City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

AGENDA

MEETING: Regular Meeting (Hybrid)

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Council Chambers, 1st Floor of the Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

ZOOM INFO: Link: https://www.zoom.us/j/84416624153
Dial-in: +1 253 215 8782
ID: 844 1662 4153

A. Call to Order

- Quorum Call
- Land Acknowledgement

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

There are no meeting minutes to approve.

D. Public Comments

This is the time set aside for public comment on Discussion Items on this agenda.

- Written comments on Discussion Items must be submitted to Planning@tacoma.gov by 12:00 noon prior to the meeting. Comments will be compiled, distributed to the Commission, and posted on the Planning Commission's meeting webpage at https://tacoma.gov/planningcommission.
- To comment virtually, join the meeting using Zoom and raise your virtual hand. To comment in person, sign in at the back of the Council Chambers. Where necessary, the Chair may limit the allotted time for comment.

E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals

F. Discussion Items

1. Parking Code Update

- Description: Present overall scope of work and schedule for updating the City of Tacoma off street parking standards for compliance with recent state legislation.
- Action: Input on scope of work and engagement.
- Contact: Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner (mmoeinian@tacoma.gov)

2. 2026 Annual Amendment

- Description: Discussion will focus on day care facility code. Staff is seeking an initial determination from the Commission on proposed permit thresholds based on either enrollment capacity or hours of operation in the Urban Residential Zones.
- Action: Review and Direction.
- Contact: Stephen Atkinson (SAtkinson@tacoma.gov)

G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) January 7, 2026 – cancelled

(2) Agenda for the January 21, 2026

- 2026 Amendments – Set Public Hearing
- Tree Code and Landscaping – Scope and Schedule introduction

(3) Agenda for February 4, 2026

- Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance
- Picture Pac Ave

(4) Agenda for February 18, 2026

- Parking Code
- Capital Facilities Program

H. Communication Items

(1) Communications from Staff

(2) **Status Reports by Commissioners** – Picture Pac Ave Project Advisory Committee.

(3) **IPS Agenda** – The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee's next meetings on December 24, 2025, and January 14, 2026, have been cancelled.

I. Adjournment

Agenda Item F1

City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

To: Planning Commission

From: Maryam Moeinian, Planning Services Division

Subject: **Parking Code Update**

Memo Date: December 11, 2025

Meeting Date: December 17, 2025

Action Requested:

Review and direction on the scope of work for the Parking Code Update, including:

1. What additional research, analysis, or information the Planning Commission needs from staff between now and February 2026 in order to evaluate the two scope options.
2. What materials or support the Commission will need before making a final recommendation to the City Council in mid-2026.

Discussion:

At the December 17, 2025 Planning Commission meeting, staff will present an overview of recently adopted state parking mandates and their implications for Tacoma's existing off-street parking standards. The presentation will summarize:

- Key requirements in SB 5184, HB 1183, and HB 1491 and how they limit local authority to require off-street parking
- Initial policy alignment with the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and Vision 2050
- The two potential scope options for the Parking Code Update
  - Option A: Parking code update to comply with state mandates
  - Option B: Broader citywide parking reform and removal of minimum parking requirements
- The proposed project schedule, engagement approach, and milestones leading to the October 2026 target adoption date

The Planning Commission is invited to discuss the two scope options and provide specific guidance to staff regarding what supporting information such as technical analysis, case studies, or additional policy evaluation will enable the Commission to evaluate the scope options and provide direction in early 2026.

Background:

The Washington State Legislature has adopted a series of new parking mandates intended to reduce development costs, support increased housing production, and decrease excessive reliance on automobiles. The Legislature found that fixed, predetermined parking requirements unnecessarily drive up the cost of development, particularly housing, discourage walking and transit use, and contribute to negative public health and climate impacts. These reforms emphasize that parking needs should be determined by actual market demand rather than one size fits all regulatory minimums.

Together, SB 5184 (2025), HB 1183 (2025) and HB 1491 (2025) significantly limit how cities, including Tacoma, may regulate off-street parking. Tacoma will need to update its parking standards to comply with state law while aligning with local goals for compact growth, affordability, walkability, and multimodal transportation.

Staff Contact:

- Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner, mmoeinian@tacoma.gov

Attachment:

- Attachment 1 – DRAFT Staff Scoping Report
- Attachment 2 – Summary of written comments from Planning Commission

c: Peter Huffman, Director

Parking Code Update
Draft Work Plan
December 17, 2025

The Washington State Legislature has adopted a series of new parking mandates intended to reduce development costs, support increased housing production, and decrease excessive reliance on automobiles. The Legislature found that fixed, predetermined parking requirements unnecessarily drive up the cost of development, particularly housing, discourage walking and transit use, and contribute to negative public health and climate impacts. These reforms emphasize that parking needs should be determined by actual market demand rather than one size fits all regulatory minimums.

Together, SB 5184 (2025), HB 1183 (2025) and HB 1491 (2025) significantly limit how cities, including Tacoma, may regulate off-street parking. Tacoma will need to update its parking standards to comply with state law while aligning with local goals for compact growth, affordability, walkability, and multimodal transportation.

