Land use designation change at a 3-acre site owned by NewCold near Orchard and S. 46th to allow for expansion of an existing cold storage facility.
- (2) **"South Sound Christian Schools"** – Land use designation changes on several parcels owned by the South Sound Christian Schools and the CenterPoint Christian Fellowship near Tacoma Mall Boulevard and S. 64th to allow for multi-family and commercial uses on some of the parcels.
- (3) **"South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD)"** – Work plan for code amendments to improve STGPD regulations to be more effective in addressing environmental and health risks.
- (4) **Minor Plan and Code Amendments** – A list of 17 non-policy and technical changes to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code to correct errors, address inconsistencies, update information, improve clarity, and clarify policy/regulatory intent.

##### 2. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) – Potential Moratorium

On June 28, 2022, the City Council adopted Amended Substitute Resolution No. 40985, approving the Work Plan for STGPD Code Amendments, as part of the 2022 Amendment. The Council also requested that "the Planning Commission will conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on heavy industrial uses and storage of hazardous materials within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope, applicability, and duration for City Council consideration within 60 days of the effective date of this resolution." The Commission has begun the review process for this urgent request, which is expected to affect the scheduling and progress of some other projects included in the Commission's Work Program for 2022-2024. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/MoratoriumSTGPD](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/MoratoriumSTGPD))

##### 3. Tidelands Area Land Use Regulations (Interim and Non-Interim)

On November 16, 2021, the City Council adopted Amended Ordinance No. 28786, replacing the Tidelands Interim Regulations that were initially enacted in November 2017 and extended several times. Prior to adopting said Non-Interim Regulations, the Council had requested the Commission, in October 2020, to develop findings of fact and recommendations, which the Commission accomplished in April 2021. The Council subsequently amended its legislative process to move the Commission's recommendations to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee for further review

and possible amendment. Recognizing the nature of some of the amendments being deliberated by the IPS Committee, the Commission submitted a letter of supplemental comments on August 18, 2021. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/TideflatsInterim](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/TideflatsInterim))

#### **4. Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS**

In recognition of the regional significance of the Tideflats, the City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Fife, and Pierce County have partnered to develop a Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS that would establish a shared, long-term vision and a coordinated approach to addressing development, environmental review, land use, economy, public services and facilities, and transportation in the area. The Commission has received periodic updates since 2019, and during this reporting period in August 2021 and March and May 2022, and will continue its review through 2023. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/TideflatsPlan](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/TideflatsPlan))

#### **5. Home in Tacoma Project – Phase 2**

Home in Tacoma Phase 1, which was recommended by the Commission in May 2021 and adopted by the City Council in December 2021, sets the stage for changes to Tacoma’s housing growth strategy, policies and programs to increase housing supply, affordability and choice for current and future residents. The subsequent Home in Tacoma Phase 2 was launched in July 2021, intended to include development of zoning, standards, infrastructure actions and other implementation programs. The Commission has been reviewing Phase 2 since August 2021, conducted a public scoping hearing in April 2022, and will continue its review through 2023. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma))

#### **6. Housing Equity and Anti-racism Policy Development**

The Planning Commission and the Human Rights Commission established the joint Housing Equity Taskforce (HET) in early 2020 to provide focused input on equity and social justice considerations associated with housing. The HET has been meeting on a monthly basis since September 2020 and reviewed and provided input to the Home in Tacoma Project, the Rental Code Update, the Anti-racism and Anti-displacement Strategy, and the Public Engagement Strategy. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma))

#### **7. Design Review Program**

In early 2019, the City launched an effort to develop a comprehensive Design Review Program to enhance the quality of the built environment throughout the City. The work was put on hold in early 2021 due to staffing changes. New staff were hired in late 2021 and assigned to complete the design guidance documents, develop administrative procedures, prepare land use code amendments, and potentially establish a Design Review Board. The Commission reviewed the project in March, April and May 2022 and will continue its review through 2023. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/UrbanDesign](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/UrbanDesign))

