TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee
SUBJECT: Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan and EIS
DATE: January 28, 2015

SUMMARY:
At the meeting on January 28, 2015 the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee will review and provide direction on the scope of work, outreach approach, timeline and preliminary assessment of key issues for the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project.

BACKGROUND:
Building on the success of the three downtown Subarea Plans/EIS’s, the City is now initiating a similar planning and environmental review effort for the 485-acre Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center. This project will bring much-needed attention and resources to this important area, focused around a community-driven process to develop a vision, goals and actions to achieve the area’s potential as a thriving, multi-modal growth center. The effort will result in programmatic environmental approval that will help catalyze development in the area, and will fulfill Tacoma’s obligation under Vision 2040 to plan for designated Regional Centers.

This work is being funded by a $250,000 National Estuaries Program Watershed Protection Grant, administered jointly by the State Departments of Ecology and Commerce. Tacoma’s successful grant application, under the theme of Improving Land Use Management, emphasized the important role that accommodating growth in urban centers plays in protecting natural and resources lands, and the health of the Puget Sound. The Puget Sound region is forecast to become home to 5 million people and 3 million jobs by 2040. The region’s historic population growth has been associated with an outward urbanization of ecologically and agriculturally sensitive areas. Vision 2040 is the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) plan to bend these trends, contain that outward expansion and direct growth to compact urban centers. The Tacoma Mall area is one of Tacoma’s two designated Regional Growth Centers and a focal point for future jobs/housing concentration.

To accommodate growth sustainably, the Center must function well on many levels. Infrastructure, services, transportation choices, and neighborhood amenities must be adequate to support growth and make the area a desirable place to live, work and shop. At the outset, the City is aware of certain challenges. The Center is located within two sensitive stormwater basins: Flett Creek and the Thea Foss Waterway. The area is generally auto-oriented, includes congested intersections, gaps in/barriers to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and lacks certain neighborhood amenities. More fundamentally, though the area has seen significant development, it lacks a cohesive and compelling vision for growth.
Health and income equity and empowerment are also significant issues. Area residents are relatively low income and live with higher than average rates of mortality and chronic disease. In recognition of these issues, the City and partners have applied for a $150,000 grant funded by the American Planning Association and the American Public Health Association which would support development of strategies to address these issues. We anticipate a response from the granting agencies in February 2015. Irrespective of the outcome, staff recognize that these issues are highly significant to the planning effort.

The Subarea Plan and EIS will be a community forum to collaboratively develop a vision, goals and strategies to guide growth and development, identify environmental impacts up-front on an area-wide basis, and target mitigation measures and other implementation steps.

Attached are a project overview, and PSRC's summary of the Center's key characteristics. If you have any questions, please contact Elliott Barnett at (253) 591-5389 or elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org. For more information, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/planning and select Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan & EIS.

**ISSUE:**
Staff are seeking Council guidance on the project approach, key issues and priorities, and stakeholder engagement strategies to help make the project rollout successful.

**ALTERNATIVES:**
There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**
There is no fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**
Discuss and provide guidance on the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan and EIS project.
Tacoma Mall Regional Center Subarea Plan and EIS

Project Overview – January 28, 2015

Objectives

- Promote sustainable growth within the 485-acre Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center
- Set the stage for a transition from an auto-centric regional shopping area and adjacent residential areas, into a compact, complete community
- Promote development consistent with VISION 2040, the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan
- Foster equity and empowerment for area residents and workers
- Leverage public and private partnerships and investment to stimulate large-scale population and employment growth within the Center that:
  - Focuses new jobs and housing in areas with transportation choices
  - Promotes equity and housing affordability
  - Promotes salmon recovery and reduces stormwater impacts
  - Contributes to a healthy economy
  - Accelerates regional conservation as a Transfer of Development Rights receiving area
  - Contributes to a unique, vibrant and attractive urban center

Approach

- Develop a draft Sub-Area Plan for the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center
- Develop an environmental impact statement (EIS) identifying impacts and mitigation steps
- Develop a Health Equity Action Plan (if funded through a separate grant application)
- Initiate a range of Implementation Strategies