Project Summary	
Project Phase	**Scoping and Assessment:** Determine which code option to consider and the level of review, analysis and engagement necessary to support a final recommendation.
Scope of Work	**Option A: Meet state mandates.** At a minimum, this project will update the City of Tacoma's off-street parking standards to comply with State law. This includes either reductions to or elimination of minimum parking requirements for specific uses, such as multiplexes, affordable housing, or units less than 1200 sq ft in size, or in areas within walking distance of a major transit facility (See section B for a full description). **Option B: Citywide parking reform.** As an alternative, the Planning Commission or City Council could consider a broader scope of work to remove minimum parking requirements across the city and shift to a market-based approach for off street parking. The City currently utilizes a market based approach in certain areas of the City including Downtown, the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center, and in Mixed-Use Centers. In addition, the code will include prescriptive standards for ADA parking requirements for new use and development and address current gaps in the Reduced Parking Area, as defined in Tacoma Municipal Code.
Area of Applicability:	Citywide – may impact full range of land uses and zoning districts. Exceptions: certain zoning districts and land uses are already exempt from minimum parking standards.
Anticipated Schedule	➢ Scoping and Assessment: Dec 2025 – Feb 2026 ➢ Code development: Mar – Apr 2026 ➢ Planning Commission comment period: Apr – May 2026 ➢ Planning Commission recommendation: Jul 2026 ➢ City Council review and adoption: Aug – Oct 2026 ➢ State Deadline for Adoption: Jan 2027
Staff Contact:	Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner, mmoeinian@tacoma.gov

A. Summary of Recent State Legislation

The Washington State Legislature has adopted a series of new parking mandates intended to reduce development costs, support increased housing production, and decrease excessive reliance on automobiles. The Legislature found that fixed, predetermined parking requirements unnecessarily drive up the cost of development, particularly housing, discourage walking and transit use, and contribute to negative public health and climate impacts. These reforms emphasize that parking needs should be determined by actual market demand rather than one size fits all regulatory minimums.

Together, SB 5184 (2025), HB 1183 (2025) and HB 1491 (2025) significantly limit how cities, including Tacoma, may regulate off-street parking. Tacoma will need to update its parking standards to comply with state law while aligning with local goals for compact growth, affordability, walkability, and multimodal transportation.

Key provisions in RCW 35.21.994 include:

1. Maximum Parking Limits

- Multifamily housing: Maximum of 0.5 spaces per unit.
- Single-family homes: Maximum of 1 space per home.
- Commercial uses: Maximum of 2 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.

2. No Minimum Parking Allowed for Certain Uses

Cities must eliminate minimum parking requirements entirely for:

- Residences under 1,200 sq. ft.
- Commercial spaces under 3,000 sq. ft.
- Affordable housing (as defined in RCW 36.70A.030)
- Senior housing
- Licensed childcare facilities (as defined in RCW 43.216.010)
- Ground-floor nonresidential spaces in mixed-use buildings
- Buildings changing the use from nonresidential to residential, or a change of use for a commercial use.

These limits do not affect ADA parking requirements. Cities may still require additional parking for religious organizations or for carpools and may continue to regulate temporary or time-restricted parking and address drop-off, loading, and accessibility through design review. The parking limits also do not apply within a one-mile radius of major commercial airports with at least nine million annual enplanements.

Cities may exceed the state limitations only if they submit an empirical safety study demonstrating that the required limits would create significantly less safe conditions for drivers, pedestrians, or bicyclists, and the Department of Commerce certifies the findings.

HB 1183 adds further restrictions on when cities may require parking, with a particular focus on housing created within existing buildings, innovative construction types, and projects near transit.

1. RCW 35.21.990 Off-Street Parking Requirements for New Housing in Existing Buildings

For existing buildings (as defined in RCW 35.21.990) that add new housing units:

- Cities may not require any new off-street parking for the added units.
- Cities may require the retention of existing parking that was tied to previous residential uses or is necessary to support remaining nonresidential uses.
- Cities cannot deny permits solely due to parking nonconformities unless they provide written findings that the nonconformity causes a significant detriment to the surrounding area.

Conclusion:
Parking cannot be used as a barrier to adding new housing units within existing buildings.

2. RCW 36.70A.817 – No Minimum Parking Allowed for Certain Residential Projects:
Cities may NOT require any off-street parking for the following project types:

- Affordable housing
- New construction or the retrofit of existing buildings meeting passive house requirements
- Modular construction
- Mass timber construction

A city may require parking only if it submits an empirical safety study that shows removing parking requirements would make conditions significantly less safe for drivers, pedestrians, or bicyclists.

Conclusion:
Several priority housing types must be allowed with zero mandated parking unless a state-certified safety study is completed.

3. Transit-Related Minimum Parking Caps
For residential development within ¼ mile of high-frequency transit (service ≥ 4 times per hour, ≥ 12 hours/day):
(A) Senior housing & housing for people with disabilities:

- Cities may NOT impose minimum residential parking requirements for residents.
- Staff/visitor parking may be required.
- Higher amounts may be required only when street parking shortages or physical constraints are documented.

