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**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services *PA*  
Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services  
Lauren Hoogkamer, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services  
**SUBJECT:** South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan  
**DATE:** May 6, 2025

At the study session on May 13, 2025, Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) staff will present a program update and [final draft of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan](#). Community members from the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan Steering Group will also be present to share their experience of the participatory planning process with the City Council. Staff are seeking feedback in anticipation of a resolution to adopt the Plan at the City Council meeting on June 10, 2025. Program staff have been working with the South Tacoma neighborhood since January 2024. Staff have worked with community to prepare the draft Plan and actions for final review and adoption by the City Council.

**PLAN DETAILS:**

On April 16, 2025, the Planning Commission voted to recommend the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan to City Council. At that meeting, staff walked through a summary of the Plan goals and recommendations, which include:

1. **Transportation, Mobility, and Connectivity:**
  - Safe Streets – Increase safety on South Tacoma streets by reducing dangerous vehicle activity impacting drivers, pedestrians, people riding bikes, and property.
  - Walkability & Connectivity – Safely and comfortably connect South Tacoma residents to amenities and the rest of the city by improving infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling (i.e., wheelchair, stroller), and transit network and service.
2. **Health and Environment:**
  - Healthy, Sustainable Environment – Create a sustainable, healthy, resilient, thriving community with clean air and water, a healthy tree canopy, and access to health and wellness facilities.
3. **Economic Opportunity and Development:**
  - Active Neighborhood Center – Further activate the neighborhood center, reduce barriers for small and diverse businesses and strengthen community capacity to support daily needs, new amenities, and community events for all ages.
  - Socially Responsible Development – Safely and comfortably connect South Tacoma residents to amenities and the rest of the city by improving infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling (i.e., wheelchair, stroller), and transit network and service.
  - Green Economic Opportunity – Encourage development of green industry and living-wage jobs while limiting community impacts of industrial development.
4. **Sense of Place and Community:**
  - Inviting, Accessible, Beautiful – Enhance and showcase South Tacoma to create an inviting, safe, accessible, beautiful neighborhood for all to enjoy.



- Celebrating History & Identities – Celebrate the neighborhood’s many histories and community identities; ensure broad, equitable participation in neighborhood decisions.
  - Sense of Community & Gathering – Foster a safe public realm by creating a healthy, clean, well-cared for spaces for all ages to gather, reflect, connect, and enjoy.
5. **Affordability:**
- Affordable Community – Ensure access to affordable and diverse services and housing, including for renters, a mix of incomes, support for people experiencing homelessness, and opportunities to build generational wealth through home ownership.

The Plan also includes specific actions that support each of these goals, a summary of how these recommendations support and/or implement other key City policy documents, a summary of community engagement, and a detailed plan for implementation.

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan includes numerous proposed implementation activities and improvements, which will require the partnership of multiple internal and external groups and significant resources, as they become available. Several of the proposed actions will be accomplished with existing allocated funding, such as an urban forestry plan and tree-planting implementation for South Tacoma streets; signature family-friendly community events; and support for the business district for studying a business improvement area. Other actions will require additional efforts and future funding, which will be dependent on identifying a combination of grants, other partnership funds, and allocating additional City resources at the City Council's discretion. The engagement and planning phases are now complete, and we are in the implementation planning phase to identify projects that can be moved forward by partners before the program sunsets at the end of June 2025.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2021, the City Council provided funding for the NPP in response to feedback from the Planning Commission, a desire for more equitable delivery of service, and to provide a grassroots response to neighborhoods’ concerns and vision for the future. The goal of the NPP is to implement a neighborhood’s short-term goals while building capacity for larger efforts. Due to the recent budget reductions, the program will sunset as of the end of June 2025. The City will not be pursuing additional Neighborhood Plans at this time and Planning and Development Services staff will not be actively managing implementation of the existing plans. Staff from the NPP will continue to support Planning and Development Services’ broader communications and engagement efforts while also sharing lessons learned from the NPP.

