



# ONE TACOMA

## Long-Range Planning Public Engagement Plan 2018 Amendments



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## Introduction

### **The Purpose of Public Engagement**

Often, when people think about planning, they focus on the things – the buildings, the streets, the green space, the roads, the transit. But planning is really about people – these are the communities we call home: Where we go to work every day, where our families will grow, and hopefully, where they'll prosper. And where we'll connect with one another.

As a result, the planning process must also be grounded in the needs of people, the locales where they live and work, and the broader community. It's where what we can do connects with how we live, work, travel, and grow. And in order to understand the values and aspirations of a broader community or specific neighborhood, city, or locale, we need to engage the people from that context in that discussion.

People are experts in assessing the long-term needs of their personal experiences and interactions with the places they live and work. This public engagement plan recognizes people as full and equal partners in the city's decision-making processes at all levels. Specifically, it outlines the responsibilities and commitments of the Planning Services Division to engage the public and key constituencies in city planning.

### **Equity in Engagement**

Decisions are better—more equitable, resilient, and accountable—when all interested parties are involved in considering the issues and weighing in on decisions. Collaborative and inclusive community participation are essential to supporting Tacoma's core values of opportunity, equity, partnerships and accountability, as well to as creating and sustaining a prosperous, healthy and equitable Tacoma.

The city's commitment to diverse and inclusive public engagement is demonstrated by the Equity and Empowerment Initiative framework, which was adopted by City Council in September 2015 (see page 12). The framework has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and the goals and plans of this engagement plan are designed to be consistent with the framework.

### **Diverse Methods for Engagement**

In order to consider all community members' needs and concerns, particular efforts must be made to improve communication with traditionally under-represented and under-served groups, including low-income communities and communities of color. Meaningful engagement is inclusive of voices in our community that may have been historically marginalized and excluded. Consistent with the City's core values and vision for government performance, deep and inclusive community involvement is essential to transparency and equity in long-range planning decisions. It also makes it possible to create and work towards a shared vision for the future.

Tacoma is committed to authentic public engagement and recognizes that the complexity and changing character of planning issues, technology and the city itself requires thoughtful innovation to ensure inclusive and equitable community engagement. Increasingly diverse demographics, as well as past failures to fully engage all members of the community, point to the need for new

approaches to citizen engagement that promote inclusive participation. Changes in communication technology allow, and even require, the city to offer new avenues for engagement, and hopefully, collaboration. Finally, the city's natural and built character and infrastructure are constantly evolving and continually require citizen input. The following goals, from the One Tacoma Plan, challenge City staff to assess current practices and develop new tools through an ongoing evaluation and improvement of public engagement methods.

### Goals of the Engagement Process

**GOAL AD-1** Engage the interests of the entire community in planning for the future.

**GOAL AD-2** Build and sustain robust partnerships with individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, institutions and other government agencies.

**GOAL AD-3** Ensure that city decision-making processes are clear and transparent, with good understanding from the community about who is responsible for making decisions and how community input is taken into account.

**GOAL AD-4** Implement Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan in accordance with state law and in the best interests of City residents.

**GOAL AD-5** Implement Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan in a coordinated and efficient manner by City officials, staff and partners.

### Planning Framework

#### Growth Management

Adopted in 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires municipalities to plan for accommodating growth and grants counties, in consultation with cities, the authority to assign growth allocations for population and employment. In general, GMA goals support focused growth in designated urban centers with adequate infrastructure, while preserving the rural area around the urban centers. The GMA identifies specific requirements for comprehensive plans, focused primarily on the required land use, housing, transportation, utilities and capital facilities elements. The City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan has been prepared and adopted in accordance with the requirements of the GMA.

#### VISION 2040

VISION 2040 is the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) vision and strategy for accommodating the five million people and three million jobs that are



Metropolitan Cities in King, Pierce, Kitsap and Snohomish counties. Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, VISION 2040

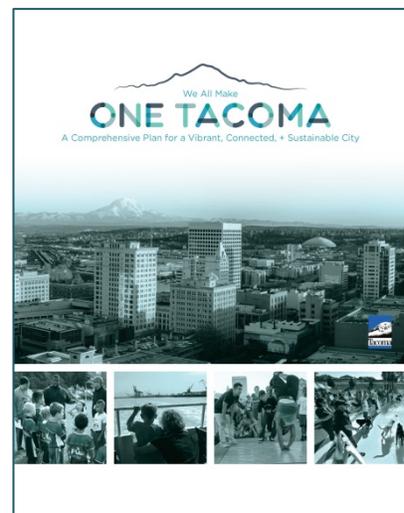
expected to be present in the Puget Sound region by 2040, while promoting the “well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment.” The Tacoma Comprehensive Plan was developed to advance the overall direction established by *VISION 2040*.

