



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Elliott Barnett, Associate Planner, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance–Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and EIS – May 8, 2018
DATE: April 19, 2018

SUMMARY:

An ordinance adopting the proposed Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and associated area-wide zoning reclassifications, zoning and design standards, and implementation strategies, as recommended by the Planning Commission and the City Council’s Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan supports the City’s strategic policy priorities:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Foster a vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.
- Cultivate a vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

The Tacoma Mall Neighborhood of approximately 575 acres is a planned hub for jobs and housing growth and includes regional retail destinations, a broad range of businesses, civic and governmental institutions, and a growing resident population. The neighborhood is a Regional Growth Center (RGC) designated in VISION 2040, the Puget Sound region’s growth, economic, and transportation strategy, and in One Tacoma, the City of Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to the State Growth Management Act (GMA) and VISION 2040, the City must develop a subarea plan for the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood to set the stage for the needed Federal, State, and regional funding and implementation actions to anticipate, support, and guide long-term community growth and development within the RGC.

Through a multi-year community involvement and collaborative process, the Planning Commission has completed development of the draft Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan (“Subarea Plan”), and after conducting a public hearing on September 6, 2017, forwarded the draft Subarea Plan to the City Council on October 18, 2017. On February 28, 2018, the City Council’s Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) Committee completed its review of the draft Subarea Plan and forwarded it to the City Council with certain modifications.

The Subarea Plan, as recommended by the Planning Commission and the IPS Committee, includes the following key aspects:

- Expansion of the Regional Growth Center (RGC), and area-wide rezones to promote mixed-use development;
- Zoning and design standard changes to enhance urban form, facilitate effective transitions, improve the pedestrian environment and promote affordable housing;
- Area-wide green stormwater strategy and 25 percent tree canopy target;

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- Area-wide transportation strategy including capital investments, expanded transit service and connectivity requirements with major development;
- Parks and open space strategy to support urban form, livability and environmental goals;
- Coordinated infrastructure and services provision, and streamlined environmental review; and
- Collaborative implementation steps by public agencies, residents, businesses and the community.

The City issued a non-project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on November 3, 2017, which concludes that the Subarea Plan is the preferred alternative due to its environmental and community benefits and coordinated approach to mitigating development impacts. The upfront environmental determination streamlines future City review of proposed development that is consistent with the Subarea Plan. Further, on March 29, 2018, the City issued an Addendum to said FEIS to address the modifications made by the IPS Committee in February 2018.

The Subarea Plan, proposed to be adopted as an element of the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, will provide innovative planning and policy interventions to help the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood achieve its potential as a thriving, livable, walkable and transit-ready urban neighborhood. The Subarea Plan, area-wide zoning reclassifications, zoning and design standards, and implementation strategies, will also serve as effective tools to facilitate the fulfillment of important community goals including Health and Safety, Human and Social Needs, Economy Vibrancy and Employment, Natural and Built Environment, and Arts and Cultural Vitality, that are set forth in Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma’s Citywide Strategic Plan and Vision. The draft Subarea Plan, zoning and standard changes, streetscape design guidelines, and environmental documents are on file at the City Clerk’s Office and available at the PDS Department and online at www.tacomamallneighborhood.com.

ISSUE:

Key issues raised by citizens and stakeholders during the planning process included bike and pedestrian improvements, parks and open space, transportation connectivity with private development, zoning and building heights, affordable housing, townhouse design, economic development, public health and safety, and green infrastructure opportunities. Issues raised by the IPS Committee during its review included the boundaries of the RGC, mandatory affordable housing, zoning and building height in the Madison district, the green streets strategy, and the regulatory approach to connectivity. At the April 24th Study Session, staff will summarize key themes of public input heard to date.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council has the discretion to take final action to approve or modify the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council is recommended to adopt the Subarea Plan and associated area-wide zoning reclassifications, zoning and design standards, and implementation strategies, as recommended by the Planning Commission and the IPS Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Subarea Plan includes a comprehensive package of actions by the City, other public agencies and the community. For example, the plan calls for capital investments totaling over \$100 million through the year 2040, and calls for the City to consider the development of a new funding mechanism to facilitate these projects. More broadly, the plan is intended to promote jobs and housing growth, which promises a range of economic benefits to the neighborhood and the City as a whole.