

# TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD

## SUBAREA PLAN



ADOPTED May 15, 2018



TACOMA MALL neighborhood

**ADOPTED:** Ordinance No. 28511, *May 15, 2018*

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# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## FUNDING

This effort was possible thanks to the financial contributions of the EPA National Estuary Program – Puget Sound Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant program, the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department and Pierce County. The City is grateful to the Washington State Department of Commerce and Department of Ecology for their guidance.

## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Thanks to the Transportation Commission and Bike and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Committee for ongoing guidance on the transportation components of this project. The City is grateful to the community members, public agencies and business people who helped shape the future of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

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## AWARDS

The Subarea Plan effort has been recognized with the following awards:



Tacoma Pierce County Health Department 2017 Healthy Communities Awards - Gold

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# ***SUPPORTING EXHIBITS***

WWW.TACOMAMALLNEIGHBORHOOD.COM

## **NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Prepared for TPCHD by NW Sound Consulting, August 23, 2015

## **EIS DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

City of Tacoma, September 4, 2015

## **SUBAREA PLAN SCOPING MEETING SUMMARY**

Gina Clarke, CCR, September 17, 2015

## **TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN WORKSHOP MANUAL TEAM MANUAL**

3 Square Blocks/Seth Harry & Associates, September 21, 2015

## **PUBLIC KICKOFF MEETING SUMMARY**

3 Square Blocks, September 28, 2015

## **TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

3 Square Blocks, October 2015

## **PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY**

3 Square Blocks, December 2015

## **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY**

3 Square Blocks, December 2015

## **EIS SCOPING SUMMARY**

3 Square Blocks, January 19, 2016

## **TACOMA MALL SUBAREA INFILTRATION STUDY**

Robinson Noble, February 2016

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS REPORT**

3 Square Blocks, March 2016

## **MULTIFAMILY AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT**

## **FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS**

Community Attributes Inc., October 2016

## **TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA**

## **COMMERCIAL ACTIONS CASE STUDY**

Community Attributes Inc., October 2017

## **TACOMA MALL SUBAREA PLAN: MIKE URBAN MODELLING REPORT**

City of Tacoma, October 2016



# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER 1



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 1



# INTRODUCTION

## CONTENTS

- Neighborhood Vision
- Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Public Engagement
- Vision & Guidance Framework
- Illustrative Vision Plan
- Six Core Design Ideas
- Benefits of the Subarea Plan
- How This Plan Is Organized
- Goals and Actions Table

## TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD VISION

By 2040 the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood will be a thriving center of regional significance and a distinctive, connected, livable and healthy place with a wide range of opportunities for all people to live, work, invest and fulfill their potential.

## TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD

The City of Tacoma and the Puget Sound Regional Council have designated the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood a Regional Growth Center (RGC). The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is located approximately 2.5 miles southwest of downtown Tacoma (Figure I-1).

Already an important employment and population center, the neighborhood is expected to receive a significant portion of the City's future housing and employment growth. The vision is for a compact, pedestrian-friendly, urban mixed-use neighborhood with a high quality of life, which includes access to healthy lifestyle choices, services and efficient multimodal transportation options. In addition to accommodating growth, the proposals include actions to address long-standing neighborhood issues. The Plan also sets priorities for the environment through innovative green infrastructure approaches and actions to improve water quality and flow control on a watershed basis while protecting and recharging the South Tacoma Aquifer.

The RGC designation makes the neighborhood a top investment priority for the City and region and is a primary reason for developing this Subarea Plan. Downtown Tacoma is also a designated RGC. Tacoma's two RGCs are the major centers for future growth in the City, with Downtown planned for the greatest growth. The two RGCs are parts of the City's network of 16 mixed-use centers, including smaller Crossroads Centers and Neighborhood Centers.

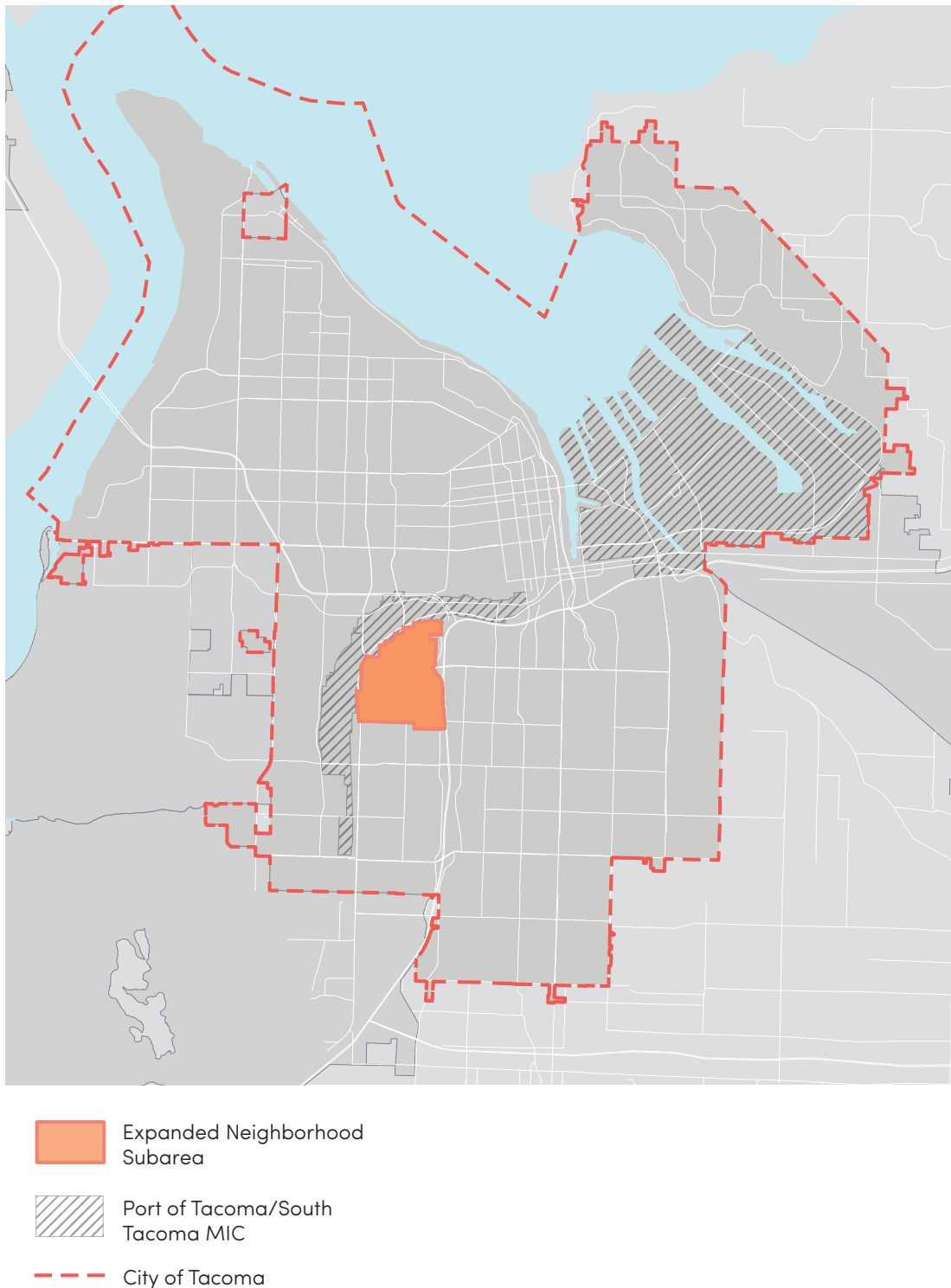


Figure I-1. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood location.

The Downtown Tacoma RGC is intended as by far the largest concentration of growth and density in Tacoma, with building maximum heights ranging from 90 to 400 feet. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood RGC is intended to be the second-most-dense neighborhood in Tacoma, with maximum heights ranging from 45 to 120 feet. The South Tacoma M/IC is intended as a concentration of industrial jobs and development, with maximum heights of 75 feet in areas adjacent to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood..

Neighborhood development began in the late 1800s. Over time the neighborhood has grown into an urban area with a mix of uses including residential, commercial and light industrial that are anchored by the Tacoma Mall, a regional retail destination. In general, the neighborhood is bounded by South Tacoma Way to the west and north; I-5 to the east; and S. 48th and S. 49th Streets to the south. Figure I-2 shows the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood boundaries.

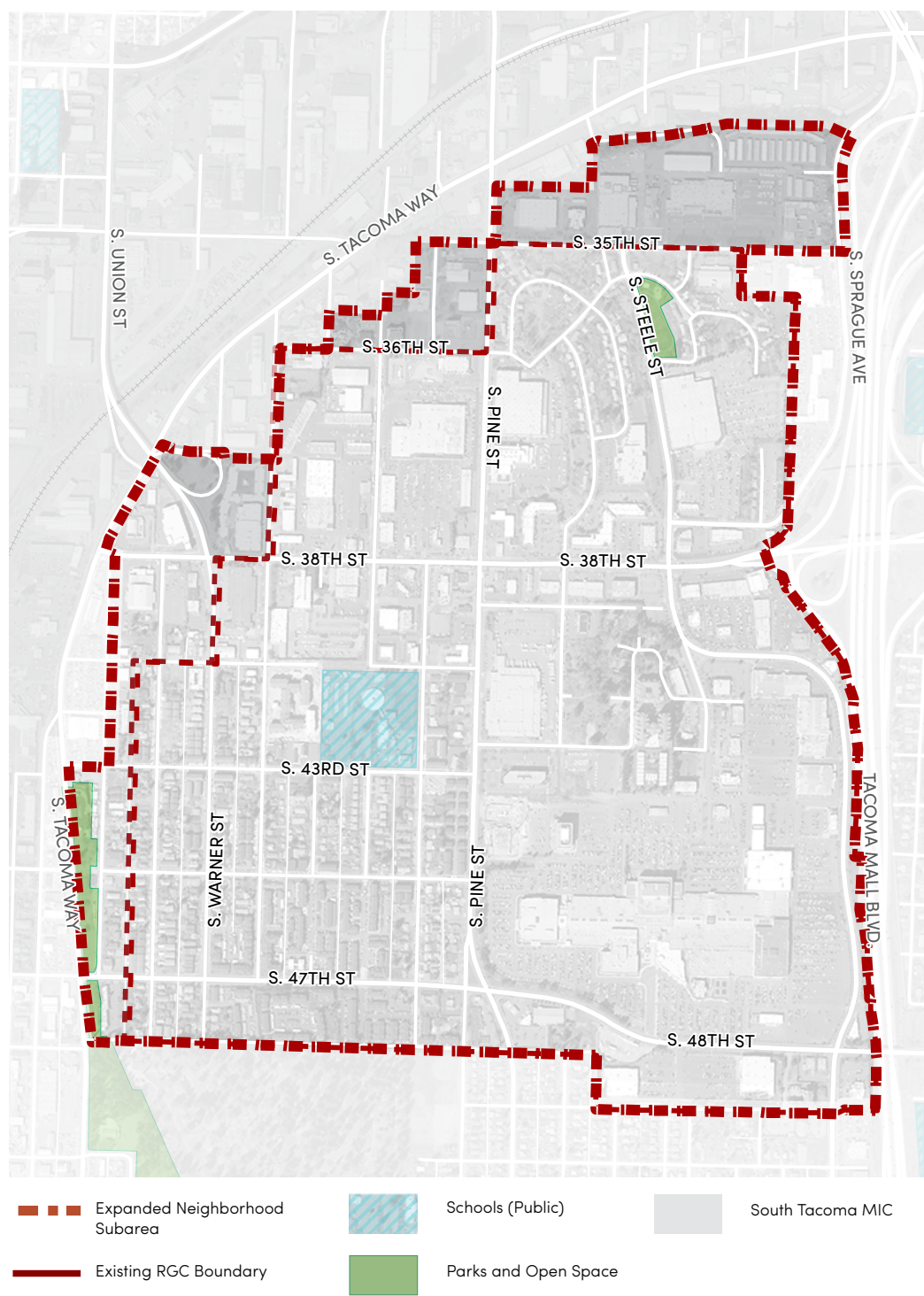


Figure I-2. Tacoma Mall Neighborhood boundaries.

## **THE SUBAREA PLAN**

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This Subarea Plan sets forth a vision for the neighborhood's future as well as goals and actions that provide a road map for City and public and private partners as they work together to achieve the vision. The Subarea Plan is intended to reflect community aspirations for the neighborhood while planning for anticipated growth. It supports creation of a positive identity for the neighborhood, aims to support business expansion and investment, strengthens existing neighborhood assets, improves quality of life, expands transportation and housing choices, and improves water quality.

The Subarea Plan fits under the City's Comprehensive Plan umbrella, Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies, the Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2040, and other city and regional plans and policies. These provide high-level guidance for future growth in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Building on the foundation provided by these plans, policies and programs, the Subarea Plan provides specific, detailed guidance for planning future growth so that the neighborhood's full potential is realized.

### **NATIONAL ESTUARIES PROGRAM PUGET SOUND WATERSHED PROTECTION AND RESTORATION GRANT**

Development of the Subarea Plan was funded through a National Estuary Program (NEP) Puget Sound Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant. The Plan calls for adding green stormwater infrastructure to provide neighborhood amenities and on-site infiltration to improve the health of local watersheds and the Puget Sound.

### **EXPANDING THE TACOMA MALL REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER**

The Subarea Plan recommends expanding the Tacoma Mall RGC's current boundaries to correspond with the Neighborhood boundaries in Figure I-2 and to manage the geographic and land use transitions from urban mixed-use RGC to South Tacoma Way Manufacturing and Industrial Center.

## **REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE & GROWTH TARGETS**

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The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is a regionally significant jobs-and-housing hub. More than 4,650 people live here and 9,749 work here. The Tacoma Mall and surrounding stores, centrally located and proximate to I-5, serve a large

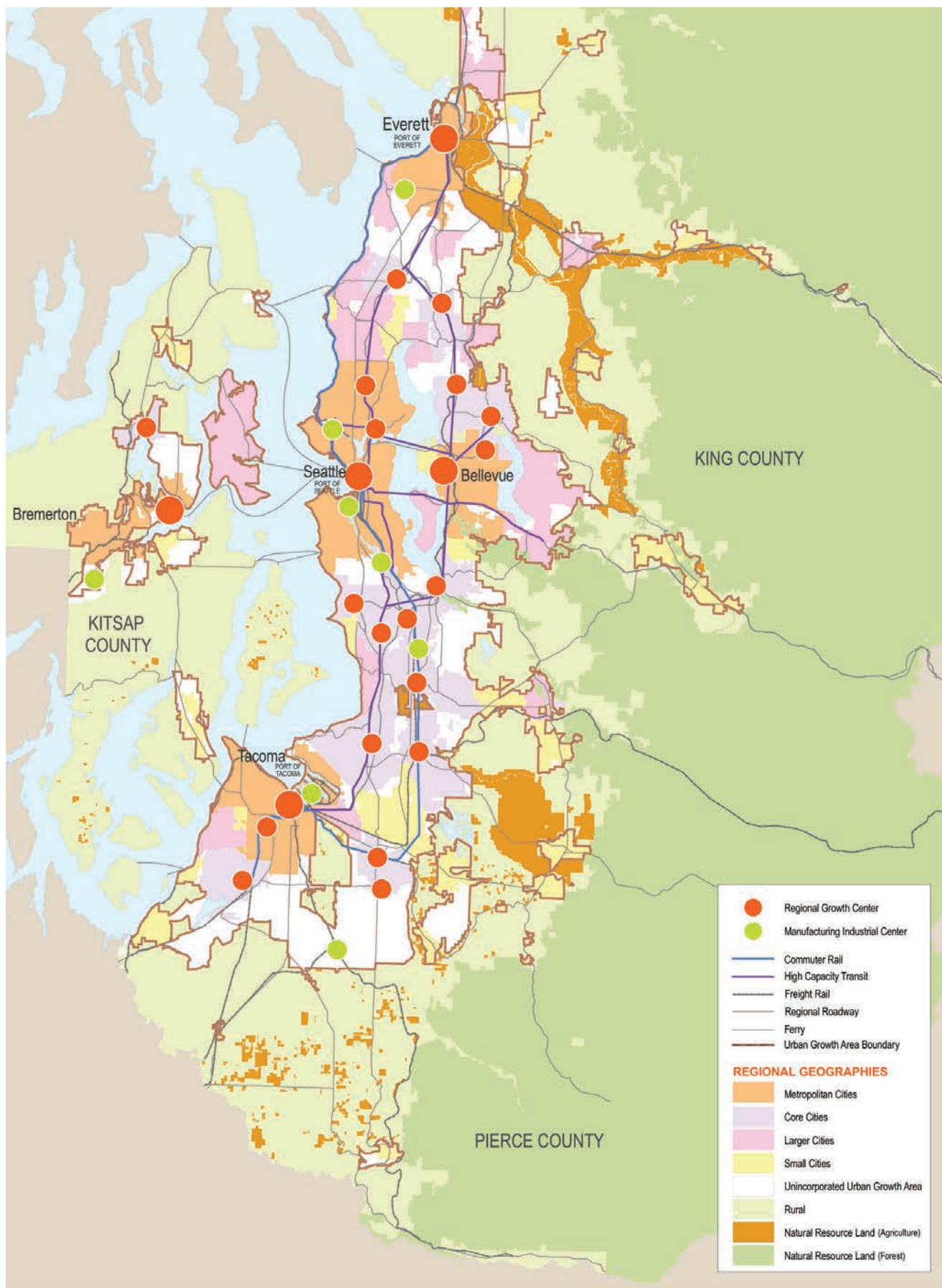


Figure I-3. Vision 2040.



Photo I-1. Tacoma Mall.

portion of the South Sound and make the Neighborhood one of the most recognizable places in the City. Pierce County government offices are located here as well. The Tacoma Mall RGC has been a designated growth center for twenty years and is one of Tacoma's fastest-growing centers. Vision 2040 and the City's Comprehensive Plan call for this area to be second only to Downtown Tacoma in jobs and housing and to be the densest neighborhood in South Tacoma. This Subarea Plan is intended to initiate actions that catalyze further growth and investment, guide regional infrastructure investments per regional growth policy, and elevate this neighborhood's role as a vibrant urban neighborhood and a gateway to Tacoma and the South Sound.

Consistent with state law and regional planning policies, the City has adopted targets for new employment and population growth through 2040. These targets help the City plan for future growth and ensure that new development supports the City's vision for the future and is supported by adequate facilities and services. The existing growth targets for the current 485-acre Tacoma Mall RGC are 7,555 new jobs and 8,079 additional people by 2040. This Subarea Plan uses those growth targets but increases them to account for the 90-acre expansion area indicated in Figure I-2 and proposed for incorporation into the Tacoma Mall RGC. The expansion area is assumed to grow at the same rate as the current RGC. The new targets for the enlarged 575-acre Tacoma Mall Neighborhood are 8,385 new jobs and 8,887 additional people by 2040. This equates to approximately three million square feet of commercial space and four million square feet of residential space.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The City of Tacoma has prepared a non-project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consistent with RCW 43.21C.420 (transit infill), RCW 43.21C.031 (planned action), and RCW 43.21C.229 (infill exemption) for the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan. Recognizing that RCW 43.21C.420 includes a sunset provision, the City is also proceeding under RCW 43.21C.031 (planned action) and RCW 43.21C.229 (infill exemption) to provide additional SEPA tools if provisions in RCW 43.21C.420(5)(a) and (b) expire.

A non-project EIS involves a cumulative environmental impact and mitigation analysis for the entire Subarea, rather than piecemeal analysis on a project-by-project basis. The non-project EIS eliminates the need for subsequent environmental review associated with project-specific development proposals that comply with the Subarea Plan, adopted regulations and EIS mitigation. As such, the non-project EIS provides developer certainty and predictability that will streamline the environmental review process and further State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and GMA goals.

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan EIS analyzes the impacts associated with future development in the Subarea, including additional development and employment and population growth anticipated to occur over the next twenty years. The Subarea Plan adopts the population and job growth targets discussed above for both the existing area and with the proposed expansion. The Tacoma Mall EIS analyzes the potential impacts resulting from these levels of growth. Future project-level development proposals that are consistent with the Subarea Plan, adopted regulations and EIS mitigation are not subject to further SEPA review or appeals through SEPA.

## **MITIGATION STRATEGY**

The EIS identifies future mitigations that will be triggered by development that occurs in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood over time. The Subarea Plan recognizes that the levels of development being considered would require future improvements in infrastructure and amenities to serve significantly higher numbers of residents and employees in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. To address the future needs of a growing community, the Plan proposes monitoring systems and development thresholds for infrastructure improvements. Lastly, as documented in the EIS, public utilities and services can be expanded to meet the anticipated demands of future developments as they occur.



Photo I-2. Public kickoff meeting.



Photo I-3. Focus Group, West Mall Terrace, August 6, 2015.



Photo I-4. Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing community participation was an essential part of developing the Subarea Plan. Starting in summer 2015, the City reached out to a broad and diverse range of stakeholders and invited them to participate; the stakeholders included area residents, businesses and property owners, community organizations, public entities and agencies, potential developers and investors, and other interested parties. Outreach and engagement efforts were extensive:

**Public kickoff meeting.** The City held its first community Subarea Plan meeting in August 2015. This was an opportunity for community members to share ideas for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood’s future and to learn about the planning process. More than fifty people attended.

**Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department focus groups.** To support the City’s subarea planning process, the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department hosted three community focus groups during summer 2015 to gather information for a neighborhood livability needs assessment. The Health Department retained a local community outreach consultant, NW Sound Consulting, to employ non-traditional means of community outreach, such as door-to-door outreach to residents of single-family, townhouse and apartment units and local businesses in order to invite local participation in the community conversations. The resulting needs assessment informed Subarea Plan development.

**Stakeholder interviews.** In summer 2015, the City interviewed ten stakeholders knowledgeable about the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood to gather additional insights on the project. The interviewees included residents, property owners, local businesses and representatives from the Tacoma School District, Metro Parks Tacoma, Pierce County and the Tacoma City Council.

**Tours.** To gather input from City advisory groups on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood’s current conditions and opportunities for the future, during summer and fall 2015 project staff toured the neighborhood with the City Council Neighborhoods and Housing Committee, the Planning Commission and the Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group.



Photo I-5. Design Workshop.



Photo I-6. Stakeholder Working Group meeting.



Photo I-7. Business group meeting.

**Design workshop.** The City hosted a four-day design workshop in fall 2015 to engage community members in developing an illustrative community vision plan for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Approximately 90 community members attended including residents, business and property owners, and public agency staff. Focus groups, open studios and design feedback discussions held during the workshop identified ways to strengthen neighborhood identity, culture, economy, environmental quality and sense of place.

**Public scoping meetings.** Two public scoping meetings were held in fall 2015 to receive comments on issues that should be studied in the EIS. These comments were reviewed and considered as part of developing the Subarea Plan goals and actions.

**Stakeholder working group.** A volunteer stakeholder working group was formed to review community input and technical analysis and to collaborate on development of the Subarea Plan vision, guiding principles and strategies. The Stakeholder Working Group was composed of residents, business owners, property owners and individuals representing partner agencies such as Metro Parks Tacoma, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, WSDOT and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. They met five times between the winter of 2015 and summer of 2016 to provide focused input on plan development, then an expanded group continued to meet monthly to provide input into the planning process and to work on implementation actions.

**Business community and property owner engagement.** Throughout the process, the project team met with individual property and business owners. In fall 2016, the City undertook a focused engagement effort with commercial stakeholders including a series of individual and group meetings. The meetings' purpose was to determine the best ways for the City to support business retention and development, and to gather input on proposals pertinent to the development of property.

**Informational briefings.** Throughout the planning process, informational briefings to share project information were given to City groups, public agencies and other interested parties. Briefings were given to: City Council, Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Bicycle

Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group, Sustainable Tacoma Commission, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council, Simon Property Group, Metro Parks, Tacoma School District, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, WSDOT and the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan Stakeholder Working Group.

City Council and City Commissions. Plan development was led by the Planning Commission, which provided overall guidance throughout the process and forwarded its recommendations to the City Council on October 18, 2017. The Council took final action on May 15, 2018.

## **TECHNICAL STUDIES**

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To support the planning effort, the City developed two key technical studies and several supporting ones. The transportation modeling effort analyzed existing conditions and the impacts of growth on transportation systems in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood without the Subarea Plan compared with the Subarea Plan. The transportation model was central to shaping street network development and other transportation actions described in Chapter 6—Transportation Choices. The stormwater study improved the City’s understanding of soil and groundwater conditions in the subarea. This information enabled the Plan to achieve a high level of specificity and certainty regarding stormwater infiltration potential which informed development of the area-wide stormwater strategy described in Chapter 7—Environment. Other technical information developed for the planning effort is summarized in pertinent chapters and is also included in the EIS for the Subarea Plan.

## **VISION & GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK**

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The neighborhood vision and guidance framework grew from ideas shared during the public engagement activities listed above and describe the future that the Tacoma Mall community aspires to achieve.

This Plan lays out policies and actions that will help achieve this neighborhood vision. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood will benefit from its central location and transportation choices, diverse range of jobs and shopping, unique local character and culture, green features and sustainable infrastructure, and complete neighborhood amenities.

## PEOPLE—PROSPERITY—PLANET

### People and Equity includes

- socioeconomic status
- social organizations
- social interactions and support
- education and coping skills
- gender, race & ethnicity
- safety & security

Research evidence shows that a socially connected and inclusive community that provides fair access to a wide range of affordable housing and community safety nets can reduce the incidence of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, depression.

### Prosperity and Health includes

- income
- employment
- working conditions
- trade & market conditions

Research evidence concludes that income and education are two major root factors barring people from achieving their maximum potential, quality of life and good health. Creating a vibrant economy, strengthening our workforce, and encouraging a positive formal and informal learning environment can address health disparities, and improve physical and social wellness.

### Planet & health includes

- air
- water
- land
- natural & wildlife habitats

Access to natural areas and open spaces can enhance tranquility, and relieve anxiety and depression. Health studies have shown that contact with nature—with plants, animals, pleasing landscapes, and wilderness—offers a range of medical benefits, including lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, enhanced survival after a heart attack, and more rapid recovery from surgery.

## ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH HEALTH-IN-ALL-POLICIES & TRIPLE-BOTTOM-LINE APPROACHES

The Subarea Plan recognizes that health is a vital concern that is interrelated with many policy considerations. Countywide Planning Policies recommend that “each municipality shall incorporate provisions addressing health and well-being into appropriate local planning and decision-making processes.” Specifically, the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department promote a “health-in-all-policies” approach to address the complex factors that influence health and equity in the neighborhood and broader community, such as access to healthy food, health care, affordable housing, transportation options and neighborhood safety. As adopted by the Pierce County Board of Health, the “health-in-all-policies” approach presents an integrated foundation for a balanced equitable social environment, a viable economy and a livable built and natural environment. The guidance is based on the ideas of the triple-bottom-line of sustainable development, people, prosperity and planet as illustrated below:

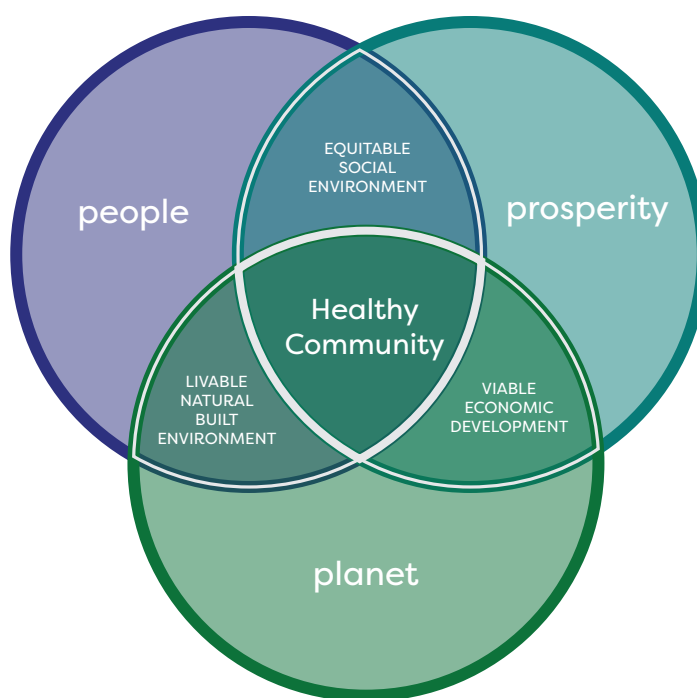


Figure I-4. Healthy communities' interconnective framework.

The goal of a balanced triple-bottom-line guided Subarea Plan development. People, economic prosperity and planet are tied together in a mutually supportive and interdependent manner to support healthy communities.



Photo I-8. Example arts.

Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department guidance on planning for health communities is available at [www.tpchd.org/environment/planning-healthy-communities](http://www.tpchd.org/environment/planning-healthy-communities).

## PRIORITIES FRAMEWORK

The following priorities framework was used with the guiding principles and health-in-all-policies approach to inform development and the priority of actions and implementation steps contained in this Subarea Plan. See Chapter 11–Implementation for more information.

Set priorities for early implementation actions to

- accomplish necessary first steps
- achieve multiple goals and leverage other actions
- leverage investment in areas with active markets
- avoid bigger risk of inaction to preserve key opportunities
- optimize cost-effectiveness
- support neighborhood completeness
- promote equity and empowerment

## ILLUSTRATIVE VISION PLAN

During fall 2015, City staff, community members and other project stakeholders worked together in an intensive four-day design workshop to produce the detailed Illustrative Vision Plan that set the course for Subarea Plan development. The Illustrative Vision Plan integrated the key themes of the public input received to that point. The Vision Plan was vetted among project partners and achieved broad support on foundational concepts for the Subarea Plan.

The Illustrative Vision Plan integrated design ideas for streets, parks and open spaces, neighborhood districts and buildings that were intended to strengthen neighborhood identity, culture, economy, environmental quality and livability for area residents, businesses and users. The Illustrative Vision Plan relied on the existing street network to create logical districts within the neighborhood. Two existing major streets, S. 38th St. and S. Pine St., bisect the neighborhood into quarters. Each quarter is roughly equivalent in size to a five-minute-walk neighborhood—a nationally recognized smart-growth principle for creating vibrant urban communities where it is possible to walk from the center to the edge of a neighborhood in about five minutes.

Illustrative Vision Plan development was a key early step in the planning process and informed the development of many goals and actions contained in the Subarea Plan

## MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM VISION MAPS

Through subsequent discussions with Tacoma’s Planning Commission, the need to bridge the gap between existing neighborhood circumstances and the neighborhood’s

long-term vision became clear. To that end, two versions of the Vision were developed—medium-term and long-term.

The medium-term vision is intended to depict the neighborhood largely as it is today and retain existing buildings, with new buildings constructed on vacant sites and surface parking lots along with construction of only top-priority new street connections.

The long-term vision depicts more substantial change and redevelopment, including new buildings oriented toward streets and new street connections. The long-term vision is intended to be illustrative rather than directive and includes alternative site development concepts for several larger sites.

## **SIX CORE URBAN DESIGN IDEAS**

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The Illustrative Vision Plan led to the Six Core Design Ideas that form the basic structure for the neighborhood's future and are summarized as goals and actions in multiple chapters. These foundational elements can transform urban form and thus improve the access, visibility and value of properties. Such transformations improve the investment climate and strengthen housing, retail, services and employment growth.

Over time, these foundational concepts will guide and inspire substantial change but also inform near-term actions. Taken together, implementing these core ideas will help shape the built environment and the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's natural realms in order to support a vibrant community, economy and culture. The six core design ideas are foundational to attracting people and investment and to making a unique, delightful and memorable neighborhood.

## **PLACE-BASED CHARACTER DISTRICTS**

The Subarea Plan calls for strengthening and fostering distinct identities for the four place-based character districts shown in Figure I-4: the Madison District, the Northwest District, the Lincoln Heights District and the Mall District. The Districts' boundaries correspond with the five-minute-walk neighborhoods formed by S. 38th St and S. Pine St. The character of each District is intended to reflect its historic patterns and the community's desires for its future.

## **FOCUSED DENSITY & TRANSITION AREAS**

Chapter 4—Land Use of this Subarea Plan proposes revised land use and zoning designations for the neighborhood. These designations support a high-density mixed-use urban core for the neighborhood by focusing the greatest intensity of uses around the existing Tacoma Mall and along S. 38th St and S. Pine St, the

major thoroughfares in the neighborhood. Adjacent areas are generally planned for moderate to high density, stepping down from the urban core and providing transitions to less intense areas. The residential neighborhoods in the Madison and Lincoln Heights District are intended for moderate intensities, which are relatively low compared with the rest of the neighborhood, in keeping with its place-based character.

### **INTERNAL LOOP ROAD & PARKS SYSTEM**

The Subarea Plan envisions construction of an internal Loop Road that connects the four districts, provides multimodal transportation options, enables internal trip capture on local streets, incorporates stormwater management features, and includes street trees and landscaping that enhance the public realm, providing environmental benefits. Future parks or open spaces could be planned adjacent to the Loop Road, creating a continuous string of public green spaces accessible to walkers and cyclists as well as those traveling by car. The parks concept envisions parks and open spaces in each district for residents of all ages to play and gather, and would enhance the overall neighborhood's green character.

### **COMPLETE & CONNECTED STREET NETWORK**

Chapters 4—Land Use and 6—Transportation Choices describe actions to create a complete and connected street network, such as adding new streets and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These improvements are intended to enhance mobility for all modes of travel in the neighborhood. Additionally, new rights-of-way would expand the public realm and create block sizes of a more pedestrian scale. The most fundamental characteristic of the desired future street network is the achievement of a maximum block scale of approximately 600 by 600 feet.

### **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS**

The Subarea Plan envisions changes to urban form and the mix of land uses that will improve the natural environment, including installation of green stormwater infrastructure, development of new parks and open spaces, increased tree cover, and expanded transportation choices with complete pedestrian and bicycle networks. These changes will result in improved water quality as a result of increased sizes of the pervious and vegetated areas that absorb and filter surface water runoff and recharge the South Tacoma aquifer. Other benefits will include improved air quality, reduced vehicle use/emissions, increased property values, expanded wildlife habitat, and visual access to trees and landscaping which are aesthetically pleasing and integral to improved mental health. Providing these environmental benefits and amenities will increase quality of life for residents and those that work and visit the neighborhood and have proven in other districts to increase property values.

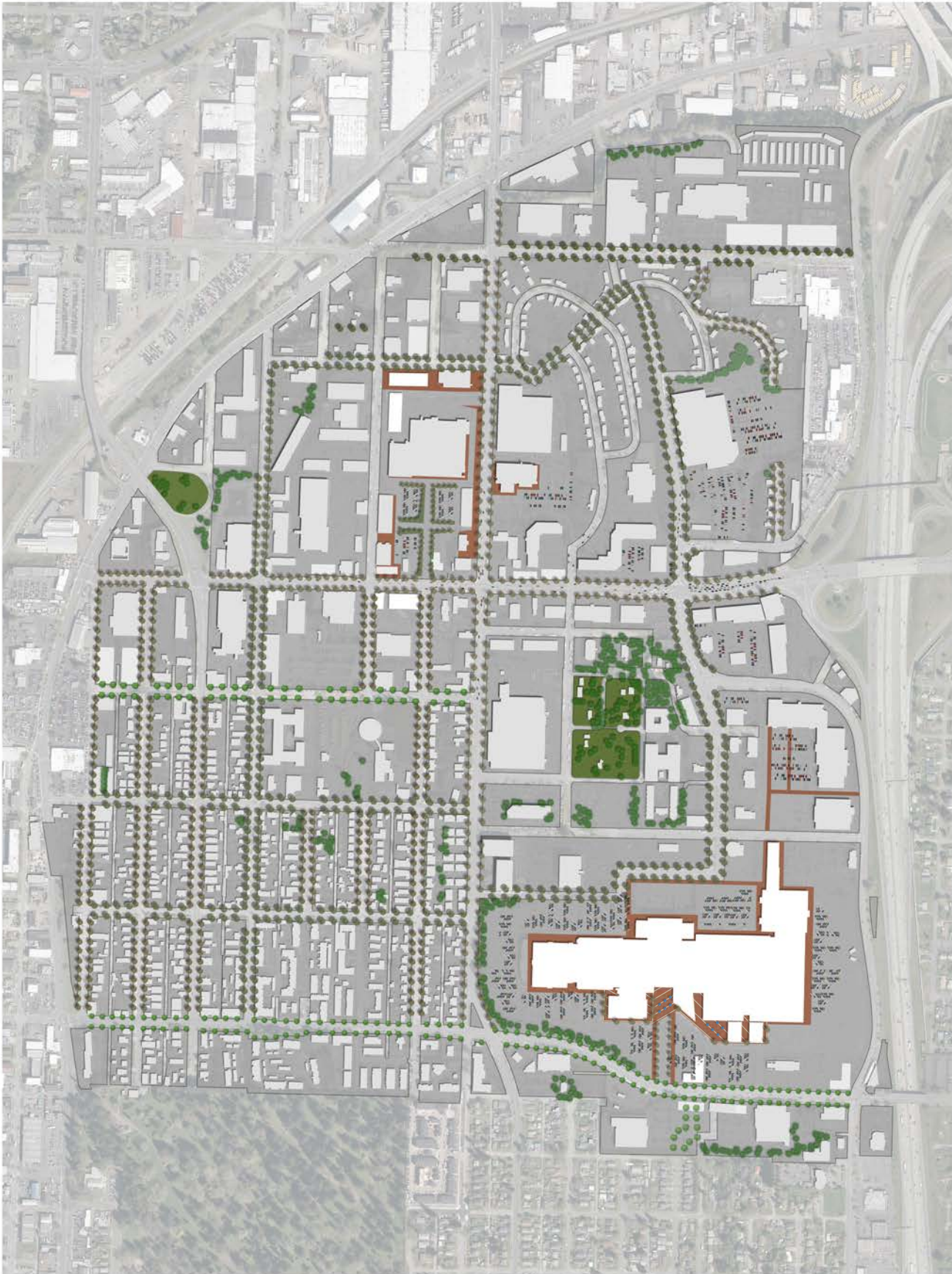


Figure I-5. Medium-Term Illustrative Vision Map.



Figure I-6. Long-Term Illustrative Vision Map.



Photo I-9. Festival Street with green stormwater features.

## NEIGHBORHOOD EDGES & TRANSITIONS

Neighborhood edges with landscaping, signage and public art can welcome passage into the neighborhood and to support neighborhood identity. There are also opportunities to create smooth transitions into adjacent areas, so that the neighborhood co-exists better with its surroundings. Chapter 3—Urban Form includes guidance to take advantage of the existing natural and man-made features that exist on the edges of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, such as roads and bluffs, and to enhance them with trees, landscaping and other features such as signage and public art to better define neighborhood edges, create distinct entry points and create transitions to adjacent areas.

## SUBAREA PLAN BENEFITS

The Subarea Plan is intended to create multiple benefits for current and future residents, businesses and visitors in the neighborhood, as well as for the City and the region. Some are described in this section.

## ACCOMMODATING REGIONAL GROWTH

The Subarea Plan promotes job and housing growth that leverages the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's location, assets and infrastructure. In doing so, it supports achievement of regional and City objectives for the Tacoma Mall RGC to accommodate regional growth and to transform into an increasingly vibrant and dense urban center where people live, work and play. The Subarea Plan also helps to preserve regional rural and resource lands such as farms and forests by encouraging growth in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and by promoting the neighborhood's role as a City-designated Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving area.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

The neighborhood's existing character will gradually change into a more attractive urban neighborhood with walking streets, local parks, attractive green infrastructure, increased tree canopy, larger-scale buildings and inviting places. The four neighborhood districts will be characterized by differing jobs, businesses and buildings, while the neighborhood-wide infrastructure and quality of development make an easily identifiable whole. High-capacity transit will serve the neighborhood, provide access to jobs and opportunities across the region.

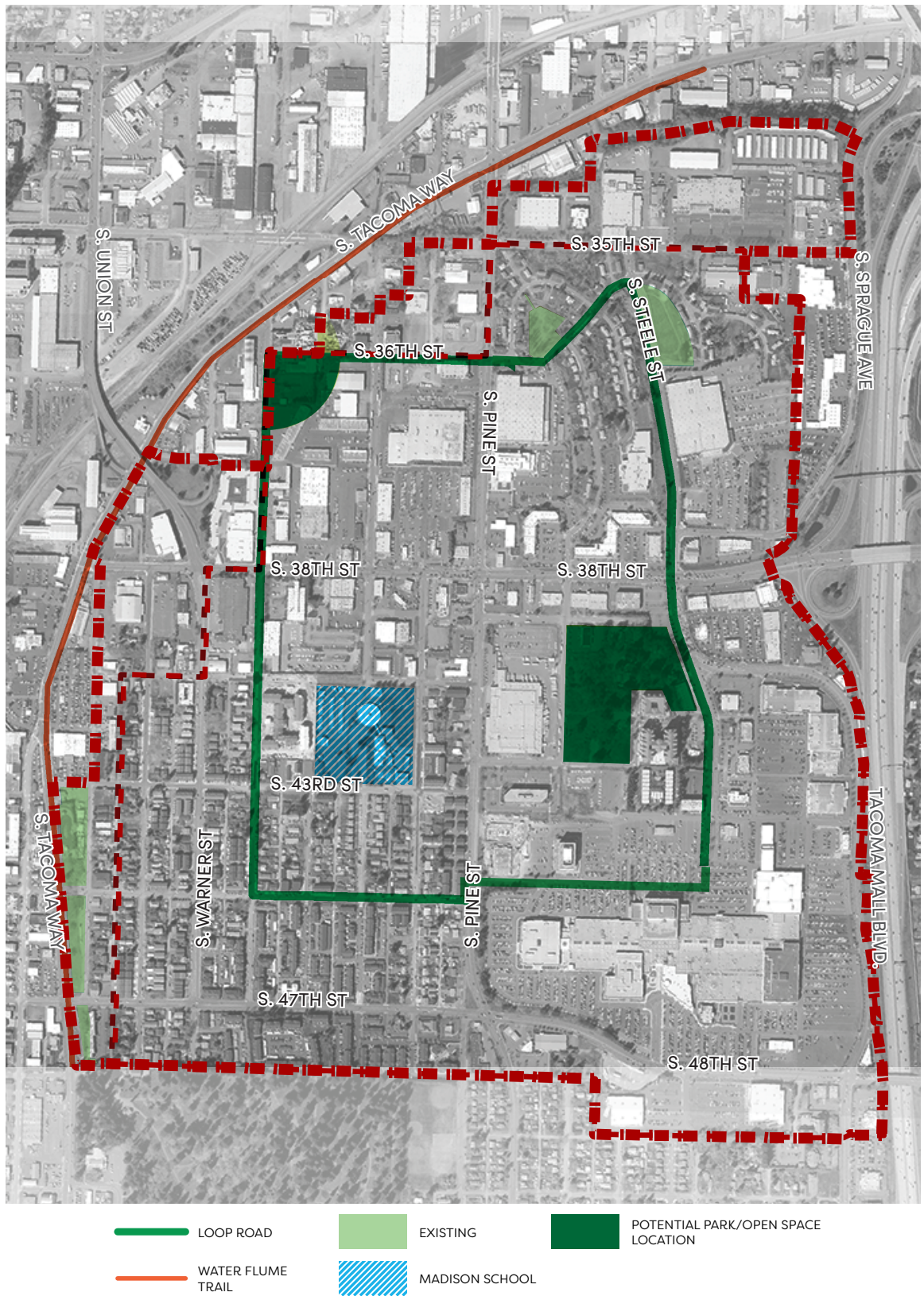


Figure I-7. Internal Loop Road & parks system concept.



Photo I-10. Community food.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE**

The area-wide green stormwater strategy will alleviate current flooding, improve water quality in the neighborhood, the Chambers Flett Creek watershed and the Puget Sound, and protect and recharge the South Tacoma Aquifer. The completed street network will improve mobility and enable mode shift with expansion of a distinctive, high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and local and regional transit network. Analyses show that more-dense mixed-use neighborhoods supported by high transportation connectivity and transit result in reduced greenhouse gases and improved air quality.

## **LIVABILITY AND HEALTH**

A neighborhood built on a balanced foundation of people, prosperity and planet can address root causes of health upstream. With the implementation of this plan, people will be able to live closer to work, shopping, health care, parks, community services, and other destinations and services. The amenities associated with living in a transit-oriented, walkable urban mixed-use neighborhood where one can easily access services that meet the needs of daily living can lead to more healthy and active lifestyles and enable more healthy living choices.

## **ECONOMIC VIBRANCY**

More intensive development in the Mall District and on gateway corridors will create a critical mass of people, employment and retail services, providing a longer-term foundation for addition of cultural, educational, entertainment and health care facilities in the neighborhood. Economic and financial benefits will include new investment in business and housing and increased private development, leading to neighborhood revitalization, joint development opportunities, and potential for increased value for those who own land and businesses in the neighborhood. Financial returns over time can benefit property owners as demand for walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods continues to grow. Such areas are trending toward increases in property values, have higher residential and commercial rents, retail revenues, and for-sale housing values over time than do less walkable places.

## **EQUITY AND ACCESS**

Transportation ranks behind housing as the second highest expense for households. When residents can live

near high-capacity transit and in walkable and bikeable communities, they don't have to drive as much. Typically, some household income that is spent on driving can go toward other household expenses. Studies have shown that living in a transit-oriented community can increase disposable income by reducing household driving costs. The access to many amenities in just a few short blocks can significantly increase a family's disposable income by eliminating the need for a second car.

### **EMPOWERED COMMUNITY**

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood community members have been powerful advocates for improved quality of life, development of local culture and retaining affordability to curb involuntary displacement. They continue to be active participants in public process and transition into a community-led group known as the "Tacoma Mall Neighbors" in their pursuit of a more healthy and safe community with an improved level of neighborhood infrastructure.

### **HOW THIS PLAN IS ORGANIZED**

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This plan is organized into eleven chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the Subarea Plan and an overview of key concepts and implementation strategies. Chapter 2 provides background information about existing conditions in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood that informed Subarea Plan development. Chapters 3 through 10 provide goals and actions for the following topics: urban form, land use, housing, transportation, environment, community vitality, utilities and services and shared prosperity. Chapter 11 describes how the plan will be implemented and includes priority project lists. Goals and actions related to community equity and health are integrated into Subarea Plan chapters.

## GOALS AND ACTIONS TABLE

### CHAPTER 3—URBAN FORM

**Goal UF-1** *Establish a more coherent, cohesive and accessible neighborhood structure by implementing the six foundational elements of neighborhood urban form.*

Action UF-1 Establish four neighborhood character districts based on the quarter-mile-walkable-neighborhood concept and the distinct quadrants defined by S. 38th and S. Pine Streets.

Action UF-2 Foster district identities that respond to the conditions, opportunities and interests of stakeholders in each district and are consistent with the community character envisioned for the entire neighborhood.

Action UF-3 Update City zoning to implement the focused density and transitions concept, including the near-term package of zoning and height changes.

Action UF-4 Create a neighborhood “mixed-use town center” in the Mall District with a potential high-capacity transit station and a full mix of land uses.

Action UF-5 Develop and implement a Master Plan for the entire Loop Road reflecting its urban design, transportation and catalytic objectives.

Action UF-6 Create a complete and connected street network through both catalytic public investments and private actions as development occurs.

Action UF-7 Design and implement the Subarea Plan area-wide stormwater management, parks and open space and tree canopy cover strategies.

Action UF-8 Implement signage, public art, landscaping and other strategies to clarify neighborhood edges, identify entry points, support neighborhood identity and provide transitions.

**Goal UF-2** *Transition to a contemporary, self-sufficient, well-connected neighborhood that has employee, resident and visitor activity to support high-capacity transit.*

Action UF-9 Plan for a high-capacity transit station and transit-oriented development in a central location in the neighborhood that supports both Subarea Plan and transit goals, and implement the plan with transit partners.

### CHAPTER 4—LAND USE

**Goal LU-1** *Ensure that future development at a scale and intensity consistent with growth targets that contributes to coherent and consistent urban form, connectivity and desired land use patterns.*

Action LU-1 Adopt and continue to refine land use and zoning requirements to create transitions in scale among core, transition and residential areas, including the proposed package of near-term code updates.

Action LU-2	Update and continue to refine the list of permitted land uses to provide broad flexibility while ensuring that new land uses are consistent with urban form goals.
Action LU-3	Adopt and continue to refine a Site Approval requirement to provide for new connections via private property when major development occurs.
Action LU-4	Improve the City's capacity to promote design objectives through development of a design review program with specific guidance for this neighborhood to promote attractive, contemporary building forms, design and materials that provide a vibrant urban experience.
<b>Goal LU-2</b>	<i>Ensure that site and building design of new development is consistent with the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood vision and urban form goals, with a particular emphasis on creating an inviting atmosphere for pedestrians.</i>
Action LU-5	Update and continue to refine commercial and residential site design, building design and landscaping standards, including the proposed near-term updates, to ensure that future development contributes to an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment.
Action LU-6	Adopt and continue to refine Pedestrian Street designations to establish the corridors where pedestrian environment is a higher priority.
Action LU-7	Update and continue to refine the City code related to the environment and stormwater to promote innovation and to provide for a safe and healthy environment, including near-term updates.
<b>Goal LU-3</b>	<i>Provide height and development incentives to encourage the provision of public benefits and innovation with development proposals.</i>
Action LU-8	Update and continue to refine height bonus options in the Mall Neighborhood to reflect community priorities.
Action LU-9	Establish and continue to refine an optional Development Regulation Agreement process for larger parcels providing public benefits, with criteria tailored to the Mall Neighborhood.
<b>Goal LU-4</b>	<i>Clarify distinctions and strengthen transitions between the Regional Growth Center and South Tacoma Way Manufacturing and Industrial Center boundaries.</i>
Action LU-10	Revise and periodically reassess the RGC boundary to manage the transition between the mixed-use Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and the industrial character of the Manufacturing and Industrial Center.
<b>Goal LU-5</b>	<i>Establish collaboration and dialogue with neighborhood stakeholders to promote ongoing improvements to the City's development review processes.</i>
Action LU-11	Engage broadly with stakeholders to consider additional steps in the future as the neighborhood grows.

## CHAPTER 5—HOUSING

**Goal H-1** *Maintain and broaden the range of housing types consistent with land use and urban design goals and growth targets.*

Action H-1 Take steps, including zoning and design standard updates and proactive infrastructure development, to promote attractive, healthy and livable housing and mixed-use development consistent with the neighborhood vision.

Action H-2 Use a variety of incentives and regulations to promote incorporation of public benefits including community spaces, green features and other amenities within housing developments.

**Goal H-2** *Maintain a range of affordable housing costs in the neighborhood.*

Action H-3 Collaborate with housing partners to ensure that at least 25% of new housing is affordable to households earning 80% of Pierce County AMI or less and that at least 12.5% is affordable for those earning 50% of AMI or less.

Action H-4 Provide development incentives, including optional height bonuses, in exchange for incorporating affordable housing.

Action H-5 Seek input to ensure that development standards make it simple and cost-effective to build attractive, contemporary housing units that are also affordably priced.

Action H-6 Work with housing providers and partners to build and maintain very-low-income and special needs housing.

Action H-7 Monitor neighborhood-wide housing costs and take action to ensure that at least 50% of housing units remain affordable to households earning 80% or less of Pierce County AMI and 25% are affordable for those earning 50% of AMI or less.

Action H-8 Work with housing partners to provide financial assistance to low- and very-low-income households who are struggling to stay in their homes.

Action H-9 Conduct a focused study of available and effective options to prevent involuntary displacement of residents along with maintaining housing affordability and choice.

Action H-10 Initiate citywide actions to provide for a range of housing costs in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and citywide, including updates to affordable housing incentives and requirements and increased and new funding and financing tools.

Action H-11 Establish and continue to refine a mandatory inclusionary zoning requirement in the residential core area of the Madison District.

## CHAPTER 6—TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

**Goal T-1** *Build a transportation network that supports and reinforces the land use, urban design, economic development, environmental, livability and public health goals of the Subarea Plan.*

Action T-1 Accommodate future growth through the development of a multimodal neighborhood transportation network designed to reduce reliance on SOVs.