(B) Market-rate multifamily housing:

- Parking requirements may be no greater than:
  - 1 space per bedroom, or
  - 0.75 space per unit
- Higher amounts may be required only with documented evidence of street parking limitations or physical barriers.

Conclusion:
Most residential projects near frequent transit will be subject to strict state caps on required parking.

HB 1491 adds further restrictions on when cities may require parking, with a particular focus on transit-oriented developments (TODs).

RCW 36.70A.842 No Off-Street Parking Requirements for Transit Oriented Developments:
Cities planning under the Growth Management Act cannot require off-street parking for residential or mixed-use development within transit station areas, except:

- ADA accessible parking for people with disabilities
- Short-term parking for delivery vehicles

If a development provides more residential parking than required, the city may:

- Require a share of parking to be allocated to affordable housing units
- Include all or part of the cost of unbundled parking charges in affordable housing rents

If a project doesn't provide parking in compliance with this section, the lack of parking cannot trigger a determination of significance under SEPA.

Exceptions:

1. Cities may exceed these limitations if an empirical safety study shows that parking restrictions would create significantly less safe conditions for drivers, pedestrians, or bicyclists and the Department of Commerce certifies the findings.
2. Areas within 1 mile of large commercial airports (≥9 million annual enplanements).

SB 6015 (2024) sets statewide standards for how cities may regulate residential parking design and what must be allowed to count toward required parking.

RCW 36.70A.622 Residential Parking Requirements:
Cities must allow the following:

- Garages and carports may not be required to satisfy parking requirements.
- Parking spaces that count towards minimum parking requirements may be enclosed or unenclosed.
- Tandem parking must count at 1 space per 20 linear feet, with allowances for turning radii.
- Cities cannot prohibit use of legally nonconforming gravel parking areas (up to six spaces) to meet required parking.
- Cities may not require residential parking spaces larger than 8' x 20', except ADA stalls.
- Cities may not require off-street parking if doing so would make compliance with tree-retention standards infeasible (applies to cities >6,000 population).
- Grass block pavers must count toward required parking.

Existing parking spaces do not need to be modified to meet these new standards except for ADA compliance. During resurfacing, cities cannot require resizing if it would be costlier or require major reconfiguration. This law also includes the same one-mile airport exemption as RCW 35.21.994.

B. Summary of Current City of Tacoma Minimum Off-Street Parking Standards

The City of Tacoma's minimum off-street parking standards are found in TMC 13.06.090.C Off Street Parking. The City's standards include minimum parking quantities based on the type of use and/or the zoning district that the use is located in. In addition, there are options for mandatory parking quantity reductions based on proximity or other project features. These are summarized below with examples.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Minimum Parking Quantity Requirements</th></tr>
<tr><th>Quantity based on land use</th><th>Quantity based on zoning district</th></tr>
<tr><td>Generally based on historic observed/ forecast parking demand for specific land use types.</td><td>Generally based on overall district planned land use, design and urban form, to shift towards more transit and pedestrian orientation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples:
Retail: 2.5 per 1,000 sq ft
Shopping Center: 4 per 1,000 sq ft
Dental Clinic: 3 per 1,000 sq ft
Restaurant: 6 per 1,000 sq ft
Medical/Dental: 3 per 1,000 sq ft
Hotel: 0.5 per guestroom
Hospital: 1.75 per bed
Day-care: 2 for every 10 children
Warehousing: 1 per 2,000 sq ft
Religious assembly: 0.2 per seat
High School: 0.4 per student</td><td>Examples:
UR-1: 1 per dwelling unit
UR-2: 0.75 per dwelling unit
UR-3: 0.50 per dwelling unit
R-4, C-1, C-2, PBD, M-1: 1.25 per dwelling unit
Downtown: exempt except for ADA parking
Mixed Use Centers:
Residential: 1 per unit
Commercial: 2.5 per 1,000 sq ft
Other: 70% of the parking required for use in general standards
Projects within 10' of pedestrian street are exempt</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Parking Quantity Allowed Reductions</th></tr>
<tr><th>Proximity Based Reductions</th><th>Reduction Incentives</th></tr>
<tr><td>Based on location factors that reduce or mitigate overall parking demand.</td><td>Based on project characteristics that reduced parking and travel demand.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples:
Reduced Parking Area (based on ½ mile from major transit) – no minimum parking required (map of the RPA is attached).
Reductions for projects within 500' of a bus stop – typically 25-50% reduction.</td><td>Examples:
Bicycle parking credits
Trip reduction plan
Car-sharing
Motorcycle/scooter parking
Small units: Unit exempt if less than 450 sq ft</td></tr>
</table>

