



twelve



# DOWNTOWN







# TWELVE

## DOWNTOWN

No revisions to the Downtown Element are proposed as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Downtown Element may be viewed at this link:

<http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/Comprehensive%20Plan/14%20-%20Downtown%206-14-11.pdf>

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# DOWNTOWN ELEMENT

## CITY OF TACOMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Tacoma is the economic and cultural center for the South Sound, the location of headquarters for regional, national and international companies, and closely tied to the Port of Tacoma. The health of Downtown Tacoma directly impacts the city as well as the entire State of Washington. According to the City's Downtown Tacoma Economic Impact Assessment (2008) employment in Downtown Tacoma generates \$3.9 billion in wages, salaries, and other income in the State of Washington. Of this, \$1.8 billion in income goes to workers who reside in Tacoma.\*

The past two decades have witnessed a renaissance in Downtown Tacoma. Recovering from a long period of disinvestment, strong leadership and the combined effects of commitments by the City, County, and State as well as countless private entities have led to a cultural and economic rebirth. A series of downtown interventions; including the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) in 1990, the Washington State History Museum, the Museum of Glass, the Bridge of Glass, the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, the Tacoma Art Museum, and the Thea Foss Esplanade.

Opening in 2003, the 1.6 mile LINK light rail is the State's first instance of light rail technology in the State, and provides the centerpoint for a effective transit network. The results? Between 2001 and 2008, more than 4,000 new residents have made Downtown Tacoma home – a 35% population increase indicative of the new viability, and interest in downtown living.

## The Update, Why Now?

While investments have spurred tourism and a renewed interest in living, working, shopping and playing downtown, there is still a need for a solid community effort to lift downtown to the next stage. Furthermore, as the Urban Center of Pierce County and the South Sound, the City must respond to pressures for growth management and with its participation in the State's *Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center*, there is a clear mandate for development of transportation alternatives.

\*Measures include both downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods – MLK and Stadium Districts.

**TACOMA'S DOWNTOWN:**  
A PLACE TO  
WALK  
EAT  
SHOP  
LEARN  
  
A PLACE TO LIVE

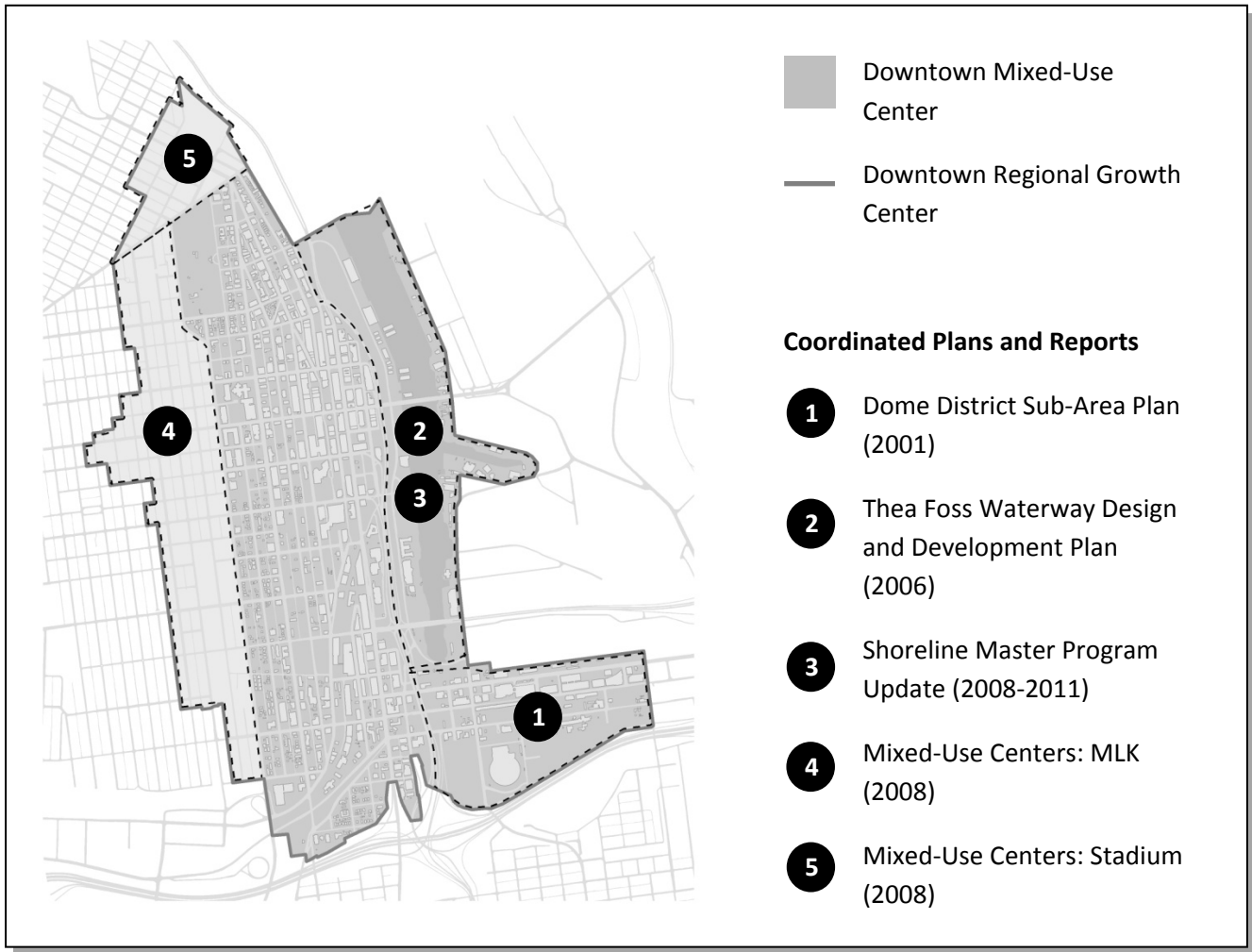


# The Project Scope

The Downtown Plan Update aims to provide the City with a working set of goals, policies and actions to realize a healthy, vibrant downtown. The Plan first describes recent changes throughout downtown and then addresses quality of life through the introduction of new programs that will build city capacity to revitalize recognized stress points or gaps in the existing urban fabric.

Geographically, the update is a coordinating document. In conjunction with the concurrent updates of Mixed-Use Centers for MLK and Stadium, this plan covers the area the City Council previously defined by resolution, the working definition of Downtown, and subsequently updated to the Downtown Regional Growth Center. However, land-use policy changes primarily affect the Downtown Mixed-Use Center, supplemented by the existing updates of Sub-Area Plans for Dome District and the Foss Waterway (see Figure 1 below).

FIG 1: PROJECT STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES + ADJACENT MIXED-USE CENTERS  
DOWNTOWN REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER







## **Seven Goals for the Downtown Plan Update**

- 1 Resolve the questions of how to responsibly increase density while laying the groundwork for a long-term, high quality city environment and maintaining Tacoma's unique character.
- 2 Coordinate land use, transportation and parking strategies through a comprehensive approach to downtown, including its adjacent neighborhoods.
- 3 Build City capacity to create a walkable downtown through the application of best practices and "complete streets" policies.
- 4 Develop a set of Urban Design Principles.
- 5 Encourage links between economic vitality and environmental quality through an awareness of the regional effects of growth management, land use and transportation decisions.
- 6 Generate new partnerships to promote infill development and link land use policy with economic revitalization strategies.
- 7 Develop a collaborative relationship between the community, city and "city builders" and encourage developers and property owners to think beyond the property line to achieve mutual benefits.

## 1.1 PLAN CONSISTENCY

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The Downtown Plan Update builds upon the policies and goals articulated in Destination Downtown (2001), the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and the 1998 R/UDAT study among others. As a starting point, Destination Downtown provided a set of policies designed to create a lively downtown setting that would attract a variety of residents, including urban professionals, artists and families. Providing interesting, attractive housing is the first link in a chain that brings services, retail stores and restaurants, fulfilling the daily needs of residents. The City of Tacoma set a goal of 2,010 new downtown housing units by the year 2010 and is on track to meet that goal.

The Downtown Tacoma Economic Strategic Plan (2008) is another important resource for neighborhood-level economic development strategies. This and other concurrent planning processes provide the City with a clear set of actions to achieve the policies and goals listed within the Downtown Plan.

Initiatives that are particularly integral to the Downtown Plan Update are listed as follows:

*Tacoma Tomorrow (2005-2010)*  
*Downtown Tacoma Economic Strategic Plan (July 2008)*  
*Downtown Economic Impact Assessment (July, 2008)*  
*Growth and Transportation and Efficiency Center Program (2008)*  
*University of Washington Tacoma Master Plan Draft (2008)*  
*Tacoma Dome Sub Area Plan (2001)*  
*Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan (2006)*  
*Shoreline Master Program Update (2008-2009)*  
*City of Tacoma Mixed Use Centers Analysis (2007)*  
*Design Review Project (on-going)*  
*Tacoma Downtown Streetscape Study and Design Concepts (2003)*  
*Tollefson Plaza, A Business Plan for its Vision and Long Term Management (2007)*  
*Tacoma's Retail Strategy Recommendations (2003)*  
*Streetcar Advisory Committee Recommendations (on-going)*  
*Vision for the Hillside Development Council (2007)*  
*Tacoma City Center Parking and Mobility Strategy (October 2007)*  
*R/UDAT Report (1998)*

## DESTINATION DOWNTOWN GOALS (2001)

*Downtown Tacoma will be a major urban center within the Puget Sound region.*

*Downtown Tacoma will offer a compact concentration of employment, shopping, educational institutions, entertainment and housing.*

*Downtown Tacoma will be served by a variety of choices in transportation including walking, rail transit, bus transit, automobile and bicycles.*

*Downtown Tacoma will have a safe, convenient, lively and attractive 24-hour environment.*

*Downtown Tacoma will provide places to live for various types of households with widely varying income levels.*

*Downtown Tacoma will have many forms of publicly accessible open space, such as parks, plazas, waterfront esplanades, tree-lined streets and community gardens*

*Downtown Tacoma will build upon its rich collection of handsome, historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality.*

*Downtown will be a regional destination for artistic, cultural and visitor attractions.*

## 1.2 PUBLIC PROCESS

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As a coordinating document for a variety of planning initiatives, the public outreach component of this Downtown Plan Update contained the following:

- 1 Individual and stakeholder interviews coordinated with the Downtown Tacoma Economic Development Strategic Plan. Over the course of 4 days consultants from the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Downtown Plan Update met with key Tacoma residents, employers, business owners, non-profits, and residents to hear concerns on the quality and functionality of downtown.
- 2 A joint Downtown Plan Update Open House was held on June 24th, 2008 to inform residents, employees, and business owners of the Downtown planning process, engage in a dialogue and clarify first ideas.

Open House invitations were advertised and the City mailed notices to interested parties within the working definition of Downtown.

- 3 A Second Open House (July 30th, 2008) was held to inform Tacoma individuals of the Downtown Plan's preferred alternatives for a transportation and land use strategy and the policy choices under consideration. Public comment was presented to the Planning Commission.
- 4 The Document was released for public comment and City Council review with sufficient time to receive appropriate feedback.

Over the course of the Downtown planning process one-on-one and stakeholder interviews were conducted that included the following individuals and groups:

Major Downtown Employers; health care, trade and logistics, finance, small business, warehousing, creative arts etc.

Downtown Developers

Downtown Residents

Tacoma City Council

Metro Parks

Museum and Cultural Representatives

Small Business Members

Pierce Transit

Sound Transit

University of Washington Tacoma

GTEC

Dome District Stakeholders

Department of Public Works

Tacoma Affordable Housing Coalition



# 2.0 FRAMEWORK

The Plan contains a set of four themes to help define our vision for downtown. A synthesis of downtown's ongoing concerns over the past decade, the themes help to acknowledge that **urban form, land use, transportation** and **economic health** work best when they can be considered in *concert*. By bringing these sometimes dissonant subjects together, this Plan incorporates not only the private sector's concerns for the built environment, but the public's concerns for community spaces, the street network and public rights-of-way and the overall character of Downtown.

[2.1] **THEME ONE:** A BALANCED, HEALTHY ECONOMY

[2.2] **THEME TWO:** ACHIEVING VITALITY DOWNTOWN

[2.3] **THEME THREE:** SUSTAINABLE CITY

[2.4] **THEME FOUR:** CITY OF THE ARTS

Each theme contains a set of subjects, containing goals, policies and associated actions. This action-based framework is organized both by time-frame as well as City priority.

Themes are followed by **Chapter 3.0 Urban Design and the Performance of the City** which explores urban design principles and development opportunities for each of downtown's emerging neighborhoods or "Character Area".

**Chapter 4.0** contains a set of Street Typologies that provide best practices and a guide for shaping the street network within downtown. These street typologies should guide the City as it updates its downtown street standards, and provide the development community with clarity in relation to the City's expectation for quality street environments.







# THEME ONE

## 2.1 A BALANCED, HEALTHY ECONOMY

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Downtown Tacoma and its adjacent neighborhoods have emerged as the economic engine for the City of Tacoma, Pierce County and the South Sound region. This cluster of economic activity with nearly 45,000 jobs includes financial services, health services, and professional services.

To create a balanced, healthy economy means not only having a plan to recruit, grow and retain businesses and the workforce but also providing the supportive governance structure and a clean, comfortable, and pleasing built environment. The Downtown Tacoma Economic Development Strategic Plan (2008) goals (listed on the following page) and associated implementation strategies provide the overall economic revitalization framework for the Downtown Plan. The following set of policies have been identified as priorities relative to downtown's overall development concept, urban form, and land use as they relate to leveraging existing investments and providing opportunities for growth.

### OVERALL GOALS

Downtown will continue to be a major **employment center** developing around successful world-class companies producing goods and services to the betterment of the community, its citizens and the investors doing business here.

The City of Tacoma will continue to be the economic and cultural center of the South Sound and leverage its existing achievements and regional cross-roads location to succeed.

The City of Tacoma will continue to be recognized as a livable and progressive international city, highly regarded for the richness of its multi-cultural population and its natural setting.

### SECTION SUMMARY

- 2.1A Economic Clusters  
Downtown
- 2.1B Foster an  
Entrepreneurial Culture
- 2.1C Catalyst Projects:  
Connecting the Gaps
- 2.1D Support the Growth of  
Vibrant Retail Districts
- 2.1E 'Place First' Parking  
— Optimize On-Site  
Parking Requirements  
with Transportation  
Access
- 2.1F Encourage Revitalization  
— Tie Land Use  
Regulations to  
Construction Realities
- 2.1G Leverage a Revised  
Bonus Amenity System  
to Public and Private  
Advantage

## SEVEN GOALS OF THE TACOMA DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1 Become a premier location of choice for primary target sectors
- 2 Foster an entrepreneurial culture and greater awareness of independent local business
- 3 Stimulate investor interest in Downtown Tacoma
- 4 Develop Downtown Tacoma into 'a talent magnet'
- 5 Support and expand the economic development agenda of the University of Washington, Tacoma
- 6 Increase retail opportunities in Downtown Tacoma
- 7 Raise the international profile of Downtown Tacoma



## 2.1A ECONOMIC CLUSTERS DOWNTOWN

The development of competitive economic clusters is identified by economists as a key route to urban revitalization. A ‘cluster’ is a geographic concentration of interrelated businesses. By locating together these businesses can enhance their operating environments, learn from each other and ultimately become more competitive in the broader landscape. To focus efforts, the Downtown Tacoma Economic Strategic Plan identified a set of five ‘target sectors’ chosen for their potential for long-term economic growth, strong assets, high wage jobs and short-term opportunities for retention, expansion, and recruitment.

### GOAL

The City of Tacoma should play a proactive role encouraging target sectors and should follow ideas and implementation strategies itemized in the Downtown Tacoma Economic Strategic Plan.

### POLICY

2.1A.A The City should implement economic development strategies to become a location of choice for the following identified target sectors:

- Business and Professional Services
- Creative Arts and Design
- Financial Services
- IT and Software Design
- Trade and Logistics Services

2.1A.B The City should generate a broad base of workforce development strategies that results in a downtown that is a ‘Talent Magnet’ for identified target sectors.

2.1A.C The City should prioritize cross-disciplinary partnering to leverage assets such as the Center for Urban Waters, the Puget Sound Partnership, Institute of Technology and Port of Tacoma.

### ACTIONS

#### ONGOING

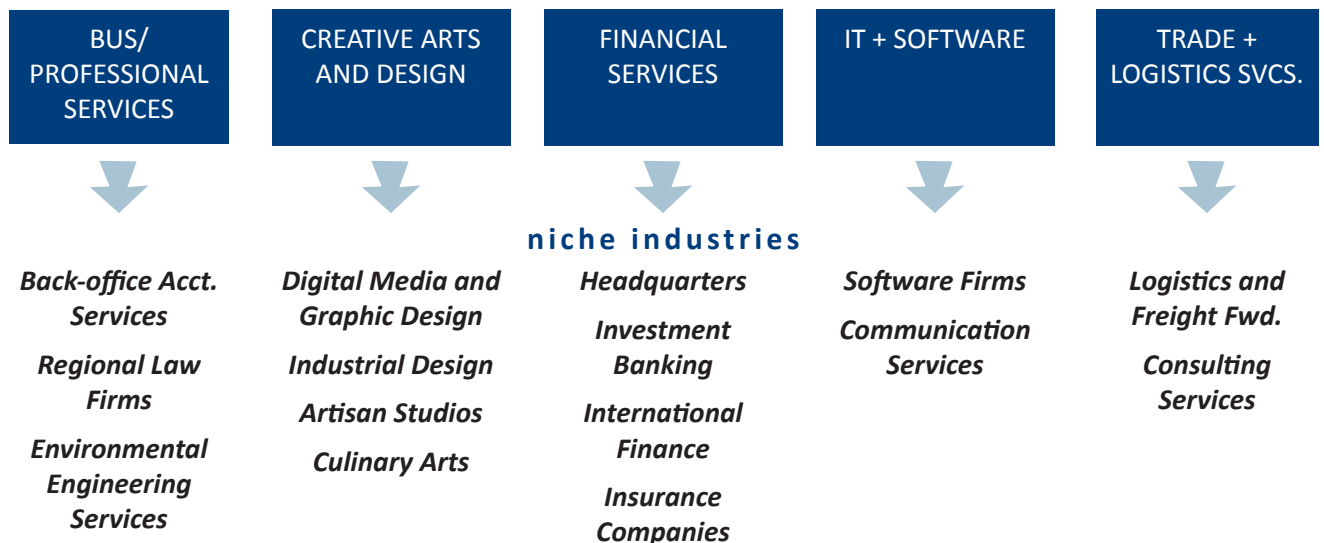
2.1A.1 Support the establishment of a new ‘creative economy’ strategy; (See Theme 2.4, and Section 3.1, 3.3)

2.1A.2 Promote a robust marketing strategy, both internally and externally, downtown identity and highlighting on:

- a. workforce development,
- b. recruiting target sectors,
- c. raising the international profile of downtown.

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.1A.3 Promote collaboration with the Port to achieve investment opportunities, such as in industrial opportunities located along port waterways or professional trade services locating within downtown.





## 2.1B FOSTER AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

### GOAL

Tied to the preceding policy (2.1A) and the Economic Development Strategic Plan, the City of Tacoma should build and support an entrepreneurial climate that leverages Tacoma's existing assets: a relatively low cost of living and doing business, excellent telecommunications infrastructure, a downtown university, quality of life amenities, and an abundance of creative outlets.

### POLICY

- 2.1B.A The City of Tacoma should develop and expand programs to recruit creative entrepreneurs associated with target sectors, both building an entrepreneurial culture internally, and encouraging relocation from higher cost locations.
- 2.1B.B The City of Tacoma should extend the community's current business assistance programs and build a robust network of entrepreneurs and independent local businesses.



### ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.1B.1 Develop a coalition that includes such organizations as City, County, Economic Development Board, Tacoma Chamber, Small Business Development Center, UWT, and local entrepreneurship networks to spearhead a series of supportive programs to recruit, support, nurture and retain local entrepreneurs.
- 2.1B.2 Foster partnerships and strengthen the coordination of Downtown, City, regional and state business retention, expansion and recruitment programs.
- 2.1B.3 Continue to support 'economic gardening' programs to bolster small- and medium-sized businesses.
- 2.1B.4 Coordinate with the UWT to address and mobilize the following:
- a. Labor development goals for regional target industries, including promotion and expansion of curricula applicable to Finance and Creative Arts.
  - b. Develop a 'technology transfer' structure to bring university-based research into commercially feasible ventures.
  - c. Real estate investment plans for Downtown Tacoma
  - d. Civic participation



## 2.1C CATALYST PROJECTS: CONNECTING THE GAPS

While the City of Tacoma has made a series of large scale public investments downtown, the urban fabric remains somewhat disconnected. The Downtown Plan will focus energy into connecting areas, in particular the Downtown Core, the Tacoma Avenue Corridor, the Brewery District and key retail corridors (section 2.1B). In this way, the City can build a collaborative and supportive environment for these areas as well as optimize existing publicly-owned parcels and rights-of-way.

The City has already begun this process. In 2008 the City of Tacoma created a Revenue Development Area in Downtown in order to participate in the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) Competitive Program application process to the State Community and Economic Revitalization Board (for public improvements such as parking infrastructure, right-of-way and streetscape improvements). Although Tacoma was not selected, the City intends to continue to pursue the use of the LIFT in the future as well as other options to secure funds for needed public improvements to attract new private investment.



Downtown Tacoma should embrace the challenge of increasing private commercial investment, particularly in the development of Class 'A' office space. With a specific focus on development nodes, the City can work directly with private investors on significant projects that act as a catalyst for additional investment.

Additionally, the adoption of provisions in the Tacoma Municipal Code for the enactment of development agreements between the City and private parties as encouraged by the State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70B.170) should be considered to facilitate the implementation of transformational projects in Downtown.

### GOAL

Downtown redevelopment should be prioritized in those areas that can provide a catalytic effect and complement existing assets to jump-start new investment so that one project leads to and inspires the next.

## POLICY

2.1C.A Focus on economic development strategies and public realm enhancements within the following geographies: (see Sections 3.2 and 3.3)

*Priority Development Nodes (short-term emphasis):*

- *International Financial Services Area*  
(see Figure 2).  
  
Desired Uses:  
Financial services such as banking, loan, security, investment management and investment advisory firms, etc.
- *Downtown Core Area*  
Between Tacoma Ave to the West, Cliff Ave to the East, 15th to the South and 7th Ave to the North.  
  
Desired Uses:  
A diverse 24-hour mix of commercial, residential, and entertainment uses.
- *Brewery District Area*  
Between Tacoma Ave to the West, I-5 to the South, 21st Street to the North, and I-705 to the East.  
  
Desired Uses:  
Businesses supportive of Creative Arts and Design, institutional, cultural, and residential uses.

2.1C.B Incubate businesses and retail uses within these priority development nodes through creative approaches that can assist environments in transition.

### 2.1C ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.1C.1 Catalyst Projects: Within each priority node, identify a catalyst project to serve as a model for public/ private development.
- a. The City should consider how to provide creative financing techniques or enable the development through a series of “planned actions” RFPs.
  - b. Develop a process for private development agreements pursuant to Growth Management Act provisions (RCW 36.70B. 170-200).

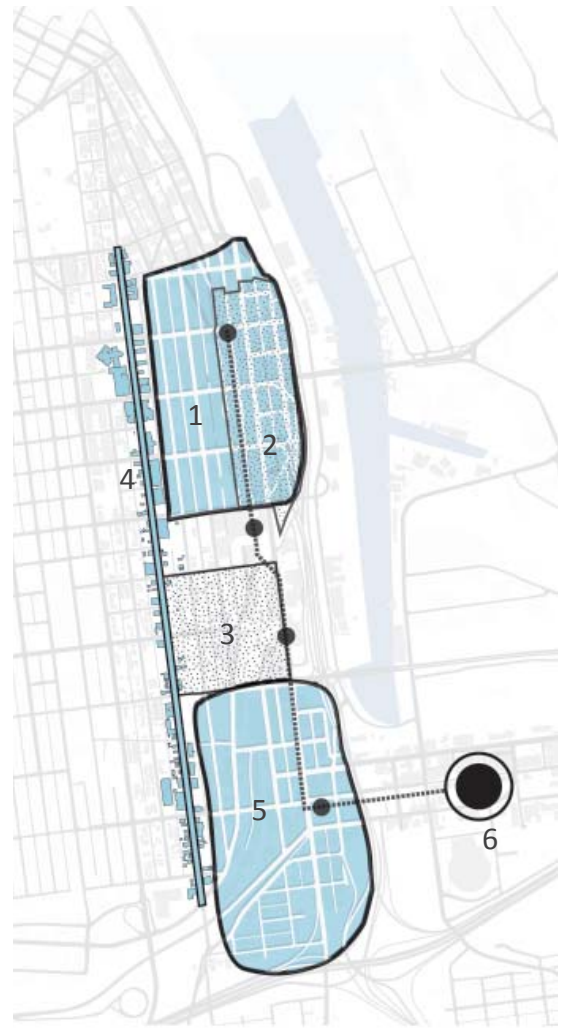


Fig 2:  
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT OVERVIEW

1. Downtown Core Area
2. International Financial Services Area
3. University of Washington Footprint
4. Hillside Corridor
5. Brewery District
6. Regional Transit Hub and TOD

## 2.1D SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF VIBRANT RETAIL DISTRICTS

One distinguishing feature of successful downtowns is a cluster of unique, local retail districts. While Tacoma already has the beginnings of locations for retail, these districts would benefit from additional retail strategies. The following policies and actions are supported by findings in the 2003 Tacoma Retail Strategy and Recommendations and the Downtown Tacoma Economic Strategic Plan (2008).

### GOAL

Tacoma's downtown will establish itself as a 'top-of-mind' retail destination, both spurring and benefiting from pedestrian growth as an outcome of additional housing construction and increases to the number of jobs downtown.



### POLICY

2.1D.A While all types of retail should be encouraged throughout Downtown, a retail strategy should promote specific clusters to create distinct retail identities.

