



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services *PH*
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee; Ramiro Chavez; Anna Le
PRESENTER: Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: Planning Commission Annual Report for 2023-2024 and Work Program for 2024-2026
DATE: November 20, 2024

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Informational Briefing and Seeking Concurrence.

SUMMARY:

On November 20, 2024, Planning and Development Services staff will present the Planning Commission’s annual report for 2023-2024 and work program for 2024-2026 and seek the Committee’s feedback and concurrence, particularly on the work program.

BACKGROUND:

Section 13.02.040.L of the Tacoma Municipal Code requires the Planning Commission to “develop the work program for the coming year in consultation with the City Council and provide an annual report to the City Council regarding accomplishments and the status of planning efforts undertaken in the previous year.” The attached report highlights the Commission’s accomplishments between July 2023 and June 2024 and outlines planning projects to be carried out or initiated during the timeline of July 2024 through June 2026 or beyond. The attached report was approved by the Planning Commission at their meeting on October 16, 2024.

ISSUE:

Issues pertaining to the planning work program may be identified and discussed during the briefing. As usual, while this work program attempts to best outline the Commission’s planned projects, the work program is subject to future adjustments in response to legislative requirements, community requests, City Council priorities, budget and staffing constraints, or other emerging situations. Staff plans to provide a mid-year check in with the Committee during winter-spring of 2025 on the implementation of the work program.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives to projects and prioritization of projects may be identified and discussed during the briefing.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impacts of projects may be identified and discussed during the briefing.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee acknowledge receipt of the Planning Commission’s annual report for 2023-2024 and concur with the work program for 2024-2026, with suggested revisions, if any.

ATTACHMENT:

Recommended Planning Commission Annual Report for 2023-2024 and Work Program for 2024-2026



Planning Commission

Annual Report 2023-2024 and Work Program 2024-2026

(As Approved by Planning Commission – October 16, 2024)

This report, prepared pursuant to the Tacoma Municipal Code Section 13.02.040.L, highlights the Planning Commission’s accomplishments between July 2023 and June 2024 and outlines the Commission’s work program for the general timeline of July 2024 through December 2026.

Part I. Accomplishments 2023-2024

A. Major Projects Reviewed:

1. Home in Tacoma Project – Phase 2

Home in Tacoma Phase 1, which was recommended by the Commission in May 2021 and adopted by the City Council in December 2021, set the stage for significant changes to Tacoma’s housing growth strategy, policies and programs to increase housing supply, affordability, and choice for current and future residents. The subsequent Home in Tacoma Phase 2 was launched in July 2021 and includes development of zoning, standards, infrastructure actions, and other implementation programs. This includes incorporation of modifications to expand flexibility for home-based and micro-businesses, as requested by the Council in Resolution 41259. The Commission has been reviewing Phase 2 since August 2021, conducted a public scoping hearing in April 2022, and will continue its review through 2023. The Commission finalized our recommendations to Council in June 2024. It is expected that Council will complete its review and adopt the final package in November 2024 (www.cityoftacoma.org/HomeinTacoma)

2. Design Review Program

In early 2019, the City launched an effort to develop a comprehensive Design Review Program to enhance the quality of the built environment throughout the City. The work was put on hold in early 2021 due to staffing changes. New staff were hired in late 2021 and assigned to complete the design guidance documents, develop administrative procedures, prepare land use code amendments, and potentially establish a Design Review Board. The Commission reviewed the project throughout 2022 and 2023 and finalized our recommendations to the City Council in October 2023. The Council adopted the new program and permitting requirements in May 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/UrbanDesign)

3. Neighborhood Planning Program

In response to a desire for more equitable delivery of services and to provide a grassroots response to neighborhoods’ concerns, the City Council provided funding in 2021 for a pilot Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) and permanent funding in the 2022-23 biennial budget. The goal of the NPP is to support neighborhood identity and vitality. The Council also identified McKinley Hill and Proctor as the first two neighborhoods representing different locations on the spectrum of neighborhood development between growth creation and growth management. The first neighborhood plan, in

