

# 02 Growth Strategy

## GROWTH STRATEGY GOALS

- **Goal GS-1** Development, growth, and infrastructure investments support Tacoma's vision for equitable, walkable, connected, and complete communities.
- **Goal GS-2** Neighborhoods across the city include a mix of housing types and integrated commercial activity.
- **Goal GS-3** The growth strategy and coordinated land use and transportation planning advance the goals of Tacoma's Climate Action Plan.
- **Goal GS-4** Preserve and protect natural systems and open space corridors to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment and to provide opportunities for Tacomans to experience nature close to home.
- **Goal GS-5** Tacoma's growth is focused in a citywide network of transit-connected centers that anchor 15-minute neighborhoods providing nodes of activity and access to housing, employment, and services.
- **Goal GS-6** Centers serve as the anchors of complete neighborhoods that include concentrations of housing alongside institutions, gathering places, cultural amenities, and green spaces.
- **Goal GS-7** Downtown is Tacoma's largest center with the highest concentrations of housing and employment, transit access, thriving local businesses, and access to arts and culture.
- **Goal GS-8** The Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center thrives as a hub of employment, housing, retail, and public services.
- **Goal GS-9** Crossroads Centers are successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and beyond. They are transit-oriented and contain high concentrations of employment, institutions, commercial and community services, and a wide range of housing options.
- **Goal GS-10** Neighborhood Centers are thriving activity hubs that serve the daily needs of residents, employees, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Goal GS-11** Tacoma's employment centers grow and thrive.
- **Goal GS-12** Transit-oriented communities are distributed across Tacoma, supported through equitable transit-oriented development, high quality station areas that are accessible and safe, and multi-modal integration.
- **Goal GS-13** Transportation planning and investments are coordinated with the Future Land Use Map and Frequent Transit Network Vision Map.
- **Goal GS-14** Annex areas within Tacoma's Urban Growth Area when conditions are appropriate.

# Growth Strategy

## 02

### 2.1 Introductory Context

#### What is this chapter about?

The One Tacoma vision is that every **Tacoma resident is a safe and short walk, roll, bus, train, or bike ride away from amenities, such as groceries, schools, parks, and healthcare.** The goals and policies in this element convey the City's intent to:

- ▶ Establish Tacoma as a 15-minute city by fostering a network of centers, equitably distributed across the city, connected along transit-oriented corridors, increasing access to community services and businesses and creating sustainable, climate resilient, complete, healthy, and connected neighborhoods.
- ▶ Create a vibrant, walkable Tacoma ensuring safe and convenient access to pedestrian, transit, biking, and active transportation networks through a commitment to ongoing improvements to Tacoma's streets and neighborhoods.
- ▶ Improve public health and daily access to nature by enhancing Tacoma's public realm, integrating nature into the city and linking people, places, and wildlife through active transportation facilities, green infrastructure investments, and habitat connections.
- ▶ Describe the overall development pattern to inform and guide design, development, and future investments.
- ▶ Define the City's strategy to accommodate population, housing, and employment growth
- ▶ Ensure that Tacoma's development pattern supports a sustainable and resilient future, including a reduction in GHG from transportation and the built environment.
- ▶ Support growth in housing that increases supply, expands choice, and meets Tacoma's affordability goals.

#### Why is this important?

Tacoma's identity now and in the future is significantly shaped by the design and physical structure of the city and its neighborhoods. How people live and get around is partly determined by the location of services and other destinations and the arrangement and design of buildings, streets and other public spaces. Together these design characteristics help determine whether: (1) a community is walkable and

#### Book I: Core Policy Elements

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accessible, (2) children have safe places to play, (3) people have places to gather, and (4) businesses are successful and easy to access.

Where housing and services are built, where street networks are connected, and how all of this is designed provides a key opportunity to enable people to meet more of their daily needs locally. When residential and commercial areas are better linked, neighborhoods are strengthened, and GHG emissions are reduced. These connections can also improve equitable access to services citywide and support healthy, active lifestyles for community members.

This chapter includes policies that support enhancing centers across the city as anchors to complete neighborhoods, providing Tacomans with convenient access to local services.

## What we heard

Throughout One Tacoma visioning engagement, the community expressed its overwhelming support for the 15-minute neighborhood concept. Tacomans are aligned with a growth strategy that emphasizes elements such as walkability in neighborhoods, ability to access daily needs without a car, and other factors that influence mobility needs. Engagement efforts revealed that across Tacoma, community members want to be able to easily access jobs, schools, and daily needs and activities within a safe walk, roll, bike, or bus ride.

Residents of Northeast Tacoma, Central Tacoma, and South Tacoma shared concerns about the lack of healthy foods, grocery stores, and other daily essentials nearby. They also noted a lack of adequate infrastructure and safety for active transportation, increasing their reliance on cars to access daily needs. Tacomans across the city expressed desire for greater accessibility within their own neighborhoods to their daily essentials, like green and open spaces, parks of all sizes, and community gardens.

## How does this chapter address key themes?

This chapter describes the overall blueprint for Tacoma's growth and development to 2050. The goals and policies reflect the City's recognition that land use patterns play a significant role in where housing, jobs, and daily essentials are located, and thus, how Tacomans access their daily needs. Laying this pattern determines where housing, jobs, and services are located and how they are connected. **A pattern of land use that clusters destinations in equitably distributed, walkable centers across the city, and along transit-oriented corridors, creates places where people can meet their daily needs within their own neighborhoods and contributes to the ability of each Tacoman to reach their full potential.** This pattern of development also reduces GHG emissions by expanding commute choices, making access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical, and reducing the overall need for vehicle trips. This pattern supports a more efficient delivery of public services and use of public infrastructure and helps preserve space for parks, open space, green infrastructure, and the community and environmental health benefits they provide. Complete, walkable neighborhoods are an effective way to reduce GHG emissions and improve energy efficiency and promote sustainability. (**Opportunity and Sustainability**)



“ FOOD DESERTS ARE BECOMING REALLY NOTICEABLE. [...] THE LACK OF GROCERY STORE COMPETITION IN TACOMA GIVES OFF AN ILLUSION THAT OUR FOOD NEEDS ARE BEING TAKEN CARE OF. BUT WHEN EACH STORE HAS THE EXACT SAME DECREASING VARIETY OF GOODS, THAT'S EFFECTIVELY THE SAME EFFECT. ”

IDEAS WALL COMMENT



OPPORTUNITY



SUSTAINABILITY



PUBLIC HEALTH



EQUITY



SAFETY

Land use patterns also affect public health. Effective land use policies can enhance social determinants of health (factors of the environment in which you were born, lived, or live) by increasing access to medical care, mitigating the impacts from sources of pollution, and helping to address inequities related to environmental justice.

The addition of parks and other green spaces can improve air quality and mitigate the effects of heat. When land use patterns include spaces for people to play, learn, connect, and belong, they can help meet diverse needs. The presence of these spaces can ensure the well-being and resilience of people across the age spectrum and in many communities. Additionally, growth strategies that support sidewalk, trail, and other active transportation infrastructure can create safe, walkable, and bikeable access to daily essentials, facilitating active and healthy lifestyles. **(Public Health)**

Finally, the policies in this chapter present opportunities to cultivate unique neighborhood identities through encouraging a vibrant public realm, enabling arts and cultural experiences, and supporting anchor institutions. In turn, these can improve the frequency of social exchange and overall social cohesion. By striking the right balance between consistent land use policies city-wide and the unique assets and opportunities presented by establishing centers as compact and accessible destinations, these policies can advance equity and improve community safety and cohesion. **(Equity and Community Safety)**

## What are some baseline conditions and opportunities?

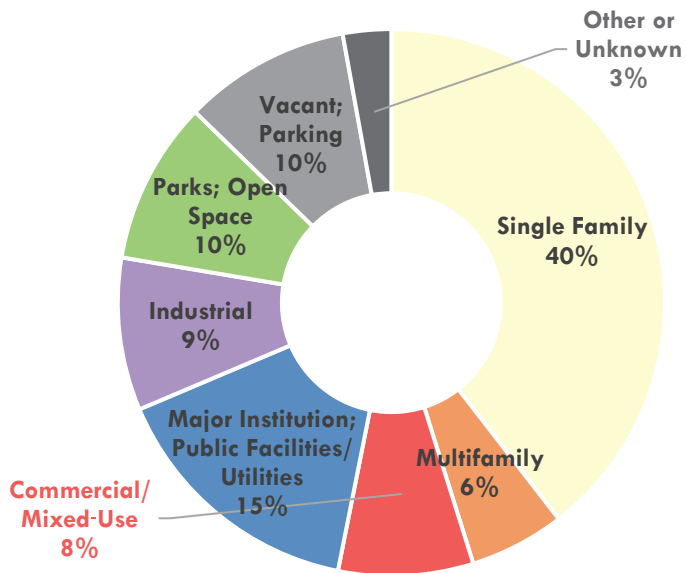
Tacoma's 2023 population is estimated to be 222,906 people. The City of Tacoma includes approximately 31,480 acres of land.

Exhibit 3 shows the current distribution of land uses in Tacoma, based on acreage. Single family homes remain the largest land use in the city, at 40% of all acreage.

Tacoma's centers are hubs of commercial activity, multidwelling housing development, and quality public amenities such as parks, plazas, recreation facilities, and entertainment venues. A critical complement to growth and to achieving the 15-minute city vision is ensuring access to green space, clean air, public art, and quality infrastructure. A balance of land uses is needed across the community to ensure that all Tacomans enjoy a high quality of life, including dedicated parks and open space. Today, parks and open space comprise 10% of Tacoma's acreage.



Exhibit 3. Existing Land Use by Acreage, 2024



Sources: Pierce County Assessor, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024

Tacoma's land use policy framework categorizes urban areas into specific types to guide development and growth effectively. These centers are designed to be compact, walkable, and connected by public transit and active transportation networks.

## TYPES OF CENTERS IN TACOMA

### Regional Growth Centers

**Downtown Tacoma.** Serves as the city's central business district, offering a mix of commercial, residential, and cultural amenities.

**Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.** A commercial hub undergoing transformation to include more residential and mixed-use developments.

### Mixed-Use Centers

These are further divided into:

**Neighborhood Centers.** Smaller hubs that provide local services and amenities. Examples include:

- ▶ Proctor
- ▶ Lincoln
- ▶ 6th Ave
- ▶ South Tacoma Way
- ▶ McKinley
- ▶ Narrows

**Crossroads Centers.** Larger than Neighborhood Centers, they serve broader areas and are typically located at major intersections. Examples include:

- ▶ James Center
- ▶ Westgate
- ▶ Tacoma Central
- ▶ Upper Portland
- ▶ Lower Portland
- ▶ Upper Pacific
- ▶ Lower Pacific



“ I LIVE IN HILLTOP, WHERE THERE ARE VERY FEW BUSINESSES THAT ARE CLOSE ENOUGH TO WALK TO. THE CITY SHOULD CHANGE ZONING TO ALLOW MORE SMALL BUSINESSES TO BE LOCATED NEAR WHERE PEOPLE LIVE. ”

- IDEAS WALL COMMENT

Each center type is designed to focus growth and development, ensuring that residents have access to essential services, employment opportunities, and recreational spaces within a convenient distance.

## Manufacturing Industrial Centers

Tacoma's Manufacturing Industrial Centers (MICs) are designated areas that concentrate manufacturing, industrial, and related activities, serving as pivotal areas for economic development and employment. Tacoma's MICs are integral to the city's economy and land use system, providing concentrated areas for industrial growth and employment opportunities. These centers are intended to:

**Preserve Industrial Land.** Ensuring that essential industrial operations have dedicated spaces to operate and expand.

**Strengthen Existing Businesses.** Supporting the growth and sustainability of current industrial enterprises.

**Expand Opportunities.** Attracting new manufacturing, industrial, and maritime businesses to the South Sound region.

The centers are strategically located to leverage existing infrastructure, such as transportation networks and proximity to the Port of Tacoma, facilitating efficient operations and contributing to the overall economic vitality of the region.

### PORT OF TACOMA MIC

This center encompasses the Port of Tacoma, a significant hub for maritime and industrial activities. It includes facilities for warehousing, transloading, manufacturing, and fabrication, all situated close to marine cargo terminals. The Port of Tacoma handles a diverse range of cargo, including containerized goods, automobiles, and bulk commodities, contributing substantially to the regional economy.

### SOUTH TACOMA MIC

Covering approximately 650 acres, Nalley Valley is zoned for industrial uses and is connected to the port industrial area by roadways and rail. The area hosts a variety of businesses, including food processing, metalworking, painting and coating, plastics manufacturing, auto sales, vehicle maintenance and repair, retail, and commercial enterprises associated with rail maintenance and operations.

## Transit-Oriented Development Areas

These areas represent areas within walking distance of high frequency transit and the station areas. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas are envisioned to be the focus for higher density housing and access to services and employment.

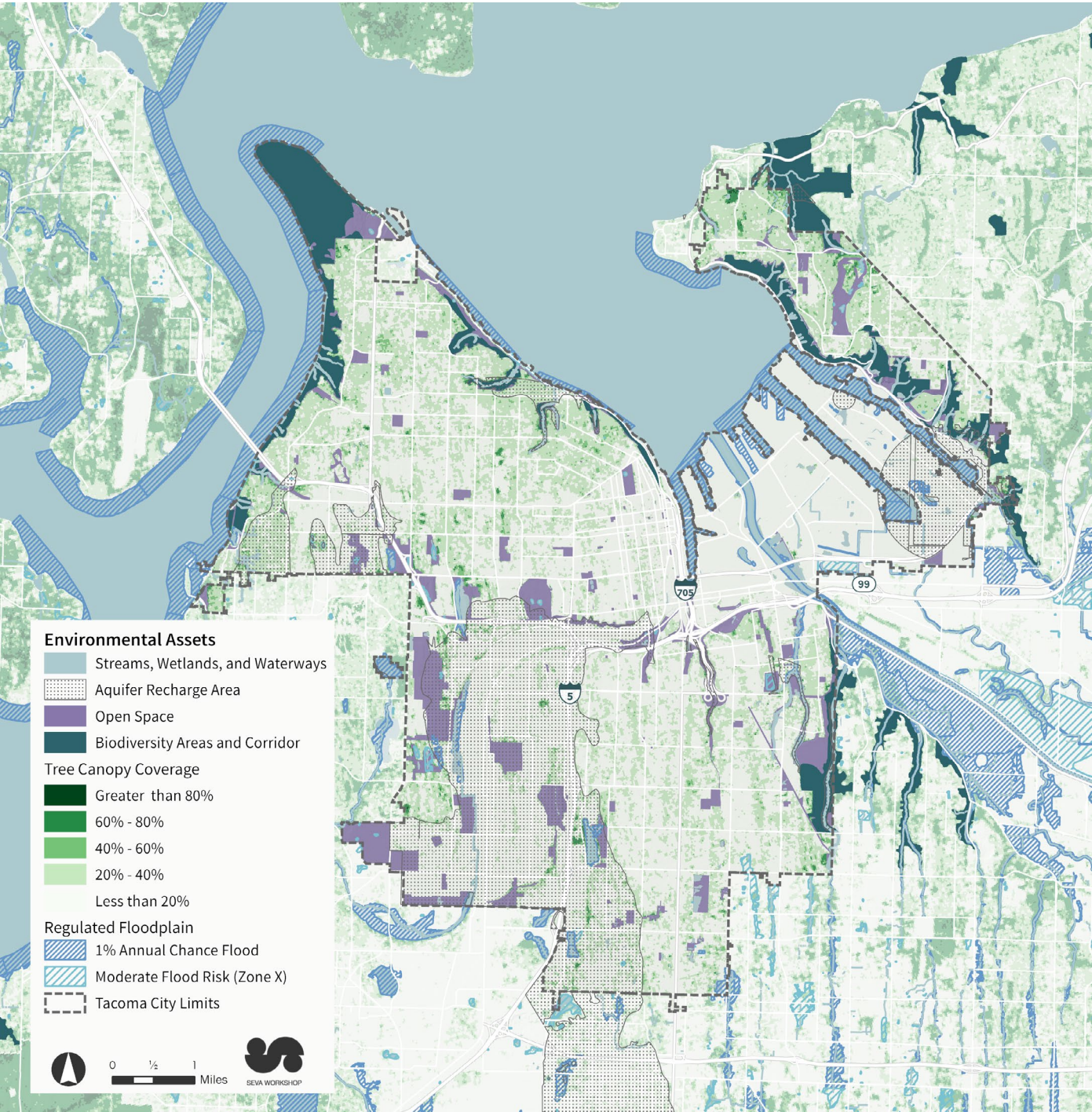
## Land Use Assets and Hazards

Tacoma's environmental assets are beloved by the community and include rivers, lakes, streams, and associated riparian uplands; floodplains; riparian corridors; wetlands and buffers; groundwater; trees and urban forests; bays, estuaries, and marshes; shorelines; open space lands; biodiversity areas and corridors; and priority species (Exhibit 4). These assets provide an array of ecologically, economically, aesthetically, and culturally valuable ecosystem services that Tacomans directly and indirectly experience daily. The maintenance, preservation, and protection of Tacoma's environmental assets are critical for the health and livelihoods of the communities within Tacoma.



Tacoma's recent housing production reflects the City's growth strategy of promoting density, particularly in areas that are high-opportunity and transit-oriented. Since 2017, 80% of new housing units are in multidwelling developments, 40% are located Downtown, and 30% are located within the city's other mixed-use centers.

Exhibit 4. Environmental Assets



Sources: City of Tacoma (Streams, Wetlands, and Waterways; Aquifer Recharge Areas; Open Space Corridors) 2024; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Biodiversity Areas and Corridor), 2024; USDA Forest Service (Tree Canopy Coverage), 2021; Pierce County (Regulated Floodplain), 2017; Seva Workshop, 2024

Tacoma's environmental hazards include landslides, erosion, flooding, sea level rise, and liquefaction (Exhibit 5). These hazards have the potential to threaten the health and safety of communities as well as damage property. They can lead to disruptions to social and economic services. Planning for land use with an understanding of Tacoma's environmental hazards is important for protecting communities and property and limiting the damages and disruptions they may cause.



Exhibit 5. Environmental Hazards



Sources: City of Tacoma (Landslides and Erosion Hazards; Flood Hazard Areas; Liquefaction Susceptibility) 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024

## Equity Outcomes

For the equity assessment that informed this Plan, we looked at equity outcomes that are cross-cutting across chapters and most relevant to the 2050 Comprehensive Plan vision. A baseline analysis of these outcomes helped set direction for policy and prioritize communities and areas for investment. Some outcomes from this analysis related to land use are presented below. The information below highlights differences in race and geography on a few selected priority equity outcomes.

Using the Targeted universalism framework, we seek to understand subgroup differences from the overall group outcome. Each table includes a column where the subgroup outcome is compared to the overall Tacoma goal or what would be expected for that subgroup given an equitable distribution. The red and blue color coding varies by the directionality of the outcome (sometimes larger numbers are the desired outcome, sometimes smaller numbers are desired).

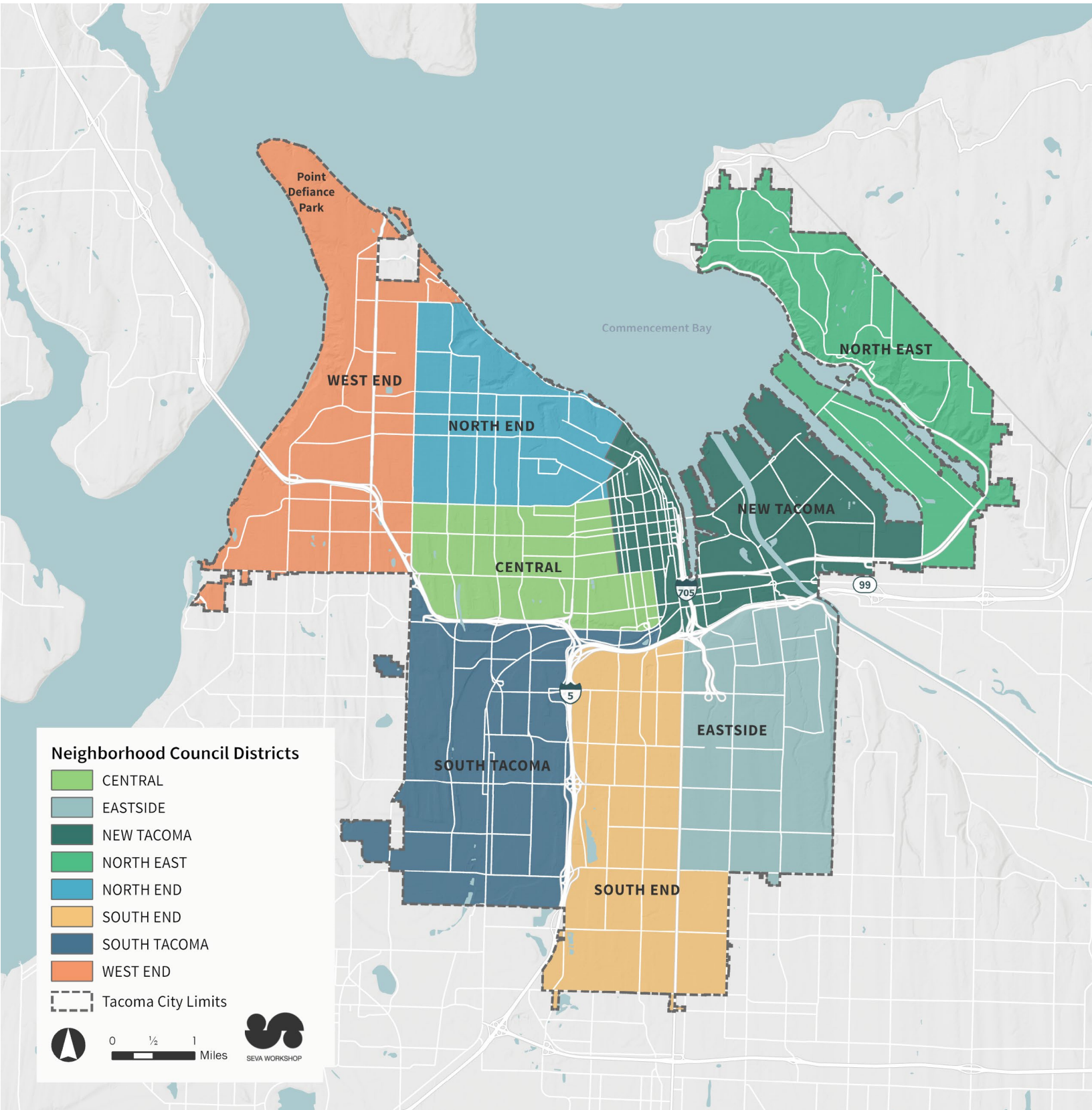
This disaggregation and comparison to the overall outcome by subgroup is essential for a targeted universalism approach and for understanding progress on equity goals. However, it does create the potential for in- and out-group or exclusionary thinking when City services are for all Tacoma residents. Subgroups are highlighted here to indicate where additional emphasis may be warranted based on differences in outcomes. Policy solutions respond to the nuance of targeting groups with specific needs, without excluding others. Further, this is a snapshot in time that reflects continuously shifting geographic and demographic patterns. The locations of residents are not necessarily where they want to be, but are where they can afford to live at this moment in time. Finally, we must acknowledge the limitations and biases that are inherent in relying on public data sets such as these. Community engagement and voice was essential to validate, refine, and address the disparities shown here.

Where available, data is presented by geographic subgroups and race/ethnicity subgroups. Depending on the source, geographic subgroups are based by neighborhoods or Council Districts (Exhibit 6).

Of course, no single metric can tell the complete picture in a complex and dynamic system like a city. Equity outcomes often need to be considered in both their relevant context and with other outcomes in order to develop the most effective policies. We also know that while the City does have significant influence, policies and programs alone are not sufficient to influence these outcomes.



Exhibit 6. Tacoma Neighborhood Council Districts



Source: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024

Land Use and Air Quality

Particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM2.5) can be inhaled and cause lung damage. It also affects visibility and quality of life as the primary contributor to haze. In 2024 the Environmental Protection Agency lowered the level of the health-based annual PM2.5 standard to 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter (from 12.0). While PM2.5 is not the only air pollutant, we include it as an equity priority for the next planning period because of the recent prevalence of wildfires, which emit smoke that contains PM2.5. The neighborhoods with highest rates of PM2.5 relative to the city average are the East Side and North East. However, on average, all neighborhoods have rates considered safe under the new standard (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7. PM2.5 by Neighborhood

NEIGHBORHOOD	AIR QUALITY (PM2.5)	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
Central	8.1	0.01
Eastside	8.2	0.11
New Tacoma	8.2	0.09
North East	8.2	0.14
North End	8.0	(0.05)
South End	8.1	0.04
South Tacoma	8.0	(0.05)
West End	7.9	(0.20)
Tacoma	8.1	

Sources: City of Tacoma, Equity Index 2020, 2022 by block group; Environmental Protection Agency EJScreen

Land Use and Urban Heat

In city environments, more heat from the sun is absorbed and retained by impervious surfaces. This can intensify temperatures locally, creating health impacts and affecting neighborhood livability.

In 2018, a campaign with Portland State University and the City of Tacoma was conducted to measure the air temperature across Tacoma during a heat wave in July. The most extreme temperatures were in the afternoon (3 PM). Another important attribute of the Urban Heat Island Effect is the duration of heat. In the actual measured morning (6 AM) temperatures, it is shown that heat islands retains heat from the day before. Central, Eastside, South End, and South Tacoma have more heat than the other parts of the city (Exhibit 8; Exhibit 9). Excessive urban heat events will have a greater impact over the next century as climate change drives heat waves to become more frequent and hotter.

Exhibit 8. Urban Heat Island Index by Neighborhood

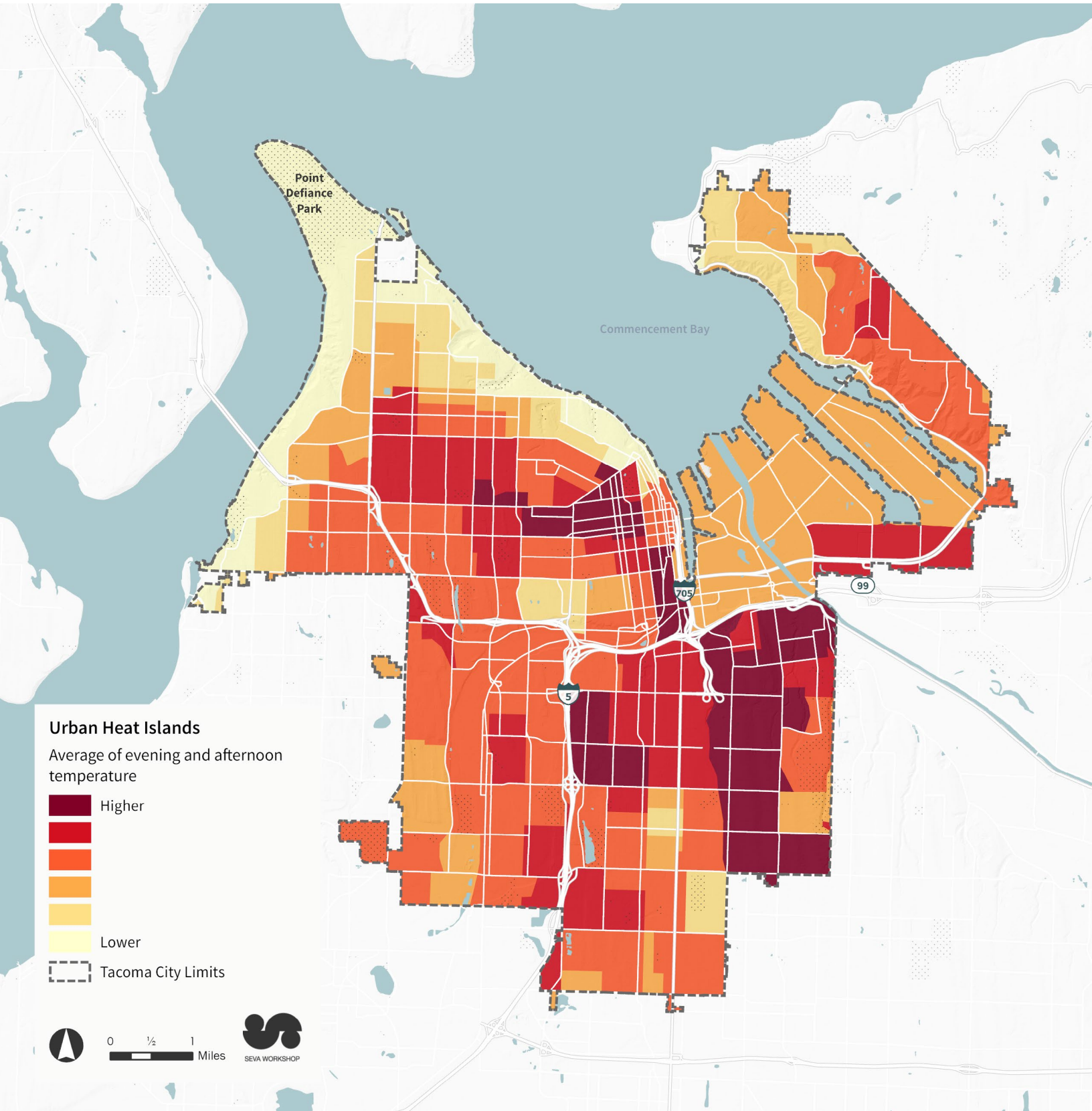
NEIGHBORHOOD	URBAN HEAT INDEX	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
Central	86.9	0.52
Eastside	87.2	0.81
New Tacoma	86.0	(0.35)
North East	85.8	(0.59)
North End	85.9	(0.53)
South End	86.8	0.38
South Tacoma	86.6	0.18
West End	85.5	(0.87)
Tacoma	86.4	

Sources: City of Tacoma, Equity Index 2020, 2022 by block group; Earth Economics



FEWER GREEN SPACES AND MORE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES LIKE ROADS, PARKING LOTS, AND BUILDINGS, ETC. ABSORB AND RETAIN HEAT FROM THE SUN TO CREATE A HEAT ISLAND. BECAUSE OF BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE, MANY URBAN AREAS EXPERIENCE HIGHER TEMPERATURES COMPARED TO THEIR RURAL SURROUNDINGS. THIS DIFFERENCE IN TEMPERATURE IS WHAT DEFINES AN URBAN HEAT ISLAND.

Exhibit 9. Urban Heat Islands



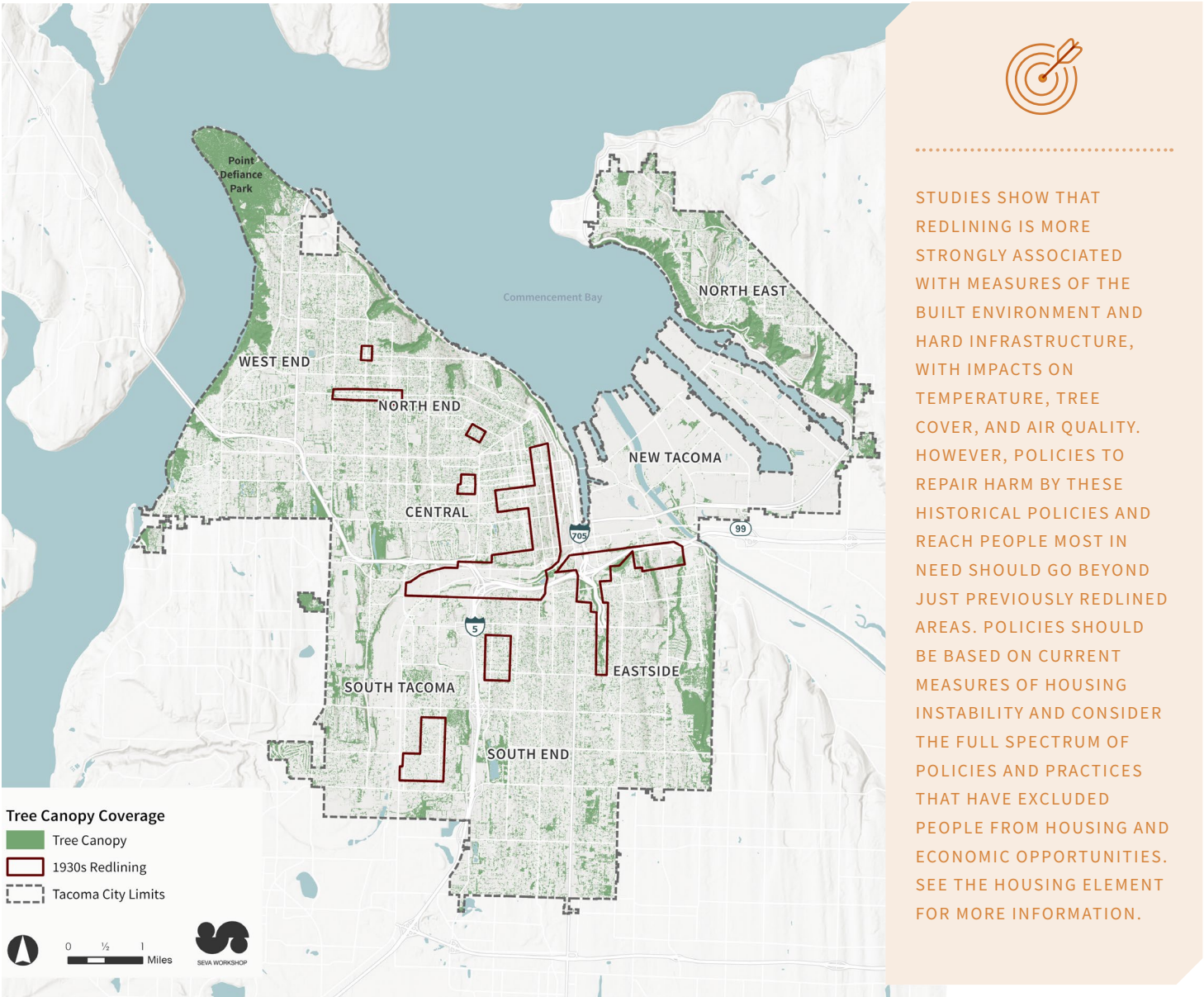
Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024



Land Use and Tree Canopy

Recent studies have shown that heat island effects are greater, imperviousness is higher, and tree cover lower in areas that were formerly redlined (class D). Urban forestry, tree cover, and building and street design are all key tools to mitigate urban heat, and are important parts of creating a sustainable, healthy, and vibrant city (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Tree Canopy



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024



## Walkable Neighborhoods

Ensuring equitable distribution of public services and amenities is a focus for the Comprehensive Plan update. The Comprehensive Plan's overarching vision is for a city in which daily essentials are not more than 15 minutes away from the average resident by foot, public transportation, or non-motorized transportation. There are many ways this concept can be measured and disaggregated, such as by transportation method or varying sets of amenities for example. The City of Tacoma produced an analysis in 2021 dubbed the 20-minute neighborhood that is focused on walking access, and integrates several walkability inputs, including distance to schools, parks, trails, commercial businesses, and transit stops.

