



# Historic Survey of Tacoma's Black Heritage

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

City Council Study Session  
February 25, 2025



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## OVERVIEW

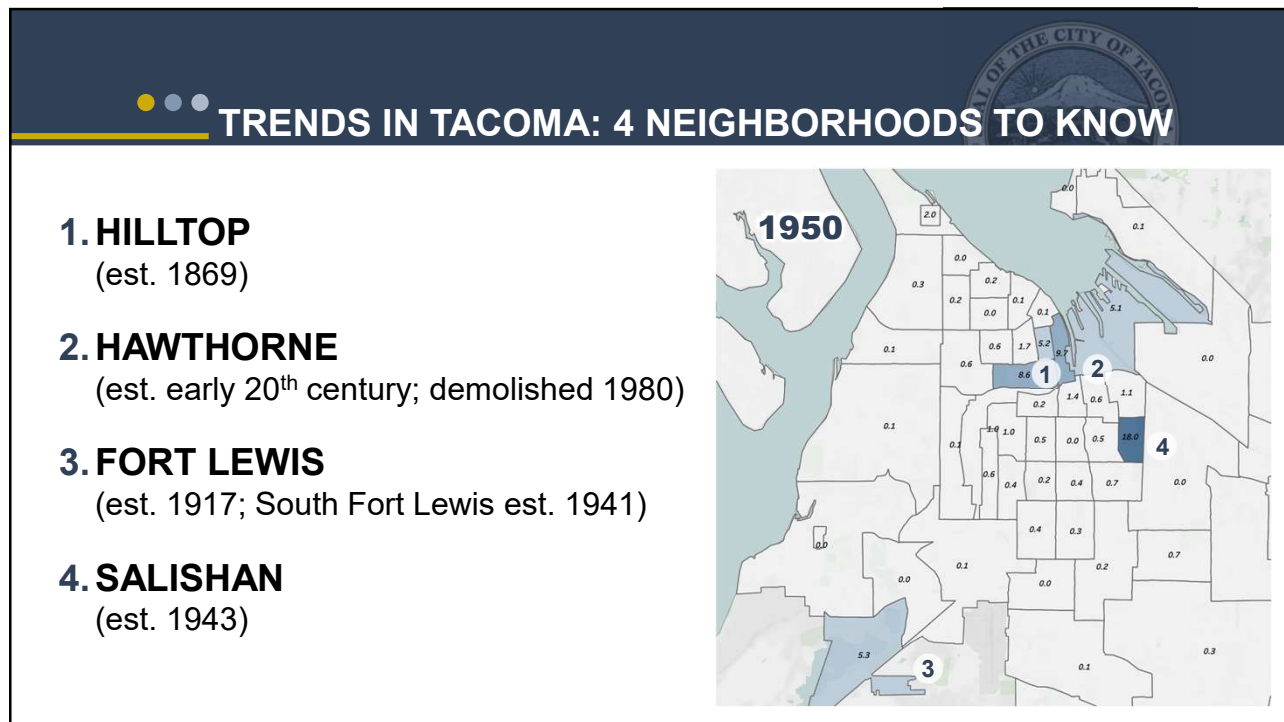


### **Why are Black communities under-represented?**

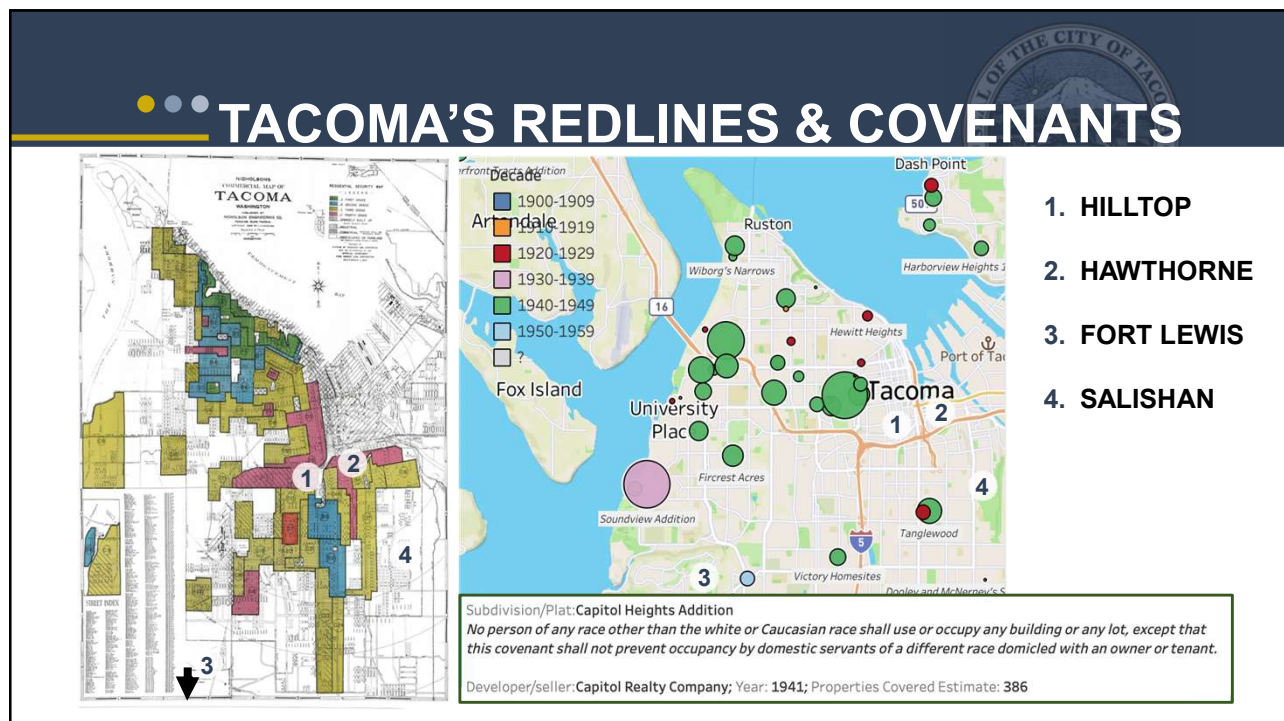
- Restrictive covenants began in the late 1920s
- Redlining: enacted by FHA in 1934
- 1950s Federal transportation infrastructure divides Black communities
- Washington State, omnibus civil rights: 1958
- Federal Fair Housing Act: 1968
- Late 1960s-1970s Urban renewal: eminent domain, condemnation, etc.