McKinley, was adopted in March 2023. For the second effort, in Proctor, the Commission provided its recommendations in December 2023 and the Council adopted the Proctor Neighborhood Plan in February 2024. The Commission has also been involved in the South Tacoma Way Neighborhood Plan effort, and is expected to make a recommendation to Council in early 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning)

4. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) – Moratorium and Code Update

On June 28, 2022, the City Council adopted Amended Substitute Resolution No. 40985, approving the Work Plan for the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) Code Amendments. The Council also requested that the Planning Commission evaluate whether a temporary moratorium on heavy industrial uses and storage of hazardous materials within the STGPD is warranted. The Commission made its recommendations regarding the moratorium in August 2022 and the Council adopted the moratorium in March 2023. Additionally, the Commission initiated the project to review the STGPD code provisions. The Commission is expected to make recommendations to Council on the STGPD code in Spring 2025. (www.cityoftacoma.org/MoratoriumSTGPD)

5. College Park Historic Special Review District (resubmittal)

The proposal for the College Park Historic Special Review District was re-submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in March 2023, who then forwarded the nomination to the Planning Commission. In accordance with the Tacoma Municipal Code, the Planning Commission conducted an initial assessment of the application to determine whether the proposal should be accepted for review. In August 2023, the Commission voted to decline to consider the resubmitted application, finding that issues raised during the first review of this proposal and resultant recommendations made by both the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Planning Commission have yet to be implemented. (www.cityoftacoma.org/CollegeParkHD)

6. Local Historic Districts – Moratorium

On June 20, 2023, the Tacoma City Council adopted Resolution No. 41226, directing the Planning Commission to conduct a public process to determine whether a moratorium on local historic district creation is warranted, and if so, to recommend a scope and schedule. The Commission held a public hearing on the potential moratorium and coordinated with the Landmarks Preservation Commission to get their input. The Landmarks Preservation Commission made a recommendation on October 25, 2023 and the Planning Commission finalized its recommendations on November 15, 2023. The Council adopted the Historic District Moratorium in April 2024 (Resolution 41226). ([Local Historic Overlay District Moratorium - City of Tacoma](#))

7. Capital Facilities Program (CFP)

The Commission reviewed the proposed update to the 2025-2030 CFP beginning in March 2024 and conducted a public hearing in June. The Commission finalized its recommendations in July 2024. In addition to recommending adoption of the updated CFP, the Commission also recommended that the City, primarily through the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, continue to work to improve the prioritization process for capital facilities and associated spending to better ensure alignment with the City's goals. It is expected that the Council will adopt the final CFP in late 2024, in coordination with the biennial budget process. ([2025-2026 Biennial Budget Development - City of Tacoma](#))

8. Permit Level of Service Code Update

This proposed code amendment modifies the adopted level of service requirements for various land use permit types and the public notice requirements. This amendment is designed to implement

recently adopted State law – Senate Bill 5290 and House Bill 1105 – which were designed to streamline permitting, increase accountability around permit timelines, and improved clarity in public notices. The Planning Commission completed its review and finalized its recommendations in June 2024. The City Council is expected to make a decision on these code amendments in December 2024.

9. Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS

In recognition of the regional significance of the Tideflats, the City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Fife, and Pierce County have partnered to develop a Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS that would establish a shared, long-term vision and a coordinated approach to addressing development, environmental review, land use, economy, public services and facilities, and transportation in the area. The Commission has received periodic updates since 2019. It is expected that the Tideflats Steering Committee will finalize its recommendation before the end of 2024, at which point the Commission will hold a public hearing in early 2025 before making final recommendations to the Council. (www.cityoftacoma.org/TideflatsPlan)

10. Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS – “Picture Pac Ave”