Exhibit 11 describes the results by neighborhood. The percent of each neighborhood area classified as highly walkable varies by 30% points in either direction. Central Tacoma is the most walkable, with nearly one-third of the total area classified as highly walkable. The North East is the least walkable area, with only 2% of the area classified as highly walkable. Overall, 17% of Tacoma's total land area is considered highly walkable by this measure. Areas such as South Tacoma and the West End also lag the city-wide average for walkability.

**Exhibit 11. Walkability Scores by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	LOW (SCORE OF 1-2)	MEDIUM (SCORE OF 3-9)	HIGH (SCORE OF 10 AND)	HIGH WALKABILITY DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
Central	4%	64%	32%	15%
Eastside	5%	72%	23%	6%
New Tacoma	38%	27%	18%	1%
North East	22%	69%	2%	-15%
North End	0%	75%	24%	7%
South End	1%	78%	21%	4%
South Tacoma	10%	76%	12%	-5%
West End	18%	69%	11%	-6%
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>17%</b>	

Source: City of Tacoma, 2022.

## Housing

Tacoma is working to undo the effects of years of exclusionary housing policy, dispossession, and displacement. At the same time, it is facing very high housing market pressure. In alignment with this work, the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan seek to create more equity on the following measures:

- ▶ First-time buyers of single dwelling structures
- ▶ Renter-occupied housing cost burden greater than 50%
- ▶ Percent of residents living in the same house one year ago

This work is articulated in land use policies and in more detail in the Housing chapter of this plan, Anti-Displacement Strategy, Affordable Housing Action Strategy, and Home in Tacoma initiatives.

## Life Expectancy at Birth

Life expectancy is an overall measure of health that can be affected by a multitude of factors – personal, social, and environmental. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control produces tract-level estimates of life expectancy for births between 2010 and 2015. Their model suggests a nearly 8-year range in life expectancy within Tacoma based on neighborhood as described in the following table (Exhibit 12). Land use policies in this chapter and across other elements articulate a cross-sector framework for more equitable outcomes for life expectancy that result in less variation by neighborhood.

**Exhibit 12. Life Expectancy at Birth by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	LIFE EXPECTANCY	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
Central	76.8	(0.52)
Eastside	75.8	(1.51)
New Tacoma	75.2	(2.04)
North East	82.6	5.30
North End	80.3	3.03
South End	75.1	(2.15)
South Tacoma	74.7	(2.57)
West End	79.8	2.54
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>77.3</b>	

Source: CDC, U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP), 2010-2015 by tract

## Access to Healthy Food

Access to healthy food is a key component of health equity. City policies, especially on land use, can create the conditions for healthy food stores and temporary food markets to open in neighborhoods, as well as support mobile food options, food affordability, and food distribution. The Tacoma Equity Index uses the modified Retail Food Environment Index (mRFEI) to measure access to healthy food. The mRFEI is the percentage of all food retailers in an area that are considered healthy. This measure captures areas with no food options (“food deserts”; correspond to a score of zero) as well as areas that have food outlets that are dominated by large relative amounts of unhealthy snack foods (“food swamps”; correspond to lower scores). Tacoma overall has an mRFEI score of 0.7 (Exhibit 13). The South End and New Tacoma stand out as areas with relatively healthy food options. The North East, South Tacoma, and West End have relatively unhealthy options.

**Exhibit 13. Access to Healthy Food by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	HEALTHY FOOD AVAILABILITY	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE AVERAGE
Central	0.9	0.20
Eastside	0.5	(0.16)
New Tacoma	1.3	0.63
North East	0.1	(0.62)
North End	0.5	(0.23)
South End	1.4	0.67
South Tacoma	0.3	(0.35)
West End	0.3	(0.38)
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>0.7</b>	

Sources: City of Tacoma, Equity Index 2022 by block group; ESRI Business Analyst

The distribution of grocery stores by neighborhood largely reflects similar patterns as the mRFEI. However, contrasting figures for South Tacoma and West End suggest that while there are relatively more food outlets available, they are not necessarily healthy options. More equitable distribution of healthy food access would result in less variation in this index across the city. Tacoma’s future vision is also for daily essentials, including grocery, to be within a 15-minute walk of all residences. In the North East, where a single grocery serves many people in a large area, many residents are likely to drive to a neighboring city or to other parts of Tacoma for grocery access.

## Good and Promising Job Availability

Over 100,000 jobs are located in Tacoma. Health care, retail, government, and administration are some of the sectors that comprise the largest shares of Tacoma-based jobs. The Brookings Institute *Opportunity Industries* report examined industries for their ability to provide pathways and quality employment to workers without college degrees. They also produced metropolitan area level estimates by industry about the availability of good and promising jobs according to the following definitions:

- ▶ **Good jobs** provide stable employment, middle-class wages, and benefits.
- ▶ **Promising jobs** are entry-level positions from which most workers can reach a good job within 10 years.
- ▶ **High-skill jobs** are good and promising jobs held by workers with a bachelor's degree. The bachelor's degree represents a barrier to entry.
- ▶ **Other jobs** do not provide decent pay, benefits, or pathways to good jobs.

About 17% of jobs located in Tacoma are considered good or promising by the Brookings Institute definition (Exhibit 14). Another 24% are high-skill good or promising jobs. The North East has the highest share of good jobs, driven largely by the number of logistics jobs located there. Many Tacomans have work locations outside of the city, but may choose to work closer to home if the opportunity is available.

**Exhibit 14. Good and Promising Jobs by Neighborhood**

NEIGHBORHOOD	PROMISING JOBS	GOOD JOBS	HIGH-SKILL JOBS	OTHER JOBS	DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE GOOD AND PROMISING JOBS RATE
Central	8%	7%	25%	60%	-1%
Eastside	8%	9%	23%	60%	1%
New Tacoma	8%	9%	27%	57%	0%
North East	9%	18%	18%	55%	10%
North End	9%	5%	23%	63%	-3%
South End	10%	5%	17%	68%	-1%
South Tacoma	10%	7%	18%	64%	1%
West End	9%	5%	20%	66%	-2%
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>60%</b>	

Sources: U.S. Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) LODES 8.1 Workplace Area Characteristic (WAC), All jobs (JT00), 2021 by block; Brookings Institute, *Opportunity Industries for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA 2018*

## FUTURE NEEDS

### Growth Targets

Tacoma’s growth target is to add 60,000 housing units and 94,000 jobs from 2017-2050. Growth trends 2017-2022 lag behind growth rates needed to achieve these targets. The Buildable Lands Report from 2022 identifies citywide housing capacity of 68,049 housing units and 84,436 jobs. Legislation passed after this analysis related to housing policy, Home in Tacoma, has further expanded the city’s housing capacity since the 2022 capacity analysis. One policy need identified as part of this planning effort is to identify more capacity for employment. This is consistent with the vision for a 15-minute city, where more commercial activity and jobs are located across Tacoma, rather than concentrated in only one or two districts.

Exhibit 15. Tacoma Growth Targets for Housing and Jobs, 2017-2050.

	Employment Growth		Population Growth		Housing Production	
	2044	2050	2044	2050	2044	2050
Downtown Regional Growth Center	35,400	47,000	37,092	47,950	14,837	21,000
Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center	5,664	7,520	5,299	6,850	2,120	3,000
Tideflats MIC	5,664	7,520				
South Tacoma MIC	5,664	7,520				
Mixed Use Centers	10,620	14,100	31,793	41,100	12,717	18,000
Outside Centers	7,788	10,340	31,793	41,100	12,717	18,000
Citywide Total	70,800	94,000	105,977	137,000	42,390	60,000

Sources: Housing estimates from OFM, 2022; PSRC Jobs Estimates, 2022; PSRC Growth Targets, Vision 2050 Consistent; Seva Workshop, 2024.



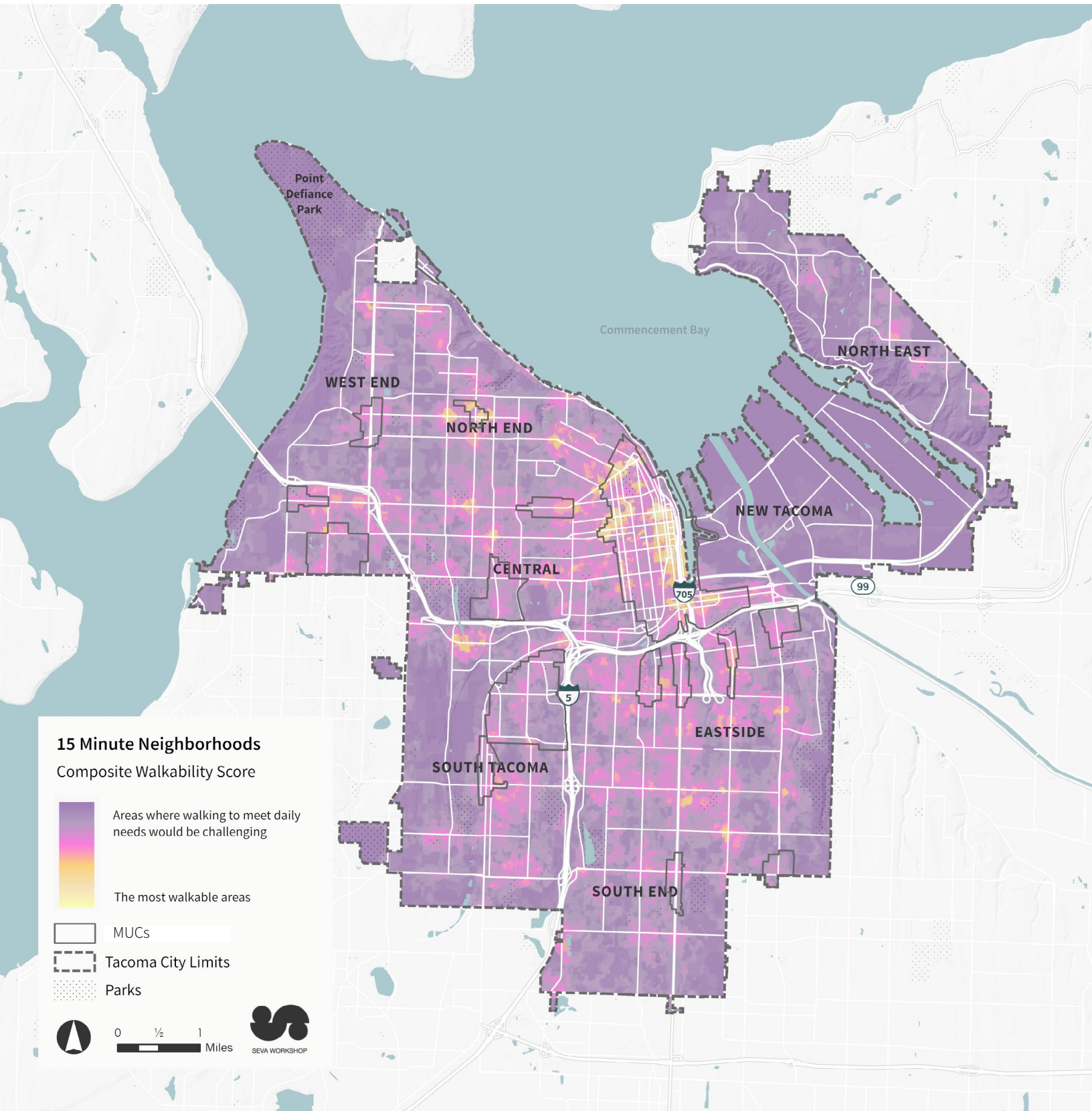
## PLAN VISION

### 15-Minute Cities

Central to the One Tacoma vision is the concept of a 15-minute city, composed of 15-minute neighborhoods where residents can access daily essentials—work, education, healthcare, groceries, recreation, etc.—within a short walk, bike ride, or transit trip. This framework integrates land use and transportation planning to create resilient neighborhoods across the city. Tacoma’s vision ensures that all residents, regardless of location, can enjoy a high quality of life without relying on cars (or other single-occupancy vehicles) for every trip. By promoting mixed-use development, connected pedestrian and bike networks, and accessible, inviting, and vibrant public spaces, Tacoma is advancing sustainable urban living that prioritizes the well-being of its residents while reducing vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions.

The 15-Minute Neighborhoodsmap in Exhibit 16 shows the relative level of attainment toward a 15-minute neighborhood across Tacoma, providing a snapshot of neighborhoods that are lacking (or robust) in their access to a wide array of daily essentials. The composite score also includes elements related to infrastructure investments and pedestrian safety, such as intersection density and sidewalk to road ratio. This information is critical to a range of key decision-making processes regarding land use and investments in facilities, services, and infrastructure, among others, to achieve more equitable outcomes in access to daily essentials. Furthermore, the tool can be used to track progress (or regression) over time as Tacoma continues to grow and evolve. The Stadium to Dome corridor through the Downtown core, Hilltop in Central Tacoma, Oakland/Madrona in South Tacoma, and the Proctor District in the North End score highly on the composite walkability score. Most of the rest of Tacoma rates as areas where walking to meet daily needs would be challenging using these criteria.

Exhibit 16. Tacoma 15-Minute Neighborhoods, 2024



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024.







# What the 15-minute city is.....

The 15-minute city concept envisions cities where residents can meet their essential needs—work, education, healthcare, shopping, and leisure—within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from their homes. The concept is rooted in sustainable urban design, fostering community well-being, and reducing environmental impact. The main ideas and goals of the 15-minute city model are:

**1. LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY:** Focus on decentralizing urban services, so each neighborhood has its own set of amenities.

**2. SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION:** Encourage walking, biking, and public transport to reduce GHG emissions and combat climate change.

**3. COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Design public spaces to promote social interaction and community cohesion.

**4. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** Reduce commute times and traffic stress, encourage physical activity and better quality of life.

**5. ECONOMIC RESILIENCE:** Support local businesses by encouraging people to shop and engage in their neighborhoods.

**6. HUMAN-CENTRIC URBAN DESIGN:** Reallocate urban space for pedestrians, green areas, and community gathering spots rather than car-dependent infrastructure. Emphasize mixed-use development where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces coexist, enhancing community life.







## and what it is not....

The 15-minute city concept has been the target of various conspiracy theories. These misconceptions typically arise from misinterpretations or deliberate misinformation. Here's a look at some common myths:

### 1. "IT'S A PLAN TO RESTRICT MOVEMENT OR TRAP PEOPLE IN ZONES":

The 15-minute city does not limit people's ability to travel. Instead, it aims to reduce the need for long commutes by making essential services more accessible. People remain free to move outside their neighborhoods.

### 2. "YOU'LL BE CONFINED TO YOUR 15-MINUTE RADIUS":

No aspect of the 15-minute city suggests restricting movement. The goal is to enhance access within neighborhoods, not impose limitations.

### 3. "IT'S A PLOY TO BAN CARS":

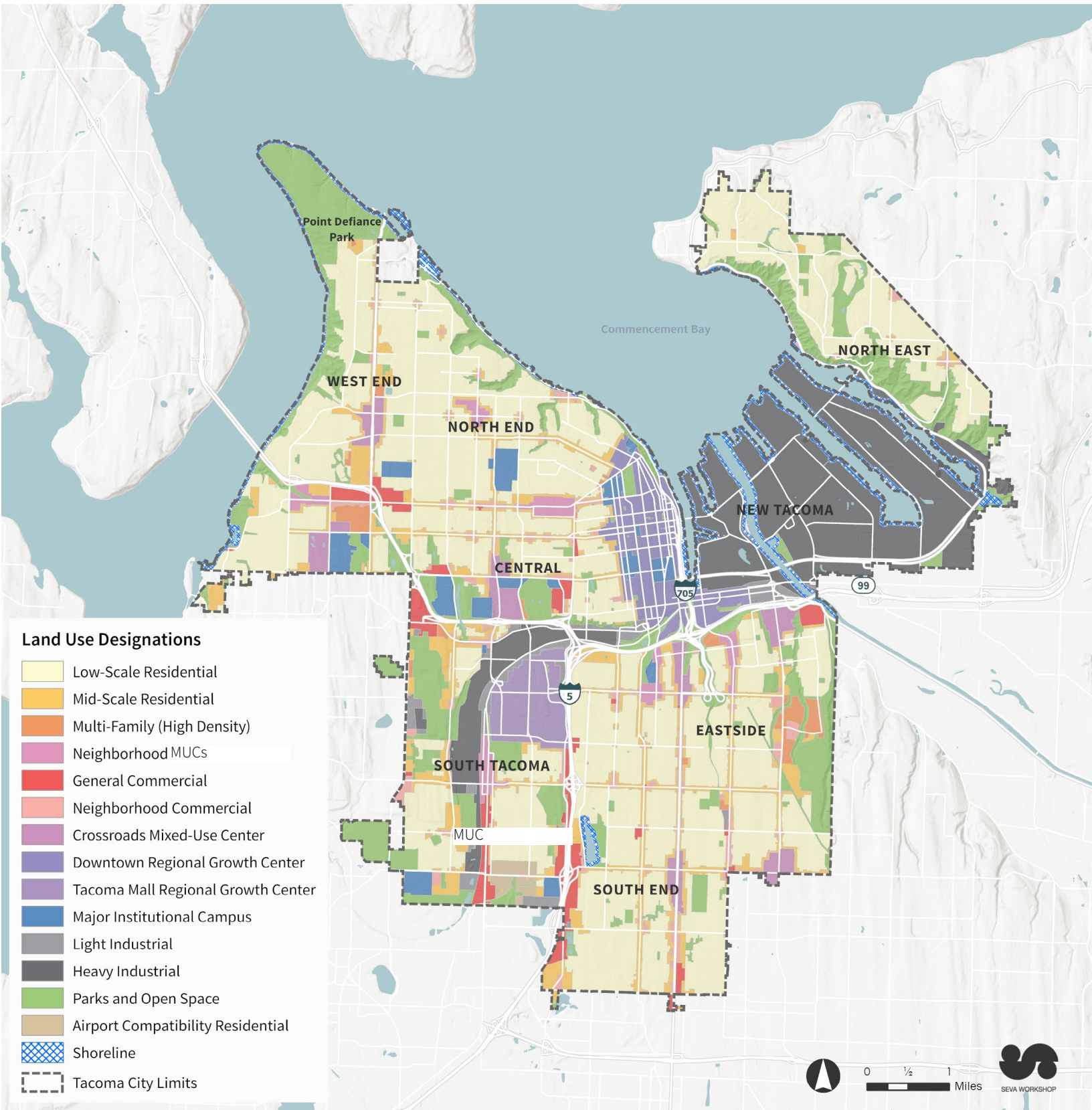
The goal is not to ban cars but to reduce car dependency. This is achieved by improving public transport, biking, and walking infrastructure, making cars less necessary for daily life.

### 4. "IT'S ABOUT PROPERTY DEVALUATION OR WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION":

The 15-minute city idea enhances neighborhood livability and often increases property values by creating desirable, accessible, and greener communities. It focuses on improving urban living for everyone, not redistributing wealth.



Exhibit 17. Future Land Use Map



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024

## Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map in Exhibit 17 illustrates the City's intended future land use pattern through the geographic distribution of residential and commercial areas, the designation of MUCs and MICs, as well as shoreline designations. This land use distribution was a result of analysis of the Growth Strategy element policies, existing land use and zoning, development trends, anticipated land use needs, and desirable growth and development goals. Various types of zoning and land use may be permitted within each of the designations. The map is to be used in conjunction with the adopted policies of the Comprehensive Plan for any land use decision.

The land use designations are established by adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and amendments thereof. The Future Land Use Map is the official land use map of the City, and is maintained by the Planning and Development Services Department in an electronic format to facilitate its accurate use and implementation.

The Future Land Use Map and the designations in Exhibit 18 provide a basis for applying zoning districts and for making land use decisions. Policies should be considered and interpreted in accordance with the geographic characteristics of the mapped areas.

Exhibit 18. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designations and Corresponding Zoning

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Low-Scale Residential</b>		
Low-scale residential designations are generally located in quieter settings of complete neighborhoods that are a short to moderate walking distance from parks, schools, shopping, transit and other neighborhood amenities.	Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 12.5%	UR1 Urban Residential 1 UR2 Urban Residential 2
	Employment: 1%	
Qualities associated with low-scale residential areas include: Diverse housing types and prices, lower noise levels, limited vehicular traffic, moderate setbacks, private and shared open space and yards, street trees, green features, and complete streets with alleys. Infill in historic districts is supported to expand housing options consistent with the low-scale designation, but must be consistent with the neighborhood scale, defining features, and policies discouraging demolition.	Target Development Density: 10-25 dwelling units/net acre	
Primary housing types supported include detached houses, houses with attached and/or detached accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses up to three units, cottage housing, and cohousing. Existing houses shall not be considered non-conforming. Secondary housing types may be permitted, including fourplexes and small-scale multidwelling, where they can fit harmoniously with the overall scale of the neighborhood, such as at corner lots, large sites, or transitions to more intensive designations. Such secondary housing types are subject to appropriate design, location, and other standards. Community facilities, including parks, schools and religious facilities, are also desirable to enhance neighborhood vitality.		
Low-scale residential designations provide a range of housing choices built at the general scale and height of detached houses and up to three stories (above grade) in height. Standards for low-scale housing types provide flexibility within the range of building width, depth, and site coverage consistent with detached houses and backyard accessory structures, pedestrian orientation, and a range of typical lot sizes from 2,500 square feet up to 7,500 square feet.		

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Mid-Scale Residential</b>		
Mid-scale residential designations are generally located in close proximity to centers, corridors, and transit, and provide walkable, urban housing choices in buildings of a size and scale that is between low-scale residential and the higher scale of centers and corridors.	Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 12.5%  Employment: 2%	UR3 Urban Residential 3
Qualities associated with mid-scale residential areas include: Diverse housing types and prices, a range of building heights and scales, walkability, transportation choices, moderate noise and activity levels, generally shared open space and yards, street trees, green features, and complete streets with alleys. Infill in historic districts is supported to expand housing options consistent with the mid-scale designation, but must be consistent with neighborhood scale and defining features, and with policies discouraging demolition.	Target Development Density: 15-45 dwelling units/net acre	
Housing types supported include small-lot houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, cottage housing, cohousing, fourplexes, and multidwelling. Existing houses shall not be considered non-conforming.		
Community facilities, including parks, schools and religious facilities, are also desirable and some nonresidential uses such as small childcare, cafes or live-work may be appropriate in limited circumstances.		
Standards for mid-scale housing support heights up to three stories (above grade) and four stories in limited circumstances along corridors. Standards shall ensure that development is harmonious with the scale and residential patterns of the neighborhood through building height, scale, width, depth, bulk, and setbacks that prevent overly massive structures, provide visual variety from the street, and ensure a strong pedestrian orientation. Development shall be subject to design standards that provide for smooth scale transitions by methods such as matching low-scale building height maximums where mid-scale residential abuts or is across the street from low-scale areas.		

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Multi-Family High Density</b>		
<p>This designation allows for a wide range of residential housing types at medium and higher density levels, along with community facilities and institutions, and some limited commercial uses and mixed-use buildings. It is characterized by taller buildings, higher traffic volumes, reduced setbacks, limited private yard space, and greater noise levels. These areas are generally found in the central city and along major transportation corridors where there is increased access to public transportation and to employment centers.</p> <p>Housing types supported include small-lot houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, cottage housing, cohousing, fourplexes, and multidwelling.</p> <p>Community facilities, including parks, schools, and religious facilities, are desirable and some nonresidential uses, such as small childcare, cafes, or live-work, are appropriate in limited circumstances.</p> <p>Standards for multi-family high density support building heights from the mid-rise (four to six stories) to high-rise (up to 15 stories) range.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share Housing: 2%</p> <p>Employment: 1%</p> <p>Target Development Density: 45–75 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>R-4 Multiple-Family Dwelling District</p> <p>R-5 Multiple-Family Dwelling District</p>
<b>Neighborhood Commercial</b>		
<p>This designation is characterized primarily by small-scale neighborhood businesses with some residential and institutional uses. Uses within these areas have low to moderate traffic generation, shorter operating hours, smaller buildings and sites, and less signage than general commercial or mixed-use areas. There is a greater emphasis on small businesses and development that is compatible with nearby, lower intensity residential areas.</p> <p>Non-residential uses typically occupy the street frontage. Low to mid-scale housing types are generally supported. Parking is generally located on-street or within a structure, or to the side or rear of the structure. Building height typically ranges from single story to three stories.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 2%</p> <p>Employment: 4%</p> <p>Target Development Density: 14–36 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>C-1 General Neighborhood Commercial District</p> <p>T Transitional District</p>

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>General Commercial</b>		
<p>This designation encompasses areas for medium to high intensity commercial uses, which serves a large community base with a broad range of larger scale uses. These areas also allow for a wide variety of residential development, community facilities, institutional uses, and some limited production and storage uses. These areas are generally located along major transportation corridors, often with reasonably direct access to a highway or high frequency transit. This designation is characterized by larger-scale buildings, longer operating hours, and moderate to high trip generation.</p> <p>Single purpose commercial structures include office building, multi-story mixed-use, and residential structures. Nonresidential uses typically occupy the street frontage, but stand-alone residential uses are allowed in some cases.</p> <p>Low to mid-scale housing types are generally supported.</p> <p>Building height typically ranges from single story to four stories.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 1%</p> <p>Employment: 3%</p> <p>Target Development Density: 45-75 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>PDB Planned Development Business District C-2 General Community Commercial District</p>
<b>Neighborhood Center</b>		
<p>Neighborhood Centers are compact, walkable, and transit-oriented mixed-use areas that serve as central focal points for daily needs, public events, community discourse and programming. Many such centers were rooted in Tacoma's historic streetcar era (1888-1938), see Chapter 3 – Complete Neighborhoods. These centers prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access and are well-served by local and regional transit. Development focuses on a mix of residential and commercial uses, with a strong emphasis on space-efficient transportation solutions. Unlike some commercial areas, neighborhood centers minimize off-street surface parking, relying on sustainable modes of transportation, managed on-street parking, and structured parking to support compact economic development. Buildings are generally up to six stories along commercial corridors, transitioning to up to three stories at the periphery near low-scale residential districts, and up to four stories in areas between the core and the periphery.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 15%</p> <p>Employment: 2.5%</p> <p>Minimum Allowable Development Density: 25 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>CCX Community Commercial Mixed-Use District RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District HMX Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p>

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Crossroads Center</b>		
<p>The Crossroads Center is a concentration of commercial and/or institutional development that serves many nearby neighborhoods and generally includes a unique attraction that draws people from throughout the city. Some residential development may already be present, and there is a goal to have more residential development. It is directly accessible by arterials and local transit.</p> <p>Development contains a mix of residential and commercial uses, and the majority of parking is provided within structures.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 15%</p> <p>Employment: 12.5%</p> <p>Minimum Allowable Development Density: 25 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>CCX Community Commercial Mixed-Use District RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District HMX Hospital Medical Mixed-Use District URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p>
<b>Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center</b>		
<p>The Urban Center is a highly dense, self-sufficient concentration of urban development. It is an area of regional attraction and a focus for both the local and regional transit systems. Many major city arterials connect to the Urban Center and nearby freeway access is present. Parking is provided both in surface lots and within structures. Internal streets and pathways provide connections among the developments within the Center.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 5%</p> <p>Employment: 8%</p> <p>Minimum Allowable Site Density: 25 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>UCX Urban Center Mixed-Use District RCX Residential Commercial Mixed-Use District URX Urban Residential Mixed-Use District</p>
<b>Downtown Regional Growth Center</b>		
<p>The Downtown Center is the highest concentration of urban growth found anywhere in the city. It is the focal point for the city, the center of government, cultural, office, financial, transportation, and other activities. This variety of day and night activities attracts visitors from throughout the city and region. The interstate freeway and major arterials provide access, and the Center has both local and regional transit connections. Larger, often historic buildings fronting on the sidewalk characterize the area. Pedestrian orientation is high. Parking is found along the street and within structures.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 35%</p> <p>Employment: 50%</p> <p>Minimum Allowable Site Density: 25 dwelling units/net acre</p>	<p>DR Downtown Residential District DMU Downtown Mixed-Use District WR Warehouse/Residential District DCC Downtown Commercial Core District UCX-TD Downtown Mixed-Use District</p>
<b>Light Industrial</b>		
<p>This designation allows for a variety of industrial uses that are moderate in scale and impact, with lower noise, odors, and traffic generation than heavy industrial uses. This designation may include various types of light manufacturing, warehousing, and newer, clean, high-tech industries, along with commercial and some limited residential uses. These areas are often utilized as a buffer or transition between heavy industrial areas and less intensive commercial and/or residential areas.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 0%</p> <p>Employment: 8%</p>	<p>M-1 Light Industrial District</p>



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Heavy Industrial</b>		
<p>This designation is characterized by higher levels of noise and odors, large-scale production, large buildings and sites, extended operating hours, and heavy truck traffic. This designation requires access to major transportation corridors, often including heavy haul truck routes and rail facilities. Commercial and institutional uses are limited and residential uses are generally prohibited.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing: 0%</p> <p>Employment: 8%</p>	<p>M-2 Heavy Industrial District PMI Port Maritime and Industrial District</p>
<b>Major Institutional Campus</b>		
<p>This designation is intended for large institutional campuses that are centers of employment and that service a broader population than that of the neighborhood in which it is located. This designation includes hospitals, medical centers, colleges, universities, and high schools typically greater than 10 acres in size. The designation recognizes the unique characteristics of these institutions and is intended to accommodate the changing needs of the institution while enhancing the livability of surrounding residential neighborhoods and the viability of nearby business areas.</p> <p>Buildings in this designation may range in scale from single story to high rise.</p>		<p>This designation is appropriate in all zoning classifications.</p>

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>		
<p>This designation is intended to conserve and enhance open, natural, and improved areas valuable for their environmental, recreational, and green infrastructure, scenic character, and the benefits they provide. The designation encompasses public and private parks and open space lands, with lands set aside for these purposes by the City of Tacoma and the Metropolitan Parks District forming the core of the designation. As more land is placed in conservation status by these agencies, as well as other public and private entities, the extent of the designation will be expanded to include them.</p> <p>The designation supports Tacoma’s vision of an integrated parks and open space system that defines and enhances the built and natural environment, supports and nurtures plant and wildlife habitat, enhances and protects trees and the urban forest, preserves the capacity and water quality of the stormwater drainage system, offers recreational opportunities, and provides pedestrian and bicycle connections.</p> <p>Lands within this designation include both natural open space areas and active use parks and recreational areas.</p> <p>Parks and recreation lands are intended to provide opportunities for active recreation, such as playfields and sports facilities; urban amenities, such as plazas, pocket parks, and community gardens; and other complementary land uses, such as cultural or educational facilities or community event spaces that enhance the park and recreational experience. This designation is intended to support flexibility in building scale to meet community demand for park and recreation programs and facilities.</p>		<p>This designation is appropriate in all zoning classifications.</p>
<b>Airport Compatible Residential</b>		
<p>This designation is intended to increase safety in residential areas within the approximately 200-acre area of South Tacoma corresponding with the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM Airport Protection Zone II. Preventing the development of conditions that could interfere with airport operations or increase the likelihood of an accident will increase safety, as will reducing risk to life and property in the incidence of a crash. Key strategies are to prevent development with explosive or flammable characteristics, and to allow reasonable use and expansion of existing uses while discouraging increases in residential density or in public gathering capacity.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: There are no specific housing or employment targets associated with this designation.</p>	<p>This designation is implemented through the JBLM Airport Compatibility Overlay District, and through the future establishment of an appropriate base residential zoning district.</p>