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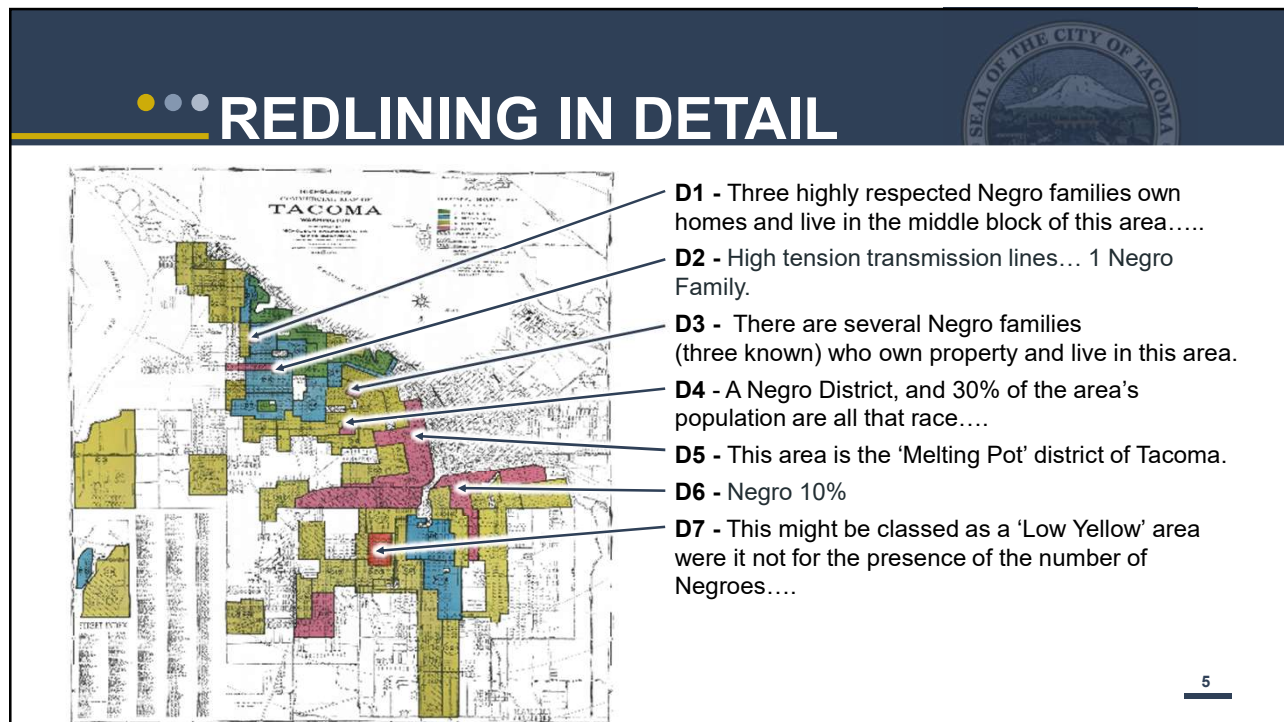
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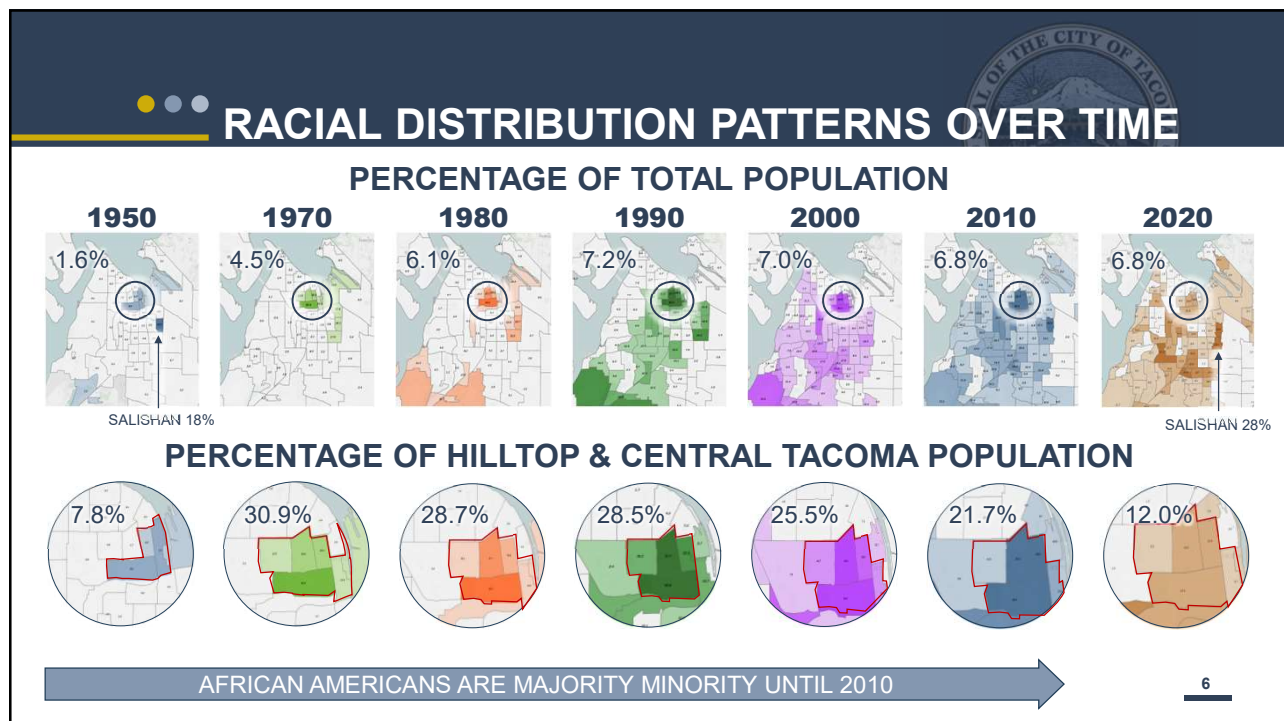
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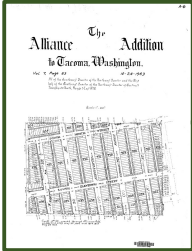