Action T-2 Design the transportation system to balance livability with retail and employment objectives by maintaining acceptable congestion levels while enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle environment.

Action T-3 Build the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood transportation network using a “layered network” that focuses on how the subarea transportation network can function as a system to meet the needs of all users.

Action T-4 Continue to utilize citywide SEPA review thresholds to trigger a transportation impacts assessment and conditions when warranted, at least until such time as an alternative process is in place to address the transportation impacts of development.

**Goal T-2** *Build a complete and connected transportation network for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.*

Action T-5 Design public and private streets consistent with the Subarea Plan Complete Streets design guidelines and City standards.

Action T-6 Pursue multiple approaches to extend and enhance the existing grid network, including establishing new connections via private property and reopening gated, vacated streets to public travel.

Action T-7 Maintain the existing street grid and seek opportunities to extend the grid on both sides of S. 38th Street to create similarly scaled blocks.

Action T-8 Street and alley vacations will be allowed only when they foster an attractive pedestrian environment and maintain transportation connectivity in the neighborhood and immediate area.

Action T-9 Adopt and implement a permitting process to analyze opportunities to extend and enhance the existing grid network consistent with Subarea Plan connectivity principles and new connection tier priorities.

**Goal T-3** *Promote transportation mode shift by enhancing transit, bicycle and pedestrian options, implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and implementing access management measures.*

Action T-10	Coordinate with Sound Transit to add Tacoma Mall transit center as a stop on the express bus service from Lakewood to Seattle.
Action T-11	Enhance transit service and attractiveness by improving multi-modal station access, improving station amenities and aesthetics, and ensuring transit effectively links key City and regional destinations.
Action T-12	Relocate the existing Tacoma Mall Transit Station to a central location within the Subarea in order to improve access, increase ridership and spur transit-oriented development.
Action T-13	Advocate for the extension of regional light rail service to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood RGC and participate actively in the ST3 LINK Extension study.
Action T-14	Explore feasibility of a Sounder station along the existing rail corridor adjacent to the Northwest District.
Action T-15	Design and construct the Subarea Plan bike and pedestrian network, including the Loop Road through proactive City investment and in association with street improvements when development occurs.
Action T-16	Develop a parking demand strategy to address neighborhood access and urban form goals as growth occurs.
Action T-17	Employ transportation demand management (TDM) measures to increase non-single-occupancy vehicle trips, including a strengthened Commute Trip Reduction Program and enactment of a parking management strategy.
Action T-18	Implement access management principles along major arterials including S. 38th Street, to consolidate access points onto the arterial.
<b>Goal T-4</b>	<i>Make fiscally responsible, cost-effective investments that serve multiple objectives, improve safety, protect the environment, and make the system more equitable.</i>
Action T-19	Strive to reduce crashes and collisions by working toward a “target zero” of deaths and injuries using education, enforcement, and engineering to set priorities to address high-crash locations.
Action T-20	Ensure that transportation investments support equitable modes of transportation and “catch-up” investment for this traditionally underserved neighborhood.
Action T-21	Consider CPTED principles, aesthetics, safety and walkability in designing and locating transportation facilities.
Action T-22	Prioritize system preservation, maintenance, and repair to protect existing and future transportation investments.
Action T-23	Utilize best management practices for stormwater and prioritize green stormwater infrastructure techniques, to ensure runoff does not cause impacts to receiving waters.

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**Goal T-5** *Proactively and collaboratively implement the Subarea Plan transportation actions concurrent with growth.*

Action T-24	Integrate the Subarea Plan projects and ranking criteria into the City's Transportation Master Plan.
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Action T-25	Partner on funding and implementation with WSDOT, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, the Department of Ecology, Metro Parks Tacoma and private parties.
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Action T-26	Coordinate with WSDOT to study, plan, add the project to the WSDOT STIP, fund and construct the I-5 Direct Access Ramp Project.
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Action T-27	Actively coordinate with transit providers and other partners on transit actions including bringing High-Capacity Transit service to the Subarea and constructing a new multimodal transit station.
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Action T-28	Construct the transportation projects based on the near, mid, and long-term prioritization recommendations of this plan, with due consideration to opportunities to complete projects ahead of schedule.
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Action T-29	Utilize the full range of existing funding sources to implement the projects identified in this plan.
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Action T-30	Assess and if appropriate enact new funding sources and mechanisms (i.e., an impact fee program, system completeness fee and a City catalytic fund) to implement the Subarea Plan projects.
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Action T-31	Monitor transportation performance measures as growth occurs and take corrective action if the planned improvements are not adequate to achieve the Plan objectives.
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## CHAPTER 7— ENVIRONMENT

**Goal E-1** *Enhance water quality and flow control conditions through implementation of an area-wide stormwater strategy with both centralized and dispersed BMPs that infiltrate runoff, provide flood storage, and reduce effective impervious surface coverage.*

Action E-1	Implement the area-wide stormwater management strategy through development review and public projects, and disseminate information broadly.
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Action E-2	Integrate stormwater infiltration and emergency overflow flood storage and conveyance into new parks and open spaces, and/or rights-of-way.
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Action E-3	Encourage the use of the City of Tacoma Payment In-Lieu-of Construction Program as a flow control alternative to site-by-site facilities for new development and redevelopment of neighborhood properties.
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Action E-4	Prioritize the construction of green stormwater infrastructure in the Madison District, as well as in other areas where soil infiltration conditions are appropriate.
Action E-5	Preserve existing mature trees and green spaces in association with City actions when feasible, and encourage retention of mature trees when properties are developed.
Action E-6	Encourage property owners to retrofit their properties with green stormwater infrastructure and/or low-impact development best management practices.
<b>Goal E-2</b>	<i>Ensure that infiltrated stormwater runoff recharges clean water to the South Tacoma aquifer, consistent with existing City and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department guidance.</i>
Action E-7	Collaborate with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to revise the Tacoma Municipal Code and associated guidance documents to reflect a shared understanding of the circumstances and requirements for infiltration in the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.
Action E-8	Ensure that areas of known soil and/or groundwater contamination are considered when reviewing proposals for development or redevelopment.
<b>Goal E-3</b>	<i>Achieve 25% tree canopy coverage in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea by 2040.</i>
Action E-9	Target 25% tree canopy coverage in the Madison District and 20% coverage in other Districts by 2040.
Action E-10	Work with property owners such as WSDOT to increase tree cover on the neighborhood perimeter, focusing on opportunities to provide large swaths of green, mitigate freeway noise and air pollution, and make the neighborhood attractive and inviting.
Action E-11	To increase the identity, canopy cover and green infrastructure value of the Loop Road linear parkway consider planting the largest street trees feasible and appropriate to the design.
Action E-12	Coordinate with parks and open space services providers to strive to meet tree canopy targets within their facilities.
Action E-13	Seek ways to promote Garry Oaks as a signature native tree species.
Action E-14	Encourage private property owners to plant trees, particularly when there are opportunities to beautify and promote pedestrian connections through large paved areas.

<b>Goal E-4</b>	<i>Promote regional conservation of farms and forests and protect the health of the Puget Sound by fulfilling the Regional Growth Center role of accommodating a substantial share of growth and by creating incentives for regional conservation through the TDR bonus system.</i>
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Action E-15	Promote the use of TDRs in exchange for height bonuses within the RGC by marketing this option to the development community, streamlining its use and taking steps to catalyze growth in the RGC.
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## CHAPTER 8—COMMUNITY VITALITY

<b>Goal CV-1</b>	<i>Foster an identity for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood that instills pride in a strong community of diverse residents and businesses.</i>
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Action CV-1	Work with local residents and businesses to identify the name for the neighborhood that best captures the community's identity and aspirations for the future.
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Action CV-2	Develop distinctive and attractive signage and wayfinding for the neighborhood.
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Action CV-3	Rebrand the neighborhood as a “green neighborhood,” celebrating planned improvements in green stormwater infrastructure, parks and tree cover.
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<b>Goal CV-2</b>	<i>Increase the presence of arts and cultural activities, engage community members from diverse backgrounds, build community relationships and foster a positive neighborhood identity.</i>
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Action CV-4	Develop a public art strategy for this neighborhood that identifies resources, partnerships and opportunities to foster and support cultural expression, awareness of neighborhood history and a sense of place and local identity.
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Action CV-5	Ensure that the City's land use regulations, and community and economic development programs, support local fabrication and production of arts.
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Action CV-6	Partner with public and private landowners to install public artworks in visible locations and neighborhood gateways that reflect and strengthen community identity.
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Action CV-7	Promote events like farmers markets, live music, festivals, food truck events, and neighborhood parties.
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<b>Goal CV-3</b>	<i>Bring more services and amenities to the neighborhood to provide safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life.</i>
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Action CV-8	Recruit, promote or construct a variety of services and amenities that address the evolving needs and desires of residents.
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Action CV-9	Work with health services providers to provide better accessible medical services in the neighborhood, including improving financial and cultural access for local residents.
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Action CV-10	Work with the Tacoma School District, Tacoma Public Library and other service providers to evaluate the potential of opening a new school, library or other community resource in the neighborhood to serve the growing population.
Action CV-11	Engage the Tacoma School District to develop scenarios for future uses for the Madison School site that would continue the site's legacy as a community hub and open space.
<b>Goal CV-4</b>	<i>Empower all community members to participate in neighborhood planning and change, and cultivate inclusive leadership and decision-making that embrace and celebrate the neighborhood's diverse community.</i>
Action CV-12	Support formation of a Subarea Plan implementation steering committee to advocate for actions needed to achieve the neighborhood vision.
Action CV-13	Use a combination of engagement methods reflecting the diversity of the community to invite all local populations to participate in planning and implementation activities.
Action CV-14	Monitor demographic characteristics and community participation over time and take steps to support and celebrate the neighborhood's ethnic, economic and age diversity.
Action CV-15	Work with partners to improve equity and health outcomes by reducing social and economic barriers such as poverty, lack of professional skills and cultural segregation.
Action CV-16	Support existing community organizing efforts, as well as potential new ones such as formation of a Community Development Corporation or Neighborhood Business District.
<b>Goal CV-5</b>	<i>Improve safety for neighborhood residents, employees and visitors at all times of the day.</i>
Action CV-17	Monitor trends in fire and emergency medical services calls and consider this information when planning for future service improvements.
Action CV-18	Work with agencies and stakeholders to improve community safety and disaster readiness and to prevent crime.
Action CV-19	Encourage development on vacant and underutilized lands to catalyze positive change.
Action CV-20	Integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the design of streets, parks and buildings, as appropriate to a dense urban district.
Action CV-21	Work with stakeholders to identify ways to improve safety and perceptions of safety, particularly along the western edge of the Madison District and the northern boundary of the Tacoma Cemetery.

<b>Goal CV-6</b>	<i>Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma School District, civic partners and the community to plan and implement the community's parks and open spaces vision in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.</i>
Action CV-22	Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma and others to consider new level of service standards for parks and open space in Tacoma's densest urban centers.
Action CV-23	Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma and other parks partners to implement parks planning principles for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.
Action CV-24	Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma to integrate the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood parks and open space strategies into long-range plans, and current and upcoming capital and programmatic priorities.
Action CV-25	Work with private property owners and developers to provide open space in various forms such as public plazas and private recreational spaces. Consider revisions to development standards and explore incentives as part of this work.
Action CV-26	Improve access to nearby parks and recreational assets including South Park, Wapato Hills Park, the Water Flume Trail and the Tacoma Cemetery through pedestrian improvements, wayfinding and other steps.
Action CV-27	Explore acquisition of any surplus public properties as well as further joint use of publicly owned facilities as recreational amenities, locations for public art or wayfinding, tree planting and passive open spaces.
Action CV-28	Collaborate with stakeholders to regularly evaluate and develop plans to meet recreational, cultural and educational programming needs for people of all ages.
<b>CHAPTER 9—SHARED PROSPERITY</b>	
<b>Goal SP-1</b>	<i>Support growth of businesses and jobs in a manner that supports the vision for the neighborhood and character of the 4 neighborhood districts.</i>
Action SP-1	Maintain a dialogue with existing businesses to seek ways to support business retention and expansion.
Action SP-2	Promote businesses and employment in locations that support character district cohesion.
Action SP-3	Attract new businesses to the Mall District to support creation of a “mixed-use town center” with a mix of regional and local serving retail, entertainment, hotel, education, health care, and commercial and institutional uses.
Action SP-4	Work with property owners to understand how existing covenants or other agreements might restrict redevelopment and infill.

Action SP-5	Collaborate between property owners, businesses, the city and others to beautify and activate streets and sidewalks.
Action SP-6	Work with the business community to explore organizing a business improvement district to address shared goals like marketing, maintenance and business recruitment.
Action SP-7	Use existing city programs to promote investment and growth such as the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program, Tacoma Job Creation Tax Credit, Façade Improvement Program and Business Loan Program.
Action SP-8	Establish standards for contemporary signage to improve the visibility and image of the neighborhood.
<b>Goal SP-2</b>	<i>Create a more diverse employment base in the neighborhood to serve both regional markets and neighborhood needs, and to increase the earning capacity of neighborhood residents.</i>
Action SP-9	Broaden the range of employment types through recruitment of under-represented institutions and businesses such as medical, office, educational and fabrication facilities.
Action SP-10	Promote job training that increases people's ability to get living-wage jobs with businesses that support and invest in their employees through good benefits and pay.
<b>Goal SP-3</b>	<i>Build critical mass by leveraging partnerships and investments to enable catalytic developments to take place.</i>
Action SP-11	Pursue a range of options to highlight the potential, focus business recruitment efforts and prioritize investments that increase access and visibility of catalyst sites, with due consideration of the key opportunities described in this chapter for each site.
Action SP-12	Develop new financing mechanisms that equitably distribute the cost of streetscape and infrastructure improvements such as impact fees, fee in lieu and latecomer fees.
<b>Goal SP-4</b>	<i>Create a walkable, urban "mixed-use town center" in the Mall District.</i>
Action SP-13	Partner with the Simon Properties Group, large land owners, public agencies and other partners to promote and coordinate actions to achieve the Mixed-Use Town Center goal.
Action SP-14	Identify a leader within the City of Tacoma to lead Mall revitalization, redevelopment and coordination with partners over a period of several years.
Action SP-15	Develop a strategy for recruiting public investment and specific business types that can strengthen and diversify District employment, retail and services in support of daily living.

Action SP-16	Recruit key land uses and businesses to support transit-oriented development in the future High-Capacity transit station area.
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## CHAPTER 10—UTILITIES & SERVICES

**Goal US-1** *Ensure availability of utilities at appropriate levels of service to support the Neighborhood's existing and planned development.*

Action US-1	Review the Tacoma Municipal Code and procedural guidance to ensure that utilities and utility service plans be adequate to support planned growth and zoning capacity.
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**Goal US-2** *Minimize impacts on adjacent properties and open spaces associated with the siting, development and operation of utility services and facilities.*

Action US-2	Require power and communications distribution lines to be placed underground whenever feasible.
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Action US-3	Revise standard plans to show colocation of facilities such as towers, poles, antennae, substation sites, trenches and easements, and rights-of-way in accordance with prudent utility practices.
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Action US-4	Recognize opportunities for joint use of utility corridors and facilities as pedestrian facilities, open spaces and aesthetic amenities.
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Action US-5	Revise development regulations to require two-family, three-family and townhouse developments to provide a consolidated location for storage of solid waste containers, direct street access pickup, and if needed space for a shared waste collection service.
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Action US-6	Revise the Tacoma Municipal Code to require that utility service for two-family, three-family and townhouse development be designed to minimize visual impact.
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**Goal US-3** *Coordinate with public service providers to ensure that they meet performance standards to support a complete neighborhood.*

Action US-7	Work with public service providers to monitor the level of public services and address any shortfalls.
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Action US-8	Coordinate with public service providers to ensure that new facilities take advantage of opportunities to support the goals of the Subarea Plan.
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Action US-9	When major new public projects are planned for the neighborhood, consider opportunities for public services providers to co-locate facilities.
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**Goal US-4** *Maximize the benefits derived from publicly owned sites and facilities by promoting their placemaking potential.*

Action US-9	Assess the potential for joint use, beautification, public art, or eventual redevelopment of public sites within the neighborhood while ensuring that the public utility and service functions are fully met.
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## CHAPTER 11—IMPLEMENTATION

**Goal IMPL-1**     *Develop a sustainable funding strategy that draws from multiple sources for various aspects of the plan in support of achieving the neighborhood vision.*

Action IMPL-1     Analyze potential new funding approaches, such as impact fees, pursuant to increasing resources dedicated to Subarea Plan actions.

Action IMPL-2     Develop a funding source for City funding for construction of new connections under the Site Approval Requirement.

**Goal IMPL-2**     *Track and manage performance measures to ensure the plan is relevant in achieving the Neighborhood vision.*

Action IMPL-3     Identify departmental roles, responsibilities, and data tracking for the performance measures identified in this Plan.

Action IMPL-4     Prepare and present a biennial report, in collaboration with the community, to the City Council in time for making budgetary decisions.

Action IMPL-5     Ensure that planned transportation improvements, creation of new funding approaches, and other implementation actions are completed concurrent with the pace of growth in the neighborhood.



# CONTEXT

## CHAPTER 2



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 2



# CONTEXT

## CONTENTS

- Introduction
- History of Urban Development
- Assets & Challenges
- Location & Topography
- Districts
- Water Quality
- Plans & Policies
- References

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes past and current conditions in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Current conditions are the starting point that this plan builds on, including existing neighborhood assets that can be preserved and strengthened, and challenges that can be addressed to improve the neighborhood's function as a green urban center and an attractive place to live, work and play. This chapter discusses the history of the neighborhood and how this influenced development patterns, current neighborhood assets and challenges, urban form, districts and water quality conditions; and the state, regional and local plans and policies that provide guidance for this Subarea Plan.

## HISTORY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood was developed with urban land use patterns between the late 1800s and the present. It lies in the traditional territory of the Steilacoom and Puyallup Tribes, though no specific native places have been identified within the neighborhood. Early survey records indicate that the area was originally swamp and prairie land. Land patent records indicate that Euro-American settlers moved into the area in the late 1800s (ESA, 2016). In the 1870s, a railroad corridor was built along the western edge of the neighborhood in the Nalley Valley. Building construction followed the corridor, and to this day it remains a hub for services related to transportation and industry. From the late 1800s to mid-1900s, single-family homes and traditional street grids were developed in parts of the neighborhood, including the Madison District (City of Tacoma, 2016).

The neighborhood experienced a construction boom following the end of World War II (ESA, 2016). This led to a wider range of land uses in the neighborhood, including a more diverse mix of housing types and new shopping options and employment centers such as that were commercial and industrial uses (CAI, 2016). Building design and

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Acres: 601

Population: 4,650

Jobs: 9,749

Population Change 2000-10:  
24.5%

Jobs Change 2000-10: -7.2%

Population Change 2010-15:  
24.3%

Jobs Change 2010-15: 36%

Socioeconomic Characteristics  
Compared with City as a Whole

- More 0-5 year olds
- More 20-29 year olds
- Lower education levels
- Lower incomes
- Higher poverty rates
- Same percentage who are nonwhite
- Twice as many of Hispanic origin
- Slightly more who are African American or who identify with two or more races
- Half as many who are Asian alone

Housing Characteristics

- Majority of housing is multifamily
- High rental rates, low homeownership rates
- Lower housing costs compared with City and Pierce County

Employment Characteristics

- Retail trade is dominant employment sector
- Few residents employed in study area

Public Health Characteristics  
Compared with City as a Whole

- Lower obesity rates\*
- Higher rates of diabetes and asthma\*
- Shorter life expectancy by eight years

Sources: City of Tacoma, 2016; PSRC, 2014; CAI, 2016; TPC HD, 2016; 3 Square Blocks, 2016.

\* Note: Asterisks indicate data for zip code 98409, which encompasses the greater Tacoma Mall area.

street design in this period reflected the increasing convenience of car travel and growing suburbanization during midcentury and were auto-oriented.

The largest single new development during this period was the Tacoma Mall, built in 1965. The mall was designed by John Graham, Jr., who received international recognition for his large-scale shopping complexes and is also known for designing the Seattle Space Needle (ESA, 2016). The mall was a catalyst project that transformed the neighborhood into a regional destination and sparked additional retail and office development, including large shopping centers anchored by big-box retailers. Many buildings in the neighborhood are from this period (CAI, 2016).



Figure C-1. Tacoma Mall rendering of interior (1963-1964).  
Architecture Collection, Img. PH Coll 339.A94a, University of Washington  
Libraries, Seattle.

Newer construction has occurred as well. For instance, a significant amount of housing development has occurred in the neighborhood since 2000. Most construction during this time was for multifamily and single-family attached housing such as apartments, duplexes, triplexes and townhomes along with commercial construction (CAI, 2016). During this period, much of the older single-family and low-scale attached housing was replaced by denser housing patterns and new commercial businesses. As the neighborhood's mix of housing types has changed over time, it has maintained a reputation for affordable housing costs that has attracted many current residents to the area.

Today, the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is home to a diverse community of residents and businesses. The neighborhood plays a regional role as a retail, employment, government and services destination. The Tacoma Mall and other major retail destinations attract people from throughout the

South Puget Sound region. Pierce County government's primary location is within the neighborhood. Over 8,000 people work in the neighborhood in a range of retail, office, commercial, medical, government and industrial jobs. The neighborhood's central location within Tacoma, proximity to Interstate 5 and commuter and freight rail, and adjacency with the South Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial District provide strong bases for growth.

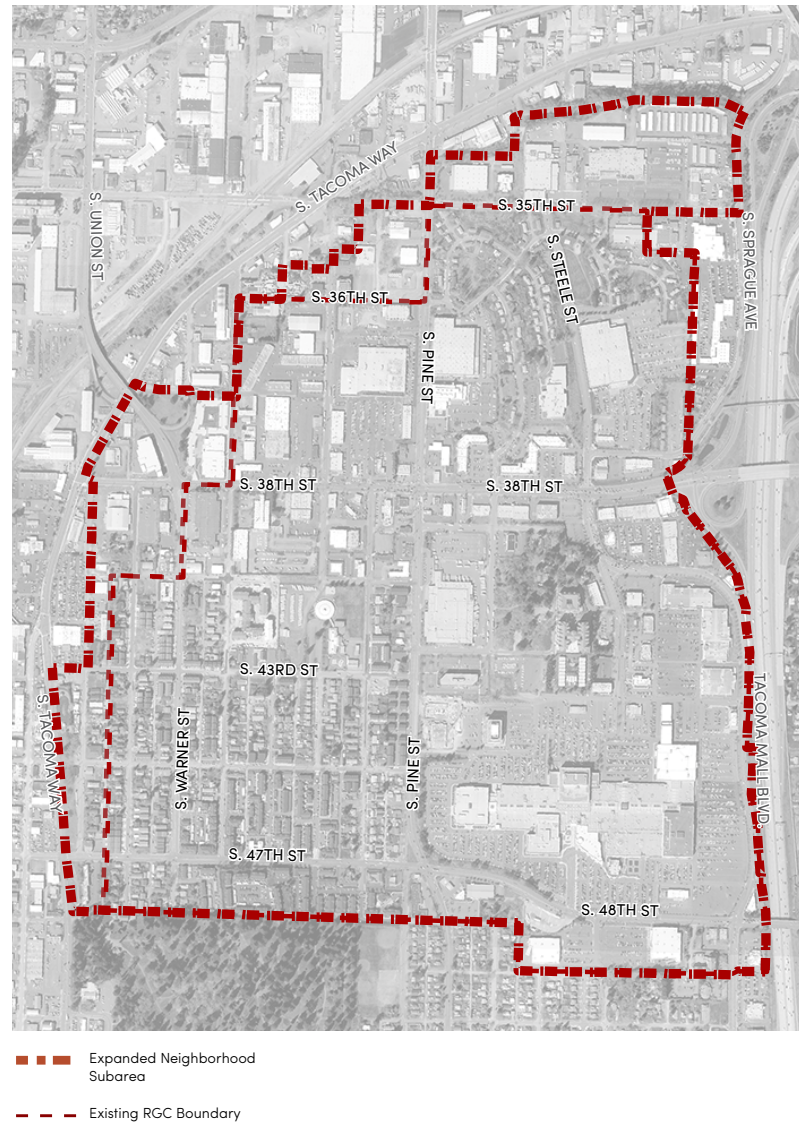


Figure C-2. Subarea.

This Plan identifies strategic actions that build on these assets to catalyze a higher intensity of job and housing growth. The neighborhood is a designated growth center for the City of Tacoma and for the central Puget Sound region. It is intended to be a primary location for future housing and job growth, where an increasingly compact urban form, both walkable and pedestrian-friendly, can be developed.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

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In addition to providing valuable information about current conditions in the neighborhood, public input on priorities for strengthening the neighborhood informed the vision, guiding principles, goals and actions in this plan.

## **ASSETS & CHALLENGES**

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Certain themes emerged during the planning process with regard to existing neighborhood conditions. Through public engagement and technical analysis, it became clear that the neighborhood has assets that can be built upon, as well as challenges to address or overcome in order to improve quality of life, encourage job growth and attract investment. The identified neighborhood assets and challenges are summarized below. They informed the vision, guiding principles, and goals and actions of the Subarea Plan.

The public engagement activities conducted during the planning process are described in Chapter 1—Introduction. Findings from the technical analysis are incorporated throughout the Subarea Plan chapters and are also recorded in greater detail in the Subarea Plan EIS.

### **ASSETS**

- role as a regional retail destination for the South Sound
- diversity of neighborhood residents, including socioeconomic and cultural diversity
- a community of business and property owners with substantial and longstanding investment in the neighborhood
- affordable housing supply
- affordable space for business creation and expansion
- central and highly visible location
- proximity to the South Tacoma Business District and the Sounder station
- established residential areas to the east and south
- transportation accessible to City and regional destinations
- variety of retail and restaurant options
- mix of employers including retail, office, industrial and public sectors
- Tacoma Mall, a regional retail destination and major employer
- Pierce County Annex, a regional public services destination and major employer
- developer interest in multifamily development as demonstrated by ongoing construction starts
- public parks and open spaces including
  - Lincoln Heights Park
  - 40th Street Community Garden
- northern portion of South Park and access to Water Flume Line Trail

- soil and groundwater conditions very conducive to rainwater infiltration, thus enabling green stormwater infrastructure approaches
- residential neighborhoods in the Madison District and Lincoln Heights District
- Madison School, a former neighborhood elementary that now provides special educational programming
- the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's role as a transit hub for Pierce Transit and a potential future station area for Sound Transit bus and/or light rail
- the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's designation as a City and regional growth center
- proximity to the South Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial Center, which is planned for significant future employment growth
- two hills with views of the Cascades and Mount Rainier, one just north of the Mall and the other in the Lincoln Heights District
- stakeholders' knowledge of history of the area
- relationships formed during the subarea planning process



Photo C-1. Lincoln Heights Neighborhood.

## CHALLENGES

- no cohesive brand or positive identity for the neighborhood
- history of haphazard growth patterns and a resulting urban form that lacks cohesiveness
- natural and built features (the interstate and topography) create barriers to other neighborhoods
- development regulations do not preserve established residential areas or direct highest intensity growth to specific locations
- dated and vacant buildings

- stagnant commercial property lease rates in some areas
- public safety challenges related to crime and traffic
- incomplete street network and sidewalk system
- traffic, including congestion and cut-through traffic on residential streets
- lack of adequate parking
- poor condition of streets
- lack of stormwater facilities as well as related challenges such as runoff, flooding and watershed pollution
- littering and illegal dumping
- high prevalence of public health risk factors
- few residents employed in the neighborhood
- residents have lower incomes and lower education levels compared with other areas of the City
- lack of organized community groups and neighborhood representation
- loss of former neighborhood amenities such as the Boys and Girls Club and use of the Madison School site as an elementary school
- not enough amenities and services such as
  - safe spaces for kids to play
  - pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
  - a neighborhood school
  - affordable food sources such as a grocery store or food bank
  - professional development resources
  - health and social services
  - recreational programming for all ages
  - trees and green spaces
  - public art and local cultural activities



Photo C-2. View across Interstate 5.

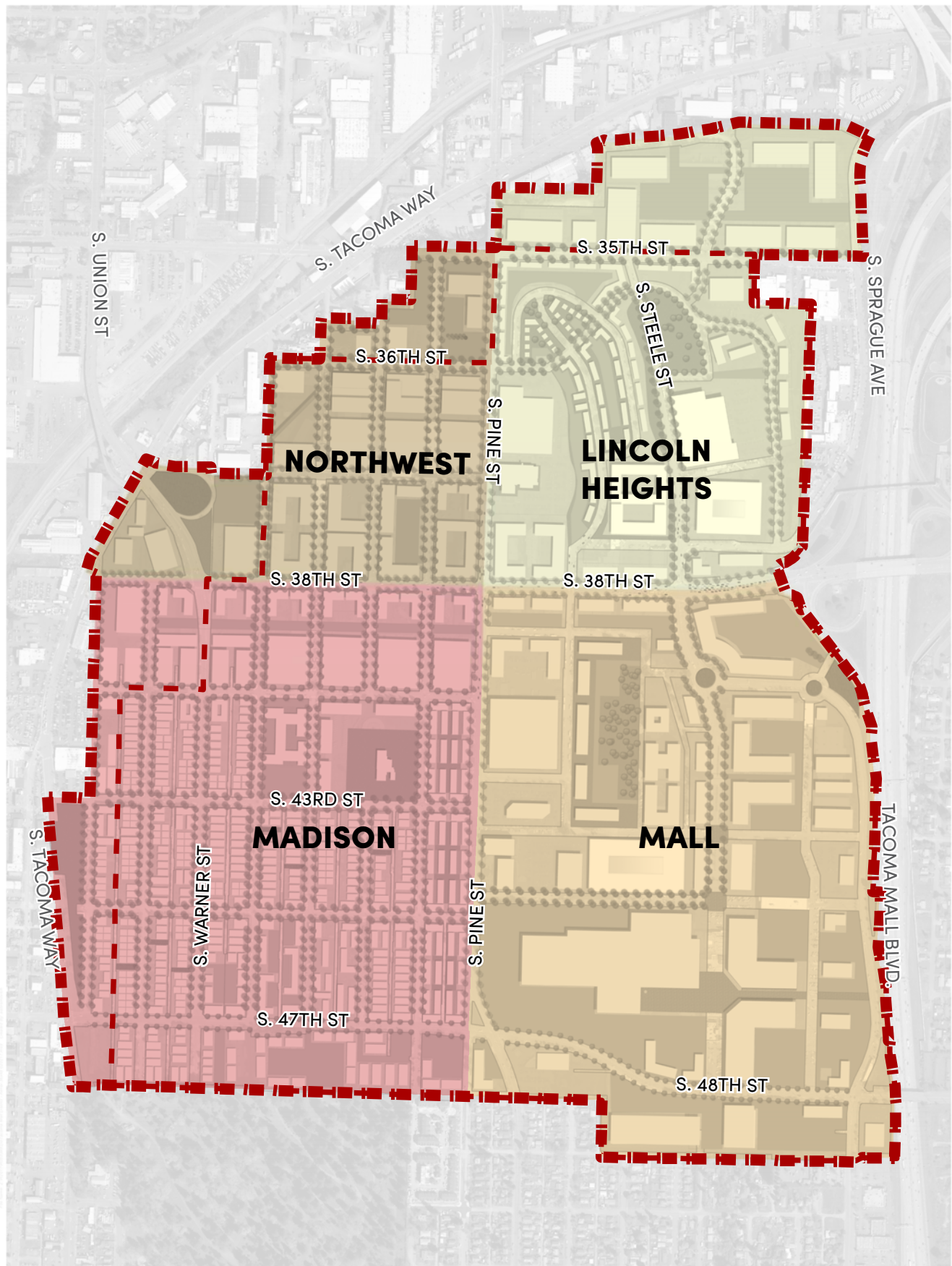


Figure C-3. Proposed Subarea Plan character districts.

## LOCATION & TOPOGRAPHY

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The neighborhood is geographical self-contained owing to natural and built edge conditions that include a bluff along its western and northern edges, I-5 along its eastern edge, and a large cemetery and a steep hill along the southern edge. As a result, the neighborhood does not have strong relationships with surrounding areas.



Photo C-3. South Pine Street and the Nalley Valley.

The study area's topography is relatively flat in most places with a gradual slope downward and west into the Nalley Valley. Some low bluffs run along the edge of the Nalley Valley. The highest point is the hill north of the mall, which is about 400 feet above sea level. Another, smaller hill is within the Lincoln Heights District (USGS, 2016).

## DISTRICTS

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The Subarea Plan encompasses areas with significant differences in land uses, development and street patterns. S. Pine St and S. 38th St are physical barriers dividing the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood into four districts as shown in Figure C-2. Along the northern and western boundaries, land uses and development patterns transition between urban commercial/mixed-use and industrial.

These patterns characterize the district as having four quadrants sectioned by S. Pine and S. 38th Streets. Though of different sizes and shapes, each district is roughly equivalent to a five-minute-walk neighborhood, where a person can walk from the center of the neighborhood to its edge in about five minutes. The defining features and distinct character of each district are summarized in Table C-1.

**Table C-1. District Character**

DISTRICT	LAND USE	STREETS	SIZE & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT
Madison	Primarily single-family and low-rise multifamily uses, with commercial and light industrial uses in the north and west	Partially complete traditional neighborhood street grid with alleys	Primarily small parcel sizes, narrow blocks, small-scale buildings
Northwest	Commercial, industrial and public uses	Limited street network, topography restricts access	Large parcel and block sizes with dispersed large-scale development
Lincoln Heights	Single-family, low-rise multifamily, commercial, industrial and public uses	Discontinuous and curvilinear streets	Small-scale urban pattern in residential neighborhood, larger-scale commercial and industrial urban pattern in other areas
Mall	Retail uses anchored by regional mall, with a mix of residential, office and public uses	Limited street network, informal vehicle and pedestrian access in parking lots	Large parcel sizes, big box retail, large scale parking areas with few connections, hill with vacant land, disparate scales in areas with mixed uses



Photo C-4. South 38th Street.

## WATER QUALITY

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is located within two of the City's nine watershed basins, Thea Foss basin and Flett Creek basin (Figure C-3).

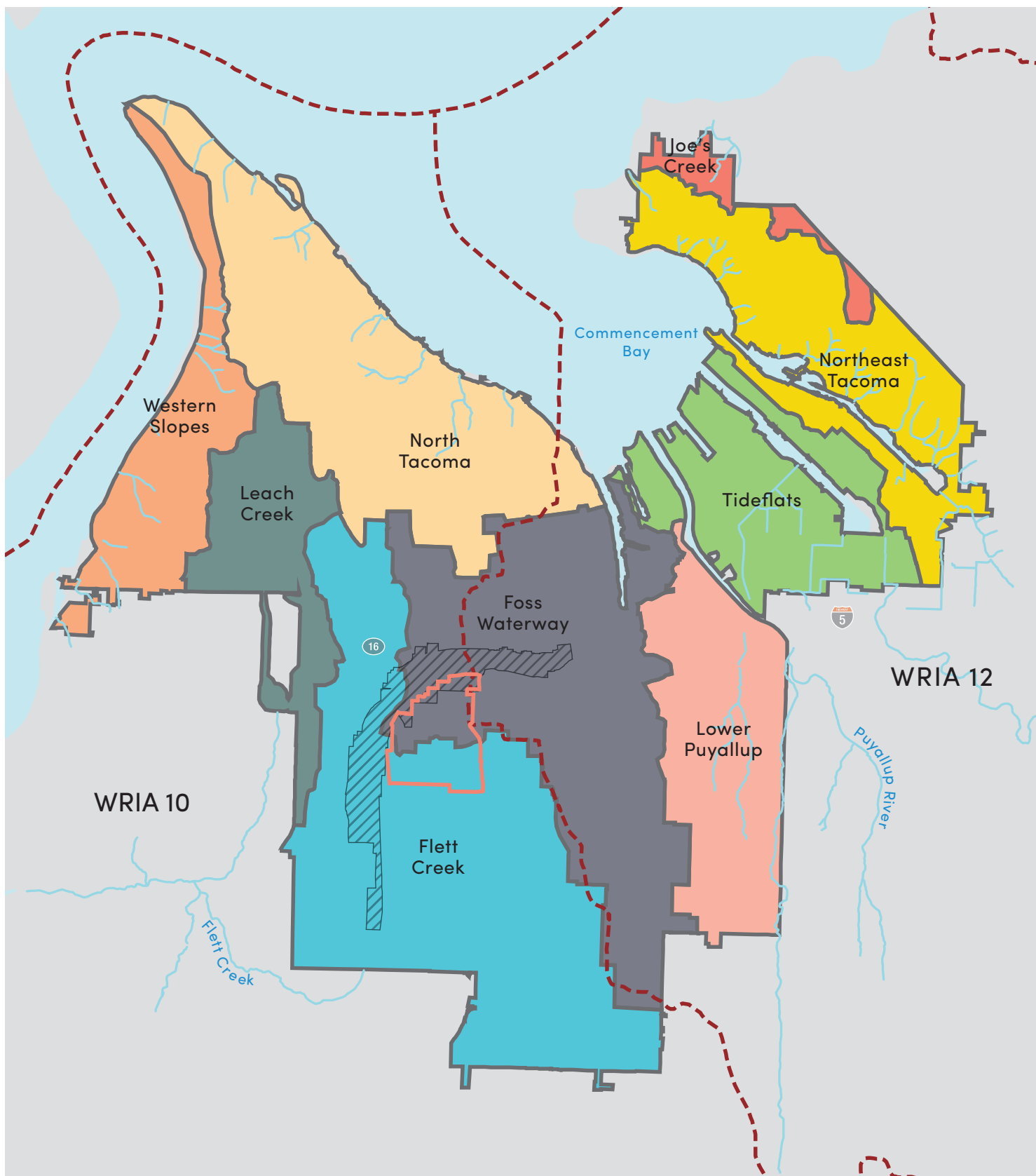


Figure C-4. Tacoma stormwater management watersheds.  
Thea Foss Waterway and Flett Creek Basin.

The northern portion of the neighborhood falls within the Thea Foss basin, which discharges stormwater north and east to the Thea Foss Waterway. The southern portion of the neighborhood falls within the Flett Creek basin, which discharges stormwater south toward Flett Creek before it drains to Chambers Creek and out to Chambers Bay. Water quality issues in the basins include runoff from urban development, historic loss of wetlands, reduction of groundwater recharge, and alterations to stream channels and riparian forest (ESA, 2016).

The entire neighborhood is located within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection Area. This groundwater-protection area was created by the City to protect the quality of water within the South Tacoma aquifer, an important source of drinking water for Tacomans.

Stormwater runoff has impacts on the water quality of the basins and aquifer. The quantity and quality of stormwater runoff relies on land use, traffic, and in particular the percentage of impervious surfaces, which water cannot penetrate. High proportions of impervious surfaces lead to more stormwater runoff and higher stormwater peak flows. Also, impervious surfaces such as streets, parking lots and other transportation structures collect pollutants like heavy metals, grease and oils, and when it rains these pollutants become part of stormwater runoff.

Impervious surfaces cover more than 70% of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Runoff is conveyed out of the neighborhood after draining to catch basins and flowing through pipe infrastructure. The high level of imperviousness and lack of stormwater water-quality treatment indicate that the neighborhood is likely a source of stormwater-borne contaminants such as pathogens, nutrients, metals and organics, to downstream-receiving waters (ESA, 2016).

The presence of trees also has an impact on stormwater conditions. Trees can reduce stormwater runoff by capturing and storing rainfall in their root zones and canopy, thus slowing runoff and providing filtration that improves water quality. Tree coverage is limited in the neighborhood with less than 10% tree cover currently (ESA, 2016).

## **PLANS & POLICIES**

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The Subarea Plan exists under the umbrella of federal, state, regional and City plans, policies and regulations. These include the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Vision 2040, Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies, City's

## GROWTH TARGETS FOR THE TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD

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Consistent with state law and regional planning policies, the City has adopted targets for new employment and population growth through 2040.

The existing growth targets for the current Tacoma Mall RGC are 7,555 new jobs and 8,079 additional people by 2040.

This Subarea Plan retains those same growth targets, while increasing them to account for the 90-acre expansion area proposed for incorporation into the Tacoma Mall RGC.

The City's new growth targets for the enlarged Tacoma Mall Neighborhood area are 8,385 additional jobs and 8,887 additional people by 2040.

Comprehensive Plan, City's Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan, Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health Resolutions, and other documents. These are described briefly below with a more detailed policy discussion available in Chapter 3.2 of the EIS for the Subarea Plan. The Subarea Plan is consistent with the guidance provided by these plans.

Tacoma has been a leader in growth management since adoption of the GMA and continues to step forward in implementing the regional vision for growth and development through strategic planning and investment in its Regional Growth Centers (RGCs). Consistent with these policies, this Subarea Plan identifies priority actions for building on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's role as a regional shopping destination and creating a vibrant, transit-ready urban center with a diverse mix of housing and job options.

The plan's growth targets and area boundaries meet PSRC and Pierce County requirements for RGC jobs, population, housing and size. The plan is also consistent with guidance provided in PSRC's Regional Center Plans Checklist. The City is committed to implementing this plan, achieving its growth targets and strengthening the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's function as a regional destination and urban center.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The GMA requires municipalities to plan for the accommodation of future growth. It grants counties, in consultation with cities, the authority to assign growth allocations for population and employment. In general, GMA goals support focused growth in designated urban centers with adequate infrastructure, and preservation of rural areas. The Plan helps implement Washington State's policy on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## VISION 2040

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**Vision 2040** is the long-range growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound. Consistent with the GMA, it promotes an environmentally friendly growth pattern that contains the expansion of urban growth areas, conserves farm and forest lands, supports compact communities where people may live and work, and envisions a significant share of new employment and housing to occur in vibrant urban centers. **Vision 2040** promotes the theme "people, prosperity, planet" as a sustainability framework.

Vision 2040 calls for growth to be concentrated within urban centers, which are defined as "locations identified to take a

greater proportion of future population and employment in order to curb sprawl.” Centers are characterized by “compact, pedestrian-oriented development, a mix of different office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses,” along with “improved accessibility and mobility for walking, biking, and transit.”

At the top of Vision 2040’s hierarchy of centers are the RGCs, “envisioned as major focal points of higher-density population and employment, served with efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure and services.” The Tacoma Mall Mixed-Use Center is one of 27 designated RGCs and is second in Tacoma’s hierarchy after the Downtown Tacoma RGC.

Plan Review Manual provides guidance and checklists for aligning plans and policies with Vision 2040 and the GMA. The checklist includes a reporting tool specifically for designated RGCs. Checklist topics include plan concept or vision, environment, land use, housing, economy, public services and transportation. This Subarea Plan was prepared to meet the requirements of the Plan Review Manual.

Multiple regional policy documents support and integrate with Vision 2040, including Transportation 2040, the companion plan to Vision 2040 that directs regional transportation actions to support Vision’s land use patterns. Adoption of this plan fulfills Tacoma’s commitment to plan for RGCs as called for in the Growing Transit Communities Compact.

## **PIERCE COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES**

The Pierce County Regional Council maintains the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to coordinate planning on a countywide basis. They are one planning tool intended to ensure that Pierce County and cities within the County develop local policies based on shared and agreed upon goals. They are also an important mechanism to coordinate local actions consistent with the GMA and with Vision 2040.

The CPPs provide specific criteria for RGCs and recommend incorporating health in local planning, in addition to policy guidance similar to that provided by ***Vision 2040***. Current RGC criteria, which the Subarea Plan satisfies, are summarized below:

- a minimum 25 employees per gross acre of nonresidential land;
- minimum 10 households per gross acre; and/or a minimum of 15,000 employees;
- not to exceed a maximum size of 1-1/2 square miles; and
- planning policies that recognize the need to capture a significant share of regional growth

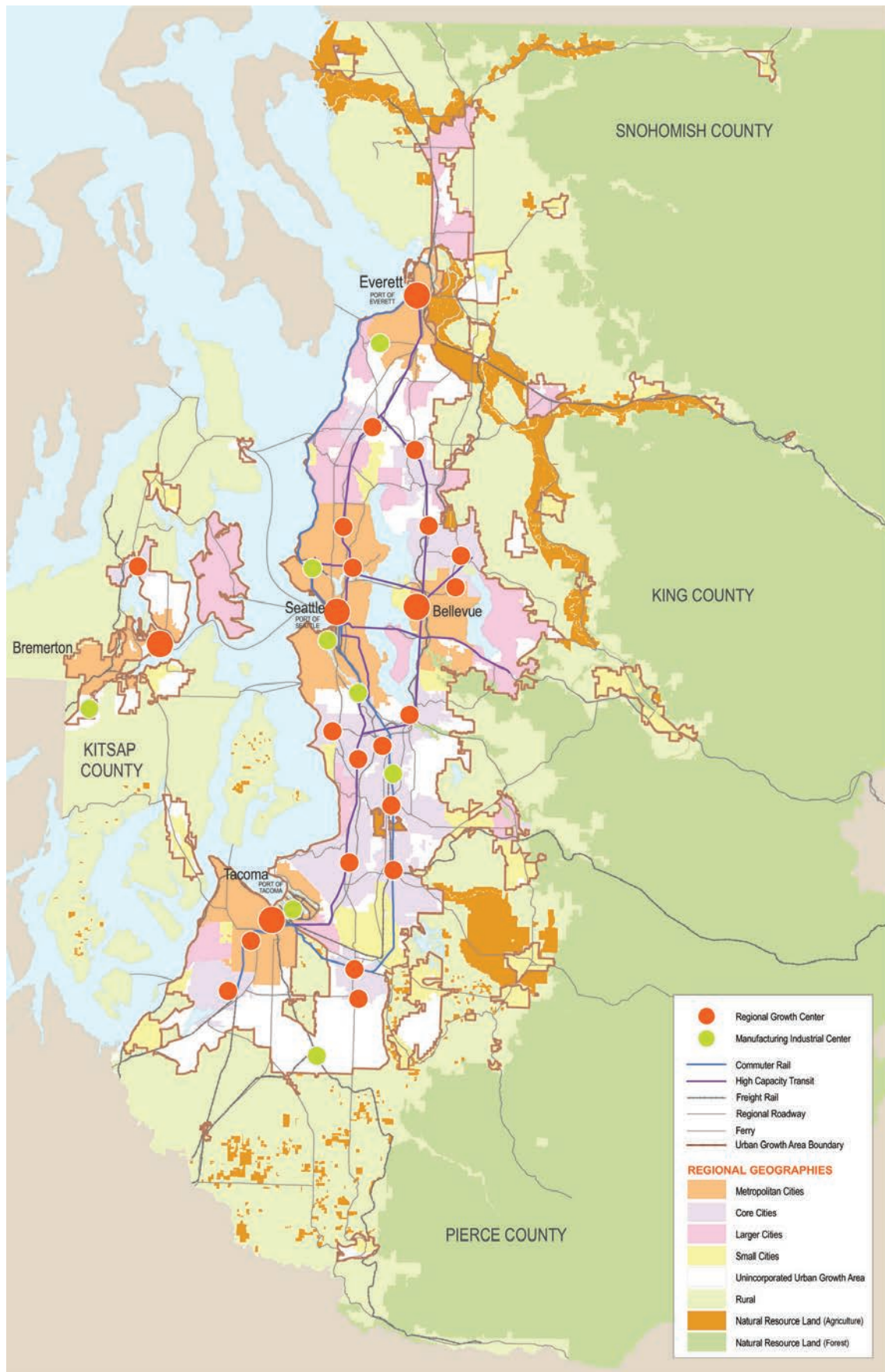


Figure C-5. Enlarged *Vision 2040* map.

## **TACOMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan looks forward to Tacoma's long-term future, ensuring that growth happens in a beneficial, healthy, and sustainable way. It provides a blueprint for the future of the city. It guides decisions on land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, parks, and the environment. It sets standards for roads and other infrastructure, identifies how they will be paid for, and establishes the basis for zoning and development regulations. It includes policy guidance for the City's mixed-use centers, including the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The Comprehensive Plan was informed by and is consistent with the GMA, Vision 2040, and the Pierce County CPPs. This Subarea Plan is consistent with and supports Tacoma 2025—Tacoma's Strategic Plan as well as the City's Climate Action Plan, Greenroads Policy and Complete Streets Resolution. The Plan was informed with and supports partner agency plans including those of Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Metro Parks Tacoma, and the Tacoma School District.

## **US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NATIONAL ESTUARIES PROGRAM WATERSHED PROTECTION & RESTORATION GRANTS**

Puget Sound is one of 28 estuaries of national significance as designated by the National Estuary Program (NEP). Under this program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receives federal funding to support local efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound. These funds are used for financial assistance to state, local and Tribal governments for their efforts in implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda. In January 2011, the EPA selected the Washington Departments of Ecology and Commerce to receive a grant for "Watershed Protection and Restoration."

The state awarded NEP grant funding to the City of Tacoma for development of the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan & EIS in recognition of the importance of compact urban development patterns in the regional effort to restore the health of the Puget Sound.

## **TACOMA–PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH RESOLUTIONS**

The Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health recognizes the importance of collaborating with local jurisdictions to create healthy communities. The Board adopted resolutions declaring neighborhoods as determinants of health, encouraging the use of health impact assessments in conjunction with the review of proposed actions under the

State Environmental Policy Act, and recommending decision-makers at all levels of local and state government consider health in all policies. Consistent with this guidance, the Subarea Plan employs a health-in-all-policies approach.

## REFERENCES

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3 Square Blocks, November 2016, Analysis of population and jobs growth rates based on data from Puget Sound Regional Council's 2014 Centers Monitoring Report.

3 Square Blocks, January 2016, Existing conditions analysis for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan.

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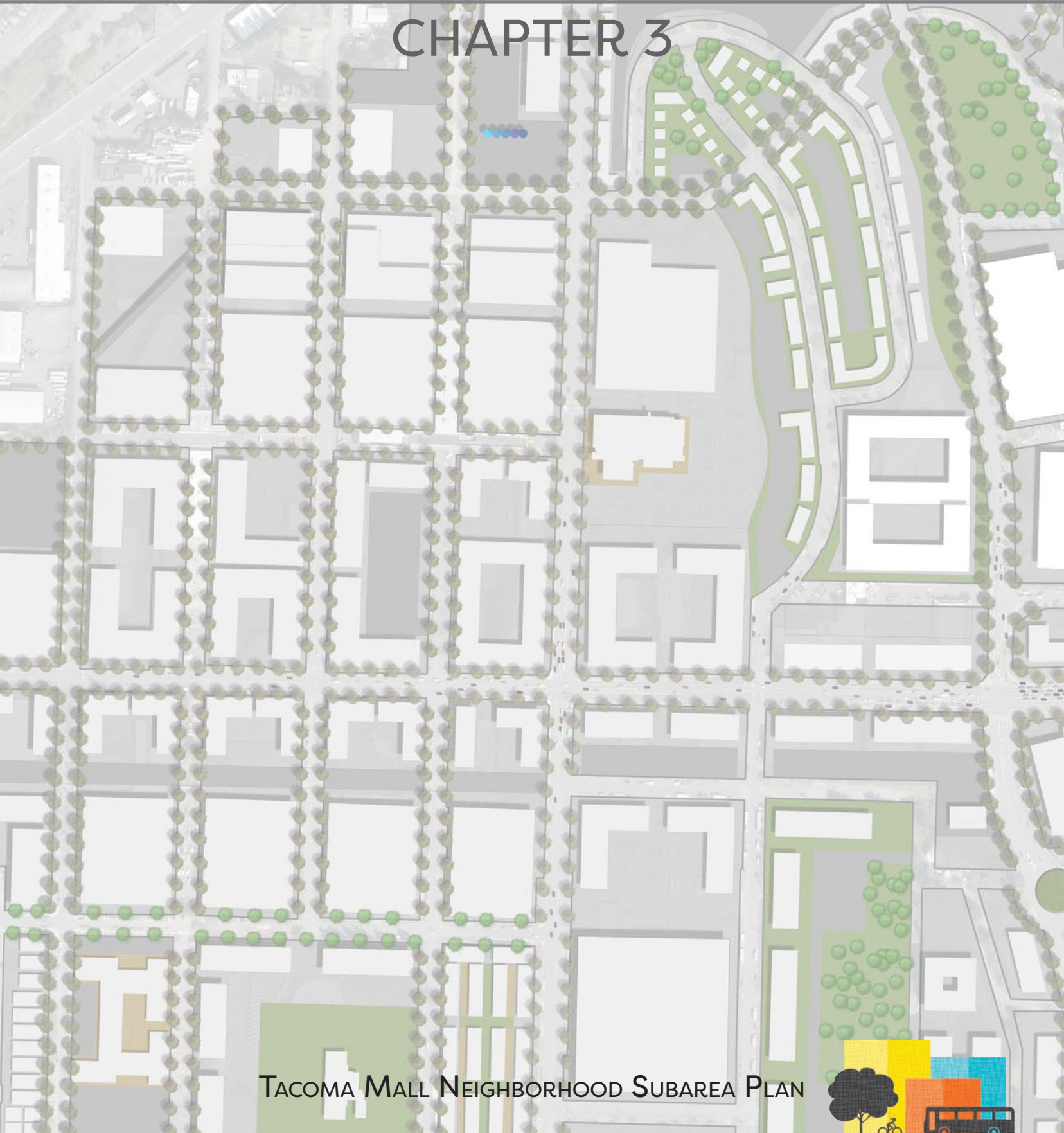
Community Attributes Inc. (CAI), January 2016, Existing conditions analysis for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan.