The following table assesses the general impacts the new state mandates would likely have on City standards:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Minimum Parking Quantity Requirements</th></tr>
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Retail: 2.5 per 1,000 sq ft
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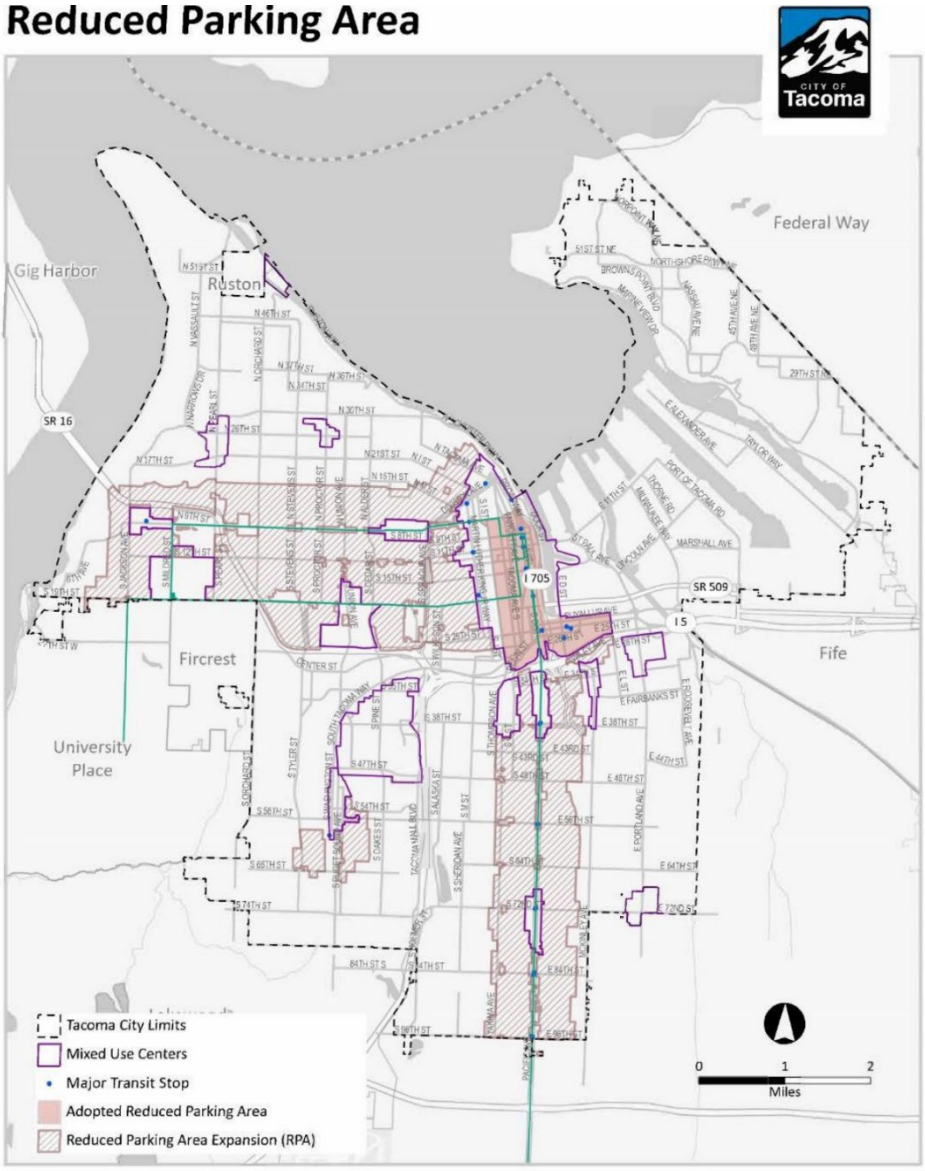
Hotel: 0.5 per guestroom
Hospital: 1.75 per bed
Day-care: 2 for every 10 children
Warehousing: 1 per 2,000 sq ft
Religious assembly: 0.2 per seat
High School: 0.4 per student
All highlighted land uses currently exceed state requirements for commercial uses.

New exemptions citywide:
Affordable housing
Senior housing
Licensed childcare facilities
Groundfloor non-residential uses in mixed use buildings</td><td>Examples:
UR-1: 1 per dwelling unit
UR-2: 0.75 per dwelling unit
UR-3: 0.50 per dwelling unit
R-4, C-1, C-2, PBD, M-1: 1.25 per dwelling unit
Downtown: exempt except for ADA parking
Mixed Use Centers:
Residential: 1 per unit
Commercial: 2.5 per 1,000 sq ft
Other: 70% of the parking required for use in general standards
Projects within 10’ of pedestrian street are exempt
All highlighted zones currently exceed state requirements.
Multifamily housing: Cities cannot require more than 0.5 spaces per unit.
Single-family homes: Maximum of 1 space per home.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Parking Quantity Allowed Reductions</th></tr>
<tr><th>Proximity Based Reductions</th><th>Incentives</th></tr>
<tr><td>Based on location factors that reduce or mitigate overall parking demand.</td><td>Based on project characteristics that reduced parking and travel demand.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples:
Reduced parking area (based on ½ mile from major transit) – no minimum parking required.
Additional amendments to Reduced Parking Area needed to comply with prior Council direction and to comply with Middle Housing requirements (see map below).
Reductions for projects within 500’ of a bus stop – typically 25-50% reduction.
NEW: Residential within ¼ mile of high frequency transit
Special Needs Housing is exempt</td><td>Examples:
Bicycle parking credits
Trip reduction plan
Car-sharing
Motorcycle/scooter parking