#### **8. Neighborhood Planning Program**

In response to a desire for more equitable delivery of services and to provide a grassroots response to neighborhoods' concerns, the City Council provided funding in 2021 for a pilot Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP). The goal of the NPP is to support neighborhood identity and vitality. The Council also identified McKinley Hill and Proctor as the pilot neighborhoods representing different locations on the spectrum of neighborhood development between growth creation and growth management. The planning effort kicked off in early 2022. The Commission has begun reviewing the progress of the NPP since October 2021. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning))

#### **9. Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)**

In recognition of the significance of Pacific Avenue as Pierce County’s first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, the City of Tacoma, Pierce Transit, and the State Department of Commerce have partnered to fund and develop a subarea plan and programmatic EIS for the 4.5-mile-long portion of Pacific Avenue between I-5 and S. 96<sup>th</sup> Street. The “Picture Pac Ave” subarea planning process will create a shared long-term vision and a more coordinated approach to development, environmental review, and strategic capital investments along the corridor. The Commission began to review the project in June 2022 and will continue its review through 2023. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/PicturePacAve](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/PicturePacAve))

## **10. College Park Historic Special Review District**

The City received a petition in May 2021 to create a new local historic overlay zone in the "College Park" neighborhood that forms an inverted L shape bordering the north and east edges of the University of Puget Sound campus. The proposed area is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the College Park Historic District, designated in 2017. After a year-long review, the Landmarks Preservation Commission forwarded its recommendation to establish the College Park Historic Special Review District to the Planning Commission on April 13, 2022. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on June 1, 2022, and is scheduled to complete its review in September-October 2022 before making a recommendation to the City Council. If the district is ultimately adopted by the Council, it would create an overlay zone in which exterior alterations to most structures, new construction, and demolition would require approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission prior to permit issuance. Similar districts include the North Slope Historic Special Review District and the Wedge Neighborhood Historic Special Review District. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/CollegeParkHD](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/CollegeParkHD))

## **11. Shipping Containers and Electric Fences**

The City Council directed the Commission to incorporate in the 2022 Amendment process the review of shipping containers for storage (per Resolution No. 40794, June 2021) and the review of expanded allowances for the use of electric fences (per Resolution No. 40881, November 2021). Upon initial review of the Council's requests in January 2022, the Commission suggested that, due to the complexity and significant impacts of both issues and the extensive community engagement that would be needed, it would be more feasible to address these issues through the 2023 Amendment process. Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission presented the Commission's recommendation to the Council's Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) Committee in February 2022. Based on the IPS Committee's deliberations and recommendations, the Council adopted Substitute Resolution No. 40955 on May 10, 2022, amending the previous resolutions, concurring with the Commission's recommendation, and providing additional guidance for the Commission's consideration. The Commission will be reviewing these issues during the 2023 Amendment cycle. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/2023Amendment](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/2023Amendment))

## **12. Impact Fees Program**

The Public Work Department has been developing a potential impact fee framework that identifies the types of projects that could be funded per State law, how an impact fee program should be structured, and key steps needed to develop such a program in Tacoma. The Commission reviewed the development of the framework in December 2020 and February, May and August 2021.

([https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_departments/public\\_works/engineering/transportation\\_planning\\_and\\_engineering/impact\\_fees](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/public_works/engineering/transportation_planning_and_engineering/impact_fees))

## **13. Capital Facilities Program (CFP)**

The Commission received a briefing from the Office of Management and Budget in November 2021 on the proposed update to the 2021-2026 CFP to increase the funding allocations for selected projects and programs in the existing CFP. The update required no action from the Commission, since it was solely budgetary in nature and did not affect alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission also reviewed the proposed updated to the 2023-2028 CFP in May 2022 and conducted a public hearing in June and made a recommendation to the City Council. The Commission also requested staff to improve project mapping and update the project prioritization criteria for future CFPs.