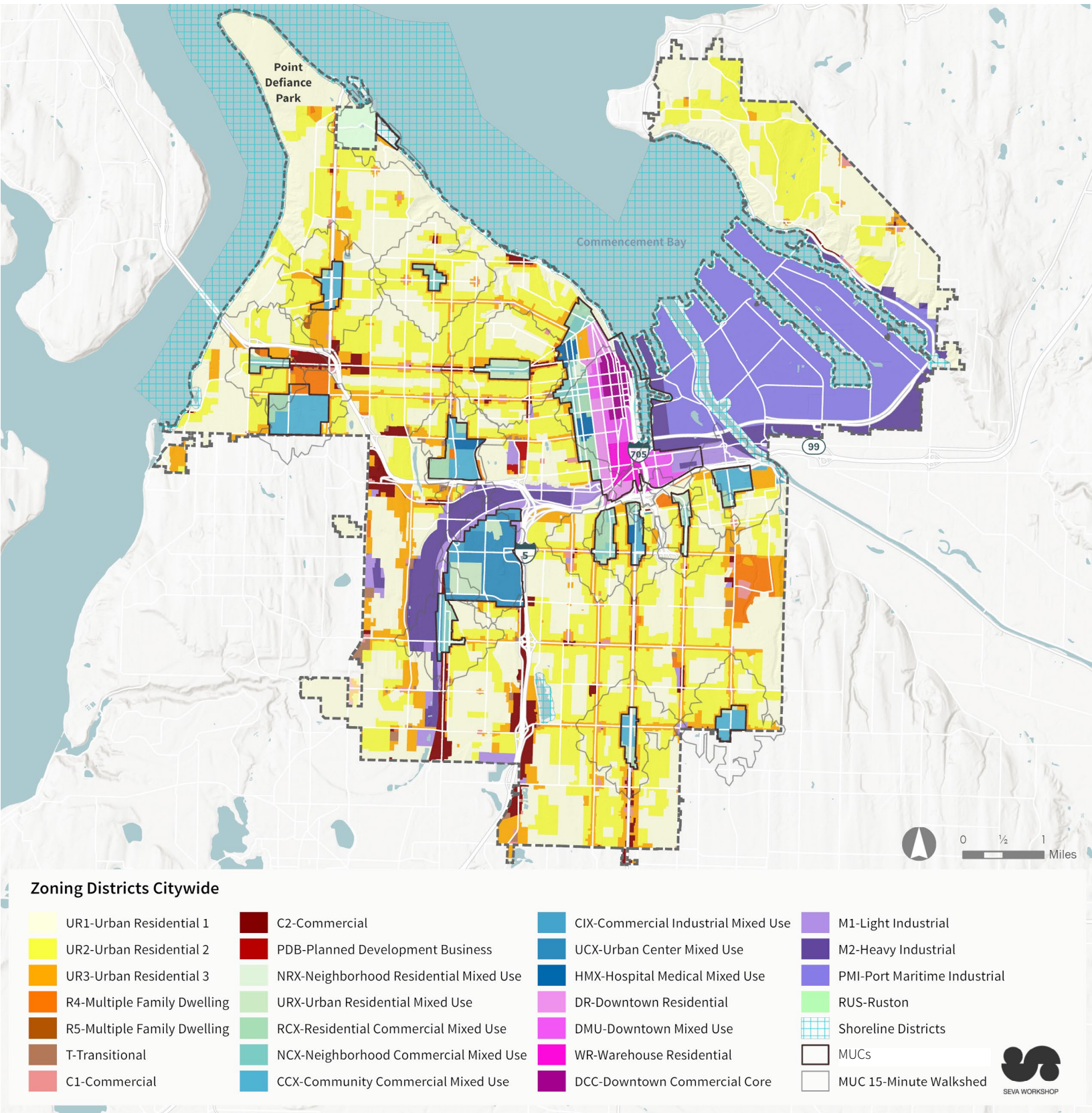
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	GROWTH SHARE	ZONING DISTRICTS
<p><b>Shorelines</b></p> <p>The city’s shoreline areas provide great social, ecological, recreational, cultural, economic, and aesthetic value, both at the local and regional level. It is the community’s intent to use the full potential of these areas in a manner that is both ordered and diversified, supports the community’s ability to enjoy the water and the unique setting it creates, and which integrates water and shoreline uses while achieving a net gain of ecological functions.</p> <p>Recognizing the limited nature of this important resource, use and development of the shoreline areas must be carefully planned and regulated to ensure that these values are maintained over time. The SMP has been developed to provide additional and more detailed policy direction regarding the city’s shoreline areas, along with specific zoning and development standards.</p> <p>The Shoreline Master Program utilizes a system of environment designations which further guide the character, intensity, and use of individual shoreline segments. These classifications include Natural, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, High Intensity, Aquatic, and Downtown Waterfront and are based on the existing development patterns, capabilities, goals, and aspirations of the community for its shoreline areas.</p> <p>These areas are intended to balance the overarching goals outlined in the State Shoreline Management Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure an adequate land supply for water-dependent uses;</li><li>• To promote and enhance the public’s opportunities to access and enjoy the water; and</li><li>• To protect and preserve natural resources.</li></ul> <p>This designation includes areas that support deepwater port and industrial sites, habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, archaeological and historical sites, open space, recreation and community activities, and some commercial and residential development.</p> <p>Typical uses and building scale are based on the specific Shoreline Environment Designation and Zoning District, but range from single story to three stories in most districts, to mid and high rise residential on the Thea Foss Waterway. Industrial areas support height and scale standards to support the long-term viability of Port container operations.</p>	<p>Citywide Growth Share: Housing and employment growth within shoreline environments are based on the Shoreline Environment Designations of the SMP (Title 19 of the Tacoma Municipal Code)</p>	<p>S1–S14 Shoreline Zoning Districts</p>

Coordination between land use changes, infrastructure investments, and transportation network improvements are needed to achieve the vision of this Plan. Recent updates to the land use code through the Home in Tacoma legislation will enable higher housing densities in areas previously restricted to single family homes. Home in Tacoma replaces single-family zoning with two new zoning categories – low-scale residential and mid-scale residential. Mid-scale residential zoning is concentrated around transit corridors and Commercial Centers to promote walkability, reduce car dependence, and support more sustainable urban growth. More neighborhood-serving commercial spaces such as cafes, live-work spaces, and other daily services will be accommodated throughout these zones. Commercial spaces are anticipated to be both embedded within neighborhoods as well as within centers. These zoning updates add diverse housing types and supportive commercial uses across Tacoma’s neighborhoods to implement Tacoma’s Growth Strategy to allow as many people as possible to experience 15-minute neighborhood living.

An important element of this strategy is to support a network of centers, equitably distributed across the city, connected along transit-oriented corridors. Transit station areas and the neighborhoods will also accommodate a range of housing types and commercial uses to achieve the vision of the 15-minute city. The proposed zoning, overlaid with identified centers and 15-minute walksheds from the centers, is shown in Exhibit 19.



Exhibit 19. Zoning and Centers, 2024



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024.

Exhibit 20. Proposed Zoning by Acreage, 2024

PROPOSED ZONING	ACRES	
UR1-Urban Residential 1	10,245	25%
UR2-Urban Residential 2	7,885	19%
UR3-Urban Residential 3	3,021	7.4%
R4-Multiple Family Dwelling	359	0.9%
R5-Multiple Family Dwelling	16	0.0%
T-Transitional	163	0.4%
C1-Commercial	252	0.6%
C2-Commercial	819	2.0%
PDB-Planned Development Business	35	0.1%
NRX-Neighborhood Residential Mixed-Use	11	0.0%
URX-Urban Residential Mixed-Use	271	0.7%
RCX-Residential Commercial Mixed-Use	427	1.1%
NCX-Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use	283	0.7%
CCX-Community Commercial Mixed-Use	637	1.6%
CIX-Commercial Industrial Mixed-Use	96	0.2%
UCX-Urban Center Mixed-Use	396	1.0%
HMX-Hospital Medical Mixed-Use	118	0.3%
DR-Downtown Residential	246	0.6%
DMU-Downtown Mixed-Use	231	0.6%
WR-Warehouse Residential	171	0.4%
DCC-Downtown Commercial Core	162	0.4%
M1-Light Industrial	639	1.6%
M2-Heavy Industrial	1,223	3.0%
PMI-Port Maritime Industrial	2,898	7.1%
RUS-Ruston	170	0.4%
Shoreline Districts	9,816	24%

Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024.







## 2.2 Goals and Policies

**GOAL GS-1:** Development, growth, and infrastructure investments support Tacoma's vision for equitable, walkable, connected, and complete communities.

**Policy GS-1.1:** Establish future land use and zoning designations that can accommodate planned housing and employment growth and ensure land use compatibility. See Exhibit 17: Future Land Use Map.

**Policy GS-1.2:** Implement the Comprehensive Plan land use designations and update the zoning code, as needed, to ensure consistency. See Exhibit 18: Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designations and Corresponding Zoning.

**Policy GS-1.3:** Promote the development of complete, walkable, and accessible neighborhoods where residents have safe and convenient access to daily essentials and services including employment, grocery stores, restaurants, schools, and parks, that support a variety of transportation choices and encourage walking, rolling, biking, and transit as attractive options.

**Policy GS-1.4:** Encourage development that creates or maintains 15-minute neighborhoods throughout existing neighborhoods with middle housing types, neighborhood businesses and smaller commercial nodes.

**Policy GS-1.5:** Ensure quality, context-sensitive urban infill throughout the city's neighborhoods with design standards, project review procedures, and zoning requirements.

**Policy GS-1.6:** Integrate and preserve nature and prioritize the use of green infrastructure throughout Tacoma as the first option, when feasible.

**Policy GS-1.7:** Recognize the importance of preserving and enhancing the city's regularized and predictable street grid, block sizes, and intersection density for supporting safe multi-modal transportation choices, quality neighborhood design, and the City's growth strategies, including 15-minute neighborhoods. Whenever practicable, create or restore connections in areas lacking safe intersection crossings, such as superblocks.

**Policy GS-1.8:** Encourage high quality neighborhood design that demonstrates Tacoma's dedication to the human-centric design of its built environment, commitment to equity, and culture of generating innovative design solutions.

**Policy GS-1.9:** Leverage Tacoma's unique assets, diverse community, and culture of art and creativity to complement growth in a way that showcases its distinctive character and quality of place.

**Policy GS-1.10:** Implement strategies to address commercial and residential displacement due to land use decisions.

**Policy GS-1.11:** Acknowledge the historical disparity of investment, infrastructure, and services across Tacoma's neighborhoods and prioritize investments to address these gaps, reduce disparities, and increase equity, especially where growth and change are anticipated.

**Policy GS-1.12:** Consider parks, schools, and institutional campuses as uses that might need special permits or zones to preserve.

**Policy GS-1.13:** As part of a future urban forest code update, the City should consider a full suite of tools to protect and enhance the City's tree canopy, including tree preservation standards, resources for tree planting and maintenance, and non-regulatory tools for tree preservation and enhancement.



TACOMA'S GROWTH TARGET  
IS FOR 42,865 NEW HOUSING  
UNITS AND 70,800 NEW JOBS  
BY 2044.

## Citywide

### **GOAL GS-2: Neighborhoods across the city include a mix of housing types and integrated commercial activity.**

**Policy GS-2.1:** Implement actions in Tacoma’s Anti-Displacement Strategy to create more homes and neighborhood business opportunities for more people to keep housing affordable and in good repair, help people stay and work in their homes and their communities, and reduce barriers for people who often or historically have encountered them.

**Policy GS-2.2:** Support existing businesses to avoid unnecessary commercial displacement, especially for locally-owned, smaller scale enterprises that add to community identity and cultural placemaking in neighborhoods. When unavoidable, such as times of construction or creation of institutional sites, support these businesses for successful relocation.

**Policy GS-2.3:** Foster neighborhood businesses and commercial districts that offer a range of everyday services and retail goods, that are responsive to cultural needs and income levels of the community, and that reduce nearby residents’ needs to travel long distances to meet daily needs. Engage, encourage and support community members to create small stores and shops dispersed through neighborhoods.

**Policy GS-2.4:** Devise strategies to address shortcomings in the achievement of 15-minute neighborhoods and promote equity, focusing efforts first in and around centers, in areas with lower incomes and higher concentrations of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and in neighborhoods farthest from success.

**Policy GS-2.5:** Encourage regulatory changes like parking quantity reductions or incentives to reduce parking to make smaller scale retail viable.

### **GOAL GS-3: The growth strategy and coordinated land use and transportation planning advance the goals of Tacoma’s Climate Action Plan.**

**Policy GS-3.1:** Direct the majority of growth and change to centers, transit-oriented corridors with current or planned frequent transit service, and high-capacity transit station areas.

**Policy GS-3.2:** Explore innovative concepts for developing public spaces that prioritize people walking and rolling; design a public realm that is people-first rather than auto-oriented, especially in centers and transit-oriented areas.

**Policy GS-3.3:** Encourage the renovation and reuse of existing structures to reduce demolition waste and new construction emissions.

**Policy GS-3.4:** Encourage electric vehicle charging infrastructure in residential, commercial, and public spaces.

**Policy GS-3.5:** Explore areas with targeted policies for emissions reductions, such as zero-emission neighborhoods.

**Policy GS-3.6:** Surface parking lots represent significant potential for redevelopment or reintroduction of green space and permeable surface and are considered “underutilized land” for the purposes of zoning regulations, density bonuses, and economic development incentives. Care should be taken to not affect parking areas required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.





## Growth Strategy as Climate Action

By fostering equitable transit-oriented communities, Tacoma aims to reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles while enhancing walkability and access to daily essentials. Tacoma's commitment to addressing climate change is reflected in the 2030 Tacoma CAP, which sets a goal to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. This ambitious goal requires a series of actions aimed at reducing emissions across various sectors, including transportation, industry, and buildings. The plan emphasizes the importance of transitioning to renewable energy sources, enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable urban development to create a resilient and equitable low-carbon future for the community.

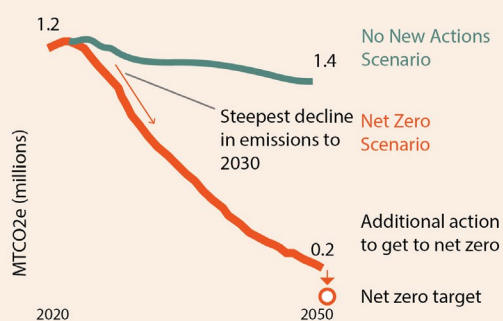
Fortunately, Tacoma's growth strategies and policies in the 2015 One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan were already producing positive outcomes toward achieving Tacoma's GHG goals. That plan

focused growth within centers, with the majority of growth occurring in Downtown, the area of the city best served by local and regional transit.

These policies were used as inputs for Section 1 of the CAP, which contains an analysis of energy and emissions modeling, providing insight into the impacts of Tacoma's growth strategy on achieving net-zero GHGs by 2050, among other programs and policies. The chart below shows the promise of these strategies and the additional gap that needs to be bridged. Under the 2015 growth strategy, per capita emissions were nearly cut in half between 2019 and 2049. Furthermore, despite significant population and employment growth, the analysis showed a nearly 20% reduction in total cumulative emissions between 2020 and 2050.

Through integrated planning, One Tacoma is building a resilient and sustainable future for all its residents. In coordination with

transit agency partners and coupled with investments in multi-modal infrastructure, the City's land use strategies increase density along higher-frequency transit networks and create neighborhoods where walking, biking and public transit are safe, reliable, convenient, and appealing modes of travel. By focusing on dense, transit-rich environments and promoting active transportation, Tacoma is encouraging a shift away from single-occupancy vehicles, producing critical reductions in GHG emissions from the transportation sector. Tacoma's growth and development strategies also leverage efficiencies gained by newer and multi-unit building typologies along with more compact infrastructure that serves more people with less materials and space, for additional GHG reductions. These efforts not only support Tacoma's climate goals, but also contribute to cleaner air, quieter streets, and healthier, more livable neighborhoods.



A steep decline in emissions until 2030 (see figure) is a key component of the net-zero scenario. This is needed in order for Tacoma to maximize cost savings from energy and emissions reductions, put itself on track to achieve its target, avoid the need for even more drastic measures to reduce emissions in the future, and decrease the risk of catastrophic climate change.

**Policy GS-3.7:** Protect the viability of existing airports as essential public facilities by encouraging compatible land uses and reducing hazards that may endanger the lives and property of the public and aviation users.

## Natural Systems and Open Space Corridors

**GOAL GS-4:** Preserve and protect natural systems and open space corridors to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment and to provide opportunities for Tacomans to experience nature close to home.

**Policy GS-4.1:** Maintain and enhance a network of open space corridors that supports recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas, and enriches the lives of Tacoma's current and future residents. See Exhibit 21: Open Space Corridors for the existing network.

**Policy GS-4.2:** Protect natural systems and discourage development and land use decisions that adversely impact the natural environment.

**Policy GS-4.3:** Manage flood prone areas and storm and flood waters of the city in accordance with the Critical Areas Ordinance, the City Shorelines Master Program, the City of Tacoma Stormwater management Program Plan, standards as enacted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

**Policy GS-4.4:** Use land use designations and separation or mitigation measures, such as vegetation buffers, habitat restoration, and native vegetation restoration, to avoid conflicts between land uses and the natural environment.

**Policy GS-4.5:** Improve open space corridors using a mix of tools including natural resource protection, property acquisition, natural resource restoration, tree planting and landscaping with native plants, and ecological design integrated with new development.

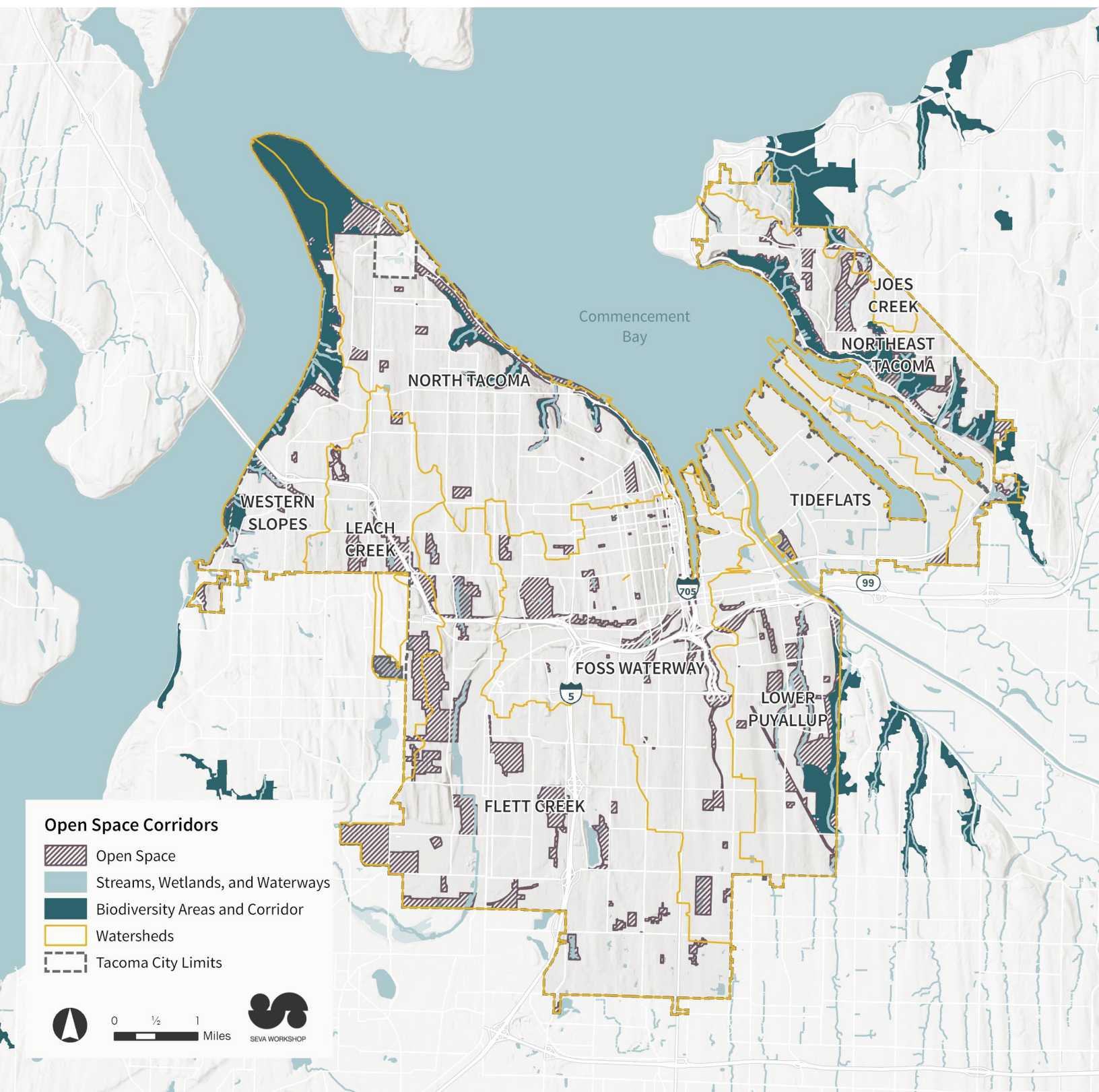
**Policy GS-4.6:** Ensure that connections between open space corridors, streets, and trail systems are located and designed to support each element's function and create positive interrelationships between the elements, while also protecting habitat functions, fish, and wildlife.

**Policy GS-4.7:** Recognize and promote the benefits that open space corridor preservation and restoration provides to the city, including greater development, sense of civic pride, and identity. Whenever feasible, partner with developers to improve connections between new development sites and parks, trails, and open space.

**Policy GS-4.8:** Promote the beautification and re-vegetation of open space areas along state highways, including I5, SR 16, SR 7 and Pearl.

**Policy GS-4.9:** Ensure access to open spaces within neighborhoods to strengthen resilience against rising temperatures, support programming and events, increase access to fresh food through gardening programs, and diversify community leadership.

Exhibit 21. Open Space Corridors, 2024



Open space corridors are lands that are useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and connection of critical areas; these include active and passive open spaces, which are both sites formally developed for community recreation like parks, and properties that are underdeveloped, in their natural state, and vegetated, like wetlands, streams, and forests.

Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024.

## Centers

**GOAL GS-5:** Tacoma's growth is focused in a citywide network of transit-connected centers that anchor 15-minute neighborhoods providing nodes of activity and access to housing, employment, and services.

**Policy GS-5.1:** Plan for an equitable distribution of centers across the city to enhance equitable access to services, employment, and housing opportunities. See Exhibit 22: Centers Map for existing designations.

**Policy GS-5.2:** Connect centers to each other and to other key destinations, such as schools and parks, by frequent, safe, and convenient transit, bicycle routes, a complete and accessible pedestrian network, and electric vehicle charging stations.

**Policy GS-5.3:** When planning capital and transportation improvements in centers, emphasize equitable outcomes and co-benefits. Consider the priorities outlined in the TMP and Public Facilities and Services elements, which should reflect these priorities.

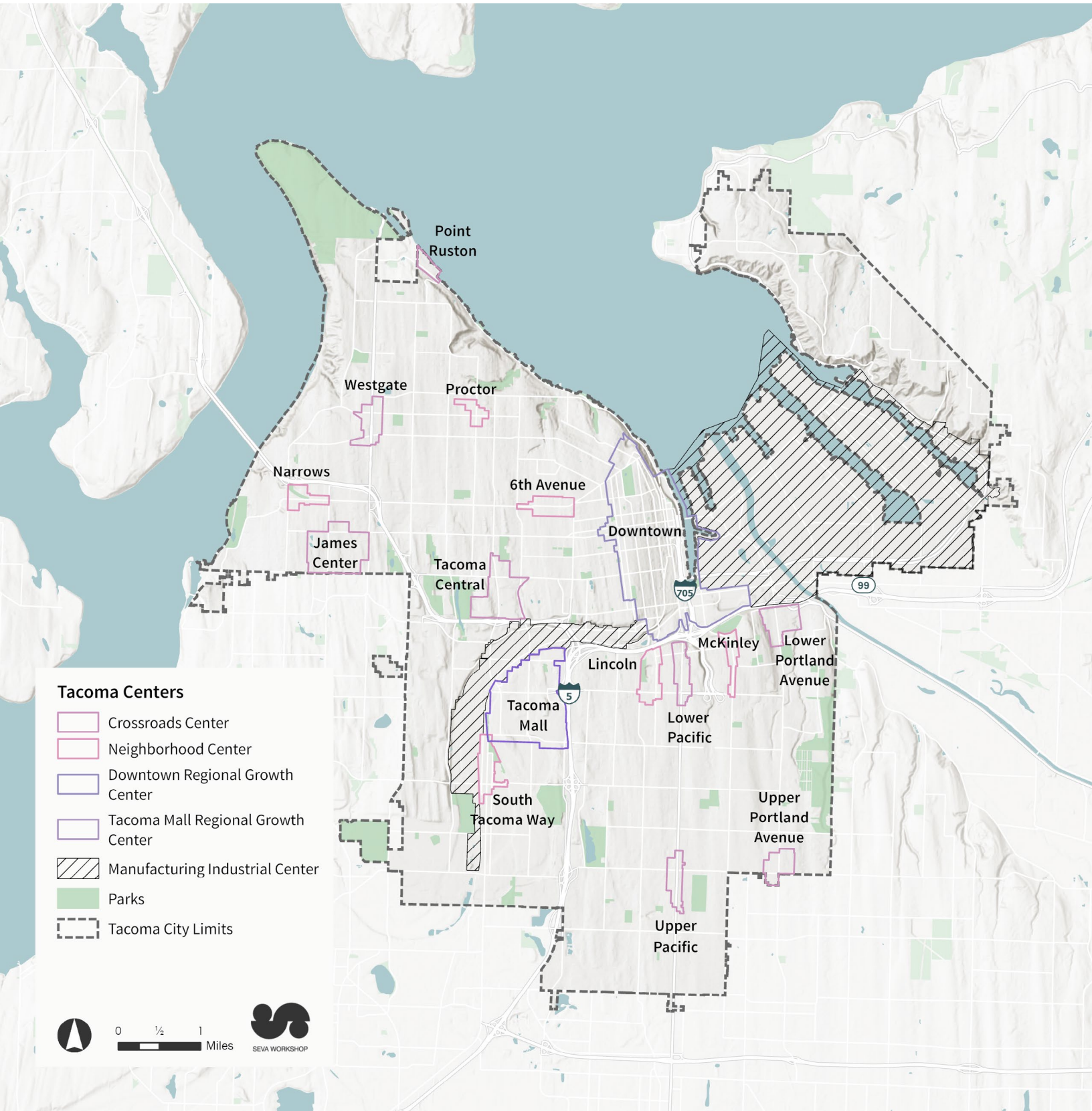
**Policy GS-5.4:** Expand the boundary of a center if the change can better implement the vision of a city of 15-minute neighborhoods. Examples include:

- Support boundary expansion where the demand for additional growth exists and where the capacity for additional growth is limited.
- Support boundary expansion to establish mid-scale transition areas near centers that provide a scale and intensity transition down to low-scale neighborhoods while supporting well-designed, context-sensitive, pedestrian-oriented housing in walkable, transit-supportive urban locations.

	Employment Growth		Population Growth		Housing Production	
	2044	2050	2044	2050	2044	2050
Downtown Regional Growth Center	35,400	47,000	37,092	47,950	14,837	21,000
Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center	5,664	7,520	5,299	6,850	2,120	3,000
Tideflats MIC	5,664	7,520				
South Tacoma MIC	5,664	7,520				
Mixed Use Centers	10,620	14,100	31,793	41,100	12,717	18,000
Outside Centers	7,788	10,340	31,793	41,100	12,717	18,000
<b>Citywide Total</b>	<b>70,800</b>	<b>94,000</b>	<b>105,977</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>42,390</b>	<b>60,000</b>



Exhibit 22. Centers Map



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024.

**GOAL GS-6:** Centers serve as the anchors of complete neighborhoods that include concentrations of housing alongside institutions, gathering places, cultural amenities, and green spaces.

**Policy GS-6.1:** Design centers to be accessible places where the street environment makes access safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities, whether by transit, walking, biking, or mobility devices, such as wheelchairs.

**Policy GS-6.2:** Encourage the placement of services in centers, including schools and colleges, health services, community centers, daycare, parks and plazas, library services, and justice services.

**Policy GS-6.3:** Ensure that land use plans and infrastructure investments allow for and incorporate arts, culture, and local history as central components of centers and as identity-forming creative processes.

**Policy GS-6.4:** Partner with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit to better connect Tacoma neighborhoods, improve transit stations, and provide development incentives and programs to improve transit-orientation in all centers.

**Policy GS-6.5:** Expand tree canopy and integrate more greenery into the public realm.

**Policy GS-6.6:** Integrate nature, parks, and trail networks into centers. Utilize green infrastructure to reduce urban heat island effects and improve climate adaptation in these denser communities.

**Policy GS-6.7:** Provide housing capacity for diverse housing types and price points in and near centers, aligned with proportional allocations by income group as identified in the Housing element, concentrating enough density and population to support a broad range of commercial services.

**Policy GS-6.8:** Encourage public and private investment in infrastructure, economic development, and community services within centers to ensure that all centers support the populations they serve as anchors of 15-minute neighborhoods.

**Policy GS-6.9:** Partner with employers within centers to reduce dependence on automobile use and increase the use of transit, ridesharing, and active transportation modes through implementation of transportation demand management, including Commute Trip Reduction programs, Reduced Parking Areas, and other strategies.

**Policy GS-6.10:** Develop or update neighborhood and subarea plans for Tacoma's largest centers—Downtown, Tacoma Mall, and Crossroads Centers—to develop a set of prioritized investments to implement a community-informed vision for these areas.

## Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Center

**GOAL GS-7:** Downtown is Tacoma's largest center with the highest concentrations of housing and employment, transit access, thriving local businesses, and access to arts and culture.

**Policy GS-7.1:** Achieve Downtown Tacoma's regional targets for employment and housing, including both quantity and income levels for housing. Continue its growth as a regional center for innovation and exchange through diverse transit-oriented housing and employment.

**Policy GS-7.2:** Enhance public places and the Thea Foss Waterway in Downtown Tacoma as places of business and social activity for the people of its districts and the broader region. Integrate public art and cultural programming wherever possible and improve access to Thea Foss Waterway.

**Policy GS-7.3:** Transform Downtown Tacoma into a central destination for regional travel by collaborating with State plans for high-speed rail service and developing a vibrant, mixed-use TOD hub inside and around the future Tacoma Dome regional light rail station.

**Policy GS-7.4:** Develop Downtown Tacoma as a regional destination attracting people to come work, shop, and experience cultural life.

**Policy GS-7.5:** Establish Downtown as a series of interconnected neighborhoods and encourage development that recognizes and responds to the context of these unique subareas: Stadium, St. Helens, Hilltop, Commercial Core, UWT/Museum District, Old Brewery District, Foss Waterway, and Dome District, as shown in Exhibit 23.



Exhibit 23. Downtown Character Areas



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024



## Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center

**GOAL GS-8:** The Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center thrives as a hub of employment, housing, retail, and public services.

**Policy GS-8.1:** Achieve the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center's targets for employment and population growth. Continue its role as a retail destination while expanding economic opportunities and services.

**Policy GS-8.2:** Increase housing density so that the center has the largest concentration of housing in South Tacoma.

**Policy GS-8.3:** Improve internal pedestrian connectivity and connectivity to Downtown and regional transportation facilities to promote cohesion of the Center and to optimize access to the shopping and employment opportunities.

**Policy GS-8.4:** Collaborate with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit to connect Tacoma Mall to regional transit services (express bus and bus rapid transit) ahead of future potential expansion of the light rail.

**Policy GS-8.5:** Enhance the public realm to provide a better setting for business and social activity that serve South Tacoma and the region.

## Crossroads Centers

**GOAL GS-9:** Crossroads Centers are successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and beyond. They are transit-oriented and contain high concentrations of employment, institutions, commercial and community services, and a wide range of housing options.

**Policy GS-9.1:** Allow and encourage a wide range of housing types in Crossroads Centers, which are intended to generally be larger in scale than the surrounding residential areas. Housing types should be accessible to a wide range of income levels and include income-restricted affordable housing. The combined area of a Crossroads Center and the area within a half-mile walking distance of the Center should be able to accommodate a minimum of 5,000 households.

**Policy GS-9.2:** Improve Crossroads Centers as multimodal transportation hubs with ample and prominent public spaces through design standards, which optimize access to areas they serve and are linked to the region's transportation network. While connection to the region's high-capacity transit system is encouraged where feasible, it is recognized that not all Crossroads Centers can or will benefit from, or require such a connection.

**Policy GS-9.3:** Provide parks and/or public squares within or near Crossroads Centers to support their roles as places of focused business and social activity.

**Policy GS-9.4:** Complete any gaps in pedestrian and bike networks. Improve safety for nonmotorized modes of travel across these centers to connect destinations and reduce reliance of automobiles for everyday trips.

## Neighborhood Centers

**GOAL GS-10:** Neighborhood Centers are thriving activity hubs that serve the daily needs of residents, employees, and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Policy GS-10.1:** Neighborhood Centers are characterized by middle density housing and small to mid-scale commercial developments. Design a core commercial area, with integrated transit access, that provides jobs, retail, and services for the Center and its surrounding residential neighborhoods. Integrate commercial uses and a range of housing types in residential streets.

**Policy GS-10.2:** Ensure sufficient zoning within a half-mile walking distance of a Neighborhood Center to accommodate a minimum of 3,000 households in a variety of housing types.

**Policy GS-10.3:** Design Neighborhood Centers as transit-oriented communities that optimize pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods and are served by frequent, safe, and easily accessible transit service.

**Policy GS-10.4:** Provide small parks, gardens, or plazas within or near Neighborhood Centers to support their roles as places of local activity and gathering. Develop bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout these areas to promote a high quality of life for residents and connect all ages and abilities.

**Policy GS-10.5:** Prioritize frequent and accessible local transit service to Neighborhood Centers, recognizing their historical role as transit-oriented communities. Explore potential connections to the regional high-capacity transit system with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit, including the siting of maintenance and operations facilities for light rail in centers on Tier-1 corridors on the Frequent Transit Network to enhance access and connectivity to compact, walkable Tacoma neighborhoods from the regional transit system and to advance the goals and policies of the Transit Element.

## Employment Areas

**GOAL GS-11:** Tacoma's employment centers grow and thrive.

**Policy GS-11.1:** Ensure that there is sufficient zoning and development capacity to accommodate the 2050 employment growth allocations.

**Policy GS-11.2:** Encourage an equitable distribution of employment throughout the city.

**Policy GS-11.3:** Consider the land development and transportation needs of Tacoma's job centers when creating and amending land use plans and making infrastructure investments.