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## ESTABLISHING THE HILLTOP: GEORGE PUTNAM RILEY

**George Putnam Riley and the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association (WJSA) purchased 67 acres of land in Tacoma in 1869.**






**Named the Alliance Addition, it became the Hilltop neighborhood.**

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## HAWTHORNE NEIGHBORHOOD



**ESTABLISHED ca. late 19th – early 20<sup>th</sup> C.**




**REDLINED IN 1937**

**D6** - “.... Negro 10%; Mixed South. European predominating. Detrimental Influences ....low-income population.”

1937: 10% African American  
1970: 18% African American

**INHABITANTS WERE AFFECTED BY EMINENT DOMAIN IN 1980**

1983 Tacoma Dome development demolishes the Hawthorne neighborhood

Many buildings were moved to the Hilltop Neighborhood, and some were moved by barge (boat) across the water.



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## FORT LEWIS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

**1917** Established.

**1941** South Fort Lewis received 110 wood-frame temporary mobilization buildings as a separate camp for Black soldiers.

African-American Women's Army Corps (WAC) from the Engineering Section at Fort Lewis, Washington in the Portland Inquirer of October 19, 1945, Page 5


**July 26, 1948** President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) issued Executive Order 9981, ending racial segregation in the military. Integration became a reality by 1950.

**1950** Fort Lewis housed 20,000 soldiers, 30% of whom were African American.

**1970** Nearly one-third of Pierce County's Black population were military personnel at Fort Lewis.

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## SALISHAN FEDERAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT




**1941** Attack on Pearl Harbor. Land on the Puyallup Indian Reservation was taken for a Federal Housing Development.


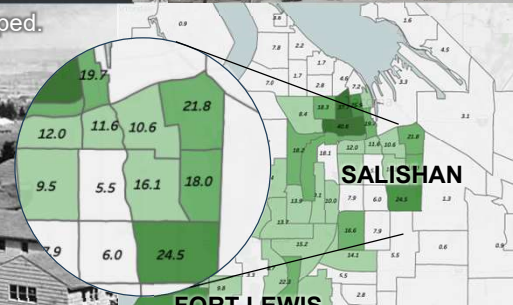
**1943** Families moved into Salishan.

**1990** Salishan and surrounding area averages ~18% Black.

**2000** Salishan was redeveloped. Residents were:  
 25% Vietnamese  
 25% Cambodian  
 15% Russian  
 13% African-American