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# URBAN FORM

## CHAPTER 3



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 3



# URBAN FORM

## CONTENTS

- Urban Form Goal
- Introduction
- Vision for Urban Form & Structure
- Foundational Neighborhood Elements
- Contemporary Transit-ready Community
- Performance Measures
- References

## URBAN FORM GOAL

Establish an urban structure in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood that fosters a thriving, attractive mixed-use urban center with a unique identity that is walkable, transit-ready and convenient by car.

## INTRODUCTION

Urban form—the way human settlement is built and designed—can have a significant impact on the quality of life, environment and economic development potential of an area. This chapter provides a vision, goals and actions for strengthening the urban form and design of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The intent is to promote a shift from a suburban, auto-oriented urban form to a compact, complete and connected neighborhood. This shift is not expected to occur overnight—and is not intended to be imposed by the city. Rather, the city will seek to support and attract investment, create opportunities and catalyze positive change.

Anchored by the Tacoma Mall, the area is a major retail destination that has long attracted national and local retailers. The Tacoma Mall, combined with the retail businesses that have developed around it, is an important economic engine for the City of Tacoma. The area is also home to many office, warehouse and light industrial businesses.

In the 1950s, prior to development of the Tacoma Mall, the majority of the area consisted of large parcels and farmland. Urban design at the time favored single-use development and automobile travel, with arterial streets and large block patterns established to accommodate the Mall and auto-oriented strip retail businesses. Large arterial streets and large block patterns were established to make room for the new businesses and the surface parking lots that go with them. In contrast, older areas such as the Madison District and the South Tacoma Way

## HEALTH IMPACTS

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The health impact of place includes physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and aesthetic outcomes. (Frumkin, 2003).

## PLACEMAKING DEFINED

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Placemaking is both an overarching idea and a hands-on tool for improving a neighborhood, city or region. It is how we collectively shape our public realm to maximize shared value, building lively neighborhoods and public places. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections (cultural, economic, social and ecological) that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. (Project for Public Places, 2016)

edge reflect prewar patterns which are more walkable and less autocentric.

While the neighborhood's auto-oriented urban form continues to function for its original purpose, new challenges and opportunities are emerging as the City and region become more urban. Broad national trends in the retail sector are aligning with local community aspirations, pointing for the creation of more walkable, distinctive and vibrant places in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The current urban form limits transportation, housing, employment and recreation choices and leads to inefficient use of space. It also limits the transition to the newer walkable mixed-use retail models being embraced by other communities to increase economic performance in similar districts.

This chapter calls for using foundational neighborhood elements of urban form to build on existing strengths in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and to transform it into a distinctive, transit-ready urban center, consistent with community input throughout the planning process. Phased implementation of the foundational neighborhood elements articulated in this chapter will improve access, add value to properties, improve the investment climate and strengthen community identity. These actions will also foster a quality of urban design that reflects the community's vision of a unique, livable and prosperous neighborhood.



Photo UF-1. Tacoma Mall parking area.

## COMMUNITY INPUT ON CHANGES TO URBAN FORM

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While most ideas from the design workshop generated consistent support, some points remained contentious. The most controversial topics concern residential character and additional street connectivity. Both issues reflect the most change compared with how the neighborhood is now and how longtime residents and businesspeople see it.

For the Madison and Lincoln Heights Districts, tension exists between accommodating growth and retaining cherished aspects of residential character. Some would wish the neighborhood to retain more of the single-family character that it originally had, while others see multifamily development as an opportunity consistent with the Regional Growth Center intent.

Commercial property owners have voiced concerns about how the proposed connectivity requirements intended to break up large blocks will unfold. The initial proposed street network was substantially modified to address those concerns.

## FOUNDATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTS

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Neighborhood structure and urban systems shape people's experience in fundamental ways. This plan takes a multifaceted "placemaking" approach to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. The neighborhood's urban form currently consists of partially complete urban systems (streets, parks and infrastructure, trees and vegetation). The foundational neighborhood elements defined in this chapter will support structural neighborhood transformation to a more compact, mixed-use community form that over time provides a richer, more complex, high-amenity urban experience.

### DESIGN WORKSHOP FINDINGS & DIRECTION

The foundational neighborhood elements grew out of community input provided throughout the planning process. Community input through public comments, stakeholder interviews, health and equity focus groups and other public engagement efforts identified clear ideas and recommendations to address urban form challenges and opportunities. An intensive, four-day design workshop conducted in the Fall of 2015 enabled the community to work with a design team to produce a detailed vision and foundational concepts to set the course for development of the Subarea Plan. The outcomes of the design workshop have now been broadly vetted and refined into the foundational neighborhood elements described below.

## WORKSHOP FINDINGS

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These workshop findings informed the development of the Illustrative Vision Plan and workshop recommendations, which have been further refined since that time through community input:

- The current zoning provides development capacity substantially greater than foreseeable demand, and does little to concentrate higher intensity development in core areas.
- Current zoning can be characterized as "one size fits all" with few distinctions or transitions among districts.
- Development is occurring in an uncoordinated pattern which captures low community return on investment.
- The resulting neighborhood lacks an identity as a cohesive whole, appearing instead more like several dissimilar, disconnected areas.
- Large blocks, discontinuous street patterns, site sizes, development patterns and topography produce barriers to visibility, walking, bicycling and circulation.
- Current development patterns in some cases ignore topography in favor of imposing a grid pattern.

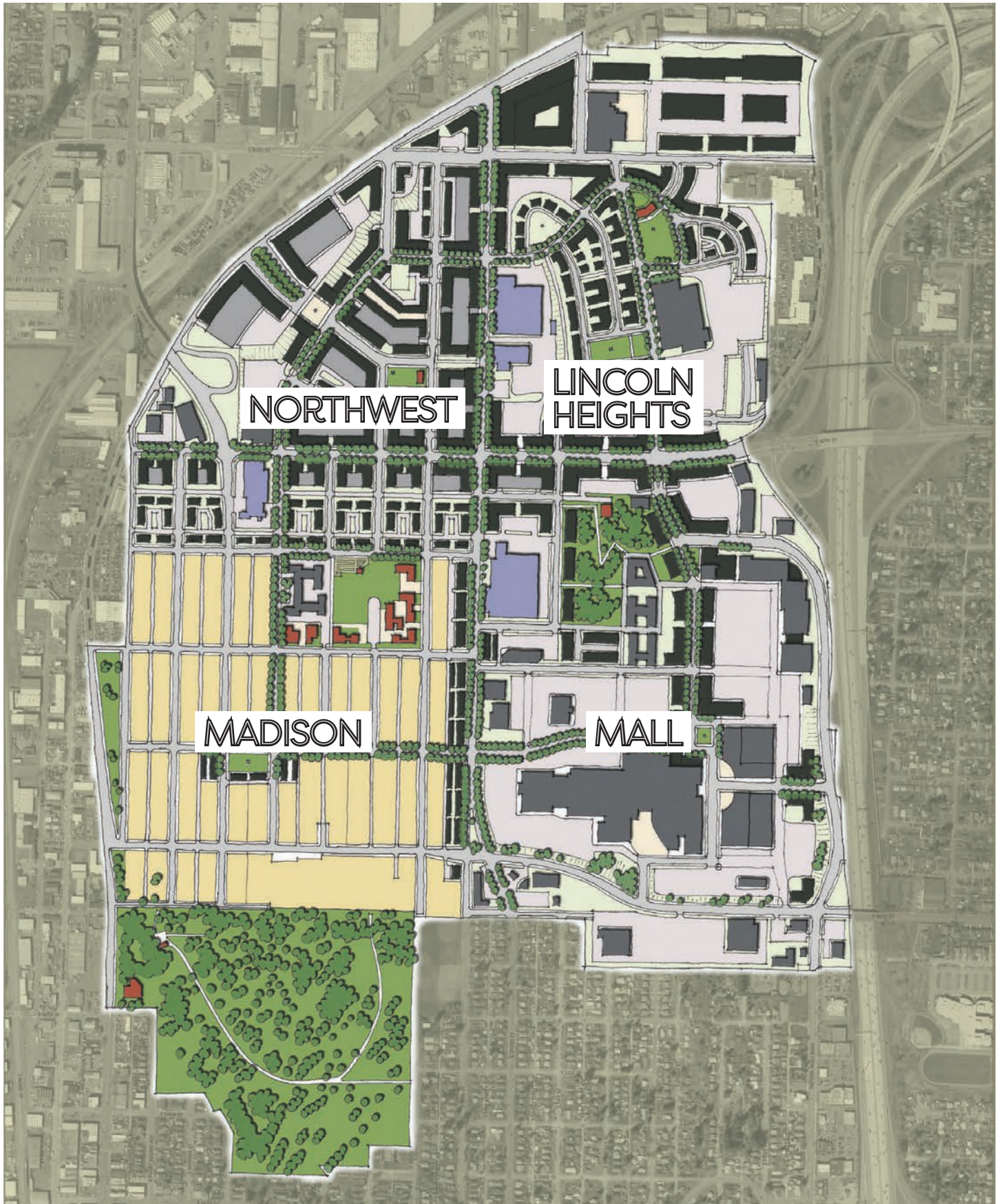


Figure UF-1. Early concept of the Illustrative Vision Plan.

## DISTRICTS AND QUADRANTS

The terms “districts” and “quadrants” are used in the Subarea Plan as they relate to urban form. This refers to the four geographic areas of the neighborhood defined by the South Pine and 38th Streets”. Each district (quadrant) has its own character defined by topography, infrastructure, land uses and building types.

## TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The City’s Transportation Master Plan sets priorities for infrastructure improvements within and between 20-minute neighborhoods based around Tacoma’s centers for growth and along identified corridors that connect residential areas to schools, local retail, businesses, and community services. The urban structure planned for this neighborhood reflects a desire for an urban form that is more compact and complete. As a smaller unit than the 20-minute neighborhood (an area just under one square mile), the Subarea Plan is built around the quarter-mile concept, which roughly reflects a five-to-ten-minute walking distance from each District of the neighborhood to transit and services.

## EFFECTS OF PLACEMAKING

Making places creates community ownership and adds value to neighborhoods and properties.

- Code calibrations could promote a more cohesive neighborhood structure.
- A more complete, compact and connected neighborhood structure would improve the investment climate and the ability to derive multiple and exponential benefits from investments.
- An improved investment climate will yield higher-quality development products, contributions to the public realm, improved livability and higher revenues.
- Better connections are needed both to the neighborhood from outside and within the four districts of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

The goals and actions in this chapter reflect the design direction that was initially established, complemented by detailed community input during the design workshop.



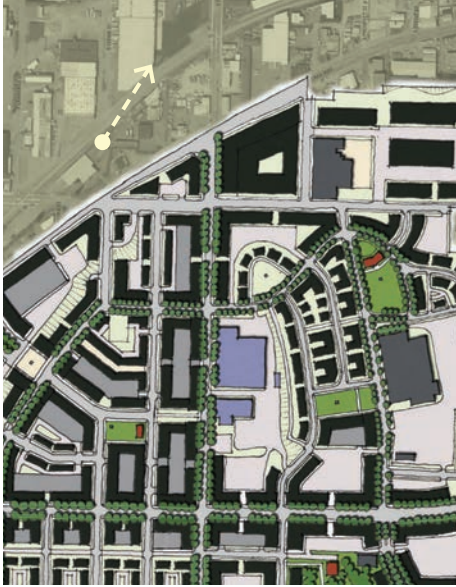
Photo UF-2. Design Workshop.

## FIVE-MINUTE-WALKING NEIGHBORHOOD

The existing street network creates four logical districts within the neighborhood. Two existing major streets, S. 38th St and S. Pine St, bisect the neighborhood into quarters. Each quarter’s size is equivalent to roughly that of a five-minute-walk neighborhood, a nationally recognized smart growth principle for creating vibrant urban communities. A five-minute walk neighborhood is one in which it is possible to walk from the center to retail and services in about five minutes.

## MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM VISION MAPS

Public input demonstrates that there is generally strong support for the urban form concepts, but also that getting a neighborhood from here to there can raise questions and concerns. When you live and work in the neighborhood of today, it is difficult to envision significant changes. Furthermore, the benefits of change may not be



## 4 NEIGHBORHOOD QUADRANTS

### Northwest Quadrant

Character - *Dispersed commercial and light industrial, public facilities*

Streets - *Large block grid*

Blocks - *Up to 18 acres*

### Lincoln Heights Quadrant

Character - *Small 1950s-era 1-3 unit residential, big box retail*

Streets - *Curvilinear, discontinuous pattern with topographic breaks*

Blocks - *Up to 20 acres*

### Madison Quadrant

Character - *Single family, townhouses, 3 story apartments*

Streets - *Neighborhood-scale grid with alleys, many segments and alleys vacated*

Blocks - *Up to 14 acres*

### Mall Quadrant

Character - *Regional mall, big box retail, expansive parking lots, hill in center, dispersed residential*

Streets - *Discontinuous system with few public streets*

Blocks - *Up to 50 acres*

immediately apparent to businesses seeking to continue to grow in place.

To help people to understand how change would occur over time, both a short-term and a long-term version of the Vision Map were developed. Both integrate design ideas for streets, parks and open spaces, neighborhood districts and buildings intended to strengthen neighborhood identity, culture, economy, environmental quality and livability for area residents, businesses and users.

The medium-term Vision depicts the neighborhood largely as it could be not too many years in the future, retaining existing buildings with new buildings constructed on vacant sites and surface parking lots, and with new construction of only top-priority new street connections. The long-term Vision depicts more substantial change, including redevelopment of many areas and more new street connections. This level of change would occur only when the market supports major redevelopment.

Both Vision Maps are intended to be illustrative rather than directive. The long-term Vision Map includes alternative potential site development concepts for several larger sites in order to convey that intent. The neighborhood's medium- and long-term Illustrative Visions are shown as Figures UF-2 and UF-3.

## Goal UF-1

*Establish a more coherent, cohesive, accessible neighborhood structure by implementing the six foundational elements of neighborhood urban form:*

1. Place-based character districts
2. Focused density & transition areas
3. Internal Loop Road & parks system
4. Complete & connected street network
5. Green infrastructure systems
6. Neighborhood edges & transitions

### 1. Place-based Character Districts

The character of each District is intended to reflect its historic roots, its physical characteristics, and the community's desires for its future. While these characteristics may be promoted through City action, in many ways implementation depends on the degree to which property owners and developers perceive that they have value. Table UF-1 shows the factors that have influenced current urban form in the four districts.

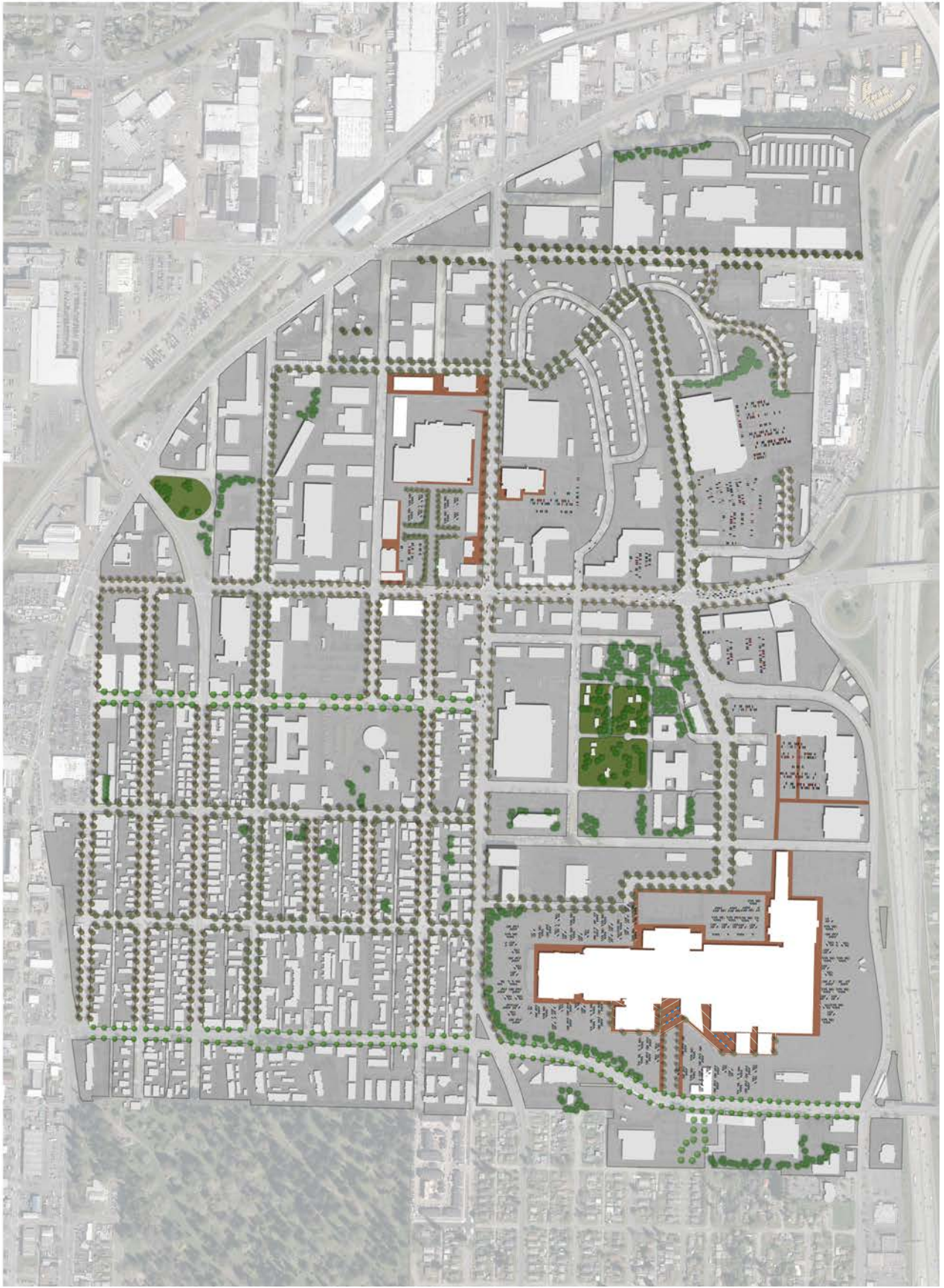


Figure UF-2. Medium-Term Illustrative Vision plan..



Figure UF-3. Long-Term Illustrative Vision plan.

**Table UF-1. Factors that have Influenced Current Urban Form**

DISTRICT	LAND FORM	LAND USE & CHARACTER	STREET PATTERN	BLOCK SIZE	URBAN PATTERN
Madison	Primarily flat with low slope on western edge near South Tacoma Way	Single-family, multifamily	Mostly neighborhood scale grid pattern with alleys	4-14 acres	Commercial on perimeter streets, single-family, townhouse, 3 & 4 story apartments in internal area
Northwest	Primarily flat with steep slope on northern and western edges near South Tacoma Way	Regional commercial, heavy commercial/ light industrial and public facilities	Large-block grid	1-18 acres	Dispersed development
Lincoln Heights	Hilly with steep slope on northern edge. Bounded by I-5 to east.	WW2 1-3 unit residential , big box development	Discontinuous curvilinear street pattern	2.5-20 acres	Small residential, large commercial areas and large publicly owned sites
Mall	Flat commercial areas with retaining walls on 47th/48th and Pine St. perimeter. Dogwood hill with regional views.	Regional mall, big box retail, hill in center, dispersed residential, some undeveloped land on Dogwood Hill.	Discontinuous public streets, informal circulation in Mall area proper	1-50 acres	Large commercial buildings & parking, large and small-format retail areas and limited residential development

## Action UF-1

*Establish four neighborhood character districts based on the quarter-mile-walkable neighborhood concept and the distinct quadrants defined by S. 38th and S. Pine Streets.*

Desired features common to all character districts:

- completed street network
- distinctive urban infrastructure
- parks & public places
- increased tree canopy
- internal Loop Road
- development oriented to streets, parks and public places
- structured parking with new development
- modern, contemporary building types, forms and materials
- contemporary signage

Characteristics specific to individual districts:

- topography
- land use pattern
- street and block pattern
- building types and scale
- gradations in height, scale and form
- character of local parks
- green stormwater infrastructure
- job types
- housing types

**Table UF-2. District Character Vision**

This vision is intended to reflect and build upon the assets of each district to inspire creative thinking about future development opportunities.

DISTRICT	LAND USE CHARACTER	PUBLIC LAND USES	DEVELOPMENT TYPES
Madison	The Madison District is envisioned to continue to contain mixed-use areas and a residential neighborhood with a mix of housing options, anchored around new public park/ community facilities and with improved streetscapes and green stormwater infrastructure.	The Madison School site serves as a neighborhood center, potentially as a mixed-use public campus with recreation, gardens, a public gathering place, school and other public facilities. The Tacoma Cemetery and the greenbelt along South Tacoma Way provide a forested edge to the south and west.	Within the residential core of the district: Low-density to medium-density multifamily housing. Along the edges: Medium-density multifamily and Mixed-Use development.
Northwest	The Northwest District is envisioned as a hub of commercial activity, warehouses and light industrial buildings connected by pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces, with the potential for mixed-use or multifamily in the future.	The Loop Road traverses along the bluff. A potential walking corridor connects the District to South Tacoma Way below, traversing a series of public spaces furnished with elements of a “stormwater pathway.” A local green on the Loop Road provides a gathering place, open space, play features and hosts local events.	Commercial, office, mixed-use, residential, with the tallest buildings generally closer to Pine and S. 38th Street, interspersed with light industrial and mixed-use buildings in areas closer to South Tacoma Way.
Lincoln Heights	The Lincoln Heights District is envisioned to continue to provide shopping and employment opportunities, with a core residential area that is preserved and strengthened.	Discontinuous and curvilinear streets. The Loop Road is a walking, biking and green street linking local parks. Lincoln Heights Park and other local parks provide neighborhood gathering places, open space and play features.	Townhouses, Urban Flats, Duplex and Triplex in the residential area with commercial mixed-use development on the perimeter. Government and light industrial uses share the area north of S. 35th Street.
Mall	The Mall District is planned to continue and expand its retail destination role, and to become a “mixed-use town center” with a full complement of entertainment and cultural destinations. This District is envisioned to have the most and broadest range of mixed-use urban infill.	Small green spaces and plazas accentuate corners and changes in the grid. A park on the top of the hill provides an urban refuge among large trees with views in all directions to the immediate surroundings, tree-lined vistas and the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges.	Regional retail, commercial mixed-use, big box mixed-use with structured parking, residential mixed-use, civic, medical, educational and cultural facilities.

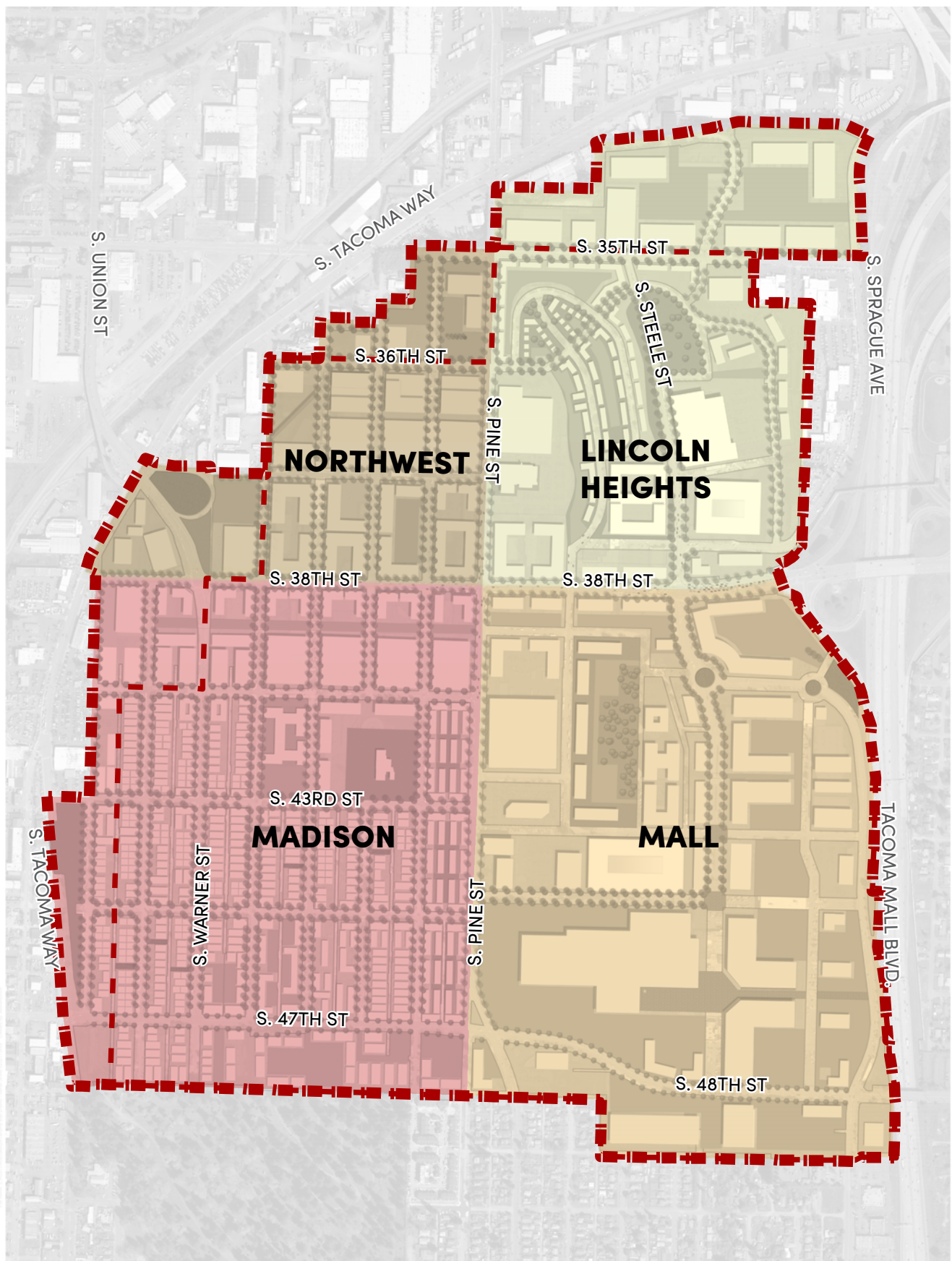


Figure UF-4. Proposed Character Districts map.



Figure UF-5. Conceptual Rendering of S. Steele St. looking toward the Tacoma Mall, Mall District.

## **Action UF-2**

*Foster district identities that respond to conditions, opportunities and interests of stakeholders in each district and are consistent with the community character envisioned for the entire neighborhood.*

Figures UF-5 through UF-8 provide character sketches of each district intended to illustrate development potential and urban design opportunities.

## **2. Focused Density and Transition Areas**

Much of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood currently has a suburban development pattern with relatively low development intensities and low-scale buildings. This plan provides guidance to strategically transition the neighborhood to a more urban development pattern, with areas of focused density that have higher development heights and larger-scale buildings, and transition areas between these and lower-height areas. By directing the majority of new growth to focused density areas the City can leverage near-term development activity to create urban nodes that catalyze the transition of the neighborhood from suburban to urban.

The highest height limits are proposed in the Tacoma Mall District and along S. 38th and S. Pine Streets, the major thoroughfares through the neighborhood. Adjacent areas are generally planned for moderate- to high heights, stepping down from the urban core and providing transitions to lower-height areas. See the Land Use Chapter for the land use, zoning and heights planned for regulating the neighborhood's urban form and scale.

## **Action UF-3**

*Update City zoning to implement the focused density and transitions concept, including the near-term package of zoning and height changes.*

## **Action UF-4**

*Create a neighborhood “mixed-use town center” in the Mall District, with a potential high-capacity transit station location, and a full mix of land uses.*

## **3. Internal Loop Road & Parks System**

The proposed Loop Road shown in Figure UF-6 will provide a broad 2-1/3-mile-long corridor of urban greenery, significant tree canopy, open space and habitat that is served by green stormwater infrastructure and festival street sections.

The Loop Road connects the four character districts and links the parks in the proposed conceptual future parks system. Designed for walking, bicycling and slow vehicular traffic, the Loop Road provides a unique neighborhood feature that builds connections, character and identity. The Loop Road and parks system can be leveraged to improve livability, social interactions, and quality of life and provide a catalyst for infill and redevelopment.

### **Action UF-5**

*Develop and implement a Master Plan for the entire Loop Road reflecting its urban design, transportation and catalytic objectives.*

The Loop Road will be designed to include common features and specific characteristics for the four character district segments. The Master Plan should ensure that the Loop Road functions as a linear public green space, links character districts and the proposed parks system, includes trees and green stormwater infrastructure, minimizes location on steep slopes to promote walkability for people of all abilities, includes the potential for festival street sections, and supports community and economic goals and multimodal mobility.

## NORTHWEST DISTRICT STREET REALIGNMENT

The initial Illustrative Vision included major street grid realignment in the Northwest District. This concept sparked interest because it had the potential to achieve several urban design, transportation, land use and environmental objectives. The concept could be revisited in the future.

The realignment would take advantage of topography to create a level corridor for the Loop Road, a clear delineation between urban mixed-use and industrial areas, better street intersections with South Tacoma Way, and an opportunity for a pedestrian gateway into the district incorporating a grand staircase and green stormwater infrastructure.

The Sounder rail passes close by the district in this location, sparking speculation that a new station might one day be built serving the area.

The internal Loop Road is designed to separate local trips from traffic throughput, enable internal neighborhood trip capture, increase mode shift, reduce congestion on arterial streets and reduce greenhouse gases.

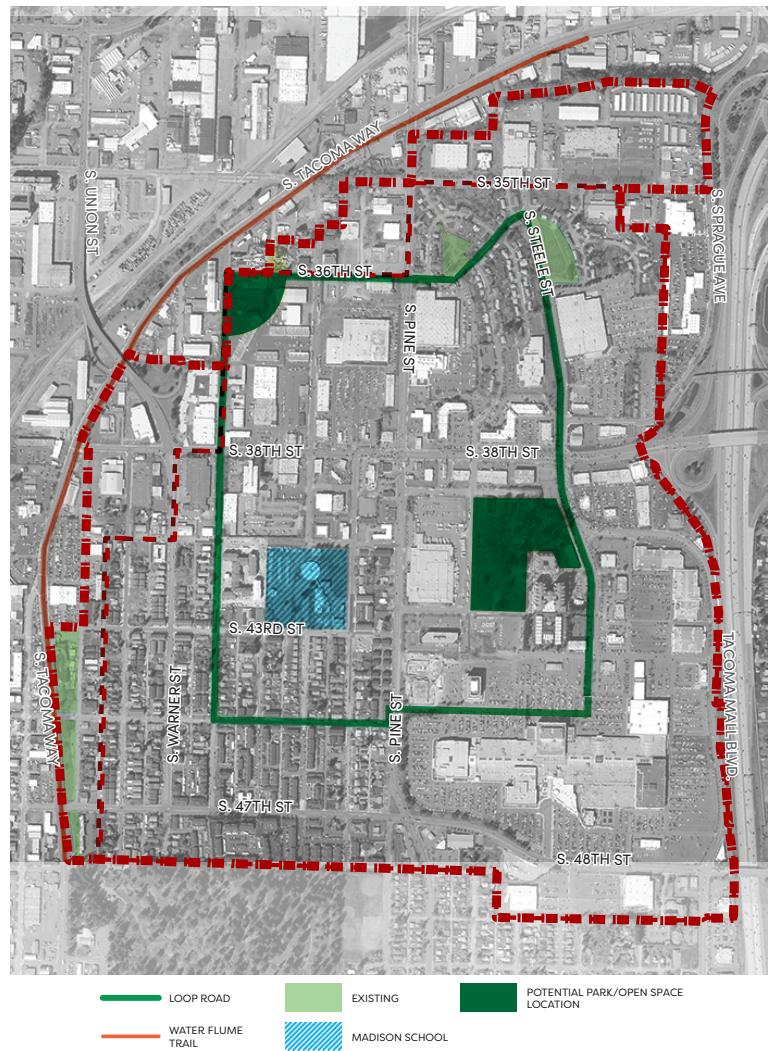


Figure UF-6. Map of Loop Road.

### 4. Complete & Connected Street Network

In the 1950s much of the neighborhood was platted with a system of streets and blocks similar to those of the Madison District and the system that still exists east of the neighborhood across I-5. The original street pattern of the Lincoln District is less apparent. (The typical historic block size in the Madison District, Downtown Tacoma and other neighborhoods is 4.5 acres. Block sizes for older city districts range from 2.5 to 4.5 acres).

Roughly one-quarter of the original neighborhood street grid remains. The bulk of the neighborhood comprises large blocks and parcels assembled through street vacations for large scale commercial and residential development and serviced by a discontinuous street pattern. Current block sizes vary from approximately 2 to 27 acres.

## STREET ACCESS BENEFITS

Increased street access yields increased frontage, increased visibility, increased value and increased potential for physical activity.]

## TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

See Chapter 6—Transportation Choices for more information about the proposed street and block network and the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network.

Optimal typical “walkable urban block” sizes are 2–3 acres. Areas with this block size have high “intersection density” (a regularized system of connected streets with four-way intersections).

The completed street, bicycle and pedestrian networks shown in the Illustrative Vision Maps are designed to provide a compact and walkable block structure that improves access to properties, development sites and the larger neighborhood. The finer grain of streets will reduce walking times, improve connectivity and enliven the neighborhood with increased access to businesses, residences and mixed-use areas. Implementation of the network will also result in lower congestion at major intersections. The most fundamental goal is to establish a maximum 600-by-600-foot-block scale in areas that today have no street connectivity, which could unfold in many ways.

### Action UF-6

*Create a complete and connected street network through both catalytic public investments and private actions as development occurs.*



Figure UF-7. Conceptual Rendering of S. 38th St. in the Northwest District.

## 5. Green Infrastructure Systems

The Subarea Plan envisions changes to urban form and mix of land uses that will improve the natural environment, including installation of green stormwater infrastructure, development of new parks and open spaces, increasing tree cover and expanding the pedestrian and bicycle network. These changes will be to improve water quality by increasing the amount of pervious and vegetated areas that absorb and filter surface water runoff and recharge the South Tacoma aquifer. Other benefits will include improved air quality, reduced vehicle use/emissions, expanded wildlife habitat and visual access to trees and landscaping which are aesthetically pleasing and have also been found to improve mental health.

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood lies in the Thea Foss and Flett Creek water basins, which drain into the Puget Sound. The area-wide stormwater strategy improves water quality, reduces flooding, provides urban design amenities and significantly improves street design, appearance and function.

Substrate investigations and urban stormwater modeling identified areas best suited for green infrastructure systems. These lie primarily in the Madison, Northwest and Lincoln Heights Districts where many neighborhood streets currently flood or lack surface water management infrastructure.

Strategic leveraging of stormwater projects enables the City to fund and achieve multiple neighborhood goals with individual projects, such as providing complete street improvements to include improved curb or storm inlets, gutters, sidewalks, greenery and environmental health.



Photo UF-3. Green stormwater infrastructure.

### **Action UF-7**

*Design and implement the Subarea Plan area-wide storm-water management, parks and open space, and tree canopy cover strategies.*

## **6. Neighborhood Edges & Transitions**

The neighborhood is physically separated from the surrounding areas by the bluff above South Tacoma Way, SR-16, I-5, topography changes to the south and the Tacoma Cemetery. Despite these physical separations, neighborhood edges and entries are ambiguous.

The edges of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood provide opportunities to indicate passage into the neighborhood and to support neighborhood identity. Edges also present opportunities to create smooth transitions to adjacent areas, so that the neighborhood is in harmony with its surroundings and neighboring residents, businesses and property owners.

### **Action UF-8**

*Implement signage, public art, landscaping and other strategies to clarify neighborhood edges, identify entry points, support neighborhood identity and provide transitions.*

## **CONTEMPORARY TRANSIT-READY COMMUNITY**

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, as a Regional Growth Center within the Sound Transit taxing district, is a likely

candidate for future high-capacity transit service. High-capacity transit stations are most successful on both a local and a regional basis when they are supported by an urban form that provides direct access to high concentrations of riders in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

This Subarea Plan identifies a general area for a new potential high-capacity transit station location nearer to the center of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The Plan calls for a range of actions to make the neighborhood transit-ready, particularly through pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and building design. In addition, the Plan seeks to foster the high-amenity urban services and transportation and housing options preferred by people who choose to live near transit stations.

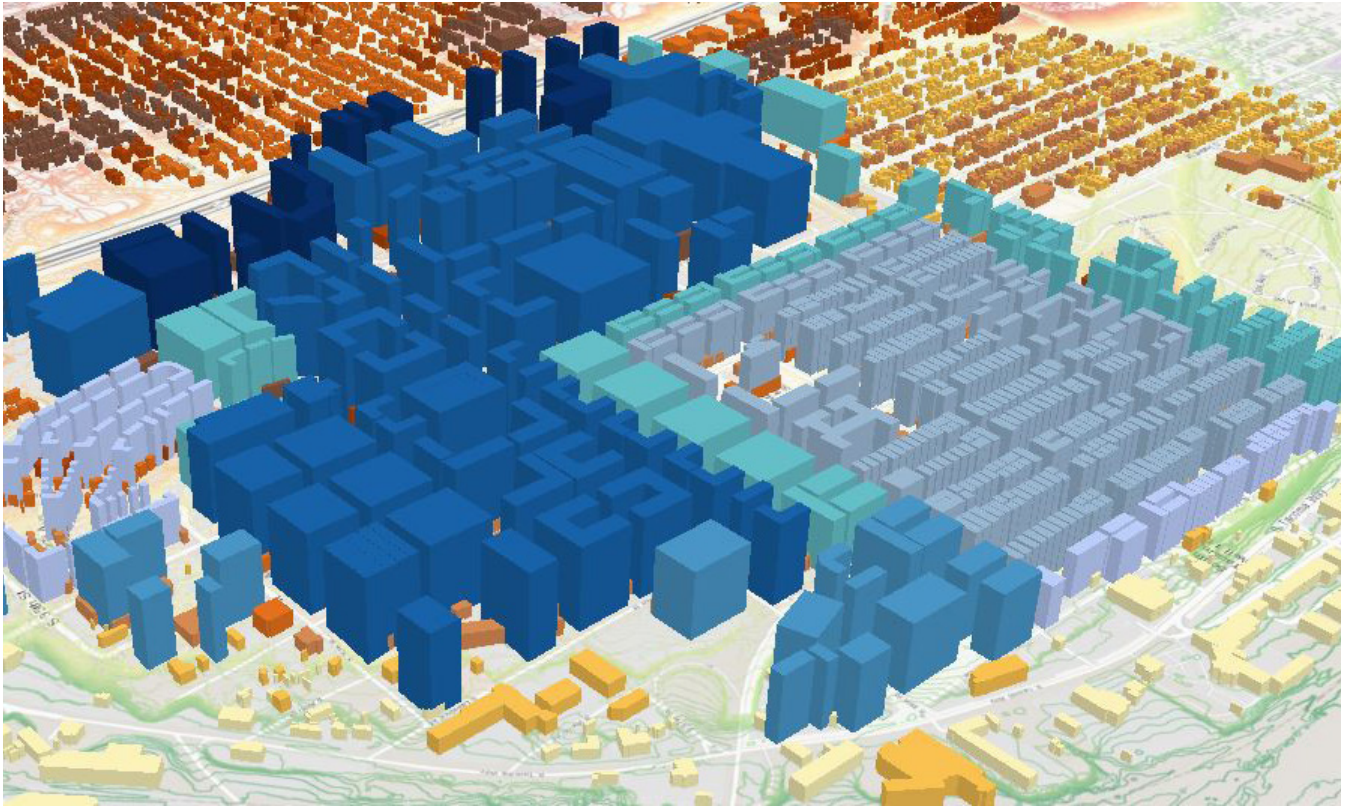


Figure UF-8. Zoning Capacity Diagram.

## **Goal UF-2**

*Transition to a contemporary, self-sufficient, well-connected neighborhood that has employee, resident and visitor activity to support high-capacity transit.*

## **Action UF-9**

*Plan for a high-capacity transit station and transit-oriented development in a central location in the neighborhood that supports both Subarea Plan and transit goals, and implement the plan with transit partners.*

Consider federal funding agency and transit station area location criteria to identify the most beneficial locations, such as:

- high percentage of developable land
- market potential for development
- mixed-use, multifamily, commercial and institutional zoning
- low percentage of fixed land uses such as industrial, military, critical areas, parks and open space, water bodies, major right of ways or other major barriers
- station area and program access characterized by Central Business District or medium- to high-density station typologies
- high pedestrian and bicycle facilities network connectivity and access
- high level of supporting transit network integration such as intermodal facility/transit hubs at stations, local and regional bus connections
- parking facilities, depending on location and transit agency policy
- drop-off/pickup improvements

While light rail is desired, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) provides a viable high-capacity transit option to light rail that is less costly and can be developed and operational in a shorter time. As one of the most sustainable ways to transport residents quickly, efficiently, and safely, a high-speed BRT system often travels in dedicated lanes and routes. Benefits of BRT include:

- relatively rapid implementation when compared with light rail technologies
- frequent headways, in some places every 5 minutes
- dedicated bus lanes provide travel time savings
- same station area amenities as light rail

- more-closely placed stations
- level boarding eliminates need for lifts
- reduction of greenhouse gases and local air pollution
- increased housing affordability by alleviating the need for individual car ownership and parking costs
- traffic safety improvements
- increased physical activity
- improved property value
- catalyst for development

## REFERENCES

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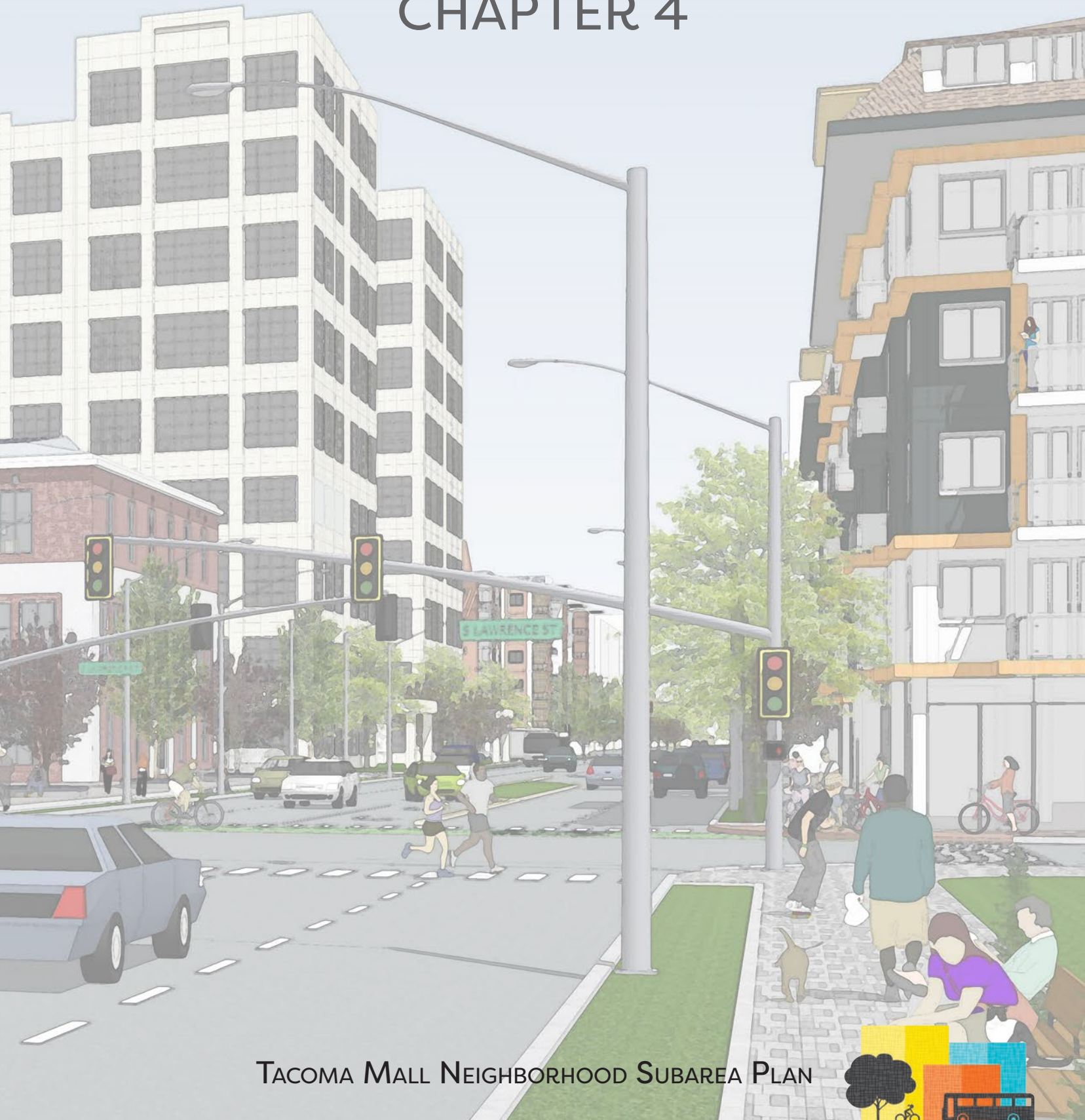
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# LAND USE

## CHAPTER 4



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



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# CHAPTER 4



# LAND USE

## CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Land Use Vision
- Existing Land Use & Development Patterns
- Future Land Use & Development Patterns
- Regional Growth Center Boundaries
- Performance Measures
- References

## LAND USE GOAL

Transition the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood into a dense, compact urban mixed-use district with the capacity to accommodate a substantial share of regional growth and with standards that ensure that development contributes to the public realm.

## INTRODUCTION

The land uses and developments permitted in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood shape its structure, function and character—past, present and future. For this reason, the City’s land use and zoning regulations are key tools for implementing the vision, goals and actions of this Subarea Plan. They also ensure adequate land development capacity to accommodate population and employment growth targets for the neighborhood.

## LAND USE AND URBAN FORM

Land use, transportation and parks are integrally linked in the urban environment. The “public realm” of a city comprises the interrelationships of the circulation system (streets, trails and paths), parks and public places. “Land use” involves the use of properties, both publicly and privately owned. The design and interaction of the public and private realms creates the desired vision for the neighborhood. Land use and property access are inextricably linked to transportation. This chapter is primarily about land use and the proposed development regulations and guidelines that regulate land use and its relationship to the proposed neighborhood street system.

## EXISTING LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

As described in Chapter 2, urban development occurred in the neighborhood starting in the late 1800s, and the land use patterns and buildings in the neighborhood reflect different periods. The development of the Tacoma Mall, residential neighborhoods in the Madison and Lincoln Heights Districts, and the industrial corridor along South Tacoma Way have greatly influenced land use patterns. In general, existing land use patterns have low to moderate intensities and are auto-oriented, though the Madison District has a more pedestrian-oriented land use pattern due to its traditional street grid. Higher-density multifamily development has occurred recently near the Tacoma Mall.



Photo UF-1. A lively urban streetscape.

Existing land uses are shown in Figure LU-1. Overall, the neighborhood has a mix of uses, with concentrations of commercial, residential and industrial distributed in separate areas within the neighborhood. Commercial retail is one of the primary land uses and includes small- and large-format retailers. Retailers are primarily located near the Tacoma Mall and major roads such as S. 38th and S. Steele Streets. Commercial office uses are interspersed with retail in several areas. Industrial uses, including warehousing and manufacturing, are predominantly located in the western and northern portions of the Center near South Tacoma Way. Residential uses are concentrated in the Madison and Lincoln Heights Districts and are mixed with commercial uses in the Mall District.

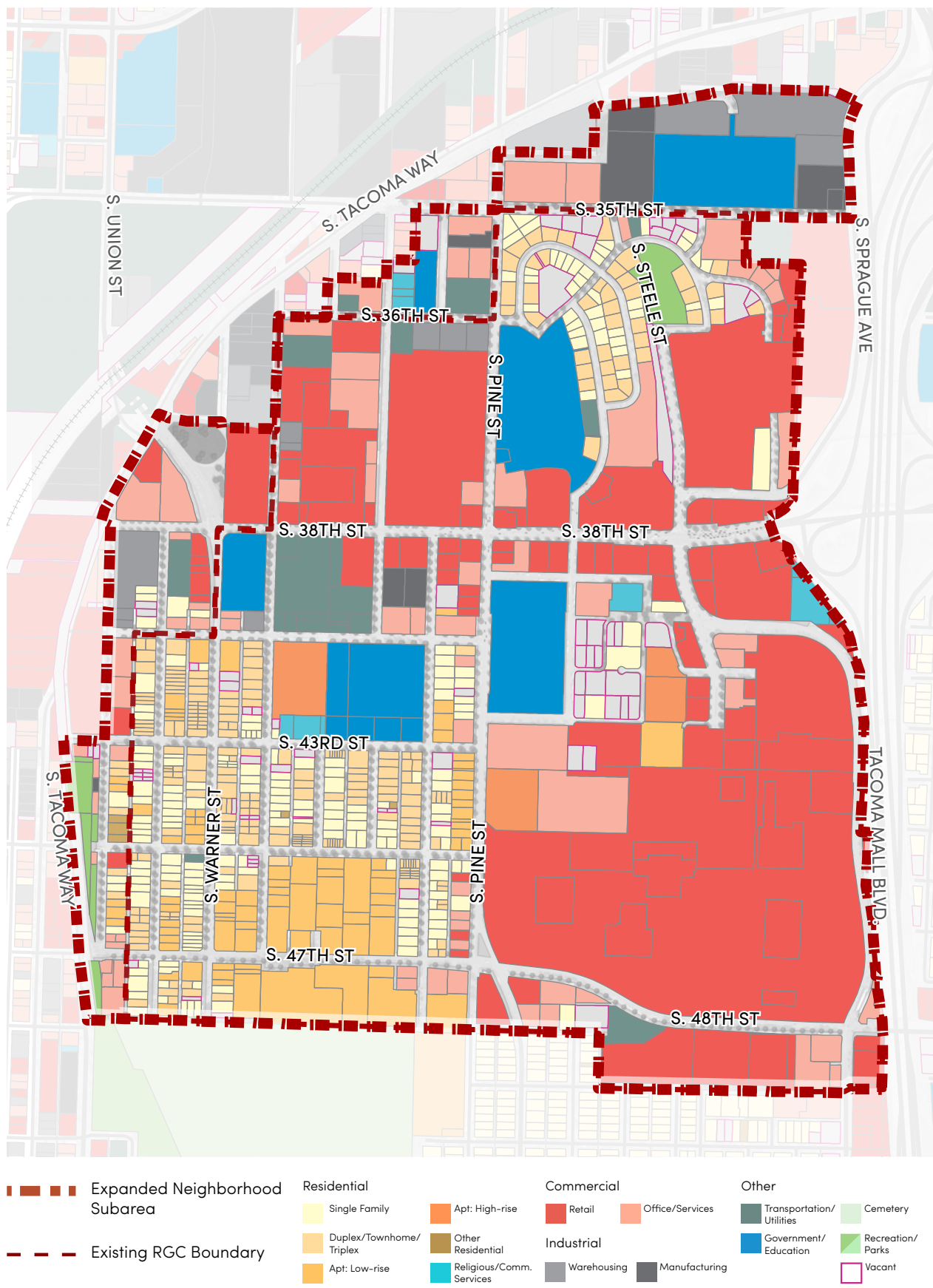


Figure UF-1. Existing land uses in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

## ZONING CONTEXT

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In 1995, in response to the newly adopted Growth Management Act, the City of Tacoma designated the Tacoma Mall a Mixed-Use Center and adopted zoning regulations supporting the designation. The zoning adopted at that time established the land use framework that is still in place today, although there have been updates since. Officially the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (RGC), the majority of its zoning allows for zero lot line buildings as high as 60–75 feet, with an option for 120 feet in most of the Center. This zoning is intended to allow and promote transit-supportive densities as well as provide a mechanism, through the height bonus option, to help conserve regional farms, forests, and City open space and historic structures.