Small units: Unit exempt if less than 450 sq ft
Small unit exemption increases to 1200 sq ft units
Commercial spaces under 3,000 sq. ft. are exempt
New Parking Exemptions to incentivize:
Modular construction
Mass timber construction</td></tr>
</table>



Staff conclusions:

- The areas most likely to be impacted are those areas outside of the City's designated Centers and the Reduced Parking Area, including the recently adopted Urban Residential Zones 1 and 2, and the City's commercial zoning districts.
- State requirements add code complexity by incorporating new use specific exemptions, exemptions based on construction type, affordability, and square footage.
- At a minimum, the Planning Commission should consider eliminating parking requirements within the mixed-use centers citywide to ensure greater consistency of minimum parking standards, and to consider expansion of the RPA above to fill gaps in applicability consistent with State law and recent Council actions through Home in Tacoma.

Key question for the Planning Commission: State mandates are based, in some cases, on existing transit service capacity and frequency. To what extent should city code utilize existing transit service to determine parking requirements or be based on planned service levels?

C. Consistency with the VISION 2050 Plan

VISION 2050 establishes a regional growth framework that prioritizes compact, transit-oriented development, reduced VMT, lower environmental impacts, and multimodal transportation options. Several adopted multicounty planning policies (MPPs) support efforts to reduce or eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements. Relevant policies include:

MPP-DP-12: "Design communities to provide safe and welcoming environments for walking and bicycling."
Reducing minimum parking requirements helps achieve walking/biking/transit-friendly development patterns by freeing land for denser, mixed uses and making alternatives to driving viable.

MPP-DP-22: *"Plan for densities that maximize benefits of transit investments in high-capacity transit station areas that are expected to attract significant new population or employment growth."*
Higher densities near high-capacity transit stations are constrained by parking minimums; implementing reduced or no minimums enables the compact, land-efficient development that VISION 2050 requires.

MPP-DP-47: *"Streamline development standards and regulations for residential and commercial development and public projects, especially in centers and high-capacity transit station areas, to provide flexibility and to accommodate a broader range of project types consistent with the regional vision."*
This policy supports removing prescriptive barriers (like parking minimums) to enable a broader range of project types and more compact development especially in centers.

MPP-T-12: *"Emphasize transportation investments that provide and encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel and increase travel options, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers."*
& MPP-T-13: *"Increase the proportion of trips made by transportation modes that are alternatives to driving alone, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers, by ensuring availability of reliable and competitive transit options."*
& MPP-T-15: "*Prioritize investments in transportation facilities and services in the urban growth area that support compact, pedestrian- and transit-oriented densities and development."*
There policies call for reducing single-occupant vehicle travel, increase transit mode share, and prioritizes investments that support compact, pedestrian- and transit-oriented densities and development. Reducing parking minimums is a complementary local tool to achieve these transportation mode and investment goals.

MPP-CC-3: "*Reduce greenhouse gases by expanding the use of conservation and alternative energy sources, electrifying the transportation system, and reducing vehicle miles traveled by increasing alternatives to driving alone."*
& MPP-CC-12: "*Prioritize transportation investments that support achievement of regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, such as by reducing vehicle miles traveled."*
Minimum parking requirements induce driving and increase VMT. Reducing/eliminating them supports the regional greenhouse-gas and VMT reduction goals.

Together, these policies emphasize reducing auto dependence, supporting transit-oriented and compact development, and lowering environmental impacts, all of which are advanced by reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements.

D. Consistency with the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

Both compliance with state mandates (Option A) and broader parking reform (Option B) support goals and policies in the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan. Many of the Plan's policies, especially those related to housing affordability, multimodal transportation, compact growth, climate objectives, and the

redevelopment of underutilized surface parking, more strongly support deeper reductions or the elimination of minimum parking requirements.

Key supporting policies include:

Policy GS–2.5:*"Encourage regulatory changes like parking quantity reductions or incentives to reduce parking to make smaller scale retail viable."* - **This policy provides direct support for lowering minimum parking requirements, particularly for commercial uses.**

Policy GS–12.10: *"Within walking distance of major transit stops… limit new or expanded surface parking lots; encourage redevelopment of existing surface parking lot into housing and mixed uses through zoning regulations… Develop parking maximums in transit-oriented areas…"*- **This policy authorizes reducing parking requirements and establishing parking maximums near transit.**

Policy H–1.7: "*Implement equitable land use incentives, such as…, parking requirement reductions, …to remove housing development barriers for income-restricted affordable housing and other housing types serving cost-burdened communities."* **This policy lists parking requirement reductions as a tool to remove housing development barriers. This is a direct policy for lowering parking minimums for housing projects.**
Policy EN–2.46: *"Discourage the development of new parking lots and the expansion of existing parking lots by imposing penalties and fees for parking lot owners that violate landscaping standards and who own rarely-used parking lots or vacant lots with excessive pavement."* **This policy reflects the City's environmental goals to reduce excessive paved areas and the stormwater, climate, and ecological impacts associated with large parking lots.**

Parking reform is also supported by the adopted goals of the Transportation & Mobility Plan. Several goals call for reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, supporting compact and walkable development patterns, and prioritizing transit and active transportation over vehicle storage.