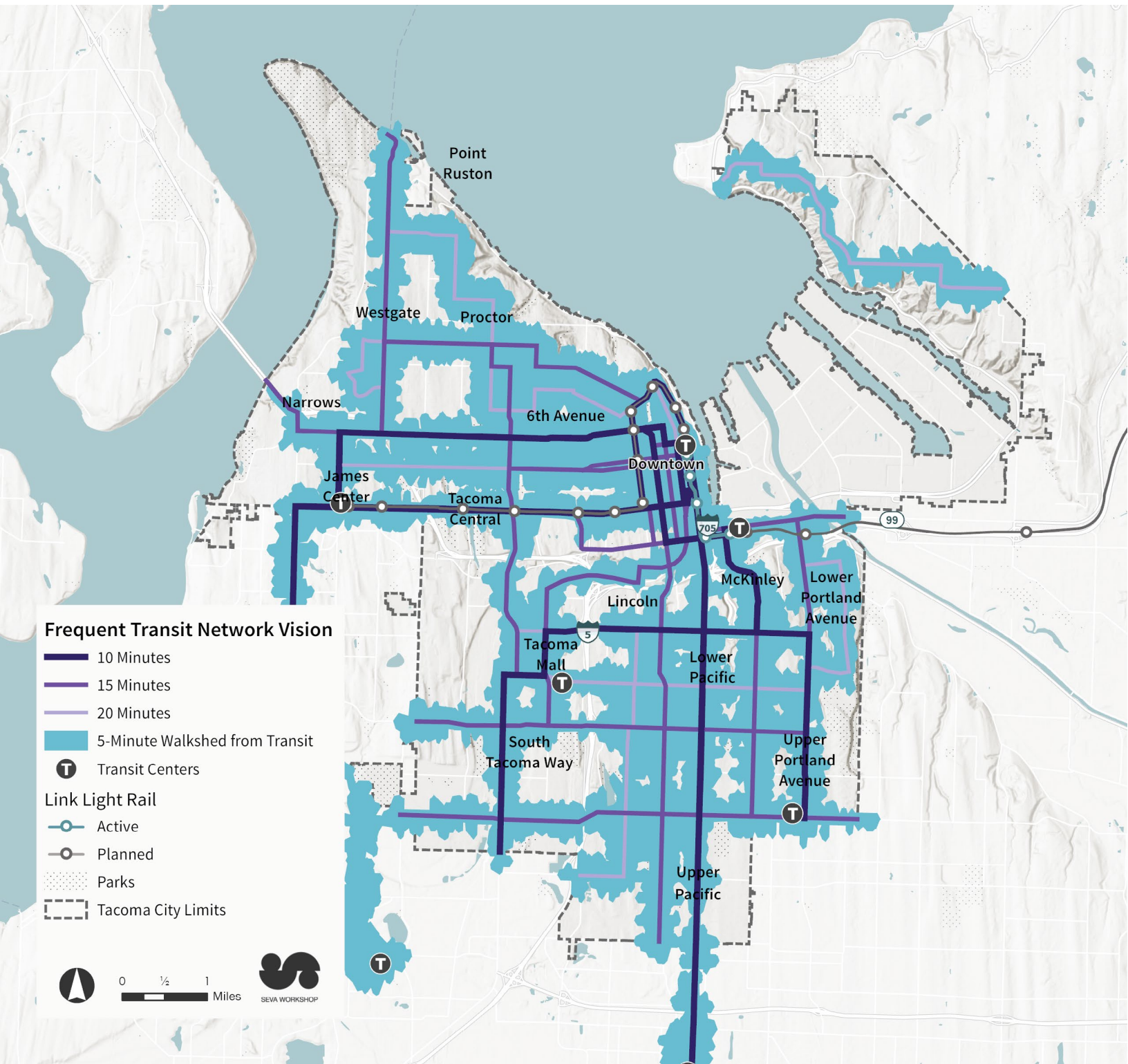
**Policy GS-11.4:** Concentrate employment centers and MICs in close proximity to transit and other public services and amenities.

**Policy GS-11.5:** Continue to support the city's MICs as locations for industrial and manufacturing employment.

**Policy GS-11.6:** Ensure existing infrastructure and utilities can support growth and existing activity in the MICs.

**Policy GS-11.7:** Support more neighborhood commercial opportunities and small, local businesses in and around Centers as residential density increases.

Exhibit 24. Frequent Transit Network Vision Map



Sources: Nelson Nygaard, 2024; City of Tacoma, 2024; Seva Workshop, 2024

## Transit-Oriented Development Areas

**GOAL GS-12:** Transit-oriented communities are distributed across Tacoma, supported through equitable transit-oriented development, high quality station areas that are accessible and safe, and multi-modal integration.

**Policy GS-12.1:** Ensure planned land use and zoning maximize activity units (jobs and population) within the five- and ten-minute walk or transit walksheds of frequent transit and bus stops. Planned land use and zoning designations should allow transit-supportive densities across as much of the corresponding transit walkshed as possible and investments in connectivity should be made to expand station area walksheds where feasible.

**Policy GS-12.2:** Promote land use strategies that complement place-based economic development and support employment growth within the ten-minute walkshed of key transit nodes.

**Policy GS-12.3:** Integrate transit stations into surrounding communities with accessibility features, thoughtful design elements, site-specific station art, and seamless connectivity with local transportation grids. Create areas near and connected to transit that are safe, comfortable, beautiful, and foster a sense of community. Ensure:

- a. adequate lighting
- b. seating and shade
- c. tree canopy
- d. public art
- e. well-maintained sidewalks with adequate widths
- f. protected bicycle lanes
- g. pedestrian-scale lighting at transit waiting areas
- h. safe and accessible crossings to support access to transit

**Policy GS-12.4:** Design transit areas to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and personal safety en route to accessing transit, within the station, and in the station area.

**Policy GS-12.5:** Encourage transit stations to provide high density concentrations of housing across a range of affordability levels, including income-restricted affordable units and commercial uses that maximize the ability of residents to live in high-quality mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods. Use incentives for encouraging desired types of development and promote development in underutilized urban tracts. Establish floor area ratio (FAR) minimums and transit-oriented standards and guidelines for new development along the Frequent Transit Network.

**Policy GS-12.6:** Enhance connections between major destinations and transit facilities to strengthen the role of these stations as places of focused activity. When siting new stations, collocate with existing activity hubs to build momentum for adjacent development.

**Policy GS-12.7:** Encourage middle housing types and transit-supportive levels of density in areas outside of centers but within walking distance of transit stations (Puget Sound Regional Council, 2015).

**Policy GS-12.8:** Create design standards for transit-supportive development, considering factors such as block size, zero lot line construction, public spaces like parks and plazas, and frontages that incorporate protection from inclement weather and enhance the public realm and pedestrian experience.



EQUITY IS A FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF THE ONE TACOMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, GUIDING EFFORTS TO PROVIDE ALL RESIDENTS—PARTICULARLY THOSE IN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED (LOWER OPPORTUNITY) NEIGHBORHOODS—WITH EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DAILY ESSENTIALS AND OPPORTUNITIES. BY PRIORITIZING TOD NEAR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC AMENITIES IN AREAS OF NEED, TACOMA ENSURES THAT THE BENEFITS OF GROWTH ARE DISTRIBUTED FAIRLY ACROSS THE CITY. EXPANDED TRANSIT OPTIONS, WHEN COMBINED WITH SAFE, WELCOMING PUBLIC SPACES AND APPROPRIATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, EXPANDED TRANSIT OPTIONS EMPOWER COMMUNITIES, MITIGATE DISPLACEMENT RISKS, AND ADDRESS LONG-STANDING DISPARITIES. THROUGH INCLUSIVE PLANNING, ONE TACOMA FOSTERS A CITY WHERE EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF INCOME OR BACKGROUND, CAN ACCESS DAILY WHEN COMBINED WITH SAFE, WELCOMING PUBLIC SPACES AND APPROPRIATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, EXPANDED TRANSIT OPTIONS EMPOWER.



**Policy GS-12.9:** Attract businesses needed by transit riders, and incorporate food and beverage vendors, restrooms, landscaping, and other daily essentials at transit centers.

**Policy GS-12.10:** Within walking distance of major transit stops as defined in municipal code, limit new or expanded surface parking lots, encourage the redevelopment of existing surface parking lots into housing and mixed uses through zoning regulations, density bonuses, economic development incentives and assessments allowed by State law. Develop parking maximums in transit-oriented areas to prevent oversaturation of parking as a land use.

## Integrated Transportation and Land Use

**GOAL GS-13:** Transportation planning and investments are coordinated with the Future Land Use Map and Frequent Transit Network Vision Map.

**Policy GS-13.1:** Ensure street patterns support multi-modal transportation choices for Tacomans with interventions such as establishing regularized grids, installing adequate multi-modal and accessibility infrastructure, and prioritizing the safety of vulnerable users over vehicular speeds.

**Policy GS-13.2:** Implement anti-displacement measures in tandem with transportation investments to foster inclusive development and stabilize communities, especially residents most vulnerable to displacement.

**Policy GS-13.3:** Consider the land use context for transportation investments, and vice versa, to ensure transportation choices and land uses are working in concert with each other. Ensure adequate zoning capacity, standards, and guidelines to establish transit-supportive densities in centers and along transit-oriented corridors.

**Policy GS-13.4:** Conduct inclusive planning studies that engage communities and stakeholders in shaping desired development outcomes in anticipation of frequent or high-capacity transit projects.

**Policy GS-13.5:** Establish interconnected street networks that connect activity centers identified in the Future Land Use Map and support the Frequent Transit Network Vision Map.

**Policy GS-13.6:** Invest in comprehensive multi-modal infrastructure prioritizing pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. This includes sidewalks, protected bike lanes, frequent and reliable transit service aligned with the Frequent Transit Network Vision Map, and universally accessible crossings connecting to key destinations outlined in the Future Land Use Map. This may require re-allocating space currently dedicated to unrestricted vehicle travel, reducing speeds, and implementing other strategies that prioritize movement for people over vehicles.

**Policy GS-13.7:** Recognize streets as vital public spaces. Design and manage them to simultaneously fulfill transportation needs and foster social interaction, connection to nature, habitat health, recreation, and other community purposes.

**Policy GS-13.8:** Support an enhanced pedestrian environment across all Tacoma neighborhoods, including complete and accessible sidewalks, trees, seating, and public art, with a particular emphasis on safe access to transit.



### TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE DENSITIES

RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES EXCEEDING 15 TO 20 HOMES PER ACRE, AS WELL AS EMPLOYMENT AREAS WITH DENSITIES OF 50 JOBS PER ACRE AND HIGHER, ARE PREFERRED TARGETS FOR THE HIGHER FREQUENCY AND HIGH-VOLUME SERVICE PROVIDED BY HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT. REGIONAL GROWTH CENTERS ARE EXPECTED TO PLAN FOR LAND USE THAT ACCOMMODATES AT LEAST 45 ACTIVITY UNITS (POPULATION AND JOBS) PER GROSS ACRE.

**Policy GS-13.9:** Public investment will prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure over new parking garage construction, requiring demonstrated need and alternative analysis for any new proposed publicly-funded parking facility.

**Policy GS-13.10:** Expand the City's capacity to deliver and maintain sidewalk infrastructure in the right-of-way by increasing funding for construction and repair, prioritizing historically under-resourced neighborhoods, and supporting financial assistance programs for low-income homeowners.



### Coordination and Transit-Supportive Densities

Supporting and promoting Tacoma's vision for a high-quality, frequent transit network (Exhibit 24) requires a high level of coordination across City of Tacoma departments, commissions, and City Council, as well as external agencies, such as the transit agencies operating within Tacoma, Pierce Transit and Sound Transit. In April 2019, the Tacoma City Council formed the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG) to help inform the design and development of significant transit projects throughout the city. The TODAG developed several issue papers and provided both formal and informal comment on transit investments; most notably, those within the Dome District. Additionally, the TODAG worked with a consultant to develop the Tacoma TOD Toolkit, serving as a foundational document for the City's upcoming efforts related to TOD.

Upon the recommendation of the TODAG, a resolution passed in May 2023 to sunset the TODAG and form the TOD Taskforce, a Joint Subcommittee of the Planning and Transportation Commissions. During the development of this Comprehensive Plan and updates to the City's TMP, the City of Tacoma and its transit agency partners Pierce Transit and Sound Transit met with the TOD Taskforce regularly, typically once per month. These meetings became a venue to coordinate and align plans, including an update to Pierce Transit's long-range Destination 2045 plan, as well as provide input and collaborate on critical transit station and station access investments forthcoming from Sound Transit.

The Taskforce became a working group to help align City staff, its consultants, transit agency partners, and City commissioners during the development of both the Comprehensive Plan and TMP. The Taskforce focused on the integration between land use and transportation, and provided critical input and recommendations on both the transit modal element of the TMP and the Growth Strategy Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Notably, the Taskforce urged the City to remain proactive in its advocacy for high quality transit service and to temporally align transit-supportive land use densities and coordinated capital investments along planned high frequency transit improvements.

## Annexation

Tacoma's UGA is an area surrounding the city that has been identified for future expansion. The city has four designated UGAs, also referred to as the Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs); namely, Fife Heights, Browns Point/Dash Point, and Parkland/Spanaway. The GMA states that cities should be the primary providers of urban services within UGAs and Tacoma does intend to meet this provision through close collaboration with other jurisdictions and strategic planning. Tacoma already provides some facilities and services in its UGAs and also encourages other service providers within the UGAs to provide similar LOS standards as the City. The City intends to jointly plan for the provision of public facilities and services with Pierce County, other neighboring jurisdictions, and regional service providers.

### **GOAL GS-14: Annex areas within Tacoma's Urban Growth Area when conditions are appropriate.**

**Policy GS-14.1:** Plan for future annexation of the city's PAAs in a collaborative manner with affected jurisdictions and residents (Exhibit 25).

**Policy GS-14.2:** Anticipate public facility and service needs of PAAs through long-range planning, and when feasible, develop facility capacities within the city to meet these needs prior to or after annexation.

**Policy GS-14.3:** Conduct joint planning efforts or studies with Pierce County and other adjacent jurisdictions for land use development, transportation, and services within UGAs to ensure development is orderly, compatible, sufficiently served, and consistent with City plans.

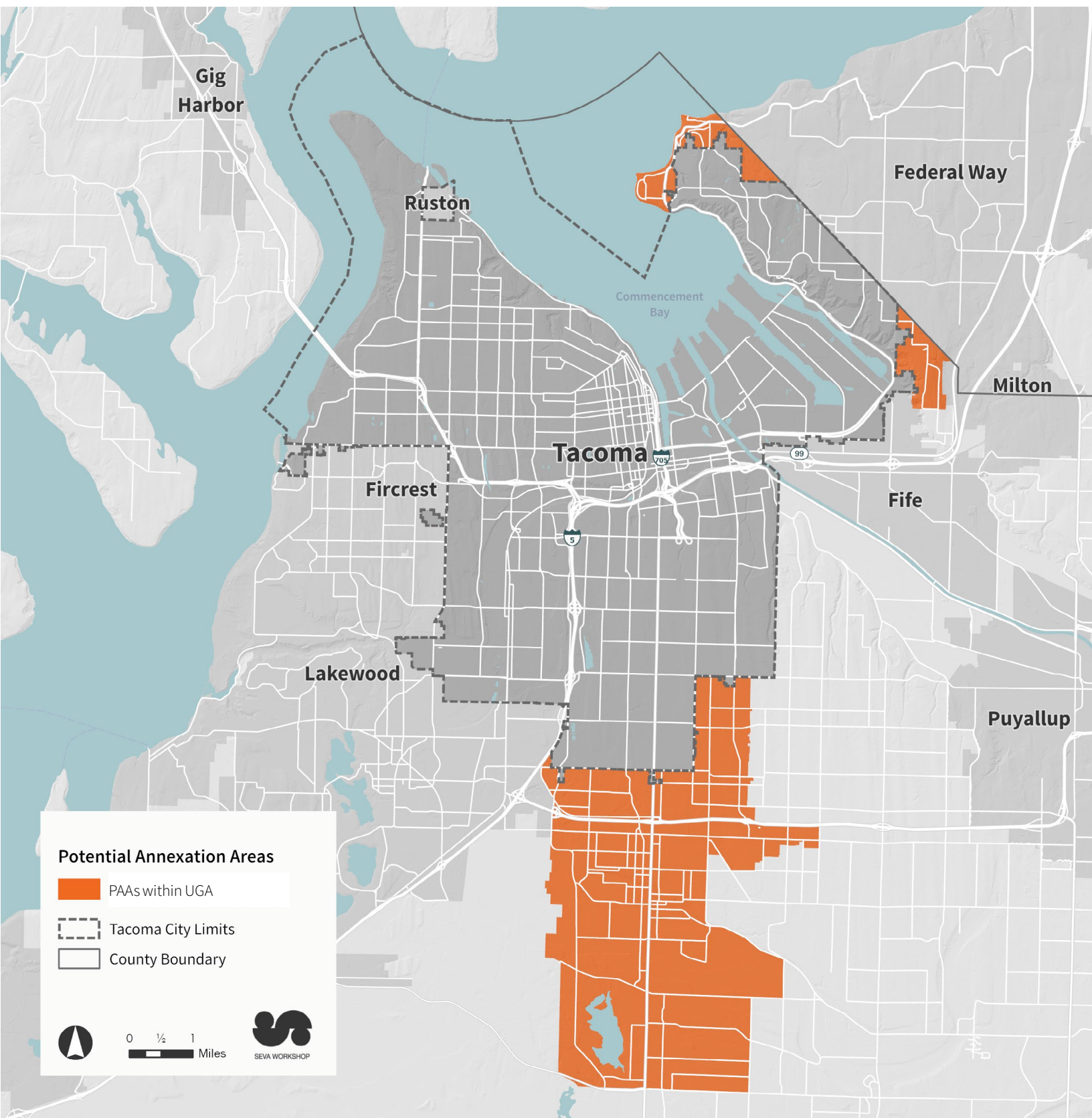
**Policy GS-14.4:** Ensure, through interlocal agreement or other mechanism, that development of land is consistent with the adopted policies and standards of the City, including the rate, amount, type and location of growth, and the provision and phasing of services within Tacoma's UGA.

**Policy GS-14.5:** Extend utility services within Tacoma's UGAs only upon annexation or if a commitment for annexation is in place.

**Policy GS-14.6:** Provide for active participation by affected residents and property owners in the joint planning, annexation proposals, or agreements for service within Tacoma's UGA.

**Policy GS-14.7:** Expand the city's boundaries within established UGAs in a manner that will benefit both the residents of Tacoma and the residents of the area to be annexed.

Exhibit 25. Potential Annexation Areas





## 2.3 Priority Actions

ACTION STEP	LEAD DEPARTMENT
Update Zoning and Development Regulations to implement policies in this element.	PDS
Conduct commercial zoning update, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update design and development standards for General and Neighborhood Commercial Zones to implement the goals and policies of the One Tacoma Plan.</li> <li>• Identify commercial areas appropriate for consideration as new MUCs or for incorporation into existing centers.</li> <li>• Consider minimum height, lot coverage, FAR, or other density standards for new development.</li> <li>• Identify commercial (and adjacent residential) areas appropriate for consideration as new Mixed-Use Centers. Develop criteria for the location and establishment of new centers to address gaps in retail and commercial service, to support transit ridership, and to expand 15-minute neighborhood access. Special consideration should be given to Neighborhood Council Districts that do not currently contain a MUC.</li> <li>• Consider expansion of existing centers to ensure consistent and logical boundaries, provide for adequate zoning and land use transitions, and to ensure an adequate residential zoning capacity within walking distance of the commercial core for commercial activation. Expanded centers should prioritize alignment with designated pedestrian streets and the Frequent Transit Network, and encourage complementary uses with nearby centers.</li> </ul>	PDS
Explore financial incentives and tools that could be effectively utilized to stimulate private investment in the centers.	PDS
Develop neighborhood plans for MUCs and Subarea Plans for Regional Growth Centers and Transit Investment Corridors.	PDS
Update the land use designation typologies for General Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial Areas on the Future Land Use Map.	PDS
Consider zoning districts or permit requirements to encourage major institutions to do master planning.	PDS

ACTION STEP	LEAD DEPARTMENT
Consider zoning or development standards to fully implement the policy intent of the parks and open space Future Land Use Map designation. Consider designation of an overlay zone.	PDS
Conduct area-wide rezones to bring the zoning districts into consistency with the Future Land Use Map.	PDS
Consider overlay zone that limits residential uses or sensitive uses adjacent to freeways and puts in place regulatory standards for indoor air quality.	PDS
Update incentives and height bonuses for the MUCs and regional growth centers.	PDS
Update Regional Growth Center subarea plans. Consider affordable housing requirements for those centers based on state law.	PDS
<p>Update the Land Use Designation table to more consistently address the following characteristics for each designation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location criteria – where is the designation appropriately applied.</li> <li>• Intent of the designation.</li> <li>• Typical characteristics, to include aspects such as parking and tree canopy.</li> <li>• Typical preferred and complementary land uses.</li> <li>• Typical range of building types and scale.</li> </ul>	PDS

# Technical Report

City of Tacoma, Washington

# ONE TACOMA

A Comprehensive Plan  
for a Vibrant, Connected,  
and Sustainable City

Community Profile | July 2024



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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Tacoma is situated on a natural delta region and traditional lands of the Puyallup Tribe. The U.S. government relocated several Puget Sound area tribes onto reservations through the Treaty of Medicine Creek 1854. Today the Puyallup Reservation encompasses all of Northeast Tacoma and parts of the New Tacoma and the Eastside neighborhood council district. Tacoma is a port city and the primary urban center on the South Puget Sound. The city is bordered by other incorporated suburban areas to the east and south and the Puget Sound waterways to the north and west. The Tacoma Narrows Bridge to the west connects to other incorporated communities on the Kitsap Peninsula.

In the most recent decade Tacoma has experienced demographic shifts. While the City has been growing, outlying suburban areas have been growing more rapidly. Families with children are declining as a share of the population in Tacoma and are proportionately more prevalent in outlying parts of Pierce County. Retirees and working age adults without children are growing as a proportion of the Tacoma population. Though families with children are declining overall, there are pockets of Tacoma where they are highly concentrated (Eastside, South Tacoma and South End neighborhood council district), in some places making up over 40% of all households. However, these areas also experience relatively high mobility, with households moving in or out of the city for better access to opportunities in work, homeownership, childcare or school.

Most communities of color are likely residing in the New Tacoma, Eastside, South End, and South Tacoma neighborhood council districts. There's a high concentration of Asian, Hispanic, and Latino communities in those areas that have varying degrees of English proficiency. Asian and Pacific Islander households have a lower English proficiency compared to other multilingual households.

Housing, income, and race are highly linked in Tacoma. For example, the median income of Tacoma's Black-headed households is nearly \$20,000 less annually than the overall median income. Black households are the only racial or ethnic group in Tacoma to experience declining homeownership rate over recent years and the most likely to be renting. Data shows that very low-income households are losing foothold in the Tacoma market, where homeownership rates have declined for the income bracket between 30-50% area median income. In contrast, more **extremely** low-income households are living in homes that they own relative to 10 years ago. In both Pierce County and Tacoma, the only other income bracket to decline in homeownership rates is those earning 100% or more of HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI). This may suggest a slight change in preference for renting or geographic mobility among higher earners.

## INCOME DEFINITIONS

Terms describing income are relative to the area's median income and adjusted for household size. As a reference point, the FY 2023 AMI was \$112,600.

- **Low-income:** A family whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent AMI
- **Very low-income:** A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of AMI
- **Extremely low-income:** A family whose annual income does not exceed 30 percent of AMI



## 2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The City of Tacoma is updating its Comprehensive Plan, One Tacoma, to plan for growth through the year 2050. This Community Profile is part of the scoping effort to understand the current context of the city and recent trends as a starting point for comprehensive plan research. It is also intended to serve as a key resource for shaping the community engagement process by summarizing information about City residents. The Community Profile is a working document, and each Comprehensive Plan chapter will expand on this research in the process of developing specific policies.

This Community Profile is developed using publicly available sources of data, including U.S. Census products, data products from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Washington State Office of Financial Management. Some findings from prior analysis and action planning efforts such as the Vision Zero Action Plan and the Analysis of Systemic Disparities in Achievable Housing Options report also appear in this document.

The 2015 One Tacoma Vision is that of a “15-minute city.” In other words, every Tacoma resident can reach daily essentials (groceries, school, parks, medical care, etc.) within 20 minutes without a car. This vision informed the selection of data presented.

### Document Organization

The community profile has three sections.

- **Geography** summarizes physical and administrative features and baseline data about availability of daily essentials.
- **Demographics** summarizes information about who lives in Tacoma and their individual identities and characteristics.
- **Individual and household outcomes** provides information about how residents are faring in terms of income, education, employment, housing and transportation. More detailed information about certain outcomes disaggregated by race and ethnicity may be available in the Equity Framework and baseline (see below).

### Other Reference Documents

Related documents developed (or in development) during the scoping phase for the Tacoma 2050 include:

- **Recent Engagement Gap Analysis:** A review of community engagement materials from recent years, highlighting gaps and priority populations.

- **Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline:** A review of relevant historical context, equity indicators, and baseline outcomes data disaggregated by race and ethnicity in Tacoma.
- **Equity Assessment Framework:** A summary of equity priorities and policy and review rubrics used for the Comprehensive Plan policy audit.
- **Engagement Plan:** A draft plan for Comprehensive Plan engagement in 2024-2025.

Tacoma's [Equity Index and Map](#) also contains a wealth of data on community demographics and 32 outcomes across Accessibility, Economy, Education, Livability, and Environmental Health. The Index summarizes these 32 indicators into a single measure of opportunity that ranges from very high to low. The Equity Index has been an integral tool for the City of Tacoma to shape and prioritize city policies, programs, and investments. This profile does not intend to replicate this work but will refer at times to high opportunity or low opportunity as defined by the Equity Index.

### 3 GEOGRAPHY

Encircling the natural deepwater port of Commencement Bay and rich in natural resources, the land that comprises the City of Tacoma has been inhabited for thousands of years. These traditional homelands of the Puyallup Tribe were conveyed to the United States in the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek and the City of Tacoma was incorporated in 1875 with a population of roughly 1,000. Today, the city is a dynamic, multiethnic community of 217,332 – the county seat and urban core of Pierce County and the third largest city in Washington State.

The City of Tacoma has eight neighborhood council districts as shown in Exhibit 1 each with distinct character. State Route 16/Interstate 5 delineates the three southern neighborhood council districts of South Tacoma, South End, and Eastside from the northern neighborhood council districts of North End, Central, New Tacoma, and North East before crossing the Tacoma Narrows strait to the Kitsap Peninsula to the west. The West End neighborhood council district has portions on both sides of SR-16. I-5 bisects the city in the south before running northeast out of the city. North East Tacoma is on the far north eastern side of Commencement Bay, separated from the rest of the city by New Tacoma neighborhood council district which is largely made up of industrial port areas and downtown as seen in Exhibit 2.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL DISTRICTS

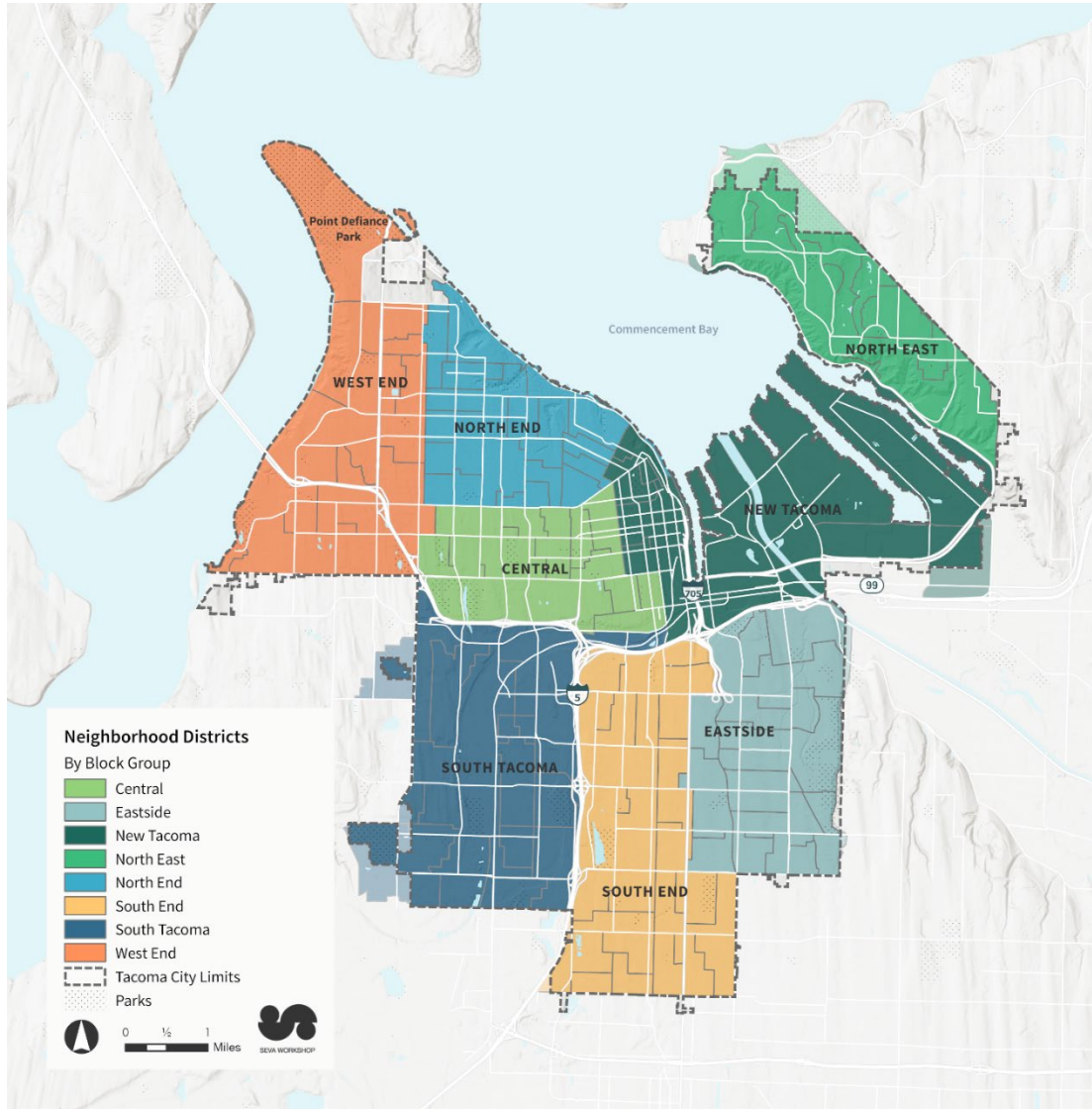
In 1992, the Tacoma City Council passed legislation designating eight Neighborhood Councils whose boundaries correspond to the City's traditional planning areas.

- Central Tacoma
- Eastside
- New Tacoma
- North End
- Northeast
- South End
- South Tacoma
- West End

The goal of the Neighborhood Council Program is to foster a partnership of open communication between the City and its neighborhoods and to ensure residents feel included and empowered to contribute to improving the livability of their communities. Each Neighborhood Council serves as an independent, non-profit organization to promote community-based efforts for neighborhood improvement.

Analysis in this document and other baseline conditions documents use neighborhood council districts to disaggregate data geographically. At times, the term “neighborhood” is used as shorthand for neighborhood council district. However, it is important to remember that these planning areas are large and diverse and contain many “neighborhoods” in the sense of the word meaning an area with distinguishing community characteristics and in the sense of a 15-minute neighborhood.

**Exhibit 1      City of Tacoma Neighborhood Council Districts, 2023**

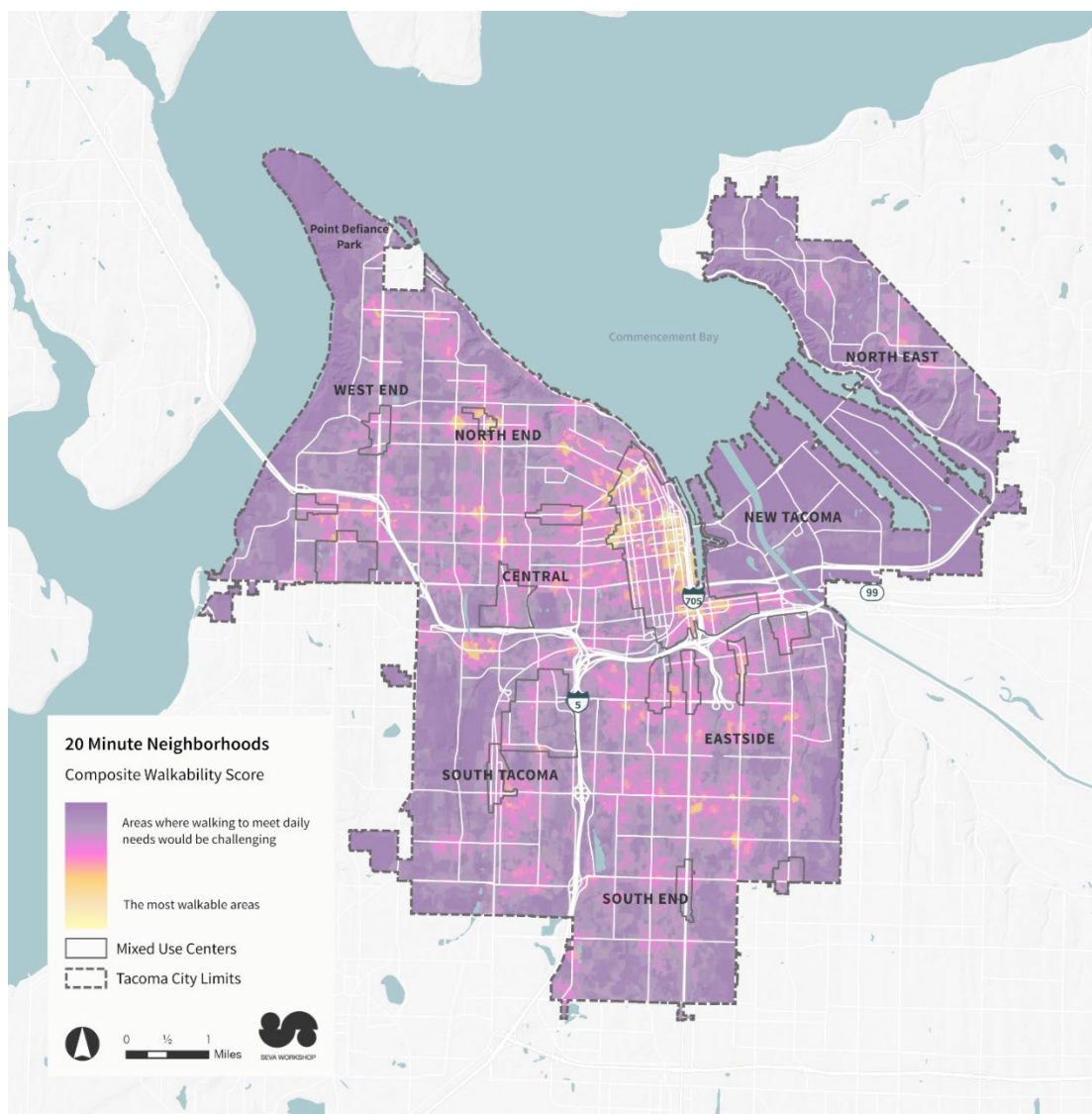


Source: City of Tacoma, Seva Workshop. 2023.



food stores, parks, and schools. The Vision also aspires to a robust multimodal transportation network and pedestrian infrastructure such that these amenities are accessible without a car. Tacoma residents vary in proximity to this vision, depending on where they live as shown in Exhibit 3. The Stadium to Dome corridor through the downtown core, Hilltop in Central Tacoma, Oakland/Madrona in South Tacoma, and the Proctor District in North End score highly on the composite walkability score and would be considered 20-minute neighborhoods. Most of the rest of Tacoma rates as areas where walking to meet daily needs would be challenging using these criteria. Further analysis will be needed to see which neighborhoods meet the 15-minute neighborhood vision.