([https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_departments/office\\_of\\_management\\_and\\_budget/2023-2024\\_biennial\\_budget\\_development](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/office_of_management_and_budget/2023-2024_biennial_budget_development))

## **14. Climate Action Plan**

The Commission received a briefing from the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability on October 20, 2021 on the draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) that was being prepared in response to the City Council's Climate Emergency Resolution (Resolution No. 40509, December 10, 2019). The Commission provided a letter of comments, seeking to ensure that the CAP addresses such important issues as no further expanded emissions, Tacoma's growth projections, the 20-minute neighborhood concept, reinforcing density in areas with access to transit services, sustainable transportation funding, local energy code, and non-automobile-centric implementation strategies. The Council adopted the 2030 Climate Action Plan in November 2021. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/climate](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/climate))

## **15. Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG)**

The TODAG is a broad-based advisory group established by the City Council in April 2019 (per Resolution No. 40303) to review and make recommendations on the various projects impacting regional and local public transportation facilities in neighborhoods and business districts where there are significant TOD opportunities. The TODAG is currently tasked to review Sound Transit's Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), Pierce Transit's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and the City's Puyallup Avenue Design Project. Commissioners Karnes and Givens have been actively participating in the TODAG, representing the Commission's interest. Commissioner Strobel also serves on the group, but as a representative from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. ([www.cityoftacoma.org/TODAdvisoryGroup](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/TODAdvisoryGroup))

## **16. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

The Planning Commission held a joint session with the Transportation Commission on February 16, 2022 to review Pierce Transit's BRT project, focusing on the Stream System Expansion Study (SSES). The Planning Commission subsequently provided a letter of comments to Pierce Transit on June 8, 2022, suggesting (1) focus on the rider experience; (2) prioritize trees and green stormwater infrastructure in streetscape design throughout the system; (3) special consideration be given to BRT station design, location, and integration in downtown Tacoma; and (4) prioritize BRT route alignments that link Mixed-Use Centers to each other, to downtown Tacoma, to other modes of transportation, and to significant destinations in neighboring communities. ([www.piercetransit.org/BRT](http://www.piercetransit.org/BRT))

## **B. Meetings, Credits and Acknowledgements, and Membership Status:**

### **1. Commission Meetings (all virtual):**

The Commission held 19 regular meetings and canceled 5 meetings between July 2021 and June 2022. The regular meeting on February 16, 2022 included a joint session with the Transportation Commission to review Pierce Transit's Bus Rapid Transit Project. The Commission also participated in a 6-Commission joint special meeting on October 11, 2021 for the "Pilot Equity Training for Commissioners." The Commission also conducted the following public hearings:

- 04/06/22 – 2022 Annual Amendment Package
- 04/20/22 – Home In Tacoma Phase 2 scope of work
- 06/01/22 – Proposed College Park Historic District
- 06/15/22 – 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Program

### **2. Community Meetings:**

Individual Commissioners have been actively involved in various community groups, meetings, open houses, and events, including but not limited to the following:

- Sound Transit's Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project and South Tacoma & Lakewood Station Access Improvements Project Online Open Houses
- Pierce Transit Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project virtual open house
- Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG) meetings (various dates)
- Design Review Project Advisory Group meetings (various dates)
- Housing Equity Taskforce meetings (jointly with the Human Rights Commission)
- Home In Tacoma Project Informational Meeting
- Tideflats Subarea Planning Project Community Meeting
- Historic Preservation Office's 2021 Broadening Horizons Heritage Café Series – The 70s Turn 50 Event (August 19, 2021)
- Plan-A-Thon on Zoom to kick off the McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan (February 3, 2022)
- Puget Sound Regional Council's 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan online open house and webinars (February 2022)
- 2022 Annual Amendment Informational Meeting (March 30, 2022)
- Proposed College Park Historic District Informational Meeting (May 2022)
- Historic Preservation Month 2022 – Many Voices; Many Stories (May 2022)
- McKinley Hill Neighborhood Planning Program Event – Walk + Talk: Neighborhood Mapping and Walkability in McKinley (May 9, 2022)

**C. Credits and Acknowledgements:**

Special recognition of individual Commissioners participating in various workgroups, projects or activities and making additional contributions:

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Workgroups / Projects / Activities</b>
Petersen, Givens, Karnes, Torrez, Steele	Housing Equity Joint Taskforce with the Human Rights Commission (Karnes past Co-Chair, Torrez current Co-Chair)
Karnes, Givens	Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG)
Givens, Santhuff, Martenson, Steele	Design Review Project Advisory Group (Givens, Santhuff since Feb. 2022; Martenson, Steele since July 2022)
Torrez	Consultant Selection Advisory Committee for "Picture Pac Ave"
Torrez	McKinley Neighborhood Plan process
Givens	RFP writing for the Neighborhood Planning consultant
Santhuff	Lead Author, letter of comments on Bus Rapid Transit (6/8/22)
Petersen, Karnes	Lead Authors and Presenters, letter of comments to the IPS on Shipping Containers and Electric Fences issues (2/23/22)
Karnes	Lead Author, letter of comments on Climate Action Plan (10/20/21)
Petersen, Givens, Strobel	"Pilot Equity Training for Commissioners" (10/11/21)