In recognition of the significance of Pacific Avenue as Pierce County’s first Enhanced Bus Service line, the City of Tacoma, Pierce Transit, and the State Department of Commerce have partnered to fund and develop a subarea plan and programmatic EIS for the 4.5-mile-long portion of Pacific Avenue between I-5 and S. 96th Street. The “Picture Pac Ave” subarea planning process will create a shared long-term vision and more coordinated approach to development, environmental review, and strategic capital investments along the corridor. The Commission began to review the project in June 2022 and will continue its review into 2025, with an expected recommendation coming in mid-2025. (www.cityoftacoma.org/PicturePacAve)

11. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – “One Tacoma”

The Commission initiated review for the state-mandated periodic update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan in early 2023. The Commission began discussions about the general timeline, phases, scope considerations, and potential key projects and priorities. The Commission is expected to make its recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan Update in early 2025, in preparation for a Council decision in mid-2025. (www.cityoftacoma.org/OneTacoma)

B. Meetings Conducted / Attended:

1. Commission Meetings:

The Commission held 20 regular meetings and canceled 4 meetings between July 2023 and June 2024. The Commission also held two special meetings in May/June 2024 to allow additional deliberations on the Home in Tacoma package. The Commission also conducted the following public hearings:

- August 16, 2023 – Urban Design Project Review
- September 20, 2023 – Historic District Moratorium
- March 6, 2024 – Home in Tacoma Phase 2
- June 5, 2024 – Capital Facilities Program 2025-2030
- June 5, 2024 – Permitting Level of Service Code Amendment

2. Community Meetings:

Individual Commissioners have been actively involved in various community groups, meetings, open houses, and events, including but not limited to the following:

- Design Review Project Advisory Group meetings
- Housing Equity Taskforce meetings (jointly with the Human Rights Commission)
- Home in Tacoma Project Informational Meetings
- Tideflats Subarea Planning Project Community Meetings
- Spotlight South Tacoma Community Meetings
- One Tacoma Community Meetings and Events
- McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan Program Events
- Proctor Neighborhood Plan Program Events
- South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan Program Events
- Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC)

In addition, the Commission has formed a joint task force with the Transportation Commission regarding transit-oriented development and to facilitate coordination between the two commissions on key projects, as Council requested in Resolution No. 41195 (adopted May 9, 2023). The Transit-Oriented Development Task Force is meeting on a monthly basis.

C. Membership Status (June 2023 through July 2024):

Council District / Expertise Area	Commissioner	Appointment
District No. 1	Jordan Rash	Appointed in July 2023
District No. 2	Morgan Dorner	Appointed in January 2022 Reappointed in July 2024
District No. 3	Brett Santhuff / Payton Swinford	Commissioner Santhuff served through June 2024 Commissioner Swinford appointed in July 2024
District No. 4	Sandesh Sadalge / <i>Vacant</i>	Appointed in July 2023, resigned in July 2024 <i>Position is currently vacant</i>
District No. 5	Robb Krehbiel	Appointed in January 2022 Reappointed in July 2024
Development Community	Anthony Steele	Appointed in January 2022 Reappointed in July 2023 Elected Vice-Chair in August 2023
Environmental Community	Brett Marlo	Appointed in July 2022
Public Transportation	Christopher Karnes	Appointed in September 2019 Reappointed in July 2023 Elected Vice-Chair in October 2021 Elected Chair in July 2022
Architecture, Historic Preservation, and/or Urban Design	Matthew Martenson	Appointed in July 2022



Planning Commission Work Program (2024-2026)

(As Approved by Planning Commission – October 16, 2024)

The Planning Commission Work Program contains projects and planning activities slated for completion or substantial progress during the general timeframe of July 2024 through December 2026. These projects and activities are primarily mandated by legislation or initiated by the City Council and are within the Commission’s review and recommendation authority. The Work Program is subject to ongoing review and adjustment in response to legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget and staffing constraints, or other emerging situations.