2.1D.B The City of Tacoma should designate specific retail nodes and concentrate improvements in these locations first. The City should prioritize the placement of a grocery or drug store as an anchor to these areas.

2.1D.C The City should work with private landowners to surmount environmental or critical area obstacles to development, particularly along retail corridors.

2.1D.D The City should work with private landowners to maintain pedestrian continuity along retail streets.

### 2.1D ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.1D.1 Economic redevelopment strategies should focus on two 'plateaus' each three to four blocks in length. These should be shifted to new locations as these areas stabilize.

Retail Corridors:  
*Pacific Ave* from 7th to 21st Street

*Broadway Avenue* from 7th to S. 15th Streets

Associated programs should provide support for the placement and recruitment of specific retail uses, funds for small short-term incentives, and encouragement for other active support for retail businesses.

2.1D.2 Create and implement a marketing plan to promote Downtown retail goods and services to in-place markets, including residents, workers, visitors and students.

2.1D.3 Revise codes and standards to encourage street animated retail uses to 'spill over' onto the sidewalk for vibrant street life.

#### MID-TERM (3-7 YEARS)

2.1D.4 Prioritize pedestrian improvements identified through community based 'Walkability Implementation' groups in retail corridors

## 2.1E 'PLACE FIRST' — OPTIMIZE ON-SITE PARKING REQUIREMENTS WITH TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

Tacoma appreciates that in space-limited urban areas the proliferation of on-site parking restricts investment in higher and better uses. Overall a key strategy for the downtown will be to reduce dependency on the single occupany vehicle while maintaining access and mobility through alternative transportation options (see sections 2.3G and 2.3H).

### GOAL

The provision of parking should not dominate the quality of life, street character, or other considerations in the creation of viable urban places. A flexible parking management strategy should mitigate the amount of capital investment necessary for automobile infrastructure and leverage opportunities for economic development.



*On-street Parking should be regulated to encourage short-term parking within priority retail districts. The City is currently working to implement pay parking within the Downtown.*

### POLICY

- 2.1E.A Downtown's Comprehensive Parking Management Strategy should balance all users including long- and short-term users such as residents, shoppers, employees, and visitors.
- 2.1E.B Within Downtown, this parking strategy should be integrated into the transportation system as well as livable urban design policies so that people are encouraged to access multiple stops and destinations without using their cars.
- 2.1E.C Downtown should move towards the implementation of a shared satellite parking system, and consider steps towards a market based parking approach within certain areas of downtown.
- 2.1E.D Proposed locations for new shared parking structures should be strategically located and designed to serve transit, walkability, and adjacent land uses.



*Within Denver's 16 Ave. Mall, a parking garage is masked by first floor active uses.*

### 2.1E ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.1E.1 Develop and implement a proactive comprehensive parking strategy for both long- and short-term users in concert with the recommendations and review by the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee.

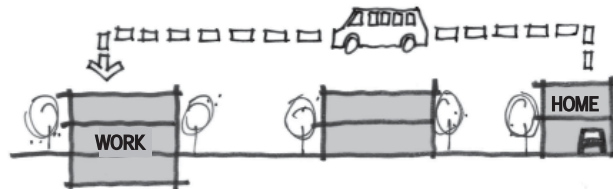


- a. The Plan should analyze both existing and anticipated supply and demand, accounting for Tacoma’s stated goals for mode shift away from the single occupancy vehicle.
- b. The Plan should include some or all of the following: development of public/private parking garages located at primary entry and egress points to the downtown transportation network and along primary retail corridors; revised on-site parking requirements within Downtown zones; a Parking Review Program which enables the application of transportation credits, off-site parking funded through a shared payment program, shared parking for existing sites, and other Transportation Demand Measures (TDM).

## 2.1E ACTIONS

### MID-TERM (3-7 YEARS)

- 2.1E.6 Consider creating parking maximums in downtown’s most walkable neighborhoods to encourage full participation in above programs.
- 2.1E.7 Ensure that the parking program listed in 2.1E.1 is regularly monitored for efficiency and full participation.



## 2.1F ENCOURAGE REVITALIZATION: TIE LAND USE REGULATIONS TO CONSTRUCTION REALITIES

The economic feasibility of high density projects is tied to the construction type of buildings (woodframe versus steel frame), and market variables, as well as various issues such as topography, building code requirements and seismic readiness. Zoning code heights and development standards should be developed in concert with these market realities.

### GOAL

Height limits and bonus provisions for height should reflect a market-oriented system that encourages high quality construction and minimizes underdeveloped land holdings.

### POLICY

- 2.1D.A In areas slated for higher density buildings, the City’s height limits should reflect the economic realities of construction while providing reasonable room for improved market conditions.

## 2.1F ACTIONS

### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.1F.1 Consider revising height limitations to reflect the realities of construction and to mitigate land speculation.



## 2.1G LEVERAGE A REVISED BONUSING SYSTEM TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADVANTAGE

Thriving high density neighborhoods successfully supplement large-scale projects with the concurrent and appropriately scaled provision of open space and community-based facilities. This both stimulates private development, growing the tax base, and provides funding to create the amenities in each neighborhood.

Within this plan each Character Area (see section 2.2A) provides a starting point for ideas and priorities for public amenities.

### GOAL

A re-aligned ‘special features’ menu within the downtown code will balance high density development with the acquisition of public amenities responsive to on-going neighborhood livability.

### POLICY

2.1G.A Bonus provisions which relax height or density restrictions should reflect a market-oriented system that minimizes underdeveloped land holdings through the provision of a strategically identified public amenity.

2.1G.B Public amenity provisions shall include, but not be limited to, geographically proximate community facilities and services needed by the downtown population such as public open space, green building and infrastructure, public art, pedestrian connections and community facilities.

2.1G.C Amenity ratios should be set so as to encourage redevelopment while successfully achieving amenities for a livable neighborhood that benefit both new and existing residents and provide on-going developer security.

### 2.1G ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.1G.1 Conduct an open process to review and revise the Downtown ‘special features’ and existing ‘as of right’ FARs to be more proximate in value, and better regulate City benefits over the long-term.

#### ONGOING

2.1G.2 Continue to revise bonus provisions on a regular basis to ensure that goals for livability, the built environment and public amenity remain complementary.



# THEME TWO

## 2.2 ACHIEVING VITALITY DOWNTOWN

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Economists point to urban livability as the single most important factor in attracting and retaining the intellectual capital needed to sustain an information-based, creative economy. To achieve the goals identified in Theme One, AND become a ‘talent magnet’ the City of Tacoma should develop procedures to increase downtown density without sacrificing livability. People are attracted by quality of life improvements, educational opportunities, a positive and distinctive sense of place and civic and cultural amenities.

Residential, mixed-use and commercial environments have qualitatively different aspects of livability including access to open space, acoustic requirements, and street environment. As downtown neighborhoods undergo redevelopment they need attention and land use guidance to transform them from a haphazard assortment of vacant lots criss-crossed by unsightly wires, to a series of complete communities with linked public spaces.

The policies of this theme outline the general objectives for the downtown’s high quality built environment, while a more specific discussion of Character Areas in section 3.0 will add specific qualifiers and development strategies.

## SECTION SUMMARY

- 2.2A Differentiate Character Areas
- 2.2B Livability Criteria to Guide Building and Public Realm Design
- 2.2C Build a Culture of Context-Appropriate and High Quality Urban Design
- 2.2D Improve Downtown Safety and Perception
- 2.2E Collaborate with the University of Washington Tacoma
- 2.2F Historic Preservation

## 2.2A DIFFERENTIATE CHARACTER AREAS

Tacoma's dramatic topography has already set the basis for some naturally occurring urban patterns; some are established while others are emerging. (Also see Chapter 3.0 for a discussion of each emerging Character Area.)

### GOAL

Downtown Tacoma shall establish itself as a series of interconnected neighborhoods, with retail districts and the commercial core supported by higher density residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

### POLICY

- 2.2A.A A set of urban design principles appropriate to specific 'character areas' should be developed to encourage sensitive neighborhood infill, as well as achieve the future vision.
- 2.2A.B Urban design policies and guidelines should be used to raise the bar for urban design within downtown's emerging neighborhoods through implementation of 'complete street' policies, design review and a revised set of land use regulations that prioritize an active and vital public realm.

### 2.2A ACTIONS

#### CONCURRENT WITH PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.2A.1 Establish the framework for a set of 'character areas' in the downtown which have a distinctive design context and character.
- 2.2A.2 Establish associated urban design policies for each and change regulatory codes and standards to achieve this vision.

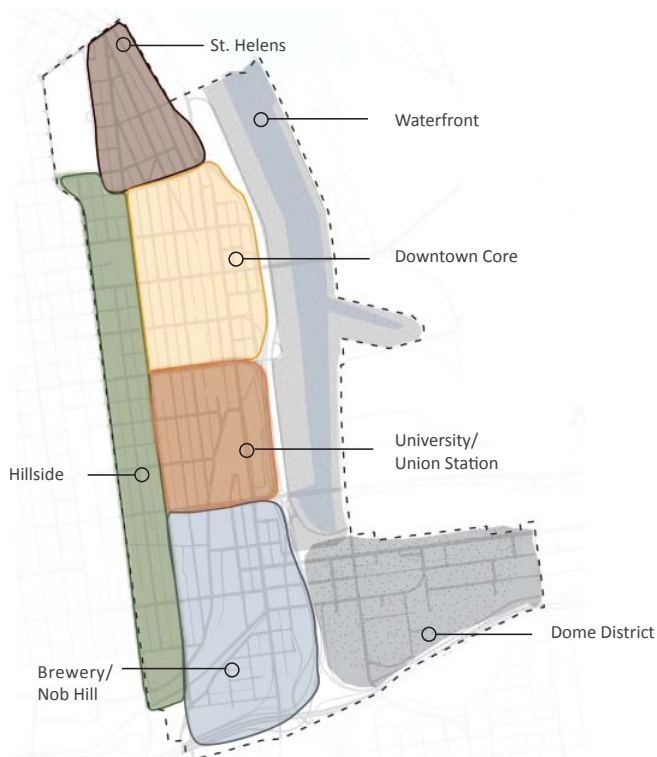


Fig 3:  
DOWNTOWN CHARACTER AREAS

*The map at the left shows a set of emerging areas within Tacoma's downtown.*

*Chapter 3.0 identifies*

- a. Existing conditions*
- b. Future vision*
- c. Opportunities, Policies and Actions*

## 2.2B LIVABILITY CRITERIA TO GUIDE BUILDING AND PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

As the downtown grows, poor siting of bulky or tall buildings can adversely impact the environmental quality of surrounding public realm through the loss of sky view and shadowing. Height, bulk, and tower spacing controls are essential means of meeting the design objectives relating to towers. The number, arrangement and form of towers in downtown districts will determine the amount of light and air that reach residential units, streets and open spaces, and the sense of crowding at street level.

### POLICY

- 2.2B.A Downtown development should be governed by principles that encourage walkability, transportation alternatives and enhanced livability for all users.
- 2.2B.B A set of livability-based performance criteria regulating the built form of downtown should be developed to ensure that a higher density area can continue to provide adequate light and air on the street, an active and sociable public realm and clear street edge definition.
- 2.2B.C Urban Design standards should respond to the character and needs of each neighborhood, mitigating the effect of more prescriptive standards and adding additional analysis criteria, thereby allowing developer flexibility while maintaining a high quality of development.
- 2.2B.D Livability Criteria applicable to development sites downtown should incorporate the following overarching elements:

#### **a. Achieving Sunlight Access in Priority Areas**

In order to preserve access to sunlight as a community asset in downtown public spaces, towers (those buildings taller than seven stories) should be sited and designed to reduce shadowing impacts. This should be particularly emphasized in key pedestrian areas where sunlight should be present at the ground level if possible. For buildings adjacent to or affecting these areas the City should require a 3-Dimensional sunlight access analysis in order to clearly understand shadowing impacts on the public realm.

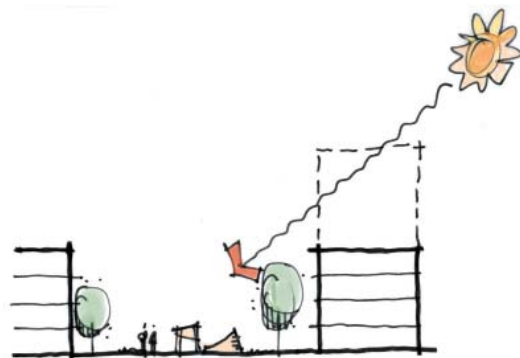
#### *Sunlight Access Priority Areas:*

- i) Pacific Ave and Broadway Ave retail corridors
- ii) The Prairie Line/ Water Ditch Trail Public Right-of-Way

#### *Sunlight Access impacts*

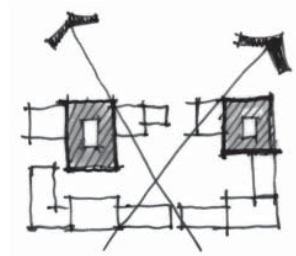
Throughout downtown shading impacts should be mitigated according to the following hierarchy of spaces:

- (i) public open spaces
- (ii) semi-private street edge
- (iii) private open space



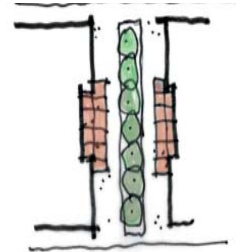
a. Sunlight Access at the Street Edge

**b. Views:** Near and distant views from project sites will help to provide for livability. Within the most intense commercial and residential districts the City should seek a minimum of 60 to 80 feet between tower edges. (Measurements may be taken from the nearest vertical plane, not including balconies.) Relaxation of tower separations should be considered where other design features mitigate for closer spacing, such as through curvilinear forms that offset adjoining planes, and reduce the sense of mass.



*b. Views*

**c. Connectivity:** Within many parts of Downtown north-south blocks exceed best practices for walkability. Projects occupying a length greater than 300 feet should seek methods to create publicly-accessible open space or mid-block connectors to enhance the comfort of the walking environment.



*c. Activated connections and crossings*

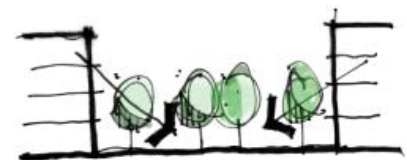
**d. Quality materials and design:** Streets are defined by the quality of the street level facade, particularly the application of natural and durable materials. Furthermore, design standards for high-rise buildings should require some form of modulation or articulation of the center as well as the base and cap such that the towers are not monolithic slabs. Balconies, terraces, applied exterior grids, and staggered upper stories add interest to individual projects.

**e. Remarkable features:** The City of Tacoma is differentiated from its competitors through strong City support of the Arts and its local artists. Buildings located in the Downtown core in identified areas (IFSA, Glass Walk, Brewery District) should make a particular effort to provide a significant presence for art.



*e. Remarkable Features*

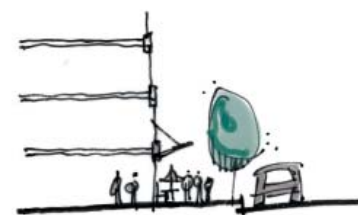
**f. Access to open space:** The City should develop a guide for the clear relationship and transition between public open spaces and adjacent private development. New public spaces should contain direct access from adjacent streets and, where appropriate, contain a variety of opportunities for casual and informal social interaction, and human scaled articulation and massing, including the placement of sitting walls, movable seating, benches and weather protection or shade.



*f. Access to open space, designing spaces that have a sense of ownership*

Downtown open spaces should be framed by building walls and facades of adjacent development; however, these should contain at minimum views into, and preferably direct access into these public spaces.

**g. Street edge activation, and building ground-orientation:** Building design should promote sociability at street level, with a rich stimulating built form designed at the human scale. Building facades on downtown streets should have frequent, identifiable entrances, appropriate ceiling heights to promote activity, and commercial usable spaces, with a high level of transparency.



*g. Street edge activation*



## 2.2C BUILD A CULTURE OF CONTEXT-APPROPRIATE AND HIGH QUALITY URBAN DESIGN

In concert with livability-based performance criteria outlined in 2.2B, improving the Design Review procedures can help the City to achieve goals for both an imageable and memorable city. Downtown design standards, regulations and the permitting process should work in concert to support developers in creative thinking and design and help them move away from a cookie cutter building mentality. However it is also important to reduce risk and encourage economic revitalization by clearly stating how and what the community would like to see. Urban design standards and design review can be accomplished in a balanced way. The City should consider the use of a tiered system which addresses special projects and developer requests, as well as a standardized checklist that can help “raise the bar” for all selected projects.

### GOALS OF DESIGN REVIEW

- 1 Establish a program that allows developers to respond to unique site conditions and address community priorities.
- 2 Establish a program that allows the City to provide early design guidance and feedback.
- 3 Establish a program that builds City capacity to allow for an efficient development review process.

### POLICY

2.2C.A Consider a downtown Design Review program:

- that is based upon strategies that prioritize the building’s response to the public realm and achieve the vision of the site’s identified vision in the downtown plan.
- that contains procedures that include cost recovery for discretionary review.
- that achieves high quality outcomes without prolonged delays to the permitting process.

### 2.2C ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.2C.1 Develop and refine a mission and set of principles as well as precedents to guide Downtown Design.
- 2.2C.2 Consider establishing a pilot Design Review in the International Financial Services Area to achieve alternative procedures for high quality urban design balanced with developer flexibility. Hold workshops with property owners in affected areas.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.2C.3 Consider expanding Design Review Program to larger scaled projects in sensitive areas, in particular the Brewery District and Union Station Character Areas.
- 2.2C.4 Maintain a consolidated book of well-executed prototype development projects within downtown. Make this available as a reference for the development community.

## 2.2D IMPROVE DOWNTOWN SAFETY AND PERCEPTION

Meeting customer needs and expectations is a central tenant of any program to improve local retail economics. It is critical that a sense of safety prevail in order to extend visits and encourage their return. To that end, commercial streets must be well serviced and maintained, e.g. streets and sidewalks free of litter, washed on a regular basis by the City or property owners through a Business Improvement Area mechanism, effective pedestrian and building lighting to minimize blind spots and dark corners, and actively discouraging the use of shutters and roller doors which block light and visual transparency and detract from the visual amenity of an area. Effective marketing and communications are also essential so that safety achieved is also realized by the broader market area.

### GOAL

Establish that the downtown has shed a perception of danger and inconvenience and pedestrians frequent the streets, adding eyes and feet on the street to bolster the sense of safety.

### POLICY

2.2D.A The City should apply CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles in the design of new public spaces by requiring placement of physical features, activities and people in ways that provide maximum visibility and foster positive social interaction among legitimate users of private and public space.

## 2.2 D ACTIONS

### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.2D.1 Develop a program for private sponsors to 'adopt' the spaces between public areas, or a series of sponsors for transitional spaces, to improve cleanliness, lighting, and safety.
- 2.2D.2 Address the 'tactics' generated in the Make Tacoma Safe & Clean initiative as appropriate.
- 2.2D.3 Audit the existing Downtown regulatory code to ensure that CPTED principles are applied and acknowledged in design standards, while ensuring quality design is not sacrificed.

### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.2D.4 Celebrate the downtown by establishing or encouraging festivals or block parties that expose people to the neighborhood.  
  
Stage at least one festival/ special event to maximize the number of people witnessing downtown's progress for themselves.
- 2.2D.5 Existing mid-block open spaces within the downtown core area should be enhanced through the development of maintenance plans, and during redevelopment these spaces should be enhanced according to the policies outlined in section 2.2B.

## 2.2E COLLABORATE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

UWT campus consists of 33 developable acres located in the heart of downtown Tacoma. The University is currently undertaking a bold program for campus expansion within this footprint to provide additional facilities for four year undergraduate education and a growing residential component. As such, it will continue to develop as an urban-style campus with a range of uses integrated between student life, residential housing and commercial activities. The following specifically addresses the Urban Design goals of the UWT campus and have been integrated into their Master Plan (2008).

### GOAL

The University of Washington Tacoma will continue as a collaborative partner in urban revitalization, with an integrated and well-loved campus that is both a City gateway and well linked to the rest of downtown.

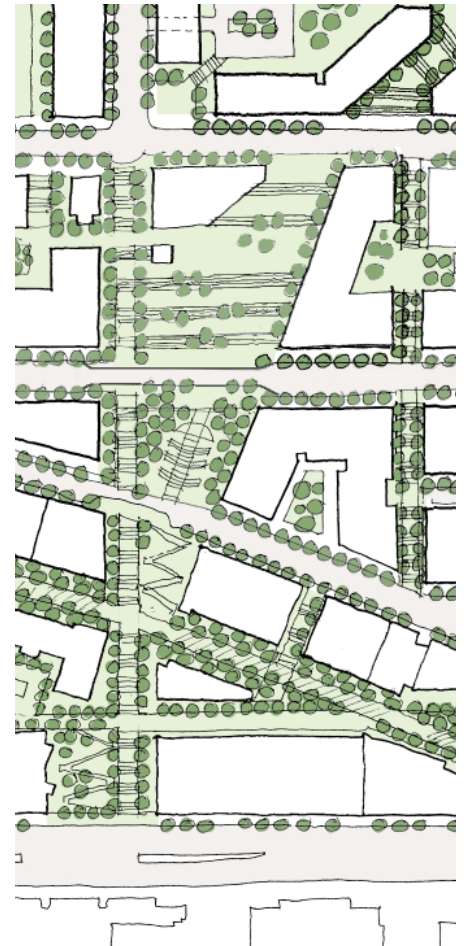
### POLICY

- 2.2E.A Building on the guiding principles for the UWT Master Plan Draft (2008), the City should work to develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship between the campus and its surrounding communities with strategic infrastructure investments, a coordinated comprehensive transit/transportation plan and parking strategies for the downtown.
- 2.2E.B The new campus should build upon and enhance its urban character by aligning planned development predominantly within the existing City street grid.
- 2.2E.C The City should coordinate with the University and Pierce Transit to develop plans for movement through the campus, in particular selective traffic calming plans for intersections and streets within the footprint.
- 2.2E.D The City should coordinate with the University to achieve development regulations that can satisfy mutually beneficial redevelopment goals, including taller buildings in conjunction with providing a public amenity and/or historic preservation.

### 2.2 E ACTIONS

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.2E.1 Collaborate with the UWT to improve the physical connections, and public realm surrounding the UWT campus footprint, particularly on Market Street and Tacoma Avenue (see section 3.1 for more detailed information).



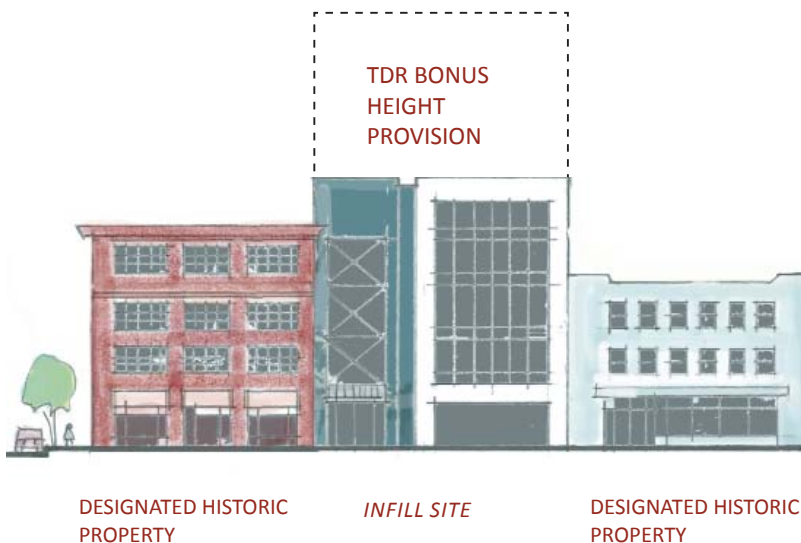
*UWT Master Plan Alternative for campus open space by Mithun Architects.*

## 2.2F HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The collection of remaining historic buildings downtown should be championed as one of Tacoma's key strategic assets. The preservation of historic buildings should be supported through a range of City-led initiatives and public/private projects as catalysts for downtown revitalization.

### POLICY

- 2.2F.A The City should continue to enrich and expand programs to encourage adaptive re-use and preservation of, and design compatibility with, downtown historic buildings, with the intent of creating environments of distinctive character and quality.
- 2.2F.B Incentives for historic preservation should continue to be expanded to:
  - a. Motivate land owners
  - b. Reduce the overall financial burden of downtown development
  - c. Provide building code flexibility and special designations for identified structures.
- 2.2F.C Pro-actively list historically eligible buildings on historic registers with the understanding that progress will be dependent on funding.
- 2.2F.D Safeguard historic structures through code enforcement and inspection to adequately protect historic buildings from demolition by neglect.



## 2.2F ACTIONS

### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.2F.1 Develop a collaborative plan to discourage tearing down the remaining significant historic structures.
- 2.2F.2 Revise Pierce County's public use rating system for current use tax assessment for historic properties to encourage adaptive re-use.
- 2.2F.3 Evaluate city-owned properties and develop preservation guidelines for their rehabilitation or alternate re-use.

### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.2F.3 Expand the existing Historic Preservation Program to provide recommendations for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for historic structures. Identify designated sending (identified eligible properties) and receiving properties (infill) as a tool to fund the renovation and adaptive re-use of signature buildings.
  - i. Begin TDR in the Downtown's priority development area, the Brewery District, to galvanize visible links between TDR investments and local community benefit (See Section 3.3). Other neighborhoods should also be considered such as Union Station and St. Helen's.
  - ii. Revise the historic "special features" bonus provision for additional height to make the TDR program for historic structures viable.
- 2.2F.4 Collaborate with non-profit and government agencies such as Washington Trust, Historic Tacoma, DAHP and CTED to develop a cultural tourism plan that focuses on Tacoma's heritage properties.