Significant development and change has occurred since 1995, particularly in the Madison District and portions of the Mall and Lincoln Heights Districts. During the same period, much of the Center remained largely unchanged. These facts point to opportunities to improve land use and zoning frameworks. This Subarea Plan further refines the land use and zoning framework to better support the Regional Growth Center vision. The first code changes adopted with the plan do not radically change the zoning framework but rather address specific issues identified through the public process. Future zoning changes could go further to reshape how the City reviews development through a new emphasis on design.



Photo UF-2. Apex Apartments.



Photo UF-3. Madison District townhouses.

## CURRENT ZONING

The existing zoning districts apply to several of the City's mixed-use centers. While many current regulations are appropriate to implement the neighborhood vision in the near term, refinements are needed in order to enact the vision.

Zoning updates would address the following characteristics:

- Development capacity far exceeds market demand. This results in a dispersed development pattern that produces a lower capture of investment than what could potentially be achieved.
- The code supports a single scale, which is inconsistent with the goals of District character distinctions and transitions between Districts.
- Mechanisms are lacking for making and managing transitions in existing residential areas.
- No clear approach exists for transitions between light industrial and residential/industrial or residential/commercial mixed-use.
- Townhouse and multifamily standards do not do enough to ensure pedestrian-oriented design.
- The current street system, block sizes and parcel configurations do not support the envisioned walkable, permeable network in some areas.
- Site access to utilities and garbage collection has sometimes been poorly located.
- Limited design direction yields a generic product.

## **MIXED-USE BENEFITS**

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Mixing diverse land uses in a compact built environment can encourage the use of alternative transportation, improve air quality and promote social interaction. Research evidence shows a strong relationship between land use and health. (Frank, 2006 and Barton, 2009)

- Limited green features can be found in residential areas.
- Land use and zoning changes are phased in recognition that development potential is not uniform throughout the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Whereas some areas have already seen significant development, it may be some time before others do.

## **FUTURE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

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This Subarea Plan envisions a future mixed land use and development pattern that builds on existing strengths in urban form; supports the vision for the four character districts; concentrates highest-intensity development in the core of the neighborhood and provides scaled transitions to less intense areas; and is cohesive, compact and pedestrian friendly.

### **DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

The zoning requirements for Regional Growth Centers require the adequate provision of capacity for planned growth. Neighborhood zoning designations (Figure LU-2) provide development capacity adequate to accommodate neighborhood growth targets of approximately 8,900 new residents and 8,400 new jobs by 2040. The former zoning designations provided capacity for nearly 50,000 additional people and 45,000 additional jobs (Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, 2014). Subarea Plan zoning designations scale back allowable land use intensities in certain areas to support the urban structure envisioned in the plan while still providing ample development capacity to meet future growth. Under the revised zoning, development capacity is now nearly 60,000 additional people and 75,000 additional jobs.

### **CHARACTER DISTRICTS**

As discussed in the Urban Form chapter, the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood contains four distinct districts with their own mixes of land uses, design characteristics, street patterns and topography. When growth reflects and contributes to those distinctions, it is likely to heighten the district's overall cohesiveness and foster a distinct yet connected identity. For people to envision the future shapes of the districts, the City developed future scenario concepts for each. Development and change certainly may take courses that were not anticipated during the planning process, and therefore the Character Districts envisioned here are simply templates to inspire and guide the development and design choices in each district. These concepts are also partly integrated into zoning and other areas, such as transportation project design, within the City's sphere of influence.

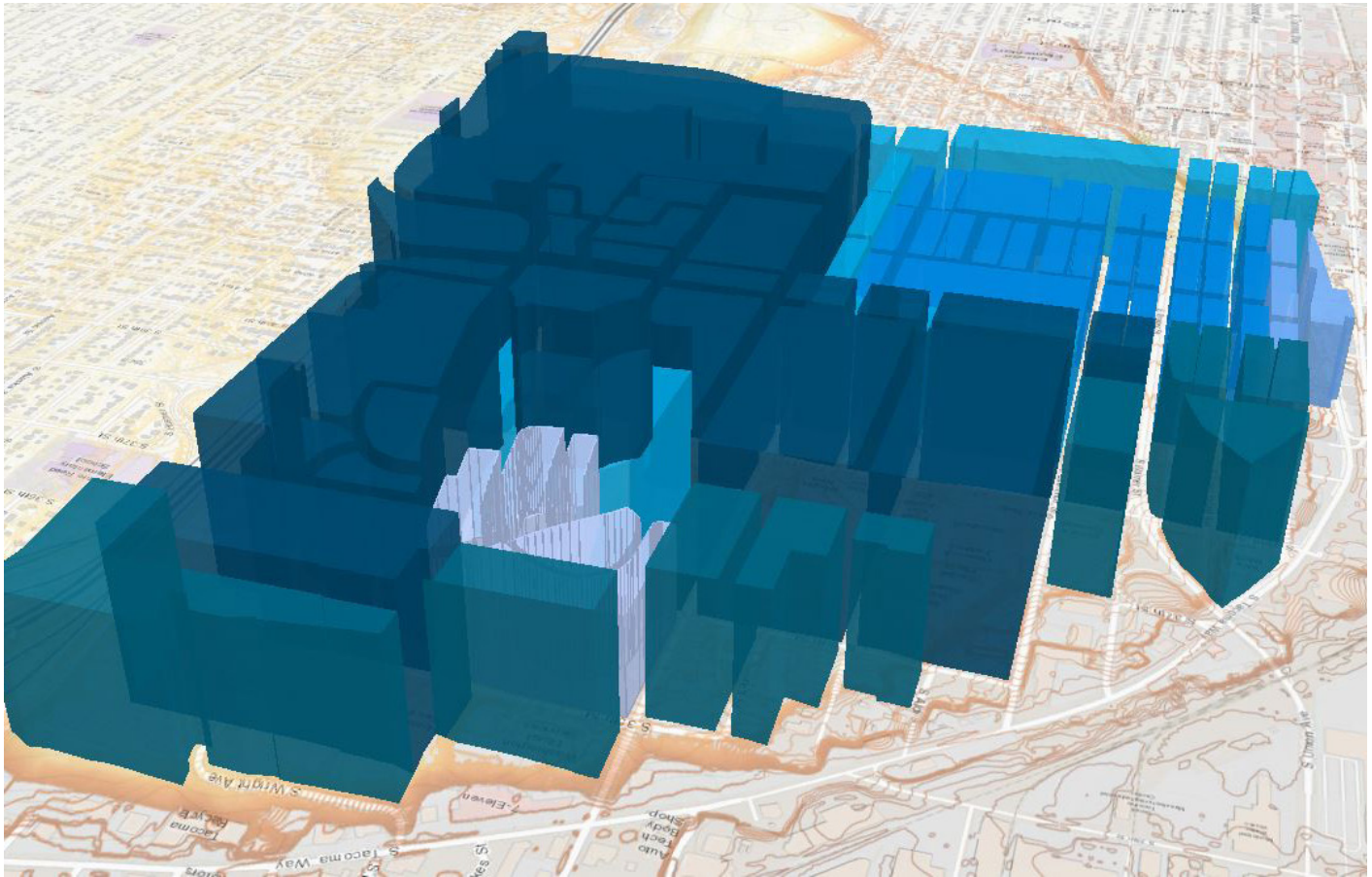


Figure UF-2. Proposed zoning capacity—Maximum building heights.

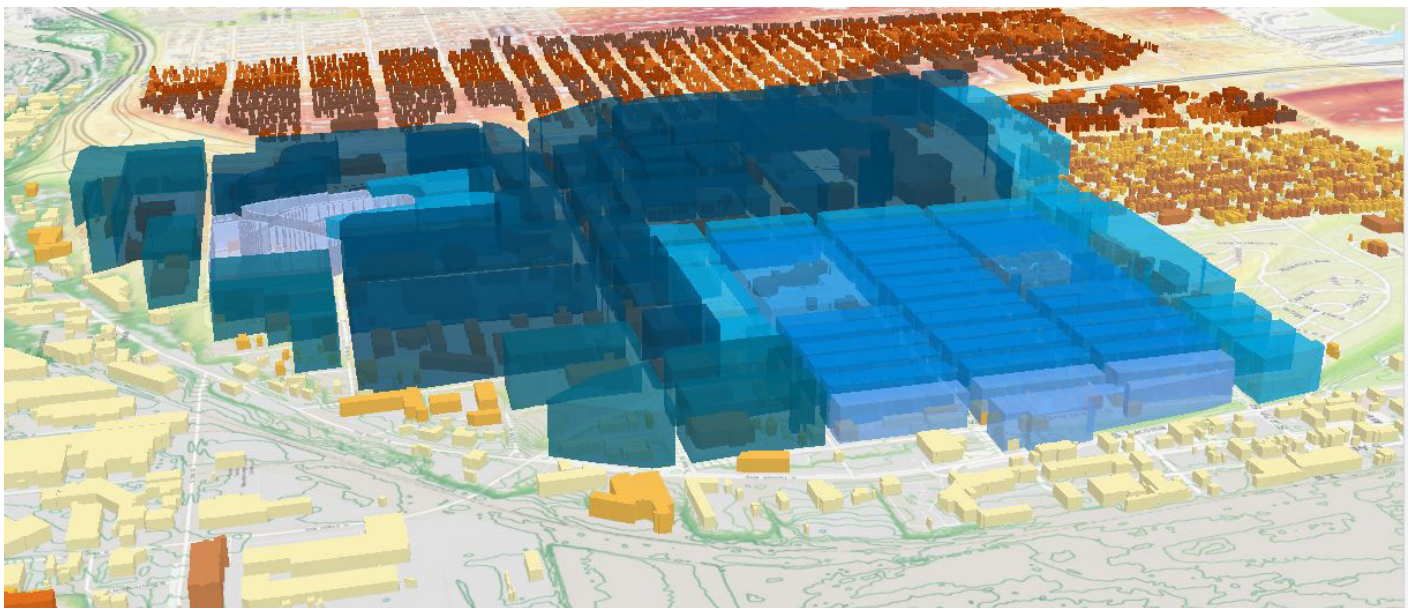


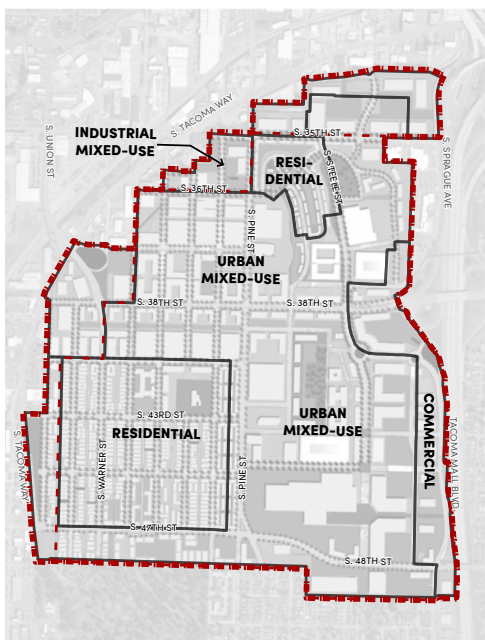
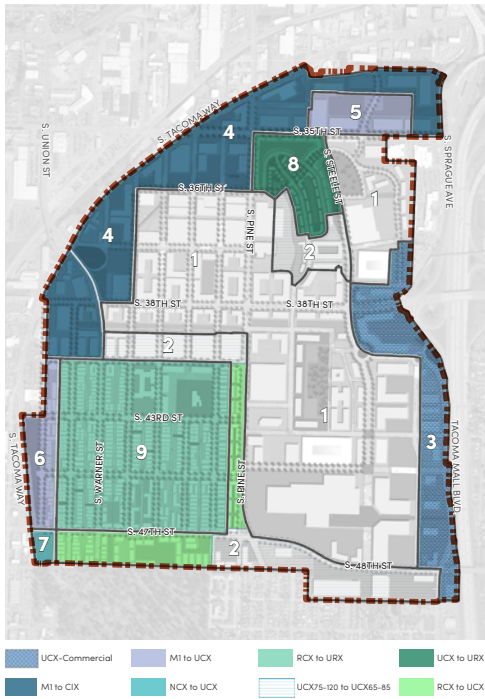
Figure UF-3. Existing development with proposed zoning capacity.

## DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The City Code's development regulations, including land use and zoning designations and development standards, control the land uses that can be built in specific areas. Development regulations in place prior to the Subarea Plan are described in the Plan's Environmental Impact Statement and were updated upon adoption of the Subarea Plan and associated ordinances. Some code changes adopted with the Subarea Plan apply specifically to the Tacoma Mall RGC, whereas others are appropriate for additional neighborhoods and applied more generally.

Recommended code updates include high-priority changes intended to ensure that near-term development actions would be generally consistent with the Subarea Plan and would not preclude implementation of future implementation actions.

The key concepts for code changes are summarized below. See Appendix LU-1 Code Changes Appendix for specifics of the proposals.



### Goal LU-1

*Ensure that future development is at a scale and intensity consistent with growth targets and contributes to a coherent and consistent urban form, connectivity and desired land use patterns.*

### **Action LU-1**

*Adopt and continue to refine land use and zoning requirements to create transitions in scale between core, transition and residential areas, including the proposed package of near-term code updates.*

The draft Subarea Plan includes a package of land use, zoning and height changes intended to catalyze high-density development consistent with the Regional Growth Center policies, support green stormwater, urban design, transportation, livability and other goals. During the planning process, several key concepts that emerged were integrated into the zoning district boundary and height changes summarized below. Proposed changes are intended to accomplish the following:

- Manage transitions and focus growth by establishing gradations in permitted height.
- Establish multifamily residential/green infrastructure areas in Madison and Lincoln Heights.
- Limit residential development in close proximity to Interstate-5 due to air quality concerns.

### **Action LU-2**

*Update and continue to refine the list of permitted land uses to provide broad flexibility while ensuring that new land uses are consistent with urban form goals.*

A review of currently permitted commercial and industrial land uses identified opportunities to better support the Subarea Plan goals or to remove restrictions that are not necessary to meet those goals.

### **Action LU-3**

*Adopt and continue to refine a Site Approval requirement to provide for new connections via private property when major redevelopment occurs.*

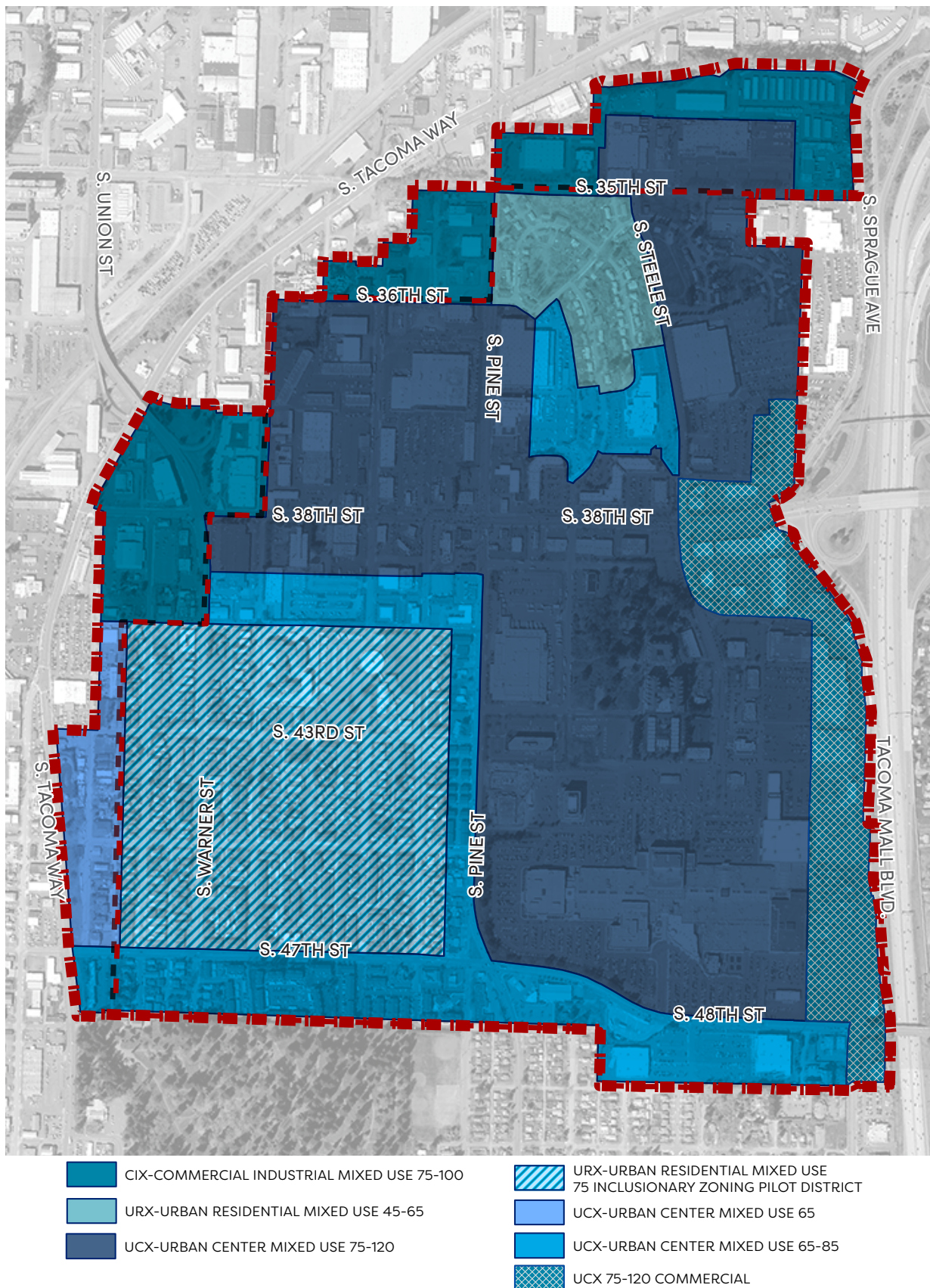


Figure UF-6. Proposed Zoning.

This proposal would require new street and pedestrian connections with major development activities on large blocks that lack through connections. Connectivity and a completed street network are foundational elements of neighborhood form, and are essential to increasing transportation choices (see the Urban Form and Transportation Choices chapters).



Photo UF-5. Twelve-story building shows the approximate scale of buildings permitted at 120 ft. height.

In association with the Subarea Plan transportation analysis, the City identified three tiers of new connections ranked by their importance to the overall transportation system. The Priority New Connections Tiers system is a foundation of the Subarea Plan transportation goals and will be part of the analysis done through the Site Approval requirement: into the Connectivity Requirement:

- **Tier 1 Connections** with specific design and location requirements that are critical for the transportation network to handle growth
- **Tier 2 Connections** that create alternative routes to existing major arterials and establish an urban street network framework of approximately 600 x 600 feet
- **Tier 3 Connections** that achieve site access and system connectivity and that promote transportation mode shift

The specific alignments of Tiers 1 and 2 will be determined through a future design process. Tier 3 connections are established flexibly with development per applicable City pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access standards.

## URBAN DESIGN

Urban form, building design, public places and quality infrastructure (public and private) are the key components of urban design. Chapter 3 lays out the vision for the cohesive neighborhood structure needed to support infill and development. This chapter adds design direction and code requirements to ensure that site and building development further support the neighborhood vision.

The Subarea Plan code changes will enable the City's capacity to guide and improve the design quality of streets, public places and buildings. In addition, the City is currently developing proposals for an Urban Design Studio that will identify additional urban design tools. This would be particularly relevant in the Mall Neighborhood.



Photo UF-6. Active building facade, Vancouver, BC.

### Action LU-4

Improve the City's capacity to promote design objectives through development of a design review program with specific guidance for this neighborhood to promote attractive, contemporary building forms, design and materials that provide a vibrant, urban experience.

### Goal LU-2

Ensure that site and building design of new development is consistent with the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood vision and urban form goals, with a particular emphasis on creating an inviting atmosphere for pedestrians.

## Action LU-5

Update and continue to refine commercial and residential site design, building design and landscaping standards, including the proposed near-term updates, to ensure that future development contributes to an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment.

### NEAR-TERM UPDATES

#### Drive-Through Design Standards

Increase design requirements applicable to drive-throughs to better integrate them into the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and reduce impacts to the pedestrian environment.



Photo UF-7. Vegetative screen drive-through.

#### Townhouse & Multifamily Design Standards

Modify the City's existing townhouse design standards to promote consolidated locations for garbage collection, enhance requirements for pedestrian entrances and design features oriented toward the street, and limit townhouse front doors facing alleys, unless the alley is fully paved and improved with a continuous sidewalk on one side, and street trees on one side.

#### Minimum Residential Density Flexibility

Relax existing minimum density requirements in some areas, in order to allow single-family housing infill on existing, developed sites that does not fully comply with minimum density requirements.

#### Landscaping

Require street tree planting for 2 and 3-family development in order to promote an attractive residential character and meet environmental goals.



Photo UF-8. An attractive shared vehicular and pedestrian accessway.



Photo UF-9. An attractive building to sidewalk interface.

## Action LU-6

*Adopt and continue to refine Pedestrian Street designations to establish the corridors where pedestrian environment is a higher priority.*

This action adds streets to the City's existing Pedestrian Street designations. Street design and building design work together to shape the pedestrian environment. Pedestrian Streets designated in the Land Use Code call for building and site design features that enhance the pedestrian environment.

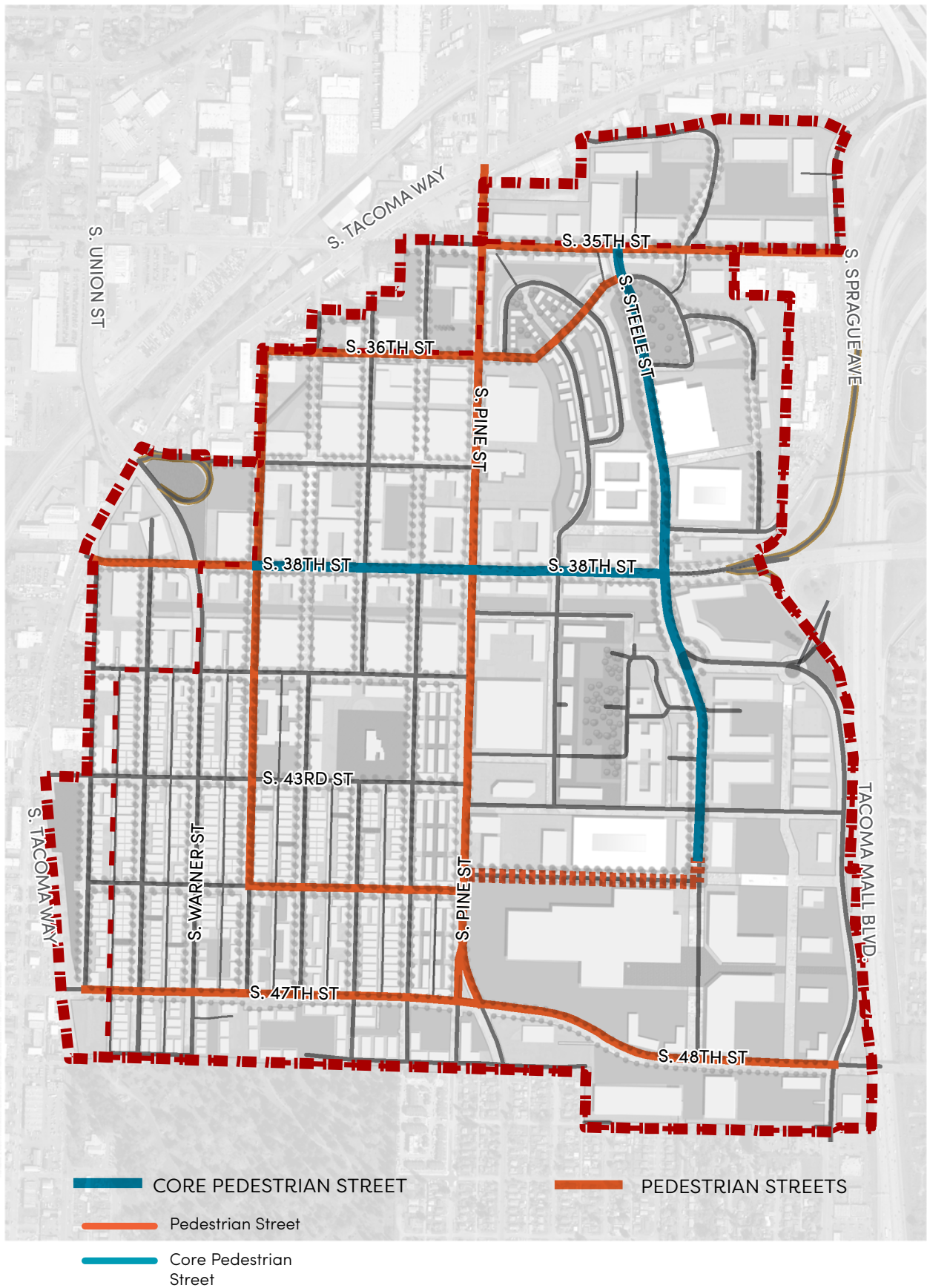


Figure UF-7. Proposed pedestrian street designation.

## **FUTURE REVIEW OF BOUNDARIES**

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Several sites immediately adjacent to the expanded the RGC boundaries were not included at this time but could potentially be added in the future. The sites are currently operated for auto sales and were deemed less compatible with the urban vision early in the process. In the future, the RGC boundaries should be revisited, and these sites should be assessed at that time.

### **Action LU-7**

Update and continue to refine the City code related to the environment and stormwater to promote innovation and provide for a safe and healthy environment, including near-term updates.

### **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District**

Minor revisions to the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) regulations in order to clarify current circumstances and requirements for stormwater infiltration within the STGPD.

### **GOAL LU-3**

***Provide height and development incentives to encourage the provision of public benefits and innovation with development proposals.***

### **Action LU-8**

*Update and continue to refine the Height bonus options in the Mall Neighborhood to reflect community priorities.*

### **Action LU-9**

*Establish and continue to refine an optional Development Regulation Agreement process for larger parcels providing public benefits, with criteria tailored to the Mall Neighborhood.*

## **REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER BOUNDARIES**

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The Regional Growth Center boundary currently runs south and west of S. Tacoma Way, and thus the area proposed for incorporation into the RGC is light industrial (M-1). It is also within the South Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial Center. Since designating the center in 1995, the City has shifted the boundary between the center and the industrial area south and west of South Tacoma Way (the currently proposed boundary). It originally encompassed the entire area now proposed for inclusion in the Center. However, current land use patterns are mixed, and the current boundary ignores topography. An existing grade change could serve as a natural transition from urban mixed-use and commercial to light industrial. These factors make the transition area ambiguous and contribute in some areas to an under-utilization of land within that area.

It is difficult to predict today how future development will trend in the transition area. In some locations, there are established light industrial uses, while in others the

character more closely reflects the urban development patterns within the current RGC. In its current configuration, there is little opportunity to provide a meaningful land use and character transition between the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center and the South Tacoma Way Manufacturing/Industrial Center. Furthermore, though there is a mix of residential, commercial and light industrial uses, existing regulations lack design controls which could help these uses coexist in a complementary manner.

With proper design standards, these land uses can be complementary and contribute to a unique urban character. The RGC expansion allows a broad range of land uses while ensuring more compatibility through application of the Mixed-Use Centers design standards.



Photo UF-10. Loft infill development.

### **Goal LU-4**

*Clarify distinctions and strengthen transitions between the Regional Growth Center and South Tacoma Way Manufacturing and Industrial Center boundaries.*

### **Action LU-10**

*Revise and periodically reassess the RGC boundary to manage the transition between the mixed-use Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and the industrial character of the Manufacturing and Industrial Center.*

## INDUSTRIAL LAND

Expanding the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's RGC boundary as shown in Figure LU-4 would reduce the City's total industrial-zoned land. The majority of land in the RGC's proposed 90-acre expansion is currently zoned M-1. Of this, 56 acres are part of the South Tacoma Manufacturing/Industrial Center. The Subarea Plan proposes to rezone these lands to Urban Center Mixed-Use (UCX) and Commercial Industrial Mixed-Use (CIX) zoning designations.

The City currently has sufficient industrial land capacity. According to analysis conducted by the City in 2013, the Tideflats Manufacturing/Industrial Center has capacity for 57,800 jobs and the South Tacoma Way Manufacturing/Industrial Center has capacity for 22,300 jobs. Each of these centers is targeted for 7,600 jobs by 2040, well within available capacity. The South Tacoma Way Manufacturing/Industrial Center is 690 acres, and rezoning 56 acres for other neighborhood uses would not be a major reduction in size. Furthermore, the CIX zoning designation does not directly reduce industrial capacity since light industrial land uses are permitted within that district.

## COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Development regulations are a tool that cities can use to try to direct growth, which can have significant impacts on the future use of property. Therefore, they must be thoughtfully constructed to avoid negative impacts to current businesses and activities. Federal law protects property owners by prohibiting taking of private property without just compensation. Ultimately, it is property owners and business investment that can transform future visions into realities. Tacoma is committed to working collaboratively with property owners and developers to achieve the mutual interests of the whole community.

The City recognizes the limitations of public planning processes to foresee the shape of future development with any precision. The land use and zoning framework has been crafted to be directive only as necessary to achieve the Subarea Plan vision, and otherwise to leave flexibility for property owners, businesses and developers to pursue their own vision for the future of their properties.

### **GOAL LU-5**

***Establish collaboration and dialogue with neighborhood stakeholders to promote ongoing improvements to the City's development review processes.***

### **Action LU-11**

*Engage broadly with stakeholders to consider additional steps in the future as the neighborhood grows.*

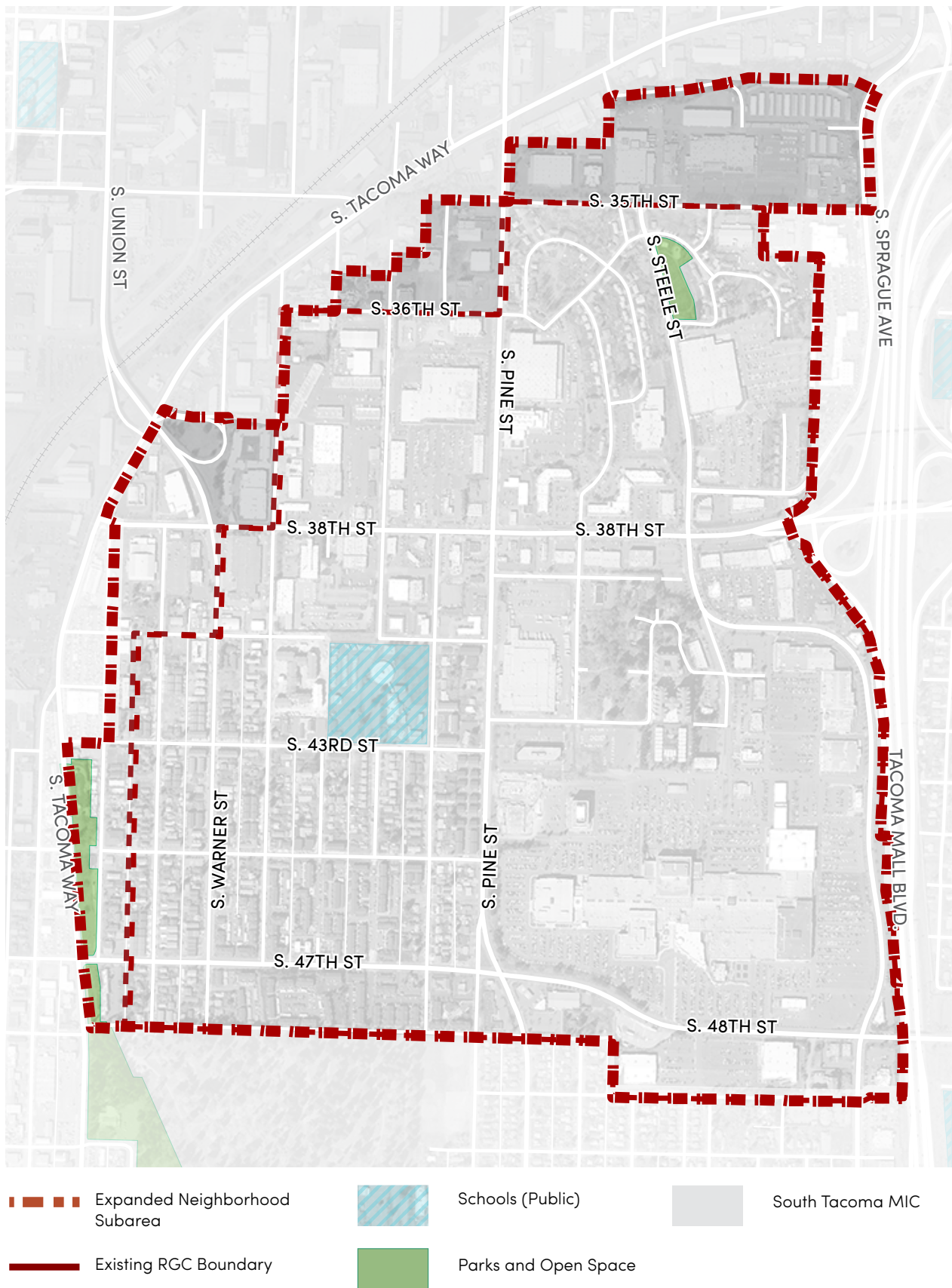


Figure UF-8. Proposed Tacoma Mall Neighborhood RGC boundary.

In the future the City may consider further code changes to achieve the community's vision for the neighborhood. A more comprehensive future update could provide greater efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing the objectives of the Subarea Plan. Recommended elements for this code update include

- a hybrid form-based code for the neighborhood
- streamlined bulk and materials standards that support a more modern, contemporary, Northwest design aesthetic
- updated bonuses for high priority urban structure elements such as street and pedestrian connections and parks
- an overlay district for a future high-capacity transit station

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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- Activity units (AUs) per acre. Regional Growth Centers are required to plan for a minimum 45 AUs/acre by 2040.

## **REFERENCES**

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# HOUSING

## CHAPTER 5



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 5



# HOUSING

## CONTENTS

- Housing Goal
- Introduction
- Housing Choice
- Housing Affordability
- Performance Measures
- References

## HOUSING QUALITY BENEFITS

Improvements in housing quality can promote general and mental health. Making housing affordable can address homelessness, reduce involuntary displacement and improve mental well-being. (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2014; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011; America's Essential Hospitals 2014)

## HOUSING GOAL

*Ensure a wide range of quality housing types and costs are available to meet the diverse needs of residents at different stages of their lives, with small and large household sizes, and with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides goals and actions for maintaining and expanding housing options in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Access to housing provides the opportunities and security that people need to live healthy and successful lives. Cities can influence housing markets using tools such as development regulations, financing options and partnerships, though many aspects of markets are outside their control. This chapter provides a framework for supporting a fair and equitable housing market in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood consistent with guidance provided in Chapters 4—Land Use and 8—Community Vitality, the Housing element of the City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan, and regional policy guidance.

**Tacoma Table T-1. Housing Units by Type**

TYPE	PERCENTAGE, ALL HOUSING UNITS
Multifamily	
Low-Rise Apartments (3 stories or fewer)	44
Mid- to High-Rise Apartments (4 stories or more)	26
Multifamily 4-8 Units (2 stories or fewer)	6
TOTAL MULTIFAMILY	76
Single-Family	
Duplex/Triplex	13
Detached	8
Townhome	3
TOTAL SINGLE-FAMILY	24

Source: Community Attributes, 2016

## HOUSING GROWTH TARGETS

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The City is planning for an additional 4,444 new housing units by the year 2040 to accommodate about three times the current population for a total of over 12,000 residents.

## HOUSING CHOICE

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The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood has roughly 1,900 housing units, representing about 2% of the City's housing stock (PSRC, 2014). Over three-quarters are multifamily as shown in Table H-1. In the early- to mid-1900s, single-family detached was the primary housing built. Since then, multifamily housing and single-family attached housing types such as duplexes, triplexes and townhomes have become more common (CAI, 2016). Current City permitting trends indicate continued growth in multifamily housing. Housing stock is concentrated in the Madison and Lincoln Heights residential areas and portions of the Mall District. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood has a longstanding reputation for moderately and affordably priced housing that has attracted many current residents to the area.

### **Goal H-1**

*Maintain and broaden the range of housing types within the neighborhood consistent with land use and urban design goals and growth targets.*

The land use and zoning designations described in Chapter 4—Land Use provide a framework for future development in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. They ensure sufficient development capacity to meet the City's 2040 housing growth targets. The transit-ready urban structure called for in Chapter 3—Urban Form, and the complete neighborhood services and amenities called for in Chapter 8—Community Vitality, promote expanded urban housing options with lower transportation costs. This includes a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of Tacoma Mall Neighborhood residents of different ages, family sizes, income levels and housing preferences.

### **Action H-1**

*Take steps, including zoning and design standard updates and proactive infrastructure development, to promote attractive, healthy and livable housing and mixed-use development consistent with the neighborhood vision.*

The Madison and the Lincoln Heights Districts are the two established residential neighborhoods within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The Madison neighborhood has existed since the early 1900s. Over time, the mix of housing types has developed to include single-family detached and attached homes, low-rise apartments and group housing

for seniors. The Lincoln Heights neighborhood, developed following World War II, is characterized by modest single-family detached and attached homes. It was partially redeveloped with commercial and public uses, such as Costco and Police Department facilities, but a core residential area remains centered around Lincoln Heights Park. The zoning designations called for in Chapter 4—Land Use are designed to preserve these areas as residential districts within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.



Photo H-1. Urban-scale apartment building.



Photo H-2. Madison townhouses lacking a strong street/sidewalk connection.

## Action H-2

*Use a variety of incentives and regulations to promote incorporation of public benefits including community spaces, green features and other amenities within housing developments.*

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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Housing costs in the study area are low compared with those of the City and Pierce County, with 84% of housing units costing below \$1,500 per month, compared with 66% in the City and 60% in the County (CAI, 2016). The majority of residents rent, with approximately 17% owning homes. Most renters pay under \$1,000 per month in combined rent and utility payments (PSRC, 2014). Average rental rates could increase in the future with the addition of new luxury apartment developments such as the Pacifica and the Apex.



Photo H-3. Attractive urban townhouses in Cambridge, MA.

Despite comparatively low housing costs, nearly half of residents are cost burdened. Neighborhood average income levels are lower than those in the City and County, and roughly a quarter of households in the study area are below the poverty level (PSRC, 2014).

The generally accepted definition of affordability is that a household spends no more than 30% of its annual gross income on housing, including utilities. Beyond this level, a household is considered cost burdened. As shown in Table

H-2, 46% of study area households spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Of that 46%, over half spend more than 50% of their income on housing. This suggests the need for additional affordable housing in the study area, including housing affordable for very-low-income households, defined as households that earn less than 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). Career development and family support services in the study area may also need to be increased.

**Tacoma Table T-2. Income Spent on Housing**

<b>HOUSING COSTS AS % OF GROSS INCOME</b>				
	30% or Less	30%–50%	> 50%	Not Computed
Percentage of Households	48	19	27	5

Source: PSRC Regional Centers Monitoring Report, 2014

With continued growth in Tacoma and the region, housing costs are likely to increase over time in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood even if it remains affordable compared with the region overall. Furthermore, the neighborhood improvements and investments called for in the Plan could ultimately contribute to such an increase while also improving livability and opportunities for residents. As a result, proactive steps are needed to prevent involuntary displacement of low- and very-low-income households.



Photo H-4. Accessible townhouses  
While individual units have internal staircases, each front door is fully accessible.

## HEIGHT BONUS PROGRAM

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The code changes proposed for adoption with the Subarea Plan include the expansion of options available for height bonuses to include the Mixed-Use Centers bonus options, including an affordable housing option.

### **Goal H-2**

*Maintain a range of affordable housing costs in the neighborhood.*

The City of Tacoma has adopted strong policy guidance to promote a mix of housing costs and types in each neighborhood. City and regional policies include guidance for providing access to affordable housing in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Policy H-4.2 of Tacoma's 2040 Comprehensive Plan calls for at least 25% of City housing growth to be affordable for households earning 80% of AMI or less. This is consistent with the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies and Multi-County Planning Policies in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040. Given the neighborhood's population growth targets, roughly 1,000 of the new housing units constructed between now and 2040 would need to be affordable for households earning 80% of AMI or less. A significant proportion of households in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, however, earn less than 50% of AMI. These households are at higher risk of involuntary displacement, and specific focus is needed to address their needs.

The City can take a range of actions to promote housing affordability including planning, regulatory actions, and financing approaches to funding housing development. Because the great majority of housing is developed by public and private housing developers, City engagement with those housing partners is essential to achieving affordability goals.

### **Action H-3**

*Collaborate with housing partners to ensure that at least 25% of new housing is affordable for households earning 80% or less of Pierce County AMI and at least 12.5% is affordable to households earning 50% of AMI or less.*

Potential actions could include incorporating further affordable housing incentives into Tacoma's development regulations, identifying target markets and housing products that would be attractive to those markets and cost-effective for developers and housing partners to build, and identifying potential development sites.

### **Action H-4**

*Provide development incentives, including optional height bonuses, in exchange for incorporating affordable housing.*



Photo H-5. An attractive internal court.



Photo H-6. Playful street furniture attracts people to linger.



Photo H-7. The Vintage at Tacoma, Madison District.



Photo H-8. Cascade Park Gardens, Madison District.

## CURRENT HOUSING COSTS

As of publication of this Plan, approximate costs for rental housing within the Subarea are as follows:

- Approximately 90% of rental units are affordable to households earning 80% or less of AMI.
- Approximately 50% of rental units are affordable to households earning 50% or less of AMI.

## Action H-5

*Seek input to ensure that development standards make it simple and cost-effective to build attractive, contemporary housing units that are also affordably priced.*

Currently, two developments offer affordable and special needs housing in the neighborhood—the Vintage at Tacoma and Cascade Park Gardens, with both located in the Madison District. The Vintage at Tacoma has 230 units for seniors over 55 years old, while Cascade Park Gardens has 114 units. In addition to providing affordable housing units for seniors, Cascade Park Gardens also offers memory care and assisted living services for people with disabilities. Although these residential communities provide affordable housing for seniors, securing affordable housing for residents in every age cohort is an important aspect of housing within the Plan.

## Action H-6

*Work with housing providers and partners to build and maintain very-low income and special needs housing.*

## Action H-7

*Monitor neighborhood-wide housing costs and take action to ensure that at least 50% of housing units remain affordable to households earning 80% or less of Pierce County AMI and 25% are affordable for those earning 50% of AMI or less.*

## Action H-8

*Work with housing partners to provide financial assistance to low- and very-low-income households who are struggling to stay in their homes.*

The cost of housing is a neighborhood, citywide and regional issue. The Plan includes the specific steps listed above, operating at the neighborhood level. However, citywide action is essential for making a more significant positive impact on housing affordability. The City can consider a range of actions including zoning to promote housing development, incentives or requirements to incorporate affordable housing, and funding and financing options that create incentives, subsidize or fully fund affordable housing projects.

One tool currently used by the City is the Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program, which offers property tax exemptions for multifamily projects—8 years for projects with market rents and 12 years for projects incorporating

## **AFFORDABILITY TARGETS**

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The Plan includes different affordability targets for construction of new housing than for overall percentage of the neighborhood. The overall neighborhood target is twice that of new construction. The reason for this is to recognize that one of the most effective ways to retain affordability in the neighborhood is likely to retain existing affordable units.

affordable housing. Action H-4 above links the 12-year MFTE program to an optional height bonus. The current MFTE program requires that 20% of new housing units are affordable for households earning up to 80% of AMI. As discussed above, in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood the most pressing need is for households that earn less than 50% of AMI. To address this, future actions could modify the MFTE program to target those lower-income households or increase the required percentage of affordable units.

### **Action H-9**

Conduct a focused study of available and effective options to prevent involuntary displacement of residents along with maintaining housing affordability and choice.

### **Action H-10**

*Initiate citywide actions to provide for a range of housing costs in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and citywide, including updates to affordable housing incentives and requirements and increased and new funding and financing tools.*

*As this Plan is being finalized, the City is initiating an Affordable Housing Action Strategy effort which will study a broad range of policy options. As part of that effort, the needs and opportunities of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood should be integrated and should be*

### **Action H-11**

*Establish and continue to refine a mandatory inclusionary zoning requirement in the residential core area of the Madison District.*

*Inclusionary zoning is a market-based approach that exchanges additional density or other incentives to offset the cost of providing affordable housing as part of developments.*



Photo H-9. Salishan Gardens, Tacoma, Washington (photo courtesy of Sitts & Hill Engineers, Inc.).

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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- 25% of new construction is affordable for households earning 80% of AMI
- 12.5% of new construction is affordable for households earning 50% of AMI
- 50% of the neighborhood is affordable for households earning 80% of AMI
- 25% of the neighborhood is affordable for households earning 50% of AMI

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Vintage at Tacoma, August 2015, Personal communication with staff.



# TRANSPORTATION

## CHAPTER 6



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 6



# TRANSPORTATION

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Transportation Choices Goal
Introduction
Transportation Master Plan
Supporting Community Goals
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Transportation for All Travelers
Serving Multiple Objectives
Implementation
Key Transportation Projects
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## TRANSPORTATION CHOICES GOAL

*The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood offers a broad range of high-quality mobility options suitable for a compact, dense urban center and retail destination, including frequent and attractive transit service, safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian facilities and convenient vehicular access.*

## INTRODUCTION

Improving transportation choice in the Mall Neighborhood is a major need and a necessity for achieving the community's goals for the neighborhood. Today the neighborhood is structured primarily for automobile travel, with gaps and barriers in the pedestrian system and few bicycle accommodations. The existing active transit center is located at the edge of the neighborhood, thus limiting ridership and development opportunities.

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan promotes sustainable development in a more compact urban form. This transition in the land use pattern can only be accomplished by a complementary redesign of the transportation system. The long-range goal of this reenvisioned transportation system is to redevelop today's large auto-oriented blocks into an interconnected multimodal network and improve regional connections to support the area's role as a Regional Growth Center (RGC).

Current travel patterns reflect the transportation system's auto orientation. Current commute-mode shares in the Tacoma Mall area are 72% single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs), 8% high-occupancy vehicles, 5% transit, and 4% walk and bicycle. Of those trips, 11% were short internal vehicle trips. In other words, nearly three-quarters of all trips made to or from the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood are via the least-efficient and least-sustainable mode, SOV. The long-term vision for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood paints a different and more desirable picture. Because vehicular travel will always play a substantial role in the area, this Plan envisions the transition to a multimodal network while still maintaining and improving vehicular capacity.



Photo T-1. Current street design prioritizes cars, not people.

Investing in the transportation system will provide more travel choices for residents, employees, and visitors of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The improved mobility choices will help attract high-quality mixed-use urban development that in turn supports further sustainable transportation gains. The Subarea Plan sets in motion this cycle of beneficial land use and transportation development. Greater transportation choices and a diverse mixed-use neighborhood are important characteristics sought by millennials and retiring baby-boomers, two of the fastest-growing demographic groups in the region.

While the Subarea Plan provides these benefits to the Tacoma Mall area, auto travel and truck access are still critical to the neighborhood's success. With both neighborhood and regional traffic growth, access and congestion will become substantial issues for autos, trucks, and buses in the absence of additional state or federal highway improvements. In particular, if the I-5 direct access ramp were not constructed, Tacoma Mall area access would become difficult because of congestion at the intersection of S. Steele St and S. 38th St. The ramp would pull a critical volume of auto traffic away from that intersection, thus reducing congestion and allowing for improved access to the subarea.



Figure T-1. Subarea I-5 traffic offramp (See Appendix T-1).

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

The Subarea Plan would result in substantial improvements to the transportation system. The transportation analysis identified deficiencies that would develop in intersection operations, the pedestrian system, and the bicycle system by 2040 if the Subarea Plan were not enacted. Projects outlined in the Subarea Plan would address those deficiencies by providing new pedestrian and bicycle facilities and improving street grid connectivity within the study area. Subarea Plan actions should also result in a lower SOV-mode share that will translate to lower vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than would occur without plan actions.

To achieve these benefits, the City will pursue the actions outlined in this document and summarized below.

- **Partnerships.** Develop partnerships with other agencies, neighborhoods, and stakeholders to fund infrastructure improvements, in particular with WSDOT to plan and fund the I-5 Direct Access ramp.
- **Transportation system.** Pursue a sustainable transportation system by investing in improvements to

Transportation planning decisions impact public health in three main ways: through traffic crashes, vehicle pollution, and physical activity. (Litman, T, 2003 and 2016).

alternate modes, transportation demand management programs and maintenance of existing facilities.

- **Land use.** Accommodate future growth through land use patterns having the density and mix to support a vibrant multimodal transportation system.
- **Connectivity.** Build a street network with increased connectivity, a robust grid to break up large blocks, and a focus on accommodating all surface transportation modes safely.
- **Parking.** Revise parking policies within the subarea as demand increases.

### BENEFITS OF THE PLAN

A key outcome of the Subarea Plan is a change in how people travel. Ample research documents that dense, mixed-use areas with strong transit connections and a well-connected grid of pedestrian and bicycle paths result in less overall vehicular travel. Specific examples are outlined below:

- **Urban form benefits.** Improving connectivity by breaking up large blocks and filling in missing sidewalk connections within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood will result in benefits to the urban form. A more grid-like urban form with smaller blocks makes walking and bicycling more convenient and reduces the length of car trips by creating a less-circuitous route. Increased intersection density provides network visibility choice and direct routes for all modes of travel.
- **Improved connectivity and access creates value for individual properties.** Assuming that visible street frontage is considered the most desirable for mixed-use and commercial development, creating smaller blocks from larger ones yields increased street parcel frontage that is street-visible. Interior pads and areas with limited street frontage typically command lower lease rates than visible sites with direct access. Therefore, increased site access also increases value.
- **Economic development.** The proposed street network improves access to more properties. Increased property access and visibility will create value throughout the neighborhood for individual properties, but also cumulatively to the district. As a district, the neighborhood will ultimately become more marketable and desirable. Many demand management strategies can provide direct economic benefits, such as congestion reduction, facility cost savings, and vehicle cost savings. This is particularly true of locations near high-capacity transit stations, where reduced private car usage and ownership make housing more affordable.



Photo T-2. Many streets are unwelcoming to pedestrians.



Photo T-3. An example of an attractive, pedestrian-oriented sidewalk.

- **Travel behavior.** Denser development with better diversity of uses and a pedestrian/bicycle friendly network will allow residents and employees to meet more of their daily needs within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and thus reduce car travel to other locations. This results in fewer and shorter vehicle trips. Implementation of the Subarea Plan would result in a 20% drop in SOV-mode share, tripling of the pedestrian/bicycle mode share, and near doubling of the transit-mode share. Without action from the City to advance the Subarea Plan, even modest new development combined with the existing high SOV-trip rate could result in substantial traffic congestion and further hinder further development of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.
- **Health benefits.** Providing alternative transportation and complete streets to connect diverse land uses throughout the neighborhood can promote physical health and social well-being, thus bringing in “free” health benefits. This Subarea Plan gives health a higher priority in transportation planning that would emphasize active transportation, injury reduction, public transit, and mobility management strategies, particularly those that increase non-motorized travel.
- **Environmental benefits.** Fewer, shorter vehicle trips translate to lower VMT and in turn lower GHG emissions. Reducing single-occupant vehicle trips results in the same reduction in GHG emissions as achieved by planting more than 150,000 new trees. This directly aligns with the City’s sustainability goals.

## TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

To achieve a more sustainable transportation outcome, this plan begins with the concepts and goals outlined in the City’s Transportation Master Plan (TMP). While the TMP outlines a citywide strategy to transform Tacoma into a community with more transportation choices and better mobility, more detail is needed at the neighborhood level. This Subarea Plan provides the detail of how the TMP is implemented in this important neighborhood. By implementing the TMP at the neighborhood level, Tacoma will provide transportation infrastructure that complements the urban form, land use and other Subarea Plan goals, consistent with the city and regional planning goals .

These proposals were informed by a transportation-modeling analysis demonstrating their benefits. The technical and methodological analyses are contained in the EIS Transportation chapter.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

While the Tacoma TMP lays out the vision for the City, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) identifies the regional vision in two documents, *Transportation 2040* and *Vision 2040*.

*Vision 2040* is a regional strategy prepared by the PSRC to accommodate projected growth in the Puget Sound region, and *Transportation 2040* is a regional action plan that identifies the transportation investments needed to serve that growth. A key element of *Vision 2040* is focusing future growth into dense, walkable, mixed-use RGCs, of which Tacoma has two—Downtown and the Tacoma Mall Area. These RGCs are high-priority locations for transportation investments that will reduce VMT and GHG.

The Subarea Plan calls for creating a denser and more diverse mix of land uses with a supporting transportation plan that includes improvements to the street network to increase connectivity, provide greater pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and improve access to transit, thereby improving mobility for all on a balanced transportation network. The Subarea Plan translates overarching citywide and regional land use and transportation goals into specific implementable actions for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.



Photo T-4. Incomplete sidewalk in the Madison District.

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GOALS

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Transportation is connected in multiple ways to other elements of the Plan. With city investment, a key principle is that each action should achieve multiple goals. Such a strategy is cost-effective and recognizes that streets play many roles—not just moving traffic. Successful transportation access establishes an area’s character, shapes resident and visitor experiences, helps protect the environment and promotes public health and supports business and the economy.

### **Goal T-1**

*Build a transportation network that supports and reinforces the land use, urban design, economic development, environmental, livability and public health goals of the Subarea Plan.*

### **LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION**

Land use type, intensity and distribution resulting from development greatly influence travel choices and decisions about placement of and investments in transportation facilities. Because land use and transportation are fundamentally linked, transportation facilities should be designed to meet both community desires and federal, state, regional and local standards for functionality, safety, service and efficiency. Accommodating a large percentage of future growth through transit-oriented development (TOD) and transit-supportive amenities will help create a safer, more comfortable pedestrian environment, encourage alternative transportation, promote active living and enhance resident quality of life. The transportation system should also be designed to balance livability objectives with the industrial activities that make up an important economic engine within the Subarea.

### **Action T-1**

*Accommodate future growth through development of a multimodal neighborhood transportation network designed to reduce reliance on SOVs.*

### **MULTIMODAL SYSTEM**

An efficient multimodal system accommodates the need for safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Effective transportation system management measures should be in place to support safe and efficient travel for all users. This includes alternatives such as skateboards, roller skates and scooters. Tacoma recognizes that transportation needs and travel choices may change over time as new alternatives become available. The City further acknowledges that goods movement is critical to Tacoma’s economic development and well-being.



Photo T-5. Sound Transit bus.

## **Action T-2**

*Design the transportation system to balance livability with retail and employment objectives by maintaining acceptable congestion levels while enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle environment.*

## **Action T-3**

*Build the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood transportation network using a “layered network” that focuses on how the subarea transportation network can function as a system to meet the needs of all users.*

## **Action T-4**

*Continue to utilize citywide SEPA review thresholds to trigger a transportation impacts assessment and conditions when warranted, at least until such time as an alternative process is in place to address the transportation impacts of development.*

## **COMPLETE AND CONNECTED STREET NETWORK**

---

The current large-block development pattern is a barrier to creating the urban vision for the neighborhood. Addressing this issue is fundamental to all plan goals including the safety, health and well-being of residents and the ability to promote growth and investment. However, it is important to recognize that the current urban form and transportation system works for many existing businesses that play important community roles. Change should therefore be accomplished in a sensitive manner that avoids negative impacts to existing businesses. Investments should create opportunities and add value, thus promoting the transition from an auto-oriented area to one that is complete and connected.

## **Goal T-2**

*Build a complete and connected transportation network for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.*

## **COMPLETE STREETS**

Complete Streets is a nationally recognized term referring to streets and sidewalks that are designed, operated and maintained to enable safe and convenient access and travel for multiple users—pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and people of all ages and abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers. The City’s Complete Streets policy states that the City will develop and maintain a safe, accessible, and clean transportation network that accommodates all users,

whether moving by an active mode, transit, truck or car, while recognizing that not all streets provide the same quality of travel experience.

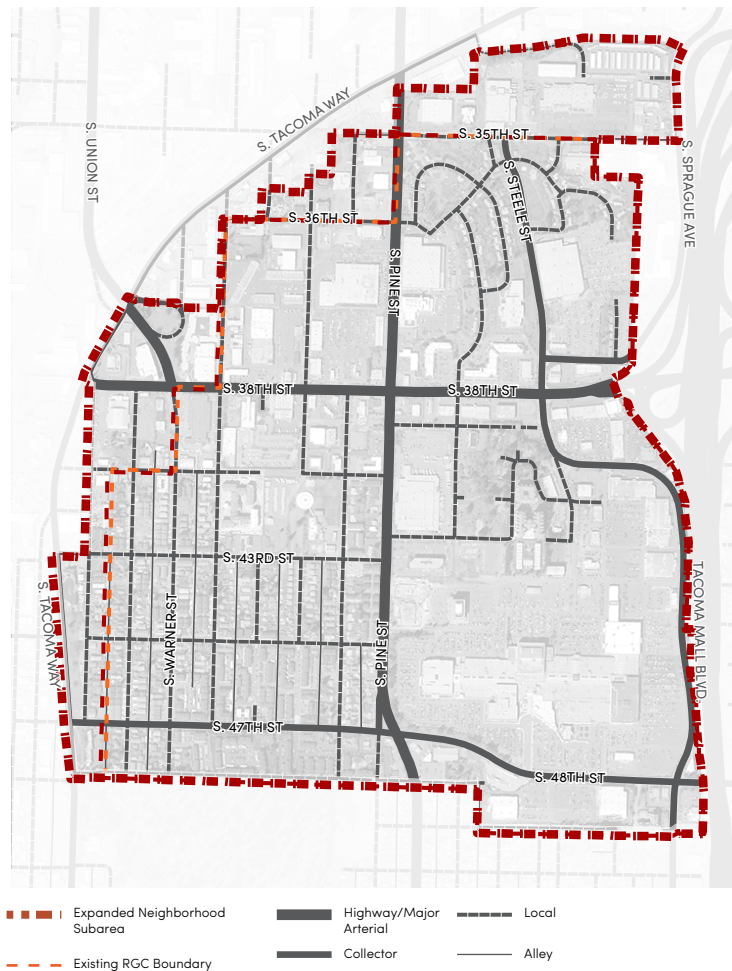


Figure T-2. Map of existing street network.

Figure T-2 classifies roads within the subarea into different Complete Streets typologies. The corresponding typology cross sections are shown in Figure T-3. These Complete Streets are designed to take advantage of the major purposes of each roadway while accommodating all modes within the existing rights-of-way on most streets. The cross sections in Figure T-3 are based on Tacoma’s adopted Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Centers. They are designed with substantial flexibility for accommodating existing conditions, right-of-way limitations, and specific project needs.

The Subarea Plan also includes proposed street layouts and street-mix views of three key corridors in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood: Steele Street, Tacoma Mall Boulevard and 38th Street. These design concepts further refine Complete Streets principles for these priority corridors to inform and spur implementation of future improvements. The three corridor conceptual designs are provided in Figure T-4.

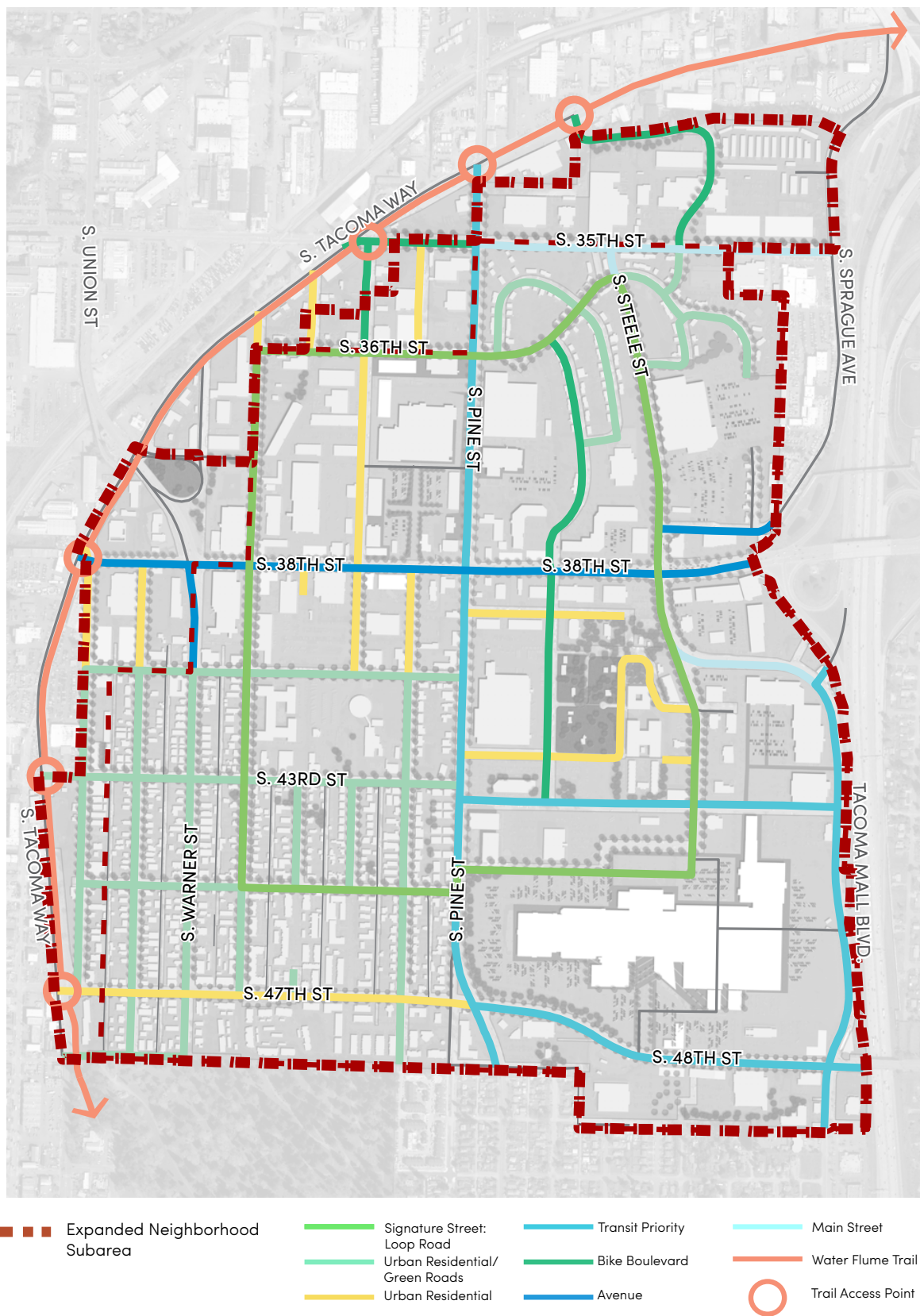
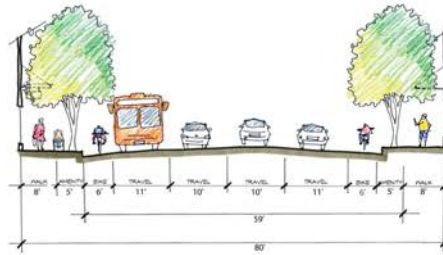
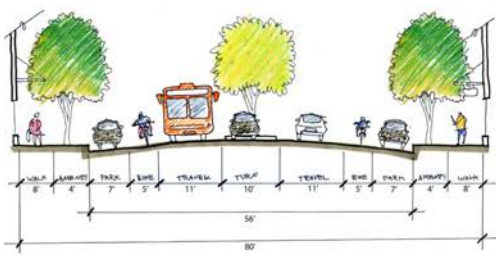
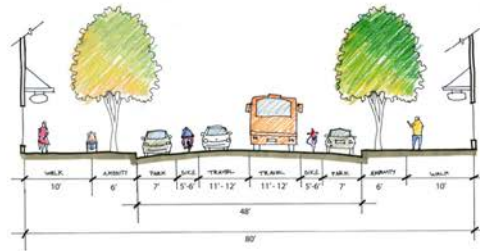
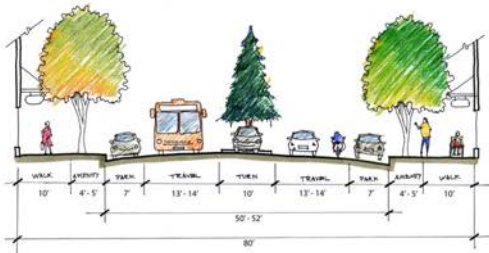


Figure T-3. Subarea Complete Streets typologies.

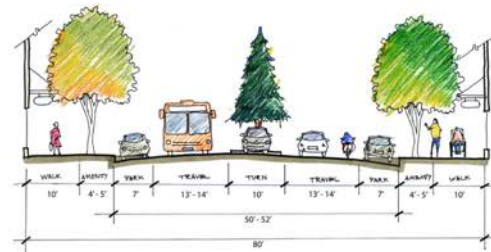
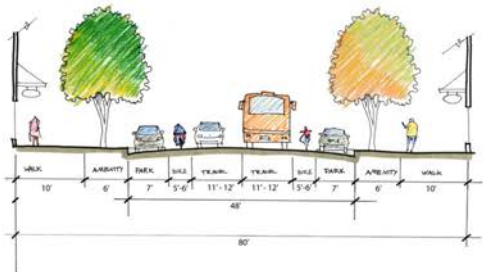
Avenue Typology, 3- and 4-lane (no parking)



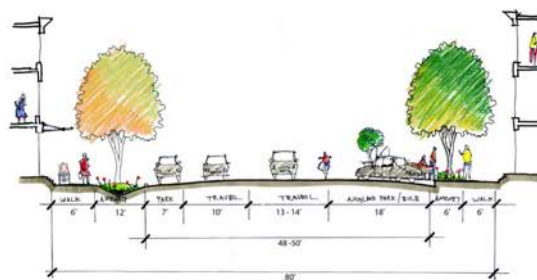
Mainstreet Typology, 2- and 3-lane



Transit Priority Typology, 2- and 3-lane



Urban Residential Typology



Bicycle Boulevard

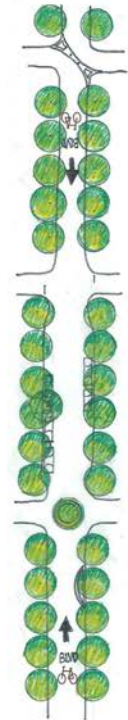


Figure T-4. Typology cross sections.

(See the City of Tacoma Public Works Design Manual for additional guidance.)

### **Action T-5**

*Design public and private streets consistent with the Subarea Plan Complete Streets design guidelines and City standards.*

Along the freeway side of Sprague Avenue and Tacoma Mall Boulevard, pedestrian improvements should only be required as necessary to serve specific destinations.

### **STREET NETWORK**

The street grid in the area is generally characterized by long distances between through streets (large blocks) and a limited number of connections through the surrounding neighborhoods. Both of these attributes create bottlenecks for vehicles and make walking and biking trips more difficult by increasing their length and concentrating travel along high-traffic roads. Drivers tend to converge on a select few routes to reach their destinations, whether they are making local or regional trips.

Street Network enhancements are vital for providing mobility for all modes throughout the neighborhood. Creating stronger connections between the Water Flume Trail, new grid streets, I-5 and other important geographical areas will improve access for people regardless of mode. Improved connections within and to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood enables better regional access.

### **Action T-6**

*Pursue multiple approaches to extend and enhance the existing grid network, including establishing new connections via private property and reopening gated, vacated streets to public travel.*

### **Action T-7**

*Maintain the existing street grid and seek opportunities to extend the grid on both sides of S. 38th Street to create similarly scaled blocks.*

### **Action T-8**

*Street and alley vacations will be allowed only when they foster an attractive pedestrian environment and maintain transportation connectivity in the neighborhood and immediate area.*

### **ESTABLISHING NEW STREETS**

This Subarea is characterized by areas with large blocks lacking streets and pedestrian connections. Large blocks in this context are defined as areas larger than 8 acres—the approximate size of two standard blocks—with no public through connections for travel (streets). Within the standard

## BLOCK SIZE PRIMER

- Current block sizes in the Subarea: Ranges from 2 to 27 acres (excluding the Mall itself).
- Typical block sizes in the Madison District and Downtown Tacoma: 4.5 acres.
- Typical block sizes in older districts citywide: 2.5 to 4.5 acres.
- Optimal typical “walkable urban blocks”: 2 to 3 acres. The finer grain of the streets reduces walking times, improves connectivity and enlivens the neighborhood with increased access to businesses, residences and mixed-use areas.



Photo T-6. LINK, downtown Tacoma.

street grid, an 8-acre block is typically 600 by 600 feet. This is an issue because larger blocks are not well configured for urban-scale development as envisioned by the plan.

To address this, the Subarea Plan and associated code changes require Site Approval permits to be submitted to the City when major development of a large block is proposed. The Site Approval process provides a venue to identify and discuss opportunities to establish transportation facilities that promote the connectivity goals of the Subarea Plan. When major development is proposed that substantially increases travel demands, the City will consider imposing requirements to dedicate, adopt easements and/or construct.

## Connectivity Principles

Site Approvals are a significant undertaking for property owners. The code requirements should be crafted to avoid or minimize negative impacts to existing businesses by allowing a substantial amount of development to occur without triggering this requirement. Specifically, tenant improvements, exterior changes and the construction of moderate-scale new buildings and building additions should be exempt. The intent is to allow businesses to continue to operate, improve and expand without hindrance until such a time that there is interest in major change such as construction of new buildings, or major additions to existing buildings.

City actions to establish new street network connectivity shall be governed by the following Connectivity Principles:

- Accommodate growth; support transportation, urban form and land use goals.
- Build on and integrate with existing street and pedestrian patterns.
- Seek to achieve multiple benefits.
- Plan proactively for projects of citywide significance.
- Support existing businesses by avoiding requirements that make it overly costly to operate, improve and expand to a reasonable extent.
- Balance predictability and flexibility in determining future street connections.



Figure T-5. Grid alternate based on connectivity options.



Figure T-6. Grid alternate based on connectivity options.

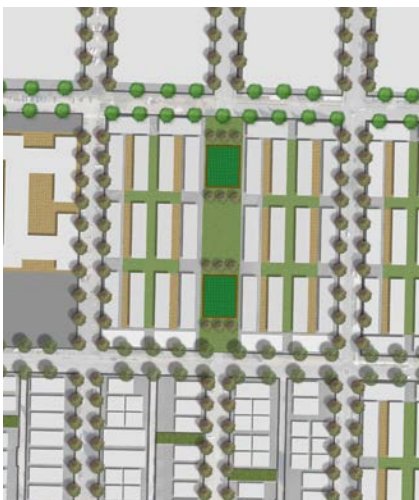


Figure T-7. Grid alternate based on connectivity options.

- Share costs proportionally with benefits at Subarea, quadrant and site levels.
- Avoid or compensate for disproportional impacts.
- Design new connections using Complete Streets principles to support planned future uses, travel modes and traffic volumes.
- Allow design flexibility for local access connections.
- Reflect nexus and proportionality land use legal principles.

### Priority New Connections

Through the Subarea Plan transportation analysis, the City has prioritized where new connections are most important, and sorted these into three “tiers”. The tiers establish the priority of new connections and provide general direction for design, ownership and funding roles.

#### Tier 1—Neighborhood-wide Significance

- necessary to accommodate 2040 growth
- public ownership
- city leadership on funding

#### Tier 2—Urban Framework

- provides quadrant level transportation benefits
- establishes an approximately 600 x 600 foot block scale
- public or private ownership
- costs shared between city and private parties

#### Tier 3—Urban Design & Site Access

- planned with development
- public or private ownership acceptable
- privately funded
- priority is pedestrian connectivity

### Action T-9

*Adopt and implement a permitting process to analyze opportunities to extend and enhance the existing grid network consistent with Subarea Plan Connectivity Principles and priority new connections tiers.*

## TRANSPORTATION FOR ALL TRAVELERS

To make the transition from the current auto-oriented land use pattern to a complete, compact and connected neighborhood while accommodating planned growth, more trips

PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

To facilitate the planning process, cost estimates were developed for the Priority Project List. Many variables will affect the eventual cost of capital projects. These estimates were based on typical costs per lineal foot for similar projects and do not include land acquisition costs, and site-specific features and circumstances such as existing structures, utilities, topography and changes in labor and materials costs.

While most projects will be located within existing public right-of-way, some require public acquisition of right-of-way across existing private property. Under the proposed Connectivity approach, the costs of future new rights-of-way and construction are in some cases to be shared between the public and private sectors. The Subarea Plan calls for three Tier 2 Priority New Connections. Cost estimates, with the same caveats as above, are provided for these three corridors below:

- New connection from Wright Avenue to S. 35th Street (Pierce County Annex site): \$945,000 (assumptions: 60 foot right-of-way, estimated 1350 lineal feet at a cost of \$700/LF).
- New connection from South Tacoma Way to S. Pine Street (future S. 37th Street): \$1,479,000 (assumptions: 60 foot right-of-way, estimated 1,740 lineal feet at a cost of \$850/LF; the unit cost is assumed to be higher due to topography and grade separation issues).
- New connection from S. Steele Street to S. 48th Street (Tacoma Mall site): \$717,500 (assumptions: 60 foot right-of-way, estimated \$700/LF).

need to take place via walking, biking, transit and multiple-occupancy vehicles. This section outlines transportation actions to promote transportation “mode shift” from Single Occupancy Vehicle trips to other modes of travel. These goals and actions informed development of the Priority Projects List included in this chapter.



Photo T-7. Westwood Village Pedestrian Connection.

Goal T-3

Promote transportation mode shift by enhancing transit, bicycle and pedestrian options, implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and implementing access management measures.

Table T-1. Mode Share (%)

Alternative	SOV	HOV	Walk/ Bicycle	Transit	Internal Vehicle Trips
Existing	72%	8%	4%	5%	11%
Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Plan	52%	9%	12%	9%	18%

Other performance measures for evaluating project include volume-to-capacity ratios, intersection LOS and system completeness.

TRANSIT & TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit will play a major role in achieving the transportation and land use goals of the RGC. While the City does not own or operate transit, it can help improve transit access and performance. The City is looking ahead to potential rail and high-capacity transit (HCT) investments. Tacoma can also invest in transit-supportive actions (signal priority,

## TRANSIT STATION LOCATION STUDY

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The first step in the identifying a new transit center location and configuration is a feasibility study conducted in collaboration with transit agencies, with input from landowners and the community. The proposed Transit Center Potential Sites depicted in Figure T-9 are conceptual. The actual location of a new station would be determined by the outcome and final recommendation of the study.

queue jumps, dedicated rights-of-way, etc.) to support HCT investments by Pierce Transit or Sound Transit.

The area of the neighborhood that would best support a high-capacity transit station with the greatest access, infill support and TOD benefits is identified in Figure T-10. This potential station area was chosen by considering funding agency station location criteria along with the land use strategy for the area where highest-intensity development is identified to occur.

### Action T-10

*Coordinate with Sound Transit to add the Tacoma Mall Transit Center as a stop on the express bus service from Lakewood to Seattle.*

### Action T-11

*Enhance transit service and attractiveness by improving multi-modal station access, improving station amenities and aesthetics, and ensuring transit effectively links key City and regional destinations.*

### Action T-12

*Relocate the existing Tacoma Mall Transit Center to a central location within the Subarea in order to improve access, increase ridership and spur transit-oriented development.*

### Action T-13

*Advocate for the extension of regional light rail service to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood RGC and participate actively in the ST3 LINK Extension study.*

### Action T-14

*Explore the feasibility of a Sounder station along the existing rail corridor adjacent to the Northwest District.*

## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

A connected, convenient, comfortable and safe bicycle and pedestrian network is fundamental to the Subarea Plan vision, and essential to meeting transportation and land use goals. The bicycle and pedestrian network shown in Figure T-9 shows the long-range vision for promoting biking and walking options. The networks were developed in consultation with Tacoma Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group (BPTAG) and link to the bike and pedestrian network called for in the Transportation Master Plan.

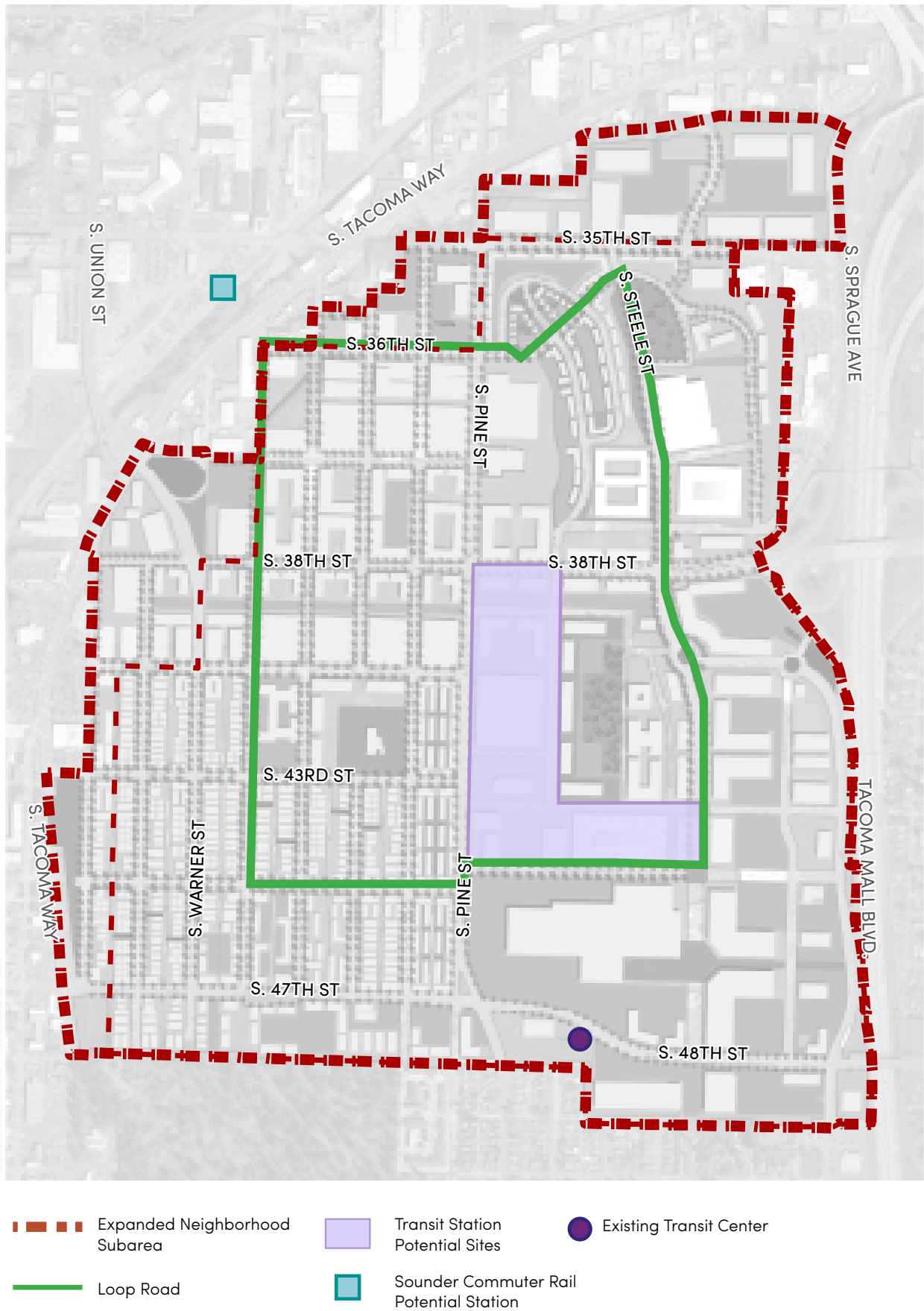


Figure T-8. Proposed high-capacity transit center area.

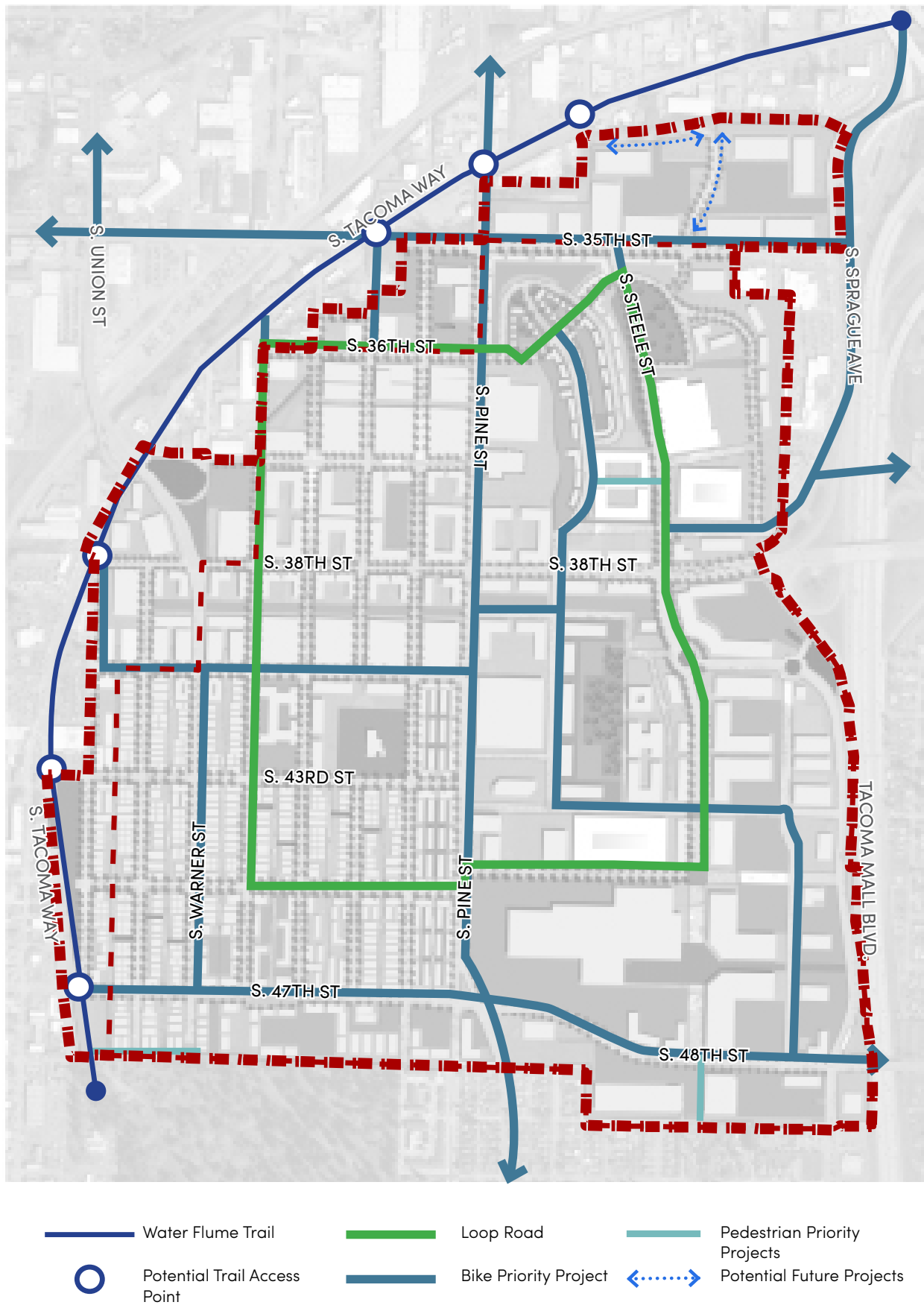


Figure T-9. Map of proposed pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



Photo T-8. Tacoma Bike Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group Tour, 2015.

## WATER FLUME TRAIL

The Water Flume Trail is the primary active transportation facility serving the neighborhood today. The Trail is a north-south spine connecting the neighborhood to Downtown Tacoma and to Oak Tree Park at the southern boundary of the City. The completion of the remaining Water Flume Trail segments is a high priority for the neighborhood.

In addition, future enhancements to the Water Flume Trail would have major benefits to this neighborhood. One specific opportunity is to consider shifting the alignment of the Trail onto Union Avenue between S. 47<sup>th</sup> and S. 38<sup>th</sup> Streets. Union Avenue provides a low-traffic alternative to South Tacoma Way, with gentle grades and an attractive vista over the Nalley Valley.

## Action T-15

*Design and construct the Subarea Plan bike and pedestrian network, including the Loop Road, through proactive City investment and in association with street improvements when development occurs.*

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a package of actions that can increase mode share in support of major capital improvements. Tacoma's Climate Action Plan (CAP) establishes carbon reduction goals for the City and community and offers more than 40 new strategies to achieve those goals. The CAP includes goals to increase mode share by non-single-occupant vehicles and develop neighborhoods that welcome walking and biking. Tacoma recently adopted the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) to further refine CAP strategies.

Transportation actions for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's Subarea Plan directly reflect this goal of providing more transportation choices. The neighborhood's strong transit connections and the options for people to live near their workplace in a dense mixed-use community are strong complements to TDM strategies. The following TDM strategies will be important as the Subarea grows.

## Parking Demand Strategy

As growth occurs, street parking will likely become more challenging. A parking demand management strategy should be developed that potentially includes

- deploying the City's residential parking zones (RPZs) program to set priorities for curb space for neighborhood residents and visitors while maximizing use of rights-of-way with deployment of time stay controls
- reviewing Tacoma parking codes to ensure that they align with the desired urban setting, which may include adopting parking maximums rather than minimums for new developments and major remodels
- encouraging shared parking by development of public parking facilities that promote a "park once" concept. Future developments should embrace, where partnerships make sense, multiuse shared parking facilities where tenant mix allows for maximum use of parking spaces
- eliminating subsidies for drive-alone employees.

## Action T-16

*Develop a parking demand strategy to address neighborhood access and urban form goals as growth occurs.*

### Commute Trip Reduction

The City's CTR Plan is an evolving and frequently updated document that provides guidelines to the City and major employers affected by state law, implementing effective strategies that achieve trip-reduction goals. The CTR Ordinance establishes requirements for affected employers including an appeals process, and procedures for the City's program administration, monitoring, enforcement and intergovernmental coordination. It is expected that CTR program effectiveness will increase as the neighborhood transforms into a more-urban environment with additional transportation choices.

## Action T-17

*Employ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to increase non-single-occupancy vehicle trips, including a strengthened Commute Trip Reduction Program.*

### Access Management

Streets with a high number of mid-block driveways pose challenges to both pedestrian safety and to efficient traffic operations. This is a problem in the Subarea which should be addressed proactively.



Photo T-9. 38<sup>th</sup> Street has a high number of driveways connecting adjacent sites. This impacts negatively on traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

## Action T-18

*Implement access management principles along major arterials including S. 38th Street, to consolidate access points onto the arterial.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND FISCAL STEWARDSHIP AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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In years past, municipalities tended to focus on traffic movement and capacity in transportation investments. The field has now evolved to recognize that multiple opportunities can be achieved. In fact, no transportation investment should serve only one purpose. It is also essential to make cost-effective investments recognizing that resources are scarce.

### **Goal T-4**

*Make fiscally responsible, cost-effective investments that serve multiple objectives, improve safety, protect the environment, and make the system more equitable.*

The City of Tacoma recognizes transportation's major effects on climate change and our environment. The transportation system needs to be established in the most fiscally responsible manner that serves both today's users and future generations. The City adopted its Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2008, which lays out strategies for addressing climate change. In addition, the City of Tacoma became the first "Greenroads Community" in June 2014 through adoption of Resolution 38945. Greenroads is a sustainability ranking system used by the City of Tacoma. This means that the City is committed to developing a policy for the City's roads and other transportation infrastructure in order to be models of environmental, economic, and social stewardship and by setting community goals of sustainable design, construction, and maintenance.

The strategies outlined in the CAP and the Greenroads policy can be applied to great effect in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The Subarea Plan is expected to reduce SOV use by about 20% compared with existing mode shares. This reduction in SOV-mode share will result in substantial reductions in GHG emissions.

By including environmental justice and health equity considerations in transportation planning, Tacoma considers how multimodal projects can be developed and sited to promote safety, support public transit, reduce motor vehicle use, minimize intermodal conflicts, enhance freight mobility and accommodate the mobility needs of Tacoma residents and visitors, especially those from traditionally underserved neighborhoods or vulnerable populations.



Photo T-10. Multiple streets in the area require maintenance.

These objectives are relevant in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea where there is a current imbalance favoring vehicular transportation, and the subarea is shifting toward improved balance by building a robust bike and pedestrian network. This network serves an underserved population and can have a significant benefit to low income households by reducing the dependency on car ownership.

### **Action T-19**

*Strive to reduce crashes and collisions by working toward a “target zero” of deaths and injuries using education, enforcement, and engineering to set priorities to address high-crash locations.*

### **Action T-20**

*Ensure that transportation investments support equitable modes of transportation and “catch-up” investment for this traditionally underserved neighborhood.*

### **Action T-21**

*Consider CPTED principles, aesthetics, safety and walkability in designing and locating transportation facilities.*

### **Action T-22**

*Prioritize system preservation, maintenance, and repair to protect existing and future transportation investments.*

### **Action T-23**

*Utilize best management practices for stormwater and prioritize green stormwater infrastructure techniques, to ensure runoff does not cause impacts to receiving waters.*

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

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Implementation is where the rubber hits the road. The Subarea Plan is an action plan, and this section provides guidance for how to get the job done. The following goal and actions address key implementation considerations including the public and private parties who are essential to implementation, and how transportation improvements will be prioritized and funded. The section also calls for ongoing monitoring and corrective actions if transportation goals are not being met.



Photo T-11. Bike bridge across I-5.



Photo T-12. Train to bus, South Tacoma Station.

## **Goal T-5**

*Proactively and collaboratively implement the Subarea Plan transportation actions concurrent with growth.*

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Coordinating with other agencies is a vital step in the process of securing improvements and change in the subarea. The City works hand in hand with many other agencies to achieve the community's transportation and related goals. In turn, the public and private sectors ultimately share common goals for the success and growth of the Subarea. Collaboration is essential to bringing about change.

### **Action T-24**

*Integrate the Subarea Plan projects and ranking criteria into the City's Transportation Master Plan.*

### **Action T-25**

*Partner on funding and implementation with WSDOT, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, the Department of Ecology, Metro Parks Tacoma and private parties.*

### **Action T-26**

*Coordinate with WSDOT to study, plan, add the project to the WSDOT STIP, fund and construct the I-5 Direct Access Ramp Project.*

### **Action T-27**

*Actively coordinate with Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Intercity Transit and other partners on transit actions including bringing High-Capacity Transit service to the Subarea and constructing a new multimodal transit station.*

## **KEY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

This Plan identifies the priority projects that must occur for the City's vision of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood to be achieved; these projects will achieve mode shift within the area. A generalized prioritized project list is presented along with a more detailed list of projects identified for near-term (within 5 years), mid-term (5–15 years) and long-term (15+ years) implementation. It should be recognized that changing the fabric of the transportation system in a large neighborhood like Tacoma Mall takes time for the

identification of funding and development of supportive land uses. The timelines presented in this section are for general guidance. However, early catalyst projects and planning efforts are critical for beginning the transition.

### **Action T-28**

*Construct the transportation projects based on the near, mid, and long-term prioritization recommendations of this plan, with due consideration to opportunities to complete projects ahead of schedule.*

### **OVERALL PRIORITY PROJECT LIST**

This section describes the overall project priority list for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. This list highlights the major projects that the project team identified as being necessary to achieve the urban form and travel choice outcomes identified in this plan. All projects were evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Advances land use objectives
2. Safety
3. Stormwater management (regional and subarea treatment)
4. Advances mode split
5. System completeness and connectivity
6. Urban design opportunities
7. Leverage partnerships (WSDOT, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Pierce County, FTA, etc.)
8. Capacity enhancements
9. Capital cost to City
10. Feasibility
11. Promotes transit-oriented development

Projects were then ranked by final score and organized as near-, medium-, and long-term priorities. The results are shown in Table T-2. This snapshot of today's priorities may change over time as the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is redeveloped. These projects serve various modes and help meet multiple goals. A brief description of several major projects follows the table. Project maps by priority period are shown as Figures T-10 through T-13.

**Table T-2. Project List**

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST (\$000)	PHASE
Near-Term Priorities (0–5 years)				
1	Loop Road Demonstration Project		\$1,500	Design, ROW*, construction
2	I-5 Direct Access Ramp—Phase 1	WSDOT, transit providers	\$900	Design
3	Madison District—Residential Streets—Phase 1		\$8,300	Design, ROW*, construction
4	S. 38th Street / S. Steele Street Intersection		\$500-1,500	Design, ROW*, construction
5	S. Sprague Avenue Bike Connection		\$2,100	Design, ROW*, construction
6	Tacoma Mall Transit Center—Phase 1	Transit providers	\$900	Design
7	Area-wide Sidewalk Gaps	Property owners	\$14,230	Design, ROW*, construction
Mid-Term Priorities (5–15 years)				
8	I-5 Direct Access Ramp	WSDOT, transit providers	\$27,650	Design, ROW*, construction
9	Tacoma Mall Transit Center	Transit providers	\$28,000	Design, ROW*, construction
10	I-5 Transit Connector	Transit agencies	\$2,450	Design, ROW*, construction
11	Transit-Supportive Actions	Transit providers	TBD	Design, ROW*, construction
12	S. 38th Street Complete Streets/ Gateway Project		\$10,660	Design, ROW*, construction
13	Loop Road—Phase 2		\$12,700	Design, ROW*, construction

	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST (\$000)	PHASE
14	Madison District—Residential Streets—Phase 2	Construction of remaining residential streets, potentially including green stormwater infrastructure		\$8,000	Design, ROW*, construction
15	Lincoln Heights—Residential Streets	Potentially including construction of residential streets, green stormwater infrastructure		TBD	Design, ROW*, construction
16	Pine St & 42 <sup>nd</sup> St Signal	Add a signal at the intersection of Pine St and 42 <sup>nd</sup> St.	Transit providers	\$300	Design, ROW*, construction
17	Pine Street—Complete Streets/ Gateway Project	Complete Streets redesign including bicycle and transit service	Transit providers	\$2,640	Design, ROW*, construction
18	S. 47th/48th Street Complete Streets/Bike Connection	Complete Streets redesign incorporating bike connection from I-5 bridge to Water Flume Trail		\$5,040	Design, ROW*, construction
19	S. 48th Street Overpass	Widen existing overpass of I-5 or build a new adjacent bridge for improved bicycle/ pedestrian connection to the subarea	WSDOT	\$1,810	Design, ROW*, construction
20	S. 35th Street Bike Corridor	Add bicycle facility and extend corridor to South Tacoma Way	Property owners	\$2,720	Design, ROW*, construction
Long-Term Priorities (15+ years)					
21	S. Fife St to S. 48 <sup>th</sup> St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection between the Lincoln Heights and Mall Districts to S. 48 <sup>th</sup> St		\$570	Design, ROW*, construction
22	S. 40 <sup>th</sup> St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection from S. Tacoma Way to S. Fife St		\$1,250	Design, ROW*, construction
23	Warner St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection from S. 38 <sup>th</sup> St to S. 47 <sup>th</sup> St		TBD	Design, ROW*, construction
24	Area-wide Active Transportation Pathways	Add pedestrian pathways and missing link bike connections called for in the Subarea Plan		TBD	
25	Area-wide street grid connections	As development occurs, add new street connections to enhance overall mobility for all modes		\$39,110	Design, ROW*, construction

\* ROW = right-of-way.

1. These are order of magnitude cost estimates for planning purposes. No right of way costs are included.
2. The City will pursue funding opportunities as they become available and projects may begin sooner than anticipated.

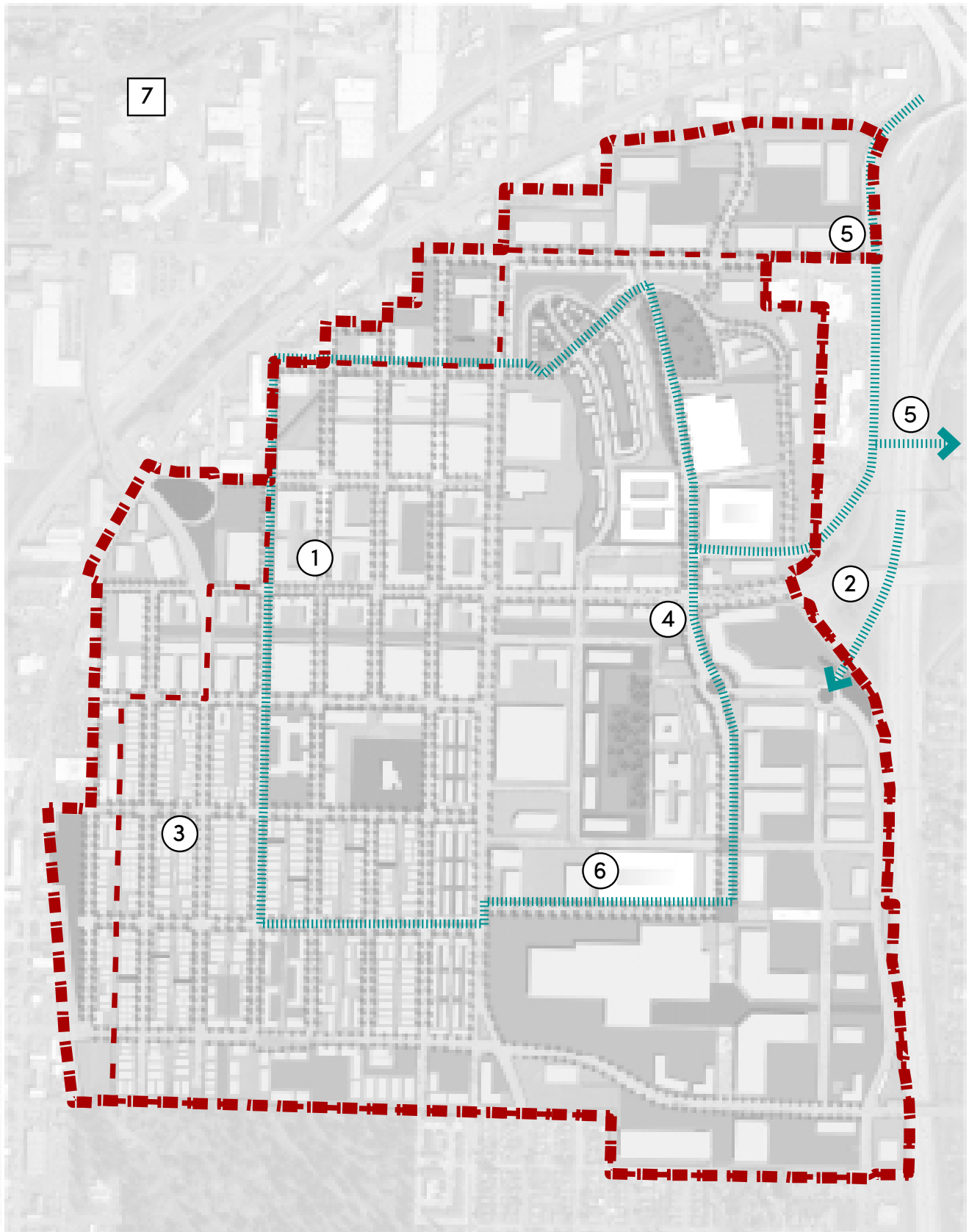


Figure T-10. Near-term priority project map.

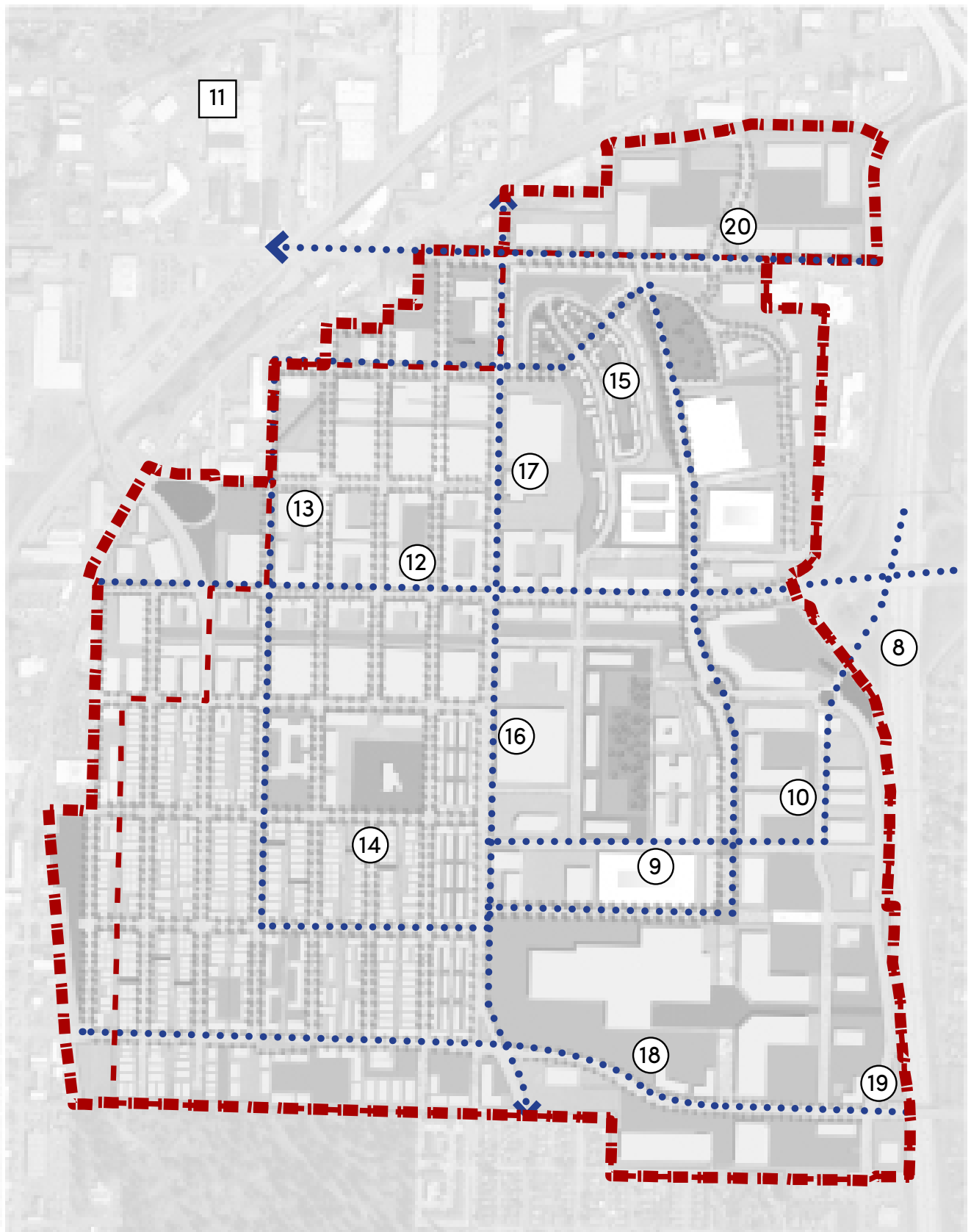


Figure T-11. Medium-term priority project map.