Expected Completion in Remainder of 2024

- **Home in Tacoma Project – Phase 2:** **Council Action November 2024**
 - Zoning, standards, affordability, anti-displacement, infrastructure, and programmatic components (includes zoning-related items from ADU Accelerator discussion, evaluation of shipping containers for housing, etc.)
 - Middle Housing Allowances (House Bill 1110 and House Bill 2321)
 - Home Occupation/Micro-businesses Expansion (Resolution No. 41259)
 - Residential Parking Code Update (Senate Bill 6015)
- **Consolidating Local Permit Review Processes:** **Council Action December 2024**
 - Implementation of State Senate Bill 5290 and House Bill 1105
- **2025-2030 Capital Facilities Program (CFP)** **Council Action December 2024 (with Budget)**

Expected Work Program for 2025 (preliminary)

- **Neighborhood Planning Program – South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan**
- **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Phase 1B (Code Update)**
 - Associated Moratorium (Ordinance 28872)
 - Includes expanded scope (as outlined in the updated Work Plan) to include issues such as impervious surface limitations, trees/landscaping requirements, integration of a Health Impact Assessment, and coordination with other efforts like the Tacoma Water Integrated Resource Plan
- **Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS**
- **GMA Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update:**
 - Key Focus Areas:
 - New Growth Allocations – including factoring in Home in Tacoma, PSRC’s Vision 2050, and State-mandated affordable housing allocations
 - Transportation Master Plan Update – New Functional Elements, Vision Zero, Multi-modal Level of Service standards, Transit planning and coordination

- 15-Minute Neighborhoods (complete, compact and connected)
- Puyallup Tribal Comprehensive Plan – Recognition and coordination
- Historic Preservation Plan – Integration and policy updates, including local historic districts
- South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Policies update
- Public Health, Safety and Equity – Based on Equity Assessment, Community Safety Action Strategy, and Health Impact Assessment pilot program with TPCHD
- Economic Development Element Update – Based on Green Economy Strategy
- Actionable Goals and Performance Measures – To support communications, effectiveness and tracking
- Minor Code Amendments
- **Historic Districts Nomination Process Code Update**
 - Associated Moratorium (Ordinance 28962)
- **Cushman/Adams Substation Reuse Study** (in partnership with TPU)
- **Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)**
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Program Evaluation**
- **Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance Update**
 - Including biodiversity corridors

Expected Work Program for 2026 *(very preliminary)*

- **Enhanced Services Facilities/Special Needs Housing Code Update**
 - Per Resolution 41311
- **Marijuana Equity Program Code Update**
 - Implementation of State Senate Bill 5080
- **High-Density Residential Zoning Update**
 - To ensure consistency with Home in Tacoma’s new residential zoning structure
- **Parking Update**
 - Including Reduced Parking Area, refinements along expanded light rail, mixed-use centers, and outstanding issues from Home in Tacoma
- **Landscaping/Tree Code Improvements**
 - Including consistency with recent updates, such as Home in Tacoma and STGPD, enhanced flexibility, planting guidelines, tree preservation (in coordination with ES)
- **Mixed-Use Centers Code Updates**
 - Including Core/Pedestrian Street review and height bonus program
- **Commercial Zoning Update – Phase 2**
- **2026 Amendment Package**
 - Including private applications (application deadline 7/31/2025)
- **2027-2032 Capital Facilities Program (CFP)**
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Additional Planning Efforts** (pending program evaluation and budget consideration)
- **South Tacoma Economic Green Zone – Subarea Plan** *(pending budget consideration)*

Other Notable Upcoming Projects

- **Home in Tacoma 3-Year Review – To be completed in 2027**
- **Shoreline Master Program Update – Required by State to be completed by 2029**
- **New Climate Element for the Comprehensive Plan – Required by State to be completed by 2029**
 - Including updated ADA Transition Plan, Climate Resiliency sub-element, Emergency Response and Management, Greenhouse Gas and Reduction Plan)
- **Mid-Cycle (5-year) Comprehensive Plan Review – Required by State to be completed by 2029**