# THEME THREE

## 2.3 SUSTAINABLE CITY

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Learning to live in ways that will allow future generations to have the resources to meet their needs may be the most daunting challenge we face as a community. By incorporating principles of sustainability into planning decisions we begin to frame solutions to mitigate regional and national concerns such as climate change, natural resource preservation and energy independence. In addition, Downtown Tacoma has specific challenges such as aging infrastructure, increased demands on existing open space, mobility, air and water quality as well as social and economic health.

Keys to a Sustainable City:

- Transit rich environment

- Walkable, compact neighborhoods with a variety of housing and retail choices

- Social responsibility and engagement in City processes

- Livability and public amenities that are strategically located and responsive to neighborhood needs.

Sustainability helps accommodate a coordinated approach to environmental, economic and social concerns. As of 2008, the City of Tacoma 's Green Ribbon Climate Action Task Force was charged with defining CO2 reduction and mitigation goals and developing a specific community and government action plan. Their recommendations help to move towards reducing the City's overall ecological footprint.

The City has created a new Office of Sustainability with citizen oversight to systematically implement the action plan, which may impact downtown regulations in the future.

This section addresses sustainability concerns through land use policy, social and community welfare, and most importantly through **sustainable transportation choices** that will help control air pollution, congestion, and CO2 emissions while boosting public health by encouraging more walking and cycling.

## SECTION SUMMARY

2.3A Incorporate Sustainability into Downtown Decisions

2.3B Expand Downtown Housing Choices

2.3C Build a Family-Friendly and Livable Downtown

2.3D Consider Context and Adjacent Neighborhoods

2.3E Grow Community through Food Security

2.3F Sustainable Transportation Choices

2.3G Plan for the Growth of Public Transit

## 2.3A INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO DOWNTOWN DECISIONS

### GOAL

Sustainability should be at the fore of all land use decisions in the downtown. Development is measured and evaluated against metrics of sustainability established with the community and for the local context. Innovative solutions for social, environmental and economic challenges should be sought as a matter of course.

### POLICY

2.3A.A A set of community identified targets should be developed to help the City stay on course to reach its goals. In particular the City should consider annual targets for:

#### Quantifiable Indicators

Housing and Job Proximity  
Open Space Accessibility  
Transportation Access/Mode Share  
Urban Forest coverage  
Public Health  
Adaptive re-use  
Waste Disposal and Recycling (including demolition waste)

#### Non-Quantifiable Indicators

Community outreach and buy-in  
Public education  
Enhanced public health and well-being

### 2.3A ACTIONS

#### NEAR-TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.3A.1 Integrate policies developed by the Green Ribbon Climate Action Task Force into downtown land use development standards.
- 2.3A.2 Establish a Community Indicators Task Force to research, develop and set measurable targets as indicators of downtown's progress and embed sustainability concerns into downtown decisions.
- 2.3A.3 Develop a Downtown Tacoma 'Blueprint for Sustainability'; containing at minimum a sustainability checklist for new development that also guides RFPs for City-owned properties. This could be organized with the Design Review program, and/or bonus amenity provisions.

## 2.3B EXPAND DOWNTOWN HOUSING CHOICE

### GOAL

Housing for all incomes is located within walking distance to employment centers and planned on existing and planned high capacity transit routes.

### POLICY

- 2.3B.A The Downtown should stress mixed-income housing solutions where affordable units are integrated with market rate units to achieve a balanced neighborhood.
- 2.3B.B The downtown provides a range of housing types from low-to high-rise and provides housing opportunities for various groups including youth, single adults, couples, families, seniors, people with special needs, artists and others.

### 2.3B ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.3B.1 Revise the affordable housing provision within the existing 'special features' section of the downtown code.
- 2.3B.2 Develop a plan in coordination with local housing agencies and stakeholders to determine the downtown's need for affordable housing.

## 2.3C BUILD A FAMILY-FRIENDLY AND LIVABLE DOWNTOWN

### GOAL

Downtown’s residential environments should be designed to support children and their parents to live, visit, go to school, recreate and explore Downtown.

### POLICY

- 2.3C.A Design standards in downtown residential neighborhoods should ensure effective transitions between high and lower scaled buildings.
- 2.3C.B Buildings in the downtown residential areas should be anchored to the ground with careful facade design in commercial areas, and multiple entries with access to open space in residential zones.
- 2.3C.C Where feasible, livability benefits — roof gardens, shared amenity space, community centers and daycare — should be tied into bonus provisions for height or density.

### 2.3C ACTIONS

#### MID-TERM (3-7 YEARS)

- 2.3C.1 Establish principles for family friendly and livable developments in the downtown including the following:
  - ground-oriented uses
  - safety
  - connected to transit
  - multiple bedroom housing
  - green space and parks
  - compatible adjacent land uses and businesses
- 2.3C.2 In combination with policies and actions in 2.3E work with Metro Parks to develop a plan for open space, urban parks and gardens.

## 2.3D CONSIDER CONTEXT AND ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

### GOAL

Downtown development planning should coordinate with surrounding neighborhoods and land uses. Adjacent neighborhoods/influence areas should be coordinated with transportation planning, parking management and land use policy within transitional areas.

### POLICY

- 2.3D.A Mixed-use centers adjacent to Downtown, using the ‘working definition of downtown’ (Stadium, MLK), shall be considered as influence areas that link the downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods and shall be addressed according to their transportation connections and land use impacts.
- 2.3D.B Mixed-use centers adjacent to Downtown, while currently outside of the Comprehensive Plan downtown boundary, should be monitored and considered as potential downtown expansion areas as growth occurs.
- 2.3D.C Mixed-use neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown, should be allowed to develop within a clear hierarchy that favors the existing downtown districts.
- 2.3D.D In neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown, parking should be coordinated with programs available in the downtown, including a transit pass program.



## 2.3E GROW COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD SECURITY

### GOAL

Develop programs for urban agriculture in areas such as excess right-of-way or existing underutilized land, with students, artists and local residents. The City should aim to achieve the eventual goal of education, community building and broad based access to nutritious local produce.

### POLICY

- 2.3E.A The City should develop programs to identify and set aside green spaces throughout the downtown with potential to serve as community gardens.
- 2.3E.B The City should consider access to food in the context of downtown land use decisions and support the creation of a permanent farmer's market as a catalyst project (2.1C.1).

### 2.3E ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.3E.1 Incentivize arable green space in a revised 'special features' menu in residential districts (Hillside).
- 2.3E.2 Develop a program that helps interested residents to negotiate seasonal or short-term community garden space on undeveloped or unused private lots.
- 2.3E.3 Provide small dollar startup support to community-based garden programs for tools, soil and other needs.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.3E.4 Foster local/ organic produce delivery service or 'veggie box' business.





## 2.3F SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

One of the most important aspects of growing sustainably is an efficient, comfortable, and useable transportation system that provides alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle. This is best accomplished through an integrated approach, providing enhanced pedestrian and cycling amenities, pedestrian-oriented, compact urban design, and efficient and well-planned transit systems (along with effective automobile access).

The City of Tacoma is well positioned to enhance the efficiency of its transit infrastructure as the working core of Pierce Transit's system. With a street network designed before the advent of the automobile, Tacoma's downtown grid has regular intervals and inherently high connectivity. Its wide rights-of-way (60', 80' or 100') which now support primarily automobile traffic can be better optimized to provide fast transit links, walking boulevards, and bicycle routes.

Enhancement of the street network may be the single most important improvement to the quality of life in downtown that can be undertaken by the City. Furthermore, with a historic street car system there is a clear precedent for alternative transit opportunities. Already LINK light rail builds a case for a well-used transit system.

### GOAL

Improve sustainable transportation.

### POLICY

The following policies and actions outline the framework for improving the transportation infrastructure throughout downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods. This is supplemented by Chapter 4.0 Circulation.

- 2.3F.A Create multi-modal and flexible streets that are designed to increase the mode share of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit use throughout downtown in order to mitigate the impacts of growth, reduce reliance on the single occupancy vehicle and increase the sociability of the walking environment.
- 2.3F.B Work to achieve a 10 percent shift away from single occupancy vehicle transportation by 2010 per the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) Program.

### 2.3F ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.3F.1 Implement Street Typologies and urban design recommendations as developed in Chapter 4.0 of this plan and commit to the development of a street "Tool Kit" to identify common problems and design solutions.
- 2.3F.2 Conduct Transportation Demand Management by providing incentives and organizational support for alternative transportation options, including carpools, transit passes, and cycling to employers and the University of Washington Tacoma.

- 2.3F.3 Build City staff capacity and provide training in the design and benefits of active transportation options.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.3F.4 Complete transit-oriented design guidelines for the Dome District and other priority station areas to ensure transit supportive land uses.

## 2.3G PLAN FOR THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

Concurrent to policies and actions listed in 2.3F, the City of Tacoma can best optimize its existing transportation network through a re-organization of City streets to serve a hierarchy of functions, and better balance street use between vehicular mobility options and transit alternatives.

Working with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit as partners, the City should develop a long term transportation strategy that will better service downtown's growing neighborhoods in a manner more appropriate to the scale of the downtown grid. Well traveled trunk or spine routes can provide the heart of a successful transit system that can then grow with additional feeder and circulator routes. This system, begun with LINK Light Rail, can expand incrementally.

### GOAL

Transit shall provide efficient, high quality service connecting jobs, housing, schools, shopping and recreational facilities throughout the downtown and region.

### POLICY

2.3G.A In collaboration with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit design transit stops and inter-modal connections integrated with the public realm, providing gathering spaces and an improved end-to-end transit experience.

2.3G.B Work with Pierce Transit and other transit providers to ensure ride quality on public transit. New vehicles should be of modern design, clean, and universally accessible.

2.3G.C Transportation planning should be coordinated with land use decisions, with transit supportive land uses located near to major transit hubs.

### 2.3G ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.3G.1 In collaboration with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit undertake a 'Downtown Mobility Plan' to further develop transportation solutions that will build robust and stable ridership, and make the case for regionally cooperative, large scale transportation investment.

i. The Plan should identify a series of 'Strategic Transit Corridors' that will provide high capacity transit, and will best serve the downtown's employment and residential needs.

ii. Study the potential for high frequency routes to service between strategic corridors, destinations and nearby neighborhoods.

iii. To fully coordinate routes and service between Pierce Transit and Sound Transit study the impact of relocating the regional transportation hub from the Commerce Street Station.

iv. Recommend street upgrades to maintain mobility for vehicular traffic, such as 21st Street.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

2.3G.2 Develop a set of performance measures to ensure that transit stops contribute to, rather than detract from, livability.



Fig 4:  
PLANNING FOR THE GROWTH  
OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

The map at the left shows a set of strategic corridors that may accommodate high capacity transit. Street Typologies in Section 4.0 have been developed to accommodate this general framework.

- Multi-modal corridors
- Key Connectors
- Street upgrade
- Transfer Points





# THEME FOUR

## 2.4 CITY OF THE ARTS

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The City of Tacoma is framed by two very strong arts clusters: the Theater District to the North, and the emerging museums and creative arts in the Brewery District/Union Station areas to the South. Over the past decade, institutions such as the Washington State History Museum (1996), the Tacoma Art Museum (2003), and the Museum of Glass (2002) have brought Tacoma into the regional spotlight.

According to the 2008 Downtown Tacoma Economic Impact Assessment, these museums are having a profound impact on the local and regional economy, forming a critical mass of attractions that is drawing visitors from far and wide. Over the 2005-2006 cycle, City-funded arts organizations brought 417,560 visitors to downtown whose valuable outside dollars were spent in the community. This includes purchases on food, lodging, and entertainment that supports local businesses, and creates additional jobs, income, and tax revenues.

Moreover, the downtown arts and culture cluster is adding to a powerful trademark for Tacoma as a stimulating urban living environment with a high quality of life. When taken together it is this positive feedback loop that is proven to attract new residents and young professionals who will contribute substantially to the future growth and development of Tacoma.

The City of Tacoma already participates in a wide variety of programs designed to support the arts, e.g. the One Percent for Art, City Grant programs, and other initiatives organized through the Tacoma Arts Commission.

During the Downtown planning process we heard in chorus that Tacomans are proud of their recent successes and that the Arts should be a significant component to downtown living, image building and economic development. The following set of policies can help Downtown to continue to leverage existing investments in its museums, theaters and public arts programs in order to further differentiate the city from its competitors.

### SECTION SUMMARY

- 2.4A Continue to Enhance Tacoma's Regional Position in Cultural Tourism
- 2.4B Establish the Creative Arts and Design as a Primary Target Sector for Downtown Tacoma
- 2.4C Establish a Public-Private Partnership for an Arts Accelerator or Cultural Arts Center
- 2.4D Continue to Support Working Artists Locating Within Downtown
- 2.4E Provide Funds and Support for Public Art
- 2.4F Continue to Revitalize the Theater District
- 2.4G Create a Master Plan for the 15th Street 'Glass Walk'
- 2.4H Collaborate with the UWT and School of the Arts to encourage a post secondary design curriculum.

## 2.4A CONTINUE TO ENHANCE TACOMA'S REGIONAL POSITION IN CULTURAL TOURISM

### GOAL

In addition to giving Tacoma a bright position on the cultural map of the Pacific Northwest, successful museums should be operated in such a manner as to increase the vitality of surrounding neighborhoods by providing additional patrons for local restaurants and shops, and by attracting new businesses to the area.

### POLICY

2.4A.1 Tacoma will continue to work with local and regional institutions to both support existing and locate new museums and cultural facilities within the Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods.

#### 2.4A ACTIONS

##### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.4A.1 Continue on-going collaboration with the LeMay Museum to provide a supportive environment for the museum, as well as associated public realm enhancements.

Ensure that the museum is well connected by transit, walking, and cycling links.

2.4A.2 Continue to work with the Childrens' Museum to find a feasible site within the downtown area, preferably within walking distance from existing museums and/or a transit hub.

2.4A.3 Continue to work on the development of a context appropriate, boutique hotel concept within the Brewery District to support local arts and heritage tourism.

##### LONG TERM (4-7 YEARS)

2.4A.4 Coordinate museums with the Cultural Tourism Plan outlined in section 2.2F.5.



## 2.4B ESTABLISH THE CREATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN AS A PRIMARY TARGET SECTOR FOR DOWNTOWN TACOMA

‘Creative Arts and Design’ is an umbrella category that includes those businesses that develop products and services based on innate creativity and talent. Typical enterprises such as software design, film production, music recording, interior and graphic design, advertising, marketing, and commercial photography, as well as architecture, urban design, and historic preservation should be encouraged activities in the downtown. The sector also includes niche manufacturing operations with a focus on technical and professional services.

These services include high skilled and well paying jobs, and are often primarily made up of small-scale entrepreneurial businesses that thrive from clustering and area notoriety.

### POLICY

2.4B.1 Tacoma should continue to further establish creative arts and design as a primary target sector for Downtown Tacoma

### 2.4B ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.4B.1 Create a land use overlay within the Brewery District to provide incentives and structural support for creative businesses locating there.

Boundaries: Tacoma Ave to the west, I-705 to the east, South Tacoma Way to the south , and South 21st Street to the north.

Within this district identify and implement economic development strategies including the following: tax abatement and exemption programs, aggressive public/private financing, and consider the creation of a gap financing pool for small projects.

2.4B.2 Within the Brewery District implement regulatory changes that will reduce barriers to restoration costs for historic buildings, such as seismic upgrades, in combination with a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for historic structures in order to jump start economic development (see section 2.2F.3.)

i. Adjust regulatory codes to lift height limits on those infill (non-historic) properties purchasing historic development rights to encourage redevelopment. (see Section 3.3)

ii. Commission an “Adaptive Re-use Building Code Study” to make recommendations for new building code strategies, and a re-use handbook to inform owners and developers.

2.4B.3 Create and fund a City staff position to oversee the development of the District.

2.4B.4 Pursue a transaction for the City’s 6.4 acre property that is synergistic with the UWT, and will support businesses within the Creative Arts and Design sector. (See Action 2.1A.1 and an exploration in Section 3.3E)

2.4B.5 Consider alternative locations for the Public Works facilities in the Brewery District in order to begin enhancement through private/public investment.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

2.4B.6 As the District develops, work with local groups to create a cooperative marketing campaign for the Brewery District.



Granville Island Vancouver, Arts Club



Kansas City, Arts Incubator



Existing City of Tacoma City Shop and Stables

## 2.4C ESTABLISH A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR AN ARTS ACCELERATOR OR CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

### GOAL

Downtown Tacoma will provide its residents with a multi-purpose facility dedicated to arts, education, and to the provision of space for members of the community to create, converse, and perform.

### POLICY

2.4C.A Tacoma should establish a public-private partnership for an arts accelerator or cultural arts center.

## 2.4D CONTINUE TO SUPPORT WORKING ARTISTS LOCATING WITHIN DOWNTOWN

Tacoma is gaining a reputation throughout the Pacific Northwest as a hotbed for artists. Attracted by relatively affordable housing in an eclectic downtown environment, artists have found a home within many pockets of downtown.

### GOAL

In recognition of the inherent value that working artists bring to the downtown community, the City of Tacoma will develop a range of incentives and programs directed at their support. Furthermore, an informed and integrated network of public agencies, grass roots organizations and non-profits will provide working artists the tools they need to establish viable careers in the working and performing arts.

### POLICY

2.4D.A Consider the creation of a private arts development association, 501c3, or umbrella organization, to help advocate for artists.

2.4D.B Create and support opportunities for community-generated projects that help to revitalize neighborhoods.

### 2.4C ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

2.4C.1 Establish a city-based or other agency to help support the development of a creative arts accelerator.

2.4C.2 Identify an existing under utilized structure or property or new building site within the Brewery District, and work to establish a Creative Arts Complex to serve as a growth stimulus for the City's creative businesses and as a cultural attraction for residents and visitors.

Non-profit, or community arts agencies, may act as anchors to the space. The space could also include the following: affordable rental spaces (day use or month to month) suitable for a variety of uses, media lab, performance venue, movement studio, workshop, gallery, conference and classrooms.

## 2.4E PROVIDE FUNDS AND SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ART

### GOAL

The City of Tacoma will integrate Public Art in long term planning initiatives and will continue to incorporate art in high visibility locations and community anchors, such as libraries, parks and recreation facilities within the downtown.

### POLICY

- 2.4E.A Broaden the reach of the One Percent for Art program through requiring participation of Downtown Parks and Libraries.
- 2.4E.B Dedicate funds to support alternative and temporary artist installations and venues such as in disused, abandoned or vacant properties.
- 2.4E.C Increase the type and number of venues for the visual and performing arts within downtown such as legal outdoor venues for street arts and mural projects.

### 2.4E ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.4E.1 Develop a 'Public Art Master Plan' for the City of Tacoma to adapt priority recommendations to the shifting environment, and create ongoing support for public arts within the core area. Goals for the master plan should include the following:
  - a. Increase the impact on the downtown public realm
  - b. Locate additional funding streams for Public Art
  - c. Provide a plan for the placement of future artwork

## 2.4F CONTINUE TO REVITALIZE THE THEATER DISTRICT

Tacoma's Theater District, located at 9th and Broadway, is anchored by The Broadway Center for the Performing Arts and its three facilities, the Pantages Theater, the Rialto Theater and the Theatre on the Square. The theaters host ballets, symphonies, live comedy, musicals, concert bands, popular music and other special events. Started as a community based revitalization effort in the 1970s and 1980s these theaters have sparked the renaissance of northern downtown including Opera Alley to the north.

### GOAL

Further revitalize the Theatre District.

### POLICY

- 2.4F.A Enhance the public realm, and prioritize safe streets in this area, particularly during evening performance hours.
- 2.4F.B Support the critical mass of eating and drinking establishments in this area along the Broadway and Pacific Corridors.

### 2.4F ACTIONS

#### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 2.4F.1 Support the creation and implementation of a wayfinding and signage project that highlights the theater district, regional arts institutions and the emerging creative arts area.

#### MID-TERM (4-7 YEARS)

- 2.4F.2 Work with existing and future venues to ensure smooth overflow parking arrangements and the provision of wayfinding to and from public parking options. Coordinate this with the Comprehensive Parking Strategy.



## 2.4G CREATE A MASTER PLAN FOR THE 15TH STREET 'GLASS WALK'

Concepts for a Tacoma 'Art Walk' have been in discussion for a decade. The 1998 R/UDAT report illustrates the 15th Street corridor as a place where artwork could inhabit the right-of-way. The concept of a 'glass walk' will benefit from being expanded and developed further.

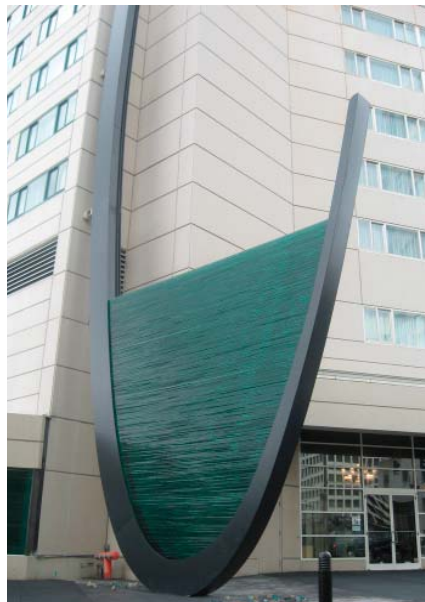
### GOAL

Create and implement a master plan for the 15th Street 'Glass Walk.'

### POLICY

2.4G.1 Tie concepts of Public Art to Tacoma's investment in Glass Art, through a glass walk that leads pedestrians from the waterfront to the Downtown Core, convention center and glass-themed hotel.

2.4G.2 Explore artwork displays that are seasonal and that change each year under a juried competitive approach to continually provide variety.





## 2.4H COLLABORATE WITH THE UWT AND SCHOOL OF THE ARTS TO ENCOURAGE A POST SECONDARY DESIGN CURRICULUM

### GOAL

The City of Tacoma will collaborate and leverage existing institutions to provide for long term sustainability in the arts through new and expanded design schools.

### POLICY

- 2.4H.B The UWT should continue to explore a proposed Art and Community degree program that not only educates artists but also infuses their work into community non-profit agencies.
- 2.4H.C Seek to establish a Creative Arts Training Center as a joint program between higher education and community partners to offer certification and degree programs in creative and culinary arts, as well as community education and arts programs.



# 3.0 URBAN DESIGN + THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CITY

While at times the benefits of good urban design can seem hard to quantify, its value to the economic and social well being of a city have been well documented. As noted in Tacoma’s 1998 R/UDAT study, “world travelers universally measure the health of a city, and even a region by the vibrancy of its downtown.” A high quality environment is a leading variable in our shifting choices about where to work and where to live.

The Plan encourages and explores the development of strategic activity areas, gateways and important physical connections particularly in primary development nodes. As such, this section will help to provide answers for individuals seeking to develop their lots and parcels, and to inform how these built structures can come together in such a manner that they create a working whole. These policies build upon the overall policies developed in the Chapter ‘Achieving Vitality Downtown.’

## How to use this Section

As growth continues to pressure neighborhoods, the City’s decision-making processes must evolve to account for shifting contexts and unique site conditions. This section should be used not only as a guideline for those planning new projects, but also as a way to provide a proactive framework for regulatory updates. Furthermore, in the future the downtown would benefit from district or area-wide plans that specifically address local conditions.

## A Series of Neighborhoods

The Downtown Plan divides the Primary Study Area into a series of distinct ‘Character Areas’ for the purpose of providing a vision and design context.\* Elements such as historic buildings, recreational or commercial destinations, scale, street type and natural features are some of the important characteristics that provide each neighborhood with its sense of place. The boundaries of any neighborhood are not fixed, but shift over time.

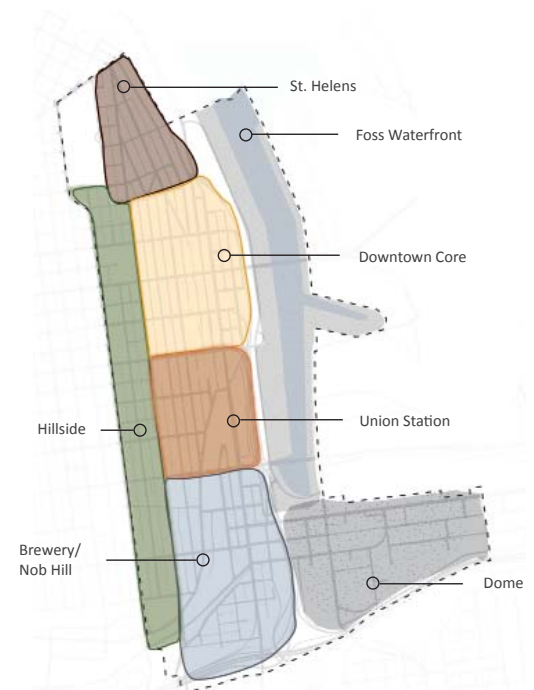
For each Character Area, the Plan identifies

- a. Existing conditions
- b. Future vision
- c. Opportunities/ Area-wide Development Strategies

*\* More specific information related to land use policy on the Dome District and Foss Waterfront may be found in the Dome District Sub Area Plan (2001), and the Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan (2006).*

## OVERALL URBAN DESIGN GOALS

Design for people  
Encourage a creative approach to density



CHARACTER AREAS

## Gateways

The downtown has a number key gateways, or areas that capture a high degree of visibility and a sense of transition. Urban design for these areas should be emphasized not only as places to pass through, but also as places in their own right, through the appropriate use of traffic calming, landscaping, lighting, public art and building outlook.

Gateways are identified by the following:

- Provide identity and meaning to the arrival experience and clearly cross a threshold of scale.
- Exhibit an intensity of activity
- Clearly articulate the emphasis on mode shift to that of human scale through design considerations.

Gateways are further explored in each Character Area section.

## Connections

The Core of Downtown's primary connections to its adjacent neighborhoods are 11th and 13th as its historic connectors (outfitted at one time with a cable car loop). 15th Street is a priority linkage between the Foss Waterway and neighborhoods to the west. Connections to the east and west have traditionally been difficult due to the steep nature of downtown. As a result, the Downtown has evolved with a series of public stairways now fallen into disrepair. The Downtown Plan looks to re-visit these connections, and creates a set of policies and implementation strategies to revitalize them as an under-used resource.