Project Phases & Preliminary Timeline

Key Steps:                                            Target dates:
- Identify available data, gaps and data gathering approaches: Winter 2014
- Stormwater data gathering:                            Winter-Spring 2015
- Engage consultant team:                               February 2015
- Stakeholder engagement kickoff:                       March 2015
- Existing conditions report:                           Summer 2015
- Visioning and Scenario Planning:                     Summer 2015
- Area-wide Transportation & Stormwater Strategies:    Summer - Fall 2015
- Health Equity Action Plan (if funded):               Spring 2016
- Draft Sub-area plan and EIS:                          Spring 2016
- Plan Implementation Strategy:                        Summer 2016
- Council Consideration of Subarea Plan & EIS:          Summer 2016

Key stakeholders (preliminary)

- South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- Simon Corporation (Tacoma Mall)
- Pierce and Sound Transit
- Pierce County
- WS Department of Transportation
- Tacoma Housing Authority
- Metro Parks Tacoma
- Tacoma Pierce County Health Dept.
- Area residents and property owners
- Tacoma School District
- Health equity partners
- CITY OF TACOMA: Inter-departmental engagement;

Key partners: Planning, Environmental Services, Public Works, Community and Economic Dev, Neighborhood Services
Characteristic features of the Tacoma Mall Subarea

- S. 38th Street
- Police Station
- Lincoln Heights
- Tacoma Mall Blvd
- West mall townhouses
- Pacifica Apartments
- S. 48th Street
Tacoma Mall

The City of Tacoma is the region’s second most populous city and Pierce County’s seat. Tacoma’s location halfway between Olympia and Seattle provides it access to many modes of transportation, natural resources, economical power sources, and a deep, sheltered harbor, all of which have contributed to Tacoma’s development as a successful industrial, commercial and trading center. The modern city has its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was designated as Northern Pacific Railroad’s western terminus for its transcontinental railroad in 1873. The city itself was incorporated in 1884. Tacoma continues its tradition as a hub for trade, with the Port of Tacoma among the most important in the nation and the Pacific Rim. Regional shopping centers such as the Tacoma Mall have emerged to provide goods and services for the city and the region, while the emphasis in downtown has changed to professional offices, international finance, government, education, and cultural facilities. The city has many historic neighborhoods and a number of colleges and universities.

Lying approximately two miles southwest of the Downtown Tacoma regional growth center, the Tacoma Mall area is an important retail district within the city. Tacoma anticipates that the Tacoma Mall regional growth center will remain as the city’s major retail center, and that it will accommodate future growth. The city plans for the center to accommodate the development of new office, supporting retail and multifamily residential uses. After the Downtown center, the Tacoma Mall area is seen as the next highest area of concentrated development in the city, with a possible range of building heights between one and 10 stories, and activity levels greater than in most areas of the city.

Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity
Tacoma Mall is a medium-sized regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (485 acres) with a net developable acreage of 394 acres (81% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city, the Tacoma Mall regional center contains 1.5 percent of the city’s overall land area, 2 percent of the population, 2 percent of the housing, and 7 percent of the city’s employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Tacoma Mall has a smaller number of total activity units (10,932), with mostly employment-oriented activity (66% jobs/33% residents) and a moderate density of activity (22.5 units per gross acre).

Urban Form
Tacoma Mall’s average parcel size is 0.4 acres, which is significantly smaller than the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. Tacoma Mall provides a moderately walkable pedestrian environment, with a very limited network of sidewalks (64% coverage) and very large blocks with a 10.5 acre average size.

**2010 Summary Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Gross acreage</th>
<th>485</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average block size (acres)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Average parcel size (acres)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mix of Uses</th>
<th>Population/Employee ratio</th>
<th>.52 : 1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population+Employee/acre</td>
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<table>
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<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Population density/acre</td>
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<td>Change (2000–2010)</td>
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<td>Housing unit density/acre</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
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<td>Employment density/acre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Change (2000–2010)</td>
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</table>

| Transportation | Housing access to transit | 65% |
|               | Employee access to transit | 89% |

| Work-based mode share | SOV / HOV | 79% - 9% |
|                      | Walk & Bike / Transit | 5% - 7% |

**Urban Amenities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food &amp; Drink</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
<th>30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cafes &amp; Bars</td>
<td>11</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Supplies &amp; Services</th>
<th>Pet Supplies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laundry &amp; Haircuts</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home supplies</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clothing &amp; Shoes</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Arts & Recreation | Spectator Sports | - |
|                  | Fitness & Outdoors | 7 |
|                  | Electronics & Toys | 3  |
|                  | Bookstores & Libraries | 4 |
|                  | Arts & Culture | - |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Public &amp; Civic Services</th>
<th>Social Services</th>
<th>8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools &amp; Childcare</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential Care Centers</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Tacoma Mall has a moderate set of urban amenities (163 total amenities / 0.34 amenities per gross acre). Home (41%) and Food/Drink (33%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Clothing/Shoes, Restaurants, Healthcare, and Cafes/Bars.