The initial focus of neighborhood planning was on the City’s adopted Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers, with McKinley as the first, Proctor as the second, and South Tacoma as the third plan. Neighborhood plans support implementation of City of Tacoma policies and plans, including Vision 2050; Tacoma 2025; the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Transportation and Mobility Plan, and the Vision Zero Action Plan; the Climate Action Plan; the Affordable Housing Action Strategy; and the Equity and Empowerment Framework.



The Planning Commission and has provided a letter of recommendation to the City Council. The plan is also supported by Council Members Bushnell and Scott, who provided the welcome letter and participated throughout the planning process.

For more information about the Neighborhood Planning Program, please visit [Cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning](http://Cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning). For questions, please contact Lauren Hoogkamer at (253) 591-5254 or [LHoogkamer@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:LHoogkamer@cityoftacoma.org).

**LINKS:**

[South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan Executive Summary](#)

[South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan Final Draft](#)

**ATTACHMENT:**

Recommendation Letter from Planning Commission, dated April 16, 2025



City of Tacoma  
Planning Commission

Christopher Karnes, Chair  
Anthony Steele, Vice-Chair  
Morgan Dörner  
Robb Krehbiel  
Brett Marlo  
Matthew Martenson  
Jordan Rash  
Payton Swinford

April 16, 2025

Mayor Victoria Woodards  
City of Tacoma  
747 Market Street  
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a recommendation for the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan (Plan). As you know, the Planning Commission duties include developing and updating the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan and supporting programs that implement it, such as the Neighborhood Planning Program (Program). With the sunset of this program anticipated at the end of June 2025, we hope that Council will continue to champion the Plan recommendations. We are excited to see how many of the *One Tacoma* goals can be implemented through the Plan in a tailored approach that fits the community's needs. Through our comments in this letter, the Planning Commission finds that the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the existing elements of *One Tacoma* and aligns with the latest draft of the Comprehensive Plan update, and, therefore, recommends adoption by the City Council.

**Coordination:** The South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan aligns with the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan in its support for the core values of Opportunity, Equity, Partnerships and Accountability, also identified in *Tacoma 2025*. Program staff coordinated with both internal (City departments) and external partners, including the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Parks Tacoma, Pierce Transit, Tacoma Housing Authority, Pierce Transit, Tacoma Public Schools and other relevant agencies and organizations, to ensure that all Plan recommendations are actionable and aligned with other strategic priorities and ongoing policy updates. These partnerships have been documented in the Plan, and we particularly appreciate Council Members Bushnell's and Scott's participation.

**Equitable Engagement and Community Capacity-Building:** The Plan responds to the City's *Equity and Empowerment Framework*, *Antiracism Resolution No. 40622*, and *One Tacoma's* Engagement, Administration, and Implementation goals. Equitable community engagement was a driving force behind the creation of the Plan, and staff worked closely with community members to co-create the community engagement process and Plan. In addition to an active neighborhood steering group, staff gathered input from over 1,300 "engagements," including survey responses, focus group participation, and event attendance. Outreach efforts included collaboration with the City's Language Access and Ambassadors program to engage Ukrainian, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Khmer, and Korean speakers; outreach to youth, seniors, and renters; and close coordination with the South Tacoma Business District. The Planning Commission encourages this effort to proactively engage communities that are not typically represented in planning processes.

The Plan's five major goals (below) are centered on shared community values with the aim of enriching South Tacoma's neighborhood livability, equity, and resilience as a diverse neighborhood that is safe, healthy, comfortable, and connected. The Plan's vision centers ways to:

- Support neighborhood business district vibrancy with amenities, events, gathering spaces, and business assistance.
- Encourage compatibility between industrial and neighboring areas and green industry to help the City and region become more sustainable.
- Increase housing and commercial space affordability so that the neighborhood is welcoming to new residents and businesses.
- Improve safety, health, comfort, and connectivity in South Tacoma by reducing dangerous vehicle activity, improving air quality, increasing urban tree canopy, enhancing the public realm, supporting transit service improvements, and building more walking and biking connections throughout the neighborhood.