There is also a strong desire from the community to fully integrate the downtown to its waterfront. Physical impediments remain extreme, including railroad rights of way and a freeway. Near term enhanced connections are planned for 15th street, with hopes for a restored Murray Morgan Bridge, and potential public access from Fireman's Park tied to future development.

Through a revised bonus provision the City may also strategize on how to share costs for larger scaled connections particularly from Fireman's Park and the IFSA.



GATEWAYS

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Division & St. Helens | 6. 17th & Tacoma       |
| 2. 7th & Broadway        | 7. 19th & Pacific      |
| 3. 11th & Yakima         | 8. 21st & Pacific      |
| 4. A & I-705             | 9. 25th & Pacific      |
| 5. 15th & Tacoma         | 10. Jefferson & Tacoma |
|                          | 11. Jefferson & Yakima |



### 3.1 UNION STATION

Perhaps the most significant area for the image of Tacoma, this character area is populated by a collection of well-preserved iconic buildings linking the city to its industrial past as well as supporting new investments in regional arts institutions.

Renovations and upgrades through the 1990s have succeeded in imbuing a civic formality and status to the area, while successful landscape treatments and historic adaptations have created a well-loved 'place' at the UWT campus. The Union Station Historic District and related design review influences the treatment of the public realm and private developments adjacent thereto, although results have been mixed. This character area includes both the Union Station Historic District and blocks adjacent to the Convention Center and calls for an integrated design approach between the two major sections of downtown.



#### VISION

With geographic proximity to the waterfront and access to and from I-705, this character area is a significant city entry point, well connected to its adjacent neighborhoods with a civic scaled public realm.

A fully integrated extension of the UWT footprint (a total of 33 developable acres) will bring new life through a blend of student, campus, residential and commercial uses. The UWT has set a goal for student enrollment at 10,000 by 2030. As such, the campus will be fundamentally linked to downtown revitalization through workforce development, real estate investment opportunities, and new student life. The UWT will be a key stakeholder partner to direct investment into the center city.

Future development of this area will be primarily university related uses, with supporting office and residential. While throughout most of the character area, building heights and bulk should be responsive to existing historic precedents, a tower-podium form is appropriate.



# UNION STATION URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following provide the basis for Urban Design Principles within the Union Station character area.

## Design in Context

New developments should enrich the quality of existing urban spaces with a design response that is complementary and arises from its context, particularly in reference to the Union Station and Union Depot historic district design guidelines.

As such, building design should take cues from the local vernacular including material choice, building elements and fenestration, massing and scale. Taller portions of buildings should be sensitive, and mitigate massing through design when located adjacent to a historic structure.



## Activate Street Edges

As Downtown's major arts and cultural district, building designs should encourage active edges, public plazas and social gathering spaces at the street level. Pedestrian connections should be reinforced, in particular along the Prairie Line.



## Frame Views

The distinctive ambiance of this area should be enhanced through the framing of streetscapes. Development should respect sight lines and featured views that are important to the character of the neighborhood, particularly at street ends and views of Mt. Rainier from Tollefson Plaza.

## Provide a Comfortable Walking Environment

Building designs should demonstrate a high degree of human scale, and prioritize access by pedestrians.

The visual and aesthetic impact of parking garage entries should be mitigated through architectural integration to the rest of the building and the wrapping of exterior finishes into garage openings for a minimum of 10 feet.

New infill buildings developed on blocks adjacent to the Convention Center should promote access through long north and south blocks and create a cohesive street wall with a scale and rhythm of development in concert with existing buildings.



## UNION STATION OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections detail specific strategies for the development of the character area, including policies and actions specific to these strategies.

### 3.1A PRAIRIE LINE MULTI-USE TRAIL

The former BSNF rail corridor, the 'Prairie Line', connects the University of Washington Tacoma, Brewery District and the Water Ditch Trail at South Tacoma Way with the Tacoma Art Museum and the emerging waterfront neighborhood (via 15th street). The City should continue to negotiate with the BSNF to a) achieve at minimum the 20' corridor right-of-way and b) provide an expanded and enhanced pedestrian crossing at 15th Street to Dock Street.

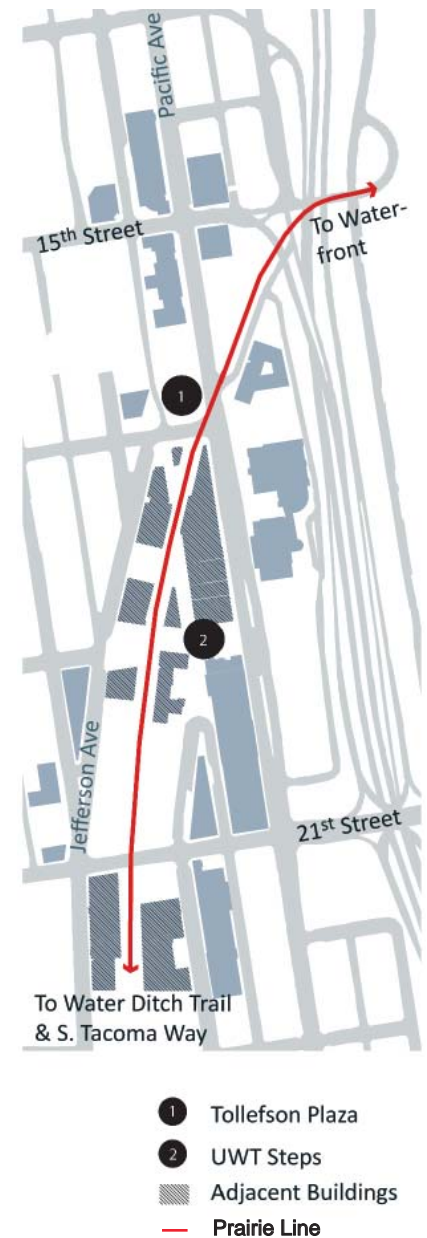
The enhanced 15th street crossing should be well signed, pedestrian friendly, and integrate new active ground floor uses on adjacent property. It should also include a significant piece of public art to kick-start the 15th Street 'Glass Walk.'

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 The City should pursue the creation of a fully integrated Prairie Line through the development of an integrated design for the entire 80' right-of-way, connecting to South Tacoma Way along Hood Street.
- 2 The Prairie Line should be designed as an active, multi purpose pathway with coordinated pedestrian lighting, paving and landscaping along its length, with some measure of weather protection and seating in key segments.

Adjust associated DMU and WR zoning regulations to encourage buildings that contain multiple entries, balconies and active 'eyes' facing the Prairie Line. Consider making these buildings eligible for a facade improvement program.

- 3 New buildings adjacent to the Prairie Line should be set-back from the existing r.o.w. Uses such as cafes, porches, and loading docks may be located within the set-back. Buildings fronting the Prairie Line should contain one or all of the following:
  - A porch-like outlook
  - Balconies
  - Public/ Private open space
  - Seating areas
  - Retail or cafes
  - Workshops or loading docks
- 4 The Prairie Line should be considered a 'sunlight access priority area' where there are restrictions on shadowing by development. Buildings adjacent should mitigate bulk and volume through appropriate siting, and the use of significant transparency to complement the trail.



### 3.1B TOLLEFSON PLAZA

“Tacoma’s City Center has a new heart – a 2.9 acre gathering place for the people of the city and its visitors.”

— 2007 Report Tollefson Plaza,  
A Business Plan for its Vision and Management

After opening in the spring of 2006, the City is now working with the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce to introduce active uses to the plaza, as well as to reconfigure spaces to provide maximum sociability. The illustration at right shows one possible concept to achieve more activated edges. In particular, the City should consider development along 17th street to bring life to the western portion of the Plaza.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

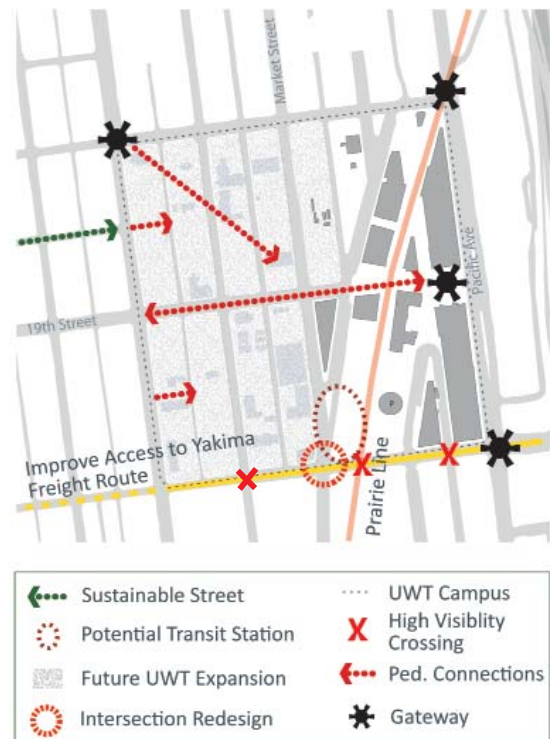
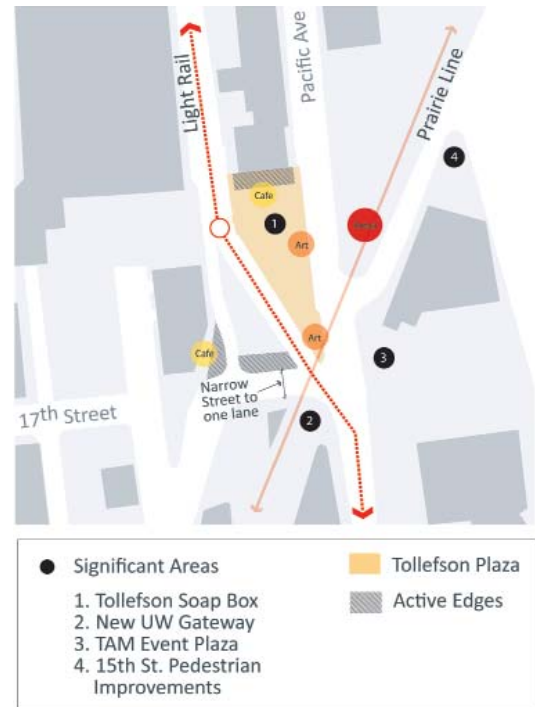
- 1 During plaza retrofitting, new designs should focus on the introduction of complementary activities to facilitate interaction between people as well as the creation of a strong framing around the edge of the plaza.
- 2 Coordinate Tollefson redesign with the Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) Master Plan update.

### 3.1C CAMPUS INTEGRATION

The University of Washington Tacoma will have a significant impact on the shape of the Downtown. The following recommendations help to foster a collaborative relationship between the City and the University in order to improve the condition of the public realm.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 As a pedestrian first initiative, access to the campus should be designed to be comfortable and safe for bicycles and pedestrians and transit stops should be upgraded with station elements and other supportive amenities.
  - i) Consider a series of high visibility crosswalks and intersection traffic calming for key entrance points.
  - ii) Prioritize internal block connectors up the slope on undifferentiated north-south blocks along Tacoma Ave and Market Street.
- 2 The City should maximize local access, low volume routes, such as 18th Street, to provide alternative storm water treatments, and educational awareness through sustainability demonstration projects.





## 3.2 COMMERCIAL CORE

As the employment center for downtown Tacoma, this area contains a number of the City's most important structures- the Municipal Building, major office buildings, performing arts theaters, shops and restaurants--as well as the Old City Hall Historic District. A major community hub at 9th and Broadway acts as the de-facto center of Tacoma.

Downtown has generally high accessibility, both to the freeway and the existing transit system via light rail. However, currently there are a number of underdeveloped sites within the core used for surface parking.

Like other areas in Downtown, this character area contains wide public rights-of-way on major streets and includes a system of service 'courts' with relatively small lots subdivided in the 19th century. Throughout the downtown the form of narrow, long blocks (up to 680') do not easily support the geometries for structured parking garages, and in some cases are a significant obstacle to large scale redevelopment.



### VISION

The Downtown Core contains significant potential. In particular, the International Financial Services Area (ISFA) located to the east of Commerce Street is envisioned to have the greatest intensity and height and may provide the location for new iconic towers. Along Pacific Avenue, and in other areas, buildings will likely remain mid-rise, with a strong pedestrian street presence.

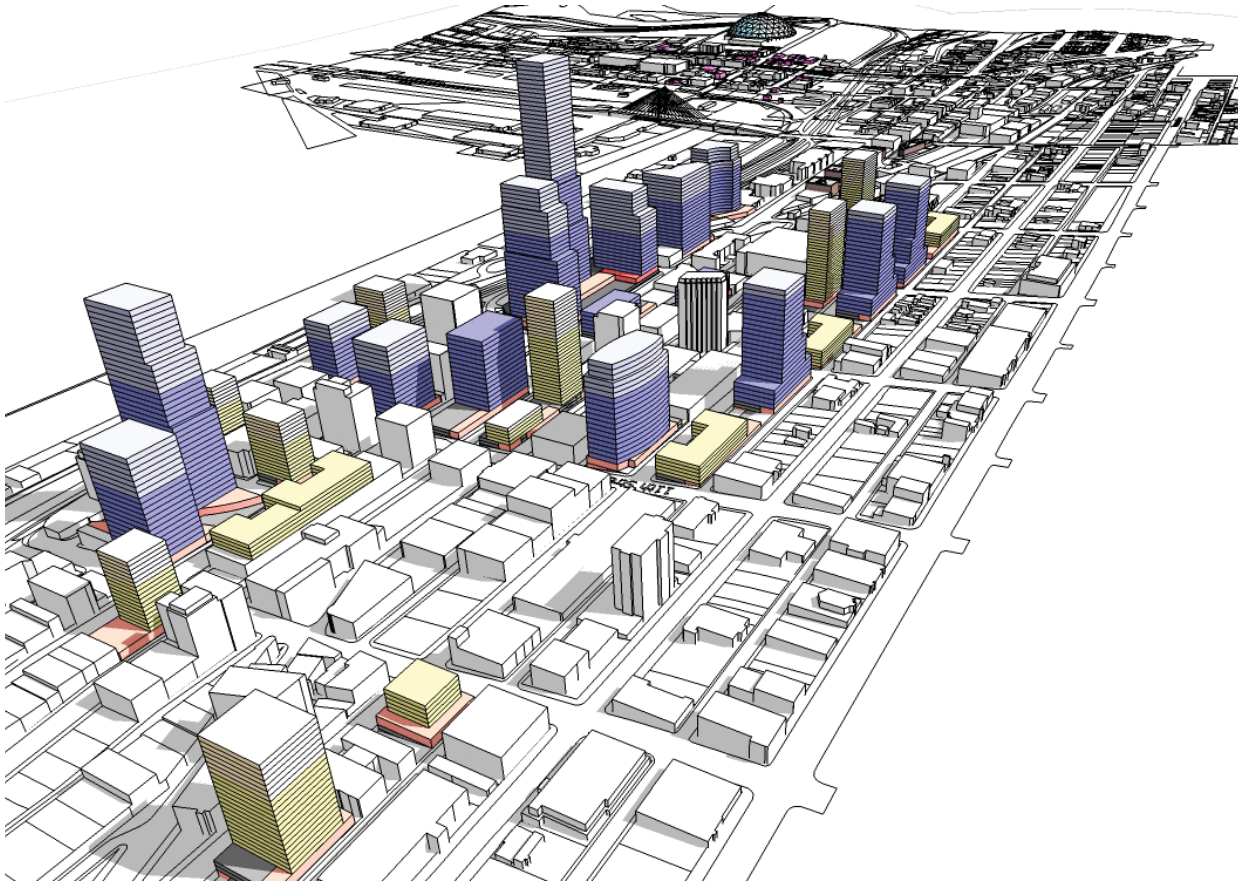
To the west of Market Street typical assembly and lot patterns suggest the highest and best use to be a residential tower form with a retail base. In this area, limits on tower floor plate size, and requirements on siting, open space and spacing, should ensure that greater intensity of use does not have long term negative impacts on livability.

#### *Transit Strategy*

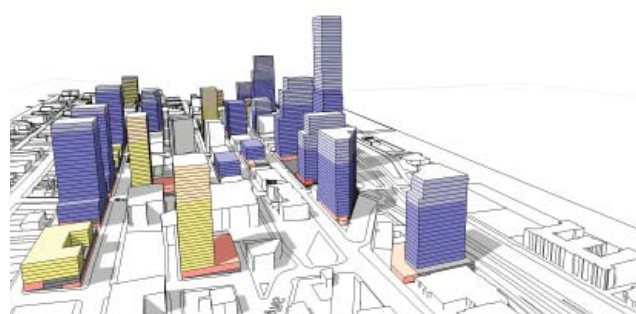
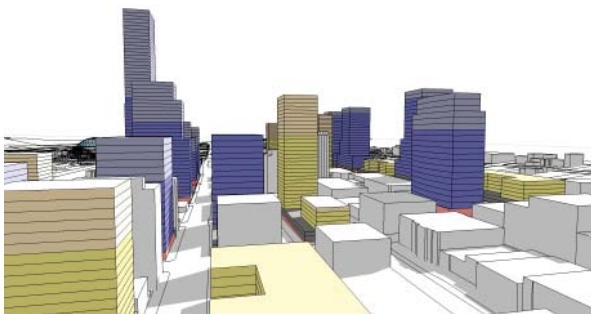
As a major employment area, good multimodal connections by transit are prioritized. Currently, Pierce Transit's 10th/ Commerce Station is a central transfer point for 20 local and regional routes. The City should consider how to best optimize this regional service in conjunction with the Dome District Station.

The comprehensive approach to transit is intended to help mitigate the effects of growth, and limit the need for employees to park downtown. By introducing a streamlined system of Transportation Demand Measures, tied to a parking strategy, new opportunities for redevelopment become feasible, and developers may benefit by eliminating onerous parking requirements from their pro formas. Furthermore, as part of a walkable downtown the City will begin to implement measures to improve the pedestrian orientation of streets including: traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and mid-block connectors.





*Modeling of possible development scenarios within the International Financial Services Area.*



## DOWNTOWN CORE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following policies provide the basis for Urban Design Principles within the Downtown Core.

### Make the Center City a Place for Walking

A core intention for Downtown's most intense neighborhood is to create an environment that is appealing for walking and to encourage socially supportive sidewalk and open space opportunities. To this end, the first several stories of any building have the most influence on the quality of the street environment and should be designed to enhance the comfort, security and richness of its walking conditions.

Building facades should contain high quality materials, weather protection, and on projects exceeding 200 feet in length multiple visible pedestrian entrances.

Facade widths or building modulation at the street edge should express and reference traditional lot widths.

Any ground level setbacks from the street edge should be activated, and may accommodate publicly accessible seating areas, patios or plazas and entrance ways. Setbacks should not detract from the overall sense of harmony along the street edge.

### Design For The Public Environment

Good street edge definition is defined by clear and recognizable transitions between: (1) public street edge, (2) semi-public street edge, and (3) private space.

Within high density residential projects all existing space should be designed to be used by residents and should clearly belong to one of these three categories. Undefined and leftover spaces should be avoided.

### Provide a Neighborly Outlook

Building heights should be designed to respond to several factors, including solar access, outlook from public open space, adjacent parks and building context. Large assembled parcels should limit bulk on the east-west orientation to allow views through the property.

Tower floor plates should generally be sited a minimum of 10 feet from the street edge property line to allow expression of the base, mid and tower portions of a tall building. The associated podium (base) should clearly reinforce the vertical identity of the tower as well as the human scale of the street, and provide a pedestrian canopy for weather protection.

Tower forms are to be spaced and fenestrated to ensure a measure of privacy for facing units and enable visual outlook through the district.

Noting their prominent identity in the regional landscape, and the importance of slenderness in improving solar access, building tops should be narrowed as height increases.



*Photo- Vancouver, downtown*

## DOWNTOWN CORE OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections detail specific strategies for the development of the Downtown Core character area.

### 3.2A RE-INVENTING MAIN STREET – PACIFIC AVENUE

As the city’s original main street, Pacific Avenue is the most important of Downtown Tacoma’s streets. The street currently suffers from an inconsistent street design and gaps in the urban fabric – due to parking garages, brownfield sites and other issues. The long term vision for Pacific is to restore this street to its former prominence as the City’s first walking street.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 Within the Downtown Comprehensive Transit Strategy, Pacific should act as a local transit route, with fast connections between the downtown employment areas, regional transit stations, and parking areas.
- 2 The City should develop a Streetscape Master Plan for Pacific Avenue, with a special emphasis on an lush urban street tree canopy.
- 3 In order to promote development along Pacific Ave, comfortable and well signed connections should be made between this and the Commerce Ave LINK stations.

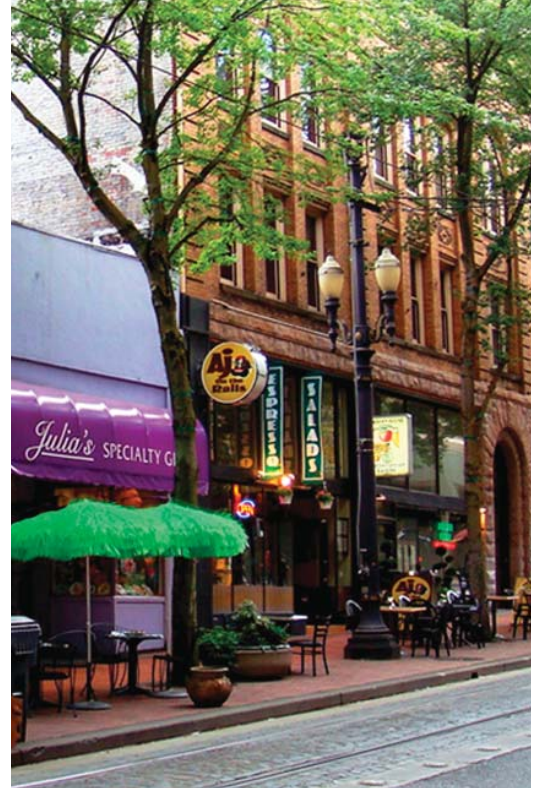


Photo- Morrison Avenue Portland

TABLE 1: RECOMMENDED LIVABILITY CRITERIA

Predominant Use	Residential	Commercial/ Office
Height	240'	Unlimited
FAR	Discretionary Design Review	Discretionary Design Review
Tower* Spacing	80'	minimum 60' preferred 80'
Tower* Floor Plate and siting	between 14,000-10,000 sq. ft. maximum subject to height condition review	24,000-16,000 sq. ft. maximum subject to height condition review
Street wall heights	3 to 4 stories	up to 5 stories
Open Space requirements (*lots greater than 15,000 sf)	15%	10%

\*A tower should be considered that portion of the building above the traditional street wall height.



### 3.2B DESIGN REVIEW/INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES AREA

The IFSA has been identified in Section 2.1A.1 as a priority development area. As a result, to encourage the placement of new larger scaled, commercial and financial headquarters the City should provide relief from restrictions on development intensity in exchange for a set of discretionary, performance based criteria based on good urban design.

Within the IFSA, the City should consider allowing participation in a Design Review program predicated upon a set of agreed upon livability standards; see Table 1 on preceding page. These standards should be considered together with policies in section 2.2B and 2.2C as well as the Urban Design Principles found in this Section.

*Desired connected open spaces - completing links*



*Artist's Illustration of potential build-out with completed mid-block crossings in the downtown area.*

### 3.2C CREATE A SYSTEM OF MIDBLOCK CROSSINGS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

A part of high density livability is the creation of accessible, linked open spaces (see preceding page for illustrative diagram). On long north-south blocks in the downtown core area, the City should continue to participate in public-private partnerships that will enhance connective pedestrian spaces - in particular focusing on the enhancement of existing mid-block crossings and stairclimbs. The City should also work to incorporate new plazas, squares, overlooks, pocket parks and larger civic spaces.

#### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- 1 The City should develop a public/private partnership with the development community for the creation and planning of connected pedestrian-oriented open space. As part of these partnerships the City should consider the following:
  - a. agreements to buy back right-of-ways
  - b. agreements to maintain new open spaces
  - c. the provision of low interest loans for open space portions of the build-out.
- 2 The City should explore gateway opportunities that will help define the IFSA as a 'pedestrian primary' zone through appropriate traffic calming of highway entrance and egress points. These may be developed as specific public space initiatives, or significant parts of new private developments.

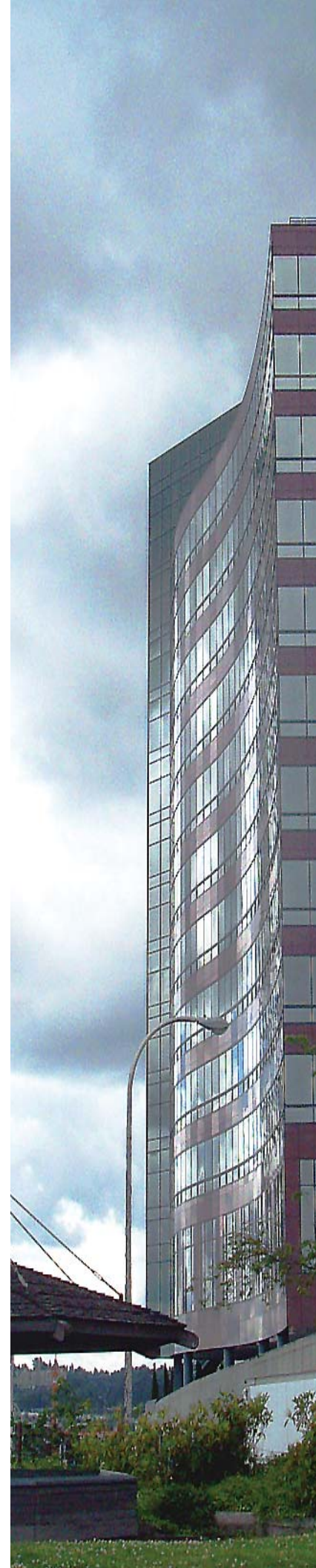
### 3.2D PROVIDE RELIEF FOR NARROW BLOCK CONFIGURATIONS

While the eventual build-out of the downtown core seeks large scaled tower forms, an intermediate form of development and redevelopment of smaller properties are likely to involve a wood-frame, mid-rise building.