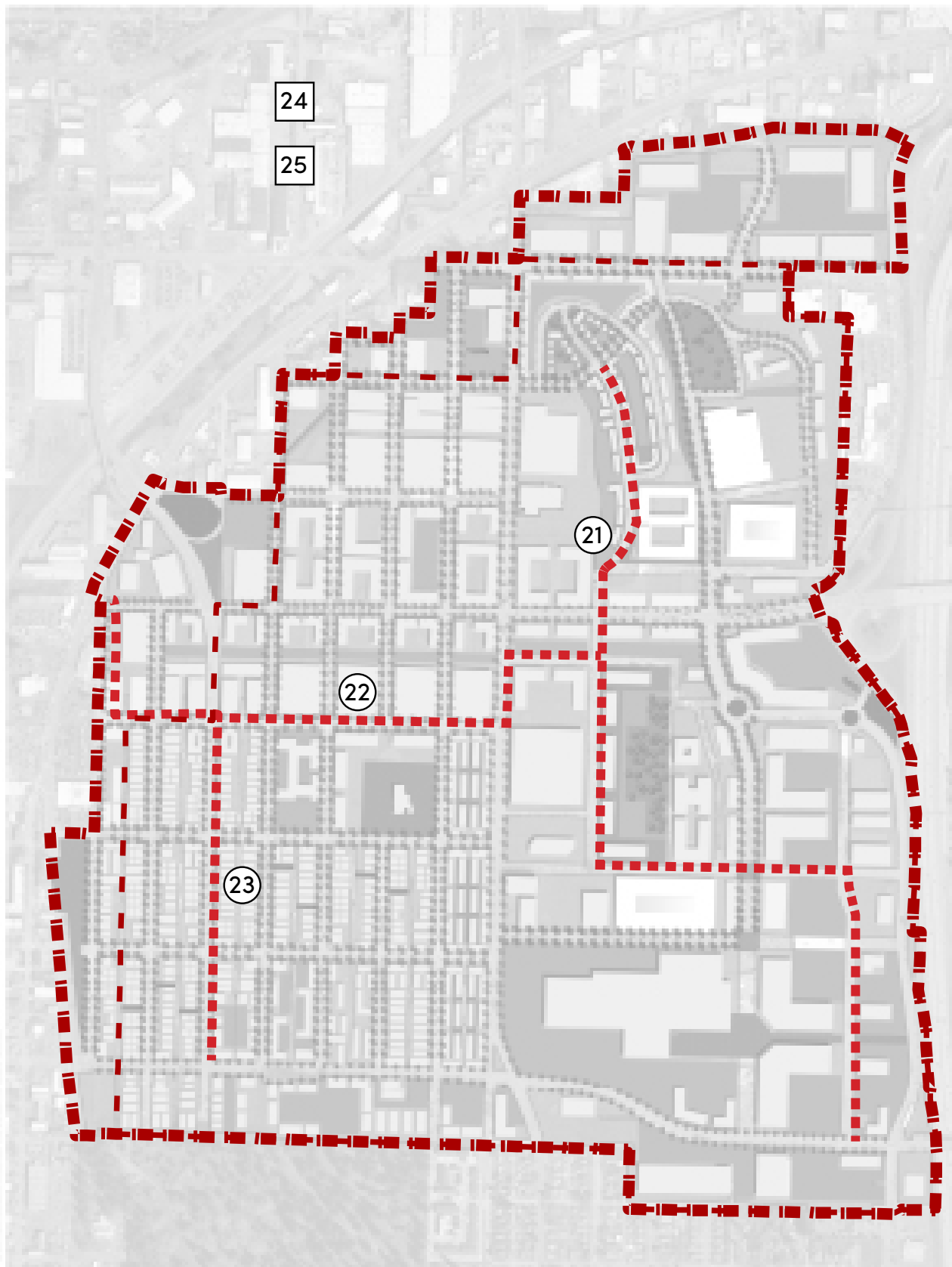


Figure T-12. Long-term priority project map.

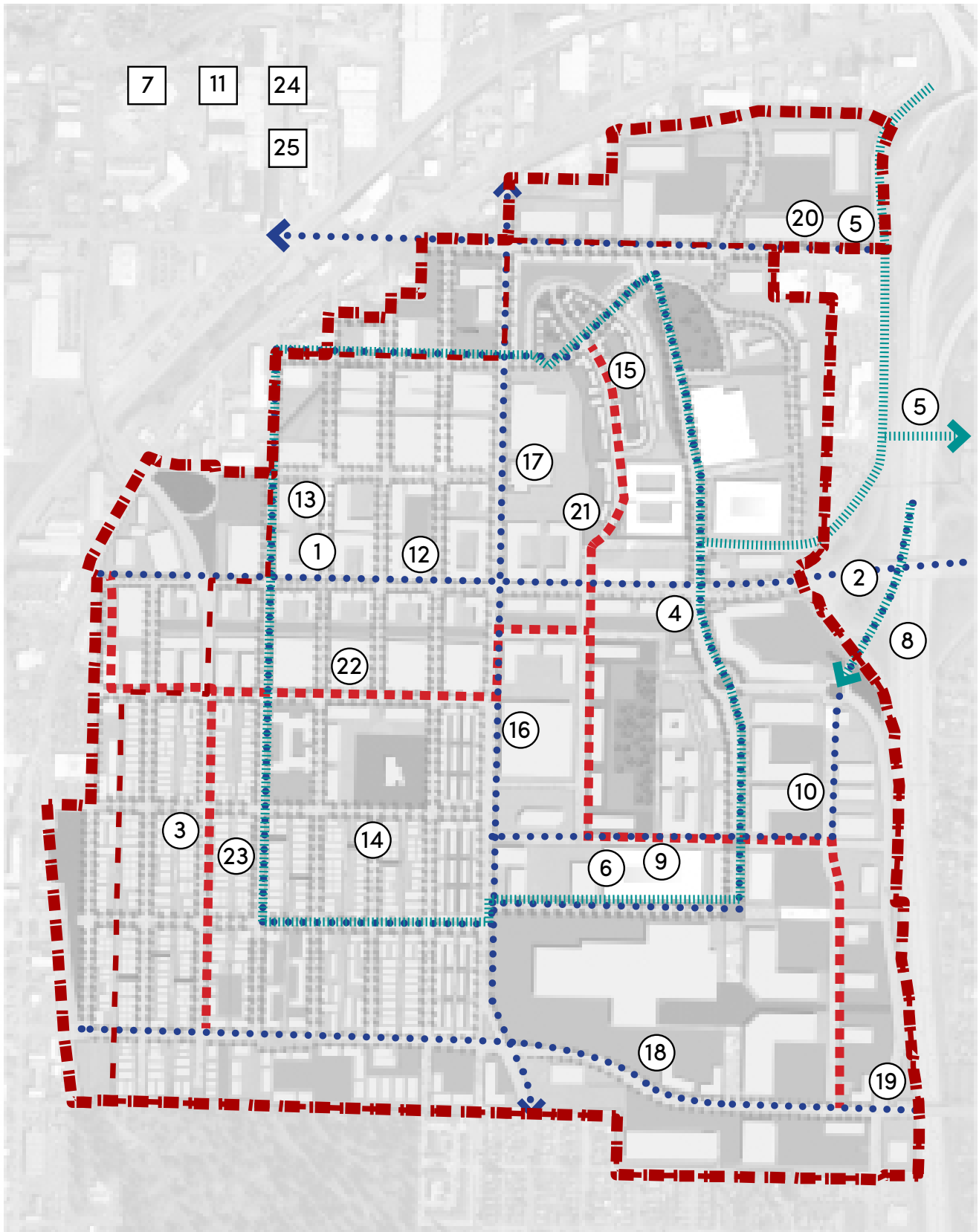


Figure T-13. Near-, Medium-, and Long-term priority project map

## LOOP ROAD

The Loop Road connects the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood's four districts together, while also helping to improve connectivity within each individual district. While each section of Loop Road may have a different cross section, they will all create a safer and more usable environment for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and other modes. This Loop Road will help to connect the new land uses with each other, as well as create a larger sense of home in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The initial near-term implementation of the Loop Road would serve as a demonstration project to highlight the design features, show a commitment of public investment in the area, and catalyze future redevelopment.

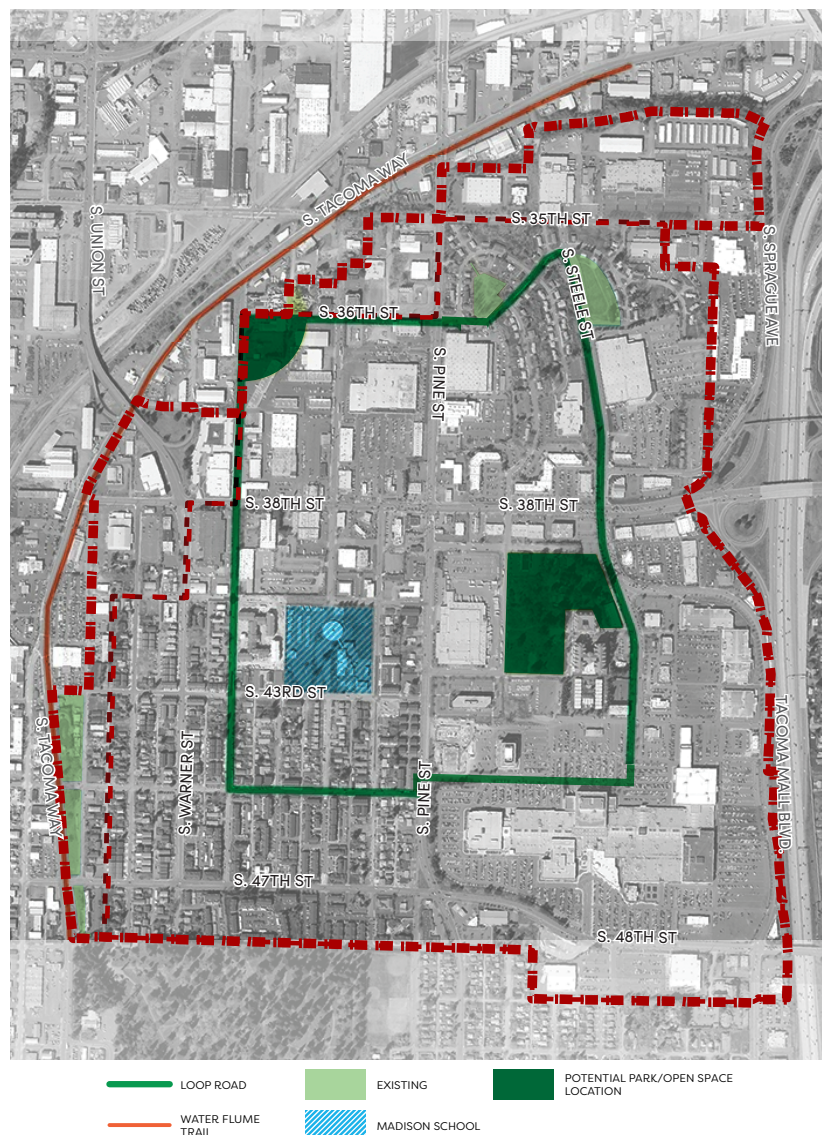


Figure T-14. Loop Road map.

## **I-5 DIRECT ACCESS RAMP**

This project is envisioned as a new southbound off-ramp from I-5 to either Tacoma Mall Boulevard or S. 48th Street (the exact location of the ramp would be determined through a feasibility study and subsequent formal scoping and project development process with WSDOT). The ramp would provide a more direct connection to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood from southbound I-5. Benefits of this project include the following:

- increases safety, improves mobility, reduces congestion and increases travel time reliability
- reduces incidence of off-ramp backups from S. 38th and S. 56th Streets
- improves transit access, on-time performance, and speeds to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood
- supports growth and mobility goals in Vision 2040, One Tacoma Plan and the Tacoma TMP
- improves distribution of traffic exiting southbound I-5 onto local streets
- supports redevelopment efforts within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood by improving access to properties and network choices
- improves access for local businesses, freight operators, and emergency response vehicles by filtering traffic through a grid of local streets
- substantially reduces congestion on S. 38th Street between I-5 and S. Steele Street
- redirects some traffic from the congested S. 56th St. and I-5 interchange

Completion of the direct access ramp is projected to serve between 500 and 600 vehicles during the p.m. peak hour. Many of these vehicles would otherwise be traveling through the Steele St and S. 38th St intersection, so the direct access ramp will substantially reduce traffic congestion and improve LOS for buses, trucks and autos.

Table T-2 identifies a near-term project to complete the initial design and permitting studies (known as an Interchange Justification Report). After initial studies are complete, construction of the new ramp has been identified as a mid-term project to ensure adequate transit and vehicle capacity in the subarea.



Photo T-13. Successful pedestrian streets



Figure T-15. Image of I-5 offramp from Conceptual design (see Appendix T-1).

### EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS

Great attention was paid in the neighborhood planning process to strengthening the connections between the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods. While the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood does have a boundary, it is important to recognize the interconnections between the Mall area and other parts of the City. The TMP identified many multimodal transportation improvements that are citywide in scale, and provide connections to and through the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. For example, the S. 38th Street and Pine Street Complete Streets/Gateway projects (Projects 12 and 17 in Table T-2) will improve connectivity to areas outside of the Mall neighborhood, as well as internally. Another bicycle facility is proposed over I-5 at S. 48th Street, helping to remove I-5 as a barrier between the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and other parts of the city and to improve the 47th/48th Street corridor within the neighborhood.

### PEDESTRIAN CONNECTONS

Almost everyone is a pedestrian at some point during the day. The neighborhood plan recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of the pedestrian and gives a high priority to providing accessible, continuous, comfortable network of pedestrian facilities. Therefore, all but one of the key multimodal transportation improvement projects

can be public or privately owned.



Photo T-14. Tacoma Mall Transit Center.

shown in Table T-2 includes investment in pedestrian facilities.

## **TRANSIT INVESTMENTS**

While investments in high-capacity transit service are not specifically identified on the near-term priority list (as the City does not own or operate transit service), a study to explore potential locations and design options for a new Tacoma Mall Transit Center is identified as one of the initial projects. While the final location would need to be identified as part of this study, Figure T-9 highlights strong potential locations. In addition to facilitating a new Transit Center, Tacoma has identified a Transit-Supportive Streets Typology that will be applied to transit corridors within the Subarea. This Plan recommends working with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit to explore extension of Sound Transit Express Bus service to the neighborhood and future High Capacity Transit options including bus rapid transit and light rail. The relocated transit center and I-5 direct access ramps will greatly facilitate future transit service to the neighborhood.

## **TACOMA MALL BOULEVARD RELOCATION**

While not identified in the list above, the City is evaluating an option to relocate Tacoma Mall Boulevard farther west to allow for additional development potential between the relocated Tacoma Mall Boulevard and I-5. This street would be designed to move vehicles effectively through the neighborhood, providing high visibility for retail and office uses that would locate between the new road and I-5. Movement of traffic would need to be designed in a manner that supports a dense walking district, such as slow vehicular speeds and frequent safe pedestrian crossings, such that the roadway design does not conflict with the walking district character.

The success of the Subarea Plan is not contingent on the ultimate location of Tacoma Mall Boulevard; therefore, it is not shown as a required project in the list and map above. However, depending on the geometric requirements of the I-5 Direct Access Ramp and the desires of landowners in the Mall District of the Subarea Plan, this option may ultimately move forward.

## **FUNDING SOURCES**

In order to achieve these project goals, new funding strategies are needed. The total project costs of the short-term priorities are approximately \$0 million within

5 years. The Mid-term projects are \$102 million that must be raised within 15 years to stay on course. The long-term projects total over \$40 million. Note that large projects are typically funded through a variety of different sources, so the projects would not be entirely funded by Tacoma. However, even with grants and other funding sources, the priorities identified in this plan are unlikely to be achievable with current funding sources and new strategies must be implemented. Additionally, strategic funding partnerships with other agencies like WSDOT, Sound Transit, and Pierce Transit are critical to implementing the projects identified in this plan.

Specific funding sources have not yet been identified for the projects included in this Plan. The City should pursue grants and other funding sources, including local improvement districts (LIDs), a transportation benefit district, cost sharing with public utilities, the gas tax, real estate excise tax, street vacation, or debt financing. As the Tacoma Mall is part of a designated RGC, it receives priority funding from the PSRC. Additionally, the air quality benefits of the transportation projects in this plan position the area well for Congestion Management Air Quality grants from the federal government.

The City should also consider implementing an impact fee program to contribute funding to these projects. An impact fee could be established for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood specifically, or across the entire City. A longer-term strategy could include a tax on parking that could be in place if paid parking becomes prevalent in the area. In the absence of an impact fee, new development in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood could be subject to a fair-share impact mitigation fee, as identified in the Environmental Impact Statement. The next sections identify a set of potential priorities that could form the basis for the fair-share impact assessment. The projects are identified to encourage initial development and keep fees low to take advantage of the existing infrastructure in the area, with potentially higher fees for later developments to support additional infrastructure needed to support development.

### **Action T-29**

*Utilize the full range of existing funding sources to implement the projects identified in this plan.*

### **Action T-30**

*Assess and if appropriate enact new funding sources and mechanisms (i.e., an impact fee program, system completeness fee and a City catalytic fund) to implement the Subarea Plan projects.*

### **PHASING IMPLEMENTATION**

The City has determined through the transportation analysis that certain projects become necessary with growth to accommodate traffic impacts. Furthermore, it is recognized that transportation projects are catalytic to positive neighborhood change and growth, and that they achieve multiple objectives particularly when combined with green stormwater features. Therefore, the City has calibrated this phased implementation approach to make a focused effort that builds positive momentum over a relatively short period.

In addition to catalyzing growth through strategic public investment, the City recently adopted system completeness as a concurrency metric. The underlying policy is that the City will build the transportation system as defined in the TMP at a rate equal to or ahead of the pace of development during the planning horizon. This is determined by comparing the progress of development completion and infrastructure completion with the City's 2040 goals. Therefore, the City will need to monitor the rate of development within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and ensure that infrastructure completion is keeping pace.

### **Action T-31**

*Monitor transportation performance measures as growth occurs and take corrective action if the planned improvements are not adequate to achieve the Plan objectives.*

### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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The following performances measures would be effective to evaluate the progress of the Subarea Plan. Furthermore, these measures should be updated to remain consistent with citywide performance measures approaches, and to ensure that the City understands whether corrective action is needed:

- mode share—track progress toward achieving the mode split target shown in Table T-1.
- safety—progress toward Target Zero goal.
- system completeness

## **TMP PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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The City is currently revisiting the Transportation Master Plan performance measures as part of the 2018 Annual Amendments. The Subarea Plan performance measures shall be modified to remain consistent with the citywide approach, as appropriate to the unique transportation issues of the Subarea.

- volume-to-capacity ratios
- intersection LOS

## **REFERENCES**

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- Todd Litman, September/October 2003, Integrating Public Health Objectives into Transportation Decision-Making, American Journal of Health Promotion, 18[1]:103-108, Available at: <http://www.vtppi.org/AJHP-litman.pdf>.
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# ENVIRONMENT

## CHAPTER 7



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 7



# ENVIRONMENT

## CONTENTS

Environment Goal
Introduction
Stormwater Quality & Quantity
Mitigation of Existing Contaminated Sites
Tree Canopy
Performance Measures
References

## ENVIRONMENT GOAL

*Maximize the quality and function of the natural environment in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood in order to provide public benefits such as improved water quality on a watershed basis and improved quality of life.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a goal and actions to enhance the quality and function of the natural environment in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The goals and actions are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and other relevant guidance such as the City's Stormwater Management Manual and Urban Forest Manual. They provide a necessary framework to meet the City's vision for greening the neighborhood and improving stormwater management, while accommodating growth. This Subarea Plan is a model effort that shows how cities can achieve multiple wins without having to choose between goals for growth, livability and the environment. When growth is targeted to the right place and is thoughtfully carried out, these goals are mutually supportive.

A primary driver behind this approach is the need to improve water quality and flow control in the neighborhood and on a watershed-wide basis. The neighborhood is located in two sensitive watersheds and has a high amount of impervious surface coverage and limited tree canopy. The area is also located within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, created to protect the South Tacoma Aquifer—an important source of drinking water for the City. Protecting these essential environmental assets is a top priority.

During the planning process, community members expressed a desire for greater access to green spaces. Natural areas provide physical, emotional and mental health benefits. They offer breathing spaces and solitude opportunities for people to live healthy lives, relax and enjoy a respite from stress. Nature has positive impacts on our

## THE INFLUENCE OF NATURE

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Nature affects our well-being. Contact with nature improves both physical and mental health by reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and the production of stress hormones, besides reducing mortality. [University of Minnesota (2014) and Frumkin, H. and Jackson, R., et al. (2002).]

well-being and provides multiple public health benefits, particularly in an urban setting.

A close link is being made between stormwater, transportation and land use in this plan. Land use adjustments are being made in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood that could potentially facilitate innovative green stormwater infrastructure approaches. Stormwater management has also been integrated into street design, and tree canopy targets have been expanded, as part of this Subarea Plan. Additionally, the Subarea Plan supports regional stormwater management and environmental conservation efforts by promoting participation in the City's Transfer of Development Right (TDR) program.

The natural environment provides a number of valuable services to people, functioning as green infrastructure. For instance, watershed systems including aquifers and aquifer recharge areas convey and store drinking water. Areas with trees and other vegetation provide benefits such as soaking up rainwater, cooling air temperatures, filtering air pollutants, providing wildlife habitat and increasing health, business patronage, and property value.



Photo E-1. Giant Sequoia, Tacoma

Science continues to demonstrate that the climate is changing, resulting in increased intensity of storm events among other issues. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

*Environment and Community Vitality Goals and Actions for parks in the Community Vitality Chapter support this vision.*

through transportation mode shift is one way the City can help reduce the impacts of climate change. The City is also working to prepare for climate change impacts. The goals and actions in this chapter support both objectives through tree planting, green stormwater infrastructure, and identifying emergency overflow flood storage and conveyance for major storm events.

The actions of this Subarea Plan have been chosen to achieve multiple environmental, growth and livability goals. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood can become a unique, dense urban neighborhood that integrates nature in an innovative and cost-effective way.

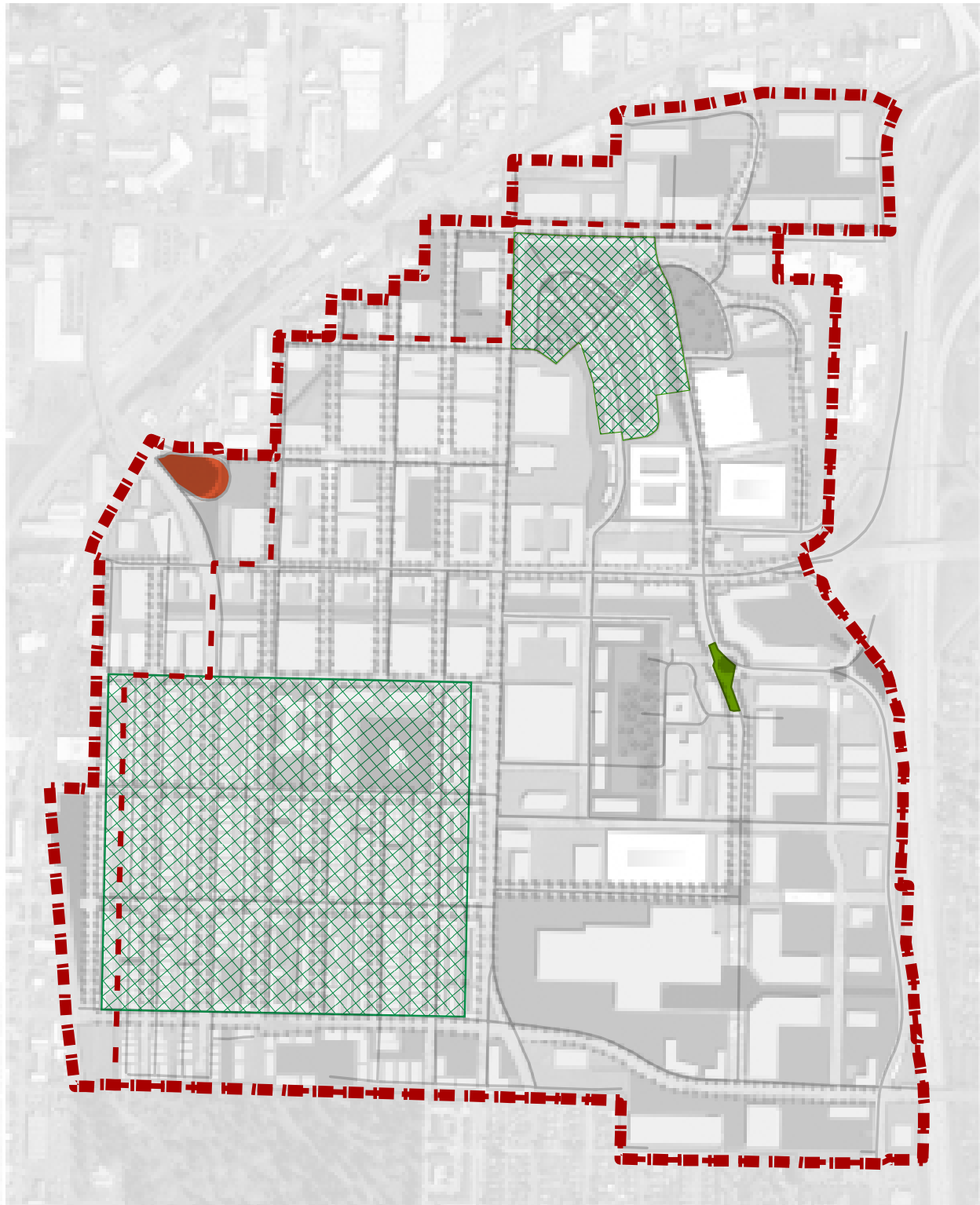
This Subarea Plan is a model effort that shows how cities can achieve multiple wins without having to choose between goals for growth, livability and the environment. When growth is targeted to the right place and is thoughtfully carried out, these goals are mutually supportive.

## **STORMWATER QUALITY & QUANTITY**

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The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is currently highly developed with structures, roadways and other impervious surfaces, with all stormwater conveyed within pipe infrastructure and essentially no surface water features (streams or wetlands) remaining. Land coverage is more than 70% impervious. Based on modeling the stormwater infrastructure is over capacity in many areas, resulting in localized standing water after intense or heavy rain events, and flooding downstream. Most areas were developed more than 20 years ago and do not provide flow control or water quality treatment consistent with the current City Stormwater Management Manual.

Across much of the neighborhood (especially the western half), there is a thick layer of underlying Steilacoom gravel deposits which are well-draining soils that provide significant opportunities to reduce overall stormwater runoff rates with infiltration. This can be completed through converting impervious surfaces into permeable surfaces. In general, maximizing the area of permeable land cover will maximize the amount of water infiltrated, thus reducing the localized flooding and the burden on the stormwater system and receiving waters.






-  GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY AREA
-  BIORETENTION FACILITY
-  REGIONAL STORMWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Figure E-1. Stormwater Strategies

## WATERSHEDS

The Thea Foss Watershed and Flett Creek Watershed are two of the largest stormwater basins within the City of Tacoma. Runoff from both of these watersheds drain to aquatic areas that provide important habitat for Chinook, coho, summer chum, and winter steelhead as well as many other fish and wildlife species.

Storm drainage in the northern half of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood reaches the Thea Foss Waterway, a highly urbanized section of the Commencement Bay shoreline that supports commercial and industrial uses.

Washington State tracks multiple water quality 303(d) listings for sediments within the Waterway, which is part of the Commencement Bay/Nearshore Tidelands Superfund site. Cleanup efforts were completed in 2006.

Storm drainage in the southern half of the Neighborhood reaches Flett Creek before flowing into Chambers Creek, a salmonid-bearing stream that discharges into Chambers Bay and then to the Tacoma Narrows.

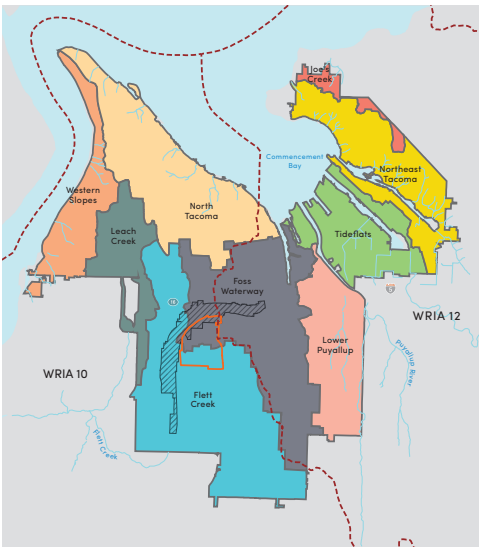


Figure E-2. Watersheds and Basins.

Storm drainage from the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is roughly divided in half between two of the City's nine watersheds. The northern portion of the neighborhood drains north and east to the Thea Foss Waterway. The southern portion of the Subarea drains south toward Flett Creek. Subarea Plan actions for improving stormwater quality and quantity were developed to be part of the City's larger Payment In-Lieu-of Construction Program. This includes recognition of the need to mitigate for stormwater impacts, including the use of approaches that rely on City-owned regional stormwater facilities. Use of this Program, adopted by the City in July 2016 (Ordinance No. 28371), allows applicants to mitigate stormwater impacts associated with new development and redevelopment projects by paying a system development charge to the City in-lieu-of constructing stormwater treatment or flow control facilities on the project site. The Flett Creek Watershed has a flow control facility at 2517 South 84<sup>th</sup> Street (the Gravel Pit Regional Stormwater Facility) that is currently available under this Program at \$0.97 per square foot of surface area requiring stormwater mitigation in accordance with Minimum Requirement #7—Flow Control (Ordinance No. 28372). The City intends to expand use of the voluntary Payment In-Lieu-of Construction Program through construction of new or expanded regional stormwater facilities in the future.

The coordinated vision of stormwater management throughout the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is a result of analysis of the existing conditions and evaluation of future growth and opportunities. Figure E-1 shows the stormwater improvement concept plan. Implementation of the Subarea Plan stormwater actions and the Payment In-Lieu-of Construction Program will expand the use of the most effective strategies for City infrastructure projects and retrofit of existing development, increasing near-term benefits (improved water quality, reduced localized flooding, and reduced burden on existing stormwater systems).

### Goal E-1

*Enhance water quality and flow control conditions through implementation of an area-wide stormwater strategy with both centralized and dispersed BMPs that infiltrate runoff, provide flood storage, and reduce effective impervious surface coverage.*

## STORMWATER INFILTRATION STUDY

The City employed Robinson Noble to aid in the development of an area-wide stormwater management strategy for the subarea. The City's intent is also to provide developers with baseline subsurface information for applying low-impact development (LID) technologies for stormwater facilities associated with development. A series of 12 boreholes and 5 monitoring wells were drilled as part of the field investigation. The study concluded that there is a unique opportunity to infiltrate stormwater in the Subarea, particularly within the Madison District. This finding is the basis of the green streets approach proposed for the Madison District.

## Action E-1

*Implement the area-wide stormwater management strategy through development review and public projects, and disseminate information broadly.*

## Action E-2

*Integrate stormwater infiltration and emergency overflow flood storage and conveyance into new parks and open spaces, and/or rights-of-way.*

## Action E-3

*Encourage the use of the City of Tacoma Payment In-Lieu-of Construction Program as a flow control alternative to site-by-site facilities for new development and redevelopment of neighborhood properties.*

## Action E-4

*Prioritize the construction of green stormwater infrastructure in the Madison District, as well as in other areas where soil infiltration conditions are appropriate.*

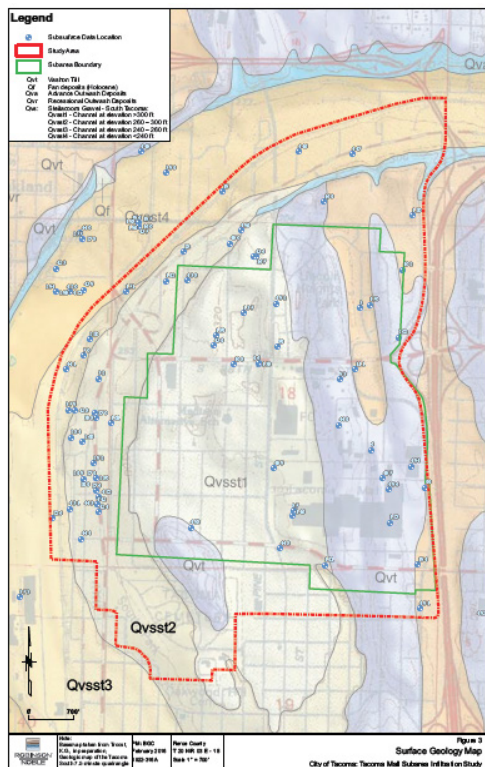


Figure E-3. Surface Geology Study.



Photo E-2. Rain garden.

### **Action E-5**

*Preserve existing mature trees and green spaces in association with City actions when feasible, and encourage retention of mature trees when properties are developed.*

### **Action E-6**

*Encourage property owners to retrofit their properties with green stormwater infrastructure and/or low impact development best management practices.*



Photo E-3. Regional stormwater treatment facility (Pt Defiance Park).



Photo E-4. Permeable pavement roadway (Wapato St, Tacoma).



Photo E-5. Festival Street with green stormwater infrastructure.

## **MITIGATION OF EXISTING CONTAMINATED SITES**

The entire Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is located within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District that was created to protect the quality of water within the South Tacoma aquifer, an important source of drinking water for the City. The City of Tacoma uses the South Tacoma aquifer as drinking water supply, supplying as much as 40% of total water demand during periods of peak summer use. Groundwater within the aquifer generally occurs with a separation of 30 feet or more feet below the surface throughout the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, with a gradient sloping down to the west and northwest from 310 feet above sea level (near the Tacoma Mall) to 210 feet above sea level (within the South Tacoma channel) (Robinson and Noble, 2015).

A significant portion of the neighborhood's soil has permeable Steilacoom gravel deposits, primarily within the western half as well as within a north-south trending corridor running approximately along the Steele Street alignment. Under natural conditions, these deposits would allow rainwater to infiltrate rapidly to the South Tacoma aquifer. Existing development in much of the Neighborhood "caps" the underlying gravel soils with impervious surface. Instead of infiltrating, runoff is directed to stormwater pipes and conveyed north and south, out of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

## TREE BENEFITS

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Every dollar spent on planting and caring for a community tree yields benefits that are two to five times that investment—benefits that include cleaner air, lower energy costs, improved water quality and storm water control and increased property values. (US Forest Service, 2011.)

Infiltration of rainwater is desirable in this area. In 2011, the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department worked collaboratively to develop guidance for infiltrating stormwater within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (*Implementation of Stormwater Infiltration for Pollution Generating Surfaces in the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District*, memo dated January 21, 2011). As part of this subarea planning effort, the Memorandum and code will be updated to be consistent and to reflect current practices and requirements. In addition, City standards for the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District require that District boundaries be reviewed every 10 years, with the last update having been completed in 2006 (TMC Section 13.09.050.A). Therefore, it is anticipated that the City, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and Tacoma Public Utilities (Tacoma Water) will begin a comprehensive effort to review and consider updates to District boundaries based on current Best Available Science, zoning changes, and development expectations. If District boundaries are changed, stormwater infiltration requirements of the Memorandum and updated code will be applicable throughout the revised District extent.

As part of ensuring compliance with the 2011 memo guidance, proposals for stormwater infiltration should also consider areas of known soil and/or groundwater contamination. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and Washington State Department of Ecology records show two contaminated sites: one located at the north end of South Lawrence Street with contaminated soil and groundwater; and the second located near the northeast corner of South Warner Street and South 45th Street with arsenic and metal pollutant contaminated soils (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, 2015). In addition to these sites, there are five potential underground storage tank sites within the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood; these tanks are tracked as potential sources of soil and groundwater contamination. These sites are shown in the Existing Conditions Report.

### **Goal E-2**

*Ensure that infiltrated stormwater runoff recharges clean water to the South Tacoma aquifer, consistent with existing City and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department guidance.*

### **Action E-7**

*Collaborate with the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department to revise the Tacoma Municipal Code and associated guidance documents to reflect a shared understanding of the circumstances and requirements for infiltration in the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.*

### **Action E-8**

*Ensure that areas of known soil and/or groundwater contamination are considered when reviewing proposals for development or redevelopment.*

## **TREE CANOPY**

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In 2010, the City of Tacoma, through its Urban Forest Policy Element of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted a Citywide tree canopy coverage goal of 30% to be accomplished by the year 2030. This canopy cover goal was in part derived from the extensive work conducted in the Regional Ecosystems Analysis for the Puget Sound Metropolitan Area produced by American Forests in 1998. The report concluded that an overall tree canopy target for the Puget Sound region of 40% would significantly improve air and stormwater quality. Trees provide air quality benefits by removing pollutants such as carbon dioxide and ozone. They provide stormwater management benefits by absorbing surface water runoff and removing pollutants. Additionally, exposure to trees and other natural environmental features has been found to have positive impacts on people's mental health.

In general, higher intensity land uses such as those in an urban areas are not as conducive to increasing tree canopy coverage as lower intensity land uses, such as in suburban residential areas. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood currently has a tree cover of 9.5% and has an urban land use pattern that is planned to intensify with future growth. Existing tree cover is shown in Figure E-4. To support the City's adopted goal of 30% canopy coverage and provide the environmental health benefits associated with tree cover to the community, tree canopy targets were developed for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and its four Districts. These targets reflect the capacity of planned land use patterns to support tree coverage. The Madison District has the highest tree canopy target.

The Tacoma Mall area is one of the only remaining tracts of native Garry Oak habitat in the City. Garry Oaks depend on well-drained gravelly soils. Though not appropriate in all circumstances, Garry Oaks could be one of the factors that distinguish the neighborhood over time. As a rare native tree

species, in some circumstances Garry Oaks are protected under the City's Critical Areas Protection Ordinance.

### **Goal E-3**

*Achieve 25% tree canopy coverage in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea by 2040.*

### **Action E-9**

*Target 25% tree canopy coverage in the Madison District and 20% coverage in other Districts by 2040.*

**Table E-1. Tree Canopy Targets for Character Districts**

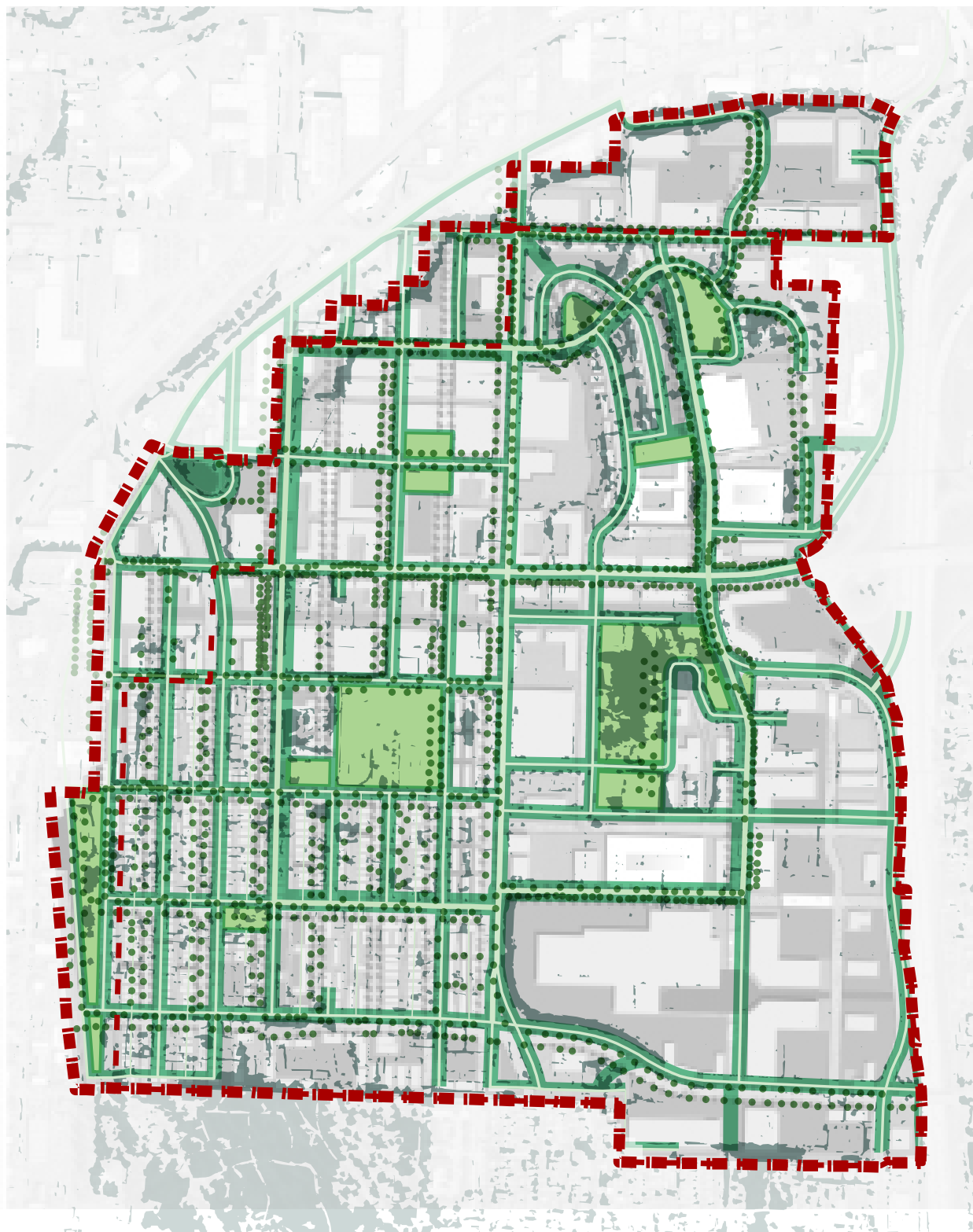
<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>CURRENT TREE CANOPY (AVERAGE)</b>	<b>GOAL (AVERAGE)</b>
Madison	184	10%	25%
Lincoln Heights	126	12%	20%
Northwest	71	7%	20%
Mall	194	8%	20%
Subarea	575	9.5%	25%

While these goals represent a significant increase in canopy coverage, they are entirely feasible through street trees, parks and open space plantings, even in a densely built out district like the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Canopy coverage of 25% would be equivalent to 142 acres of tree canopy. Achieving these canopy goals can be done mostly through street tree plantings, which are already required with most new development and with roadway construction. The goal could be achieved more rapidly through proactive street tree planting efforts.

Additionally, the City made changes to its development regulations when the Subarea Plan was adopted to increase support for tree canopy goals. One of these changes was modifying the requirements of the Land Use Code to require street trees to be planted for all land uses. The former code exempted single, two and three-family development from the street tree requirement.



Figure E-4. Existing Tree Canopy Coverage.



- Expanded Neighborhood Subarea
- Tree Locations
- Existing RGC Boundary

Figure E-5. Proposed Tree Canopy Coverage.



Photo E-6. Garry Oak Tree, S. 52nd St.



Photo E-7. Cimarón ash street tree, Tacoma.

The following assumptions underlie development of the canopy targets:

**Table E-2. Tree Canopy Assumptions for Streets, Parks & Open Spaces and Other Properties**

TREE PLANTING LOCATION	TARGET TREE CANOPY	2040 CANOPY COVERAGE GOAL (ACRES)
Street Trees	3 trees per 100 ft 25-ft tree crown radius	88
Parks & Open Spaces	30% average coverage 60% coverage in Mall District park	14
Other Properties	10% average coverage	40
Total	25%	142 acres

#### **Action E-10**

*Work with property owners such as WSDOT to increase tree cover on the neighborhood perimeter, focusing on opportunities to provide large swaths of green, mitigate freeway noise and air pollution, and make the neighborhood attractive and inviting.*

#### **Action E-11**

*To increase the identity, canopy cover and green infrastructure value of the Loop Road linear parkway consider planting the largest street trees feasible and appropriate to the design.*

#### **Action E-12**

*Coordinate with parks and open space services providers to strive to meet tree canopy targets within their facilities.*

#### **Action E-13**

*Seek ways to promote Garry Oaks as a signature native tree species.*

#### **Action E-14**

*Encourage private property owners to plant trees, particularly when there are opportunities to beautify and promote pedestrian connections through large paved areas.*

## GREEN URBAN DISTRICT

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As green infrastructure strategies are implemented, they will contribute to a unique character and high quality of life. This greening of the neighborhood could ultimately become a very positive element of the neighborhood's identity and image. Public input demonstrates strong support for the green infrastructure approaches integrated in this Plan, and for future efforts to bring green building, recycling and other sustainability strategies online in the neighborhood.

## TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

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The Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (RGC) is a designated TDR receiving area, providing development height bonuses in exchange for TDRs purchased as part of conserving farms, forests and other sensitive areas. The City's zoning code offers substantial height bonuses as an incentive to use the program. This market based conservation tool is poised to make a substantial contribution once the market conditions are right.

### **Goal E-4**

*Promote regional conservation of farms and forests and protect the health of the Puget Sound by fulfilling the Regional Growth Center role of accommodating a substantial share of growth and by creating incentives for regional conservation through the TDR bonus system.*

### **Action E-15**

*Promote the use of TDRs in exchange for height bonuses within the RGC by marketing this option to the development community, streamlining its use and taking steps to catalyze growth in the RGC.*



Photo E-8. Subarea residential street with street trees, Madison District.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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- Achieve average 25% tree canopy in Tacoma Mall Neighborhood by 2040.
- By 2030, tree canopy should average at least 18%.



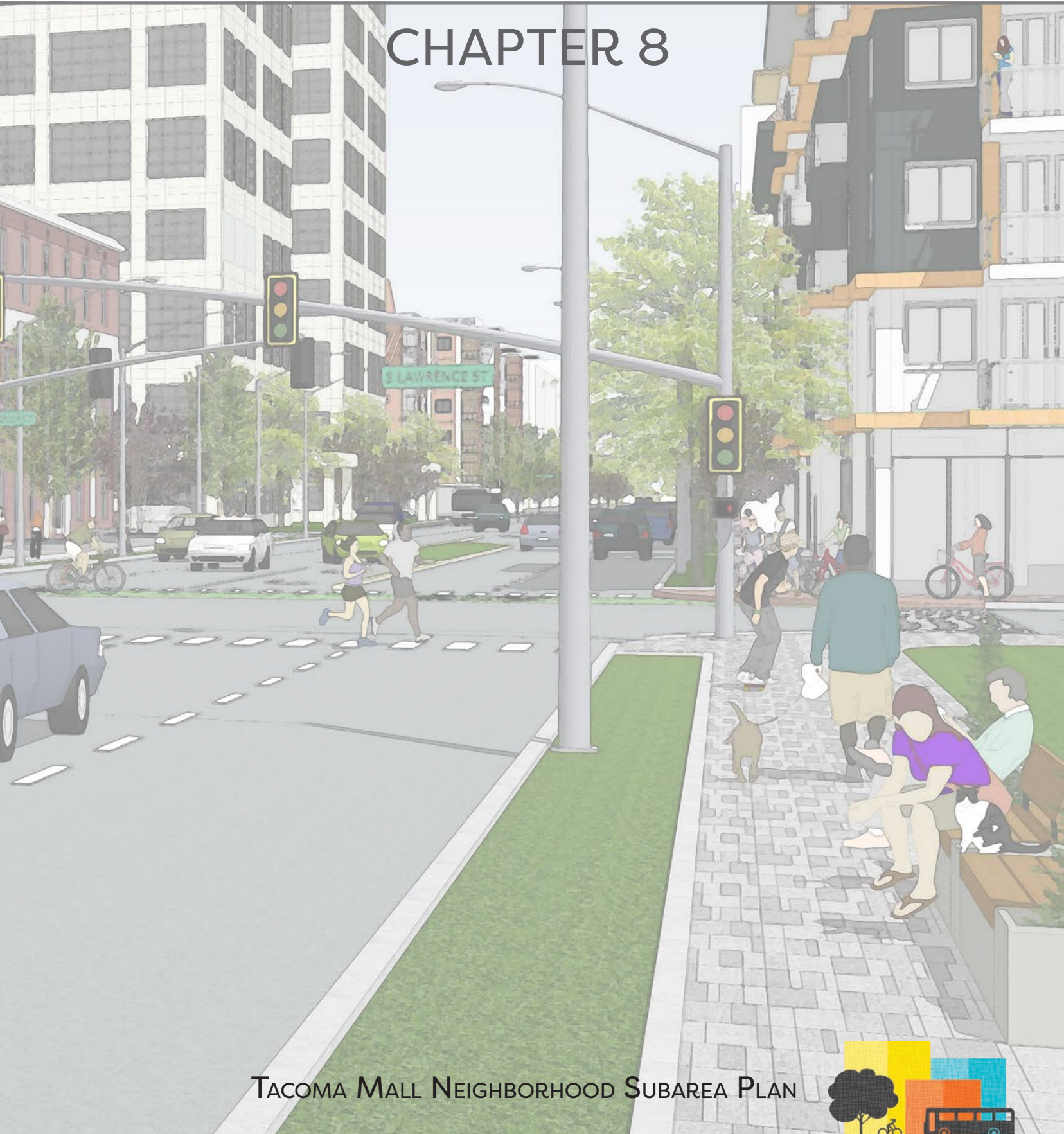
Photo E-9. A Pierce County live-work farm.

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# COMMUNITY VITALITY

## CHAPTER 8



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



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# CHAPTER 8



# COMMUNITY VITALITY

## CONTENTS

Community Vitality Goal

Introduction

Local Culture

Parks & Open Spaces

Performance Measures

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## COMMUNITY VITALITY GOAL

*Make the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood an attractive place to live and work with a vibrant local culture, strong community engagement, and a robust system of neighborhood services, amenities and gathering places that fosters a sense of identity, empowerment and attachment to place.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a vision, goals and actions for fostering a vibrant local culture, a safe environment for people of all ages, and a complete system of community services and amenities, including parks, open spaces, and community resources. The chapter speaks to the social, cultural, recreational, civic and human service aspects of the Subarea Plan, and describes how community vitality may be strengthened by growing a more resilient and vibrant local culture and identity. These important qualities can be referred to in many ways—in this case, the plan discusses them together as key aspects of community vitality.

Other chapters in this Subarea Plan provide guidance for strengthening community identity and sense of place through improvements to urban form, land use, housing, transportation systems and the environment. While important, these improvements alone cannot create a complete neighborhood. Through accessing community services and amenities in a complete neighborhood, people living and working in the community get to know their neighbors and develop a sense of identity and pride that is rooted in place. They actively participate in neighborhood life, engage in civic matters and gather in parks, schools, libraries and other neighborhood spaces, fostering a vibrant local culture that is expressive of their diverse talents and backgrounds. They desire to remain in the neighborhood and care for it as stewards and are empowered to do so.

## COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOOD

The term “complete neighborhood” describes a neighborhood with safe, affordable and convenient access to the goods and services that support daily living. A complete neighborhood offering good and healthy places and safety nets for social interaction and support can bring diverse communities together, foster civic engagement, and contribute to people’s health, happiness and well-being. (Oldenburg, 1989; American Planning Association. 2007.)

“It’s not just about creating a plan to help pack more people in. It’s, how do we create a plan that’s going to have quality urban living?” (Quote from public meeting on September 17, 2015.)

## A NEW NAME?

The City conducted a naming survey as part of the subarea planning process. The majority of respondents favored finding a new name for the neighborhood, though some felt an attachment to its current name. Multiple names were suggested, with potential options for a new name identified through the survey and stakeholder discussions. Most people also favored referring to each district by its own name (Mall District, Madison District, Northwest District, and Lincoln Heights District).