**Exhibit 3      20-minute Neighborhoods Based on 2015 Vision**



Source: City of Tacoma, 2015.

## 3.2 Access to Parks and Open Space

In the City of Tacoma, park and open space services are provided by the City in partnership with Metro Parks Tacoma. Active areas are those that are developed for and dedicated to community access and recreation. Passive open space properties are generally undeveloped and covered with vegetation and most provide or have the potential to provide benefits to stormwater quantity and quality. There are approximately 1,480 acres of active open space and parks and 3,900 acres of passive open space (including undeveloped private property) in the City of Tacoma<sup>1</sup>. In 2014, the passive open space parcels were transferred from the City Planning and Development Services to Environmental Services while Active open space sites remain managed by the City's Public Works Department, specifically the Real Property Services section.

In 2018, Metro Parks Tacoma adopted, and the City of Tacoma endorsed, the goal that every resident within the Park District have access to a park or open space within a 10-minute walk of their residence. Metro Parks analysis conducted as part of their 2024 update of the System and Strategic Plan noted that only approximately 75% of Tacoma residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. They have identified the Tacoma Mall Area, Southwest Tacoma Area, Helen B. Stafford Elementary Area, Northwest Tacoma (Silas High School Area), and the Larchmont & Fern Hill Neighborhoods as particularly underserved by parks access<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Tacoma, Parks and Open Space Inventory

<sup>2</sup> Metro Parks Tacoma System & Strategic Plan, <https://engagepiercecounty.mysocialpinpoint.com/strategic-plan>

**Exhibit 4** Parks in Tacoma, with 10-minute walksheds.



Sources: City of Tacoma, 2022; Seva Workshop, 2023.

### 3.3 Tree Cover

Tacoma, with 20% of the land area covered by tree canopy, has the least amount of tree canopy as a percentage of land cover for all communities assessed in the Puget Sound

Region<sup>3</sup>. The City of Tacoma Urban Forestry team has committed to a goal of 30% tree canopy cover by 2030. Tacoma's existing tree canopy is mapped in Exhibit 5.

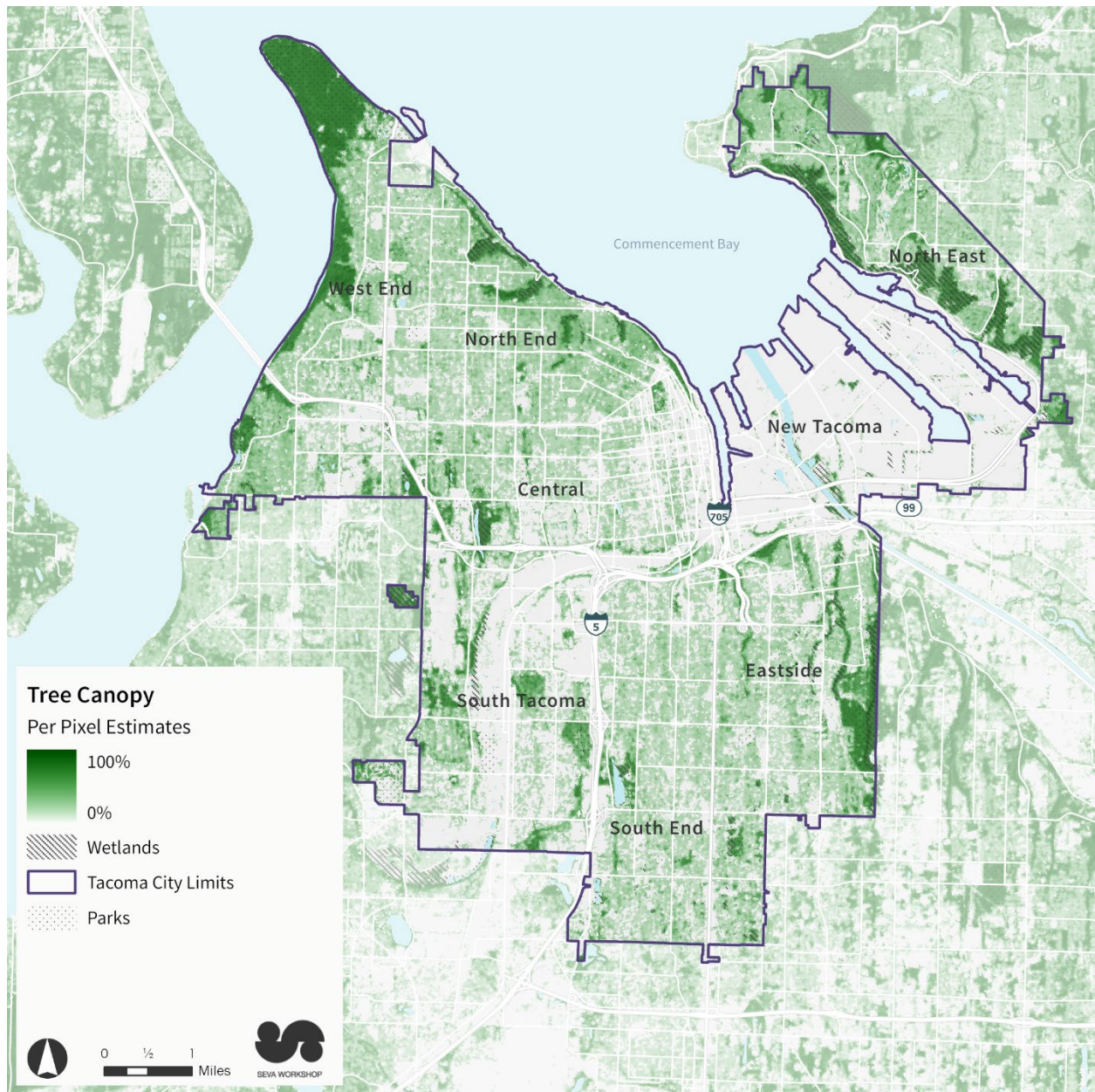
When an area has fewer green spaces and more impervious surfaces like roads, parking lots, and buildings, etc. it absorbs and retains more heat from the sun and can create a heat island. Because of built infrastructure, many urban areas experience higher temperatures compared to their rural surroundings. This difference in temperature is what defines an urban heat island effect. A 2020 analysis conducted by Earth Economics found that urban heat islands in Tacoma increase maximum temperatures by as much as 6.2°F above the local baseline. Combined with regional climatic effects, neighborhoods in Central and South Tacoma may be as much as 14°F hotter than neighborhoods in North Tacoma. Higher opportunity neighborhoods, according to the Equity Index, have 15% more tree cover than lower opportunity neighborhoods. Lower opportunity neighborhoods have 19% more impervious surface than higher opportunity neighborhoods.

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<sup>3</sup> [“Urban Tree Canopy Assessment”](#) City of Tacoma, 2018



**Exhibit 5** Tree Canopy in Tacoma, 2017.



Source: City of Tacoma, 2017; Seva Workshop, 2023.

## 3.4 Access to Transportation and Complete Streets

A safe and accessible multimodal transportation network is key for ensuring the health and wellbeing of the Tacoma community. Currently, many in Tacoma do not have direct access to

quality pedestrian infrastructure, public transportation, or bicycle lanes. Addressing traffic safety concerns for travelers of all modes is a top priority for ensuring community health. In February 2020, Tacoma City Council adopted Resolution 40559 committing to Vision Zero and setting the goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2035. While the City of Tacoma has made substantive efforts to create safer streets over many years, there is still an unacceptable number of crashes.

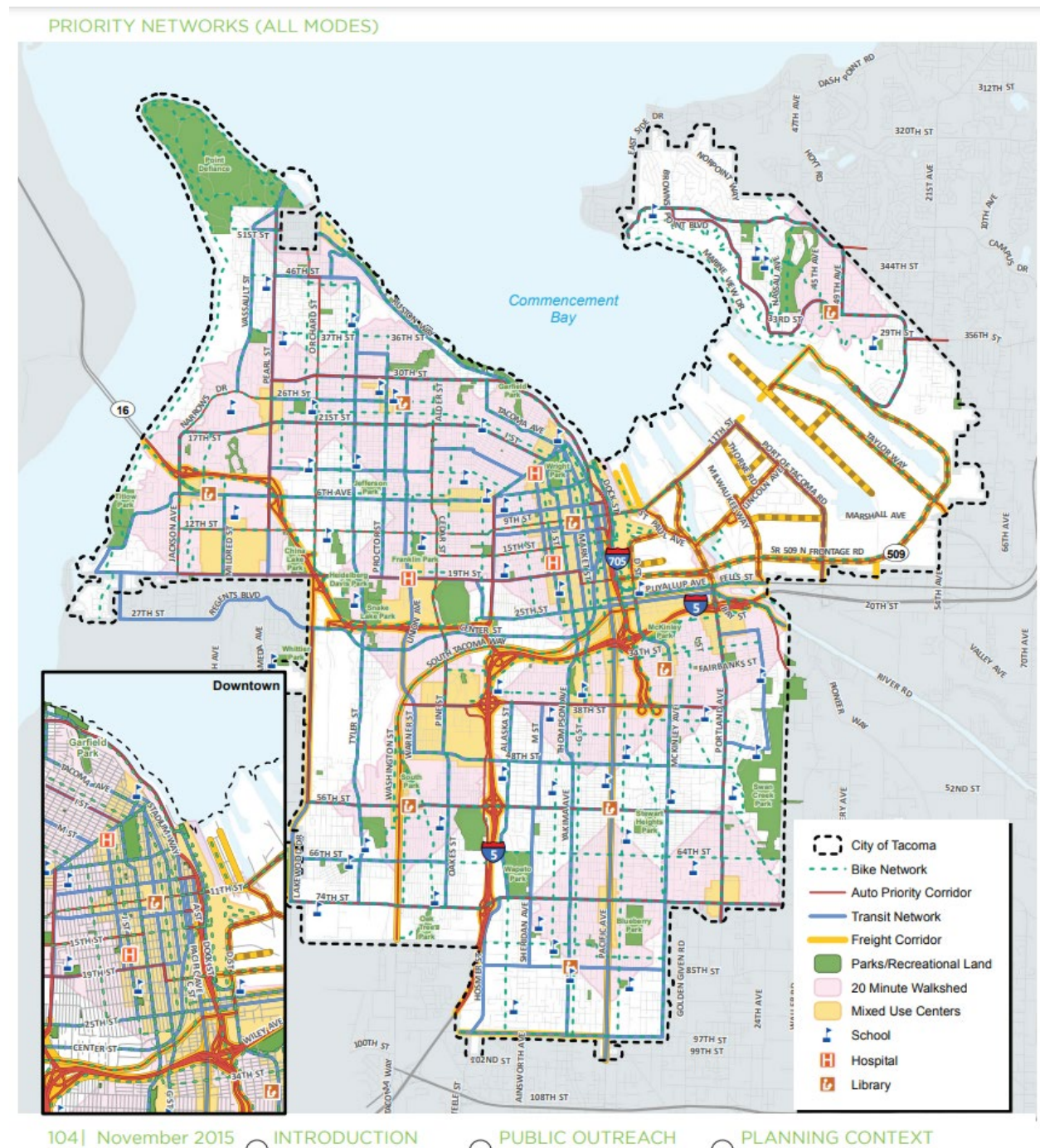
In alignment with the City's Complete Streets ordinance adopted in 2009 and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City is working to make Tacoma's streets safe and accessible for all ages and abilities. The City manages 760 miles of streets and over a thousand miles of sidewalks<sup>4</sup>. These assets represent a huge opportunity for improving community health and the daily experience of moving in and around Tacoma. The 2015 Transportation Master Plan outlines a vision for a comprehensive network of multimodal transportation across Tacoma (see Exhibit 6). Many elements of this vision remain unrealized. The Transportation Master Plan will be updated as part of the comprehensive planning process to align with the updated future land use map.

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<sup>4</sup> City of Tacoma, Transportation Inventory, 2022



Exhibit 6 Vision for Multimodal Transportation Networks in Tacoma, 2015.



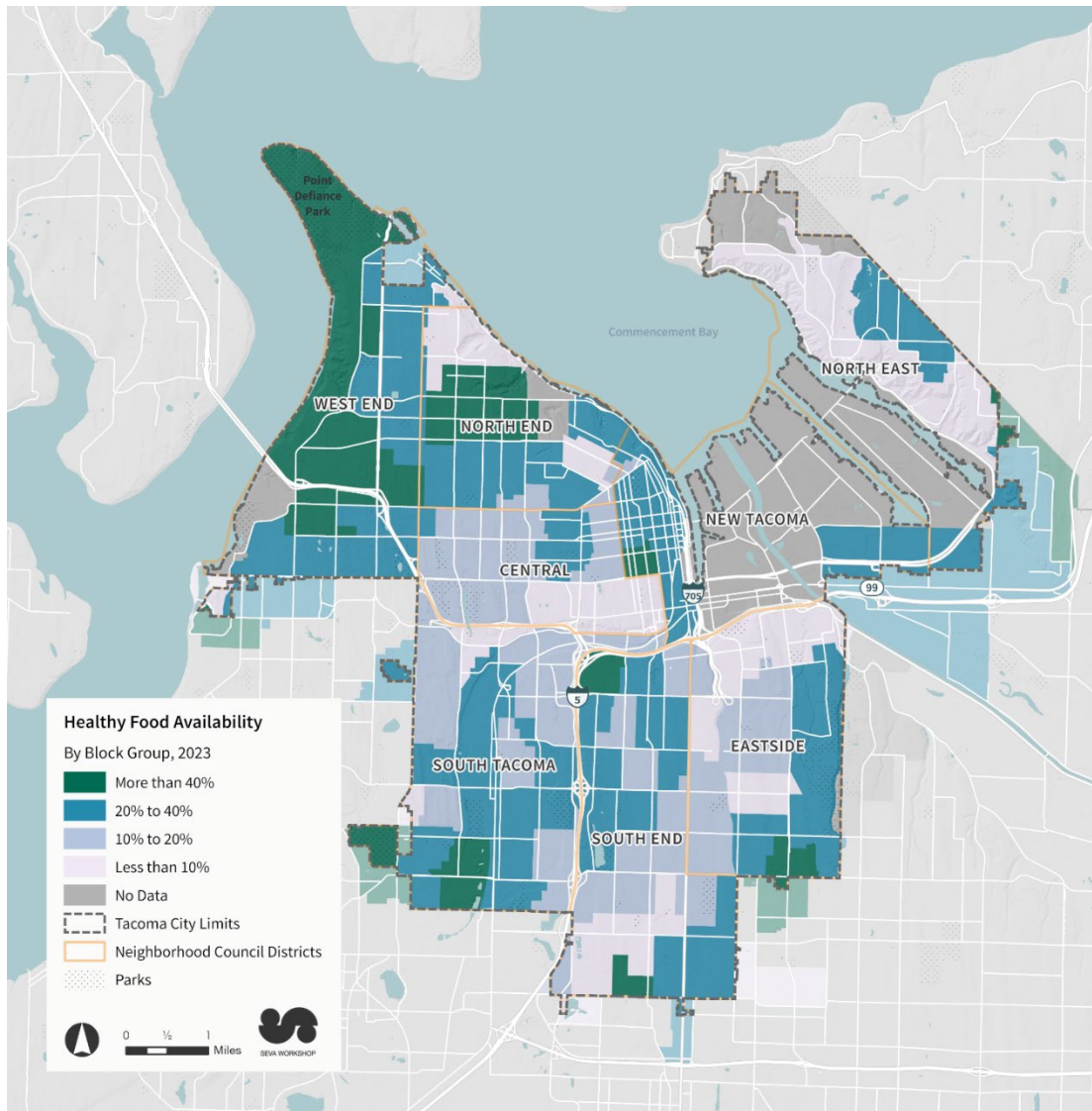
Source: City of Tacoma, Transportation Master Plan, 2015

## 3.5 Access to Healthy Food

Healthy food is one of the daily essentials contained in the draft vision for Tacoma. City plans and programs can create the conditions for healthy food stores and temporary food markets to open in neighborhoods, as well as support mobile food options, food affordability, and food distribution. The Tacoma Equity Index uses the modified Retail Food Environment Index (mRFEI) to measure access to healthy food, a methodology first used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The mRFEI is the percentage of all food retailers in an area that are considered healthy. This measure captures areas with no food options (“food deserts”; correspond to a score of zero) as well as areas that have food outlets that are dominated by large relative amounts of unhealthy snack foods (“food swamps”; correspond to lower scores) (Centers for Disease Control). City-wide the mRFEI ratio is about 0.25, meaning about one out of every four food retailers is considered healthy. Areas that tend to have more unhealthy options than healthy options are in Central Tacoma, South End, and Eastside.



## Exhibit 7 Food Access Map of Tacoma.



Source: City of Tacoma, Equity Index 2024.

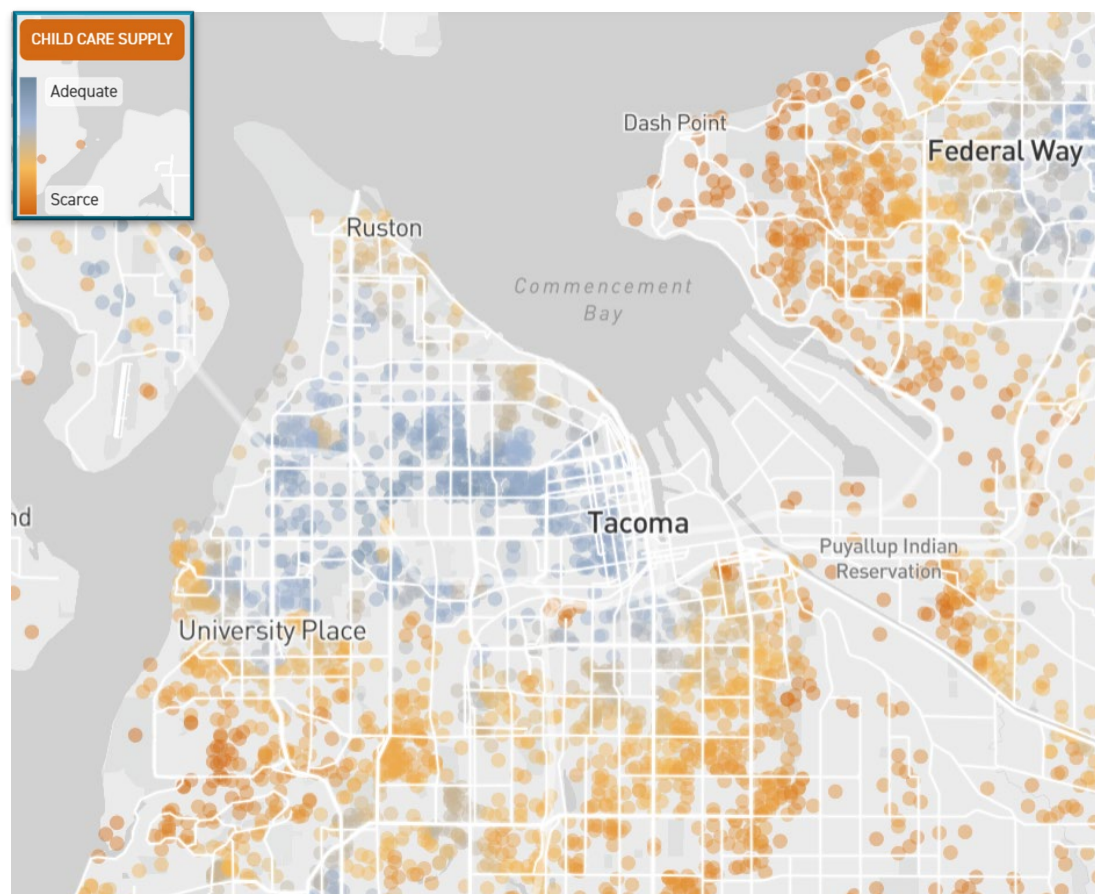
## 3.6 Access to Childcare

In Tacoma, current licensed childcare availability only meets the needs of approximately 25% of children under 6 in low- and low-middle income families ( $\leq 85\%$  state median income) who need care. For infants and toddlers (under 3 years old) only 15.3% of the estimated need is met.

Between childcare centers and family childcare homes, there were over 4,000 childcare slots in the TPS Boundary before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, much of the area

is considered a childcare desert by the Center for American Progress and the areas of low childcare access overlap with areas of high poverty in the region<sup>5</sup>.

## Exhibit 8 Childcare Supply Relative to Demand



Source: Center for American Progress, Child Care Deserts, 2023.

In 2020, the average monthly cost of full-time childcare in Pierce County was \$987 per child, which meant 18 percent of the median household income for a family with a child aged 6 years or younger went towards childcare costs. Paying for childcare is a larger financial burden for households with a single parent, where 28 percent of the household income went towards childcare costs. Black households with a single parent spent 36 percent of their household income on childcare costs. Comparatively, households with two parents spent 15 percent of their household income on childcare costs. A White household with two parents spent 14 percent of their household income on childcare costs<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> “Head Start Needs Assessment”, Tacoma Public Schools, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.childcareaware.org/our-issues/research/ccdc/state/wa/>

## 4 DEMOGRAPHICS

Tacoma has grown in the past decade, but its growth has been slower than the county as a whole. Compared to 2011, Tacoma today is a city with smaller-sized households, more retirees, and a higher proportion of working-aged adults without children. There is a declining proportion of teenagers and families with young children. The main driver of regional growth in recent years has been net migration, as opposed to natural causes, which has been stable or declining due to a declining birth rate coupled with the aging population. Net migration primarily comes from other parts of the County and Washington State (as opposed to out of state and international migration).

Tacoma and Pierce County have been particularly attractive for the Baby Boomer generation, having experienced high rates of growth among adults between 60 and 79 years of age. In Tacoma, there has been a 45% increase in the size of this population from 2011 to 2021. Countywide, this cohort has grown by 50%. Tacoma has also been a destination for 30-39 year olds which has seen a large proportional increase in the population. The population of middle-aged adults (40 – 59) has remained relatively stagnant in size. This is fairly consistent with countywide trends, although there is slightly higher growth shown at that scale. This reflects the smaller size of Gen X nationally.

Areas adjacent to Tacoma have grown much faster than the city in both population and housing units. Relative to other parts of Pierce County, the population of households with young children in Tacoma and school age children has remained relatively stagnant or declining. This change has important implications for the school networks and local service providers. In conjunction with changes observed in surrounding areas, families with children may be leaving the city for home ownership opportunities, opportunities to access different schools, affordable childcare, and/or larger unit sizes that may support working from home or larger families. Tacoma is also not attracting many adults in their 20s or families with 2 or more children relative to other parts of Pierce County, again suggesting affordability concerns.

Opportunities for homeownership have tightened in Tacoma over recent years. Housing sales prices have been on a steep incline without wage increase to match. Low-income households especially have lost ground in homeownership rates, as have Black households.

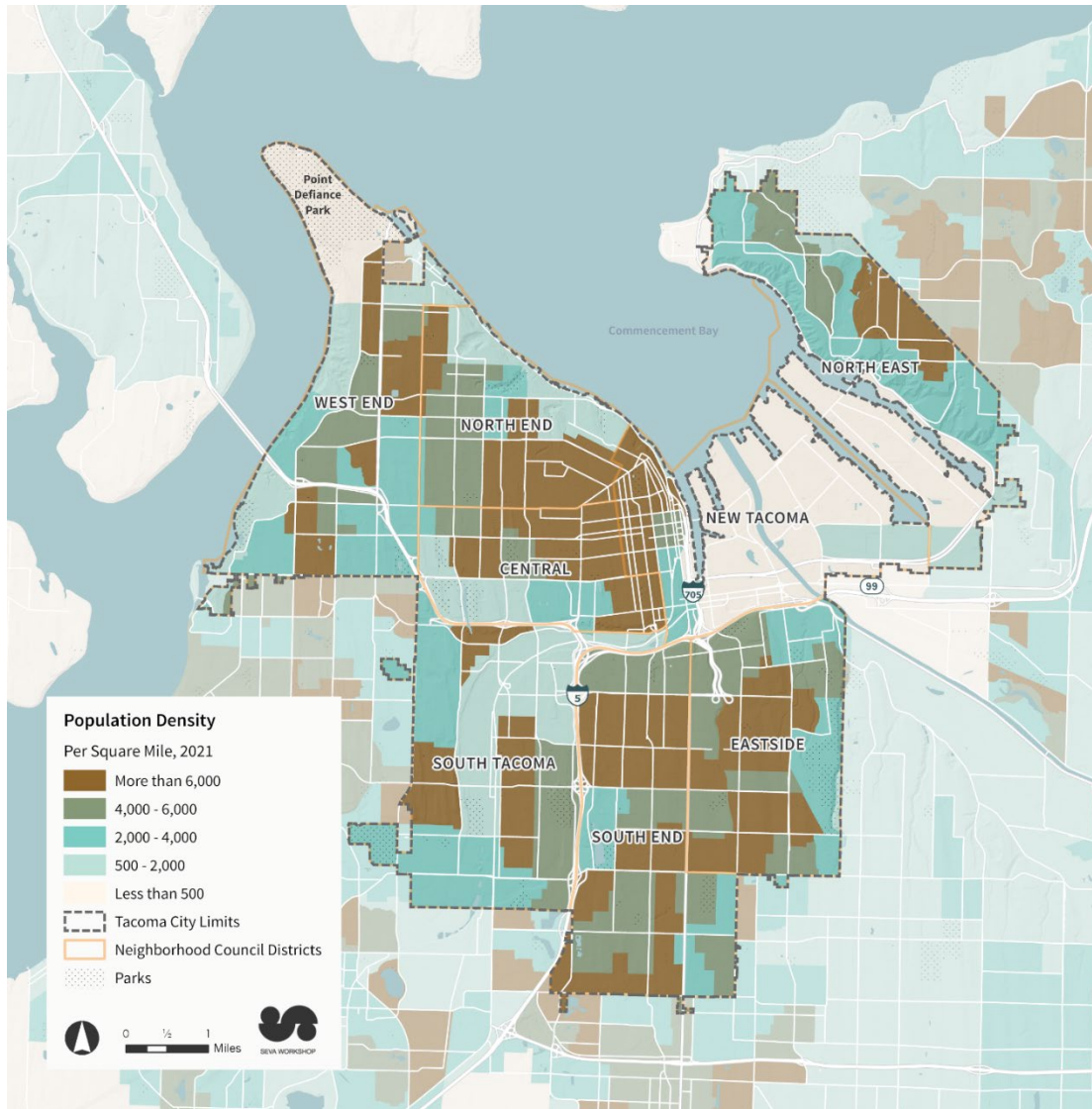
### 4.1 Population

The City of Tacoma has an estimated population of 217,332 people (2021), up 9% over the past ten years. The average annual rate of population growth over this decade (2011 to 2021) is 0.9%. In Pierce County overall, there has been an average of 1.4% population growth annually, over this same time period. The most rapid rates of growth in Pierce County have been in incorporated areas adjacent to Tacoma such as Gig Harbor (5.3%) and Ruston (3.5%). Nearby communities of Milton (3.5%) and Edgewood (3.4%) have also seen high rates of growth.



Central Tacoma, Eastside, and South End have the greatest land areas with high population density, more than 6,000 people per square mile. The neighborhood council districts of West End, South Tacoma, and North East are less densely populated these are geographically very large areas and include variation in population density. As can be seen on the following map, Exhibit 9, the incorporated areas surrounding Tacoma to the northeast, south, and west have similar levels of population density.

**Exhibit 9 Tacoma Population Density, 2021**



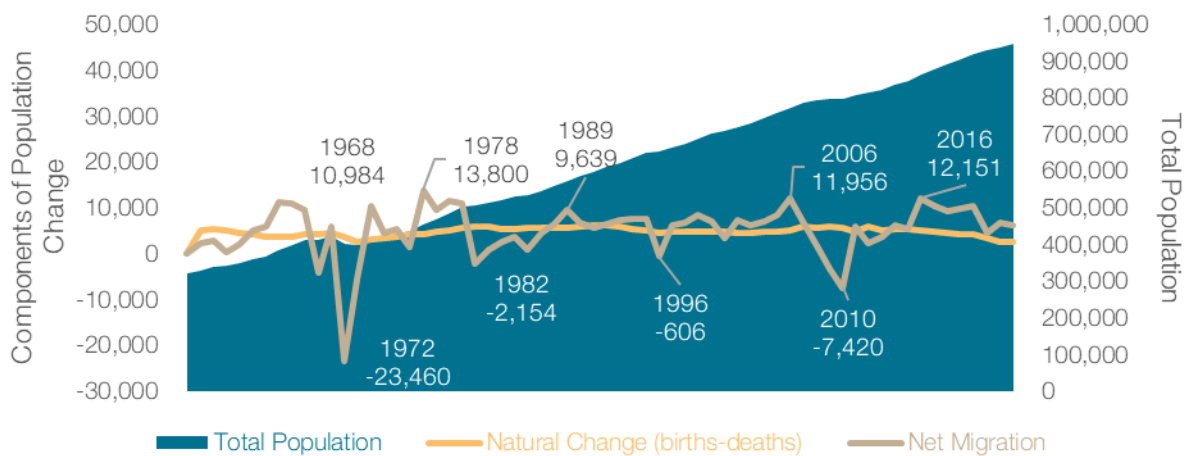
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017 to 2021).

The Office of Financial Management estimates components of population change at the County level based on census estimates and vital statistics. Population change in a given region is comprised of natural change (births minus deaths) and net migration (people moving in minus



people moving out). As shown in Exhibit 10, the combination of births and deaths has been a steady, and in recent years slightly declining, contributor to population growth in Pierce County. This reflects broad trends in decreasing birth rates and an aging population. Net migration has been a more volatile variable in population change with a few peaks and valleys highlighted in the following exhibit. Since 2016, net migration has been the more significant contributor to population growth in Pierce County (as opposed to natural change).

**Exhibit 10 Total Population and Components of Population Change 1960-2023, Pierce County**

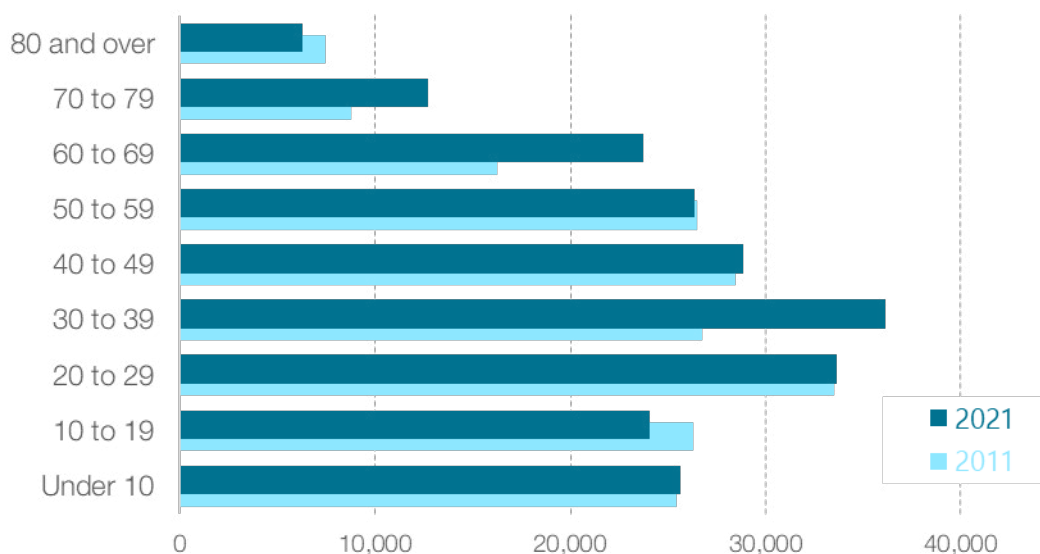


Source: Office of Financial Management April 1 population estimates, U.S. Census Bureau decennial census counts, and vital statistics from the Washington State Department of Health.

Exhibit 11 and Exhibit 12 show that the age cohorts contributing the most to population growth between the years 2011 and 2021 have been 60 to 79 year olds and 30 to 39 year olds in both the City of Tacoma and Pierce County overall. The retirement age cohort has grown by roughly 50% in both regions over the past decade.

However, there are also notable differences between the City of Tacoma and Pierce County in population changes by age. For example, the City of Tacoma has seen little to negative growth in the number of young people (ages 0 to 29) in the population while Pierce County has had growth in line with overall trends or greater. Tacoma has also had a net loss of residents aged 80 and over while Pierce County has seen this population grow.