**1. Transportation, Mobility, and Connectivity:** Tacoma's *Transportation and Mobility Plan* (TMP) puts forth a vision and plan on how to maintain, update, and grow multimodal transportation options in the city, including improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and ADA-compliant arterial crossings in high-pedestrian areas like Neighborhood Business Districts. In addition, the *Vision Zero Action Plan* (VZAP) commits the City of Tacoma to eliminate traffic deaths by 2035. The Plan recommendations are aligned with the priorities outlined in the updated TMP and the VZAP and identify a unique opportunity to implement Public Works' Road Safety Audit recommendations.

**2. Health and Environment:** The Planning Commission supports a healthy and sustainable community through an integrated and holistic consideration of environmental quality, economic vitality, and social equity. Watershed functions, open space lands, air and water quality, tree canopy and urban forest, climate change, and preservation and restoration of Tacoma's environmental assets were all key elements identified by the community for this Plan. The Plan seeks to further these goals through coordination with the Depave and Urban Forestry programs, as well as through alignment with the *Climate Action Plan*, South Tacoma Ground Water Protection District Code Updates and the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council's proposed Economic Green Zone.

**3. Economic Opportunity and Development:** As South Tacoma grows, there is a desire to balance an active neighborhood center, socially responsible development, and green economic opportunity. *One Tacoma* includes goals for addressing urban design considerations at the scale of neighborhood patterns, systems of connectivity, open space, and health and sustainability. Mixed-Use Centers are the core of the Comprehensive Plan's growth and development strategy, and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers were the initial focus of the Program. This and the following goal are also aligned with the Complete Neighborhood goals in the drafted Comprehensive Plan update.

**4. Sense of Place and Community:** The Planning Commission supports the Plan's goals of making South Tacoma inviting, accessible, and beautiful, celebrating diverse histories and identities, and maintaining a sense of community and gathering spaces for all ages. The Plan supports the City's Economic Development goal of supporting small businesses and historic preservation, and Recreation and Urban Form goals by creating healthy, unique,

accessible, connected spaces in the public realm. The South Tacoma community's recommendations for more inclusive, equitable, and trauma-informed engagement have already been incorporated into the updated draft Comprehensive Plan under review.

- 5. Affordability:** The Plan recommends strategies to ensure access to affordable and diverse housing for renters, a mix of incomes, and people experiencing homelessness, as well as opportunities to build generational wealth through home ownership, which supports the Affordable Housing Action Strategy and the recently adopted Home in Tacoma housing code updates. Community members in South Tacoma also expressed a desire for neighborhood capacity-building and better access to assistance and affordable essential resources for youth and families.

**Implementation and Long-Term Maintenance:** A key component of both *One Tacoma* and *Tacoma 2025* is accountability and transparency in the equitable delivery of services. The Planning Commission has long advocated for increased engagement, community capacity-building, and City response to community-identified issues. We thank the full Council for supporting implementation through the last budget, but we would also like to express our concerns about the sunset of this Program and the future lack of Program staff to support implementation of the One Tacoma goals across the City, as well as the continued relationship-building within the community. Commissioners recognized that this program is very meaningful to everyone who participated in it and provides the kind of thoughtful, equitable, and actionable work that improves our neighborhoods and relationships with community. As a Commission, we would like to advocate for funding the Program again in the future, or, at the very least, maintaining the Booster Grants to help support implementation of community-led priorities.

We particularly appreciate the team's diligent community engagement and their focus on developing multimodal transportation options connecting neighborhood centers to the City's regional growth center. These efforts have been recognized by multiple awards including:


- 2023 PAW/APA Excellence in Planning Award for Implementation: McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan
- 2023 Governor's Smart Communities Award for Smart Equity Strategies: McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan
- 2024 Healthy Communities Award: McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan Implementation: McKinley Overlook
- 2025 PAW/APA Excellence in Planning Award for Community Involvement: South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this recommendation.

Sincerely,



Christopher Karnes, Chair  
Tacoma Planning Commission



Anthony Steele, Vice-Chair  
Tacoma Planning Commission

Enclosure: South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan (Final Draft)