Goal 3 (Environment & Sustainability) directs the City to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions and to incentivize transit and active modes.
Goal 6 (Connecting the Tacoma Community) calls for transforming Frequent Transit Network into transit-oriented development areas and reallocating street space to prioritize people.
Goal 1 (Equity & Livability) emphasizes providing affordable transportation options and removing systemic barriers related to auto-dependent infrastructure and address harm from past infrastructure decisions (Creating mandatory parking requirements that imposes auto-centric patterns on communities)

Together, these policies establish a strong local policy foundation for reducing mandatory off-street parking, transitioning toward a market-based approach, and supporting walkability, transit use, and compact development patterns. This direction aligns with state legislation and provides policy support for either meeting minimum state requirements or pursuing a more comprehensive citywide approach to remove minimum parking requirements.

E. Project Milestone Schedule – (Target Adoption: October 2026)

Project Launch & Initial Code Options (Dec 2025 – Feb 2026)

- Introduce project to the Planning Commission (Dec 2025)
- Launch project webpage and FAQs (Jan 2026)
- Briefings with IPS Committee and Planning Commission to confirm direction (Feb 2026)

Code Development & Early Engagement (Feb – Apr 2026)

- Internal engagement with departments and key boards/commissions
    - Transportation Commission

    - Climate & Sustainability Commission
    - Commission on Disabilities
    - Parking Technical Advisory Group
- External engagement with other government entities
    - Puyallup Tribe of Indians
    - Pierce Transit
    - Metro Parks
- Public outreach
    - Unified engagement
    - Virtual open house
    - Social media
    - Business Districts
    - Neighborhood Councils
    - Online survey
    - Translated materials
    - Cultural ambassadors

Public Review Draft & Planning Commission Recommendation (Apr – July 2026)

- Public release of draft code (mid-April) and 30-day comment period
- SEPA and Commerce 60-day review begin
- Community information meeting (May 2026)
- IPS briefing (May 2026)
- Planning Commission Public Hearing (May 2026)
- Planning Commission debrief and direction (June 2026)
- Final Planning Commission recommendation (July 2026)

City Council Review & Adoption (Aug – Oct 2026)

- Council resolution to set the public hearing (Aug 2026)
- City Council public hearing (Sept 2026)
- Final Reading and anticipated adoption (Oct 2026)

Post-Adoption (Fall 2026)

- Update website, FAQs, and public materials
- Notification to affected parties
- Internal staff training

Question for Planning Commission: Are there specific audiences that staff should target for outreach and communications?

F. Supplemental Information

Option A: State Parking Mandates

If the scope of work is limited to Option A: State Parking Mandates, then the need for additional review or analysis will likely be limited. The state requirements are prescriptive and do not leave significant room for local discretion.

Option B: Citywide Parking Reform

If the scope of work is expanded to include a broader citywide reduction or elimination of minimum parking requirements, additional research and analysis may be required, to include:

1. Benchmarking: review jurisdictions that have recently updated or eliminated parking minimums.
    a. Where jurisdictions have eliminated parking minimums, consider whether those eliminations apply to all uses and zoning districts, or only certain zones.
    b. How do these jurisdictions address industrial areas and ADA parking?
    c. To what extent are new projects continuing to provide parking, even when not required?

2. What impacts, both beneficial and harmful, may be expected from eliminating or significantly reducing parking standards? What is the state of best available information?
    a. Affordability / Feasibility for construction
    b. Greenhouse gas emissions/ vehicle miles traveled reductions
    c. Site design conflicts / Urban design
    d. User experience and convenience
    e. Stormwater management
3. What strategies are available that the City could consider to mitigate user impacts?
    a. Metered parking
    b. Permit parking
    c. Shared parking
    d. Transit access and availability

Questions for Planning Commission: Is there additional information that should be considered to support the Planning Commission's selection of a code option? What information will be necessary to make a final recommendation to the City Council?

Planning Commission Questions – Parking Code Update

As part of the preparation for the upcoming Planning Commission discussion on the Parking Code Update, the following questions were submitted by Planning Commissioners. These questions are provided for reference and context to inform the discussion at the December 17, 2025 meeting. Responses to these questions may be addressed during the meeting or in subsequent staff reports as appropriate.