**Exhibit 11** City of Tacoma Population by Age, 2011 and 2021



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017 to 2021).

**Exhibit 12** Tacoma and Pierce County Percent Population Change (%) by Age Cohort, 2011-2021.

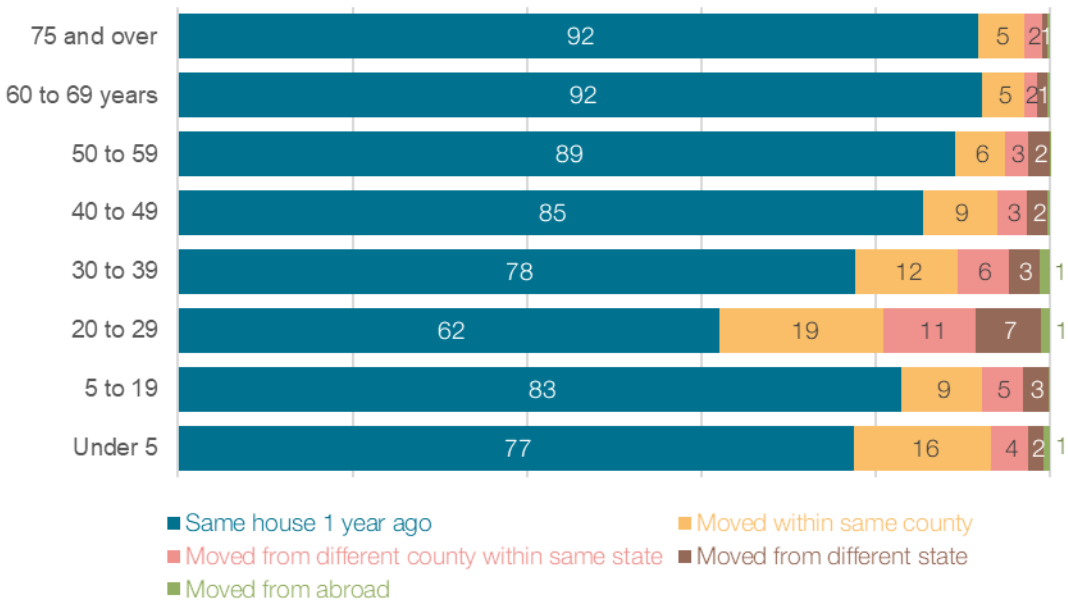
	Tacoma	Pierce County
<b>Under 10</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>10 to 19</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>20 to 29</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>30 to 39</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>40 to 49</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>50 to 59</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>60 to 69</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>70 to 79</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>80 and over</b>	<b>-16%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Total Population Change</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2011 & 2021.

There is a high degree of intra-county geographic mobility, especially in younger age cohorts. Compared to their residence one year ago, 19% of those between age 20 and 29 and 16% of those under 5 years old were living somewhere else in Pierce County. The 20 to 29 year old age cohort is also the most likely to have moved in from somewhere else in the state or from another state. Though Tacoma has a very significant foreign-born population (see 4.5

Immigration) moves from abroad was a much smaller contributor to net migration in the last year compared to within-County and within State moves.

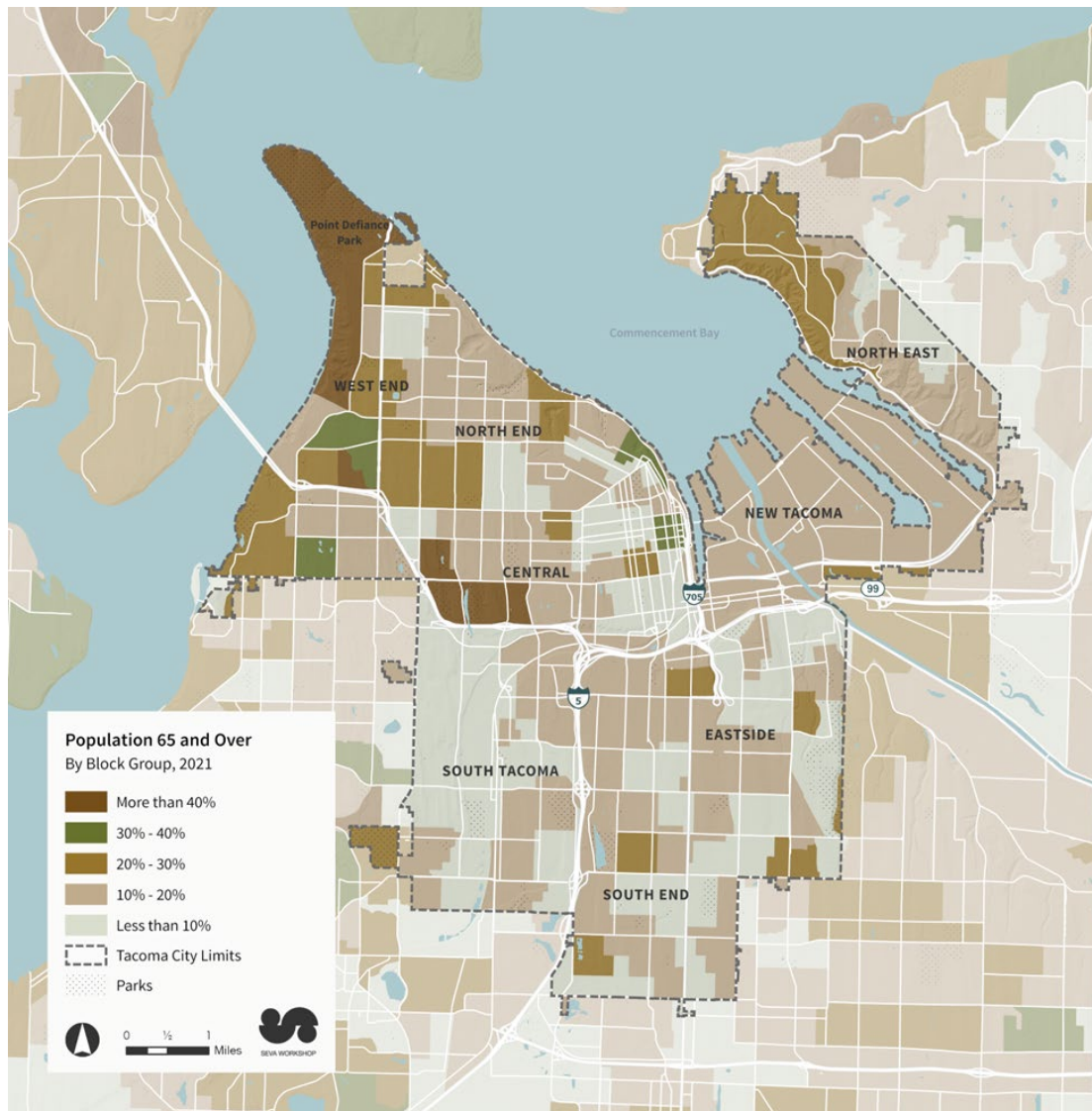
**Exhibit 13 Tacoma Geographic Mobility by Age, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

The areas shown on the following map with the largest proportion of population 65 years old and older are largely natural and commercial areas with overall low population density, including Port Defiance, Brown's Point and the Cheney Stadium and Allenmore Hospital and Golf Course area. Several senior and retirement housing options, as well as adult family homes and assisted living facilities can be found in these areas. Outside of these areas, the senior population tends to live in West End and North End neighborhood council district, with other pockets scattered throughout the rest of the city.

**Exhibit 14** City of Tacoma Population Age 65 and Older, 2023

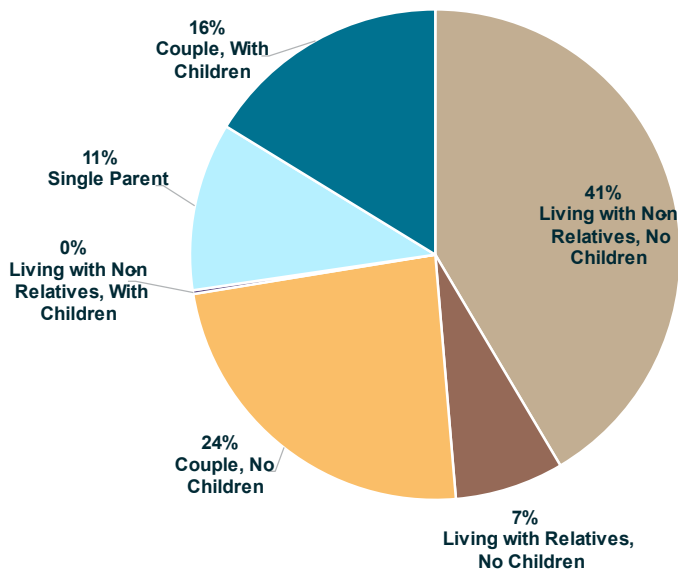


## 4.2 Household Composition

An estimated 87,379 households reside in Tacoma, up approximately 10% in the last ten years and in line with overall population growth. This translates to an average of 2.4 people per household.



Figure 15 Household Composition in Tacoma, 2021



Note: Household composition considers children as all persons under 18 years of age living in the household, regardless of relation to the householder.  
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021) B11005; Seva Workshop, 2023.

Exhibit 16 Change in Household Composition in Tacoma & Pierce County, 2011 & 2021

Households by type	Tacoma		Pierce County		% change 2011-2021	
	2011	2021	2011	2021	Tacoma	Pierce County
Households with children under 18	24,365	24,091	105,422	110,973	-1%	5%
Households without children under 18	55,065	63,288	192,417	224,996	15%	17%

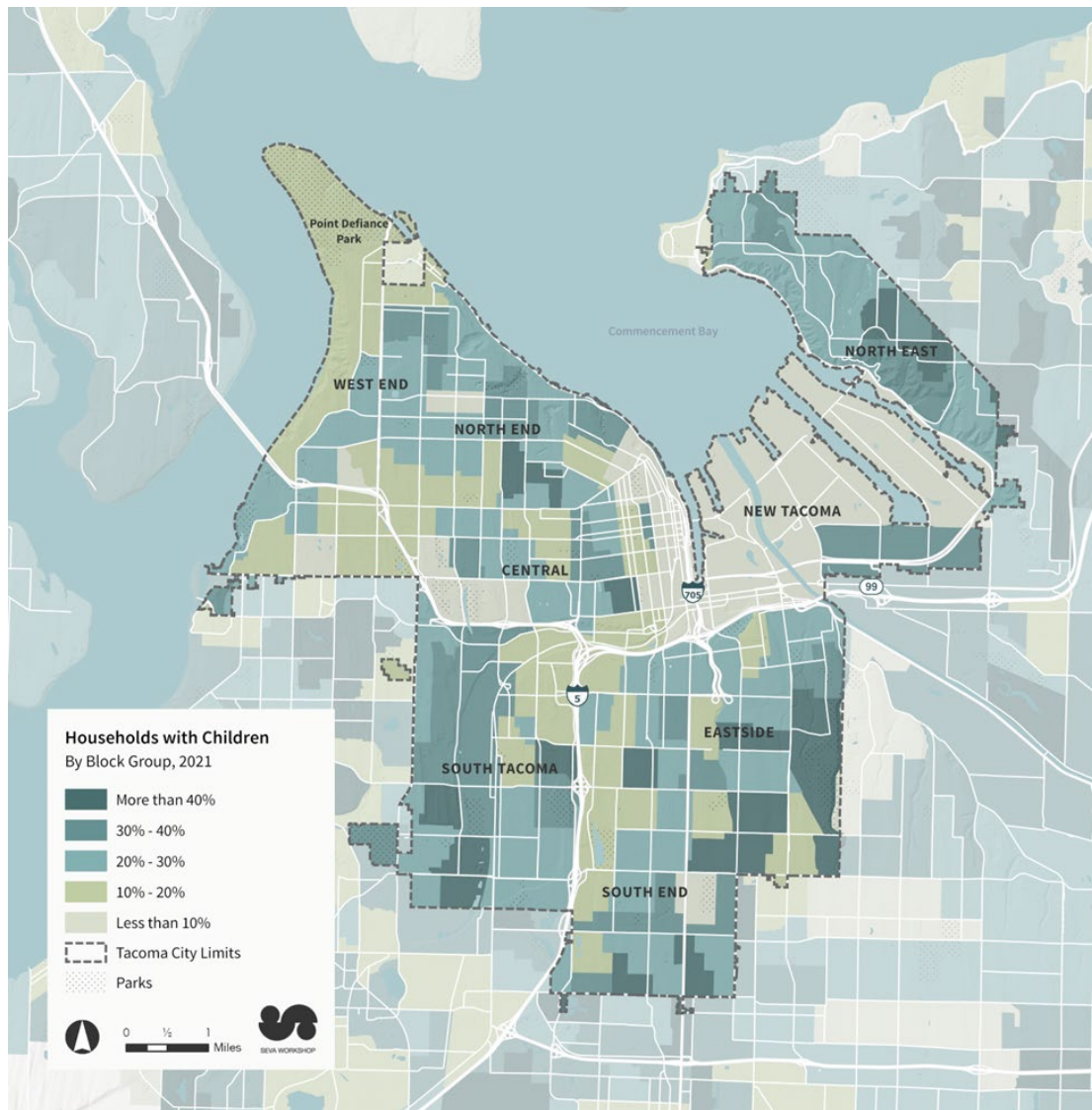
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021) B11005; Seva Workshop, 2023.

Overall, 28% of Tacoma households have children. In 2011, this figure was 31%. Despite overall population growth in this period, Tacoma has fewer households with children under 18 today compared to 2011. This aligns with the overall trend observed in age cohorts with a reduced proportion of children in the city. In contrast, Pierce County has had a modest increase in households with children. Households without children have significantly increased both in Tacoma and in Pierce County overall, and at similar rates.

The households with children in Tacoma tend to concentrate in more affordable residential neighborhoods and near schools. The map in Exhibit 17 explores this geographic distribution, with higher concentrations of children in neighborhood council districts including North East Tacoma, Eastside, South Tacoma and South End, as well as the North End. In some of these residential pockets of Tacoma, over 40% of households have children. Many of these areas with

the highest density of children also about other parts of Pierce County that have similarly high concentrations of households with children. Together with the high within-county geographic mobility for these age groups, these data suggest a high degree of movement for families with young children across the line dividing the City of Tacoma from the rest of Pierce County.

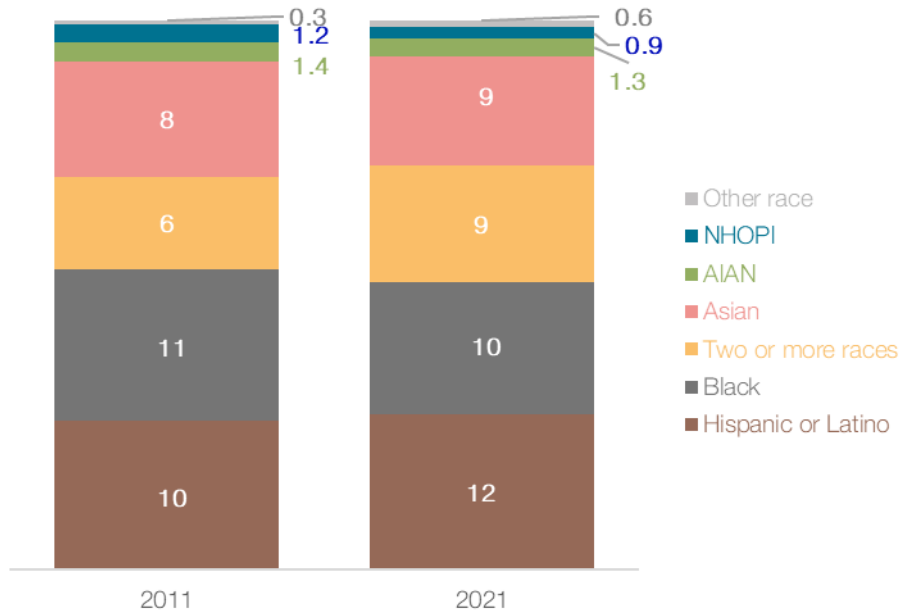
**Exhibit 17 Tacoma Density Map for Households with Children, 2021**



Note: Household composition considers children as all persons under 18 years of age living in the household, regardless of relation to the householder.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

**Exhibit 19 Race and Ethnicity in Tacoma, People of Color Detail 2011 & 2021**

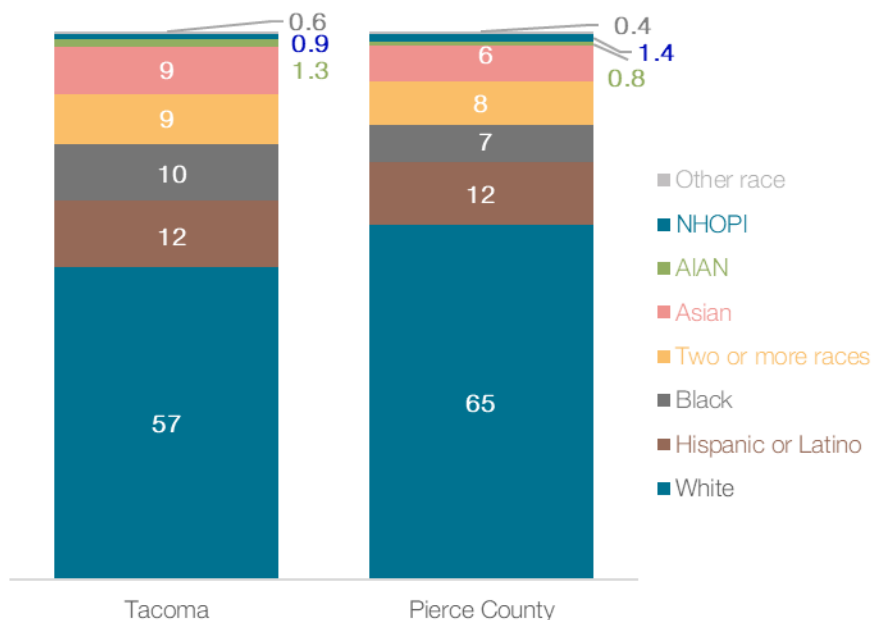


Note: AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPi=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Hispanic or Latino is an ethnicity. The Hispanic or Latino category includes Hispanic and Latine people of all races. All other categories show non-Hispanic races.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2011 & 2021.

Compared to Pierce County, Tacoma has a higher proportion of People of Color. This is particularly true for the Asian and Black communities, as well as the American Indian and Alaska Native, 'Other race', and multiracial identities. The percentage that identifies as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander may appear small. However, these populations include relatively large communities that are often farthest from opportunity and representation due in part to their smaller size in Census figures.

**Exhibit 20 Tacoma and Pierce County Populations by Race and Ethnicity, 2021**



Notes: AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPI=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Hispanic or Latine is an ethnicity. The Hispanic or Latino category includes Hispanic and Latine people of all races. All other categories show non-Hispanic races.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

The map in Exhibit 21 explores the geographic distribution for communities of color in Tacoma. The highest concentrations for people of color are in the city's southern and eastern neighborhoods. Densities are lowest in the North and West. The current distribution of communities of color is the result of historical policies and practices, such as treaties, redlining<sup>7</sup>, Japanese incarceration, and Chinese expulsion as well as the outcomes of individual household resources and decisions.

The City of Tacoma is located on the traditional homelands of the Puyallup Tribe and today the municipal border of the city extends into the reservation lands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians to the northeast, established by the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek. The Puyallup Reservation encompasses all of Northeast Tacoma and parts of the New Tacoma and the Eastside neighborhood council districts. The culture and identity of the Puyallup people within Tacoma is an important piece of its multiethnic identity today.

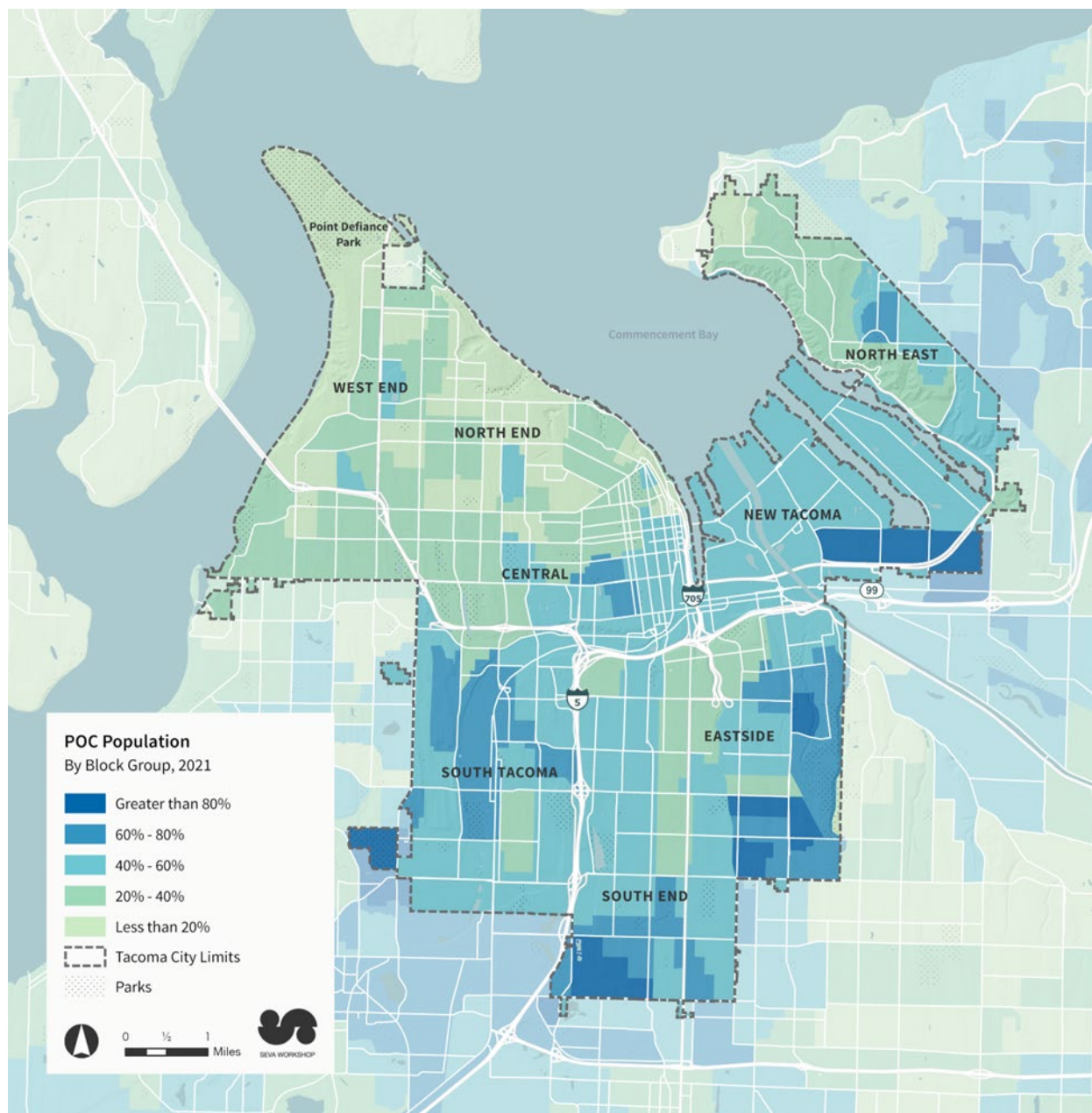
The redlining practices of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) identified the North End and areas extending to the bay as the most desirable parts of the city. Downtown and Hilltop area and the northern parts of Eastside and parts of South Tacoma as hazardous or undesirable due to the presence of non-white

<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed history see: Mapping Inequality, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/WA/Tacoma/context#loc=12/47.2481/-122.4546>



residents. These practices concentrated communities of color in neighborhoods that were deprioritized for public investment and services.

## Exhibit 21 People of Color as a Proportion of the Population in Tacoma by Block Group, 2021



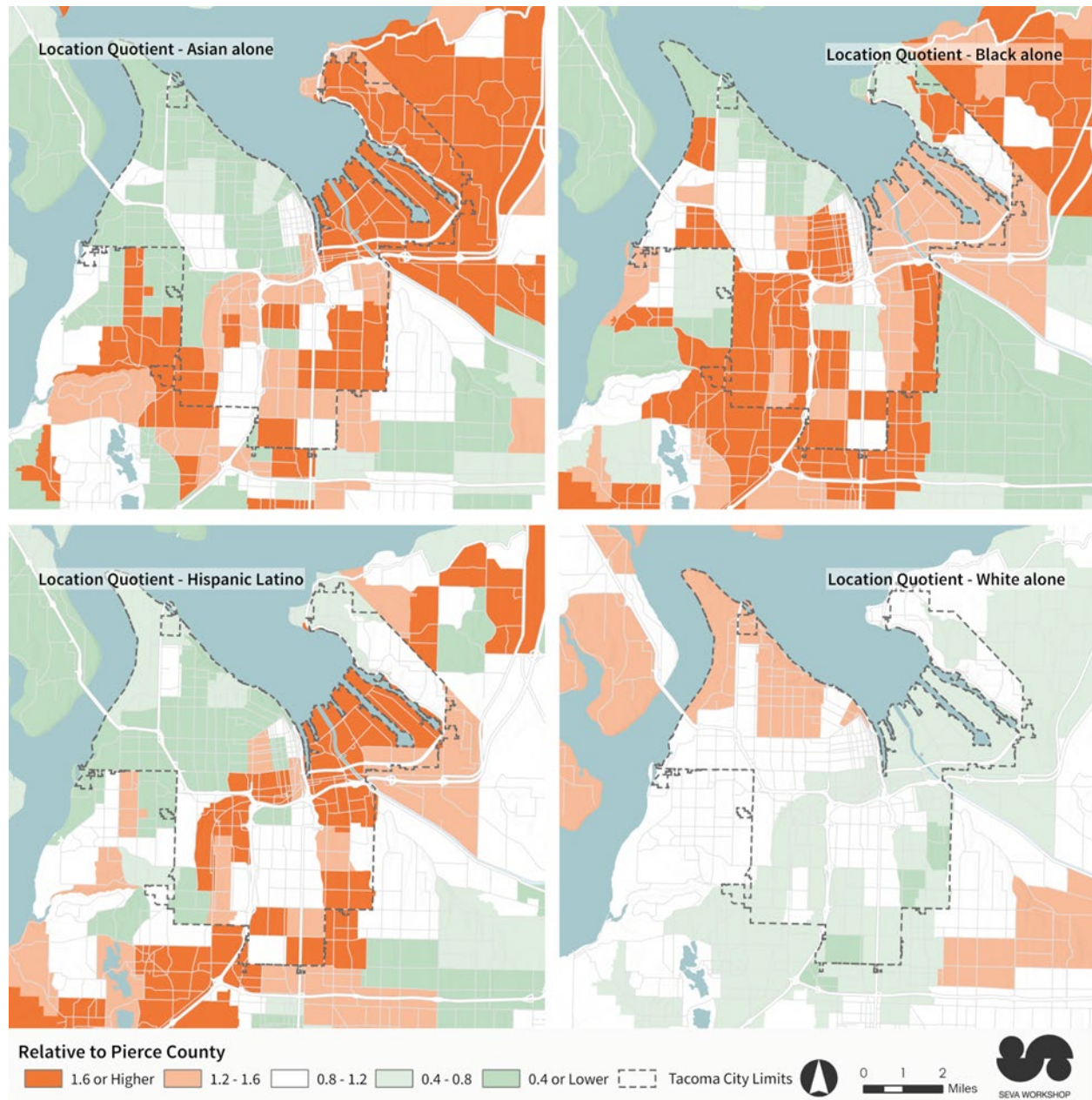
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

A location quotient is a metric calculated to show the concentration of communities of interest in each census tract relative to county as a whole. It is a useful way to illustrate segregation of

groups. For example, if 7% of the neighborhood population is Black, and 7% of the county population is Black, then the location quotient is 1. A tract where 14% of residents are Black would have a location quotient of 2. And a tract where only 3.5% of residents are Black would have a location quotient of 0.5. So, tracts with high location quotient scores have a greater share of that population compared to the rest of the County. Tacoma has long been more diverse than Pierce County as a whole. As noted above, the City has historically been home to particularly high concentrations of Asian and Black residents as compared to Pierce County. However, as the location quotient maps show, these communities are likely to live just outside of the Tacoma City boundary in other urban, peri-urban areas of Pierce County.

The location quotient and charts suggest that the concentration of White and Hispanic/Latino communities is relatively even across Tacoma and Pierce County. The durability of redlining effects can be seen in the North End that has a higher concentration of White households than compared to Pierce County as a whole and lower concentration of Asian, Black and Hispanic/Latino residents. For an overview of the structural factors that have contributed to these patterns, see PSRC's [Legacy of Structural Racism](#) and the [Racial Restrictive Covenants Project](#).

## Exhibit 22 Location Quotient, Asian, Black, Hispanic Latino, White Alone



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021); Seva Workshop, 2023

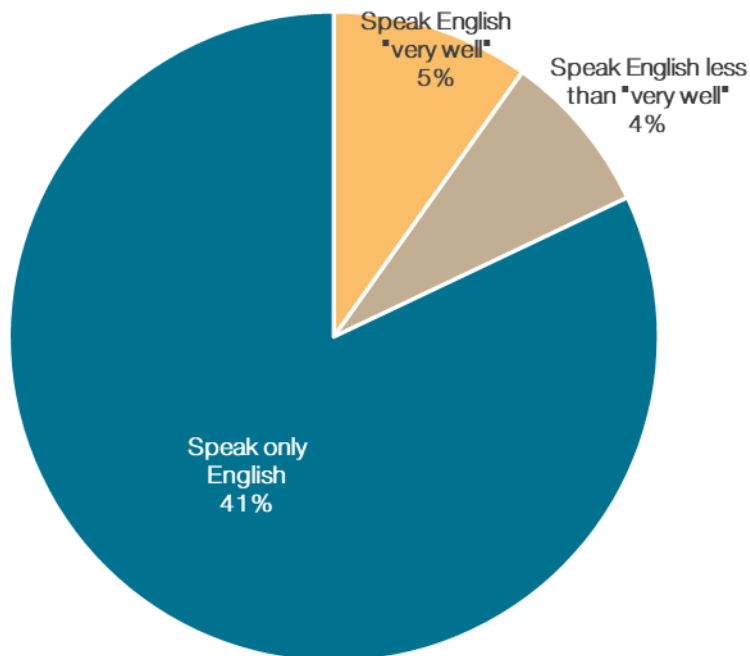
## 4.4 Linguistic and Cultural Groups

There is a wide range of languages spoken across Tacoma. While most Tacoma residents age 5 and older speak English as their primary language (82%), other common languages spoken at home are Spanish (7%), Vietnamese (2%), and Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages (1.4%), Korean (1.1%), and Tagalog (0.9%). An additional 3% of the population speaks other

Asian and Pacific Island languages, which could include languages such as Samoan, Marshallese, Chuukese, and Lao.

Roughly 20 percent of the population speak more than one language at home with varying English proficiency. Asian and Pacific Islander language speaking households are less likely to have English proficiency of “very well” compared to other multilingual households. They comprise roughly half of the population that speaks English less than “very well.” Another one-third of households that speak English less than “very well” are primarily Spanish speakers.

**Exhibit 23     Language Spoken at Home among Population aged 5 and older, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).



## Exhibit 24 English Proficiency for Households that Speak Additional Languages

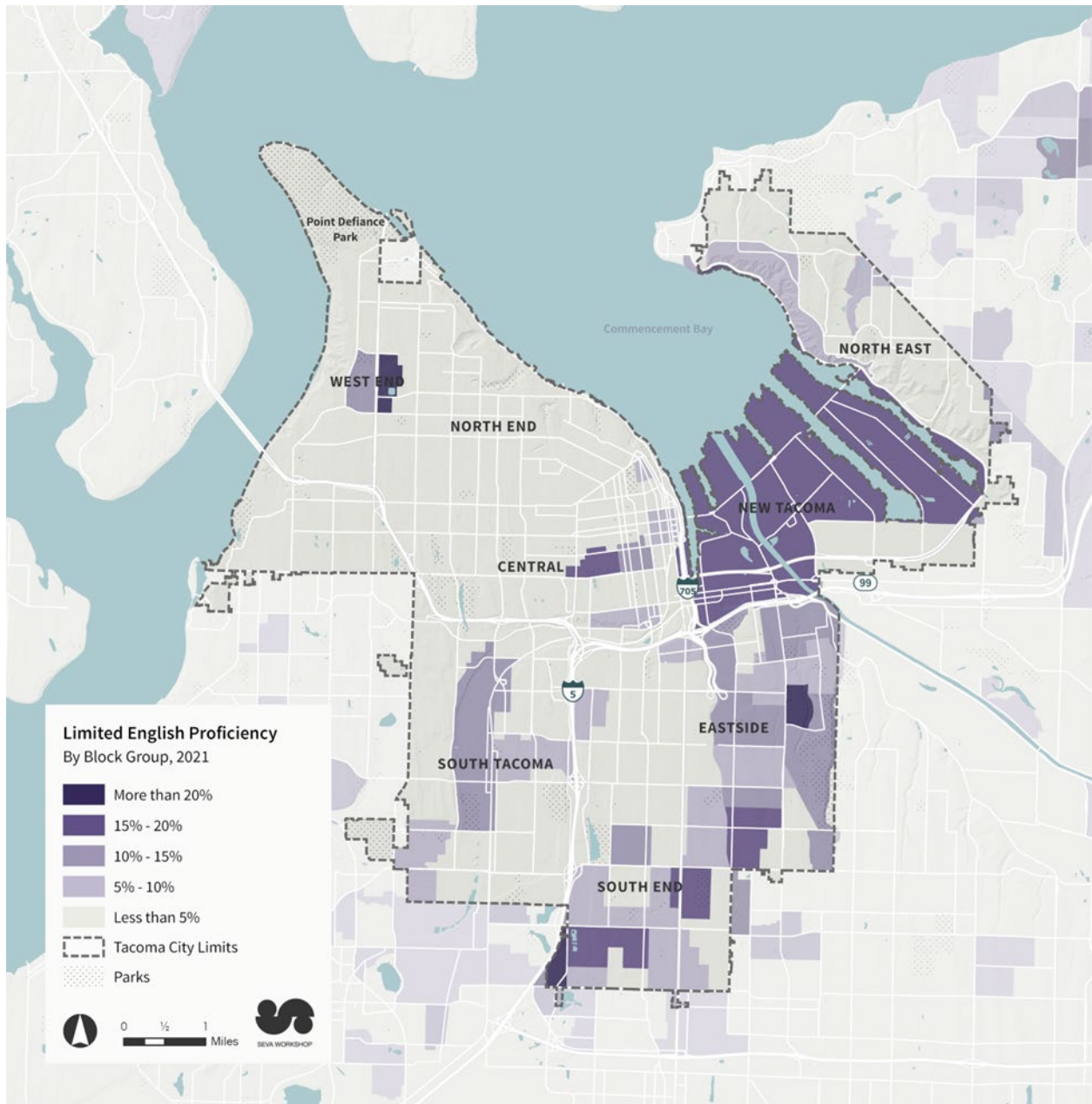
	Speak English "very well"	Speak English less than "very well"	% of those who speak English less than "very well"	Total
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	5,990	8,377	51%	
Speak Spanish	9,028	5,277	32%	
Speak other Indo-European languages	3,434	2,350	14%	
Speak other languages	1,645	493	3%	
Speak only English				167,248
Total Population, 5 years and older				203,842

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

The map in Exhibit 24 captures the geographic distribution of those who speak English less than "very well." The residential communities located in the Eastside and South End neighborhood council districts are home to the highest prevalence of speakers who don't speak English very well.