**Land Use**
The major land uses in Tacoma Mall are commercial (57%), multi-family residential (16%), single-family residential (9%) and institutional (8%). About 67 percent of the center’s 394 net acres are in employment-related use. Approximately 25 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

**Demographics**
The total population in Tacoma Mall is 3,761, and has grown by 739 residents over the past 10 years. The center has slightly younger residents than the region as a whole, with the largest share of youth (26%) and a very small share of seniors (4%). The age of residents is predominantly 18-34, followed by 35-64 (71% for both age groups).
At 58 percent, Tacoma Mall’s racial diversity is significantly greater than the region’s 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Tacoma Mall are White (42%), African American/Black (25%), and Other (21%). Twenty-one percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

**Employment**
The total employment in Tacoma Mall is 7,171, and it has decreased by 570 jobs over the past 10 years. The major industry sectors are Retail (45%), Services (26%) and Government (18%). Major employers are retailers located in the Tacoma Mall.

**Housing**
Tacoma Mall has 1,916 total housing units, with a density of four housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by 605 units (46% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Tacoma Mall has a large share (54%) of single family and 2- to 4-unit multifamily dwellings and a significant share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily (45%). In terms of unit affordability, Tacoma Mall’s owner-occupied housing tends to be significantly less expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center’s share of units under $300,000 is 92 percent, whereas the region’s share is 38 percent. The center’s share of units over $500,000 category is 0 percent, whereas the region’s is 25 percent.

**Transportation**
For work-based trips, the Tacoma Mall regional center’s travel characteristics are similar to the region as a whole. The region’s single-occupant vehicle (SOV) share is 76 percent, while the center’s share is 79 percent. The region’s non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center’s non-SOV share is 21 percent, with 7 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from Tacoma Mall are slightly focused on destinations in regional centers (19% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (9%) and trips that go to other centers (9%).

In terms of employee access to transit, Tacoma Mall has almost complete access, with 89 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For residential, Tacoma Mall has partial access, with 65 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk. For the 1/2 mile walkshed, the center has complete levels of residential access to transit (100%).

**Plan Overview and Comparison to Center Plan Checklist**
The city’s primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.
Although the comprehensive plan has policies to guide development in the center, Tacoma does not yet have a specific subarea plan for its Tacoma Mall regional growth center. The city’s comprehensive plan provides several policies in the Generalized Land Use element that apply to the Tacoma Mall regional growth center within the context of the city’s hierarchy of mixed use centers. The Generalized Land Use element includes a policy specifically calling for the city to develop a subarea plan for this center. The comprehensive plan Neighborhood element also contains a section addressing South Tacoma subareas, including a discussion of the Tacoma Mall area.

Several aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist have been addressed by policies in the comprehensive plan. The plan introduction includes a discussion on the role and expectations of regional growth centers, and the plan includes a commitment to develop a subarea plan for the center. Policies address planned housing and employment densities, though specific growth targets have not been set for the center yet. The Generalized Land Use element includes policies that call for pedestrian-oriented design, compact form and mix of uses, and an integrated transportation network.

The plan addresses items on the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are topics that the comprehensive plan does not address or that could be strengthened through a dedicated regional growth center plan. This includes a market analysis and several land use topics on the checklist. As the city moves forward on planning for the center, additional detail could be provided on the economy, public services, and transportation strategies. Housing could also be further addressed in the plan, or references could be made to the center-related housing policies in the comprehensive plan provide more clarity regarding the housing strategy for the center.

Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies
As noted by the city in a 2011 survey, Tacoma identified challenges relating to limited market demand, fragmented parcel ownership, enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and securing funding for local transit and mobility connections.

Tacoma has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of the Tacoma Mall regional growth center, including increasing allowed building height and establishing design policies.