On-going Planning Issues

- Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program
- Joint Planning Commission/Transportation Commission TOD Task Force (per Council Resolution)
- Joint Meetings of the Planning Commission with appropriate groups (e.g., the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Transportation Commission, and Community Council)
- Transportation Master Plan Implementation, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., impact fees study, transportation network planning, streetscape design guidance, such as Tacoma Ave., signature trails development, etc.)
- Light Rail Expansion projects (including the Hilltop Links to Opportunity Program, ST3 Tacoma Dome Link Extension, Tacoma-TCC Link Extension, Sounder Station Access Improvements, etc.)
- Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan, Stream System Expansion Study (SSES) and Pacific Avenue BRT Project
- Citizen Participation, Notification, Language Access, and Public Outreach Enhancements
- Proactive Equity/Social Justice/Anti-Racism integration in policies and programs
- Schuster Corridor Trail
- Subarea Plan Implementation – North Downtown, South Downtown, Hilltop, and Tacoma Mall Neighborhood
- McKinley Neighborhood Plan implementation and tracking
- Proctor Neighborhood Plan implementation and tracking
- South Tacoma Way Neighborhood Plan implementation and tracking
- Home in Tacoma implementation and tracking
- Urban Design Program implementation and tracking
- Urban Forestry implementation and tracking
- Economic Development implementation and tracking
- Fossil Fuel Tracking and Council Reporting
- Historic Preservation, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (e.g., Historic TDR, integration of Historic Preservation Plan with *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan, historic districts process and standards, preservation incentive tools, educational programs, etc.)

Regional and Cross-Jurisdictional Issues

- Regional Transportation Issues, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., Tacoma LINK and Central LINK Light Rail Expansions, Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan and BRT Project)
- PSRC Regional Centers Framework Update, Vision 2050 implementation, GMA review

- PCRC County-Wide Planning Policies, County-level Centers Update, Population Allocations, Buildable Lands, Annexations and Pre-Annexation Planning
- Regional/Countywide Climate planning and coordination (Pierce County Climate Collaborative)
- Tribal Planning Coordination

Emerging Issues

These items are generally not integrated into the current work program and are dependent on future program space, priorities, funding, etc. Additionally, staff and the Commission regularly look for opportunities to integrate these items into other, larger projects when appropriate. These are listed in no particular order.

- Health Impact Assessments *(in partnership with TPCHD, after review of pilot)*
- Corridor Plans, focused on TOD corridor planning, such as Portland Avenue, 6th Avenue, and 19th Street (19th Street is a particular priority to support and ensure coordination with the planned Sound Transit TCC light rail extension)
- Station-Area Planning, such as Portland Avenue/I-5 area and “Four Corners” at James Center/TCC Mixed-Use Center (Portland Avenue/I-5 is a particular priority to support and ensure coordination with the upcoming Sound Transit Tacoma Dome Link Extension project)
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy and code review *(potentially coming out of Crime Prevention Plan)*
- Potential Local Historic Districts *(coordinated with LPC)*
- Street Typology and Designation System Review
- Wildfire Adaptation and Mitigation *(from Sustainable Tacoma Commission)*
- Urban Heat Island review/considerations *(from Sustainable Tacoma Commission)*
- Parks and Open Space Planning *(in coordination with MetroParks Tacoma and Tacoma School District)*
- Subarea Plan review/updates – North Downtown, South Downtown, Hilltop and Tacoma Mall Neighborhood (including street designation review)
- Sign Code Update
- Pre-Annexation Planning – Browns Point/Dash Point, Parkland/Spanaway *(with Pierce County)*
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program review
- SENCO SNAP review/integration
- Unified Development Code
- Institutional Master Plans
- “Dark Sky” lighting standards (from JBLM AICUZ study)
- Trail-Oriented Design Standards
- Zoning Code conversion to web-based, linked format