The [Tacoma Equity Map](#) provides additional insight to specific language groups in these areas. Spanish is most prevalent in the Eastside and Central Tacoma. Russian, Polish, Slavic languages are most common in West End and South Tacoma. Vietnamese is most common in South Tacoma, South End and Eastside. Tagalog is common in the West End, South Tacoma, South End, and the Eastside. Korean is most common in the West End, Central Tacoma, and North East.

## Exhibit 25    Persons with Limited English Proficiency as a Proportion of the Population in Tacoma by Block Group, 2021



Note: While New Tacoma shows a high proportion of Limited English Proficiency persons, the area is primarily industrial with few residents.

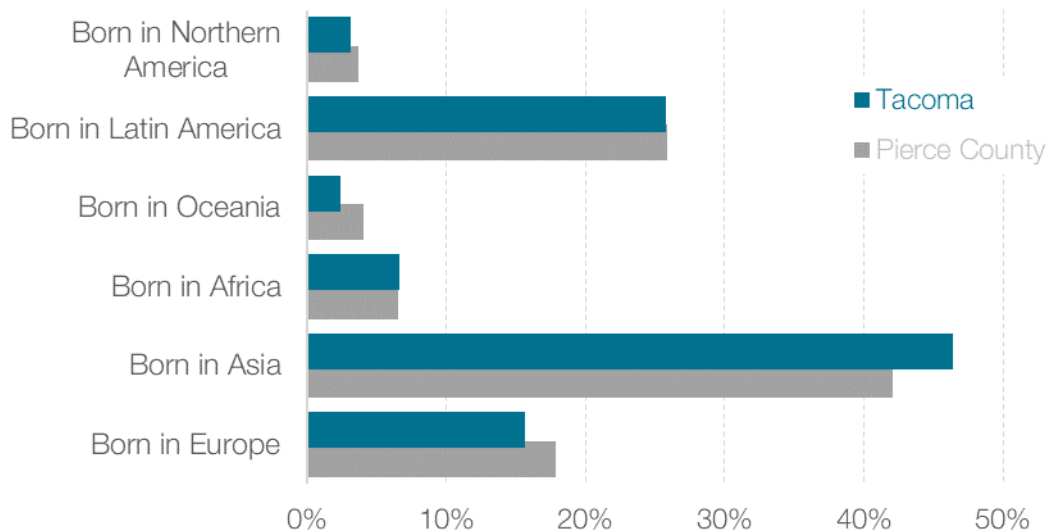
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021)

## 4.5 Immigration

The City of Tacoma is home to 26,123 foreign-born residents, comprising 13% of its total population. Immigrants in Tacoma come from across the world, but highest numbers are from

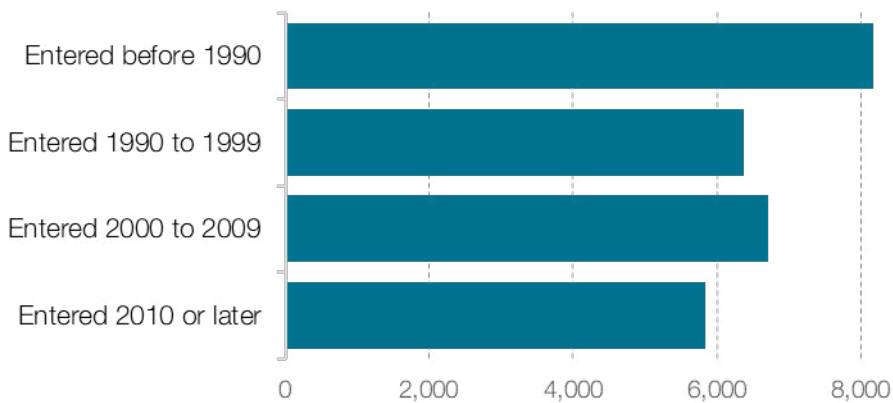
countries in Asia (46% of total), Latin America (26%), and Europe (16%). This aligns with the findings on languages spoken at home in the above section. Rates of immigration have slowed over the past decade for Tacoma: the foreign-born population increased 4% in 2011-2021 compared to 9% citywide population growth. The graph in Exhibit 27 highlights this decline, which is likely related to shifts in immigration policy at the federal level. As described earlier in this profile, Tacoma's growth in recent years has primarily been driven by net migration, but mostly from within county and within state rather than from abroad.

**Exhibit 26 Foreign-Born Place of Birth for Tacoma and Pierce County Population, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

**Exhibit 27 Tacoma Foreign-Born Population by Year of Entry, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021).

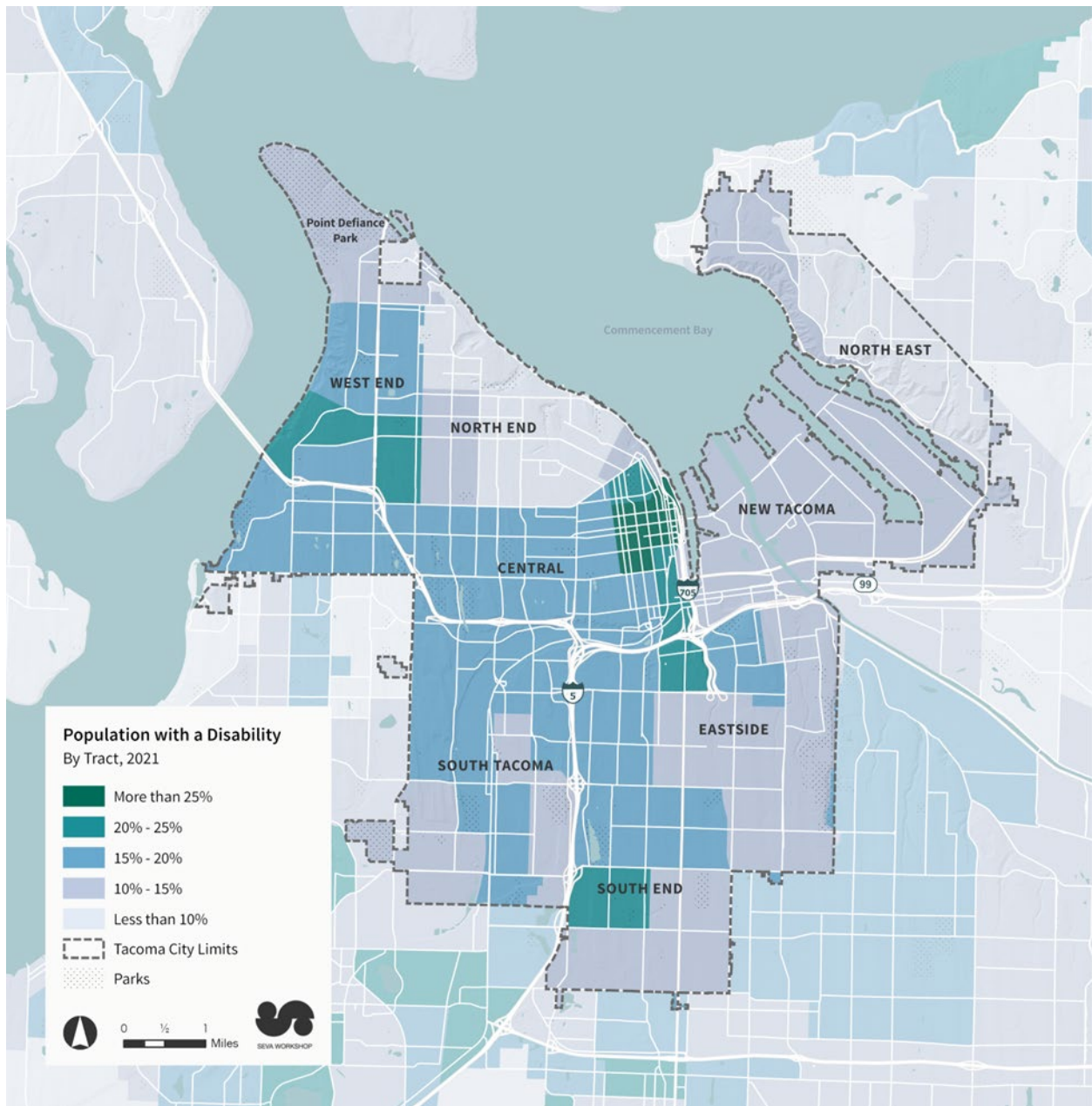
## 4.6 Disability

Fifteen percent of the population are living with a disability, including disabilities in hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living. This statistic has remained consistent for the last 5 years. The population living with a disability in Tacoma is slightly higher in Tacoma as compared to Pierce County overall where it is about 13%.

While people with disabilities live in every block group within Tacoma as shown in Exhibit 28, there are neighborhood council districts where over one-quarter of residents are living with a disability. Areas of the West End, downtown Tacoma and South End are home to the highest concentrations of residents living with a disability. These concentrations may be related to the presence of services and or housing that are well-suited to living with a disability. It may also be due to housing affordability relative to other parts of the City and County. Notably, just outside the Eastern boundary of the city in Pierce County, there is also a relatively high concentration of residents living with a disability.



**Exhibit 28**      **Persons with a Disability as a Proportion of the Population in Tacoma by Block Group, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021)

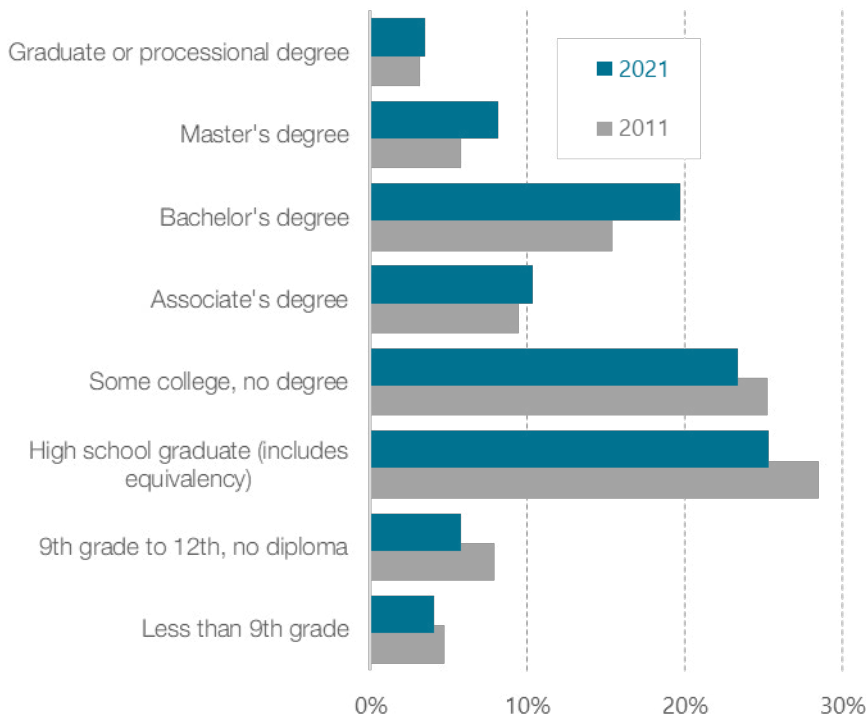
## 5 INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD OUTCOMES

### 5.1 Education

Tacoma's population is attaining higher levels of education. Over the last ten years the proportion of residents with a completed Associate's degree or higher has increased from 34% to 42%. The City has also made gains in rates of residents with at least a high school diploma or equivalency completion.

Despite these gains, Tacoma's rates of educational attainment still lag behind statewide levels. More than one third of residents (35%) have terminated formal education at high school completion or earlier, compared to 30% in Washington state overall. These lower rates in Tacoma are consistent across almost every race category. Racial disparities in educational attainment also persist, with Black attainment of a bachelor's degree at around 18.9% in contrast to 33.4% of White residents.

**Exhibit 29** Population by Highest Level of Education Attained, 2011 & 2021



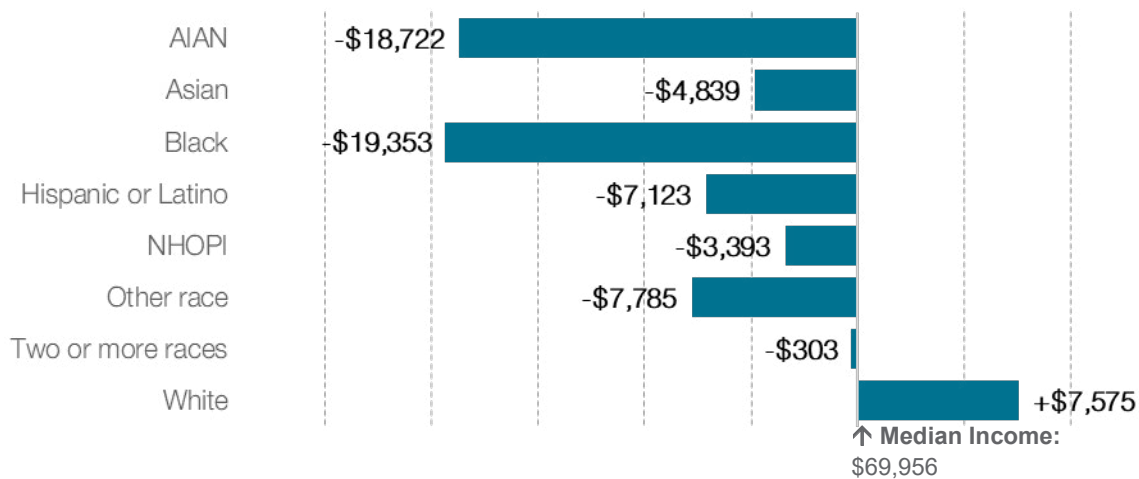
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011 & 2017-2021).

## 5.2 Income and Employment

Tacoma's overall median household income in 2021 was \$69,956, a 42% increase (without inflation adjustment) from the overall median household income in 2011, which was \$49,232. Adjusted for inflation, real median household income has increased by about 22%. There are wide disparities for median household income when comparing by race and ethnicity, as shown in Exhibit 30. White households have a higher median household income at \$77,531. Black and AIAN households have the lowest incomes, with medians at \$19,353 and \$18,722 below the citywide median - respectively. All other BIPOC groups also have median household incomes below the citywide median. For an overview of the structural factors that have contributed to these disparities, see PSRC's [Legacy of Structural Racism](#).

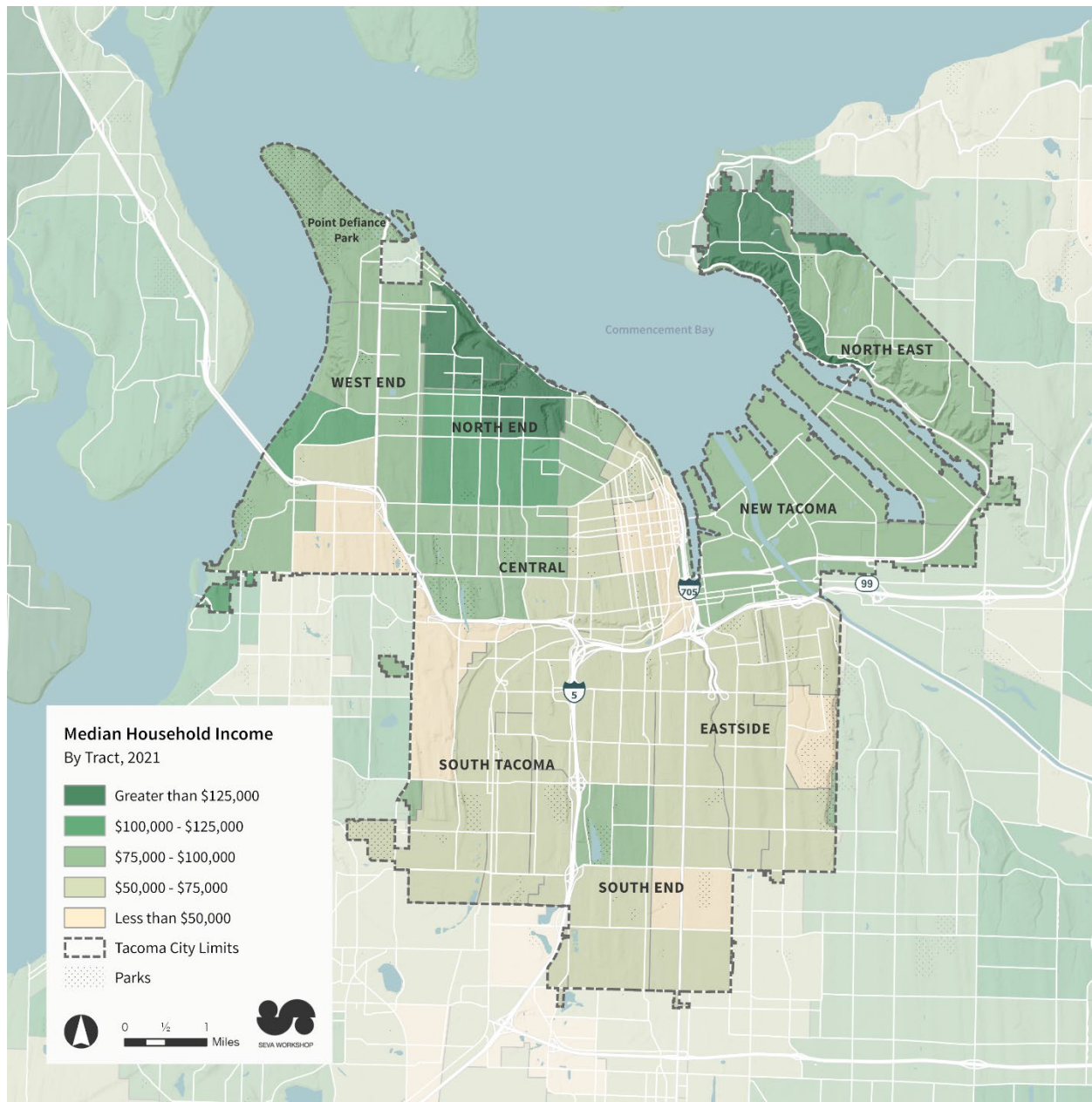
In Tacoma, incomes are higher in areas around the North End, West End, and Northeast Tacoma. Incomes are lowest in South Tacoma, the South End, and the Eastside. These geographic trends are visualized in the map in Exhibit 31.

**Exhibit 30 Household income by race and ethnicity, compared to Tacoma's median in 2021**



Note: Exhibits per group are compared to the overall median income.  
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021)

**Exhibit 31** Median Household Income by Census Tract in Tacoma, 2021



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021)

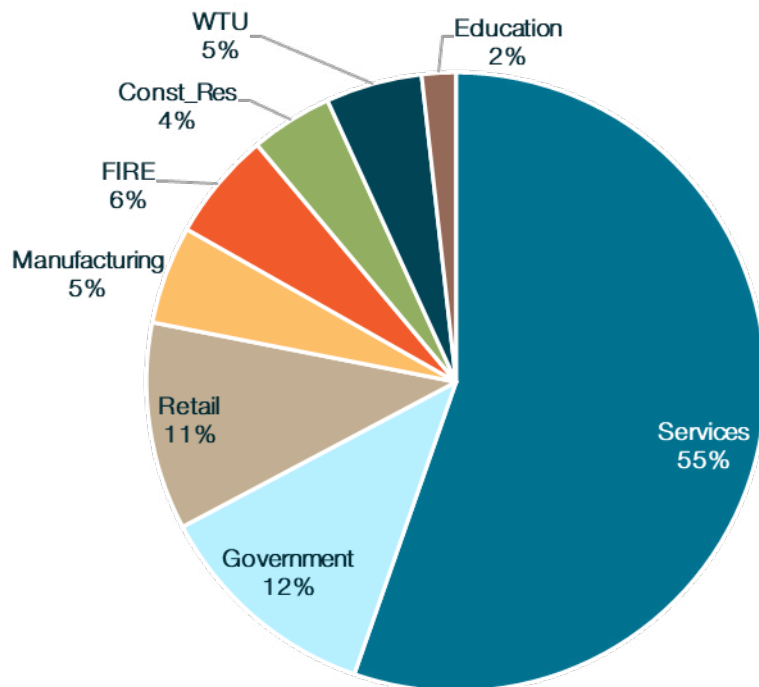
According to the 2021 American Community Survey, Tacoma has a population of 117,407 that is 16 years of age or older and in the labor force. 2% of these individuals are in the Armed Forces and 93% are employed in the Civilian labor force. This translates to an unemployment rate of 5%, about equal to that of Pierce County.

The 3 largest sectors for covered employment in Tacoma are Services (54%), Government (11%), and Retail (10%). Top employers in the Tacoma area represent the government and



healthcare providers: Joint Base Lewis-McChord, MultiCare Health System, the State of Washington, CHI Franciscan Health, and Tacoma Public Schools<sup>8</sup>. Services includes professional, scientific, and technical services; health care and social assistance; and accommodation and food services.

**Exhibit 32      Employment by Major Sector in Tacoma, 2022**



Note: “Const\_Res” = Construction and Resources; “FIRE” = Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate; “WTU” = Wholesale Trade, Transportation, & Utilities.  
Sources: PSRC, 2022; Seva Workshop, 2023.

## 5.3 Commuting Characteristics

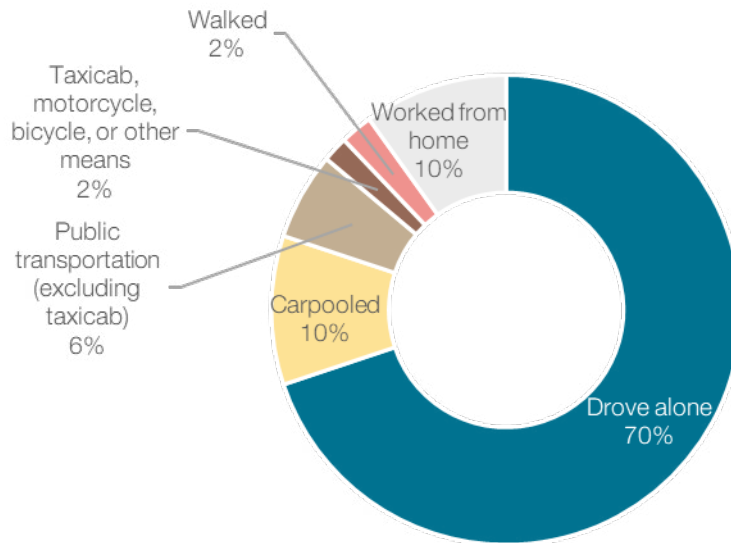
According to 2021 LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), only 28% of working Tacoma residents also work in Tacoma. A combined 21.7 percent have places of employment in surrounding cities of Lakewood, Kent, Auburn, Federal Way, and Fife. Twelve percent (12%) of Tacoma workers have their place of employment in Seattle. About one-third work elsewhere – this includes at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, one of the largest Tacoma resident employers. It is important to note the LEHD data is based on administrative records such as unemployment insurance reporting connecting place of residence and place of employment. These numbers reflect both commuters and those who are working remotely. They also do not include self-employed workers who are more likely to work from home.

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<sup>8 8</sup> [City of Tacoma Economic Development Services](#), 2020.

The American Community Survey is based on self-reported respondent experiences and will be inclusive of self-employed workers. Based on the 2021 ACS data, the Tacoma workforce largely commutes by car, 70% driving alone and another 10% carpooling. Ten percent of the workforce works from home. The mean travel time to work is 30.4 minutes with 22.7% of workers commuting 45 minutes or more to work.

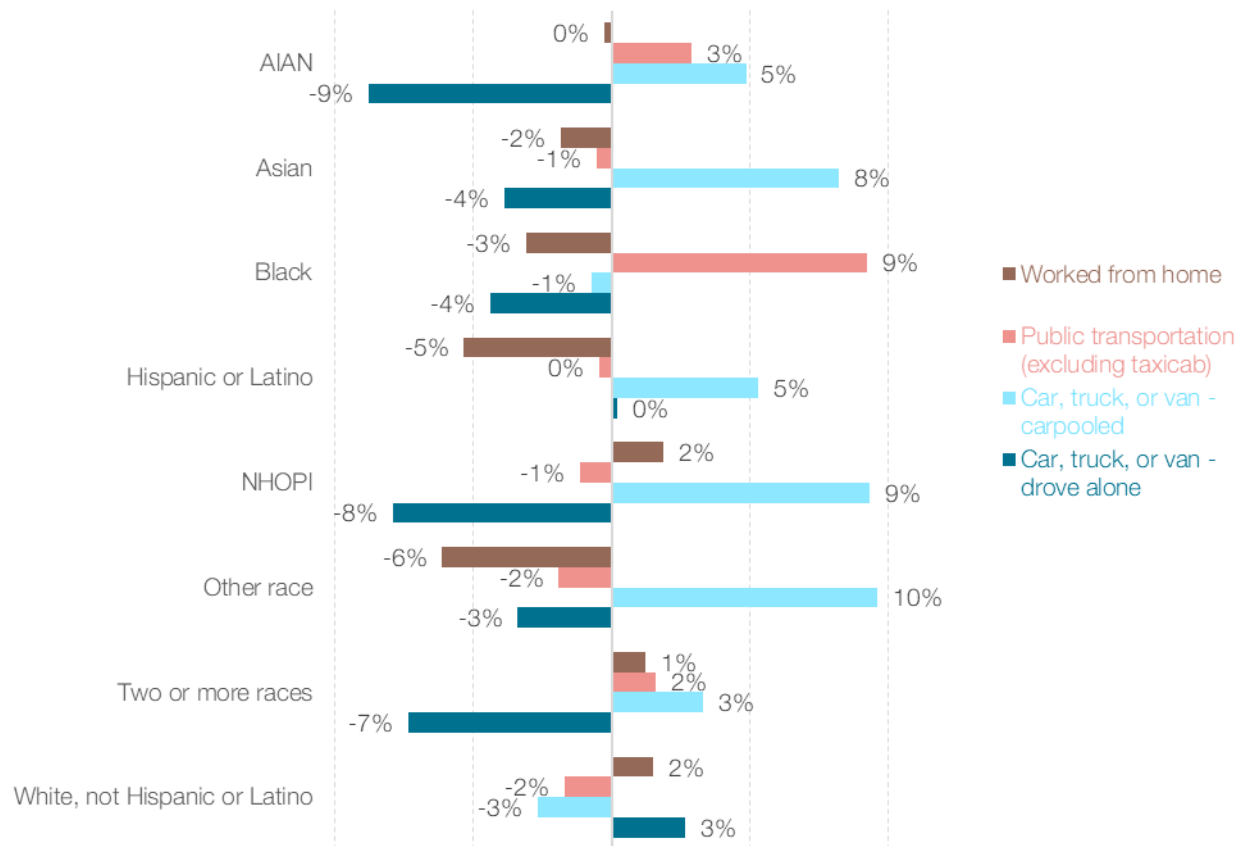
**Figure 33 Means of Transportation to Work, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021)

The likelihood of Tacoma workers taking a certain means of transportation to work varies by race and ethnicity. The following exhibit compares the distribution of commute methods to the underlying distribution of workers by race and ethnicity. Communities of color are more likely than average to carpool. Black workers are much more likely than average to commute to work by public transportation. White, non-Hispanic or Latino, workers are the most likely group to commute alone by car, truck, or van.

**Exhibit 34 Means of Transportation to Work by Race and Ethnicity**



**Note:** Indexed means of transportation to work for workers aged 16 and over, by race and ethnicity in the last 12 months. A value of 0 indicates the share of that group using that means of transportation is equal to their share in the overall population. AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPI=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Hispanic or Latine is an ethnicity. The Hispanic or Latino category includes Hispanic and Latine people of all races. All other categories show non-Hispanic races.

**Source:** American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2017-2021) (B08119, B08105B-1)

## 5.4 Housing

The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) dataset produced by Housing and Urban Development estimated Tacoma to have 85,565 occupied housing units in 2020. This represents an 8% increase over the 2010 estimate of housing units. Housing has grown more rapidly in Pierce County overall, where the number of occupied housing units increased 12% from 2010 to 2020. HUD and the US Census Bureau define the homeownership rate as the percent of occupied housing units occupied by an owner. This rate, 54% in Tacoma and 63% in Pierce County has remained stable over the last decade.

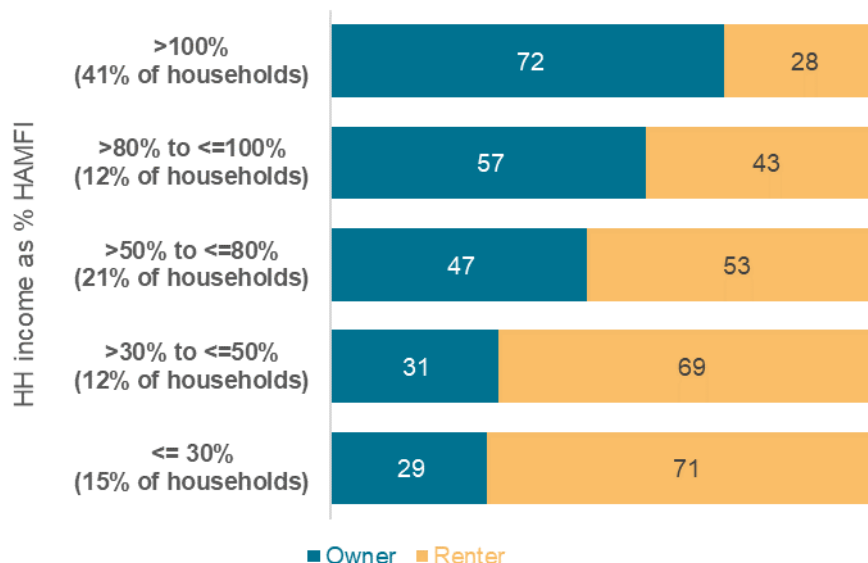
### Exhibit 35 Tacoma Housing Tenure, 2010 & 2020

	2010	2020
Owner Occupied	43,250 (54%)	46,375 (54%)
Renter Occupied	36,750 (46%)	40,190 (46%)
Total Households	80,005	86,565

Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2006-2010 & 2016-2020

Household income has a direct relationship with the likelihood of being in owner-occupied housing. Exhibit 36 displays homeownership rates disaggregated by Household Area Median Family Income (HAMFI). 72% of households in Tacoma earning at least the area median income are living in owner-occupied housing, whereas households earning 30% of the median or less are much less likely to live in owner-occupied housing (29%).

### Exhibit 36 Household Median Income and Housing Status, Tacoma, 2020

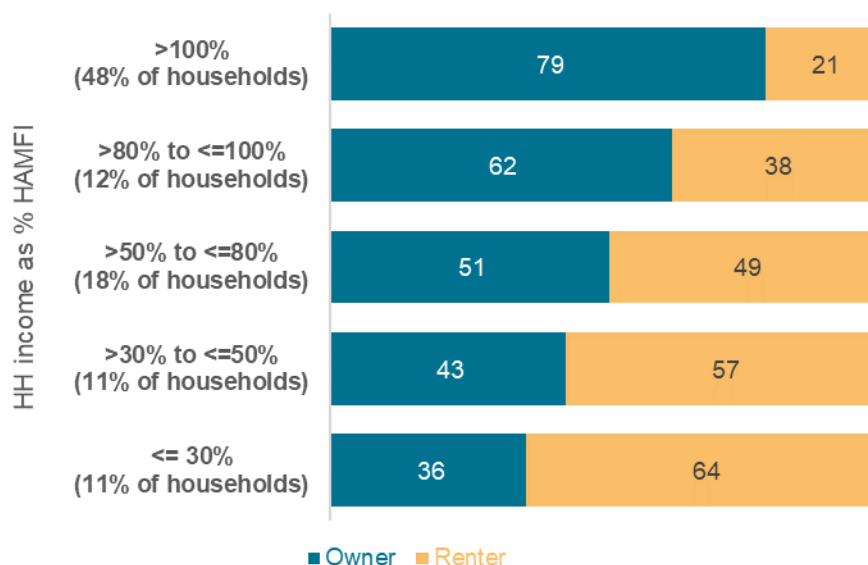


Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2016-2020

Pierce County households trend slightly higher both in incomes and homeownership rates. For example, 15% of households in Tacoma are in the very low income bracket of earning less than 30% median income, while 11% of Pierce County households earn at this level. However, Pierce County households in the low and very low income levels are significantly more likely to own their homes than similar households in Tacoma.