*VISION 2040* designates Tacoma as one of five Metropolitan Cities in the region. As a Metropolitan City, Tacoma is to serve as a focal point for accommodating forecast growth and helping to relieve development pressure on rural and natural resource lands. By planning for future population, housing and employment that align with *VISION 2040* targets, the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan seeks to fulfill its role and responsibility as a Metropolitan City. At the same time, the Comprehensive Plan seeks to ensure that the vision for Tacoma’s character, services and quality of life are maintained and enhanced as the city grows. Accordingly, the Plan supports allocation of resources where the greatest amount of growth is forecast.

### **One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan**

A comprehensive plan guides a community’s development over the long term, addresses the entire community and describes how the community’s vision for the future is to be achieved. In short, it’s a blueprint for the future character 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, and economic health of the City. Plan guidance is intentionally general, providing broad policy direction. Policy guidance established in the plan will be translated into action through specific implementation programs or regulatory actions developed by the City to fulfill plan direction. A plan is also a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions, and offering a framework for the consideration of policy changes.



## **2016 – 2018 Work Program**

### **Background**

Tacoma is the second largest city in the Puget Sound region and the most important business employment center in the South Sound region. Over the past two decades, Tacoma has seen a significant renaissance, with substantial reinvestment in the downtown and increased growth and vitality in the city’s eclectic neighborhoods. Recognizing Tacoma’s role in the region, the Puget Sound Regional Council designated Tacoma as a Metropolitan City, serving as Pierce County’s civic, cultural and economic hub and a focal point for future population and employment growth.

With the adoption of the One Tacoma Plan in 2015, the City’s 2017-2018 work program is focused on implementing the goals and policies of the Plan through area-wide rezones, development

regulation updates, ongoing management of public investments in infrastructure, and coordination with the plans and investments of other agencies, to ensure that growth happens in a beneficial, healthy, and sustainable way.

Given the City's growth targets, it is expected that a greater share of Tacoma's housing development will be of a more intensive and dense housing style, predominantly multi-family, and occurring in the City's designated mixed-use centers and along transit corridors. As the City's market shifts and more projects become feasible, how the City manages the ongoing impacts of that growth will become an even greater concern among our neighborhoods. Markets, however, are uneven, and certain neighborhoods in the city are more likely to experience this shift before others. In some neighborhoods, like the Proctor District, these conversations are happening today as the first large-scale, mixed-use projects enter the market.

An important consideration for the Public Engagement Plan is that often more community members engage in the development review and permit process as opposed to the long-range planning process. As a result, many residents and business owners are unaware of the adopted plans and policies that establish the legal framework for reviewing and permitting new development activity.

A critical component of the engagement strategy, then, must be to educate the public with regard to how the planning and development process works, what information is used, how decisions are made, what opportunities the public has to comment and participate, and how the City assesses and manages the ongoing impacts from growth and development. This information, and a strong community understanding of the Planning and Development process, will help to facilitate a more active, aware, and engaged citizenry. As a result, staff is proposing to conduct a Planning and Development Forum (see page 7) that will provide an inter-departmental overview of the plan and development process.

### **Project Summary**

The 2016-2018 Public Engagement Plan will be used to coordinate overall public involvement in the 2018 Amendment, which tentatively includes the following projects:

1. Private Applications
  - Private plan and code amendments will be accepted. Applications are still to be determined.
2. Future Land Use Implementation (area-wide rezones)
  - This project will include area-wide rezones to rectify inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan and the City's Zoning Districts. This will also include an evaluation and potential adoption of a new institutional zoning district.
3. Commercial Zoning Update
  - This project will evaluate the development patterns in the City's existing, non-center commercial zoning districts and update development standards for these areas. This may include the evaluation and adoption of a new commercial zoning district.
4. Open Space Corridors/Steep Slopes

- This project will evaluate site development standards for designated open space corridors and steep slopes.
5. Downtown Plan Integration with Subarea Plans
    - This project will improve the consistency between the Downtown Element and the adopted subarea plans.
  6. Mixed-use Center Core Pedestrian Streets
    - This project will evaluate the use restrictions along designated core-pedestrian streets and recommend amendments to the use allowances or the extent of the core pedestrian street designation.
  7. JLUS Study Implementation
    - This project will evaluate strategies for airport compatibility based on the recommendations of the Joint Land Use Study.
  8. Institutional Campus Zoning Review
    - The Institutional Campus Zoning review will assess zoning changes, special use restrictions, additional development standards, or new administrative procedures to ensure that new or expansion of existing major campus institutions successfully implement the goals and policies of the One Tacoma Plan.
  9. Plan and Code Cleanups
    - This project will correct errors, improve clarity, and address other plan and code cleanup actions that improve the overall functionality of the Plan and Code.

These projects and activities are primarily mandated by legislation or initiated by the City Council and are within the Planning Commission's review and recommendation authority. The Planning Work Program is subject to change, in response to changing conditions and factors, such as legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget constraints, staffing resources, and emergency situations.