## LOCAL CULTURE

### NEIGHBORHOOD NAME & IDENTITY

Throughout the planning process, a desire was expressed to strengthen community identity. Ideas shared for strengthening community identity included improving safety, providing more parks and public spaces, increasing trees and green features, and increasing access to jobs and services and amenities. To reflect the fact that the neighborhood is larger and more diverse than the Mall itself, the Subarea Plan has established the precedent of referring to the area as the “Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Regional Growth Center,” rather than just “Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center.” Many participants in the planning process also expressed interest in agreeing on a new name for the neighborhood. A new name would need to go beyond a “branding” effort and be authentically expressive of the neighborhood’s diverse community and its envisioned future.



Photo CV-1. Kids crossing road.

### Goal CV-1

*Foster an identity for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood that instills pride in a strong community of diverse residents and businesses.*

### Action CV-1

Work with local residents and businesses to identify the name for the neighborhood that best captures the community’s identity and aspirations for the future.

### Action CV-2

*Develop distinctive and attractive signage and wayfinding for the neighborhood.*

### Action CV-3

*Rebrand the neighborhood as a “green neighborhood,” celebrating planned improvements in green stormwater infrastructure, parks and tree cover.*

## THE VALUE OF ARTS & CULTURE

“Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to Tacoma’s unique and distinctive identity. Creativity is also the engine of the new economy. The creative sector contributes directly and indirectly to community prosperity through generating economic activity, providing employment, making Tacoma attractive to today’s mobile knowledge workers, and contributing to Tacoma’s quality of life.” (ArtFull Tacoma, 2016)



Photo CV-2. Dance Performance.



Photo CV-3. .Building Community.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS & CULTURE

Local arts and culture present unique options for locally based economic, social and cultural expression that contributes to every facet of community life as well as to people’s health and well-being. Local arts and culture promote formal and informal programs and activities, enjoyable and memorable individual experiences, a sense of connection to place, and economic development and job creation.

### Goal CV-2

*Increase the presence of arts and cultural activities, engage community members from diverse backgrounds, build community relationships and foster a positive neighborhood identity.*

### Action CV-4

*Develop a public art strategy for this neighborhood that identifies resources, partnerships and opportunities to foster and support cultural expression, awareness of neighborhood history and a sense of place and local identity.*

### Action CV-5

*Ensure that the City’s land use regulations, and community and economic development programs, support local fabrication and production of arts.*

### Action CV-6

*Partner with public and private landowners to install public artworks in visible locations and neighborhood gateways that reflect and strengthen community identity.*

### Action CV-7

*Promote events like farmers markets, live music, festivals, food truck events, and neighborhood parties.*

## SERVICES & AMENITIES

Complete neighborhoods have safe and convenient access to the goods and services that support daily living for people of all ages and abilities. These include a variety of commercial and public services including grocery stores, daycare, medical services, educational services, public open spaces and recreational facilities, community hubs, affordable transportation options and civic amenities.



Photo CV-4. Handprints on fence, Madison District .



Photo CV-5. Community courtesy of Tacoma Farmers' Market.



Photo CV-6. Tacoma Runners, 2016.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. The use of arts in healing complements the biomedical view by focusing on not only sickness and symptoms themselves but the holistic nature of the person. (Furnham and Forey, 1994)

### **Goal CV-3**

*Bring more services and amenities to the neighborhood to provide safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life.*

### **Action CV-8**

*Recruit, promote or construct a variety of services and amenities that address the evolving needs and desires of residents.*

Through the planning process, the community identified the following local services and amenities as near-term priorities:

- affordable food sources such as a local grocery store or local food bank or farmers market
- professional development training
- affordable childcare
- health and medical services
- social services
- community amenities and facilities such as parks, a community center and a library

### **Action CV-9**

*Work with health services providers to provide better accessible medical services in the neighborhood, including improving financial and cultural access for local residents.*

### **Action CV-10**

*Work with the Tacoma School District, Tacoma Public Library and other service providers to evaluate the potential of opening a new school, library or other community resource in the neighborhood to serve the growing population.*

### **Action CV-11**

*Engage the Tacoma School District to develop scenarios for future uses for the Madison School site that would continue the site's legacy as a community hub and open space.*

Madison Elementary School was built in 1924 and for many decades served as a community hub for students, their families and other people in the neighborhood. The facility is no longer an elementary school and currently provides programs including Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Family Literacy, Head Start and Indian Education. Because it is no longer a neighborhood-serving elementary school, less neighborhood interaction takes place at the Madison School than in the past.

## **All Ages Community**

A community for all ages seeks to meet the needs and interests of the very old, the very young and everyone in between. Research shows that communities that meet the needs of its older and younger citizens raise the quality of life for everyone.

## **TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORS**

During the time the plan was being developed, a group of committed stakeholders self-organized into the Tacoma Mall Neighbors to promote neighborhood engagement and improvements. Within the first six months the group held the neighborhood's first block party in years, staged an "occupy Lincoln Park" event.

Madison School is an important neighborhood recreational asset where neighborhood children go to play. However, residents report that current conditions are not ideal and that certain areas and play structures are fenced off from local access. The parks goal described below envisions future use of the Madison School property as an accessible park and/or community-facilities center that would provide recreation and green space amenities, reinforce the site's historic role as a community-gathering place and potentially provide a new elementary school and a new home for the 40th Street Community Garden.



Photo CV-7. Madison School is an important hub of community for the neighborhood.



Photo CV-8. Madison School playground is often fenced off but still attracts neighborhood children.

## REIMAGINING THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

The McMenamins' Kennedy School in Portland, Oregon is an example of reimagining a historic public elementary school in a manner that maintains its role as a neighborhood hub. The Kennedy School now offers restaurants, a hotel, a cinema and other amenities to its neighborhood.



Photo CV-9. Kennedy School, Portland, Oregon.

While Tacoma Public Schools could potentially redevelop the Madison School site in the future, which could potentially include construction of a new school or a partnership to develop park space, the District has no plans to do so at this time (Tacoma Public Schools, 2016). Tacoma Public Schools will soon begin work on a master plan for the future of the school district that presents an opportunity to integrate the community's vision for the Madison School site into the District's future planning and implementation activities.



Photo CV-10. The Madison School playfield is an important recreational asset to the neighborhood.

## MALL NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

During the planning process, local community groups organized events that helped bring activity to the neighborhood. These events included the Tacoma Runners event, Tacoma Kidical Mass family bike ride ending in Lincoln Heights Park, Tacoma Neighbors block party, and “Occupy the Park” events.



Photo CV-11. Community garden in Madison District.



Photo CV-12. Tacoma Cemetery pathway.



Photo CV-13. Asia Pacific Cultural Center.

## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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Community empowerment refers to the process of enabling communities to increase control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. Implementation of this plan is dependent upon continued community leadership, participation and ownership of the process. Sustained community empowerment and implementation partnerships are essential to the long-term achievement of community goals. Empowerment can be achieved through City efforts to fully engage community members in neighborhood planning processes, and by increasing access to jobs and education and services as called for in the prior section and in Chapter 9—Shared Prosperity.

### **Goal CV-4**

*Empower all community members to participate in neighborhood planning and change, and cultivate inclusive leadership and decision-making that embraces and celebrates the neighborhood's diverse community.*

### **Action CV-12**

*Support formation of a Subarea Plan implementation steering committee to advocate for actions needed to achieve the neighborhood vision.*

### **Action CV-13**

*Use a combination of engagement methods reflecting the diversity of the community to invite all local populations to participate in planning and implementation activities.*



Photo CV-14. Tacoma Friends meeting and City Haven Peace Park.

## BROADENING THE MALL'S ROLE

“Alternative High School at Northgate Mall provides unique opportunities for teens.” The Seattle School District operates Middle College High School at Northgate Mall (owned by Simon Corporation). Middle College High School is an alternative high school option to earn credits for a high school diploma and preparation for higher education in a small, caring environment, which includes three unique schools. (Seattle School District, 2016)

## HEALTH EQUITY

Healthy People 2020 defines health equity as the “attainment of the highest level of health for all people” (USDHHS, 2016). Community empowerment gives community members opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives and neighborhoods to fulfill their aspirations and potential. Continued community engagement can help ensure plan implementation can truly meet their changing needs.

### Action CV-14

*Monitor demographic characteristics and community participation over time and take steps to support and celebrate the neighborhood’s ethnic, economic and age diversity.*

### Action CV-15

*Work with partners to improve equity and health outcomes by reducing social and economic barriers such as poverty, lack of professional skills and cultural segregation.*

### Action CV-16

*Support existing community organizing efforts, as well as potential new ones such as formation of a Community Development Corporation or Neighborhood Business District.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

Neighborhood safety is essential to community well-being, stability, resilience and prosperity. Safety concerns were a common theme expressed during the development of this plan. Concerns about safety affect both perception and behavior in ways that are detrimental to individuals, families, the community and business. Unsafe neighborhoods, and the perception of unsafe neighborhoods, can cause anxiety, depression, stress and disinvestment. Fear of violence can keep people of all ages indoors, isolating them from neighbors and community resources and reducing opportunities for exercise, play and transit use. Companies may be less willing to invest in unsafe neighborhoods, making jobs harder to find.



Photo CV-15. Police serving the neighborhood.

## **Goal CV-5**

*Improve safety for neighborhood residents, employees and visitors at all times of the day.*

Crime is currently a concern in the community, and evidence of high crime levels is shown in data collected by the Tacoma Police Department. In 2015, the Department recorded 185 crimes against persons and 1,710 crimes against property in the neighborhood. This translates to 49 crimes against persons per 1,000 residents and 450 crimes against property per 1,000 residents. These ratios are significantly higher than the Department's crime level targets (City of Tacoma Police Department, 2016). Increased police presence and patrols in the neighborhood could help to strengthen community policing and reduce crime. Additional staffing could potentially be provided out of the Sector 3 substation, which currently serves the neighborhood and has capacity to house additional staff. Police Department staffing is dependent upon available resources and demands.



Photo CV-16. Street design is the deciding factor in a safe street.

The Tacoma Fire Department currently receives about 200 calls per 1,000 residents. Based on this annual citywide average, future population growth planned for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood could result in an increase of approximately 1,600 to 1,800 calls annually by 2040. If an increase of this scale occurred, construction of a new fire station with staff for an additional engine in the study area could be needed (Tacoma Fire Department, 2016).

## TARGET ZERO

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*The Transportation Choices Chapter calls for implementing “Target Zero” injury goals by concentrating traffic safety improvements in areas of high pedestrian and bicycle injuries, including 38th west of Pine, Steele Street at Tacoma Mall Boulevard and 47th between Tacoma Mall Boulevard and Pine.*

## A SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD

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“Improving safety for all people – whether they are walking, biking, or driving – should be the top priority of this project.” –Quote from public comment letter

## SAFE PLACES FOR KIDS

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“Right now, there is no safe place for kids to go in the neighborhood. We need safe places for kids, like parks.” –Quote from public meeting on August 26, 2015

## Action CV-17

*Monitor trends in fire and emergency medical services calls and consider this information when planning for future service improvements.*

## Action CV-18

*Work with agencies and stakeholders to improve community safety and disaster readiness and to prevent crime.*

## Action CV-19

*Encourage development on vacant and underutilized lands to catalyze positive change.*

## Action CV-20

*Integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the design of streets, parks and buildings, as appropriate to a dense urban district.*

## Action CV-21

*Work with stakeholders to identify ways to improve safety and perceptions of safety, particularly along the western edge of the Madison District and the northern boundary of the Tacoma Cemetery.*

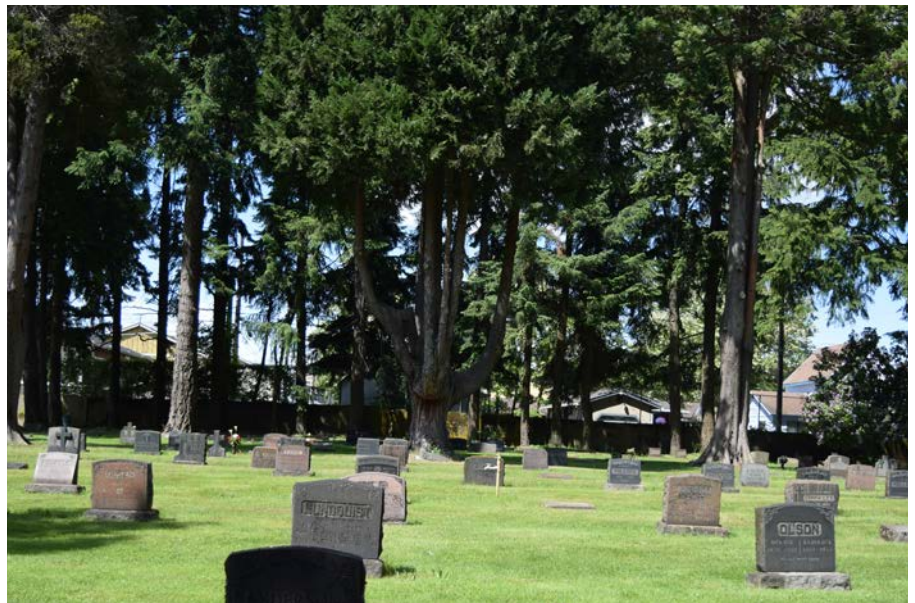


Photo CV-17. Cemetery with houses in background



Photo CV-18. Block party, kids at play, Madison District.

## **PARKS & OPEN SPACES**

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Parks and open spaces are an important part of urban neighborhoods. They provide access to nature, recreational opportunities, green spaces, urban habitat, stormwater management and public gathering places in a dense urban environment.

Through the planning process, the community developed a robust vision for an integrated system of parks, open space, green infrastructure and public streets including the Loop Road. Achieving that vision will take coordinated action by multiple parties. Metro Parks Tacoma, the City of Tacoma, the Tacoma School District and civic partners work in collaboration to provide public parks, open spaces and schoolyard play space in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood and throughout the city. The first step in achieving the community's vision for parks and open space is to collaborate with Tacoma's parks and open-space providers so that the Subarea Plan parks vision can be integrated into citywide planning efforts, reflect management and funding realities, and ultimately be turned into action. Moving forward, innovative approaches such as public-private partnerships may play a significant role. Finally, private open spaces, such as the Tacoma Mall's plazas, also play an important role.

There are currently four existing parks and open spaces of various types within the neighborhood (Figure CV-1): Lincoln Heights Park, the 40th Street Community Garden, the northern portion of South Park and the Water Flume Line Trail. Additionally, there is schoolyard space at the Madison School. Lincoln Heights Park is a neighborhood park with basketball, picnic and play equipment located in the Lincoln Heights District. The 40th Street Community Garden is a new community garden located in the Madison District.

South Park is a community park straddling the southwest border of the neighborhood. The portion of the park in the neighborhood includes landscaped areas, trees and utility buildings. The portion to the south includes play equipment, a “sprayground,” a community center, gardens and tree stands. The Water Flume Line Trail runs through South Park, providing opportunities for walking and biking. The Asia Pacific Cultural Center is located adjacent to the trail and South Park, and offers community meeting space and cultural programs and events. In addition, there are several other parks and open spaces located within a short drive, bus or bike ride of the neighborhood: the STAR Center, Wapato Park, Lincoln Park, Wapato Hills, and the Tacoma Nature Center.

Metro Parks Tacoma’s January 2018 Strategic Master Plan and the City’s Comprehensive Plan establish level of service standards for parks and open space. The Strategic Plan establishes a 10-minute park walk standard. This standard sets the goal of having a park within a 10-minute walk of every resident. The 10-minute walk standard, when applied to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, demonstrates the need for additional parks and open space in some areas, and also highlights the significance of Madison School. The school’s central location brings the neighborhood much closer to achieving the 10-minute walk goal. The standard is consistent with a theme of the stakeholder engagement process--that more and better park facilities are needed.

**Action CV-22** proposes consideration of additional level-of-service standards designed specifically for Tacoma’s densest urban centers, including the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. These standards aim to ensure that there are parks within a five-to-ten-minute walking distance of all parts of the neighborhood, and that a minimum amount of parks and open space is provided per person to provide access to green space and “breathing room” in a highly built, populous environment.



Photo CV-19. Subarea park community garden.

## PARKS FOR THE MALL NEIGHBORHOOD

Figure CV-2 is a conceptual plan meant to serve as a starting point for discussion with parks providers about developing new parks in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. The concept includes existing parks and open spaces as well as desired future ones. Future parks and open spaces are not likely to be in these exact locations, configurations or sizes.

### Goal CV-6

*Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma School District, civic partners and the community to plan and implement the community's parks and open spaces vision in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.*

Downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood are the City's densest urban centers and are envisioned to become increasingly urban over time. In the urban context where people may not have private yard space, parks should be closer at hand and within easy walking distance. A quarter-mile walking distance is roughly equivalent to a five-or-ten-minute walking time for the average person. This is generally considered a distance that most people would choose to walk on a regular basis.

The amount and location of new park and open space must be strategically planned in order to create the most value for the neighborhood and achieve multiple benefits. The following parks planning principles are recommended as guides for improving and expanding the parks system in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

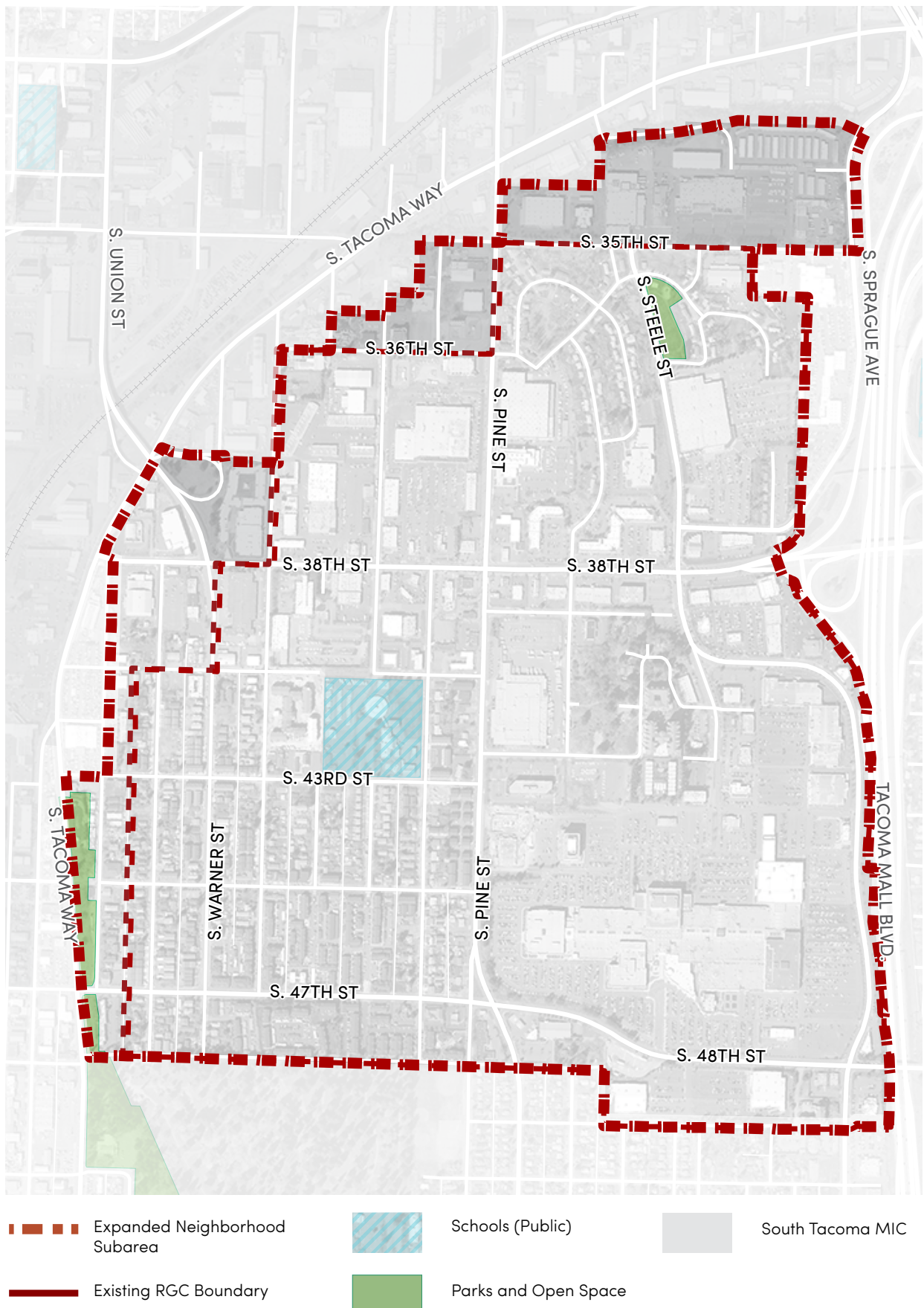


Figure CV-1. Existing parks and open space map.

## TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS PLANNING PRINCIPLES:

- *a park or open space in each of the four Tacoma Mall Neighborhood districts*
- *located along the Loop Road to create a continuous string of green public spaces*
- *provides green stormwater infrastructure and tree canopy*
- *enhances sense of place and urban design*
- *meets the recreational programming needs of a dense urban neighborhood and diverse communities*

In general, priority should be given to making improvements to existing parks and open space assets first rather than creating new ones. When new parks are under consideration, priority should be given to sites with the greatest potential as community gathering places, defining elements of neighborhood identity, and neighborhood catalysts.

Figure CV-2 shows a conceptual future parks system to accomplish these parks planning principles. This conceptual system is one possible outcome that would meet the parks principles of this Plan, and is not intended to be interpreted as proscriptive or regulatory in nature.

Parks located around the Loop Road are easily accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The Loop Road and parks are envisioned to include green stormwater infrastructure, trees and landscaping features that significantly increase the amount of public green space and attractiveness of the neighborhood. Parks and open spaces are located for maximum visibility and urban design benefit, for instance by being placed where they terminate a vista, at a change in the street grid, or at transitions between different intensities of land uses. A range of sizes that can be used to accommodate the programming needs in the neighborhood, from small public gathering spaces to community gardens to sports fields.

The following Metro Parks Tacoma parks typologies could meet the needs of the neighborhood:

- **Neighborhood Park:** Provides daily convenient access to basic urban recreation opportunities for residents within walking or biking distance

- **Community Park:** Provides a variety of major recreation facilities and supports recreation programming and larger scale group activities
- **Urban Park:** Provides visitors with access to open spaces and other park amenities in downtown commercial areas and mixed-use centers. Examples include:
  - **Public Green:** A small park with grass or other landscaped features designed primarily for sitting, picnicking and enjoying nature
  - **Public Square:** A small hardscaped public area with design features such as pavement markings, public art and seating
  - **Linear Urban Park:** A long, thin park that provides green public space and recreation opportunities. Linear parks may include habitat areas, green stormwater infrastructure, multiuse trails, urban plazas or streets. For linear parks that contain streets, vehicle speeds should be slow and walking areas should be separated from traffic by trees, landscaping or hardscaped areas with pedestrian-friendly design elements such as public art, seating and signage.
- **Community Garden:** A public amenity where community members can participate in growing and harvesting plants.



Photo CV-20. South Park, Tacoma.

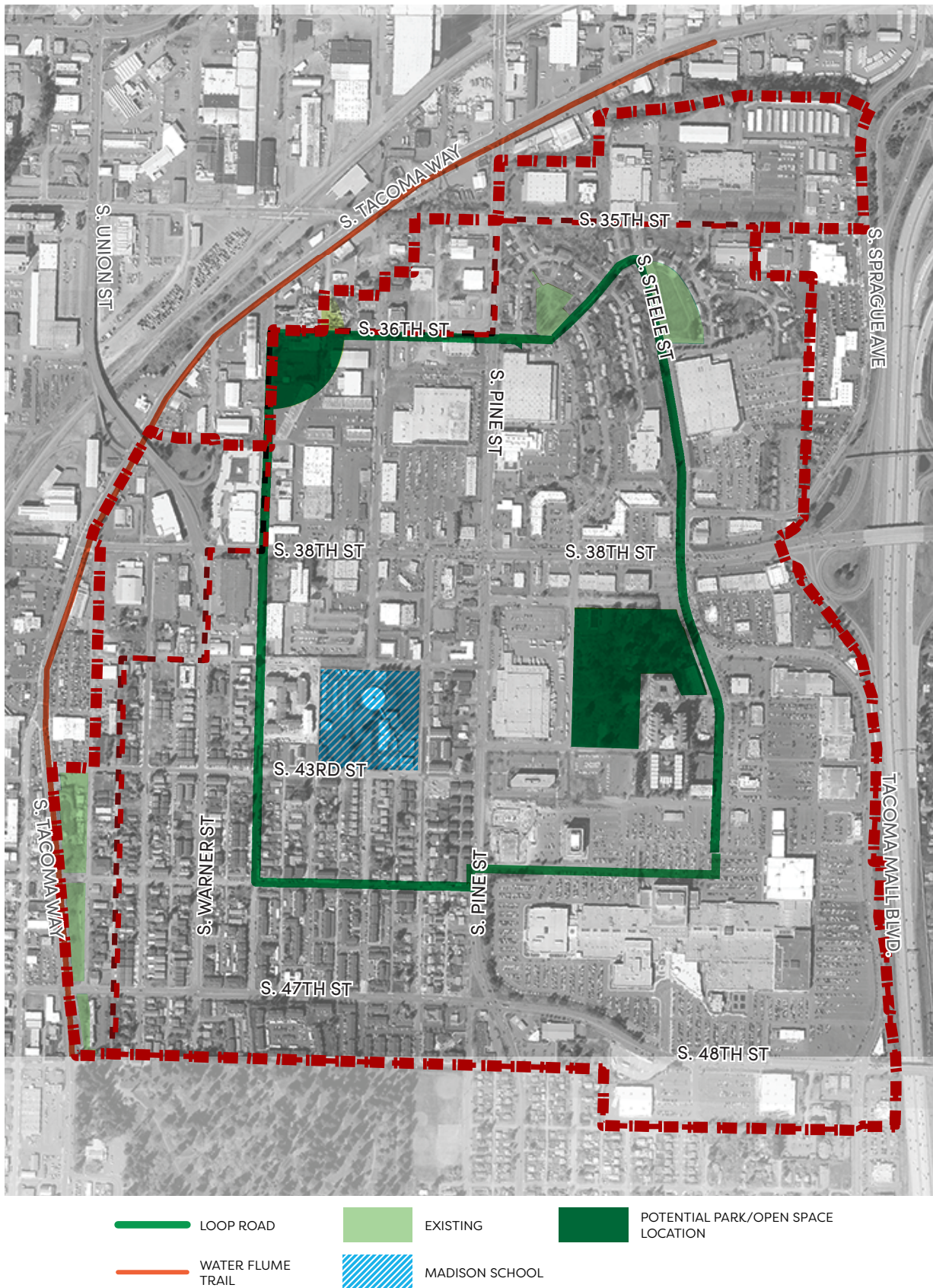


Figure CV-2. Conceptual parks & open space plan.

## **THE NORTHWEST DISTRICT**

The district is currently almost entirely commercial and light industrial and there is no existing park or open space there. As the neighborhood develops, it is uncertain whether residential development will be part of the mix. Therefore, the intent of creating a park or open space in that area may be served in a different manner. Rather than a traditional park, the approach could instead be a linear park along the Loop Road, a green stormwater feature, joint use of public sites, or private plazas as part of future development. The creation of a new park in the Northwest District should be phased with the prospect of significant development in the area.

## **LINCOLN HEIGHTS DISTRICT**

This District has the Subarea's only current neighborhood park. Lincoln Heights Park is centrally located and fronts on the Loop Road. The park is in need of design updates, and has high potential to become a well-connected recreational asset and gathering space. Another opportunity is to integrate open space into future development of the Pierce County Annex site, potentially with vistas over the Nalley Valley. Improved non-motorized access to the I-5 pedestrian bridge will better connect the Lincoln Heights District to Jennie Reed Elementary School and neighborhoods to the east.

## **MALL DISTRICT**

The Mall District includes one of the Subarea's few remaining undeveloped areas. Located along the west-facing slope of a small hill, this site could become a neighborhood or urban park, potentially incorporating an arboretum and viewpoints. Alternatively, if this site were developed, integrating open space into the design could be a major benefit to future residents and the neighborhood. Open space goals could also be met through civic and gathering spaces integrated into the Tacoma Mall and other commercial sites. There are opportunities to connect to the residential neighborhood to the south via a pedestrian pathway from S. 48th Street to S. Wapato Street, and to neighborhoods east of I-5 via the S. 48th Street overpass.

## **MADISON DISTRICT**

Within the Madison District, the Madison School site functions as a community hub and presents a strategic opportunity to enhance its function as a recreational asset and gathering space. In addition, the S. 40th Street Community

Garden, Tacoma water property abutting South Tacoma Way, and the Tacoma Cemetery are valuable greenspaces which could be enhanced through pedestrian and recreational amenities. Opportunities to create pocket parks should be pursued. Non-motorized connections to South Park, the Asia Pacific Cultural Center, and the Water Flume Trail should be enhanced.

## JOINT USE

Several Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) sites serve as passive open space assets and greenbelts, as do other publicly owned sites in the neighborhood. As the neighborhood grows, these could potentially be further enhanced for joint public use, as sites for public art or publicly accessible green spaces. TPU is responsible first to provide their utility functions. In addition, any publicly owned properties declared surplus should be evaluated as potential open spaces prior to sale for private use. Currently, one such site exists in the Madison Neighborhood at the corner of S. 45<sup>th</sup> and Warner Streets. A funding source should be pursued to acquire this property as an open space asset.



Photo CV-21. Tacoma Public Utilities well site in Northwest District.



Photo CV-22. A “festival street.”

It can accommodate regular travel and become a public open space for special events.

## MADISON SCHOOL

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Figure CV-2 includes a potential future park on the Madison School property owned by Tacoma Public Schools. Creating a park here would reinforce the school's historic role as a community gathering place. A park here could potentially be part of a larger campus with a new or reopened elementary school and a new home for the 40th Street Community Garden.

"We see the benefits of love in everything. When children, pets, plants and even objects are loved, they thrive...The same is true of our places. When we have an emotional connection to our place, we are less likely to leave it and far more likely to champion and defend it in the face of criticism. We will fight for it."  
(Kageyama, 2008)

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Dense urban centers have unique parks and recreation needs. In these environments there is a need for "outdoor breathing space" in an otherwise highly developed built environment. There is also a need for a wide range of recreational programming such as spaces for large and small events and gatherings, cultural programming that celebrates the diverse backgrounds of community members, youth and senior programming, a range of sports and exercise options, community gardens, pet-friendly spaces and arts creation and enjoyment. During the subarea planning process, Tacoma Mall Neighborhood residents expressed a desire for these types of programming and emphasized an immediate need for more safe places for youth and people of all ages to spend their free time.

### Action CV-22

*Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma and others to consider new level of service standards for parks and open space in Tacoma's densest urban centers.*

### Action CV-23

*Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma and other parks partners to implement parks planning principles for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.*

### Action CV-24

*Collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma to integrate the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood parks and open space strategies into long-range plans, and current and upcoming capital and programmatic priorities.*

### Action CV-25

*Work with private property owners and developers to provide open space in various forms such as public plazas and private recreational spaces. Consider revisions to development standards and explore incentives as part of this work.*

### Action CV-26

*Improve access to nearby parks and recreational assets including South Park, Wapato Hills Park, the Water Flume Trail and the Tacoma Cemetery through pedestrian improvements, wayfinding and other steps.*

## Action CV-27

*Explore acquisition of any surplus public properties as well as further joint use of publicly owned facilities as recreational amenities, locations for public art or wayfinding, tree planting and passive open spaces.*

## Action CV-28

*Collaborate with stakeholders to regularly evaluate and develop plans to meet recreational, cultural and educational programming needs for people of all ages.*

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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- **Parks and Open Space:** Regularly assess the community's level of satisfaction with implementation of the parks and open space vision for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.
- **Community Vitality Outreach:** Given the qualitative nature of community vitality, measures of performance must be nuanced. Metro Parks Tacoma the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma School District should collaborate to solicit input from the community on a regular basis.

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Photo CV-23. Chrome Twist by John Rogers, public art displayed at Tacoma Police Headquarters.  
Photo courtesy of the City of Tacoma Arts Commission (City of Tacoma Arts Commission, undated).



# SHARED PROSPERITY

S. 36TH ST CHAPTER 9

S. PINE ST

LE ST

H ST

S. 38TH ST

TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 9



# SHARED PROSPERITY

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*Grow Businesses & Jobs*

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*Madison District Infill & Redevelopment Strategy*

*Northwest District Infill & Redevelopment Strategy*

*Lincoln Heights District Strategy*

*Performance Measures*

*References*

## SHARED PROSPERITY GOAL

*Promote business retention, growth and investment, and broaden employment opportunities in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood in order to increase prosperity for the neighborhood, the City and the region.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is a very important economic engine for the City of Tacoma. The mall is the best-known destination in a neighborhood that also contains other major retail destinations, commercial, industrial and office businesses as well as residential areas.

This chapter describes key opportunities to promote economic development that increases prosperity and opportunity for businesses, residents and the City. Promoting business retention, investment and job growth in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is a shared public and private goal. Achieving the 2040 growth target of doubling the current number of jobs would bring major local, city and regional benefits. The Mall Neighborhood is well situated and has significant assets to support growth including freeway access, visibility in a core urban area and major businesses and employers. Its Regional Growth Center status channels public resources to the neighborhood.

While this area is a jobs and tax revenue hub for Tacoma, it functions largely according to a suburban economic model that limits its economic potential. The neighborhood was developed at a time when land was more plentiful and auto-oriented development was in its ascendance. Today, the City and region have grown up around it. Land in core urban areas is becoming more scarce and valuable. Meanwhile, today's retail economy and market preferences are shifting dramatically forcing cities and businesses to adapt. The same auto-oriented land use patterns and transportation system



Photo SP-1. The Tacoma Mall's iconic sign.

that brought growth to the area are now becoming barriers to the next phase of growth. The combination of actions proposed in this Plan will transform the area from a place that people drive through to shop then leave, to a place where people chose to live, work, shop and spend time.



Photo SP-2. Ballard Trader Joe's—street-oriented big box retail.

Prosperity is elusive to many residents of this neighborhood where average household incomes are significantly below City and regional averages. While this is a complex problem calling for a broad range of actions to improve the economic opportunities of low-income citizens, progress can be made locally. For example, although this area is home to a mix of jobs and housing today most residents commute out of the area for work, and most businesses serve city or regional markets, rather than serving the local neighborhood. Taking steps to better integrate the disparate districts of the Subarea through urban form and transportation improvements could provide mutual benefits.

This Subarea Plan is an economic development plan intended to initiate actions that will promote, or remove barriers to, growth and investment. As part of the plan development process, the City engaged with local and regional developers and business people. The core message was largely consistent with the input from the broader community—that current land use and transportation patterns, uncoordinated urban form, and lack of neighborhood amenities are holding the area back and contributing to a negative image for the area. The same set of actions to promote the transportation, urban form, neighborhood vitality and environmental goals can also foster economic development.

The Plan actions are intended to result in multiple, exponential benefits thus bringing prosperity to area residents, business and property owners, the workforce, visitors, and the broader Tacoma community. Prosperity benefits the economy, identity of place, the natural environment, health and vitality. Today's market may not yet be strong enough to support major change, but the trends are in the right direction. It is in the shared interest of the City, neighborhood and the local business community to be proactive rather than be left behind as other cities take advantage of emerging market opportunities.

While the City can remove barriers and increase incentives to private investment, there is no benefit to seeking to impose change before the market is there to support it. The key tools available to the City include the Subarea Plan, up-front Planned Action EIS, coordinated public investments in infrastructure planned transportation and utilities, and use of the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption Program. These tools are intended to support project feasibility and economic performance on an area-wide basis and help streamline and reduce the costs of development permitting while using mitigation approaches to address development impacts and contribute to the vision of a great urban place.

There is fertile ground to collaborate on actions that solve problems and provide mutual benefits. The placemaking approach will create a complete, inviting, distinctive urban form. This in turn will leverage higher quality infrastructure, connectivity and improved property visibility and access, thus attracting jobs and housing to an area with an improved investment climate.



Photo SP-3. A parking lot with no trees or people.

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD TODAY

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is named for its super-regional mall. It is currently a predominantly commercial area with residential enclaves in the Lincoln Heights, Madison and Mall Districts. The balance of the neighborhood land contains additional retail, commercial and light industrial offerings, supporting a significant concentration of employment.



Photo SP-4. Griot's Garage, S. 38th and Lawrence Streets.



Photo SP-5. Costco, Lincoln Heights District.



Photo SP-6. Metro Plaza, facing S. 38th St.



Photo SP-7. Bradken Fabrication, Northwest District.



Photo SP-8. Buffalo Wild Wings, Mall District.

National retailers are concentrated in and around the Tacoma Mall and on S. 38th Street. Multiple national retailers, particularly in the Mall proper, serve more market segments than many regional malls and draw from a larger than average trade area. Other retail, office and commercial development is located throughout the neighborhood except in the residential cores of Madison and Lincoln Heights District.

Development capacity is far greater than 20-year demand. Commercial markets, availability of land, neighborhood location and design preferences have contributed to the current low density, dispersed development pattern. The Tacoma Mall has remained stronger than many regional malls due to its visibility, access and diversity of offerings. Vacancies have historically been lower than other comparable areas, ranging from around 1% from 2007 to 2009, to 2%–3% from 2009 to the end of 2013, likely due to leasing strategies by the Tacoma Mall. However, since the fourth quarter of 2013 vacancy rates have jumped to about 5%, to be in line with suburban Tacoma averages and below rates in the Westfield Southcenter Mall and Northgate Mall areas.

A residential/mixed-use feasibility analysis conducted to understand current real estate dynamics for this sector affirmed that developments similar to recent projects in the area (The Apex and Pacifica) reflect what is currently feasible in those markets. The analysis identifies rents that would need to be achieved to see developments with a higher percentage of structured parking or with more amenities and street presence, such as current development trends in downtown and the Proctor District.

A commercial market analysis was also completed to assess the economic impacts of the proposed plan actions.

## **PROSPERITY FOR ALL**

Shared prosperity means shared local, city and regional benefits to the economy, environment, businesses and residents, including current and future residents and generations. Each district benefits through development of its own identity and niches while the entire neighborhood supports people of all incomes and groups.

Actions to achieve shared prosperity include:

- reinvesting in the neighborhood and each District to capture potential community benefits
- encouraging jobs and housing growth through a strategy that incorporates business retention and job growth

## INCOME EFFECTS ON HEALTH

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Job wage and income security greatly impact one's ability to attain maximum health and potential. Unshared benefits of economic prosperity have resulted in the climbing of poverty rates (Schweke, B., 2006). Poverty increases the chances of poor health. At age 25, Americans in the highest income group can expect to live more than six years longer than their poor counterparts (Urban Institute, 2015).

- attracting businesses to invest in this area to improve their businesses, to invest in employees, and to create new job opportunities
- investing in the workforce to increase their career options and earning potential
- making it more possible to live and work in the same neighborhood to reduce cost of living
- providing more jobs close to home for low income household members
- distinguishing the market niche that will attract new investment and customers for each District
- improving livability of all residential areas
- building a more compact, green, walkable mixed-use neighborhood

The Subarea Plan provides a framework for broadening the employment base and development types in more compact formats that, over time, will yield higher economic output.

The smart growth strategies are anticipated to be profitable to everyone in the long term. In the short term, current business models are likely to remain. The Subarea Plan is designed to increase the economic vitality of the neighborhood over time through a strategic package of actions. It is anticipated that improved infrastructure will help raise lease rates, retail sales and incomes, which collectively will affect feasibility and enable significant redevelopment to occur.

## ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

An Economic and Real Estate Conditions Analysis of existing conditions was developed by Community Attributes Inc. (CAI) in 2016 as a part of this project. A summary of the analysis is provided below.

- Development is occurring in an uncoordinated pattern that captures low community return on investment.
- Employment in the neighborhood is dominated by retail trade, which consists of over 40% of all employment. Accommodation and food services, as well as government services are also key sectors for employment in the neighborhood. Services and manufacturing sectors tend to be much less represented than in other comparable locations. There are few local serving retail and service businesses in the neighborhood. Opportunities exist to broaden the neighborhood economy to include enterprises that support neighborhood identity. These businesses include local restaurants and food sources, small-scale artisan and

## THE VALUE OF MIXED USE

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A key aspect of reconfiguring a successful mix in to a more broadly based mixed-use District is to identify and maximize the dynamic synergies between uses. The cycle of supporting uses is:

1. Residential attracts retail.
2. Retail supports office.
3. Office supplies restaurants.
4. Restaurants attract residential use.

These synergies are most effective when the uses are close together and it is convenient to move easily from one to another. This is especially true of “vertical mixed use,” integrated into urban streets with ground-level retail and office and residential above. The retail can only typically be supported on major streets and works best in the most urban part of a mixed-use “town center.” (Dunham-Jones, 2009)

“makers” types of fabrication businesses, local artists and small businesses that feature offerings that are unique to this neighborhood.

- Community employment needs are not fulfilled by neighborhood residents, with about 3% of the local population employed within the neighborhood. Employees that work in the area are drawn from communities across the region.
- Retail space in the neighborhood was largely constructed in the 1960s, and is currently dominated by the Tacoma Mall and other large format retailers. However, over the past five years, little to no commercial development activity has taken place. Historically, vacancies have been lower and rents higher than in the rest of the City and the broader area, but current vacancy rates are equivalent to those in the rest of the suburban Tacoma market. Retail rents in the neighborhood currently average about \$16–\$17/square foot. Over 1 million square feet of retail space in the area is 40–50 years old.
- Office space in the neighborhood includes a significant amount of stock developed in the 1960s, but no significant increases in new office space have occurred since the 1990s. Office vacancy rates until recently have tended to be higher than the City and broader areas, with comparable rents to the rest of the market. Current office rents in the neighborhood are around \$20/square foot.
- Minimal industrial space exists within the existing neighborhood with some warehouses developed in the 1990s. The potential Regional Growth Center expansion area has a higher concentration of industrial uses than is typical. Market vacancy rates and rents in the broader area have risen slightly over the past 10 years, with rates around \$4–\$5/square foot.
- The local economy is dominated by retail (primarily with the Tacoma Mall) and government employment, with less of a focus on services than are often seen in other locations. Diversification of the local economy and a focus on both employment and retail/service offerings that can meet the needs of the local neighborhood should be a focus of ongoing economic development efforts.
- Although building permits demonstrate continuing investment through renovation and remodeling, the future role of the neighborhood as a regional and super-regional center may require more comprehensive redesign to remain competitive.

## MALL DISTRICT POTENTIAL

The Tacoma Mall has been the economic driver in the neighborhood for the past 50 years. The land base, proximity to I-5, market conditions, reputation and existing assets are the basis for the Tacoma Mall's success. Some existing commercial and residential development predated the Mall; however, the majority of commercial development is located there to capture spinoff traffic and business due to proximity to the Mall. The current street network is the result of changing business and development trends and vacation of public rights-of-way. The resulting urban form consists of irregular parcel configurations without public street access. The current form constrains mobility and access to properties and capture of full economic potential.

The potential also exists for significant residential infill with varied contemporary housing types to fulfill market expectations. The completion of an attractive street network, addition of parks, public places is needed to support such economic capture of neighborhood assets and potential.

Emphasis is placed on mixed-use development because it maximizes the multiple and synergistic benefits to be derived. Single use development (residential, institutional and commercial) is also necessary and beneficial. Development supportive of a walkable urban form is the desired format for all development.



Photo SP-9. Pacifica Apartments, Mall District



Photo SP-10. Macy's, Tacoma Mall.

## SHIFTING TRENDS IN RETAIL ENVIRONMENTS

Economic shifts have occurred with the rebirth of cities and preferences of post-baby boom generations. Contemporary experiences and lifestyles such as in-town living in walkable mixed-use neighborhoods have become mainstream and proven to be economically viable. These types of experiences continue to increase as preferred choices among baby boomers and millennials in particular.

This shift has become a powerful driver of the economy, as shown by substantial downtown, major mall and town center redevelopment. The redevelopment of regional malls into mixed-use developments and new, mixed-use “town centers” across the country is the next generation of retail environments taking place in response to significant cultural and retail trends. The photo (captioned Photo SP-11) of Steiner and Associates’ Liberty Center illustrates this type of development. (Urban Land Institute, 2012).

A 2014 Nielsen report on the influential U.S. Millennial population segment—people born between the early 1980s and early 2000s—said that 62 percent of that demographic prefers living in walkable, urban style, mixed-use communities near to their workplaces and to restaurants, shopping and transit.

Top retail developers increasingly respond to these trends. The best of new projects have common characteristics: a significant portion of their public space is outdoors; non-retail leisure time components are a large component of the tenant mix; the design of outdoor public spaces follows traditional urban planning principles, and nonretail uses like residential, office and hospitality are fully integrated into the design.



Photo SP-11. Image of a well-designed retail space.



Photo SP-12. Urban Mixed-use Community

The most applicable examples of these projects are not only the commercial, but also the social and civic hubs of the community. Many retail and mall developers believe that Mall environments must respond to these trends to not only thrive, but also survive in this new environment. (Steiner, 2015)

Another significant shift in retail shopping environments is the evolution of “need-based transactions” to “want-based” transactions. The characteristics of each are described in Table SP-1, Need-Based and Want-Based Shopping Environments. (Steiner, 2015)

**Table SP-1. Need-Based and Want-Based Shopping Environments**

<b>PURPOSE</b>		<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>LOCATIONAL NEEDS</b>
Need-Based Transactions	Provide for basic everyday needs, draw frequent visits, and involve purchase decisions that are driven primarily by rational criteria	Serve local trade areas and offer functional design and provide convenient access	Visible and accessible from arterial streets; criteria vary
	Retailers provide value for the dollar, serve local trade areas, offer functional design and provide convenient access.	Shopping environments are essentially part of the basic infrastructure of a community	
Want-Based Transactions	Meet aspirational needs, involve discretionary spending and a lower frequency of visits, and inspire purchasing decisions driven primarily by emotional criteria.	Shopping environments serve regional trade areas with regional access, and feature aspirational design elements	Work best in sites with quality regional access, and the feasibility of the retail component should be verified independent of other nonretail uses
		Shopping environments define and add value to a community and contribute to its economic development. Retail environments are enhanced (and enhance in turn) pedestrian friendly, urban/mixed-use fabrics	

*Source: Adapted from Emerging Retail Environments, The changing world of regional retail—and design and development guidelines for the next generation of integrated retail developments, by Yaromir Steiner, Chain Store Age, August 2015.*

A successful and sustainable mixed-use “town center,” as envisioned for the Mall District, must be responsive to both the need-based and want-based transactions of its trade area. Both need-based and want-based retail can be integrated, but while all want-based retail is welcome, it is only the high frequency and daily life component of need-based retail that can be successfully mixed with the other uses.

Both drivable suburban and walkable urban forms of development have market support and appeal; it is not as if one is “better” than the other. However, from traffic, energy, environmental and walkability perspectives, more compact mixed-use communities outperform the more dispersed driving-only communities.

You have to create a place that will become the center of people's lives."

—Quote from Yaromir Steiner,  
Chief Executive Officer of Steiner +  
Associates

The reasons for this shift include preferences for walkable, mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhoods include significant demographic changes (decreased percentages of households with children and increased one and two-person households), absolute increase in suburban traffic congestion, proportional increase in household transportation costs, and an increased appreciation for the convenience, diversity, creativity, and health benefits associated with walkable urban lifestyles. As a result, drivable suburban development has become overbuilt in relation to market demand, as is the case with some of the underused commercial properties in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood.

Vision 2040 requires that cities direct growth into urban core areas. The Puget Sound region, including the City of Tacoma, is planning for significant jobs and housing growth by 2040. Since space in the region is ultimately limited, jobs and population growth are driving market investment into core urban areas where there is development potential, like in Downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (Tacoma Mall Neighborhood).



Photo SP-13. Skating Rink, Belmar, Lakewood, Colorado.

## **WALKABLE URBANISM**

Development of more fine-grained mixed-use walkable places has been demonstrated to provide economic benefit to communities. "Walkable urbanism" has become a powerful economic driver as evidenced by the success of downtowns, major mall and town center transformations into mixed-use walkable districts across the nation. Numerous places originally developed as strip commercial

## CURBING INVOLUNTARY DISPLACEMENT

“Walkable places perform better economically. Residents of places with poor walkability are generally less affluent...Places with more walkability features have also become more gentrified over the past decade” (Leinberger and Alfonzo, 2012).

Strategies to curb involuntary displacement through community empowerment can be found in Chapter 8—Community Vitality.

and/or regional malls that have since been urbanized and experience higher economic return.

Over the next generation, walkable urban development will spur even greater economic growth as demand for walkable urban development is met. The future growth of walkable urban places could provide the same economic base in the 21st century that drivable sub-urbanism did in the mid- to late-20th century . However, this growth will not be realized without appropriate infrastructure, zoning, and financing mechanisms at the federal, state, and local levels (Leinberger, Lynch, 2014).

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is in the process of transitioning from a drivable, suburban style area to a walkable urban place. The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Plan is designed to capture the latent real estate value in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood and with the provision of a more complete infrastructure, amenities and services, support the transition to the envisioned more complete community. It is envisioned to be a neighborhood for everyone—a place for people of all incomes and backgrounds.



Photo SP-14. Photo SP-14. Westwood Village 2.

## IMPROVE IMAGE AND PERCEPTION

Improving the image and the perception of the neighborhood is an important step needed to achieve shared prosperity. Other chapters include goals and actions for improving image and perception, such as taking steps

to resolve traffic issues, improve safety and development quality, enhance the pedestrian environment and public realm, and to rebrand the neighborhood. See the Urban Form, Land Use, Transportation, Environment and Community Vitality Chapters.

## **GROW BUSINESSES & JOBS**

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Existing established businesses are the basis of current employment and tax revenue generation in the neighborhood. Their success and growth is the economic and employment engine of the neighborhood. Existing businesses that remain over time and grow in place along with the neighborhood contribute to continuity and stability over time.

The majority of neighborhood jobs today are in retailing and services, with just 3% of employees living in the neighborhood. Broadening business and commercial offerings that will diversify employment opportunities are envisioned for the neighborhood related to the character districts:

- Professional employment in the Mall District (education, medical and professional offices)
- Local artisan and creative culture jobs

### **Goal SP-1**

*Support growth of businesses and jobs in a manner that supports the vision for the neighborhood and character of the 4 neighborhood districts.*

### **Action SP-1**

*Maintain a dialogue with existing businesses to seek ways to support business retention and expansion.*

### **Action SP-2**

*Promote businesses and employment in locations that support character district cohesion.*

### **Action SP-3**

*Attract new businesses to the Mall District to support creation of a “mixed-use town center” with a mix of regional and local serving retail, entertainment, hotel, education, health care, and commercial and institutional uses.*

#### **Action SP-4**

*Work with property owners to understand how existing covenants or other agreements might restrict redevelopment and infill.*

#### **Action SP-5**

*Collaborate between property owners, businesses, the city and others to beautify and activate streets and sidewalks.*

#### **Action SP-6**

*Work with the business community to explore organizing a Business Improvement Area to address shared goals like marketing, maintenance and business recruitment.*

#### **Action SP-7**

*Use existing city programs to promote investment and growth such as the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption Program, Tacoma Job Creation Tax Credit, Façade Improvement Program and Business Loan Program.*

#### **Action SP-8**

*Establish standards for contemporary signage to improve visibility and image of the neighborhood.*

#### **Goal SP-2**

*Create a more diverse employment base in the neighborhood to serve both regional markets and neighborhood needs, and to increase the earning capacity of neighborhood residents.*

#### **Action SP-9**

*Broaden the range of employment types through recruitment of under-represented institutions and businesses such as medical, office, educational and fabrication facilities.*

#### **Action SP-10**

*Promote job training that increases people's ability to get living-wage jobs with businesses that support and invest in their employees through good benefits and pay.*

### **HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT & TOD**

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Locating a high-capacity transit station in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood could increase business interest in locating to the area. This would in turn support the vision for the neighborhood as a dense urban center with a mix of jobs

## CATALYST SITES DEFINED

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- Single large ownership
- Currently underused
- Prominent accessible location
- Ability to capture value of site with quality and mix of uses

and housing. Goals and actions that support planning for a high-capacity transit station and transit oriented development are in Chapter 3—Urban Form. Location of higher density housing within walking distance of high-capacity transit supports housing affordability by reducing or alleviating the need for car ownership.