**D. Membership Status (July 2021 through June-July 2022):**

<b>Council District / Expertise Area</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Notes</b>
District No. 1	Andrew Strobel	Reappointed in November 2020; Elected Vice-Chair in July 2022
District No. 2	Carolyn Edmonds / Morgan Dorner	Edmonds served through December 2021; Dorner appointed and sworn in in January 2022
District No. 3	Brett Santhuff	Reappointed in January 2022
District No. 4	Alyssa Torrez	Reappointed in May 2022
District No. 5	David Horne / Robb Krehbiel	Horne served through August 2021; Krehbiel appointed and sworn in in January 2022
Development Community	Jeff McInnis / Anthony Steele	McInnis served through September 2021; Steele appointed and sworn in in January 2022
Environmental Community	Anna Petersen / Brett Marlo	Petersen served through June 2022; Marlo appointed in May 2022 and sworn in in July 2022
Public Transportation	Christopher Karnes	Appointed in September 2019; Elected Vice-Chair in October 2021; Elected Chair in July 2022
Architecture, Historic Preservation, and/or Urban Design	Ryan Givens / Matthew Martenson	Givens served through June 2022; Martenson appointed in May 2022 and sworn in in July 2022

**Part II. Planning Commission Work Program for 2022-2024 (Attached)**

Attached is the "Planning Commission Work Program for 2022-2024", incorporated into the Planning Commission's Annual Report for 2021-2022. The Work Program contains projects and planning activities slated for completion or substantial progress during the general timeframe of July 2022 through December 2024. These projects and activities are primarily mandated by legislation or initiated by the City Council and are within the Commission's review and recommendation authority. The Work Program is subject to adjustments in response to legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget and staffing constraints, or other emerging situations.



## Planning Commission Work Program (2022-2024)

(Approved by the Planning Commission, August 3, 2022;  
 Concurred by the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee, August 10, 2022)

### Expected Completion in 2022

- **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Consideration of a Moratorium** *Expected Council Action September/October 2022*
- **Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations – Shoreline Amendment** *Expected Council Action August 2022*
- **Proposed College Park Historic District** *Expected Recommendation October 2022*
- **2023-2028 Capital Facilities Program (CFP)** *Expected Council Action November 2022*
- **Design Review Program – Startup/Creation** *Expected Recommendation December 2022*
- **McKinley Neighborhood Plan** *Expected Recommendation December 2022*
- **South Tacoma Economic Green Zone – Scoping**
- **2023 Annual Amendment Package – Scoping:**
  - Mor Furniture Land Use Designation and Rezone (private application)
  - South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code Update – Phase 1B
  - Shipping Containers for Storage (Sub Res #40955, 5/10/22)
  - Electric Fences – Expanded Allowances (Sub Res #40955, 5/10/22)
  - Delivery-Only Businesses
  - Commercial Zoning Update – Phase 1 (includes items in Ord #28798, 12/14/21)
  - Minor Plan and Code Amendments
- **GMA 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Preliminary Scoping (key issues):**
  - **Plan Updates:**
    - Coordination/integration with Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan update (CMO)
    - Growth Targets and Consistency with VISION 2050
    - Transportation Master Plan Update
    - Tribal Lands Coordination and Compatibility
    - 20 Minute Neighborhoods and Performance Measures
    - Transportation Master Plan Update (PW)
    - Economic Development Element (CEDD)
    - Mixed-use Centers Policy Updates
    - Climate Action Plan Integration – GHG Targets and Implementation Actions
    - Watershed Plan Elements (ES)
    - Historic Preservation Plan Update and Integration
    - Level of Service Standards and Priority Project Lists (multiple)
  - **Code Updates:**
    - Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance Update
    - Institutional Zoning
    - Mixed-Use Centers Code Updates