Information

1. In what general era were Tacoma's first minimum parking ratios adopted and what justification was used to adopt the specific ratios for each use?
2. How many times since 1990 have parking ratios been reduced, exempted or credited, and why? How many pages of exemption text exist today in the code?
3. In the last 5 years, have any applicants built parking even when no minimum was required?
4. Have any projects proposed by applicants fallen through because of minimum parking requirements?
5. What is the average regional cost to construct a structured parking stall?
6. What percentage of Tacoma renters are rent-burdened?
7. Does the City have regulations that protect renters from paying for parking spaces included in their leases they do not use?
8. What share of residents do not own a working vehicle; do not drive?
9. What post-occupancy monitoring mechanisms exist for ensuring conformity with the minimum number of parking stalls that a project was initially permitted with?
10. Does the City limit how many vehicles a household may own or park on the street? Are backyard buildings without parking allowed to replace off-street parking in urban residential zones?

Analysis

1. How do SB 5184's legislative findings, the Comprehensive Plan, and the current purpose statement (TMC 13.06.090(c)2) align legally? Do they need to? From Legal's reading, does the code's stated goal for minimum parking requirements do more to broadly protect public health and safety, or to secure convenience for users of one mode of travel?
2. Could mandatory minima create a health-safety disparity between drivers and non-drivers in low equity areas (e.g., higher traffic from commercial zones on Vision Zero high risk corridors)?
3. What are the trends in residential unit size (last 5 years)? What % of new units are <1,200 ft^2 (exempt under SB 5184) and what % of the 2045 housing target qualifies as affordable (also exempt)?

4. From prior HIA's from the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, what are the impacts of excess parking on VMT, traffic volumes, air/water quality, urban heat island, and public health? Are there equity-correlated differences in transportation-safety outcomes? (Can the Health Dept. potentially do a rapid HIA for this project?)
5. How does excess parking affect residents' ability to reach daily necessities in low opportunity areas?
   Which Washington cities have eliminated mandatory minimum parking, and what reasons did they give for doing so?

Engagement

1. Do people or businesses ever use required parking spaces for other purposes (e.g., storage, recreation, etc.)?
2. What alternative parking solutions would you as a community member support for new developments? (e.g., shared-parking agreements, on-street curb-time pricing, residential parking permits, angled-parking layouts, or any other ideas you have)
3. If mandatory parking requirements (except ADA) were discontinued, which benefits would you like to emphasize with local regulations, examples: lower housing rents, more walkable streets, closer access to daily needs, more housing, more tree canopy, added green or community space, or better bike-pedestrian infrastructure?

Agenda Item F2

City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

To: Planning Commission

From: Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division

Subject: **2026 Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code**

Memo Date: December 11, 2025

Meeting Date: December 17, 2025

Action Requested:
Review and Direction

Discussion:
Legislative Code Amendments: Discussion will be limited to day care facility code amendments.

Staff is seeking Planning Commission direction on permitting day care facilities within the Urban Residential 1 and 2 zoning districts and specifically for direction on whether any limits on capacity or hours of operation are warranted. At this stage, the Commission will be putting together an initial proposal for public release in January and will still have opportunities to refine the proposal following public comment. Attached are draft presentation slides that reference the zoning districts under discussion, some background information on how current state licensing addresses capacity, and several code options for the Commission to consider.

Background:
The 2026 Amendment includes the following applications.

Application	Amendment Type	Objective	Staff Contacts
2026-01 McKinley Annexation	Plan and Code; Land Use Designation and Zoning	Legislative Requirement	Wesley Rhodes
2026-02 Special Needs Housing	Code Amendment	Legislative requirement	Adam Nolan
2026-03 Minor Amendments	Plan and Code	Maintain effectiveness, consistency	Carl Metz
2026-05: Legislative Code Amendments • Child Day Care Facilities • Binding Site Plans	Code Amendment	Legislative requirements	Stephen Atkinson

Planning Commission Prior Review and Actions:

- October 1, 2025: Assessment of Applications and Finalized Docket

Staff Contact:

- Stephen Atkinson, satkinson@tacoma.gov

Attachment:

