



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance – Adopting the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation and Mobility Plan, as Recommended by the Planning Commission – June 10, 2025
DATE: May 27, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

An ordinance adopting amendments to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, including the Transportation and Mobility Plan, as recommended by the Planning Commission on April 23, 2025, to fulfill the periodic update requirements of the Growth Management Act and for consistency with Vision 2050 multi-county planning policies.

BACKGROUND:

Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan, One Tacoma, is the City's official statement concerning its vision for future growth and development. It identifies goals, policies, and strategies for maintaining the health, welfare, and quality of life of Tacoma's residents. The Comprehensive Plan comprises numerous individual elements, including elements addressing such important issues as land use, neighborhood completeness, environment and watershed health, parks and recreation, housing, economic development, historic preservation, and transportation and infrastructure.

The [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA) requires counties and cities to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plans and regulations to bring them in line with any relevant changes in the GMA, and to accommodate updated growth targets. [RCW 36.70A.130](#) establishes the review procedures and schedule for Comprehensive Plan amendments and periodic review. Tacoma last completed such a periodic update in 2015 and is mandated to undertake and complete another periodic update.

In addition, the City of Tacoma is the designated "Metropolitan City" for Pierce County and is allocated, through [Vision 2050](#) and the [Countywide Planning Policies](#), to accommodate a significant share of the region's population and employment growth. The Puget Sound Regional Council evaluates and certifies local comprehensive plans for consistency with the multi-county planning policies (see the [Plan Review Manual](#), page 27).

The One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and Transportation and Mobility Plan have been updated to remain consistent with these pertinent state and regional planning requirements.

The following is a brief description of the core policy elements that comprise the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and the GMA goals that they implement.

Element	Description and How it Supports the Vision	GMA Goal
Growth Strategy (GS)	This chapter describes which land uses are allowed in which places across the city, and how growth in population, housing, and employment will be distributed across these places. It also addresses key transportation connections between these places, to form an overall planned network for the city.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (9) (10) (14)



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

Complete Neighborhoods (CN)	This chapter articulates how Tacoma's unique neighborhoods should look and feel to the people that live in and visit them. This includes policies affecting local building and site design, such as energy and resource efficiency, safety, views, public realm, and historic and cultural resource preservation. It also addresses connectivity at the neighborhood scale.	(13) (14)
Environment + Watershed Health (EN)	Using an ecological watershed approach, this chapter addresses ways in which Tacoma will invest in trees and forests, open space lands, and quality of air, water, and habitat to support healthy people and places.	(2) (9) (10) (14) (15)
Housing (H)	This chapter includes policies that support Tacoma's housing goals, including the ability for all Tacomans to access and maintain safe and affordable housing that meets their household needs. This includes policies to grow overall housing diversity and stock and programs for anti-displacement and to create equitable access to housing.	(4)
Economic Development (EC)	Policies in this chapter promote access to a diversity of quality economic opportunities, including growth opportunities within an easy and accessible commute. This includes green economy strategies, and a favorable business climate for a range of priority industries.	(5)
Transportation and Mobility Plan (TMP)	This chapter includes the policies that affect how people move within Tacoma and connect to the regional transportation system. It describes the investments in mobility options necessary to achieve connected, compact, and equitable neighborhoods throughout Tacoma.	(3) (5) (10) (12) (14)
Parks + Recreation (P)	This chapter describes investments and programming to achieve a complete parks system for the residents of and visitors to Tacoma. A complete system reflects the City's unique cultural communities and ecological settings and provides high-quality equitable access to recreational opportunities for people of all walks of life.	(9) (12)
Public Facilities + Services (PFS)	This chapter sets standard levels of service and a plan to achieve and/or maintain them given anticipated development. Services and facilities such as police and fire response, libraries, utilities, and schools represent significant public investment and are a core part of a quality neighborhood experience.	(12) (14)
Historic Preservation (P)	This chapter defines the City of Tacoma's preservation goals, policies, and actions for preservation and neighborhood conservation. It provides a framework for organizations engaged in community-based initiatives with interests in protecting and experiencing cultural resources.	(13)
Engagement + Administration (AD)	As this chapter describes, continued equitable engagement, transparency, and accountability are fundamental to the work of plan implementation. Policies in this chapter describe the City's effort to build and sustain partnership with community members in planning for and realizing this vision for Tacoma.	(11)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

RCW 36.70A.130 of the GMA establishes the review procedures and schedule for Comprehensive Plan amendments and periodic review; RCW 36.70A.140 of the GMA requires local jurisdictions to provide for "early and continuous public participation" during the periodic review and update of the Comprehensive Plan.



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

A Public Engagement Plan was developed to guide the planning process and was reviewed by the Planning Commission on February 21, 2024, to guide the City's engagement efforts in support of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Public Engagement Plan leveraged existing data and existing engagement efforts to minimize respondent burden and confusion. Additional resources or "new engagements" were focused on thematic gaps and/or gaps by community group.