The mid-rise form, as the interim solution within downtown, should have appropriate relief from narrow lot constraints and unique site conditions. In particular, the narrow lot configuration affects the performance of developments between Broadway and Pacific due to the lack of a service alley and requirements for pedestrian-oriented uses and transparency on Commerce Street.

#### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- 1 Commerce Street should be considered as secondary to the Pacific and Broadway primary retail corridors, with relief provided from achieving full retail/transparency requirements due to the lack of a functioning service alley.
- 2 The City should develop a more flexible response to site constraints than the variance process.

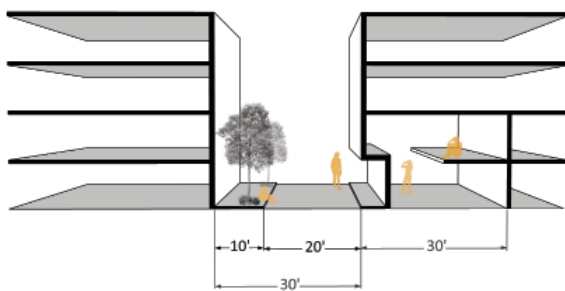




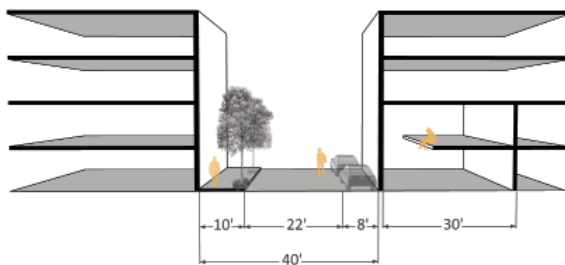
## 3.2 E OPTIMIZE THE COURTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

The system of 'Courts' throughout downtown with a 40' ROW are either too broad for service lanes (the way they are treated now) and too narrow to be real streets.

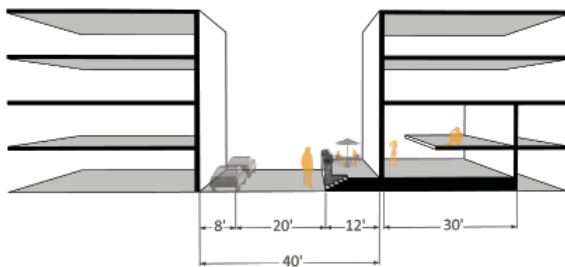
The following set of diagrams explores development options for the Court system by allowing new configurations for development, and optimizing public right-of-way.



LANDSCAPED + STREET VACATION (LIVE/WORK)



LANDSCAPED + PARKING LANE



PARKING LANE + STREET VACATION (RESIDENTIAL)



Existing: "Court C/11th Street"



A narrow street configuration mingling auto and pedestrian access within commercial and residential realms.

### 3.3 BREWERY DISTRICT

The Brewery District originated from a wave of industrial expansion in the early 19th century. It was named for the Tacoma Pacific Brewing and Malt Company, a 13 building complex of 117-year-old brick structures, and the Alt Heidelberg Brewery, both of which located in the area to take advantage of freshwater springs. A variety of other productive enterprises also chose the district for its proximity to rail tracks and waterways. Resulting buildings were designed with loading dock/commercial entrances facing the rail line and pedestrian entrances on the street.

The District's remaining historic core area is centered between 'A' Street and Jefferson from South 21st to South 25th Streets. In this location, a series of vernacular two-story masonry buildings, warehouse structures with large windows and street level loading docks are still present as well as the municipal power substation and city maintenance facilities.

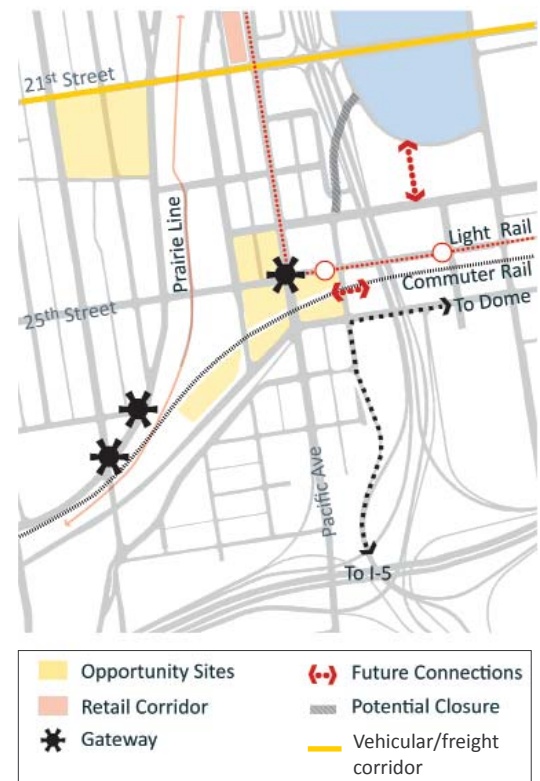


#### VISION

The history and character of this neighborhood make it unique, and uniquely desirable. The vision for this area seeks the complementary rehabilitation of historic properties with strategic infill uses, including warehouse buildings in the district core and 'gasoline alley' on Pacific and 'A' Street. Historic revitalization is supported through the development of a mixed-use and fully integrated Nob Hill. At the district's core will be a 'Creative Art and Design Overlay' put in place to support creative industries, small scale production and assembly and secondary residential with artisan live/work or work/live spaces. Cooperatives, incubator spaces and other innovative shared spaces, such as shared workshops, storage areas and flex space will also be found here.

The Brewery District will be linked via the non-motorized pathway, the Prairie Line on Hood Street, and the existing waterditch trail to South Tacoma Way. Strong pedestrian links to the Dome and Waterfront should be developed. The extension of the commuter rail through the center of the district will be designed to provide a southern "gateway" to Pacific Ave.

The construction of businesses and developments that support or complement UWT as well as significant amounts of new residential housing will bring vibrancy to the district. The introduction of a Transfer of Development Rights program for historic properties should be considered as one way to implement the vision, preserve existing historic buildings and provide infill sites with the potential for larger, more economically feasible projects.



## BREWERY DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections detail specific strategies for the development of the character area.

### 3.3A PRAIRIE LINE TO WATER DITCH TRAIL

The Prairie Line is a new major non-motorized connection between Downtown and neighborhoods to the south via South Tacoma Way. See policies and actions listed in Section 3.1A.

### 3.3B COMMUTER RAIL EXTENSION

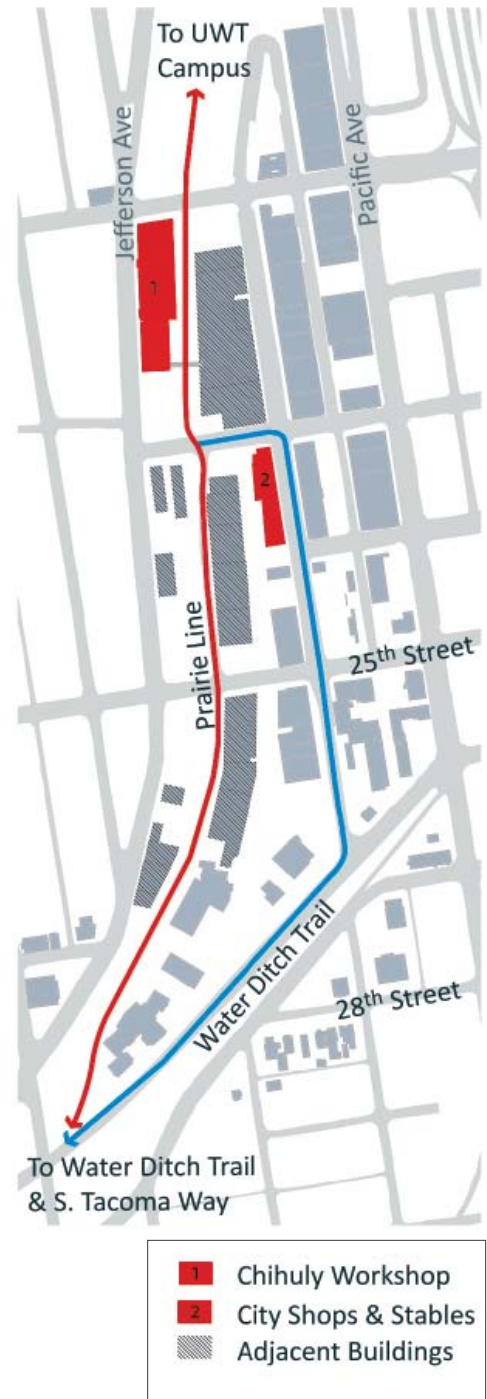
Sound Transit's commuter rail extension from the Dome to Lakewood passes through the Brewery District, crossing Pacific Avenue and forcing the closure of 'A' Street. During the urban design process, the City should consider the following.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 The City should mitigate the effects of the commuter rail corridor through the Brewery District by maximizing development and partnering opportunities on parcels impacted by the rail line.
- 2 The alignment of the Sound Transit commuter rail extension should be integrated with the existing city fabric to avoid creating a barrier between 26th and 25th Streets. The commuter rail route should be designed to unite rather than divide this neighborhood as a gateway to Pacific Avenue.
- 3 The City should consider the activation of all resulting pedestrian connections such as at 'A Street' with eyes on the street, and seek to add ground-oriented uses where possible.

### 3.3C NOB HILL, GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN

Upon a highly visible promontory, Nob Hill has the capacity to become a new entry point to downtown from the South. With its close proximity to the City's regional transportation hub at the Dome, Nob Hill should be considered as a good location to provide housing support for businesses as well as commercial uses. While the area is somewhat separated from the rest of the Brewery District; Nob Hill remains classified within the the Brewery District to allow its significant infill sites to participate in the proposed Transfer of Development Rights program for historic properties.



## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 Regulatory updates should include Nob Hill within downtown's boundaries and regulations. Standards should be highly supportive of transportation, and take advantage of the area's gateway location and views to the north and east.
- 2 Nob Hill should be considered adjacent to and supportive of the Brewery District's Core historic neighborhood, but buildings in this area should not require significant design compatibility with historic treatments.
- 3 Height limitations within the Nob Hill area should be adjusted to allow for economic feasibility, allowing a bonus provision of up to 160' with participation in the Transfer of Development Rights program for historic properties or other identified strategic bonusing program.
- 4 Urban design principles should be developed for this area that recognize the unique qualities and view opportunities.
5. In order to mitigate the disconnection of the area, emphasis should be given on maintaining and improving vehicular and non-motorized links to the Brewery and Dome District.



### 3.3D HISTORIC DISTRICT TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program works by 'unbundling' the rights associated with land ownership, allowing a monetary exchange to direct development rights away from one parcel of land and towards another parcel more suitable for development.

In this situation, a developer owning a property within the Brewery District can purchase a 'development right' from the owner of a City-designated historic property in order to receive a development bonus. Buyers and sellers of development rights can negotiate sales directly.

## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 The City should explore the restoration and adaptive re-use of historically significant structures within the Brewery District through the creation of a 'Historic District Transfer of Development Rights program.
- 2 The City should consider allowing 'Density Transfers' to raise the current existing maximum heights to provide redevelopment potential on non-historic infill sites.
- 3 The City should work with owners of selected assembled infill sites to promote participation in the TDR program.
- 4 The City should consider providing identified historic property owners grants and/or loans to complete seismic and other upgrades to their properties.



### 3.3E A CREATIVE ARTS COMPLEX

A creative arts complex within the Brewery District should be designed and developed to act as a cultural attraction for visitors – tied to the UWT, supportive of creative arts, culinary programs, as well as opportunities for housing.

Possible Sites include:

- City-owned 6-acre parcel (21st/Tacoma Ave)
- Collaborations with existing private owners (infill)
- Commuter Rail Extension - adjacent development sites
- City Shop and Stables

The creative arts complex should contain some or all of the following:

- Architecturally compatible buildings
- Incubator spaces
- Creative arts spaces
- Residential occupancies such as live-work lofts, artist studios, student housing and housing tolerant of industrial noise and activity.
- High bay, flexible light industrial uses including R+D, high tech and associated offices
- Galleries and restaurants
- (On non-historic sites) residential towers/small floor plate office towers



Warehouse space converted into incubator spaces for creative arts.



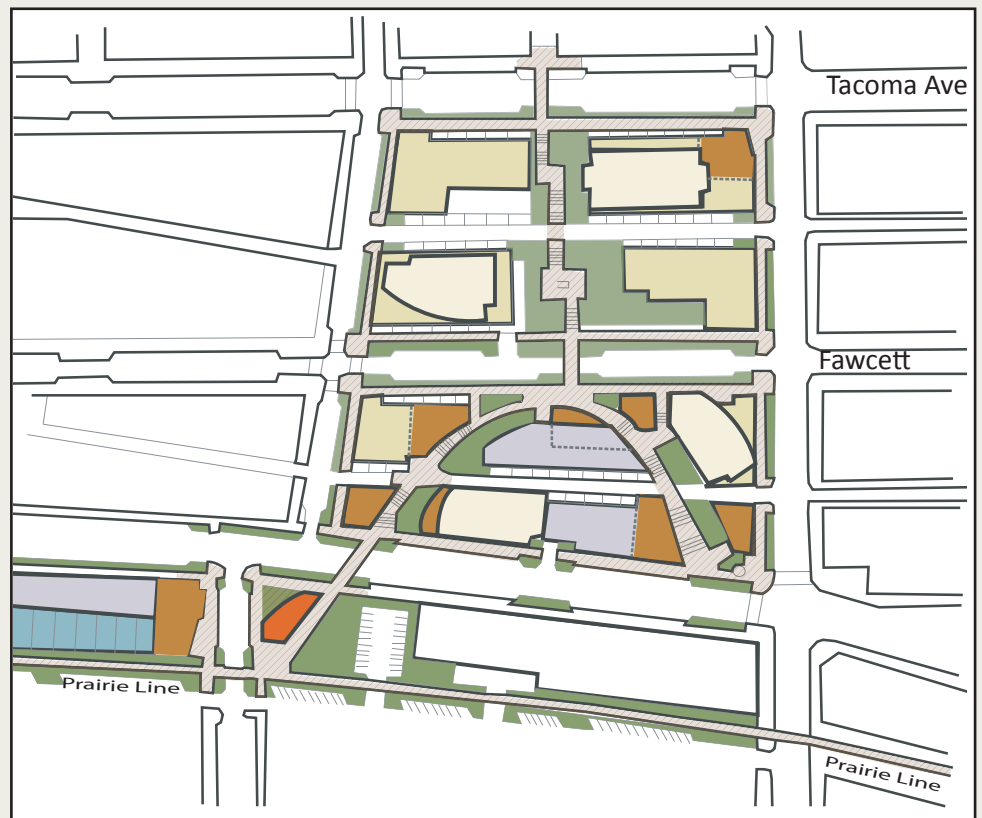
#### IDEAS: MAKING THE MOST OF THE BREWERY BLOCKS

*This illustration shows an imaginative build-out for the 6-Acre City owned parcel at 21st and Tacoma Ave.*

*The site plan combines the desired vision for the Brewery District with pedestrian spaces, galleries, live-work, and industrial uses, as well as selectively increased height limits for tower forms, tied to participation in the proposed Historic Transfer of Development Rights program.*

*In a true mix of uses, light industrial workshops co-exist with artisan shops and galleries, as well as various forms of residences on upper floors.*

- Galleries or retail
- Arts pavilion
- Residential uses /towers
- High-bay industrial





### 3.3F REINFORCE HERITAGE IN THE CORE AREA

The Core of the Brewery District should retain the spirit of its mercantile/ industrial heritage through architecture and re-use of salvaged materials where possible. These historic buildings within the Brewery District should define the fabric of the neighborhood.

#### Key Elements:

- Durable materials, such as brick, or metal siding, open floor plates, large multi-paned windows
- Transitional building forms and rhythmic concrete columns with a consistent application of the street wall.
- The re-use of salvaged materials, the layering of history.
- Day-lit work environments for both long term worker productivity, energy reductions, and long term value.

#### POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 1 Regulatory codes should be updated to ensure that residential uses located in the first floors of heritage buildings in this district are considered secondary to employment or live-work uses.
- 2 The historic street grid should be maintained within the Brewery District. These warehouse streets should maintain their multi-layered character, containing a patchwork of the original brick, rail spurs, loading docks and shared spaces. Streets should accommodate parking and vehicles but also reserve space for pedestrian and cyclist safety.



Historic Designation

- Special Review District
- Conservation District



Historic character of Brewery District during the height of industrial production.

### 3.4 ST. HELENS

The St. Helen's neighborhood is a mature, high to medium density residential neighborhood supporting the downtown. This neighborhood has seen the most housing growth since Destination Downtown (1999) with a number of new condo and apartment developments.

With excellent views of the Thea Foss Waterway and access to Wright Park, a retail district on St. Helen's Avenue and a mix of significant historic structures, St Helen's has become one of Tacoma's favorite downtown neighborhoods.

There is currently opportunity for redevelopment along the St. Helens corridor. An existing street upgrade project (Broadway Local Improvement District) sets a precedent for street design throughout the area.



#### VISION

Within this neighborhood the City is focused on sensitive infill strategies, the introduction of sustainability concepts, catalyst projects within the public right-of-way, and other identified community amenities traded for high quality development.

St. Helen's is the entryway to downtown from neighborhoods to the North. Its urban design should emphasize the area's connections between downtown and residential neighborhoods to the north, with an emphasis on pedestrian/cycling amenities and on-street parking.



*Character of retail district within St Helen's district.*



## ST. HELENS OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections detail specific strategies for the development of the character area.

### 3.4A OPTIMIZE THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

Within the St. Helens neighborhood the Plan has identified a series of catalyst projects located within the public right-of-way. These projects would benefit from further study and could be considered priorities for a revised 'bonus system' or other public-private partnership to enhance overall walkability.

These street intersections, in particular 7th/Fawcett/Baker, have been the subject of a number of design ideas and aspirations over the past decade. Pedestrianization would constitute a major departure from existing conditions:

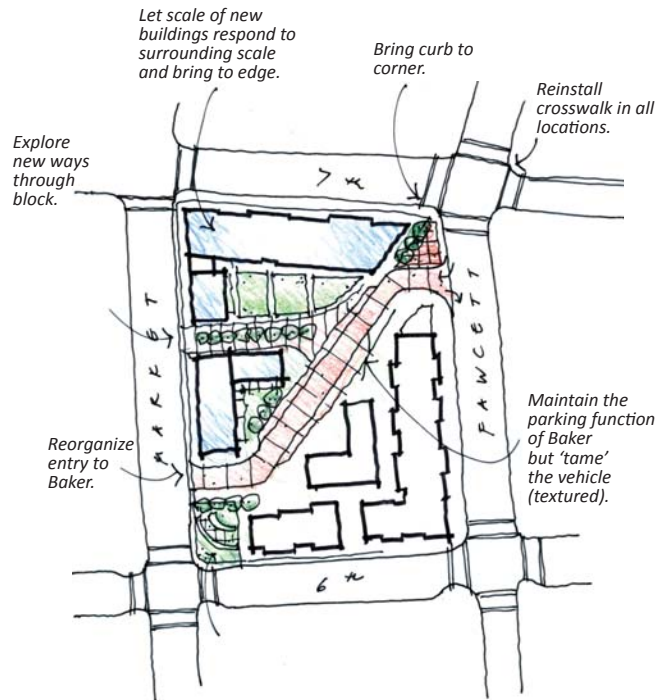
- a Convergence intersection design and alternatives  
7th/Fawcett/Baker (see illustration at right)
- b Gateway design  
St. Helen's/Division/1st Street
- c Intersection design  
4th/Tacoma Ave

In addition to the above selected intersections, the City should study the costs and benefits to uncovering historic brick streets within this residential district as a potential traffic calming opportunity.

### 3.4B CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ORGANIZED AROUND HEIGHT

The City should consider adding additional height (up to 160') to help fund specific, strategic public benefits and to revitalize infill sites. Benefits associated with height may include the following:

*Ground level, arable garden spaces and/or roof gardens*  
*LEED investment*  
*Completed pedestrian connections and/or activated alleys and stairclimbs*  
*Historic Preservation*  
*Public-Private partnerships for intersection re-design*



*A high density residential environment with quality street edge and pedestrian amenity*



### 3.4C REORGANIZE PARKING

On-street parking through-out this neighborhood should be organized to maximize the number of spaces available to service downtown. The City should study and begin to implement the use of back in-angle parking spaces to complement cyclists, as these are the most safe parking configurations for cyclists. Future street designs should not preclude transit improvements.

### 3.4D BUILD ON THE ST. HELENS CORRIDOR

Given that St. Helens is one of the City's successful retail corridors, the City should promote an active street edge along this corridor that involves:

- 1 Recognizable entrances, small plazas and outlooks.
- 2 Narrow and transparent street frontages which bring interior activities to the street.
- 3 Small scale social environments such as benches, and landscaping.
- 4 Retail signage should contribute to the nature of this street.

### 3.4E HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL STREETS

As the City grows, and concurrently with the shifts suggested in 3.4B, the City should consider the development of Urban Design guidelines for high density residential environments. This will build upon the Urban Residential street typology introduced in Chapter 4.0.



*Ensure that parking is well organized and optimized throughout this neighborhood.*



*A mix of building heights and intensities*

#### *Overall recommendations for St. Helens*

- 1 Develop urban design guidelines to better achieve ground-orientation, i.e. direct entry units that contribute to visual interest, sociability and safety along the street.
- 2 Respect for access to sunlight, privacy, and views. Building volumes should be arranged to reduce overshadowing of public open spaces and the St. Helen's retail corridor.
- 3 Consider the development of a set of 'tower types' that can guide high density design and land use policy, i.e. controls on height, dimension, and floor plate (linked to the dimensional requirements).
- 4 Sensitive infill - consider the historic character of surrounding building context
- 5 Location for a potential historic Transfer of Development Rights program
- 6 Pedestrian links that support connections to transit and an active open space network such as between Stadium Way and Broadway.

## 3.5 HILLSIDE

This neighborhood incorporates the village-like atmosphere at the entrance to Wright Park, civic uses lining Tacoma Avenue and new townhouses and redevelopment along the length of the hillside. Well served by transit and in close proximity to the UWT and major employment centers, Hillside is an ideal location for residential and mixed-use growth taking advantage of the views. The neighborhood has significant redevelopment capacity and is bounded by two of downtown's signature streets – Yakima and Tacoma Avenues. The Hillside area provides an important transition area to the intensity of downtown.

As the Hillside character area runs the length of downtown, it contains a series of distinct areas, such as the commercial character along Tacoma Avenue, between 9th and 15th, and historic buildings lining Wright Park. Furthermore, the UWT frontage between 21st and 17th is an area that could withstand potential increased height/density for mixed-use as the University expands its footprint to Tacoma Ave. An existing Yakima Avenue overlay limits heights to 60' within 150' east of the centerline of Yakima. This height limitation should be reviewed.



### VISION

The Hillside character area will remain primarily mid-rise with a focus on a building design that promotes high connectivity between the downtown core areas and adjacent neighborhoods. This neighborhood will likely develop in response to the primary development nodes in the Downtown Core and the Brewery Districts.

Hillside's edges will be a greened Yakima Avenue as a tree-lined boulevard, and Tacoma Avenue, a possible strategic north-south transit corridor with key east-west connections. Dense development at the street edge on Tacoma Avenue should provide a mix of neighborhood business, office and service uses.

The Hillside corridor should provide relief from higher density neighborhoods to the east and west, with a focus on ground-level open spaces and pocket parks. This area prioritizes porosity and connections between major centers.





## HILLSIDE OPPORTUNITIES

### 3.5A WRIGHT PARK GATEWAY

Develop the area around Yakima and 6th as a gateway to the park, landmark for the neighborhood and destination for the Yakima Avenue boulevard. An illustrated graphic at right shows how Wright Park could be extended into the public realm reinforcing a linear axis and entryway.

### 3.5B GREEN STREET DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Create a demonstration sustainable street per the Green Street typology in Section 4.0. A low volume residential street such as 8th, 18th, or 23rd – with excellent potential to bridge to the Brewery District and Prairie Line – could be a prime candidate. The Green Street would showcase low-impact street design, storm water treatments, and educational awareness, while improving walking links between centers.

### 3.5C YAKIMA AVENUE SIGNATURE STREET

Yakima has been identified as one of Tacoma's great streets, with a 100 ft R.O.W. and conclusion at the foot of Wright Park. The urban arboretum concept features a landscaped pathway and a variety of native trees and plants. (See Section 4.0)

### 3.5D CREATE A MIXED-USE VILLAGE

There are a variety of civic uses within the Hillside area between 9th and 15th. In this area the City should leverage existing Pierce County Offices to improve the mix of uses and amenities.

### 3.5E ENCOURAGE STREET EDGE DEVELOPMENT AT THE CAMPUS

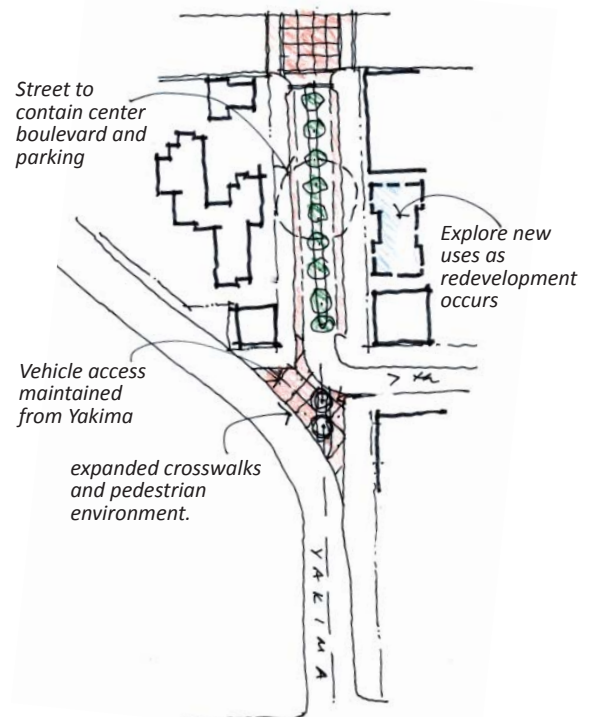
Work with stakeholders to consider how best the UWT frontage can help revitalize the Tacoma Ave corridor. Consider this area for potential increase in height/density to accommodate future UWT mixed-use development.