- Attachment 1 – Presentation

c: Peter Huffman, Director

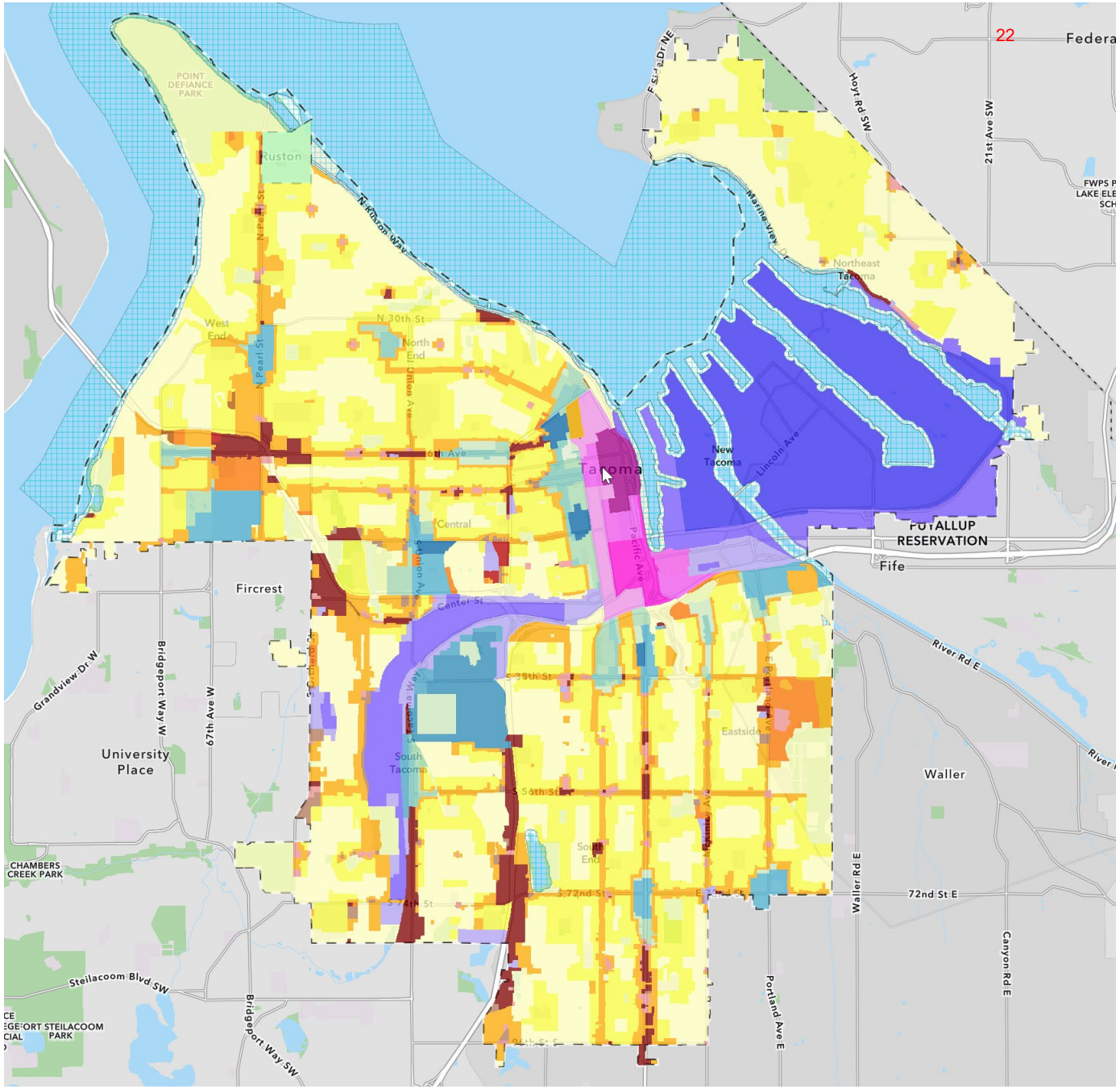
2026-05: LEGISLATIVE CODE AMENDMENTS

- **Child Day Care Centers** (required by SB 5509)
  - Requires cities to allow childcare centers outright (permitted without special review and approval) in all non-industrial zones, and as Conditional Use in industrial zones. Required to comply by July 2027. May place reasonable standards on uses.

- **Staff recommendations:**
  - Combine two existing use day care classifications
  - Modify use allowances per state law to allow by right

Key question for Planning Commission:

- Should there be any express limit on enrollment or hours of operation in the Urban Residential zones?



DAY CARE FACILITIES

Permitted without limits on enrollment or hours of operation in all Downtown, Mixed-Use, and Commercial Districts.

Three zones currently have a limit on enrollment:

UR-1 and UR-2: 14 or more requires CU

UR-3: More than 50 requires CU

In the map on the left, UR 1 and 2 are the lightest yellow colors on the map.

DAY CARE FACILITIES

What factors influence overall facility capacity?

- Indoor space per enrollee in classroom or group setting (35 sq ft of usable space per child)
- Outdoor space per enrollee (70 sq ft)
- Group capacity limits affected by age group, number of staff and staff qualifications.
- Other facility requirements (food preparation, janitorial, storage, offices, bathrooms, etc)
  - Seattle estimates 70 – 90 sq ft floor area per child overall as minimum

What building sizes are permitted in UR-1 and 2 Districts?

Base Floor Area Ratio for UR-1 is 0.6 and for UR-2 is 0.8.

- Ex) In UR-1 a standard 5,000 sq ft lot would allow a 3,000 sq ft building
  - Could potentially accommodate 33-42 children.
- Ex) In UR-2 a standard 5,000 sq ft lot would allow a 4,000 sq ft building
  - Could potentially accommodate 44-57 children.
- Outdoor area may play limiting factor for single story buildings.

DAY CARE FACILITIES

Current threshold based on enrollment

UR-1 and UR-2:

- Permitted: 13 adults or children or less
- Conditional use: 14 or more

Alternative 1: Limit hours of operation

UR-1 and/or UR-2:

- Permitted: Hours of operation 5:00 am to 10:00 pm
- Conditional use: Hours of operation that exceed standard

Alternative 2: No threshold

UR-1 and/or UR-2:

- Permitted without limits on enrollment or hours of operation in the zoning code.
- Capacity based strictly on state licensing, general dimensional standards.