



**TO:** Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Peter Huffman, Planning and Development Services *PH*  
**COPY:** Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee; Michael P. Slevin III, P.E.;  
Cathy Sims  
**PRESENTER:** Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services  
**SUBJECT:** South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Consideration of a Moratorium  
**DATE:** November 9, 2022

**PRESENTATION TYPE:**

Request for Resolution

**SUMMARY:**

On November 9, 2022, the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) Committee will conduct a panel discussion of the Planning Commission’s Findings and Recommendations regarding the consideration of whether a moratorium on heavy industry and hazardous material storage is warranted within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD).

**BACKGROUND:**

The City Council adopted Amended Substitute Resolution No. 40985 (resolution) on June 28, 2022, approving the Work Plan for the STGPD Code Amendments (Work Plan), which was one of the four applications for the 2022 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code (2022 Amendment).

Prior to adopting the resolution, the City Council conducted a public hearing on June 7, 2022, on all four applications for the 2022 Amendment, including the Work Plan. Public testimony to the City Council raised community concerns around the compatibility of heavy industrial uses and storage of hazardous materials within the STGPD and suggestions for the City Council to consider enacting a moratorium.

In response to the community’s suggestions, the City Council stipulated in the resolution that “immediately following the adoption of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Work Plan, as part of the first phase of that Work Plan, the Planning Commission will conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on heavy industrial uses and storage of hazardous materials within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope, applicability, and duration for City Council consideration within 60 days of the effective date of this resolution.”

The Planning Commission has completed its review and deliberations of the matter through a public process and forwarded to the City Council. The Commission has recommended a targeted moratorium on new underground storage tanks, metal recycling and auto wrecking facilities, and vehicle service and repair within the groundwater district.

**ISSUE:**

On September 20, 2022, staff from Planning and Development Services, Tacoma Water, Environmental Services, Tacoma Fire, and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department presented the Planning Commission’s Findings of Fact and Recommendations and a summary of the information the Commission considered in its review. In response, the City Council referred the issue to the IPS Committee for further discussion.



**ALTERNATIVES:**

The IPS Committee can consider alternatives to the Planning Commission recommendation, including modifications to the Planning Commission proposal, or determination as to whether a moratorium is warranted.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Commission recommends that “the City Council should consider enacting a moratorium on permits for new and expansion of metal recycling, auto wrecking, vehicle service and repair, vehicle service and repair – industrial, as well as new underground storage tanks, within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, for a duration of one year, to prevent the vesting of new land uses that may pose a risk to groundwater resources until the Groundwater Code Update can be complete in 2023.”

Enacting a moratorium requires amending certain relevant provisions of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code. According to TMC 13.05.030.D and 13.05.030.B, the City Council shall conduct a public hearing prior to adopting such amendments.