## Expected Work Program for 2023 *(preliminary)*

- **2023 Annual Amendment Package – Recommendations to Council for Adoption**
- **2024 Annual Amendment Package – Scoping and Assessment**
- **GMA 2024 Periodic Update – Analysis**
- **Home In Tacoma Project – Phase 2:** zoning, standards, affordability, anti-displacement, infrastructure, and programmatic components (includes zoning-related items from ADU Accelerator discussion)
- **Housing Equity and Anti-racism Policy Development** (Housing Equity Taskforce, jointly with Human Rights Commission)
- **Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS**
- **Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)**
- **South Tacoma Economic Green Zone – Subarea Plan** (pending budget consideration)
- **Design Review Program** (program launch)
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Proctor Neighborhood Plan**
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Additional Neighborhood Plans** (depending on resources)
- **Cushman/Adams Substation Reuse Study**
- **Public Notice and Engagement – Comprehensive Review**

## Expected Work Program for 2024 *(very preliminary)*

- **GMA 2024 Periodic Update – Recommendations for Council Adoption**
- **2024 Annual Amendment Package – Recommendations for Council Adoption**
- **Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS – Potential Adoption**
- **Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”) – Potential Adoption**
- **South Tacoma Economic Green Zone – Subarea Plan** (pending budget consideration)
- **Home in Tacoma Project – Implementation and Refinement**
- **Design Review Program – Implementation and Refinement**
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Implementation and New Planning Efforts** (pending budget consideration)
- **2025-2030 Capital Facilities Program (CFP)**

## On-going Planning Issues

- Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program
- Joint Meetings of the Planning Commission with appropriate groups (e.g., the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Transportation Commission, and Community Council)

- Transportation Master Plan Implementation, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., impact fees study, transportation network planning, streetscape design guidance, signature trails development, etc.)
- Light Rail Expansion projects (including the Hilltop Links to Opportunity Program, ST3 Tacoma Dome Link Extension, Tacoma-TCC Link Extension, Sounder Station Access Improvements, etc.)
- Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan, Stream System Expansion Study (SSES) and Pacific Avenue BRT Project
- Historic Preservation, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (e.g., Historic TDR, Home In Tacoma Project, integration of Historic Preservation Plan with *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan, preservation incentive tools, educational programs, etc.)
- Subarea Plan Implementation – North Downtown, South Downtown, Hilltop and Tacoma Mall Neighborhood
- Residential Infill Pilot Program – Implementation and project reviews
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) Council Reporting
- Citizen Participation and Public Outreach Enhancements
- Proactive Equity/Social Justice/Anti-Racism integration in policies and programs
- Schuster Corridor Trail
- Fossil Fuel Tracking and Council Reporting

## Regional and Cross-Jurisdictional Issues

- Regional Transportation Issues, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., Tacoma LINK and Central LINK Light Rail Expansions, Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan and BRT Project)
- PSRC Regional Centers Framework Update, Vision 2050 implementation, GMA review
- PCRC County-Wide Planning Policies, County-level Centers Update, Population Allocations, Buildable Lands, Annexations and Pre-Annexation Planning

## Emerging and Deferred Issues

- Corridor Plans, focused on TOD corridor planning (such as 19<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Mixed-Use Centers Implementation Programming (Action Strategies/Master Plans)
- Mixed-Use Centers Core/Pedestrian Street Review
- Parking Update (RPA, refinements along light rail, Mixed-Use Centers, design, etc.)
- Potential Local Historic Districts – coordinated with LPC (e.g., Stadium)
- Urban Forestry Implementation (landscaping, tree-preservation, open space, etc.)  
(*coordinated with Environmental Services*)
- Street Typology and Designation System Review
- Post-Pandemic Emerging Land Use Trends/Shifts
- Form-based Residential Standards (lot coverage, FAR, etc.) (*possibly with Home In Tacoma*)
- Tribal Planning Coordination
- Sign Code Update
- Pre-Annexation Planning (Browns Point/Dash Point, Parkland/Spanaway)
- Station-Area Planning (such as Portland Avenue/I-5 area and Four Corners)
- Self-Storage Code Amendments (zoning and standards)
- View Sensitive District – comprehensive review