### 3.5F UPGRADE 21ST STREET

The City should upgrade 21st Street to improve the connection between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods in coordination with UW Tacoma development and improved transit and non-motorized use on Market Street and Tacoma Avenue.



*Residential Street with Swale  
Photo by The City of Portland*



*Exploration of urban design alternatives at the southern entrance to Wright Park.*



# 4.0 DOWNTOWN CIRCULATION

Crucial to the success of Downtown Tacoma is its position as point of convergence for all modes of transportation. Improving the ground rules for interaction between pedestrians, cyclists, cars and public transit should help to establish an environment that is adaptable to all transportation modes.

During this Downtown Plan Update process, transportation issues have been identified as a top priority for the successful redevelopment of Tacoma’s Downtown. This chapter provides more detail, resources and options for addressing the policies and actions articulated in Section 2.3.

The City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element communicates policies that are designed to empower agencies to build a multi-modal transportation network, including sections on Transportation Demand Management, transportation and land use integration and non-motorized travel. However, throughout downtown there is a need for more comprehensive implementation strategies, better funding, more consistent street design, and traffic calming. In the downtown area, Policy T-TSM-3 should be read to include the use of innovative engineering approaches.

## ***Transportation Related Comprehensive Plan Policies:***

### **T-TSM-3 Traffic Calming Measures**

Use sanctioned engineering approaches, such as medians, streetscapes, bulb-outs, traffic circles, traffic controls and bike lanes to protect neighborhood streets from cut-through traffic, high volumes, high speeds, and pedestrian/ vehicle conflicts when warranted and integrated with emergency response vehicle access.

### **T-NT-1**

Assign high priority to pedestrian and bicycle projects that serve the following objectives:

- Address safety issues
- Provide access to designated centers
- Encourage safe and active routes to schools
- Provide linkages to the transit, ferry, and school bus systems
- Complete planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities or trails
- Provide system connectivity

### **T-ES-3 Congestion Management**

Encourage the use of alternative modes, and thereby slow the increase in the use of single occupant vehicles and the increase of environmental degradation associated with their use.

### **T-NT-7 Walkability**

Provide height bonuses and other incentives to developments that promote walkability through pedestrian orientation, providing amenities such as weather protection and seating, and improve pedestrian connectivity.

### **T-FSS-2 Development Incentives**

Make transit-oriented development (TOD) more economically attractive by providing development bonuses and/or incentives for incorporating TOD elements, walkability, and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## 4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

While overall the downtown layout constitutes an excellent pattern for walking, significant challenges remain for the city to create a entirely positive pedestrian experience. Currently there is no clear set of visual rules and elements for all users of the road to understand. In particular, despite wide rights-of-way there is limited space dedicated to non-motorized facilities. Pedestrian pathways are poorly defined in many areas and the condition of crosswalks is inconsistent.

The City should develop a plan that helps to differentiate travel modes and a long term vision for its downtown streets. This candid approach can provide a base for both long term public sector strategy as well as shorter term and ad hoc private sector redevelopment projects.

Any street planning needs to take into account long north-south blocks of nearly 700' that limit connectivity to the east and west, and steep grades to the east and west. This Chapters's policies, as well as associated complete streets standards currently underway, should help the City to retool its position on pedestrian and alternative transport modes such as cycling and transit.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR WALKING

**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY** (lighting, sidewalk condition and buffers, crossing distance, traffic speed) These measures are statistically associated with lower rates of collision and perception of risk. Streets designed for the pedestrian include at minimum:

- Street crossings with high visibility that are safe and convenient for pedestrians to cross

- Enhanced sidewalks with buffers between pedestrians and vehicles

- Pedestrian clear zones that allow unobstructed movement at a minimum of 5 feet

**QUALITATIVE** (measures for improvement such as aesthetics, street complexity, facade transparency and connectivity).

**REGIONAL** (measures such as air quality, VMT, and public health).



*Well-marked and clearly designated pedestrian crossings accomplish multiple goals. First, they prepare drivers for the likelihood of encountering a pedestrian, and second, they create a positive impression of walkability, safety and accessibility for pedestrians.*

*The above crosswalk illustrates the typical sub standard condition of downtown Tacoma's crosswalks.*

## 4.2 COMPLETING THE STREETS

For years the automobile has been the baseline element for the evaluation of urban streets, and maximizing throughput and efficiency has been the central goal of traffic planning. The following policies encourage a fundamental shift in previous procedures and assumptions to provide livable streets that are comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists with high quality design from property line to property line. The following policies help the City to develop a set of procedures that not only design, but also evaluate, streets from a ‘walkability’ standpoint that considers cars as one mode, and not the most important.

### GOAL

Provide livable streets.

### POLICIES

- 4.3A.A Create a set of “complete streets” that consider the experience of all users including transit, pedestrians and cyclists in order to create a sense of place and to build a cohesive network of links that are an enhancement to the downtown neighborhoods and prioritize the public realm.
- 4.3A.B Build City capacity to assess the on-going qualitative performance of streets to achieve sustainability goals, and to achieve a livable, walkable and bikable downtown street environment.
- 4.3A.C As surrounding neighborhoods grow, review pedestrian connections to ensure appropriate linkages are maintained, and be particularly aware of the effects of street vacations on pedestrian connections.



*A “walkability tour” conducted by Dan Burden to assess the quality of downtown streets*

## 4.3 ACTIONS

### NEAR TERM (1-3 YEARS)

- 4.3A.1 Convene a ‘Walkability Implementation Group’ consisting of City staff, business owners, students, property owners, and downtown residents to develop a set of indicators and a checklist for a high quality walking environment.  
  
Use indicators to evaluate and recommend improvements to street maintenance plans. (This information should be coordinated with the Mobility Plan in action 2.3G.1)
- 4.3A.2 Prioritize street improvement projects around retail and development areas identified in section 2.1C, and 2.1D.
- 4.3A.3 Identify new funding streams for street and sidewalk maintenance. (While funds may be limited for improving the streetscape as part of a general maintenance program, coordination with other agencies may create opportunities for cost-sharing.)
- 4.3A.4 Develop and implement a downtown street tree planting and maintenance program.
- 4.3A.5 As part of the ongoing Transportation Demand Management effort, work towards a completed bicycle network within downtown. (Coordinate with Mobility Plan 2.3G.1)



## 4.3 STREETS AND CIRCULATION

Policies listed in 4.3 help put a face on the community perspective of the downtown as a valued destination. However, an overall strategy is needed to concentrate these efforts for maximum value. Building on the existing policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the following section describes the overarching concept of street typologies as a methodology for setting a visual and experiential baseline for different streets, serving different functions in the downtown.

### What makes a great street?

The design of the street includes more than the asphalt paving between curb edge; it also includes the improvements between property lines: sidewalks, paving textures, street trees and landscaping as well as controls over the relationship of the property edge to the public right-of-way.

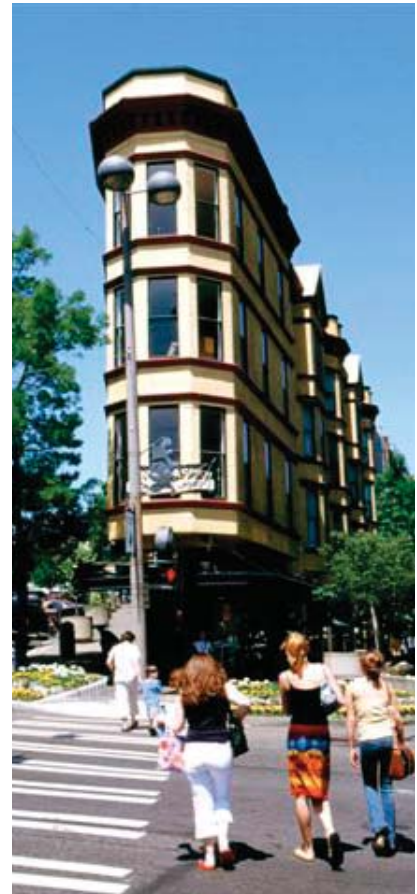
A great street provides a positive experience, not just a pathway.

**“While walking as a mode of travel is strongly dependent on the distance to destinations, the design of the urban environment can also impact whether or not people incorporate walking into their everyday routine”**

**Lawrence Frank  
2007**

### Identified general improvements:

- Sidewalk repair and widening
- Pedestrian activated signals
- Bicycle lane improvements and overall network additions
- Intersections and crosswalks redesigned to create a more consistent experience
- Crosswalk striping should be standardized and prioritized
- Tightened corner radii, corner bulb-outs and roundabouts may be applicable in gateway and other intersections
- Implement a hierarchy of street amenities to highlight primary routes for pedestrians
- Design guidelines for new pedestrian-only trails and associated crossings
- Continuous implementation of transit supportive guidelines



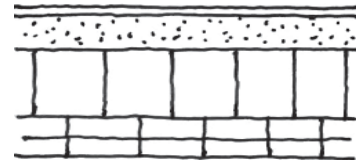
## Amenities for a walkable downtown

A rich street environment and enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities can benefit the safety of the streets, local economy, social equity, air quality and the environment, and public health. The following amenities should be added to the City's 'tool box' for downtown street design.

### 1. Sidewalk Design

The sidewalk is the public right-of-way dedicated to walking. Sidewalks create a continuous easement along the street with width, design and condition appropriate to adjacent land use context. A person typically requires 3 to 4 feet in width while two people walking abreast require 5 feet of unobstructed space.

The City of Tacoma should develop a coherent approach to sidewalk design for a civic-oriented public realm. A set of related sidewalk typologies that respect the historic character of neighborhoods should be designed to complement the associated street typologies, prioritizing in particular Tacoma and Pacific Avenues.



1. Sidewalk Design

### 2. Context-Sensitive Pedestrian Crossings

An intersection crosswalk is the marked or unmarked extension of a sidewalk or shoulder across an intersection. Crossings are often the weak-link in any non-motorized network and within Downtown there is a lack of clearly marked crossings. Several recent major studies of pedestrian collision rates at marked and unmarked crosswalks have been conducted by the Federal Highway Administration. In 2006, a study was completed that assists engineers and planners in selecting the right treatment for marked crosswalks. The City should work to apply best practices in the placement, striping and design of crosswalks at intersections.

#### *Crosswalk Function:*

- Create reasonable expectations as to where pedestrians may cross
- Provide predictability for pedestrian actions and movement

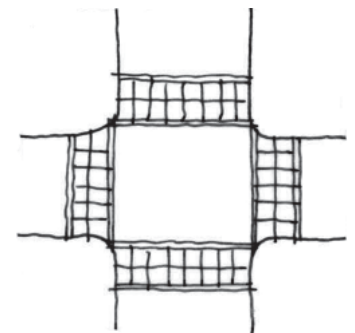
#### *Advantages of marked crosswalks:*

- Help pedestrians find their way across complex intersections
- Designate the shortest path
- Direct pedestrians to locations with the best sight distance

#### *Recommendations for Crosswalk Placement:*

Crosswalks should be placed at all controlled intersections within downtown and on all street approaches where possible. Higher visibility crosswalks should be considered in the following areas:

- 1 At intersections between residential streets and collectors/arterials where traffic on the dominant roadway is not controlled by stop signs or traffic signals.
- 2 In locations where there is a need to clarify the preferred crossing location, or when there are dangerous crossing situations.
- 3 In highly prioritized intersections such as near the UWT, in retail and commercial districts, and other pedestrian generators.



2. Crosswalk Design

#### *Recommendations for Crosswalk Designs:*

On high visibility, or gateway intersections, crosswalks should be designed with high visibility cast concrete scored or cast concrete banded to combine durability with visual interest. Concrete should be designed in tones that *contrast* and are visible next to existing paving. These gateway crossings should be designed to notify the driver that they are entering into a pedestrian area through the use of signage, texture and color change.

All other crossings should be designed to ensure consistent quality. The Department of Public Works should develop a standard 'piano key' or 'zebra striped' marking.

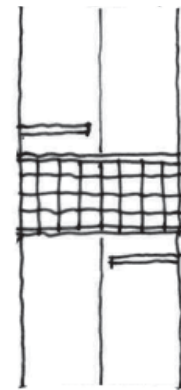
A variety of other high visibility techniques and special treatments may also be employed and added to the 'tool box' to make drivers and pedestrians aware and safe, including:

- Pedestrian signals timed to a proper pedestrian speed
- Yield to pedestrian signage

### 3. Midblock Crossings

Midblock street crossings are essential in areas where the frequency of intersections is reduced, and where there are pedestrian generators. Highly connected walking patterns seek crossing opportunities at a spacing of 1 per 200'. Without mid-block crossing locations, pedestrians face the following three choices: detour to a controlled crossing location; detour to an intersection where it is legal to cross, even if not controlled; or jaywalk (cross illegally).

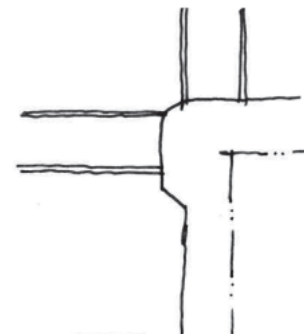
The City of Tacoma should determine a clear procedure for adding midblock crossings as the City density increases, and residential and employee populations increase. In the best cases, a midblock crossing should be installed concurrently with adjacent development.



3. Midblock Crossing

### 4. Bulbouts

Bulbouts are a typical traffic calming tool designed to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and provide better sight lines for drivers. These help to reduce both perceived and real distances between street edges. A series of bulbouts along a corridor at intersections can reduce overall travel speeds. Studies by Oregon State DOT also show that curb extensions contribute to a significant reduction in the average number of vehicles that pass a pedestrian waiting to cross before yielding to the pedestrian. Bulbouts designs should not impede bicycle travel.

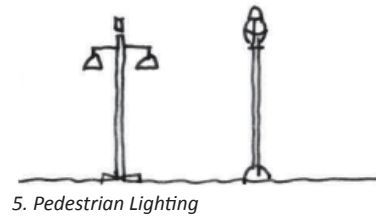


4. Bulb Out

## 5. Pedestrian Lighting

Lighting technology has evolved tremendously in recent years. There are more light sources, fixtures and materials available, including energy efficient LED lighting. There is also much interest in the use of decorative light poles and a recognition that street lighting is an important daytime as well as evening design element.

Within Downtown Tacoma the selection of lighting standards should strive to provide the right amount of light, in the right place at the right time. Often exterior light is wasted by either having too much light, being wrongly placed or sending light up into the sky. The following guidelines should be addressed when designing pedestrian scaled lighting:



5. Pedestrian Lighting

- 1 People can see and be seen clearly from a distance of about 30 feet.
- 2 Transitional lighting is used in order to reduce contrast between lit and unlit places.
- 3 Appropriate color temperatures and color rendition (definition) are used and are glare free, providing high levels of visual comfort and amenity.
- 4 Attention is paid to lighting appropriate enhancements such as sculptures, fountains and building facades.
- 5 Poles should be scaled to the pedestrian level (at around 20 feet in height).
- 6 Pedestrian lighting should be shielded with reflectors to cut down on light pollution and prevent glare from entering windows and orient light to where it is most needed.

The City of Tacoma should coordinate with a lighting designer to secure a pedestrian lighting standard that meets green performance standards, as well as shielded lighted bollards to be used at key intersections and in the Brewery District.

## 6. Furniture and Amenity Suite

The City should also develop a default 'palette' or furniture suite appropriate for downtown including the following\*:

- Newspaper boxes
- Benches (see Streetscape Assessment Study 2003)
- Transit stations and amenities
- Kiosks
- Tree grates
- Street tree species
- Planter boxes
- Bicycle racks and storage boxes near transit stations

\*In historic districts, applicable historic guidelines apply.



## 4.4 A SET OF STREET TYPOLOGIES

Street typologies provide a framework for incremental improvement of the downtown streetscape. The “Street Typology” is a set of best practices to support and guide the City as development occurs and should act as a guide to identify the preferred standard and point of departure both for the City and the private developer. As a *typical* design, these streets can not take into account variables along an entire corridor.

Establishing street typologies highlights the most appropriate set of functions for a given street, thus allowing more clarity for maintenance plans, direction for site development and improvements. Allowing streets to concentrate on fewer modes of transportation and addressing them well leads to improved safety and amenity.

Seven typologies have been developed as a recommended starting point. These street types represent both prioritization and enhancement of existing, recognized routes, such as Pacific Avenue, as well as refocusing streets to bring new value and accessibility to the downtown core. These typologies should be coordinated with other City efforts to create complete streets.

### WHY STREET TYPOLOGIES?

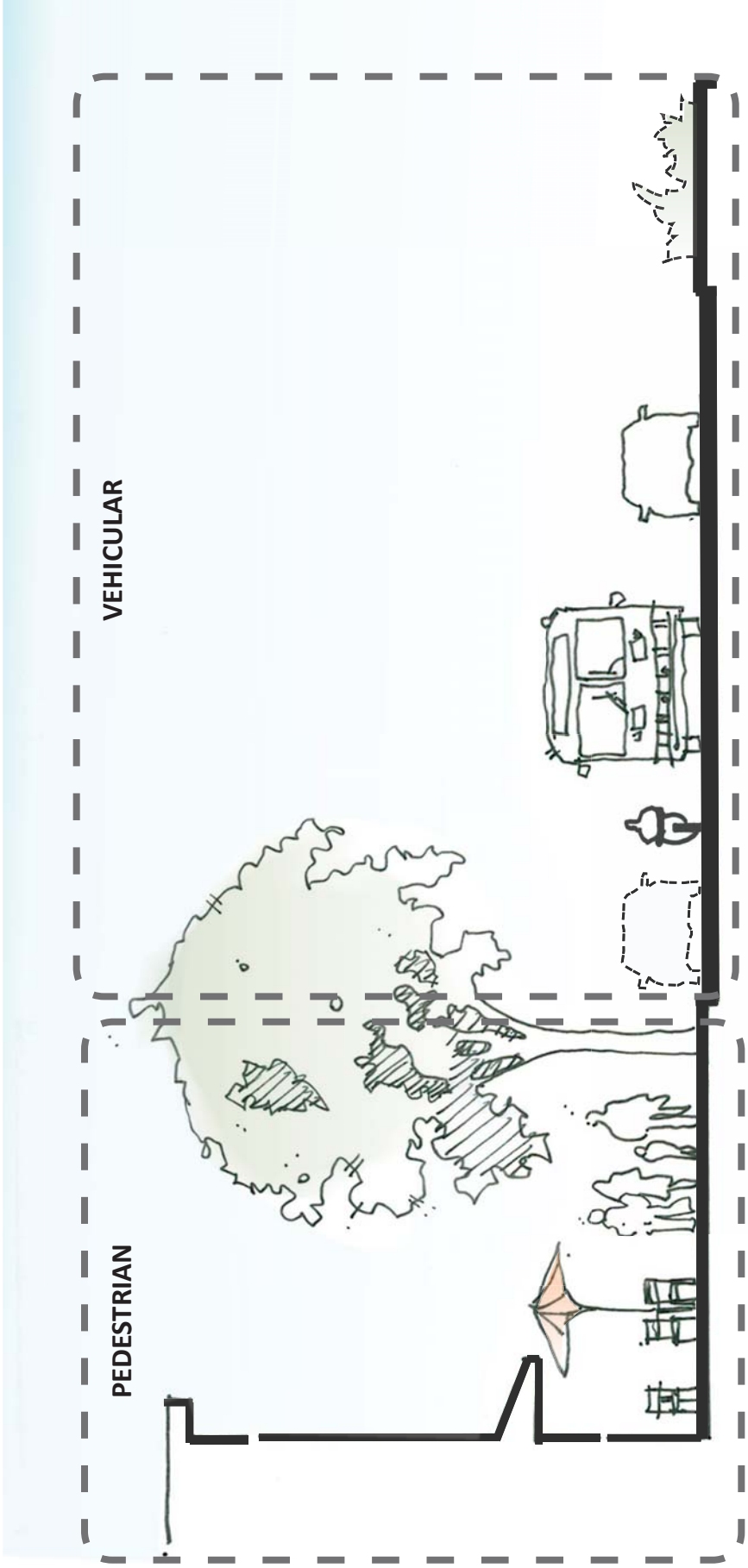
Helps to create more functional and appealing street environments

Balances the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles for safer streets

Creates a flexible framework for molding and responding to neighborhood character

Concentrates maintenance and redevelopment energies and provides repeatable design solutions





ZONE	frontage	movement	interface	buffer	travel	median
FUNCTION	seating, entrances, plaza, landscape, signage, additional sidewalk width	Sidewalk pedestrian zone	trees, planting benches, bike racks, parking meters	parking, corner bulb outs, cyclist lanes or sharrows	vehicle travel lanes, transit, crosswalk	directional buffer, planted strip, trees, turning lanes
CHARACTER	Should read as an extension of the sidewalk	clear path identified material	grass, tree grates, textured hard surface	extension of travel zone, or identifying material, opportunity for permeable surfaces	minimize width while maintaining traffic flow	reduce perceived width of street







## KEY

### Street Types

- Pedestrian Streets, Retail Focus**  
 Pedestrian amenities, coordinated lighting and street trees. These streets are differentiated by additional requirements for civic scaled sidewalks, high transparency and pedestrian-oriented retail front-ages.
- Planning for Transit Priority**  
 Optimum rights-of-way, and centralized locations for future multi-modal and high-capacity transportation option.
- Connectors**  
 Prioritize interface to the east and west as secondary commercial streets. Enhanced crossings, extended curbs and street trees should be applied where permissible.
- Cycling**  
 Local access street may be a good choice for a cycle boulevard that permits cyclists to move quickly, while calming features discourage non-local automobile traffic.
- Yakima Signature Street**  
 Working with the street's existing attributes, Yakima Ave can be enhanced incrementally with double rows of street trees, and a landscaping plan.
- Green Streets/Urban Residential**  
 "Best practice" for local residential streets to balance access and mobility; enhanced pedestrian amenities, landscaping/street trees and shared cycling routes. Optional "sustainability" tools to infiltrate storm water locally.
- Warehouse**  
 Industrial, working shared street design.



## PEDESTRIAN, RETAIL STREET

Pacific Ave  
Broadway Ave  
Tacoma Avenue\*  
7th (to be considered)

### Description

These streets have typical rights-of-way between 100' to 80'. As significant pedestrian routes they contain civic scale sidewalks, coordinated lighting and street trees. These streets also demand highly transparent, active and pedestrian-oriented retail frontages. Pacific Ave as Tacoma's historic mainstreet is also a candidate for significant increases in transit availability and should be enhanced with transit supportive amenities.

Parking aisles might receive a distinct surface treatment to reduce the perceived street width, and highlight unique character. Curb bulbouts decrease the crossing time and improve the visibility of people crossing the street.

\*Although not a Pedestrian, Retail street, Tacoma Avenue should be "paired" with Pacific Ave as major 'civic scale' routes through the downtown. These streets should share design features such as lighting elements and surface treatments.

### Adjacent Land Uses

High intensity mixed-use.

Ground floor uses are active with high levels of transparency, primarily retail and commercial.

Institutional and financial uses should be considered on the basis that they contribute to pedestrian character.