Photo SP-15. Renton Transit Center

## CATALYZE INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

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Successful urban centers result from leadership and partnerships that help to mature development markets with strategically focused and coordinated public and private investments.

Currently there is more redevelopment capacity than market demand for development in the neighborhood. As a result, there are a number of large sites in key locations with redevelopment potential well beyond their current uses.

If redeveloped with more dense, mixed-use urban formats, these sites present significant opportunities to realize much higher economic return while making significant contributions to neighborhood vitality and catalyzing additional development in their vicinities.

A list of potential catalyst sites includes:

1. Pierce County Annex campus:

Large site at the top of the bluff with frontage on S. 35<sup>th</sup> Street—a proposed Pedestrian Street which will be improved with complete streets features and extended eastward through a capital project. A new north-south street will connect Wright Avenue to S. 35<sup>th</sup> Street, and a street or pedestrian connection should be established

to Sprague Street with redevelopment. This will improve access to the current “back” of the site. The bluff offers the opportunity to showcase vistas over the Nalley Valley.

Proposed zoning allows buildings up to 120 feet. The site could potentially continue as a government campus with infill commercial or mixed-use development, or any number of commercial, mixed-use and office concepts. Portions of the site are zoned to allow light industrial uses (maximum height 100 feet), allowing further flexibility to consider establishing a “makers” district.



Photo SP-16. Pierce County Annex .

## 2. Michael’s Plaza

One of the most prominent sites in the neighborhood, Michael’s Plaza has a strong presence on both Pine and S. 38<sup>th</sup> Streets, and faces S. 36<sup>th</sup> Street, a segment of the Loop Road. Three frontages of this block will be redesigned as pedestrian-oriented streets. The Loop Road will increase access and visibility along the site’s northern frontage. S. 38<sup>th</sup> and Pine are both slated for complete streets retrofits and Pine is a transit priority route. Future development will orient toward the abutting streets, particularly these three streets. Connectivity east-west through the site should be established with major redevelopment.

Zoning allows buildings up to 120 feet. The site could be redeveloped as a more urban pedestrian-oriented retail complex, or any number of commercial, mixed-use and office concepts. A new pedestrian crossing should be evaluated across Pine Street connecting the site to the City Fleet Services site.

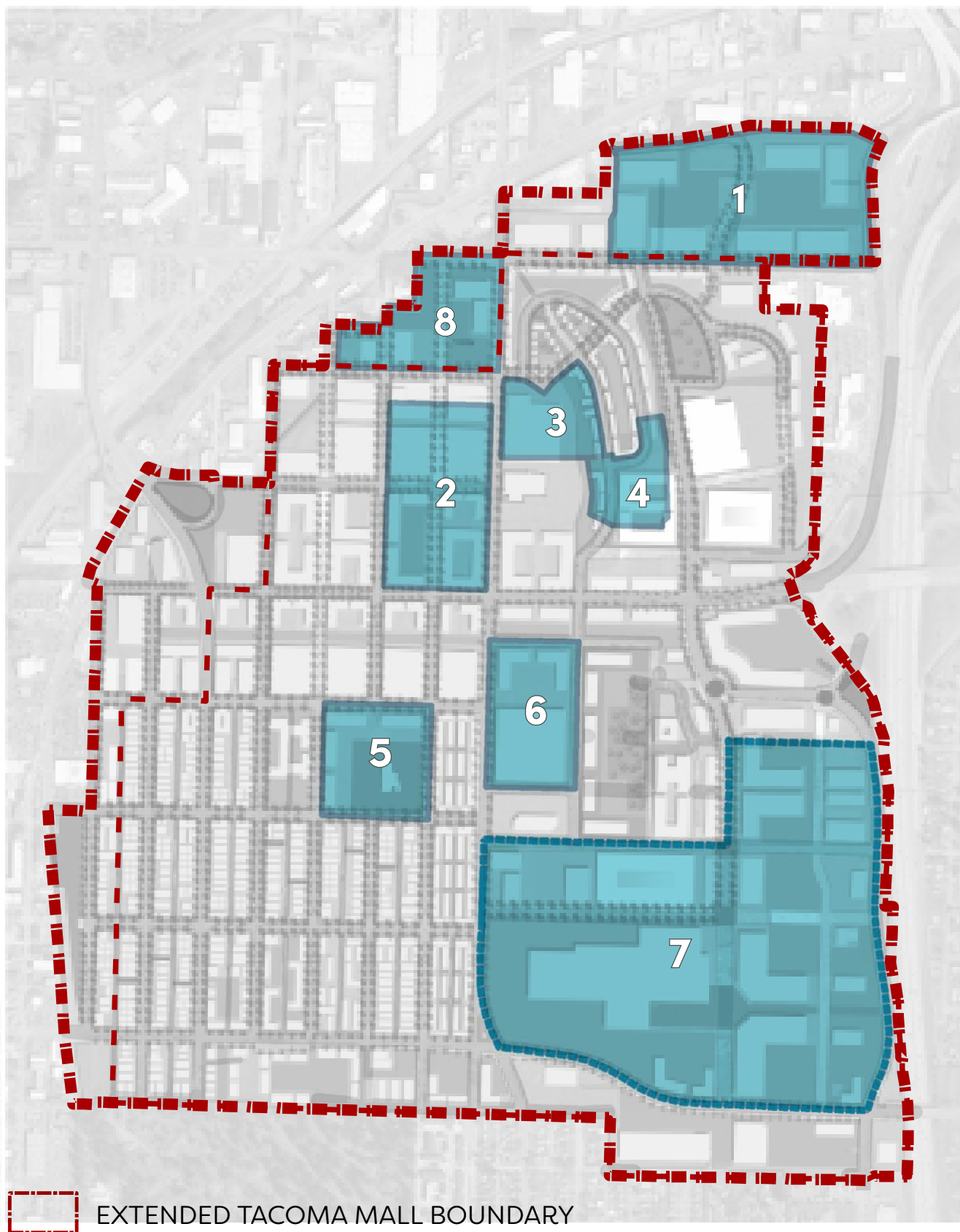


Figure SP-1. Catalyst Sites.



Photo SP-17. Michael's Plaza, S 38th St.

### 3. City of Tacoma Fleet Services

This site is highly visible along Pine Street, a designated pedestrian street slated for a complete streets retrofit. It also fronts on the Loop Road along its northern frontage. The current use presents a blank wall and no street interaction. The site is nestled up to the bottom of a steep slope along its eastern edge.

Given its size, visibility, public ownership and planned streetscape investments the site presents an opportunity to pursue a catalytic redevelopment proposal. The current driveway linking the site to the top of the Lincoln Heights hill (at Fife Street) presents an opportunity to enhance connectivity. A new pedestrian crossing should be evaluated across Pine Street connecting the site to the Michael's Plaza site.



Photo SP-18. City of Tacoma Fleet Services Building, facing S. Pine St.

#### 4. Lincoln Heights summit

Located at the top of the Lincoln Heights hill, this site is in a central location that feels like an enclave of calm due to the topography and curvilinear, treelined streets. The site includes a recently reopened fitness center as well as a surface parking lot across the street from it. A pedestrian connection to Steele Street would link the site to the Loop Road and Lincoln Heights Park, as well as Costco and other commercial offerings.

The location at the top of the hill means that a building would have vistas in all directions above the first story or two. The fitness center provides recreation as the population grows. A taller multifamily building on this site could anchor and catalyze further redevelopment of the Lincoln Heights District's residential core.



Photo SP-19. View of Mount Rainier from the summit of Lincoln Heights.

#### 5. Madison School site

Madison School and playground play an important role as a recreational amenity and gathering space. Its central location in the Madison District means it tends to function as the logical “heart” of the district. When it was a local elementary school, that role was even greater.

The community has expressed strong desire to improve Madison School as a community space. Ideally, it would reopen as a school or become a community center, library or other public gathering space.

Early implementation steps should include relocating the school bus parking from the site to make that space available for higher and better use. Green stormwater

infrastructure should be prioritized in this location. A new site, potentially on the Madison School campus, should be found for the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Community Garden prior to construction of S. 40<sup>th</sup> Street.

Should the School District determine in the future that Madison School will be sold, it is essential that the sale be conditioned on allowing permanent public access to the site as a community amenity that does justice to this site's essential function for the district. A north-south street or pedestrian connection should be established along the S. Alder Street alignment of the site with substantial construction or redevelopment of the site.



Photo SP-20. Madison School, S. 43rd and Junett Streets.

#### 6. U.S. Post Office Pine Street site

The Post Office is located along S. Pine Street, a proposed Pedestrian Street that will be improved with complete streets features. Pine Street is also a transit priority corridor. Fife Street, along the site's eastern frontage, is also part of the transit connection accessed via the future I-5 off ramp.

The Post Office site is located in an area with high potential as a future consolidated transit station serving local and regional transit. The transit station could potentially be located on this site and would definitely be nearby. The site is also in close proximity to the Tacoma Mall and the proposed Mixed-use Town Center concept. As such, it could potentially redevelop in a number of ways that would contribute more to the street life of the area. Zoning allows buildings up to 120 feet.



Photo SP-21. U.S. Postal Service, S. 39th and Pine Streets.

## 7. Tacoma Mall and surrounding retail sites

This is the primary urban infill site planned to be a Mixed-use Town Center concept. See the discussion below.



Photo SP-22. Apex Apartments, Mall District.



Photo SP-23. Tacoma Mall Boulevard and Mall.

## 8. Northern Gateway

Located at the northern edge of the Subarea, this area includes several blocks bounded by Lawrence and Pine Streets, S 36<sup>th</sup> Street and unimproved 35<sup>th</sup> Street. These blocks are currently in separate ownership and include several substantial buildings, as well as less developed sites. The topography affects development potential, as does the fact that S. 35<sup>th</sup> Street and portions of other streets are currently unimproved.

The area is highly visible and could function as a gateway into the neighborhood with a relationship to South Tacoma Way, the Water Flume Trail, Pine Street and the Loop Road. The incorporation of the area into the RGC and zoning change allows a broader range of mixed-use development up to a maximum height of 100 feet. With the planned capital investments in S. 35<sup>th</sup>, Pine and the Loop Road, and planned enhancements to the TPU site at the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets, access and visibility will improve substantially. Given these actions, the development potential for investment in the area will likely increase, particularly along S. 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

### ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Urban Land Institute (ULI) recommends the critical mass in a mixed-use “suburban business district” to establish and reinforce a sense of community is a minimum of 200,000 square feet of retail and 2,000 dwelling units within a 10 minute walk of each other. While the neighborhood currently exceeds these numbers, form and distribution of retail and residential uses poses barriers to capturing the synergy among these uses.



Photo SP-24. Intersection of S 35th and Cedar Streets rights-of-way.

### **Goal SP-3**

*Build critical mass by leveraging partnerships and investments to enable catalytic developments to take place.*

### **Action SP-11**

*Pursue a range of options to highlight the potential, focus business recruitment efforts and prioritize investments that increase access and visibility of catalyst sites, with due consideration of the key opportunities described in this chapter for each site.*

### **Action SP-12**

*Develop new financing mechanisms that equitably distribute the cost of streetscape and infrastructure improvements such as impact fees, fee in lieu of and latecomer fees.*

### **Action SP-13**

*Catalyze private investment through proactive City action and/or public-private partnerships to purchase, assemble and improve land and/or to develop substantial projects within the neighborhood.*

## **MALL DISTRICT INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT**

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Figure SP-2. Conceptual Rendering of the Mall District.

## STRATEGY

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The Tacoma Mall is the major anchor in the neighborhood and a major contributor to the City of Tacoma and regional economy. While performing at a high level, the buildings and site improvements were mostly built 50 years ago. The Mall owners and the City of Tacoma recognize that that land available to infill and selective redevelopment provides significant opportunities to improve the Mall area and capture the economic value of walkable places and the spending power of the next demographic wave (millennials and baby boomers).

Simon Properties Group, America's largest owner of US malls and outlet centers, is adding high-end residences to its Phipps Plaza property in Atlanta's fashionable Buckhead district. Its Domain at Phipps Plaza, developed by partner Columbus Realty, will feature 319 mid-rise luxury residences when it opens this fall. An AC Marriot hotel is also in the works on that same property. "Residential and hotel developments represent asset enhancements, and we will add them to our properties where appropriate," said a Simon spokesman. "Living Space, Retailers are Increasingly Adding Housing to the Mix" Shopping Centers Today, April 2015.

The Simon Company, owner of the Tacoma Mall and approximately 200 malls nationwide, has recognized and capitalized on these opportunities in other locations around the country. The company has the potential to bring that expertise here and work with its willing partner in the City of Tacoma, to move towards investment in growth, diversification and increased shared prosperity over the next years.

The ambitious vision to transform the Mall District and Mall area proper into a Mixed Use "Town Center" will require sustained leaderships, partnerships and coordination. Conditions required to accomplish such a goal would include willingness on the part of the Mall owner, sustained leadership and incentives provided by the City of Tacoma, and shared agreement and participation among numerous property owners and public agencies. Fortunately, such models exist around the country, as manifested by Simon and other like companies.

Infill and redevelopment of comparable areas in the country provide models for the Tacoma Mall neighborhood transformation.

Opportunities for the Mall include:

- development of new market niches
- developing more direct connections to the neighborhood
- incorporating transit and a more walkable environment
- becoming the central neighborhood place
- becoming a special, walkable place where more people want to work and live
- capturing more upscale markets and need-based/local serving business
- offering memorable, exciting entertainment venues
- becoming more inviting to families and kids with recreational opportunities, special events and a cinema
- educational and medical facilities
- improved vehicular access and a roadway pattern promotes denser development.

### **Goal SP-4**

*Create a walkable, urban "Mixed-use Town Center" in the Mall District.*

### **Action SP-13**

*Partner with the Simon Properties Group, large land owners, public agencies and other partners to promote and coordinate actions to achieve the Mixed-Use Town Center goal.*

### **Action SP-14**

*Identify a leader within the City of Tacoma to lead Mall revitalization, redevelopment and coordination with partners over a period of several years.*

### **Action SP-15**

*Develop a strategy for recruiting both public investment and specific business types that can strengthen and diversify employment, retail and services markets to in Districts and to support daily living.*

### **Action SP-16**

*Recruit key land uses and businesses to support transit-oriented development in the future High-Capacity transit station area.*

## **MADISON DISTRICT INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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The Madison District, located in the southwest area of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, will be strengthened by actions described in other document chapters. These include clarity of urban form provided by revised zoning and design guidelines and street connections, public reuse of the Madison School site, transitions to other districts and South Tacoma Way, establishment of a neighborhood park and many community-based actions. Commercial/mixed uses will transition from S. 38th and Pine Street to preservation of the existing residential enclave in the center of the District.



Figure SP-3. Conceptual Rendering of the Madison District

## **NORTHWEST DISTRICT INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Northwest District, located on the hillside above South Tacoma Way, has the potential to use topography to create a distinctive district. The area could potentially see infill commercial and light industrial development of surface parking areas, or redevelop in a number of ways. The large blocks present an opportunity to create a more urban retail-shopping destination. The area could also see mixed-use, residential or office redevelopment. Establishing new street and pedestrian connections will be a priority with redevelopment. The Loop Road provides opportunities to enliven abutting portions of the district. A future small park, open space or green stormwater feature could further enhance livability. The NW District has the potential to be a center of local arts, fabrications, food production and “makers” jobs.



Figure SP-4. Conceptual Rendering of the Northwest District.

## LINCOLN HEIGHTS DISTRICT STRATEGY

The Lincoln Heights District, located in the northeast area of the neighborhood, will be strengthened by actions described in other document chapters. These include clarity of urban form provided by revised zoning and design guidelines, addition of missing street connections, and park improvements. Commercial/mixed uses will transition from South 38<sup>th</sup> Street, South Pine Street, I-5 and the Pierce County properties to the north to preservation of the existing residential area in the center of the District.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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- Job Growth: By 2040, achieve the RGC planning target of 16,675 jobs (an additional 8,385 from today's 8,290 jobs).
- Investment in/redevelopment of Catalyst Sites: further development of the identified catalyst sites has the potential to spur significant change in the neighborhood.

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# UTILITIES & SERVICES

## CHAPTER 10



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN







# UTILITIES & SERVICES

**CONTENTS**

- Introduction
- Utilities
- Public Services
- Public Sites in the Subarea
- Performance Measures
- References

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides goals and actions for utilities and public services. High-quality and dependable utilities and public services, such as clean water, reliable electricity and responsive police and fire services, are essential to the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood’s future success. They support a high quality of life, human and environmental health, efficient provision of infrastructure concurrent with growth and development and an attractive investment climate.

The Public Facilities & Services element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance for utilities and services, calling for them to support planned growth and enhance quality of life. As part of this policy guidance, the Comprehensive Plan establishes level of service standards to be used in coordination with providers’ current plans and needs analysis to guide improvements to utility systems and public facilities throughout the city. The vision, goals and actions in this chapter are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and provide an additional framework to support the growth, development patterns and community character envisioned in this Subarea Plan.

A primary objective of this Subarea Plan and EIS is to ensure that utilities, public services and infrastructure are provided concurrent with development. To accomplish that, advance planning based on planned growth targets is essential.

**City of Tacoma Level of Service Standards for Concurrency**

PUBLIC FACILITIES	LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARD
Electric Utilities	Voltage level + or - 5%; Average annual system outage duration 75 minutes or less
Transportation Pedestrian Bicycle Transit Auto/Freight	The system completeness LOS as defined in the Transportation Master Plan

<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES</b>	<b>LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARD</b>
Sanitary Sewers Maximum Month Flow Peak Hydraulic or Peak- Instantaneous Flow	200 gallons per capita per day (GPCD) 400 gallons per capita per day (GPCD)
Solid Waste	1.13 tons per capita per year
Stormwater Management Private facilities <24 inches in diameter All public facilities, and private facilities >= 24 inches in diameter	10 year, 24 hour design storm 25 year, 24 hour design storm
Water (Potable)	442 gallons per day per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) and/or as contained in Tacoma Water's current Washington State Department of Health approved water system plan

Source: City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities + Services Element, 2016.

### City of Tacoma Level of Service Standards Not Subject to Concurrency

<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES</b>	<b>LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARD</b>
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	0.016 units per 1,000 people
Fire	0.109 apparatus per 1,000 people
Law Enforcement	288.58 square feet of facility space per 1,000 people
Library	60 square feet per 1,000 circulation
Parks Local	3 acres per 1,000 people, and within ¾ mile of all residents
Regional	7 acres per 1,000 people
Open Space/Wildlife Habitat	2 acres per 1,000 people

Source: City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities + Services Element, 2016.

## UTILITIES

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood is currently well served by utilities. Key utilities include electricity, natural gas, solid waste, stormwater, water, wastewater and telecommunications services. The primary utility providers for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood are listed in Table US-1.

Stormwater is addressed in detail in Chapter 7—Environment.

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Level of service standards describe the amount, type or quality of service needed to serve the community. They establish a minimum threshold for provision of services and facilities. The level-of-service standards established in the City’s Comprehensive Plan are listed in the sections that follow.

Table US-1. Utility Providers

UTILITY	PROVIDER
Electricity	Tacoma Public Utilities, Tacoma Power division
Solid Waste	City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department
Stormwater	City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department
Wastewater	City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department
Water	Tacoma Public Utilities, Tacoma Water division
Telecommunications	Tacoma Public Utilities (Click! division) and Private Providers
Natural Gas	Puget Sound Energy



Photo US-1. Water hydrant, Madison District.

Existing utility infrastructure within the neighborhood generally provides adequate service for current users, and providers report that facilities have capacity to accommodate anticipated future uses and development. There are currently limited system upgrades anticipated for aging wastewater and water infrastructure (primarily pipe systems).



Photo US-2. Overhead powerlines, S. Sprague Ave.



Photo US-3. An example of an overly conspicuous utility feature.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

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Public services are covered in greater detail in Chapter 8—Community Vitality. See that chapter for additional background information, goals and actions specific to fire, police, schools and parks.

As development and redevelopment occurs consistent with the Subarea Plan, utility providers will make system improvements necessary to serve additional demand. Most utility improvements, such as infrastructure upgrades and connections required to serve specific development projects, will be made on a project-by-project basis and will be funded by developers. As infrastructure and public projects are implemented across the neighborhood, the City will encourage coordination among utility providers and property owners to ensure that opportunities for efficient utility system improvements are maximized. Additionally, the City may choose to participate in specific utility project public/private partnerships that will catalyze development to meet specific goals, provide high-priority facilities, or satisfy land use requirements.

### **Goal US-1**

*Ensure availability of utilities at appropriate levels of service to support the Neighborhood's existing and planned development.*

### **Action US-1**

*Review the Tacoma Municipal Code and procedural guidance to ensure that utilities and utility service plans are adequate to support planned growth and zoning capacity.*

The location, construction, and day-to-day operations of utilities can have an impact on surrounding residents and businesses. Impacts can include noise, high activity levels and visual appearances that are out of sync with their surroundings. Thoughtful management and design of utilities services and facilities can support neighborhood character and minimize the amount of potentially negative impacts on the community.

Along with considerations for other development types and uses, specifically address utility connections and solid waste collection service for townhouse developments and impacts on surrounding residents and businesses. In recent years, the City reviewed townhouse developments as single-family units, which meant that each unit could have its own garbage collection and utility connections. In addition, the access for many of those developments did not allow for collection in front of each unit meaning there would be a number of garbage bins pushed out to the curb. This pattern of townhouse development has resulted in visual appearance impacts as well as difficulties for solid waste collection. Similarly, dwelling units were designed with separate electricity transformers, which again was unsightly.



Photo US-4. Fuel and Power Generation  
Garbage Incinerator  
(reimagined by famous artist Friedensreich  
Hundertwasser, Vienna Austria).

## **Goal US-2**

*Minimize impacts on adjacent properties and open spaces associated with the siting, development and operation of utility services and facilities.*

## **Action US-2**

*Require power and communications distribution lines to be undergrounded whenever feasible.*

For new development requiring improvements within the public right-of-way, require existing and new Tacoma Power distribution lines to be undergrounded by the developer, whenever feasible.

## **Action US-3**

*Revise standard plans to show co-location of facilities such as towers, poles, antennae, substation sites, trenches and easements and rights-of-way in accordance with prudent utility practices.*

## **Action US-4**

*Recognize opportunities for joint use of utility corridors and facilities as pedestrian facilities, open spaces and aesthetic amenities.*



Photo US-5. A well-sited utility feature.



Photo US-6. This electrical box visually overpowers the townhouse.

### **Action US-5**

*Revise development regulations to require two-family, three-family and townhouse developments to provide a consolidated location for storage of solid waste containers, direct street access pickup, and if needed space for a shared waste collection service.*

### **Action US-6**

*Revise the Tacoma Municipal Code to require that utility service for new two-family, three-family and townhouse development be designed to minimize visual impact.*

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

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Public services in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood include fire, police, schools and parks. The primary providers of these services are the Tacoma Fire Department, the Tacoma Police Department, Tacoma Public Schools and Metro Parks Tacoma. These providers continually reevaluate how to best use their resources to meet changing demands in the neighborhood and throughout the City. They also participate in regular capital facilities and budgeting planning processes to plan for future service needs.

### **Goal US-3**

*Coordinate with public service providers to ensure that they meet performance standards to support a complete neighborhood.*



Photo US-7. Tacoma Police headquarters.

### **Action US-7**

*Work with public service providers to monitor the level of public services and address any shortfalls.*

### **Action US-8**

*Coordinate with public service providers to ensure that new facilities take advantage of opportunities to support the goals of the Subarea Plan.*

### **Action US-9**

*When major new public projects are planned for the neighborhood, consider opportunities for public services providers to co-locate facilities.*

## **PUBLIC SITES IN THE SUBAREA**

---

Several publicly owned sites exist in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, including the Police Department Headquarters and City Fleet Services buildings, Tacoma Public Utilities facilities, the Pierce County Annex building, US Post Office facilities, as well as the schools and parks facilities discussed in Chapter 8 – Community Vitality. These serve important utility and public service functions. Given their location within the neighborhood, there could be opportunities for them to serve joint purposes or potentially to be redeveloped at the proper time. There is also a placemaking opportunity of adding public art and green features there.

### **Goal US-4**

*Maximize the benefits derived from publicly owned sites and facilities by promoting their placemaking potential.*

### **Action US-10**

*Assess the potential for joint use, beautification, public art, or eventual redevelopment of public sites within the neighborhood while ensuring that the public utility and service functions are fully met.*



Photo US-8. Tacoma Public Utilities well site on S. Pine St. is a prominent feature.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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- Meet adopted level-of-service standards.

## **REFERENCES**

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City of Tacoma, 2016, 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

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# IMPLEMENTATION

## CHAPTER 11



TACOMA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD SUBAREA PLAN



TACOMA MALL neighborhood



# CHAPTER 11



# IMPLEMENTATION

## CONTENTS

Implementation Goal  
Introduction  
Strategic Directions for Success  
Infrastructure as Economic Development  
Capital Projects  
Potential Development & Funding Strategies  
Leadership & Partnerships  
Plan Performance Management  
References

## IMPLEMENTATION GOAL

Ensure early strategic investments in neighborhood infrastructure, establishment of partnerships and neighborhood branding will foster phased growth and development that builds momentum to achieve the Subarea Plan vision for this regional growth center.

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays the foundation for successful implementation of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan by the City of Tacoma, its partners and the community. It identifies the big moves—how to successfully leverage priority actions to achieve multiple benefits from investments in capital projects, coordinated leadership, partnerships and increased community equity and empowerment. Additional detailed actions are identified in the individual Subarea Plan chapters.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR SUCCESS

The Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan presents an ambitious, detailed vision for the future. To prepare the City, community and community partners for implementation efforts, it is important to ask:

- What are the strategic directions that could be taken to ensure Plan success?
- What are the underlying challenges that could keep this Plan from being successfully implemented?

Table IMPL-1 identifies emergent themes that may impede future success of the Subarea Plan; Table IMPL-2 identifies strategic directions for successful Subarea Plan implementation.

**Table IMPL-1. Potential Impediments to Success**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>IMPEDIMENTS</b>
Competing Interests and Unclear Benefits	Need for coordinated leadership Need clear partnership between public and private interests Potential partners have different missions Property owners are not local
Infrastructure is Expensive	How can infrastructure be financed? How can we achieve and build on early success?
Implementation is Risky	Need good development incentives Unproven benefits and markets Proposed code takes broader approach
Current Perceptions of the Area	Current perceptions driving current quality of development Working towards future opportunities not perceived by all Plan should not seek just to recruit, but also “keep and grow” those who are here

Table IMPL-2 identifies emergent themes that would support the achievement of a successful Subarea Plan. Goals and actions are specified for each theme to provide direction for Plan development and implementation.

**Table IMPL-2. Strategic Directions for Success**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS</b>
Leaderships and Partnerships	Establish leadership consortium Community and leaders are beneficiaries Government as partner Financial partnerships
Demonstrate Early Success	Capture momentum of active markets with infrastructure investments Change perceptions with high-visibility projects
Inviting Business Climate	Smart code conveys and implements vision Mitigation-friendly zoning Brand the area as green and inviting
Develop Marketing Strategy	Define markets—who and why different Recruitment strategy for catalyst uses
Strong community development	Establish community-driven Neighborhood Committee to champion project implementation that includes both current and future residents
Demonstrate Benefits of Subarea Plan	Case studies of similar approaches Fiscal cost-benefit analysis

## RECENT MARKET ACTIVITY IN THE FOUR DISTRICTS

Madison District: Small- to medium-scale residential infill development (duplex, townhouse and small apartment buildings).

The Northwest District: Currently retail, heavy commercial and light industrial land uses. There has been no significant development activity in this District for several years.

The Lincoln Heights District: Currently big box and retail power centers and single family and duplex development, light industrial and government. There has been no significant development activity for several years.

Mall District: The Tacoma Mall in recent years added a food court and built an addition onto the Mall for a larger Nordstrom Store.

There has been mid-rise residential development activity in the last several years plus limited small commercial infill.

- A.** Accomplish necessary first steps
- B.** Achieve multiple goals and leverage other actions
- C.** Leverage investment in areas with active markets
- D.** Avoid bigger risk of inaction to preserve key opportunities
- E.** Be cost effective
- F.** Support neighborhood completeness
- G.** Promote equity and empowerment

## INFRASTRUCTURE AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Leveraging development of key infrastructure for multiple benefits is one of the most powerful tools available to the City.

Given that more developable land is available than there is current market demand, strategic leveraging of mutually supportive infrastructure projects is a priority action that can stimulate economic development.

## SETTING IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

With a long-range-plan and multiple implementing actions, strategy is important in determining what to do first. The following criteria were derived from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health-in-all-Policies guidance and project Guiding Principles for that purpose. Set priorities for early implementation actions to

- accomplish necessary first steps;
- achieve multiple goals and leverage other actions;
- leverage investment in areas with active markets;
- avoid bigger risk of inaction to preserve key opportunities;
- achieve cost-effectiveness;
- support neighborhood completeness;
- promote equity and empowerment;
- leverage capital project development.

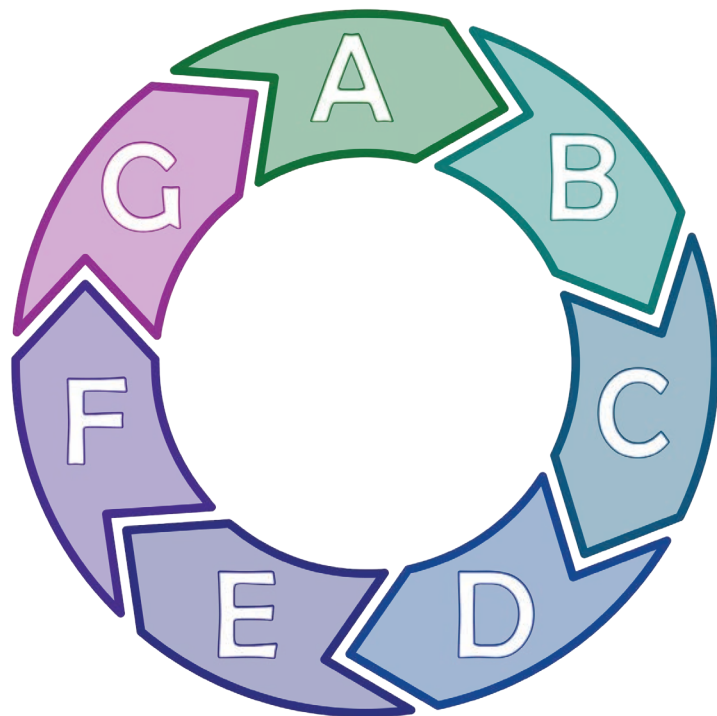


Figure IMPL-1. Prioritization Diagram.

## RESIDENTS OF THE FUTURE

Who are the future residents, employees and patrons of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood?

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood can plan for and capitalize on shifting marketplaces with growing demand for compact, walkable places, particularly within the following demographic sectors:

Members of the millennial generation, America's largest single generation since the baby boomers, favor an urban vibe.

Baby boomers, now empty nesters approaching retirement, are moving back into town, favoring walkable neighborhoods that provide the goods and services that support daily life that have quality transit service.

Shoppers who expect a higher quality experience intermingled with multiple attractions.

Current residents developing roots in the neighborhood and aging in place.

The Subarea Plan recommends careful leveraging of investment and redevelopment to enable coordinated, phased transformation of urban systems and development pattern to derive multiple mutually beneficial outcomes. It prioritizes early infrastructure projects in Districts where markets are active to build value and stimulate additional development and where level of infrastructure is incomplete.

Planned capital projects for the neighborhood fall into 3 overlapping categories: streets, green stormwater infrastructure and parks. If carefully timed and coordinated, opportunities exist to leverage funding sources to capture multiple benefits of building adjacent projects in the same time frame.

## STREET NETWORK

Building the complete street network is the most positive and powerful intervention that the City can make towards developing a more cohesive neighborhood structure. A high quality street network provides the basis for accelerated development activity and neighborhood livability.

## ACTIONS COMPLETED WITH PLAN ADOPTION

With Plan development and adoption, the City took important first steps to support the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood in becoming a thriving urban center. These steps included:

- Establishment of a vision and goals for the neighborhood through a public process
- Identification and prioritization of implementation actions
- Compliance with state and regional requirements to plan for Regional Growth Centers (RGC)
- Identification of a proposed RGC boundary expansion
- Completion of an up-front (Planned Action) EIS
- Adoption of initial development code updates for consistency with the plan and EIS
- Prioritization of capital projects
- Initiation of coordination with partner agencies
- Engagement with the community

The City has also identified the top priority actions from the Subarea Plan that should be implemented in the near-term in order to achieve the vision for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Both the completed and near-term post-adoption actions are summarized in the table below. The complete text is available in each chapter

NOTE: The priority action items identified below retain the action numbers from the individual chapters.

**Table IMPL-3. Priority Early Implementation Actions & Prioritization Criteria**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>ACCOMPLISH NECESSARY FIRST STEPS</b>	<b>SUPPORT MULTIPLE GOALS &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>LEVERAGE INVESTMENT IN ACTIVE MARKETS</b>	<b>AVOID LOSS OF KEY OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>COST EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD COMPLETENESS</b>	<b>PROMOTE EQUITY &amp; EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>LEVERAGE CAPITAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT</b>
UF-5 Loop Road Master Plan	X	X	X	X		X		
UF-8 Clarify Neighborhood Edges	X	X	X		X			
LU-1 Zoning Code Changes	X	X	X	X	X			X
LU-2 Update Permitted Land Uses	X	X		X	X	X		
LU-5 Update Design Standards	X	X	X	X	X			
LU-6 Pedestrian Streets Designations	X	X	X	X	X			X
LU-7 Update City Environmental Code	X	X		X	X			X
LU-8 Update Height Bonuses	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
LU-9 Establish DRA Option	X	X	X		X	X		X
LU-10 Revise RGC Boundary	X	X		X	X	X		
H-4 Incentivize Affordable Housing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H-7 Monitor housing costs		X		X	X	X	X	
H-8 Support Struggling Households		X		X	X	X	X	
H.-9 Prevent Involuntary Displacement		X		X	X	X	X	
T-4 Complete Streets Guidelines	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
T-7 Limit alley vacations	X	X		X	X	X	X	
T-8 Adopt Connectivity Requirement	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
T-9 Regional bus service	X	X	X		X	X	X	
T-11 Relocate transit station	X	X	X			X	X	X
T-15 Parking Management strategy	X	X		X		X		
T-22 Update TMP Project List	X	X		X	X			X

ACTION	ACCOMPLISH NECESSARY FIRST STEPS	SUPPORT MULTIPLE GOALS & ACTIONS	LEVERAGE INVESTMENT IN ACTIVE MARKETS	AVOID LOSS OF KEY OPPORTUNITIES	COST EFFECTIVE	SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD COMPLETENESS	PROMOTE EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT	LEVERAGE CAPITAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
T-24 New I-5 Ramp	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
T-28 New funding sources	X	X	X			X	X	X
E-1 Area-wide Stormwater strategies		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E-7 Update groundwater code	X	X	X	X	X			X
E-10 Trees in visible areas		X			X	X	X	X
E-12 Trees on public properties		X			X	X	X	
CV-2 Neighborhood signage		X	X		X			X
CV-4 Public arts strategy	X	X			X	X	X	X
CV-7 Promote public events		X			X	X	X	
CV-8 Recruit neighborhood services		X			X	X	X	
CV-11 Madison School scenarios	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
CV-12 Form a Steering Committee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CV-23 Partner to implement parks principles		X	X			X	X	X
CV-24 Plan for parks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CV-28 Public and surplus properties		X		X	X	X	X	X
SP-1 Dialogue with business community	X	X	X	X	X			
SP-7 City economic development programs	X	X	X	X		X		
Sp-12 New financing mechanisms	X	X	X	X				X
SP-13 Partner on Town Center goal	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
US-5 Waste collection code updates	X			X	X		X	
US-6 Utilities code updates	X			X	X		X	
US-10 Joint use of public sites		X	X		X	X	X	
IMPL-1 Study funding options	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
IMPL-3 Departmental roles and responsibilities	X	X		X	X			

Design concepts for the 3 key corridors are included as Appendix T-1.

## **EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE KEY CORRIDORS**

Three corridors were selected for early implementation that will immediately improve quality of place, neighborhood image and mobility, as well as stimulate economic development. The corridors are S. 38th Street, the I-5 off-ramp and 45th Street South to Fife Transit connection.

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM**

The Subarea Plan envisions changes to urban form, the mix of land uses, expanded pedestrian and bicycle network, increased tree cover, addition of parks and open space and green stormwater infrastructure to improve environmental quality and human health.

One of the primary benefits of these changes will be an increased amount of pervious and vegetated areas that absorb and filter surface water runoff and recharge the South Tacoma aquifer. Other benefits will include improved air quality; reduced vehicle use/emissions, expanded tree canopy and green features; and visual access to trees and landscaping that are aesthetically pleasing and found to benefit mental health.

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

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Priority capital projects have been identified for transportation, stormwater and parks projects in the neighborhood. Capital projects and costs are identified in Table IMPL-4 at the end of this chapter.

## **POTENTIAL FUNDING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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This section identifies potential funding and development strategies that may be used to implement the Subarea Plan.

## **CITY CATALYTIC PROJECT FUND**

The City currently has a Catalytic Fund that can be used along the public right-of-way to support needed public infrastructure improvements that are triggered when new buildings are constructed. These funds can be combined with the private owner's required upgrades. If funded, this approach could be utilized to promote property owner buy in with the connectivity improvements required under the plan.



Photo IMPL-1. Street Construction.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

Public-private partnerships are one of the most powerful and appropriate tools for promoting catalyst projects in South Downtown. In general, public/private partnerships involve a public entity providing support for a private development in exchange for public benefits provided by the development. Support most often takes the form of discounted land but may also include special loans, tax abatements or exemptions, code departures, or fast-track permitting. The type of public benefit required for a public-private partnership can vary widely. For development projects, it typically involves the provision of extra public amenities such as open space, a community center or affordable housing.

## **DEVELOPER RFPs**

Public-private partnerships can be initiated with a Request for Proposals (RFP) for specific development sites. An RFP spells out the all of the development conditions that must be met, which may include criteria such as program, design standards, financials or specific public benefits. To increase the incentive for developers, RFPs can be crafted for a “development-ready” package that could include: conceptual designs and program or zoning or other regulatory adjustments, incentives for public amenities, mandatory or optional criteria based on community input, economic feasibility and pro forma studies, architectural massing and capacity studies and plans for a phased buildout. After packaging the RFP, the City proceeds with a transparent, competitive process to solicit developer proposals and select a private developer best suited to complete the project.

## **LAND ACQUISITION**

The availability of publicly owned land is a key ingredient for most public-private redevelopment projects. The City of Tacoma, agencies such as the School District and other municipal entities often own properties that they no longer need. These entities are usually required by law to sell their properties at fair market value and offer first right of purchase to government agencies for a public purchase in a specified order of preference before properties can be offered for private sale. A public-private partnership can stipulate that specific public benefits be included in a development that compensate for the sale of the land at below market value. However, in a weak real estate market, any such agreement must be carefully crafted to ensure that the

development requirements do not negate the benefits of reduced land cost. Cities also have the option of proactively assisting in the acquisition and consolidation of land to initiate a desired redevelopment.

The proposed street connectivity requirement (part of the Phase 1 code recommendations) would require right-of-way dedication for new street connections and through-block connections with the assumption that the City would build the streets (dependent upon funding availability).

## **PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES**

A Public Development Authority (PDA) could be an effective tool for promoting and coordinating redevelopment in targeted areas of the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood. Most important, a PDA would help compensate for the high degree of risk associated with being one of the first private development projects in largely unproven markets in the neighborhood. PDAs are quasi-municipal corporations that are governed by a volunteer board. The City of Tacoma has established several PDAs, including the Foss Waterway Redevelopment Authority (FWDA) and the Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS**

The City recently investigated the feasibility of forming a Capital Development Corporation however it was not deemed feasible at this time. Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are similar to PDAs in many ways, but they are truly private not-for-profit entities that are independent from the City. CDCs are not bound by laws covering public construction, can access foundation and other philanthropic funds, and can use tax-exempt financing.

For example, the Pierce County CDC focuses on providing low and moderate-income housing. A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a variation on a CDC that acquires and holds land as a means to develop and steward affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces or other assets on behalf of a community. A CLT acquires multiple parcels of land throughout a targeted geographic area and retains ownership in perpetuity. Development on the property is owned by individuals, or by nonprofit, governmental, or for-profit entities.



Photo IMPL-2. “Road Work Ahead” sign.

## **IMPACT FEES**

One potential tool for generating parks and open space funding is an impact fee on new development. As the real estate market matures, it may become practical to phase in impact fees to fund parks and open space development.

The City has the ability to require developers to pay for the cost of improvements necessary to offset the additional burden created by new development on four types of public facilities: transportation, parks, fire protection and schools. The facilities to which impact fees are applied must be identified in the capital facilities element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Impact fees must be expended on the identified projects within ten years or be refunded. The fees may also be charged for improvements that are already constructed, if such improvements serve the new development, but they cannot be used to make up for existing deficiencies. (Revised Code of Washington sections 82.02.050-110)

## **LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (LID)**

A Local Improvement District (LID) is an area where a special tax is applied to properties that will benefit from public investment. An LID could be formed to finance debt from the construction of parks and open space that nearby property owners believe would bring value to their property. If certain areas are identified as having a critical need for future open space, a “no protest agreement” could be established that waives a property owner’s right to protest the formation of an LID to finance future improvements.

## **PARKS LEVY**

In 2010, the City of Tacoma voters approved a Parks Levy on property taxes to fund Metro Parks Tacoma operations and maintenance. In the future, the increasing need for new open space in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood could help justify another Parks Levy designed to fund land acquisition and construction on of new parks.

## **LATECOMER FEE**

A latecomer fee is a contract between a city or county and a developer for construction of water and sewer facilities. It authorizes, for a 15-year period, reimbursement of a developer by other property owners who did not contribute to the original cost of the facilities and who subsequently tap into or use the facilities. The State of Washington authorizes cities and counties to contract with a developer for

the construction or improvement of street projects, and it authorizes, for a 15-year period, reimbursement of the developer by other property owners who subsequently develop their property and who meet certain criteria.

## **NO-PROTEST AGREEMENTS**

In some cases, it may be determined that the development of a property will create impacts that can only be later mitigated through the construction of an area-wide or neighborhood improvement. In these cases, it would be unreasonable to require the full improvement as a condition of the development. In such situations, a city and property owner may enter into a “no-protest agreement” that waives the property owner’s right to protest the formation of an LID to finance future improvements. The agreement must specify the improvements and the term of the agreement, typically not to exceed 10 years.

Numerous cities throughout Washington State have implemented No-Protest Agreements for LIDs. This tool is an appropriate strategy for supporting redevelopment in South Downtown because it helps to ensure that the financing of future infrastructure investments without encumbering near-term, catalytic development projects.

## **LATECOMER AGREEMENTS**

Latecomer agreements, also called recovery contracts or reimbursement agreements, allow a property owner who has installed street or utility improvements to recover a portion of the cost of those improvements from other property owners who later develop property in the vicinity and use the improvements.

### ***Goal IMPL-1***

*Develop a sustainable funding strategy that draws from multiple sources for various aspects of the plan in support of achieving the neighborhood vision.*

### **Action IMPL-1**

*Analyze potential new funding approaches, such as impact fees, pursuant to increasing resources dedicated to Subarea Plan actions.*

### **Action IMPL-2**

*Develop a funding source for City funding for construction of new connections under the Site Approval Requirement.*

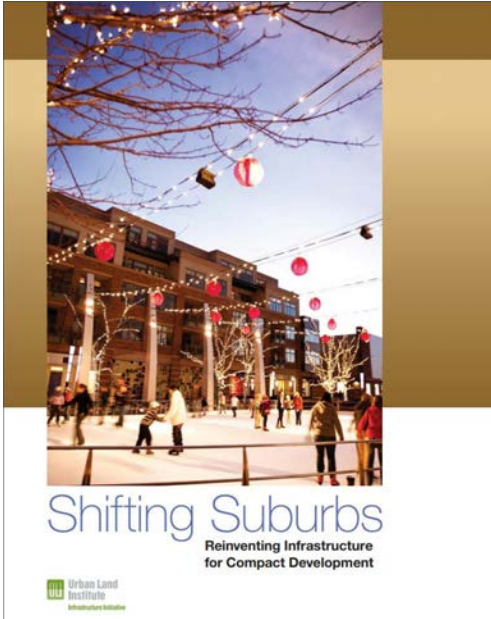


Photo IMPL-3. ULI Report “Shifting Suburbs”.

## LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

### ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM

Effective partnerships are at the core of many of the efforts that have transformed similar underused low-intensity centers, with public-private partnerships seen as an essential component.

Putting the planning pieces in place— master plans, market studies, infrastructure strategies, fiscal modeling, zoning changes, lobbying —can help facilitate and attract growth. Whether the target for transformation is large scale or site specific, proactive planning can remove uncertainty, speeding redevelopment and ensuring that it happens according to a larger vision for the community. (Urban Land Institute, 2012).

Compact redevelopment of low intensity centers into more compact, mixed-use neighborhoods often requires extensive cross-jurisdictional infrastructure planning and coordination, as well as the commitment of many different players, including sometimes-overlapping local government entities, state departments of transportation, developers, and others. (Urban Land Institute 2012, page 6).

### TACOMA MALL IMPLEMENTATION CONSORTIUM

As described above and in Chapter 9—Shared Prosperity, the Subarea Plan recommends the formation of a broad consortium of policy makers, foundations, community organizations and local and regional leaders to join the City of Tacoma in its leadership efforts to transform the Tacoma Mall District into the neighborhood’s mixed-use town center. Such teams of high-level leaders from the public and private sectors have been instrumental in similar areas around the country in enabling promotion and long-term implementation of complex infrastructure and partnership projects. (Urban Land Institute, 2012, p. 34.)

Proposed improvements such as a new I-5 southbound off-ramp that will move traffic directly into the Tacoma Mall area proper would require high-level political leadership to plan and execute the project plus alliances with the Simon Corporation, owner of the Tacoma Mall, and representatives of entities with interest and expertise relative to implementing the Subarea Plan. Key leaders would include Tacoma City Manager or Mayor, Economic Development leadership staff, major property owners, Chamber of Commerce, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, WSDOT, Tacoma School District, Metropolitan Parks District, selected developers and investors and the local community.



Photo IMPL-4. Tacoma Municipal Building.

## THE CITY OF TACOMA'S ROLE

City governments' active leadership role in planning, approval and construction phases is critical to successful implementation of larger, multiparty efforts.

- Provide long-term leadership of an implementation consortium to redevelopment of the Mall District into the neighborhood mixed-use town center.
- Identify a leader with the City of Tacoma to undertake Mall revitalization and redevelopment over a period of several years.
- Leadership in soliciting public input and support
- Adoption of zoning and other regulatory changes to support the project
- Financial participation, particularly in connection with infrastructure and parking costs
- Fiscal modeling to determine cost benefits of infrastructure and capital projects
- Coordination with other public agencies involved in project approval, development, or operations
- Assignment of staff to assist in project management throughout the design, review, and approval process
- Assistance with street connections and reparcelization into smaller sites
- Introduction of civic activities to the project site (such as schools)
- Provide support and assistance to the community-driven organizations such as the Tacoma Mall Neighbors.

## PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance measures proposed under each chapter are intended to track the success of plan implementation over the planning horizon. The frequency of data tracking depends on many factors, such as the availability of data, etc. Performance measures will be managed by tracking data on a regular basis, informing planners and the local community if the actions and strategies in the Plan are still relevant to achieve the intended outcome. Data tracked and managed may result in proposed new actions or amendments to the Plan. Performance management result should be reported out to the Planning Commission and the City Council at regular intervals to inform budgetary and other decisions.

### **Goal IMPL-2**

*Track and manage performance measures to ensure the plan is relevant in achieving the Neighborhood vision.*

### **Action IMPL-3**

*Identify departmental roles, responsibilities, and data tracking for the performance measures identified in this Plan.*

### **Action IMPL-4**

*Prepare and present a biennial report, in collaboration with the community, to the City Council in time for making budgetary decisions.*

### **Action IMPL-5**

*Ensure that planned transportation improvements, creation of new funding approaches, and other implementation actions are completed concurrent with the pace of growth in the neighborhood.*

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## CAPITAL PROJECTS LIST

**Table IMPL-4. Transportation Projects, Listed in Order of Priority**

(Note: Projects are keyed to Table T-2, Transportation Projects List Map)

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST (\$000)	PHASE
<b>Near-Term Priorities (0–5 years)</b>				
Loop Road Demonstration Project	Initial implementation of a section of the Loop Road—would include a study to identify the best location		\$1,500	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
I-5 Direct Access/HOV Ramp—Phase 1	Preliminary engineering study for new direct access/high occupancy vehicle freeway off ramp	WSDOT, Transit Providers	\$900	Design
Madison District—Residential Streets—Phase 1	Initial implementation of residential streets, potentially including green stormwater infrastructure		\$8,300	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
S. 38th Street / S. Steele Street Intersection	Revise intersection channelization to improve vehicle operations; may require new turn lane		\$500–\$1,500	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
S. Sprague Avenue Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection from I-5 Bike/ Ped Bridge along Sprague Ave to Steele Street, S 35th St and S Tacoma Way		\$2,100	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Tacoma Mall Transit Center—Phase 1	Location study and preliminary design for new transit center (in conjunction with ST3 high capacity transit study)	Transit Providers	\$900	Design
Area-wide sidewalk gaps	As development occurs, connect sidewalk system, addressing gaps and sub-standard conditions		\$14,230	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
<b>Mid-Term Priorities (5–15 years)</b>				
I-5 Direct Access/HOV Ramp	New direct access/High Occupancy Vehicle freeway off ramp	WSDOT, Transit Providers	\$27,650	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Tacoma Mall Transit Center	New transit center with six bus bays, shelter, layover space, and passenger amenities	Transit Providers	\$28,000	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
I-5 Transit Connector	Enhancements for transit speed and reliability between I-5 and new transit center location	Transit Agencies	\$2,450	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Transit-Supportive Actions	Speed and reliability enhancements to support planned high capacity transit routes	Transit Providers	TBD	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
S. 38th Street Complete Streets/ Gateway Project	Complete Streets redesign and incorporate gateway features on S 38th Street between S. Tacoma Way and I-5		\$10,660	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	COST (\$000)	PHASE
Loop Road—Phase 2	Complete Loop Road—multimodal internal connector emphasizing bike, pedestrian and green stormwater features		\$12,700	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Madison District—Residential Streets—Phase 2	Complete construction of residential streets, potentially including green stormwater infrastructure		\$8,000	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Lincoln Heights—Residential Streets	Potentially including construction of residential streets, green stormwater infrastructure		TBD	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Pine St & 42nd St Signal	Add a signal at the intersection of Pine St and 42nd St.	Transit Providers	\$300	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
Pine Street—Complete Streets/ Gateway Project	Complete Streets redesign including bicycle and transit service	Transit Providers	\$2,640	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
S. 47th/48th Street Complete Streets/ Bike Connection	Complete Streets redesign incorporating bike connection from I-5 bridge to Water Flume Trail		\$5,040	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
S. 48th Street Overpass	Widen existing overpass of I-5 or build a new adjacent bridge for improved bicycle/ pedestrian connection to the subarea	WSDOT	\$1,810	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
S. 35th Street Bike Corridor	Add bicycle facility and extend corridor to South Tacoma Way		\$2,720	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction
<b>Long-Term Priorities (15+ years)</b>				
S Fife St to S 48th St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection between the Lincoln Heights and Mall Districts to S 48th St		\$570	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
S 40th St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection from S Tacoma Way to S Fife St		\$1,250	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
Warner St Bike Connection	Add bicycle connection from S 38th St to S 47th St		TBD	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
Area-wide Active Transportation Pathways	Add pedestrian pathways and missing link bike connections called for in the Subarea Plan		TBD	Design, Right-of-way, Construction
Area-wide street grid connections	As development occurs, add new street connections to enhance overall mobility for all modes		\$39,110	Design, Right-of-Way, Construction



TACOMA MALL neighborhood