### Exhibit 37 Household Median Income and Housing Status, Pierce County, 2020



Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2016-2020

Comparing homeownership rates over the past ten years, it is apparent that Tacoma and Pierce County have both seen significant improvements in rates for the very low income bracket. However, the low income bracket of 30-50% area median income has significantly declined in homeownership rates in Tacoma, while the rate for the same group has increased in Pierce County. This may reflect more availability of affordable homeownership options outside of the City boundaries, and the lack of homeownership programs and support (relative to those in the very low income bracket). The only other income group to see declines in homeownership rates has been households earning 100% or more than the area median income.

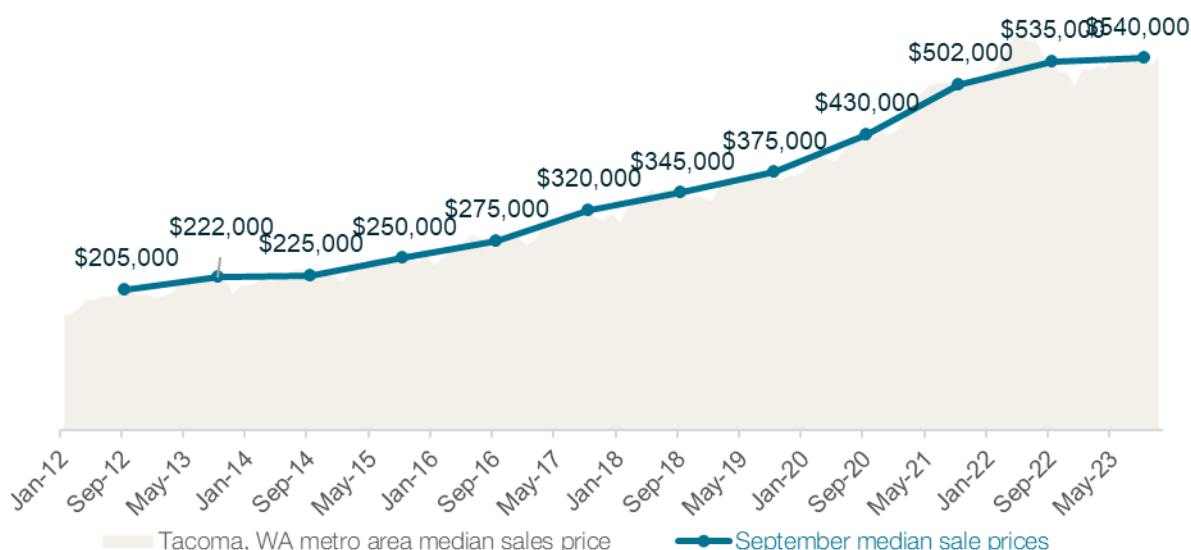
### Exhibit 38 Household Median Income and Home Ownership Rate, Tacoma and Pierce County 2020

	Tacoma			Pierce County		
	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change
<= 30%	20	29	↑ 9	29	36	↑ 7
>30% to <=50%	36	31	↓ 5	40	43	↑ 3
>50% to <=80%	46	47	↑ 1	50	51	↑ 1
>80% to <=100%	53	57	↑ 4	58	62	↑ 4
>100%	75	72	↓ 3	80	79	↓ 1

Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2006-2010 & 2016-2020

The median sales price for a home in Tacoma in September 2023 was \$540,000, a 57% increase from 2018. Household incomes have not kept pace with the increase in home prices. For example, from 2018 to 2021, the Tacoma nominal median income increased about 19% (from \$58,617 in 2018 to \$69,956 in 2021) while home prices increased 46% (from \$345,000 in September 2018 to \$502,000 in September 2021)

**Exhibit 39 Tacoma Monthly Median Home Sales Price, September YOY Change (%) 2012-2023**

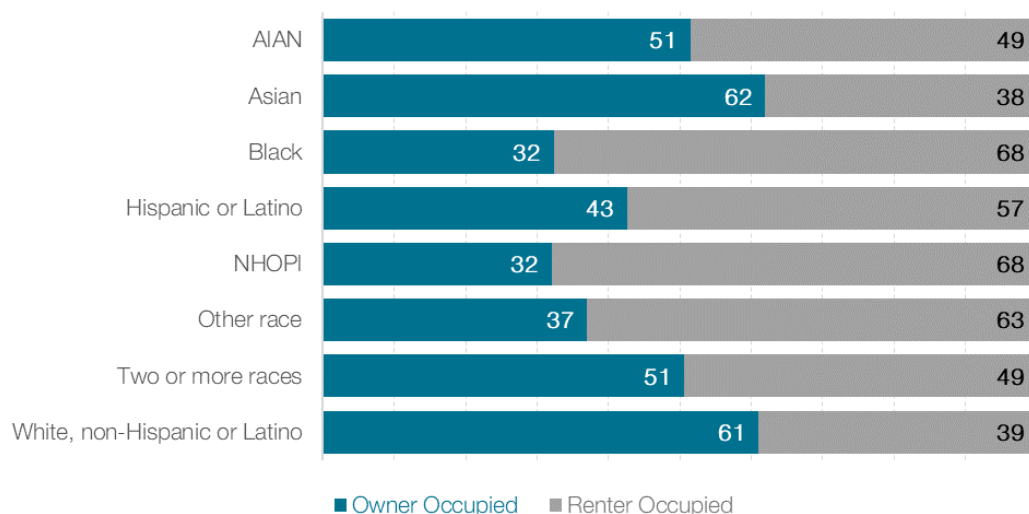


	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
YOY Change	8.3%	1.4%	11.1%	10.0%	16.4%	7.8%	8.7%	14.7%	16.7%	6.6%	0.9%

The likelihood of owning their place of residence varies widely across racial and ethnic groups in Tacoma. White and Asian households have the highest likelihood of owning their home at 61% and 62%, respectively. Comparatively, NHOPI and Black households are much more likely to be renters than homeowners, with ownership rates of 32% for both groups. Both of these groups have experienced a significant decline in likelihood of homeownership rates over the past decade. In 2011, 36% of Black households and 39% of NHOPI households were homeowners. An in-depth discussion of race-based disparities homeownership in Tacoma and factors contributing to this decline is available in [this report](#)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> ECONorthwest and BDS Planning, *Analysis of Systemic Disparities in Achievable Housing Options, 2021*. [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_6/File/cms/CBCFiles/Tacoma%20Housing%20Disparities%20Report\\_2021.pdf](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/CBCFiles/Tacoma%20Housing%20Disparities%20Report_2021.pdf)

**Exhibit 40 Tacoma Housing Tenure by Race and Ethnicity, 2021**



**Note:** AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPI=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Hispanic or Latine is an ethnicity. The Hispanic or Latino category includes Hispanic and Latine people of all races. All other categories show non-Hispanic races.

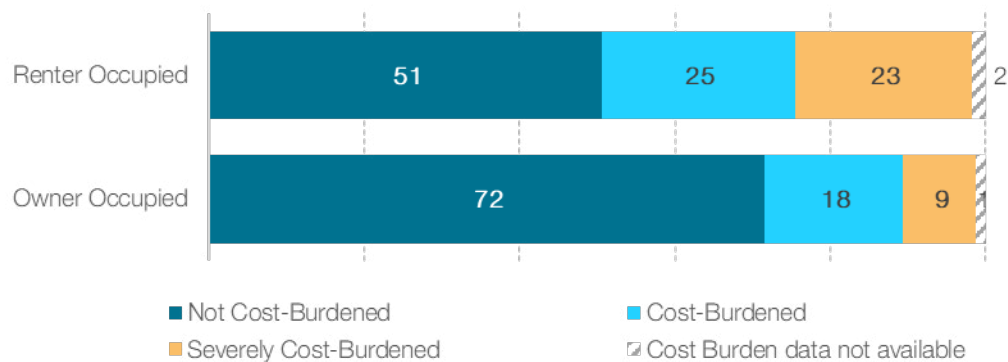
**Source:** American Community Survey 5-year estimates

The median gross rent in 2021 was \$1,146 for a 1-bedroom unit and \$1,750 for a 3-bedroom unit. These rents translate to about 20% and 30% of the overall median household income in Tacoma, but 27% and 42% of the median income for households headed by Black earners.

Households that pay 30% or more of their income toward housing are considered cost-burdened and may struggle to cover other essential household expenses, such as transportation or healthcare.

Renters in Tacoma are much more likely than homeowners to experience housing cost burden, which is defined as 30 percent or more of a household's income going towards housing costs. Forty-eight percent (48%) of renters experienced housing costs burden in 2020, and 27% of homeowners experienced housing cost burden. See Exhibit 41. The map in Exhibit 42 explores the geographic distribution of renter cost burden in Tacoma. These rates are particularly high (over 65%) in areas across the City, but are most concentrated in Central, South Tacoma, and the South End.

**Exhibit 41**      **Percent of Households Cost Burdened by Tenure, 2020**

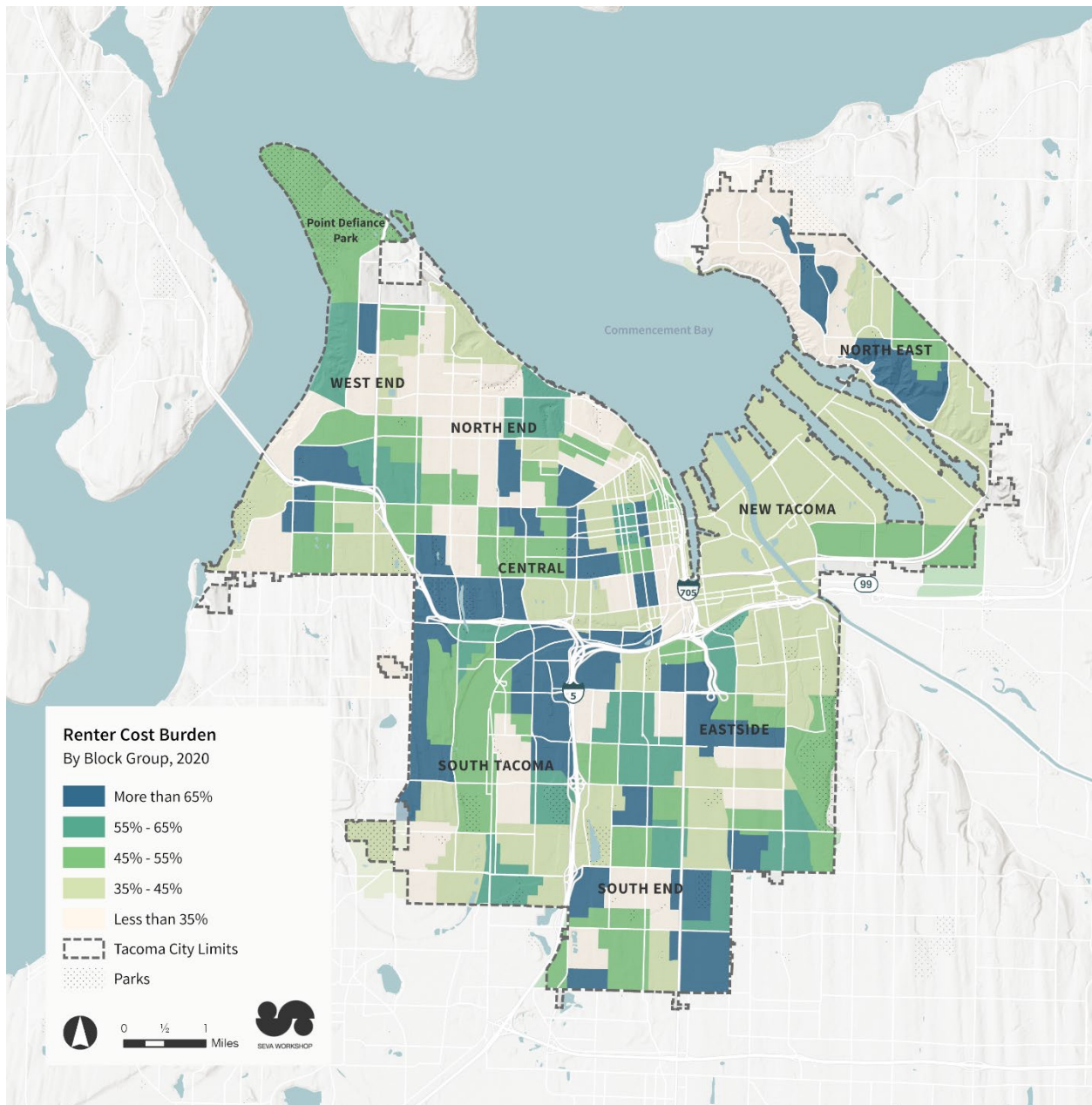


Note: Cost-Burdened households spend between 30-50% of income toward housing. Severely cost-burdened households spend more than 50% of gross income for housing.

Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2016-2020.



**Exhibit 42     Distribution of Renter Cost Burdened-Households in Tacoma, as a % of Block Group Population, 2020**



Source: CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) dataset based on American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2016-2020.

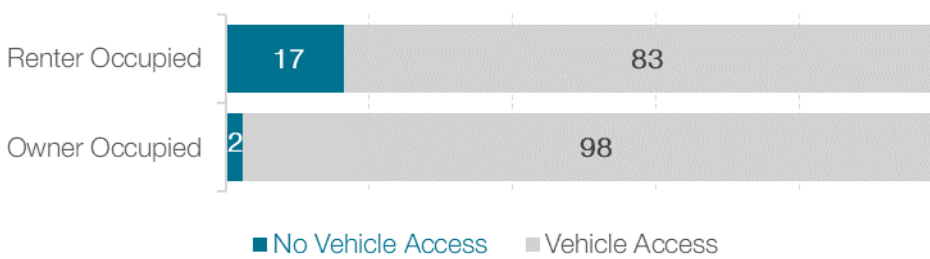
## 5.5 Vehicle Access

In 2021, about 7,545 households or 9% of households in Tacoma live without access to a personal vehicle. These households rely on other modes, such as public transportation, bicycle,

or pedestrian networks. For these households, the 15-minute walkshed (Exhibit 3) and strong multimodal transportation infrastructure (Exhibit 6) are paramount concerns. While Tacoma lacks complete streets and distribution of amenities for these households, they often bear an excessive time burden for accessing daily essentials. These households are primarily renting households as shown in Exhibit 43.

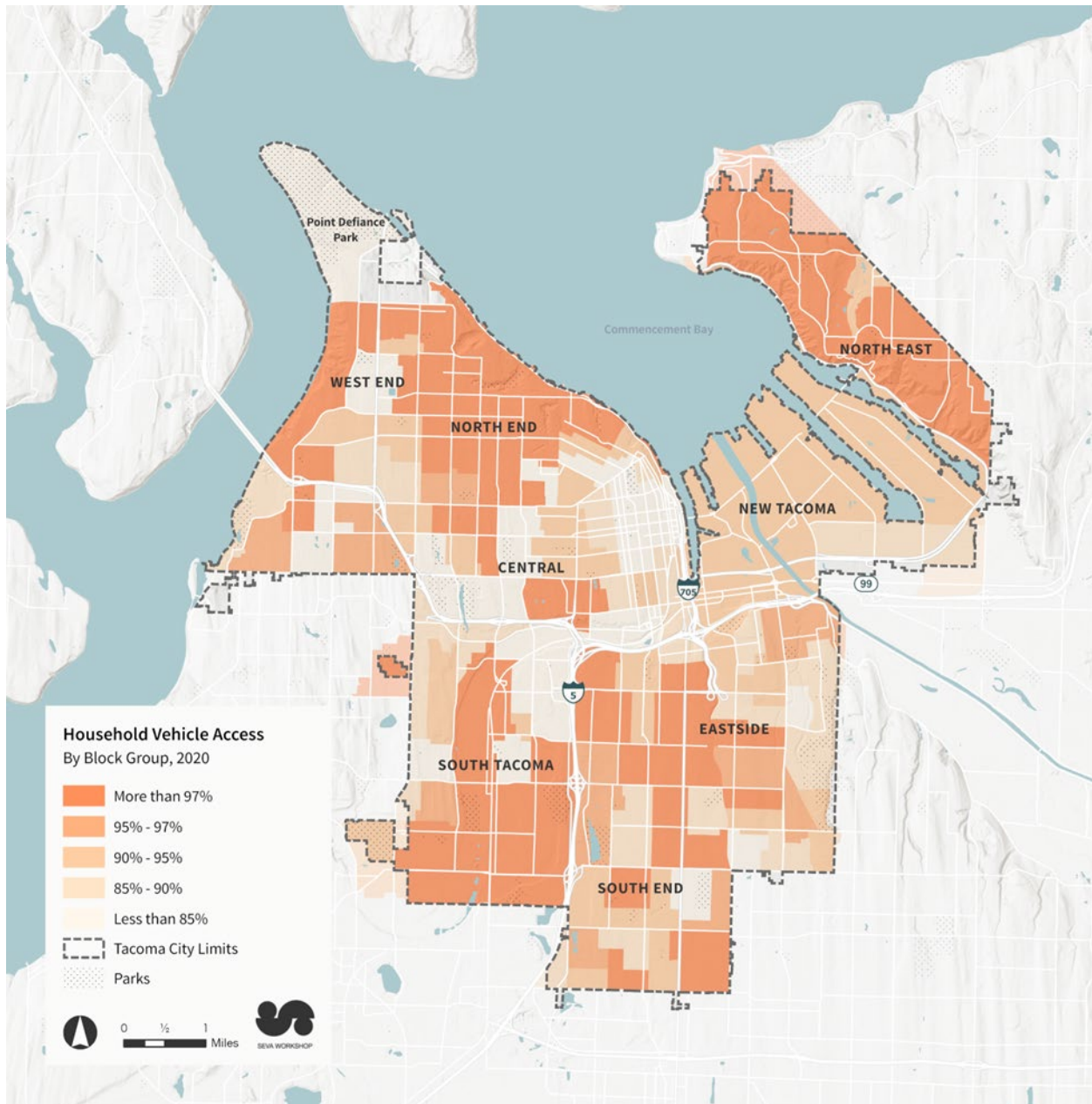
While there is some expected concentration of vehicle-free households in the walkable central neighborhoods of Tacoma, there are also low rates of vehicle access in the Eastside neighborhood council district and in the South End where transit is less frequent and pedestrian infrastructure is less developed. Households' vehicle access is mapped in Exhibit 44. Demonstrating safe access to schools, grocery stores, and other essential daily routes for non-drivers in these areas is important for promoting quality of life and achieving the City's vision.

**Exhibit 43     Vehicle Access by Housing Tenure in Tacoma, 2021**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

**Exhibit 44** Household Vehicle Access, as a % of Block Group Population in Tacoma, 2021



Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2021.

## 5.6 Homelessness

The Point-in-Time count is a one-day survey of people experiencing homelessness. It is a challenging survey to conduct requiring many volunteers over a large, geographically distributed

area and attempting to contact individuals who may not want to be visible to officials. Results are highly sensitive to external factors like the weather and availability of volunteers. For these reasons, it is well known to be an undercount of the actual prevalence of homelessness, though it is uncertain the degree to which it undercounts. For example, the 2023 Pierce County Point-in-Time Count physically recorded 2,148 unsheltered individuals but 6,500 individuals were known to be in contact with the homeless crisis response system in roughly the same period (and even more may be homeless or at risk of homelessness but not in contact with the system). While the measure has its flaws, it is an important way to track the prevalence of homelessness. Compared to 2019, the 2023 Point in Time Count identified 44.5% more individuals experiencing homelessness. Part of this increase may be due to new methodology that includes more people connected to services (but not unsheltered) in 2023, but at least part of this increase is likely attributable to increases in homelessness overall. While roughly one-third of respondents do not record a last known zip code, typically 25-30% give a Tacoma zip code as the last address.

Forty-one percent of those experiencing homelessness in the 2023 count identified as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color, disproportionate to Pierce County's overall population (Exhibit 20). The majority of households in the Point in Time count are households without children (93% in 2023). Seven percent were households with children and another 1% percent (9 households) represented unaccompanied youth and young adults. However, a youth-specific Point in Time Count conducted in October 2022 suggests that the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults (ages 13-24) experiencing homelessness is much higher, identifying 332 individuals.

Historically, the Point in Time count relies on definitions of homelessness set by Housing and Urban Development and has not included numerous individuals and families living in places unfit for long-term habitation (such as motels) or "doubled up" with other households to remain sheltered. The broader Mc-Kinney Vento definition used by the Department of Education does include these households (though limited to counting households with children connected to public schools). School districts and buildings can vary greatly in the resources available to identify and support homeless children. According to this definition, in the 2022-23 school year, 7.0% (2,030) of Tacoma Public School students are homeless. This rate ranges from 0.7% at Browns Point Elementary School<sup>10</sup> to Sherman Elementary School to a high of 27% in Oakland High School.

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<sup>10</sup> Excludes data from Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center with 0.0% homeless enrollment

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City of Tacoma, Washington

# ONE TACOMA

A Comprehensive Plan  
for a Vibrant, Connected,  
and Sustainable City

Equity Framework | July 2024

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# 1 PURPOSE

The City of Tacoma is updating its Comprehensive Plan One Tacoma to the year 2050. Equity is a key focus for the City of Tacoma and therefore this update. There are also statewide and regional efforts to articulate equity and orient policies and programs to achieve more equitable outcomes for Washington residents. For example, House Bill 1220 introduced new requirements related to housing equity in Growth Management Planning which the Comprehensive Plan will be subject to.

This framework is intended to curate measurable and observable equity goals for the City of Tacoma to prioritize in policy updates. This single evaluative framework will be used to assess the existing Comprehensive Plan and meet 1220 requirements. It will also be a guide for policy and program updates to the plan. The content of this framework is based on contextual research and analysis, a summary of which appears in an accompanying document: [Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline](#).

## 2 EQUITY ASSESSMENT METHODS & CRITERIA

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### How did we develop the assessment and select outcomes to focus on in One Tacoma 2050?

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#### 2.1 Methods

The existence of equity occurs across multiple dimensions and can be considered among infinite ways of characterizing subgroups of people. Even with the guidance of existing policies and frameworks as described in the previous section, the Comprehensive Planning process needed to further focus priority equity outcomes. We undertook the following steps to arrive at the analysis contained in this document.

1. **Conduct background research and understand policy context.** The study team gathered existing documentation produced by state, regional, and city entities defining equity priorities. We also researched Tacoma's historical context. A summary review of findings from this research appears in the accompanying [Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline](#).
2. **Develop and apply criteria.** The project team including consultants, City staff and key external partners met and discussed criteria by which the indicators would be filtered for inclusion in this Equity Assessment and which subgroups to prioritize for analysis. These criteria are described below. The consultant team and staff applied these criteria to develop the selected indicators.
3. **Conduct baseline analysis.** The consultant team produced the baseline analysis in this document assessing disparities in outcomes. The data comes from various sources and therefore was available for different subgroup definitions and geographic levels. Where possible, data was disaggregated by race, income, geography (neighborhood). The full compendium of analysis is available in Excel format. Key findings are included in this document while the full baseline appears in the accompanying [Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline](#). Outcomes displaying high disparities between a given subgroup and the general population were prioritized for discussion in this document:
4. **Develop assessment rubric with project team.** One rubric guides the assessment of the policy/program **content** for impact and opportunities to move equity goals. A second helps screen for biased or vague **language**.



5. **Audit the Comprehensive Plan** for equity impact on desired outcomes, language, and (re)develop policy options. The Comprehensive Plan audit using the information and rubrics in this document is planned for June-July 2024.

## 2.2 Criteria

The following criteria were used to filter and focus on the equity outcomes most relevant to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan:

### Alignment Criteria

- **Anti-Racism.** The City's stated goal of becoming an anti-racist city is outlined in Resolution 40622. Indicators should be disaggregated and analyzed by race to be able to effect anti-racist policies.
- **Targeted Universalism.** The City of Tacoma's Equity and Empowerment framework led by the Office of Equity and Human Rights uses a strategy of "targeted universalism" which recognizes that we all need different strategies to achieve our full potential. We show a universal population measure and disparities by race and income according to this framework. The rubric guidance needs to be flexible enough to allow for different strategies for different populations.
- **HB 1220.** The new State requirement mandates housing analysis conducted by income and geography to identify and address housing disparities.

### Implementation Criteria

- **Drives the Vision.** The Comprehensive Plan vision is a Tacoma where "every resident can reach daily essentials (groceries, school, parks, medical care etc.) within 15 minutes without a car." Outcomes that contribute to this vision were prioritized.
- **Coordination with Council and Community Priorities.** We prioritized adopting measures that have already been articulated to avoid duplication of effort, such as the homelessness strategy, the affordable housing action strategy, the climate action plan, and Vision Zero. Comprehensive Plan strategies and these actions should be mutually supportive.
- **Replicable/trackable.** We prioritized indicators with publicly available data or data that is already being tracked by the City to be able to assess future progress on.
- **Actionable.** We prioritized outcomes over which the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan have influence. This Equity Assessment is intended as key reference material for plan writers to craft policies and programs addressing key disparities. One key decision relating to actionability was to not include overall Index measures as an outcome (such as the Tacoma Equity Index or Displacement Indices), but rather, key component measures.

### 3 ONE TACOMA EQUITY OUTCOMES

#### Selected equity outcomes for One Tacoma 2050.

These outcomes were selected by the project team according to the criteria outlined above. A baseline analysis identified the areas and groups listed in the table as farthest from equitable outcomes. Designing programs and policies specifically for these areas and groups will help Tacoma achieve universal goals.

OUTCOME CATEGORY	INDICATORS	PRIORITY AREAS AND GROUPS
HOUSING	▪ First-time buyers of single dwelling structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ Black households</li> <li>▪ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander households</li> </ul>
	▪ Renter-occupied housing cost burden greater than 50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ New Tacoma</li> <li>▪ Black households</li> <li>▪ Multi-race households</li> <li>▪ Very low income and Low income households</li> </ul>
	▪ Percent of residents living in the same house one year ago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ South End</li> <li>▪ Hispanic/Latine individuals</li> <li>▪ Multiracial individuals</li> </ul>
HOMELESSNESS	▪ Rare: Point in time count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Black individuals</li> <li>▪ American Indian/Alaska Native individuals</li> <li>▪ Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders</li> </ul>
	▪ Brief: Placement rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ American Indian/Alaska Native individuals</li> </ul>
	▪ One-time: 2-year return rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ American Indian/Alaska Native individuals</li> </ul>
HEALTH	▪ Life expectancy at birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eastside</li> <li>▪ New Tacoma</li> <li>▪ South End</li> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> </ul>
	▪ Access to healthy food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North East</li> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ West End</li> </ul>

OUTCOME CATEGORY	INDICATORS	PRIORITY AREAS AND GROUPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 12 students</li> <li>American Indian/Alaska Native students</li> <li>White students</li> <li>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students</li> <li>Asian students</li> </ul>
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE / CLIMATE IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban heat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central</li> <li>Eastside</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> <li>South End</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air quality (PM 2.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North East and Eastside communities adjacent to freeways and freight routes</li> </ul>
TRANSPORTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-capacity transit access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Tacoma</li> <li>North East</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North East</li> <li>Eastside</li> <li>New Tacoma</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> <li>West End</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household vehicle access (Transit dependency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Tacoma</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> </ul>
PUBLIC SERVICES AND AMENITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North East</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> <li>West End</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial amenities per acre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastside</li> <li>North East</li> <li>North End</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> <li>West End</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average time in minutes between call received and police dispatch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastside</li> <li>North End</li> <li>South End</li> <li>South Tacoma</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perception of safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District 4</li> <li>District 5</li> <li>Hispanic/Latine individuals</li> <li>Multiracial individuals</li> </ul>

OUTCOME CATEGORY	INDICATORS	PRIORITY AREAS AND GROUPS
<b>ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>	▪ Median household income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ American Indian/Alaska Native household</li> <li>▪ Black households</li> <li>▪ Hispanic/Latine households</li> <li>▪ Other race households</li> </ul>
	▪ Childhood Poverty - children under 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eastside</li> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ South End</li> </ul>
	▪ Good and Promising job availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North End</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURAL VITALITY</b>	▪ Level of access to arts, culture, science, and/or heritage programs or experiences in your community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BIPOC community</li> <li>▪ District 5</li> </ul>
<b>HISTORIC PRESERVATION</b>	▪ Thematic representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ unknown</li> </ul>
	▪ Distribution of landmarks and districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eastside</li> <li>▪ South End</li> <li>▪ South Tacoma</li> <li>▪ West End</li> </ul>

## 4 POLICY AUDIT RUBRICS

**How can we assess which policies contribute to more or less equitable outcomes?**

### 4.1 Policy Impacts on Equity Goals

This rubric is designed to be a tool for reviewers to assess Comprehensive Plan policies regardless of prior assessment and equity experience. The goal is not to “score” each policy on each of the Assessment Considerations. Instead, the considerations are guiding questions and lenses for reviewers to think through the policy and its characteristics and implications. After thinking through the considerations, we recommend assigning an overall rating as a synthesis of the results.

In the audit process, multiple reviewers independently review the policies and assign ratings. Comparing the results of these independent audits, policies where different ratings were assigned would warrant further discussion to arrive at a consensus. We note that the goal is not to have a plan full of transformative policies, but to build in key opportunities to advance equity, especially on priority outcomes and for priority groups listed above.

Assessment Considerations		Overall Rating
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Who is this policy intended to serve?</li><li>▪ What impact or outcomes does this policy intend to create? Does it affect priority equity outcomes?</li><li>▪ Was it created in response to input from the community it was intended to serve?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Harmful/Exploitative - Perpetuates or exacerbates existing injustices in the distribution of benefits and burdens.</li><li>▪ Neutral/Blind - Does not call out or recognize differences by subgroup. May be implicitly biased according to dominant paradigms.</li><li>▪ Sensitive/Responsive – Recognizes differences by subgroups and targets interventions by subgroup to respond to differential needs within in the existing paradigm.</li><li>▪ Transformative – Structurally shifts systems of power and distribution of benefits and burdens in a just way.</li></ul>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How are the activities of this policy resourced (funding, staffing, public will/attention)?</li><li>▪ Are there explicit equity-focused priorities identified and resourced accordingly?</li><li>▪ Are resources for implementation of this policy distributed equitably?</li><li>▪ How do communities access the benefits of this policy? What unique barriers may exist for specific subgroups?</li></ul>	



Assessment Considerations		Overall Rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the process for implementation of this policy? Are there points at which bias may affect the outcome?</li> </ul>	
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the policy aligned with Comp Plan goals and/or specific Equity outcomes?</li> <li>Who is impacted (benefiting or burdened) by the implementation of this policy? Are specific priority groups or areas identified?</li> <li>Is the policy alone sufficient for achieving equity outcomes? If no, are complementary policies and programs available and sufficient?</li> <li>What unintended impacts may result from this policy and how are the benefits and burdens of these distributed?</li> </ul>	
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there relevant disaggregated data and measures available to assess the success of this policy?</li> <li>Who is accountable for the results of policy implementation?</li> <li>Are results of this policy transparent to impacted communities?</li> <li>Are there mechanisms and venues to continue to engage impacted communities in the improvement and redesign of this policy?</li> </ul>	

## Example Review

Policy H-1.6 “Allow and support a robust and diverse supply of affordable, accessible housing to meet the needs of special populations, to include older adults, and people with disabilities, and permanent, supportive housing for homeless individuals, especially in centers and other places which are in close proximity to services and transit.”

Rated: S with considerations for improvement

- If the City’s role is to “allow and support” are complementary strategies and partnerships needed to achieve the implied goal? Can the City have a stronger/proactive role?
- Input from older adult, people with disabilities, and homeless individual housing needs
- Who already lives in the areas identified for this housing and how will they be impacted?
- How will we measure the housing outcomes for these subgroups?
- Add priority for housing American Indians and Alaska Native individuals who are affected most by homelessness.

## 4.2 Language

Similar to the policy rubric, the language rubric is intended as guidance to help reviewers screen for issues and opportunities to make policy language more inclusive and less subject to bias. An overall rating is assigned primarily to help quantify the results of the review and to plan for the work of updating the language. The rating should not be interpreted as a score.

Assessment Considerations		Overall Rating
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy have a clear purpose, rationale, and scope of application?</li> <li>Was it created in response to input from the community it was intended to serve?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Harmful/Exploitative (H)</b> - Perpetuates or exacerbates existing biases and stereotypes.</li> <li><b>Neutral/Blind (N)</b> – Leaves space for biased interpretation according to dominant paradigms.</li> <li><b>Sensitive/Responsive (S)</b> – Is explicit in purpose, responsible actors, and beneficiaries and uses appropriately inclusive and accessible language.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusion and Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy use asset-based language (and avoid deficit-minded language) when describing groups and goals?</li> <li>Does the policy use inclusive language that adequately covers the goal and intended beneficiaries?</li> <li>Does the policy include implicit assumptions about people and households? (common assumptions include ability, gender, citizenship, housing status, heteronormativity)</li> <li>Does the policy avoid unnecessary jargon, acronyms, and specialized language?</li> <li>Where relevant, does the policy include specific examples to aid interpretation?</li> </ul>	
<b>Bias and Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy language appropriately identify the responsible institutions, departments, and partners?</li> <li>Does the policy language specifically identify intended beneficiaries and/or priority populations?</li> <li>Does the policy use clear and universal terms to describe intended impact (and avoid vague and subjective terms like “neighborhood character” and “appropriate uses”)?</li> <li>When listing groups, does the policy use the opportunity to list non-dominant groups first?</li> </ul>	

### Example Review

Policy H-1.6 “Allow and support a robust and diverse supply of affordable, accessible housing to meet the needs of special populations, to include older adults, and people with disabilities, and permanent, supportive housing for homeless individuals, especially in centers and other places which are in close proximity to services and transit.”

Rated: S with considerations for improvement

- More specificity around older adults (age ranges) and disabilities (conditions).
- More specificity to define centers and proximity to services and transit.
- Clarity around whether the term “special populations” is broader than the named subgroups, and if so, who else is included.

