



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services *PA*
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Setting a Public Hearing on the Tideflats Subarea Plan and related Amendments to the One Tacoma Plan, Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code, and Title 19 Shoreline Master Program
DATE: August 20, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution setting Tuesday, October 28, 2025, as the date for a public hearing before the City Council on the proposed Tideflats Subarea Plan, as recommended by the Tideflats Steering Committee, and related amendments to the One Tacoma Plan, Tacoma Municipal Codes Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code, and Title 19 Shoreline Master Program, as recommended by the Tacoma Planning Commission.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Woodards and Council Member Walker

BACKGROUND:

Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.05.030.D, which requires the City Council to hold at least one public hearing on the adoption of the Tideflats Subarea Plan and proposed amendments to TMC Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code and Title 19 Shoreline Master Program.

The Tideflats Subarea Plan is a shared long-term vision supported by goals and policies that provide a roadmap to achieve the vision. The Subarea Plan is intended to create a more coordinated approach to development, environmental review, and strategic capital investments in the Tideflats. The Plan was developed through intergovernmental collaboration and community engagement and is guided by the vision and guiding principles that came out of this process. The five participating governments who co-developed the Plan with community are: City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Fife, and Pierce County. The Plan's vision, goals, and policies supports economic prosperity, strengthens existing center assets, expands transportation choices, and improves environmental quality. [The Steering Committee members unanimously recommended the draft Plan on December 5, 2024.](#) Specific aspects include:

- **Balancing Industrial Success with Environmental Restoration:** Plan policies called for coordinated actions and investments to restore ecosystems, improve water quality, and protect biodiversity alongside industrial development.
- **Indigenous Values:** The Plan honors both the natural and cultural landscapes of the region. Policies and action recognize the Puyallup Tribe's rights and interests in the Tideflats and ensure that any development respects their cultural, economic, and environmental connections to the land.
- **Comprehensive Climate Action:** The Plan's policies integrate climate resilience strategies, with specific actions around decarbonization goals, adaptive measures for sea-level rise, and restoration of natural habitats.
- **Economic and Industrial Adaptation:** The Plan supports economic flexibility by preserving core industrial uses and encouraging industries that meet environmental goals and facilitate innovation in clean energy. It demonstrates how a world class Port can thrive alongside growing urban neighborhoods.



- **Transportation and Infrastructure Innovations:** The Plan takes a holistic approach to transportation infrastructure, promoting proactive investments in multimodal transportation systems that support both the industrial sector and the surrounding community. It also incorporates green infrastructure solutions to mitigate pollution and improve the urban landscape as well as public access to the waterfront.
- **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** The Plan was developed through a seven-year long collaborative process that set up ongoing dialogue among local governments, tribes, businesses, and residents, fostering shared accountability and coordinated problem-solving for long-term implementation.

Following the Tideflats Steering Committee's recommendation, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on both the Subarea Plan and related amendments to the One Tacoma Plan, Land Use Regulatory Code and Shoreline Master Program. The Commission concluded their review on July 16, 2025, and forwarded their recommendations to the City Council.

The Planning Commission's Letter of Recommendation, Findings of Fact, and proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code are all available for public review at the following webpage: tacoma.gov/tideflats.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Meaningful public engagement was an important goal of this project and shaped the outcomes of the Subarea Plan and related code. Engagement was designed to hear from a broad group of community members who reflected the many interests and perspectives surrounding the history, current uses, and future of the Tideflats.

The community process was guided by a [Public Engagement Plan](#). The methods and engagement from the community visioning process was documented [here](#) and shared with the Steering Committee and City Council. Additional outreach was conducted in support of the [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#).

Two committees provided perspectives and guidance to the project at regular meetings throughout the project duration:

TIDEFLATS ADVISORY GROUP (TAG): The TAG included representatives from a wide range of interests including adjacent jurisdictions, neighborhoods, business and industry, labor, environmental interests, regional economic interests, and others. The TAG provided input and feedback for the Subarea Planning Process. TAG members also served as liaisons to the broader stakeholder groups they represent, and some served as panelists at topic-focused public engagement meetings. The TAG met 21 times from February 2020 through October 2024.

STEERING COMMITTEE (SC): The SC consisted of two elected leaders and alternates (elected officials) from each participating government, including the City of Fife, City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Port of Tacoma, and the Puyallup Tribe. The SC provided guidance for policy decisions and facilitated mutual understanding and a closer alignment of interests across jurisdictions throughout the subarea planning process. The SC also recommended an initial draft Subarea Plan for consideration by the Tacoma Planning Commission. The SC met 17 times from July 2020 through December 2024.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

The Plan recognizes and proactively supports the Puyallup Tribe's rights and interests in the Tideflats and ensures that any development respects their cultural, economic, and environmental connections to the land. The Tideflats



Subarea Plan and its implementation will support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air pollutants, reduce vehicle miles traveled, expand high-capacity transit and nonmotorized transportation options, and increase the efficiency of resource use, in support of the City's Climate Action Plan and goals to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Communities adjacent to the Tideflats have been designated as an "overburdened community" by the Department of Ecology. The goals and actions of the Plan will likely reduce these impacts and support overall public health improvements. The Plan further supports expanded employment opportunities and a focus on supporting quality jobs that do not require a college degree.

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score:* Very High 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:

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.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Very Low Opportunity

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

The Subarea Plan promotes job growth that leverages the center's location, assets and infrastructure. In doing so, it supports the achievement of regional and City objectives for the center. The Subarea Plan also helps to strengthen and preserve regional industrial lands by supporting the growth of the Port of Tacoma and by promoting the center's role as a local and regional Manufacturing Industrial Center (MIC).

Strategies in the Plan will aim to alleviate current flooding, improve water quality in the Puyallup River, and other waterbodies in the center, and protect and recharge the South Tacoma Aquifer. Investments in the street network will improve mobility and enable mode shift with the expansion of the pedestrian, bicycle, and local and regional transit network. This is expected to reduce greenhouse gases and improve air quality.

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. Policies and actions in the Plan support living wage jobs, transportation choices, and cleaner air and water to improve community health.



ALTERNATIVES:

| Alternative(s) | Positive Impact(s) | Negative Impact(s) |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Delay the public hearing. | This option provides more time for Council to consider the Planning Commission Recommendation prior to setting a public hearing. | Delay in setting and conducting the public hearing will likely result in significant delay in overall adoption of the Plan and likelihood that new uses and development are inconsistent with the Plan. |
| 2. Move the hearing to an earlier date. | This option gives the Council more time following the public hearing to consider public testimony prior to adoption. | This option would not meet the requirements of a 45-day public comment period as agreed to in the Intergovernmental Agreement and Work Plan. |

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The Tideflats Subarea Plan will be periodically reviewed and updated as required by the State Growth Management Act.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council set October 28, 2025, as a public hearing on the Tideflats Subarea Plan and related amendments to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and TMC Title 13 and 19.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to setting a public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Letter of Recommendation](#)
- [Findings of Fact and Recommendations](#)
 - [Exhibit 1: Proposed Amendments for Council Consideration](#)
 - [Exhibit 2: Draft Tideflats Subarea Plan](#)
 - [Exhibit 3: One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - [Exhibit 4: TMC Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code](#)
 - [Exhibit 5: TMC Title 19 Shoreline Master Program](#)