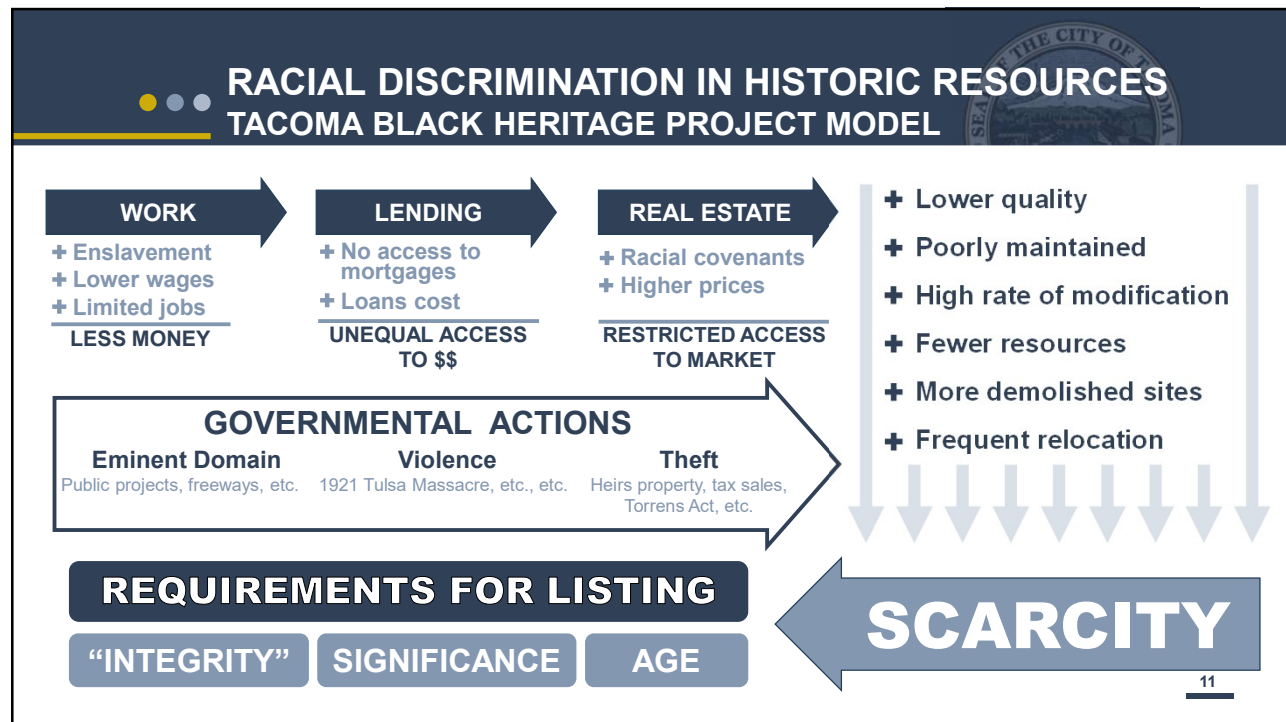
Salishan School 1945

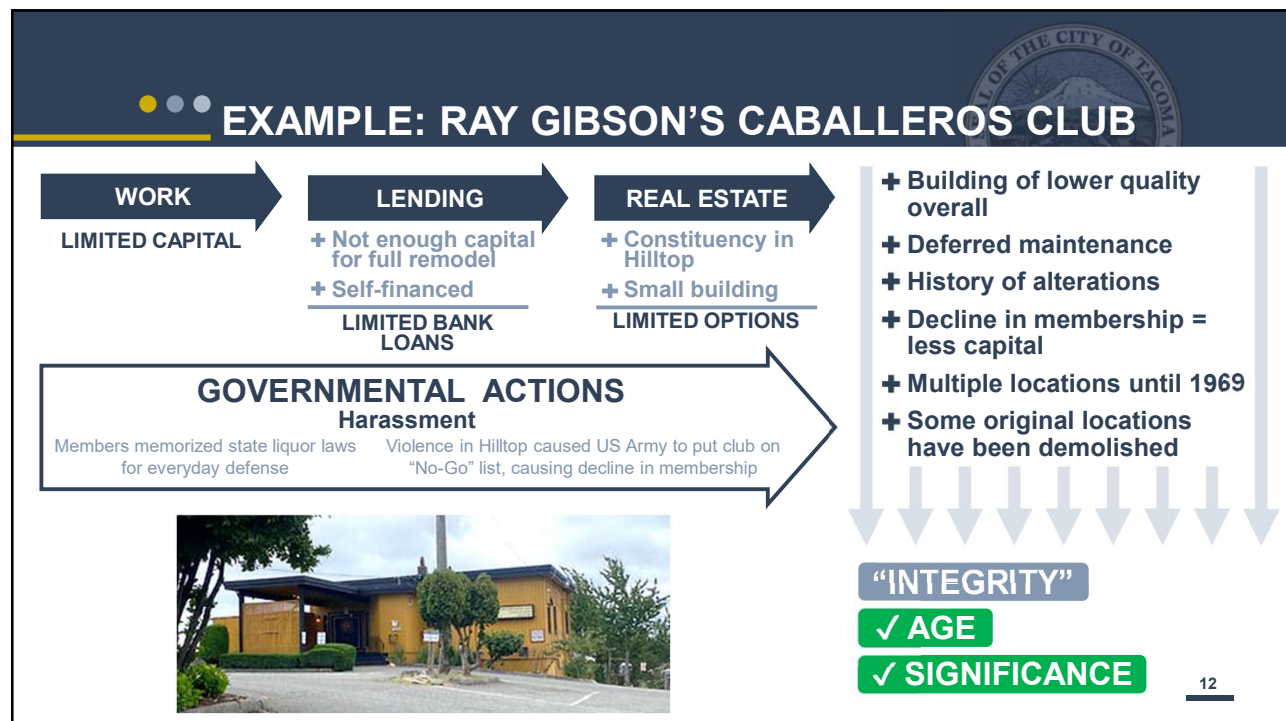
**SALISHAN**

**FORT LEWIS**

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## CASE STUDY: TACOMA CAMPUS OF THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE



<b>A</b> 1972-1976	<b>E</b> 1980
<b>B</b> 1976	<b>F</b> 1981
<b>C</b> 1978	<b>G</b> 1984-2000
<b>D</b> 1979-1980	<b>H</b> 2000-present

### ISSUES

- WITH "HISTORIC INTEGRITY" OF THE RESOURCE
- MEETING AGE STANDARDS
- WITH ESTABLISHING "SIGNIFICANCE"

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## TACOMA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**City of Tacoma Annual Historic Preservation Awards  
May 23, 2024**

Outstanding Achievement in Partnerships in Preservation was awarded to Tacoma Evergreen for their Black History visioning work.

All stakeholders, including those involved in the Black Historic Sites Project, Caballeros Club members, and college staff, were invited on stage.

### EVENTS

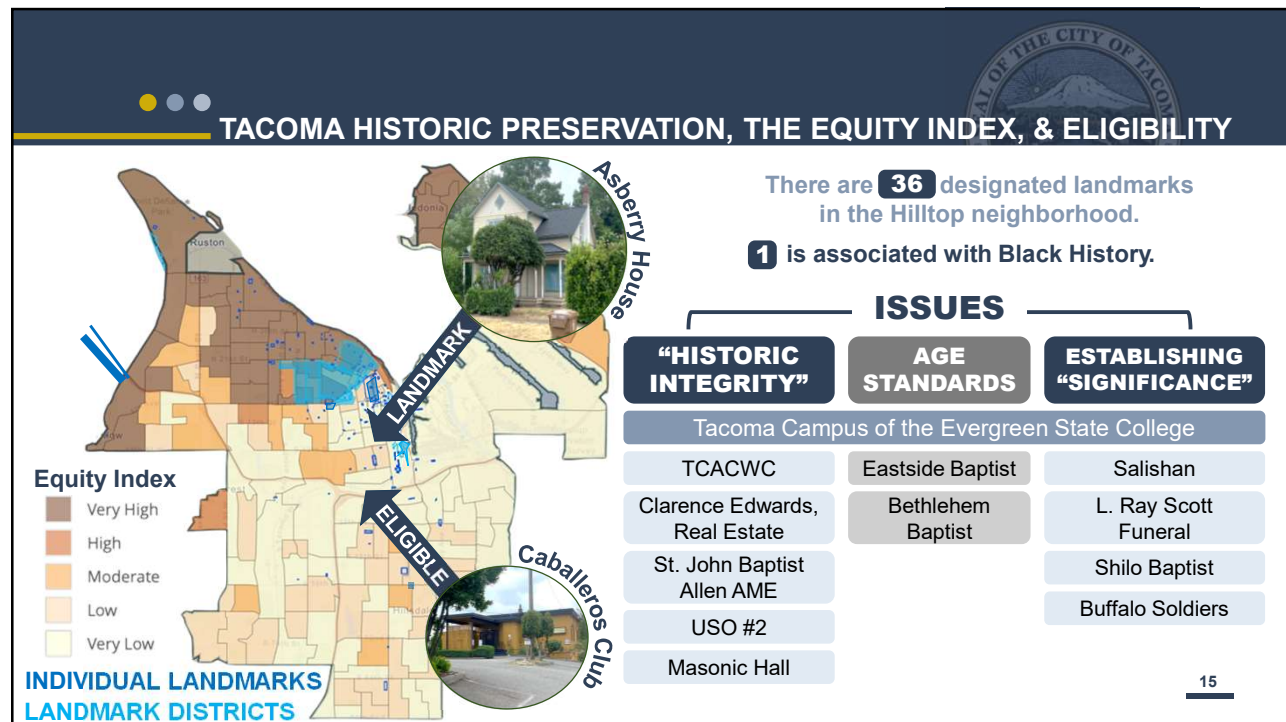
Twice a month meetings of the Black Heritage Stakeholders at Evergreen State College Tacoma Campus

**April 13, 2024** - Black History in Preservation Call & Response

**May 11, 2024** - Summit for Black History, Historic Preservation



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