### Zones and Functions

#### Vehicular/Median Zone

Enhanced Crosswalk Treatment  
Median with Turning Lanes (where feasible)

#### Buffer

Corner Bulb-out  
Midblock Crossings  
On-street Parking with  
Bays  
Enhanced surface material  
Time-limited  
Time-of-Day  
Limited Driveway Access

#### Interface Zone

Tree Grates

#### Pedestrian Zone

Desired width: 15.5'

#### Features

Street Trees  
Canopy Trees  
25' Spacing Minimum (tighter spacing preferred at 15-20')  
Planted Caliper 6"  
Furniture Suite  
Transit Station Amenities  
Bicycle Racks

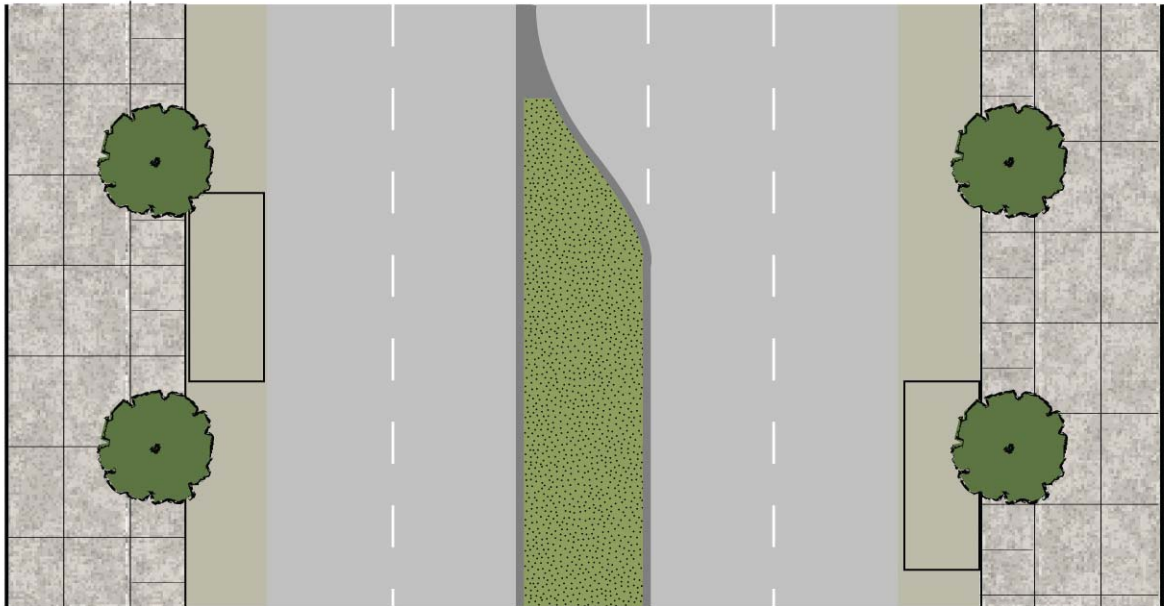
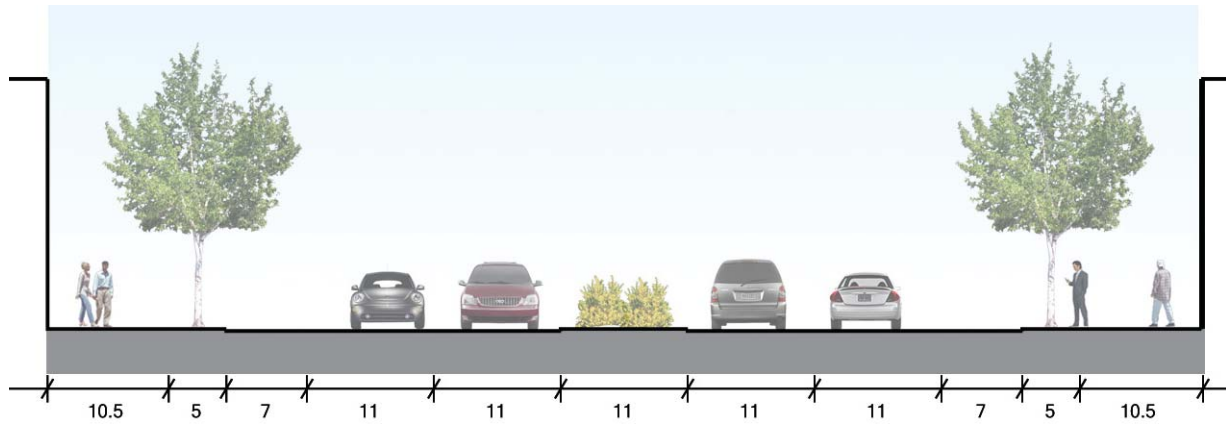
#### Pedestrian Lighting

Single Mast

#### Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## PEDESTRIAN, RETAIL STREET



PLANNING FOR TRANSIT PRIORITY

Commerce Street  
Market Street  
Tacoma Ave (See Also Pedestrian, Retail Street)  
Pacific Ave (See Also Pedestrian, Retail Street)

Description

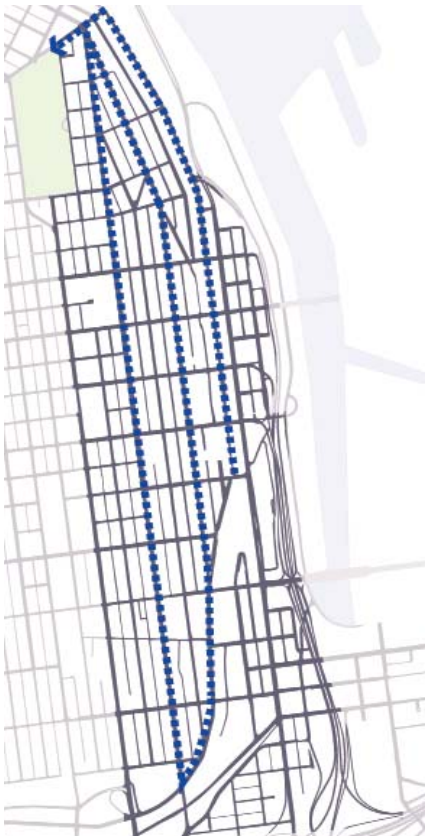
These streets have typically broad vehicular rights-of-way between 80' and 100' and can be optimized for future adaptability, supporting ongoing transit improvements without sacrificing current functions or aesthetic goals. Planning for future transit allows the City to reserve rights-of-way that can be used in the interim as pedestrian medians (option a) or curb extensions (option b). This street typology will be altered as the transit system evolves. (Commerce Street is already completed, and limited changes are predicted for this street.)

Starting with pedestrian realm improvements, two options are presented here that can equally support increased volumes of transit, and build a well linked local transit system.

St. Helen's between 7th and Division should be balanced between competing transit, pedestrian, and bicycle uses.

Adjacent Land Uses

Dense street edge development, with ground-oriented retail and significant sidewalks.



Zones and Functions

**Vehicular/Median Zone**  
Enhanced Crosswalk Treatment

**Buffer**  
Midblock Crossings  
On-street Parking with enhanced surface material  
Limited Driveway Access

**Interface Zone**  
Concrete  
Tree Grates

**Pedestrian Realm**  
Desired width: 14'

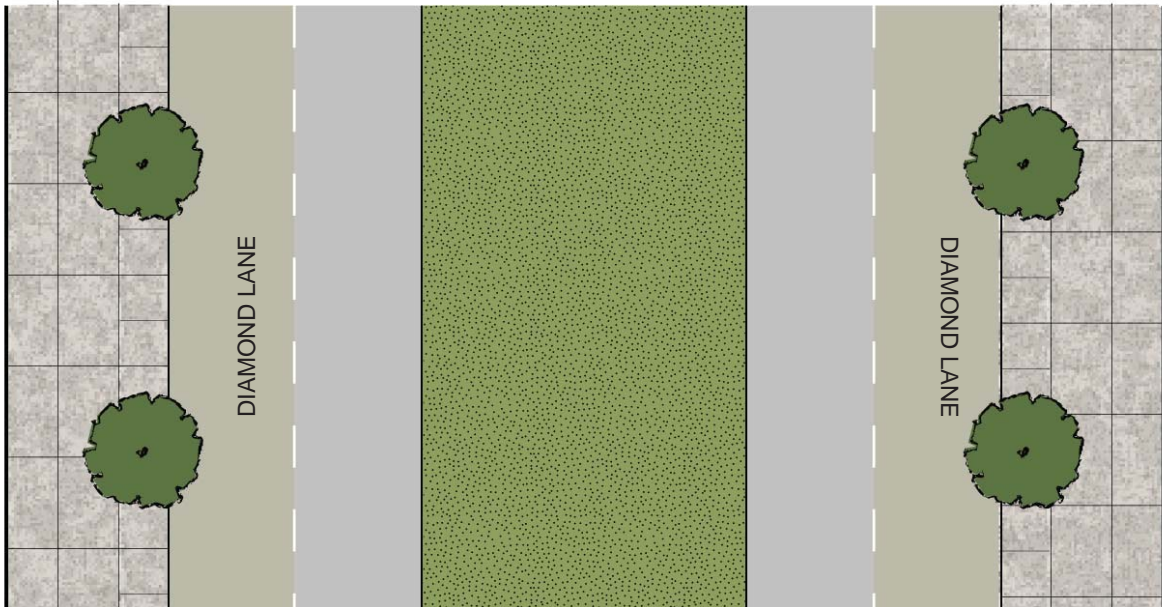
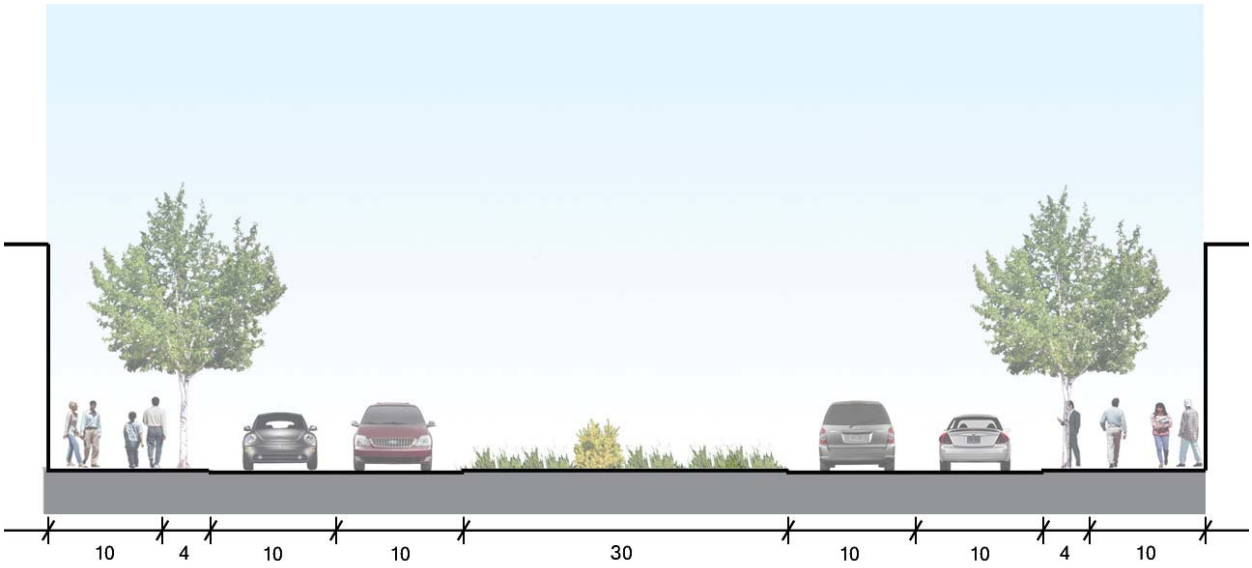
**Features**  
Street Trees  
Canopy Trees  
25' Minimum Spacing (tighter spacing preferred at 15-20')  
Planted Caliper 6"  
Furniture Suite  
Transit Stations and Amenities  
Bicycle Racks

**Pedestrian Lighting**  
Single Mast

Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## PLANNING FOR TRANSIT PRIORITY

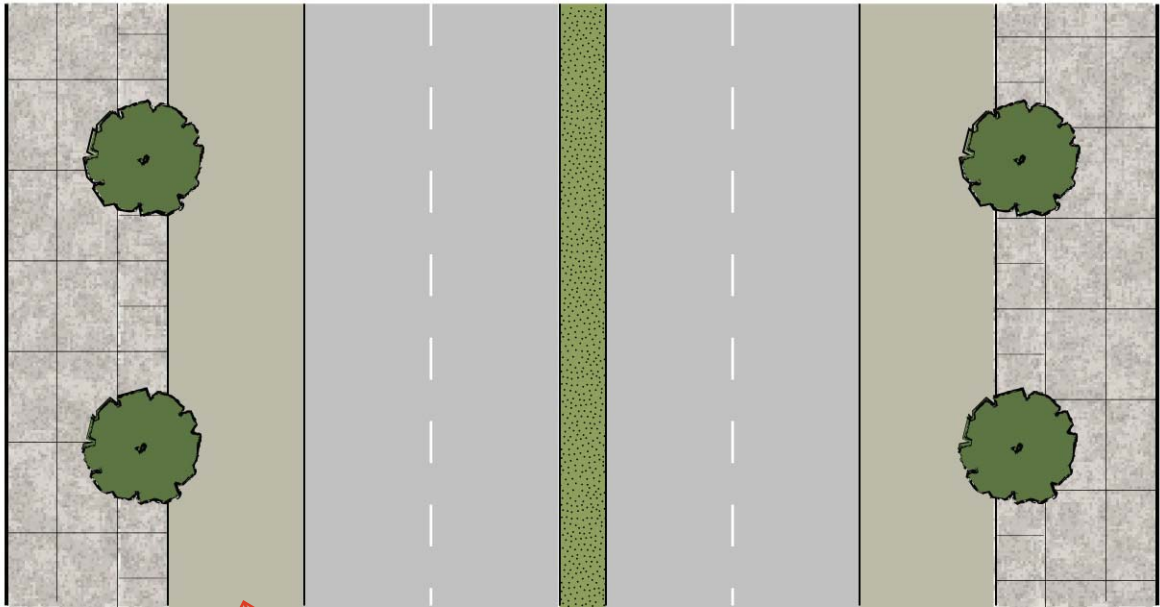
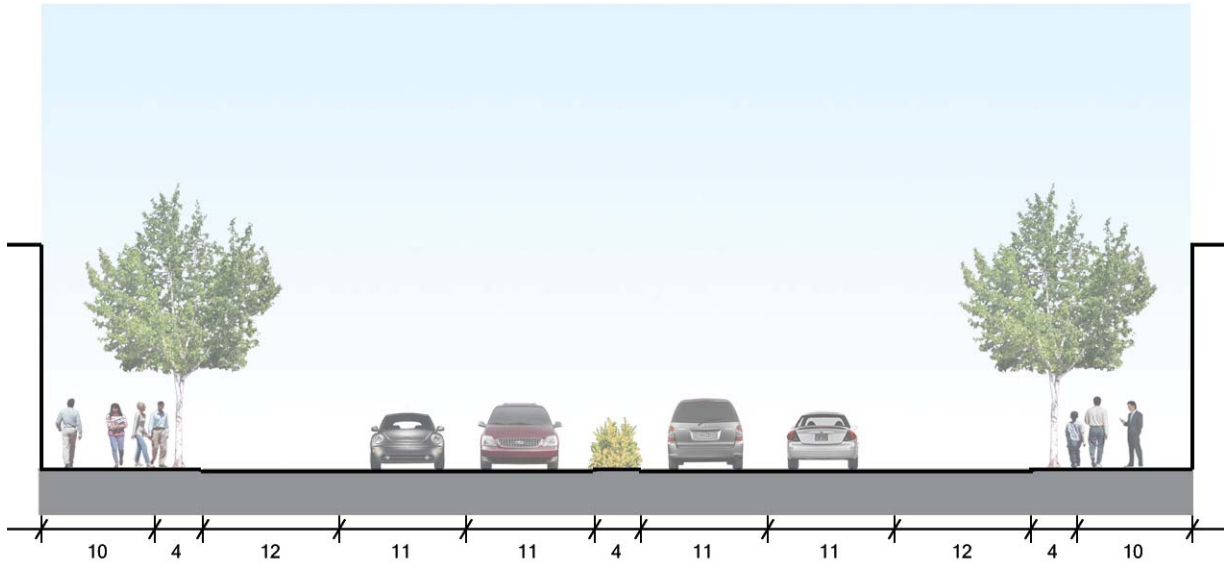


Option A- Center Boulevard

PLANTED MEDIAN  
WITH OPPORTUNITY  
FOR FUTURE HIGH  
CAPACITY TRANSIT



PLANNING FOR TRANSIT PRIORITY



Option B - Couplet

PARKING AND BIKE LANE OR SHARROW, WITH OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT



## CONNECTORS

"A Street"

6th Avenue

9th Street, 11th Street

13th Street, 15th Street

17th Street

21st Street

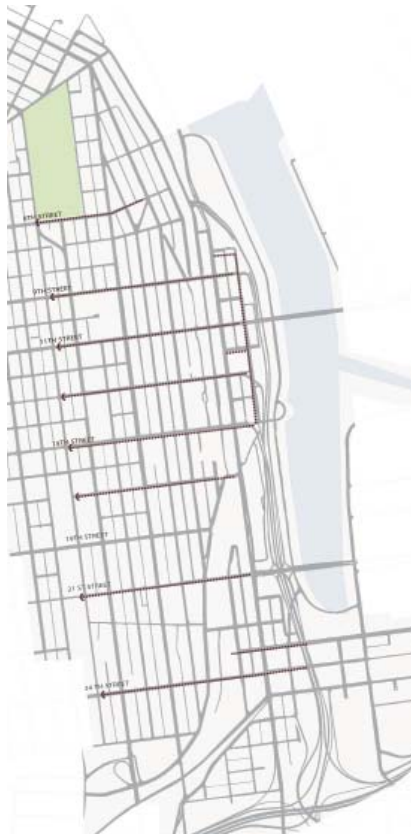
### Description

This street type prioritizes an improved walking experience up and down the hill, as primarily east-west oriented secondary commercial streets.

These streets should have adequate amenities for transit and secondary retail. Due to the slope, walking on these routes can be difficult. Connector streets should share a similar pattern of street trees and materials to their Pedestrian/Retail counterparts, with a lower frequency of street furniture. However, these routes should contain benches, and planter boxes to anchor steep slopes and provide places to rest.

### Adjacent Land Uses

A mix of retail, commercial and walk-in trade as well as ground-oriented housing. Properties along connector streets should incorporate a strong streetwall and tie into the uses of the primary North-South routes at intersections.



### Zones and Functions

#### Vehicular/Median Zone

Enhanced Crosswalk Treatment  
Shared Turning Lane

#### Buffer

On-street Parking  
with enhanced surface material  
Time-Of Day Parking limitations  
Limited Driveway Access

#### Interface Zone

Concrete  
Public Art  
Tree Grates

#### Pedestrian Realm

Desired width: 11'

#### Features

Street Trees/ Planters  
Columnar  
25' Spacing  
Planted Caliper 6"  
Limited furniture suite except benches

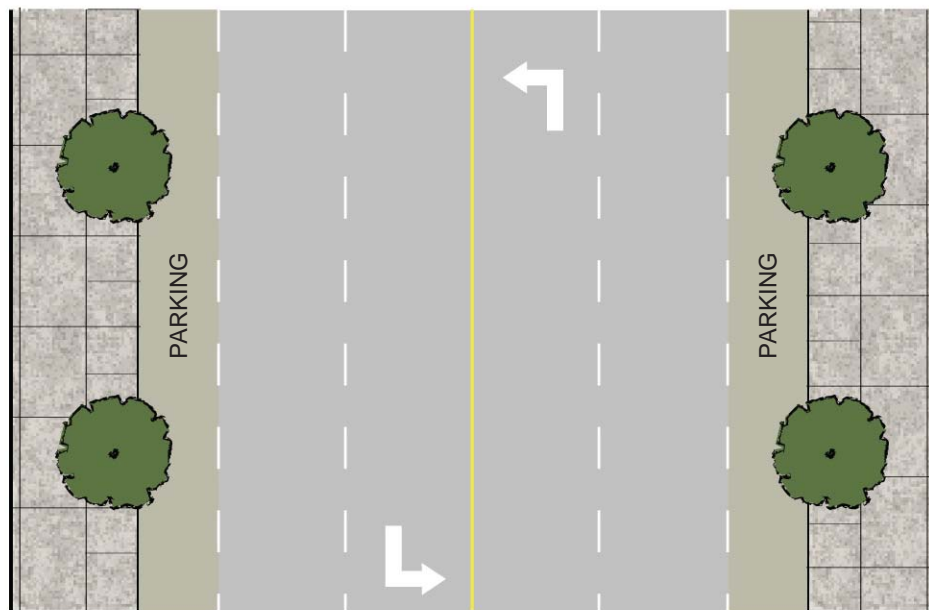
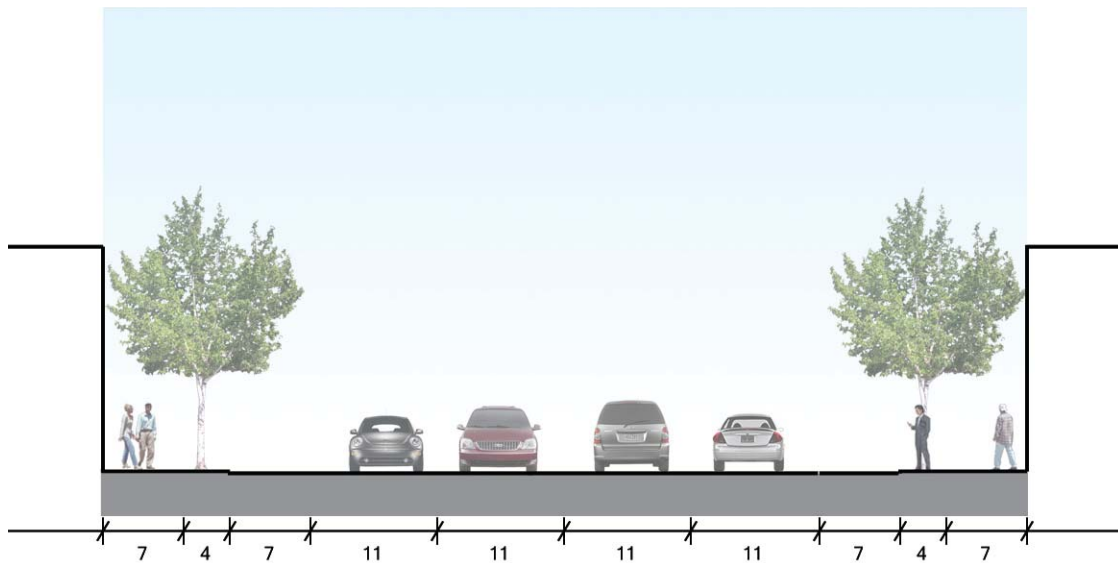
#### Pedestrian Lighting

Single Mast

#### Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## CONNECTORS





# CYCLING BOULEVARD

Fawcett Avenue

## Description

This local access street is a good choice for the City’s first cycling boulevard. Ample-width, marked bike lanes are created in concert with traffic-calming measures that slow autos, but prioritize cyclists, along this street. Cyclists typically prefer to ride on lower volume streets for safety and comfort. This option could provide an alternative to busy (and potentially transit oriented) Tacoma Avenue and Market Street.

Intersections along the Cycling Boulevard could also be outfitted with bicycle-oriented signal controls. The Cycling boulevard should shift from residential based towards the south to mixed-use and high density street in the Downtown Core.

Fawcett’s lower traffic volumes, central location, and connection across the downtown make it ideal as a key cycling connection, serving the St. Helen’s residential neighbourhood, the University, and the Warehouse District.

## Adjacent Land Uses

Residential, institutional and creative industrial or live/work uses.



## Zones and Functions

### Vehicular/Median

#### Buffer

- Corner Bulb-out
- Enhanced surface material
- On-street Parking
  - Bays
  - Time-limited

### Pedestrian Realm

Desired width: 18’

### Interface

Planting strip - varies

### Features

- Street Trees/ Planters
- Canopy
- 25’ Spacing
- Planted Caliper 4”

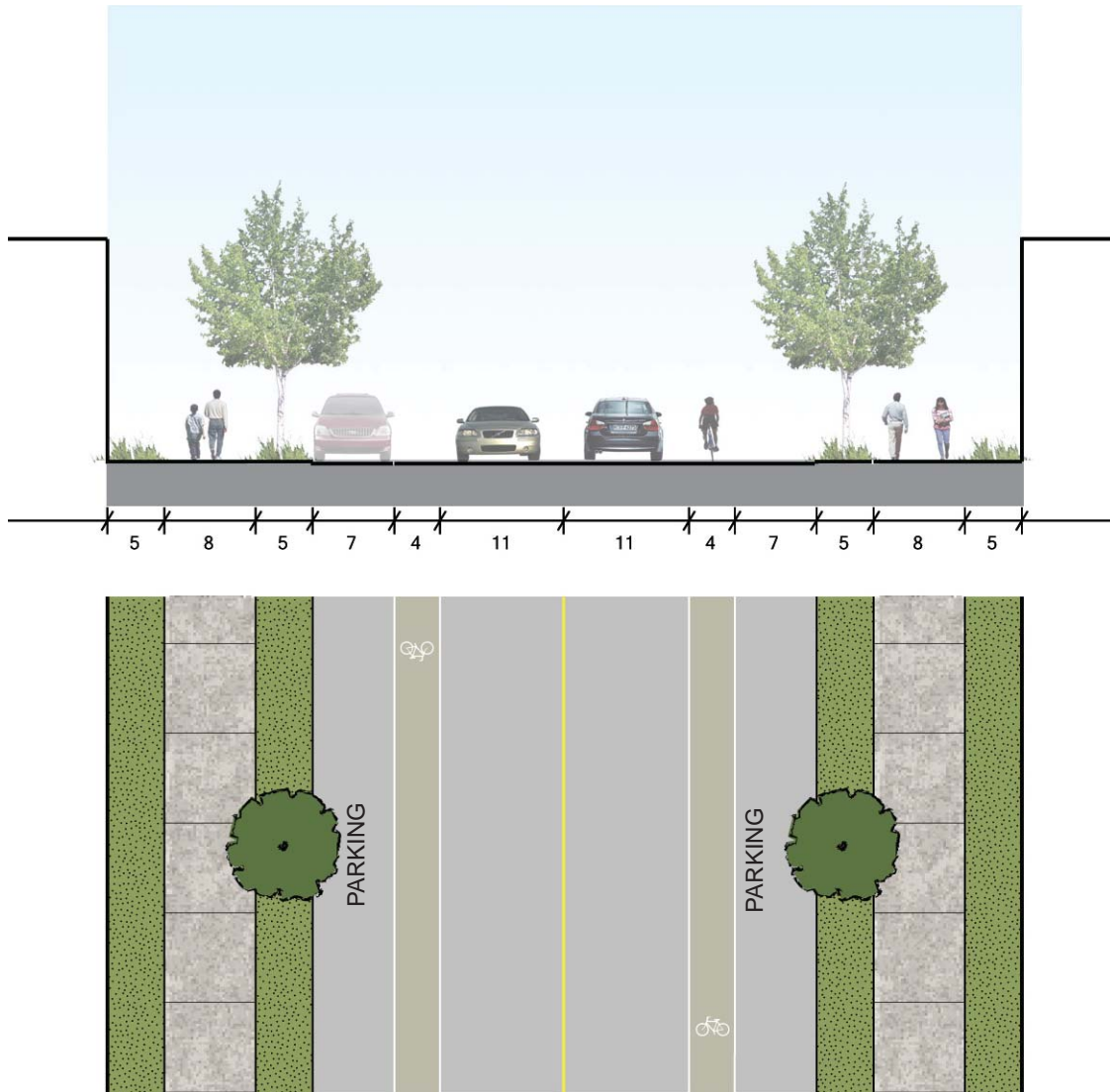
### Pedestrian Lighting

Double Mast

## Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## CYCLING BOULEVARD



## URBAN RESIDENTIAL

Local Access Streets in the St.  
Helens, Hillside and Nob Hill  
Areas

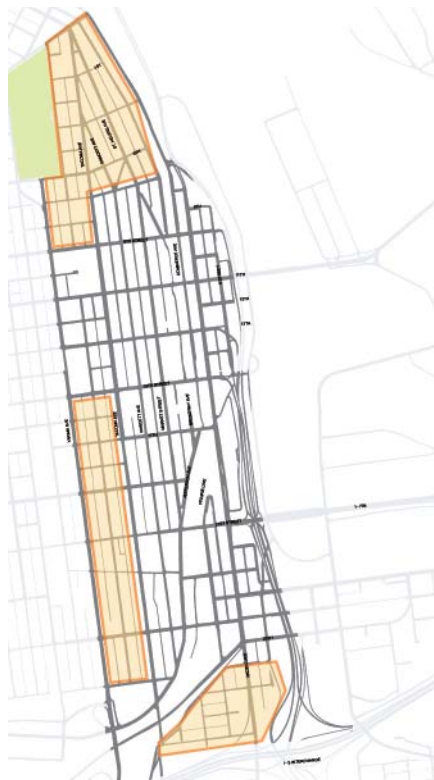
### Description

Developing a “best practice” for local urban residential streets will help Tacoma optimize the existing R.O.W. and better balance access and mobility. At 80' many of Tacoma's residential streets are double the width of streets with similar functions in other cities. Urban Residential streets can support enhanced pedestrian amenities, shared or separated bicycle lanes, landscaping and street trees. An option for a “sustainability street” which helps to infiltrate storm water locally (see Green Streets) is also provided.

