



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update
DATE: May 7, 2025

OVERVIEW:

On May 13, 2025, Planning and Development Services and Public Works staff will present an overview of the proposed One Tacoma Plan, including the Transportation and Mobility Plan and Minor Code Amendments, as recommended by the Tacoma Planning Commission. This presentation is in preparation for a resolution during the City Council meeting on May 13, 2025, setting June 3, 2025, as a public hearing on the Planning Commission's recommended One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code.

The Planning Commission completed its review of the One Tacoma Plan update through a public process including a public hearing on March 5, 2025. Pursuant to Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.02, the City Council is required to conduct a public hearing before enacting any amendments to the [Comprehensive Plan and the TMC](#).

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan guides a community's development over the long term and describes how the community's vision for the future will be achieved. In short, it's a blueprint for the future of the city. It guides decisions on land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, parks, and the environment. It also sets standards for roads and other infrastructure, identifies how they'll be paid for, and establishes the basis for zoning and development regulations. The plan takes a long-range perspective on topics that address the physical, social, environmental, and economic health of the city. Plan guidance is intentionally general, providing broad policy direction. The policy guidance established in the plan will be translated into action through specific implementation programs or regulatory actions developed by the City to fulfill the Plan's direction. This Plan is also a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions, and offering a framework for the consideration of policy changes.

PLANNING MANDATES

The [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington State. The GMA requires the fastest-growing jurisdictions, including the City of Tacoma, to plan and develop policies and regulations to guide future growth, including addressing land use, housing, transportation, natural resources and critical environmental assets, and other topics. These policies are collectively referred to as the Comprehensive Plan for the jurisdiction.

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 Comprehensive Plan update will include a review and update to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of Vision 2050.

WHAT IS IN TACOMA’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

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)
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)
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In accordance with TMC 13.05.030.D, the Planning Commission may also recommend to the City Council amendments to the land use regulations in order to implement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Procedures for amendments or supplements to the land use regulations shall be the same as those specified for development regulations in subsection 13.05.030.B.

The proposed amendments are considered to be minor in that they do not suggest substantive or policy-level changes to code. They are intended to correct minor errors, address inconsistencies, keep information current, and clarify and improve provisions that, through implementation of the Plan and the code, are found to be unclear or not fully meeting their intent.

TENTATIVE NEXT STEPS

Target 2025 Dates	Meeting	Milestone
May 13	City Council	Study Session + Resolution to set the public hearing
June 3	City Council	Public Hearing
June 10	City Council	Study Session - Debrief First Reading of Ordinance
June 17	City Council	Final Reading of Ordinance
June/July	Puget Sound Regional Council	Certification Submittal

DOCUMENT LINKS:

The Planning Commission's Letter of Recommendation, Findings of Fact, and proposed Comprehensive Plan, Transportation and Mobility Plan, and Minor Code Amendments are all available for public review at the following webpage: www.cityoftacoma.org/onetacoma.

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