- [Public Engagement Plan](#)
- [Existing Engagement Gap Analysis](#)

Engagement activities during the visioning portion of the Comprehensive Plan update included in-person and virtual workshops, pop-ups at community events, attendance at meetings of existing neighborhood groups, a website that hosted the Ideas Wall open public comment forum, and a community survey that was available in several languages. The City hosted a total of nine community Visioning Workshops during the initial phase of the update, one per neighborhood council area and one virtual, and received a total of 402 comments on thematic gaps identified in the gap analysis. Workshops included creative hands-on activities to get feedback on topics and were supported with robust outreach and by the City's language ambassador team. The community survey received roughly 800 responses. In sum, the City received roughly 1,600 comments through these engagement efforts.

- [Public Engagement Summary](#) (One Tacoma Visioning Workshops Summer 2024)

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the draft One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan on March 5, 2025. City staff held several in-person and virtual informational events during the public comment period that led up to the public hearing date for community members to learn about the draft plan and prepare to provide comments. A recording of the virtual information event was also made available online.

Over 100 people attended these events with 81 public comments provided by community members, City boards, commissions, and partner agencies. Comments were shared with Planning Commissioners in information packets and through a debrief presentation on March 19, 2025, which are public on the Planning Commission webpage. Prior to their final recommendation, the Planning Commission considered amendments to the public review draft based on public input and testimony.

The City Council conducted a public hearing on June 3, 2025, to accept public comments the Planning Commission proposal.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Equity and anti-racism is a key focus for the City of Tacoma and therefore this update. There are also statewide and regional efforts to articulate equity and orient policies and programs to achieve more equitable outcomes for Washington residents. For example, House Bill 1220 introduced new requirements related to housing equity in Growth Management Planning which the Comprehensive Plan will be subject to. To advance equity in the Comprehensive Plan update, staff developed an equity assessment framework to guide an audit of the existing plan against equity goals. The equity goals included in the framework were selected after research into the policy context of Tacoma's equity work and historical context. After selecting the equity goals, staff also conducted baseline data analysis to identify priority subgroups for each outcome.

- [Community Profile](#): The Community Profile includes information about the current context of the city and recent trends as a starting point for comprehensive plan research. It is also intended to serve as a key resource for shaping the community engagement process by summarizing information about City



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

residents. The Community Profile is a working document, and each Comprehensive Plan chapter expands on this research in the process of developing specific policies.

- [Equity Assessment Context History and Baseline](#): A review of relevant historical context, equity indicators, and baseline outcomes data disaggregated by race and ethnicity in Tacoma.
- [Equity Assessment Framework](#): A summary of equity priorities and policy and review rubrics used for the Comprehensive Plan policy audit.

Economy/Workforce: Moderate Opportunity

Increase the number of diverse livable wage jobs.

Increase the number of infrastructure projects and improvements that support existing and new business developments.

Civic Engagement: Moderate Opportunity

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

Representation at public meetings will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community

Livability:

Increase the number of Complete Compact Communities/ 20-Minute Neighborhoods throughout the city.

One Tacoma 2050 is a next-generation Comprehensive Plan. It articulates a possible blueprint for the future of all climate-friendly cities, moving away from a downtown-centric growth pattern to a pattern of complete neighborhoods and employment centers. In the context of global and regional changes related to climate and demography, this Plan uniquely takes a community-defined approach to direct resources toward the future Tacomans want. Based on several years' worth of community engagement findings, this Plan focuses in measurable and observable ways on local priorities of equity, opportunity, public health, safety, and sustainability. These themes are integrated across all elements, creating mutually reinforcing actions and opportunities for inter-departmental collaboration on some of the City's most complex and pressing issues. Goals and policies supporting climate resilience, equitable and sustainable economic opportunity, community safety, and housing affordability can be found in several elements. The Plan also reinforces and sustains important local initiatives such as the Climate Action Plan, Green Economy Strategy, and Affordable Housing Action Strategy.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Reject the proposal.	N/A	Rejecting the proposal or delaying adoption could jeopardize the City's ability to secure state and regional grant funds that require certification of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
2. Modify the proposal.	To be determined based on any proposed modifications.	To be determined based on the proposed modifications. However, delay in adoption could result in ineligibility for upcoming grants.



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan is subject to annual review and amendment as well as state required updates. The next annual review cycle will begin in August of 2025 followed by a state required review to be completed in 2029.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends the City Council adopt the One Tacoma Plan and Transportation and Mobility Plan as proposed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to the adoption of the One Tacoma Plan. The Plan does recommend specific policies, projects and actions which may have fiscal impacts. These impacts would be studied and considered as part of those future decision-making processes, including the future update of the Capital Facilities Program and Transportation Improvement Program. The Plan also identifies potential funding sources for these future public facility and service needs.

LINK:

[One Tacoma: Comprehensive Plan Webpage](#)
[Draft One Tacoma: Comprehensive Plan \(full copy\)](#)