Building on the value of lower traffic volumes and creating a local counterpoint to the bustling boulevards nearby, these are typical neighborhood streets that provide the texture for high and medium density residential neighborhoods. Bicycles, although they may not have their own lane, are encouraged to move with slower moving vehicular traffic. In particular, back-in angle parking will help to ensure cycling safety and maximize parking opportunities.

### Adjacent Land Uses

Ground Floor uses may be a mix of neighborhood-scale services and walk-in trade as well as ground-oriented and street facing dwelling units, entrance plazas and small urban park spaces.



### Zones and Functions

#### Vehicular/Median

Reduced lane width where feasible

#### Buffer

Corner Bulb-out

Roundabouts

On-street Parking

(angle or back-in angle parking  
where feasible)

Bays

Time-Limited Permitted

#### Pedestrian Realm

Desired width: 10'

#### Interface

Planting strip

Low Shrub

#### Features

Street Trees/ Planters

Canopy

25' Spacing Minimum

Planted Caliper 4"

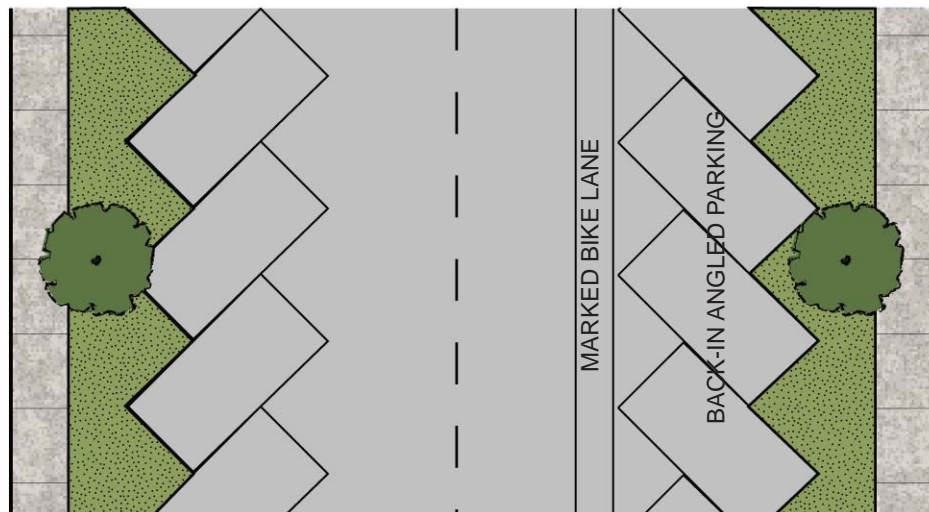
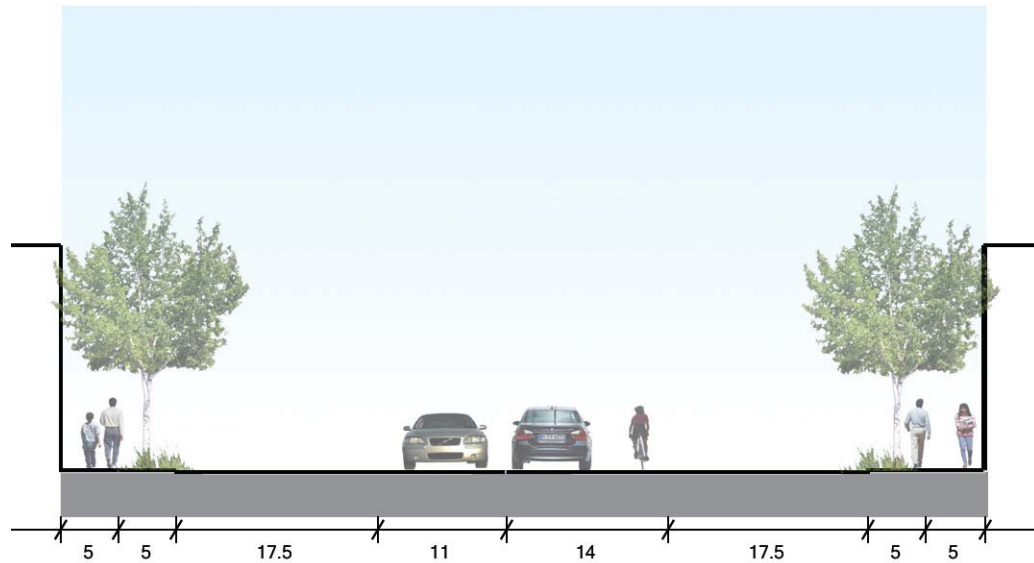
#### Pedestrian Lighting

Single mast

#### Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## URBAN RESIDENTIAL





## GREEN STREETS

Urban Residential streets west of Market  
or where appropriate

### Description

As an adaptation to the urban residential street typology, Green Streets should be considered as redevelopment occurs to supplement aging infrastructure, and increase downtown sustainability.

Short, primarily residential, and mixed-use blocks provide the opportunity to showcase innovative 'street greening' strategies such as storm water detention and on-street biofiltration. Green streets would be concentrated between Yakima and Tacoma Avenues.

A recommended location for Downtown's first Green Street should be 18th, as a connector between major employment centers and the UWT.

### Adjacent Land Uses

Predominantly residential; may include some neighborhood retail or mixed-use



### Zones and Functions

#### Vehicular/Median

##### Buffer

Corner Bulb-out integrated with bio-swale  
Enhanced surface material or porous paving  
On-street Parking

##### Pedestrian Realm

Desired width: 20'

##### Interface

Planting strip

##### Features

Biofiltration  
Street Trees/ Planters  
Canopy  
10-15' Spacing  
Planted Caliper 4"

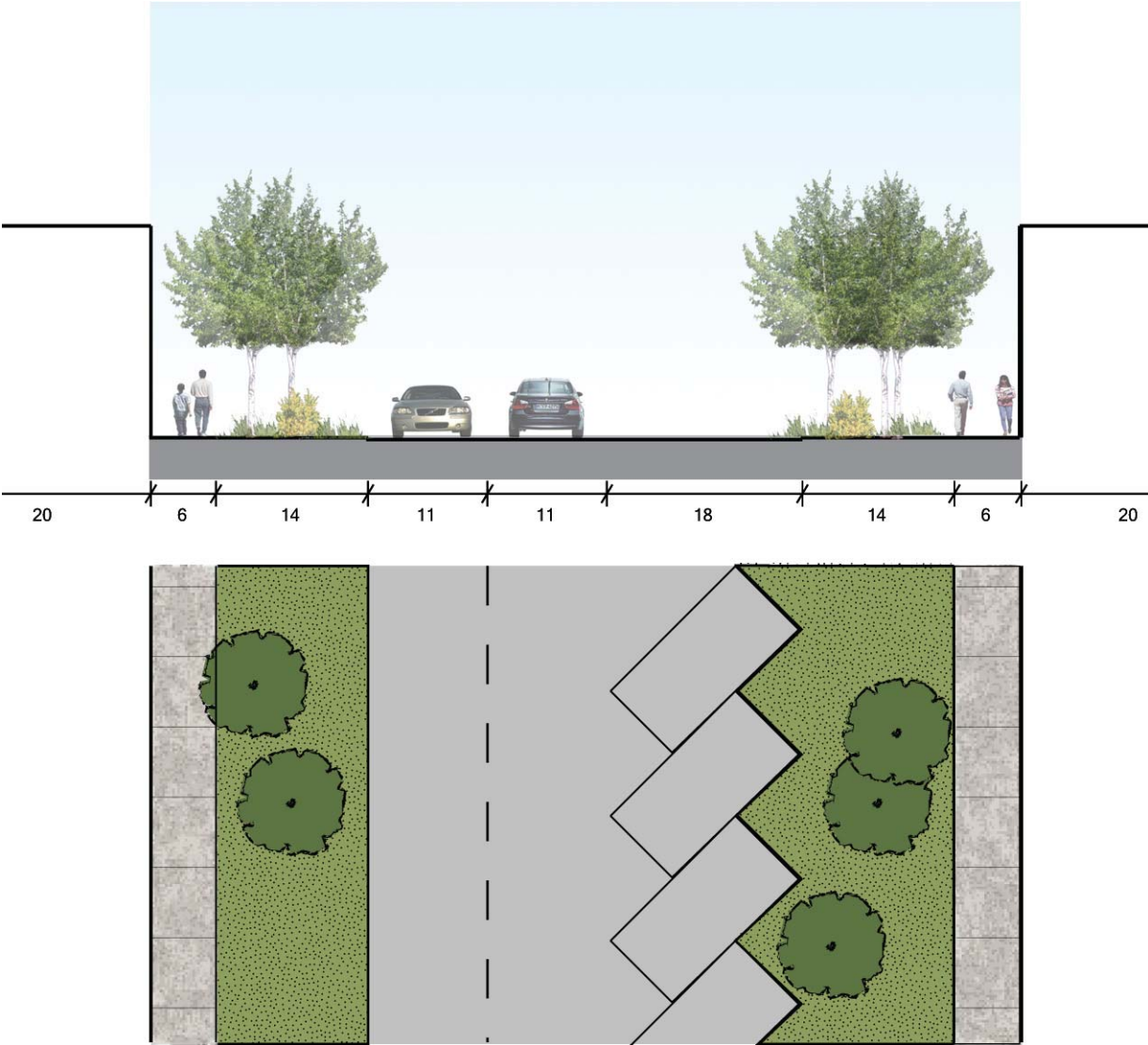
##### Pedestrian Lighting

Single mast

### Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

GREEN STREETS



# YAKIMA AVENUE

## Description

With its 100' R.O.W. and connection into Wright Park, Yakima Avenue could become one of Tacoma's great signature streets. Yakima can be incrementally enhanced with double rows of street trees, and an end-to-end landscape plan. Working with an arborist, or in collaboration with Metro Parks, the center median and planting strip should be planted with a variety of tree species and provide a strong green edge to the downtown neighborhood. Yakima's right-of-way will still permit double travel lanes in each direction along with the suggested landscape features. It should provide an expanded sense of pedestrian realm in a park-like atmosphere.

Left turn lanes should be made available at Connector Streets, and Arterials such as 19th Street, but not at local residential streets.

## Adjacent Land Uses

Residential and transitional mixed uses.

The street nominally divides the downtown from adjacent residential uses and contains a 60' height limitation buffer within 150' of the center line.

High-density ground-oriented dwellings or neighborhood-scale retail and commercial uses on the ground floor.



## Zones and Functions

### Vehicular/Median

Planted Median/Street Trees

### Buffer

Corner Bulb-out  
Roundabouts  
On-street Parking  
Time-limited

### Pedestrian Realm

Desired width: 20'

### Interface

Planting strip  
Low Shrubs

### Features

Street Trees (double row)  
Canopy  
15-20' Spacing  
Planted Caliper 6"  
Bicycle Racks

### Pedestrian Lighting

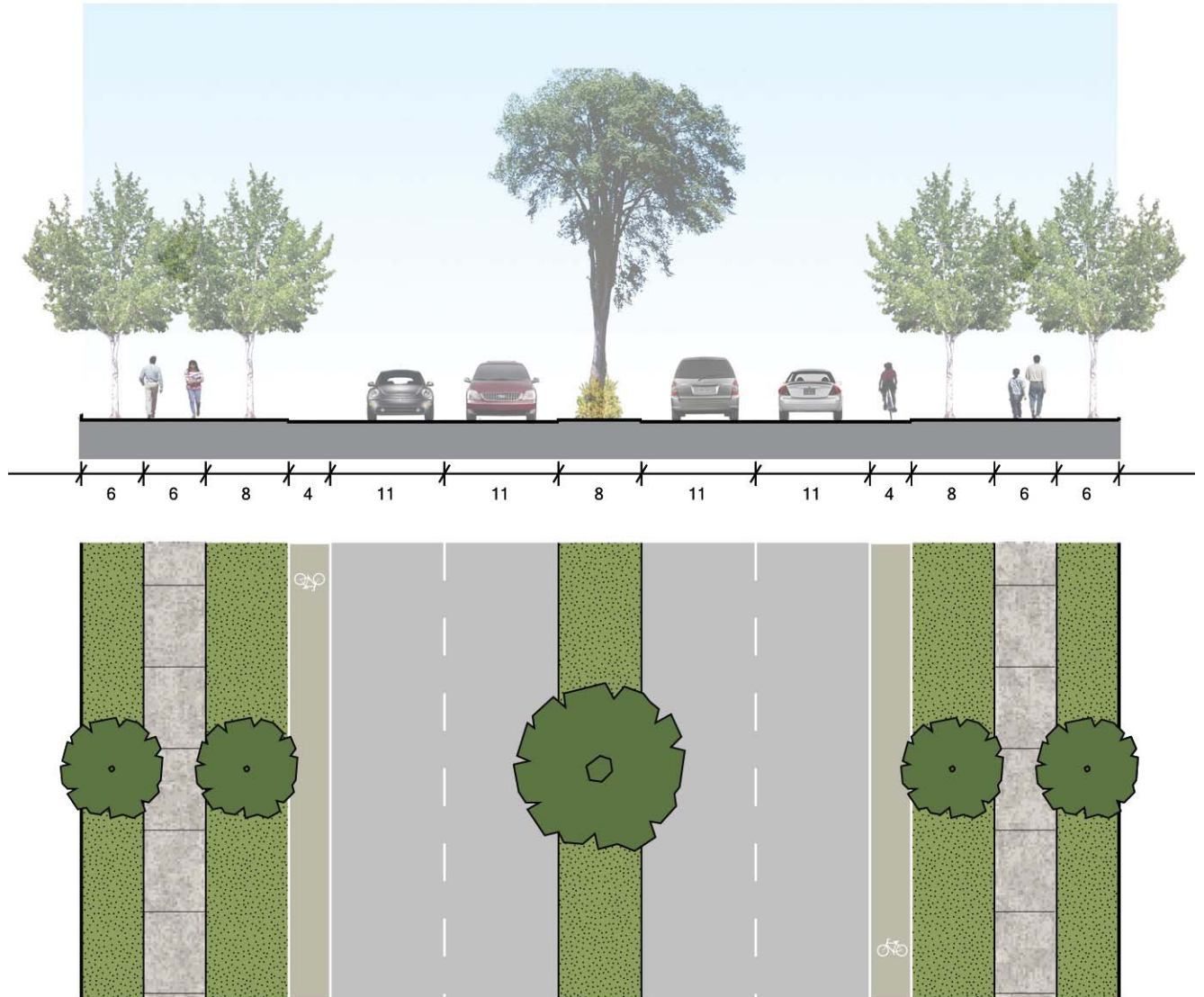
Decorative double mast

## Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING



## YAKIMA AVENUE





## WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Commerce Ave (21st-26th)

“C” Street

Holgate St.

S. 23rd Street

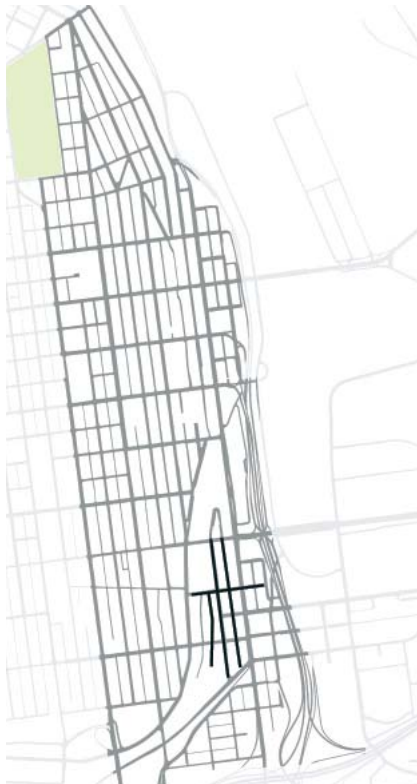
### Description

The Warehouse District is unique to the City of Tacoma with concentrations of industrial and light industrial buildings, rail corridors and a unique relationship to the street edge.

In this area, creative arts and light industry are encouraged, as are alternative residential arrangements — particularly work/live or live/work. Streets should reflect this historic relationship and traditional shared use of street space while improving safety and lighting. Where scale permits, on-street parking should be maximized using angled parking and back-in angled parking where possible without limiting the maneuvering of larger vehicles. Currently there are limited street trees or dedicated sidewalks in this district.

### Adjacent Land Uses

Industrial, Light Industrial, Creative Industry, Work-live



### Zones and Functions

#### Vehicular/Median

##### Buffer

On-street Parking  
Time-limited  
Bays  
Bollards

#### Pedestrian Realm

Shared Street  
5' sidewalks where possible

#### Interface

Distinctive textured surface

#### Features

Loading Bays as pedestrian realm  
Public Art  
Street Trees at discretion

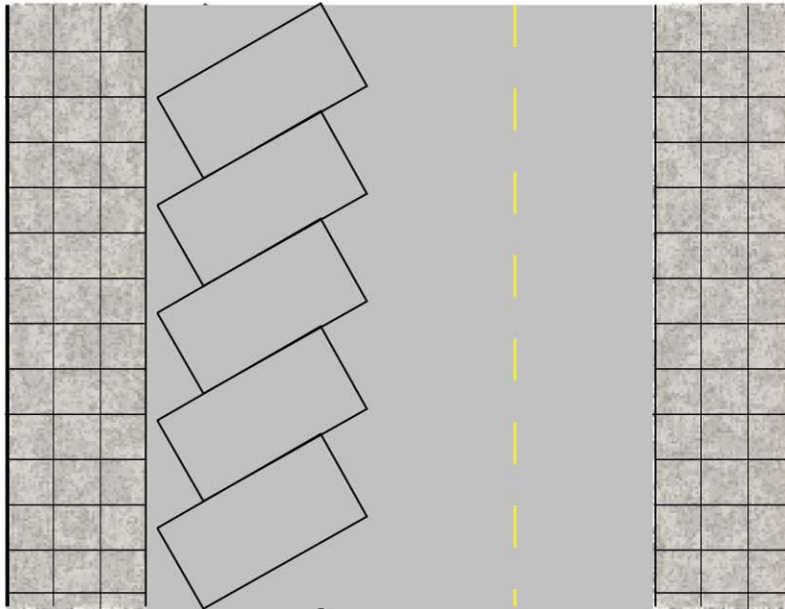
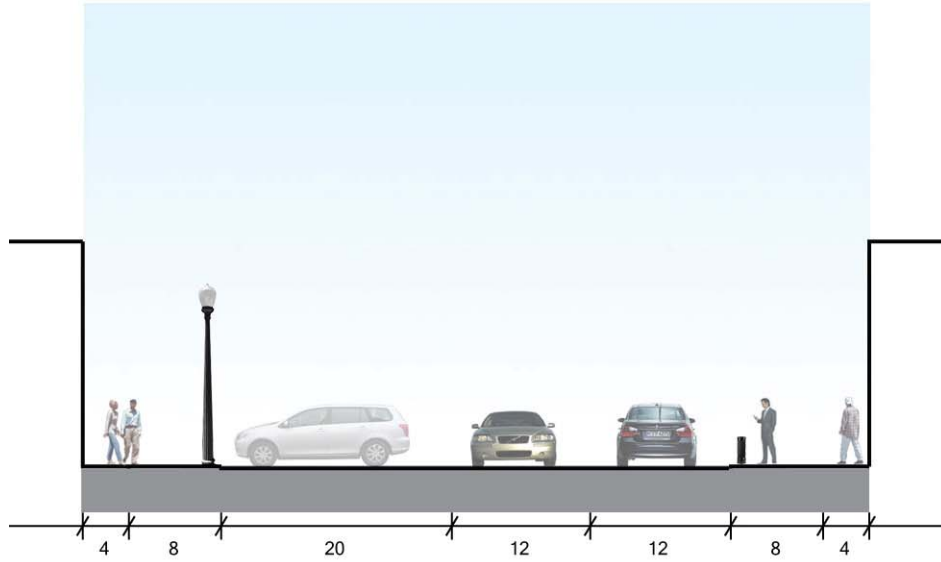
#### Pedestrian Lighting

Lighted bollards

### Desired Function

- VEHICULAR
- FREIGHT
- TRANSIT
- BICYCLE
- PEDESTRIAN
- PARKING

## WAREHOUSE DISTRICT





# 5.0 DISTRICT POLICIES\*

\*These district policies are retained from *Destination Downtown*, the previous Downtown Tacoma Element, originally adopted on December 14, 1999 and last amended on December 11, 2001, per City Council Substitute Ordinance No. 26898. Upon adopting the new Downtown Tacoma Element, the City Council ordained that “the District Policies as set forth in Chapter 12 of the City Comprehensive Plan will need to remain in place to provide a planning foundation for the four current Downtown Zoning Districts and their implementing development regulations.” (pursuant to Ordinance No. 27770, December 9, 2008)

## A. Downtown Commercial Core District

1. This district should contain uses and buildings with the greatest intensity and height to produce a concentration of jobs, shops, meeting facilities, entertainment and restaurants within close proximity to each other.
2. This district should be served by a mixture of bus and light rail transportation so that public transit is convenient and accessible.
3. A variety of public spaces should be provided through this district, including plazas, squares, overlooks, pocket parks and larger civic spaces.
4. Certain streets within this district should be particularly pedestrian oriented. Streetscape enhancements (lighting, planting, furnishings), uses and architectural features should make walking safe, comfortable and interesting.
5. Fast-moving through traffic should be discouraged in favor of making circulation within the core more oriented to downtown businesses and amenities.
6. While it is expected that the commercial core will have a predominance of office, retail and entertainment uses, residential development shall also be encouraged to provide a population that brings vitality into evening hours.
7. The commercial core should offer exterior and interior public spaces appropriate for festivals, fairs, public gatherings, open air markets, seasonal events, exhibitions, and other activities throughout the year.
8. The availability of parking should be clear and evident without having parking structures interrupt the continuity of street level uses or overwhelm the scale of adjacent buildings.
9. Given the steep topography of locations west of Pacific Avenue, buildings should include connections, spaces and mechanical features that assist in fostering pedestrian mobility.
10. Pedestrian connections at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street should be improved to provide enhanced access and mobility between the commercial core and the Foss Waterway esplanade.





## B. Downtown Residential District

1. These areas of downtown should have an emphasis on housing more than commercial development.
2. Within the Residential Districts, housing should be high density (in the range of 50 to 100 dwelling units/acre) but should be contained within mid-rise buildings (4-7 stories).
3. Services, such as grocery stores and drugstores, aimed at local residents should be available, but they should be focused into select locations to provide a sufficient concentration that can be sustained over time.
4. As residential development occurs, neighborhood parks, gardens and pedestrian linkages through blocks should be provided.
5. Both market-rate housing and affordable housing should be encouraged, although large concentrations of low-income housing are not.
6. Tacoma Avenue should become a green urban boulevard that offers an attractive, pleasant focus to denser residential areas.
7. The design of urban residential development should be varied in building form, incorporate pitched or terraced roof forms, and include features such as bay windows, offsets, projecting decks and upper level step-backs.
8. Tax abatement incentives should be applied to these areas to encourage residential development, but the use of this tool should be tied to a review of the design to ensure quality.
9. Within these districts, incentives should be employed to retain and reuse older structures that can provide depth and character to the identity of the area.



## C. Downtown Mixed Use District

1. This district is the focus of governmental and educational services, but should also accommodate retail, office and residential uses.
2. Given the concentration of employees and visitors, a variety of public spaces should be available.
3. Tacoma Avenue should be treated as a landscaped boulevard, with special lighting and art works that can establish a civic identity.
4. New public buildings should be subject to a design review process to ensure that their scale, bulk and detailing both presents a gracious civic presence and is compatible with nearby lower density residential areas.
5. 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Tacoma Avenue should be the location of a major landscape or artistic feature that can reinforce this location as a public place.



## **D. Warehouse/Residential District**

1. This district should accommodate a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential uses, with a particular emphasis on workplaces, galleries and dwellings for artists, craftspeople and artisans.
2. The character of the district should remain principally “industrial” in nature, with loading docks, water tanks and maneuvering areas.
3. The city should promote the adaptive re-use of unused buildings into residential uses while respecting the heritage of industrial architecture.
4. The city should consider using properties it owns in this district for creative renovation and development.
5. This district would be appropriate as a location for a community center that emphasizes the visual and performing arts.
6. Some portion of this district may be appropriate for designation as a historic district in order to ensure the continuation and strengthening of its character, which is marked by a predominance of brick industrial buildings and so that building owners may benefit from the economic opportunities present in a historic district.