It is important to note that these projects represent only those efforts that are expected to be adopted as part of the 2018 Amendment. Other initiatives may proceed on independent schedules and outreach and engagement for those projects will be undertaken separately, though where there are opportunities to coordinate with this engagement plan, joint efforts will be undertaken.

### **Other Projects and Initiatives**

The following projects are part of the Planning Work Program but are likely to proceed on a separate schedule and under a separate public process. Please visit [www.cityoftacoma.org/planning](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/planning) to learn more.

1. Historic Demolition Review
2. Unified Development Code
3. Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan
4. Residential Infill Pilot Program
5. Hilltop Links to Opportunity

## **Opportunities for Engagement**

### **Neighborhood and Business Groups**

The project team will meet with Neighborhood Councils, Business Districts, and other neighborhood and business groups, to talk about the process upon request and seek their input. Staff will ensure that interested groups are made aware of project proposals and milestones, offer opportunities for submitting comments and attend community group meetings at key milestones.



### **Public Hearing and Comment Period(s)**

Community members will have an opportunity to provide comments and testimony directly to the Planning Commission and City Council during the legislative process. In addition, both the Commission and Council accept comments at all meetings that pertain to items on that evenings agenda.

### **Planning and Development Forum**

At least four Planning and Development Forums will be held to provide information to interested stakeholders and the general public regarding the way in which development and development impacts are reviewed and considered, from long-range planning, permitting, to construction and ongoing management. Other subject matter will include the information staff utilizes in development plans and reviewing permits, opportunities for citizen involvement, and how citizen comments are utilized. These forums will be a joint effort involving multiple City departments, including Planning and Development Services, Public Works, and Environmental Services.



### **Technical Advisory Group**

A Technical Advisory Group, representing diverse environmental and development interests, may be formed to provide technical and scientific expertise to the best available science review and code development for geologically hazardous areas.



### **Map-app Survey**

An online map-based survey will be utilized to gauge use and design preferences in the City's commercially zoning districts.

### **Map-app Comment Form**

An online map-app will be used to solicit public comments on proposed zoning during the Planning Commission public comment period.

## Walking Tours

Walking tours will be utilized to engage with citizens and to provide context on how proposed zoning and development standards would apply in specific areas. Sites for walking tours will be identified during the process and through community comments and outreach.

## Farmers' Markets

Use and commercial design surveys, project descriptions, and upcoming meeting dates will be distributed at Farmer's Markets throughout the City. Use and development preferences will be actively solicited at the booths.

## Citizen Advisory Bodies

The City of Tacoma utilizes a diverse set of citizen boards, commissions and committees to advise on topics ranging from land use issues to transportation, landmarks, the arts, parking, human rights and human services, among many others. These boards are comprised of volunteers who commit their time and expertise to serving the City and the residents of Tacoma. Staff will actively engage with these groups to provide information on ongoing projects, solicit feedback, and encourage collaboration among staff and community members with diverse interests.

## Partner Agencies

The City of Tacoma is not the sole provider of services within the City of Tacoma. We work collaboratively with multiple agencies to ensure that plans, investments and actions are aligned and that all of the needs of our citizens are met. These partner agencies include the Tacoma School District, Metro Parks Tacoma, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and the Port of Tacoma, among others. Staff will actively notify and engage these agencies throughout the process.

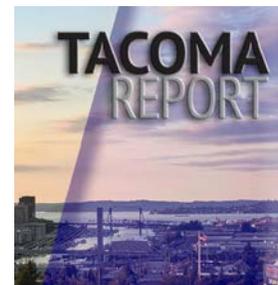
## Tools for Notification

### Website

Planning Services will maintain a calendar of events, project updates, advisory group meeting summaries and project documents on the PDS web site.

### Mailing

An electronic mailing list will be used to provide updates to interested parties regarding meetings, events and new products. Hard copy notices of important events such as public hearings will be mailed to interested parties. Utility mailings or other community newsletters may be used to disseminate information to a broader audience that includes tenants as well as property owners.



## **Media**

Announcements for key events and document releases will be distributed to local media outlets including the Daily Index and The News Tribune, neighborhood newspapers and other outlets.

## **Social Media**

Facebook and Twitter will be used to announce project news and promote and document events. Social Media will also be used to make connections to similar efforts, organizations and individuals in Tacoma.

## **Decision Making Process**

### **Planning Commission**

The Tacoma Planning Commission is a nine member citizen's advisory body responsible for advising the City Council on all land use matters. The Commission's meetings are open to the public and advertised on the City's website. The Commission will make a formal recommendation to the City Council.

### **City Council**

Final decisions regarding outcomes of the planning process will be made by the Tacoma City Council based on recommendations from staff, Project Advisory Committees, Planning Commission and public input. The City Council will review and discuss any recommended revisions at a study session. The study session meetings are open to the public. In addition, the full Council will hold at least one public hearing to receive further public comment before adopting any revisions to SMP policies and regulations. Public testimony will also be accepted at first and second reading of adopting ordinances.

## **Accountability and Evaluation**

### **Feedback Loop**

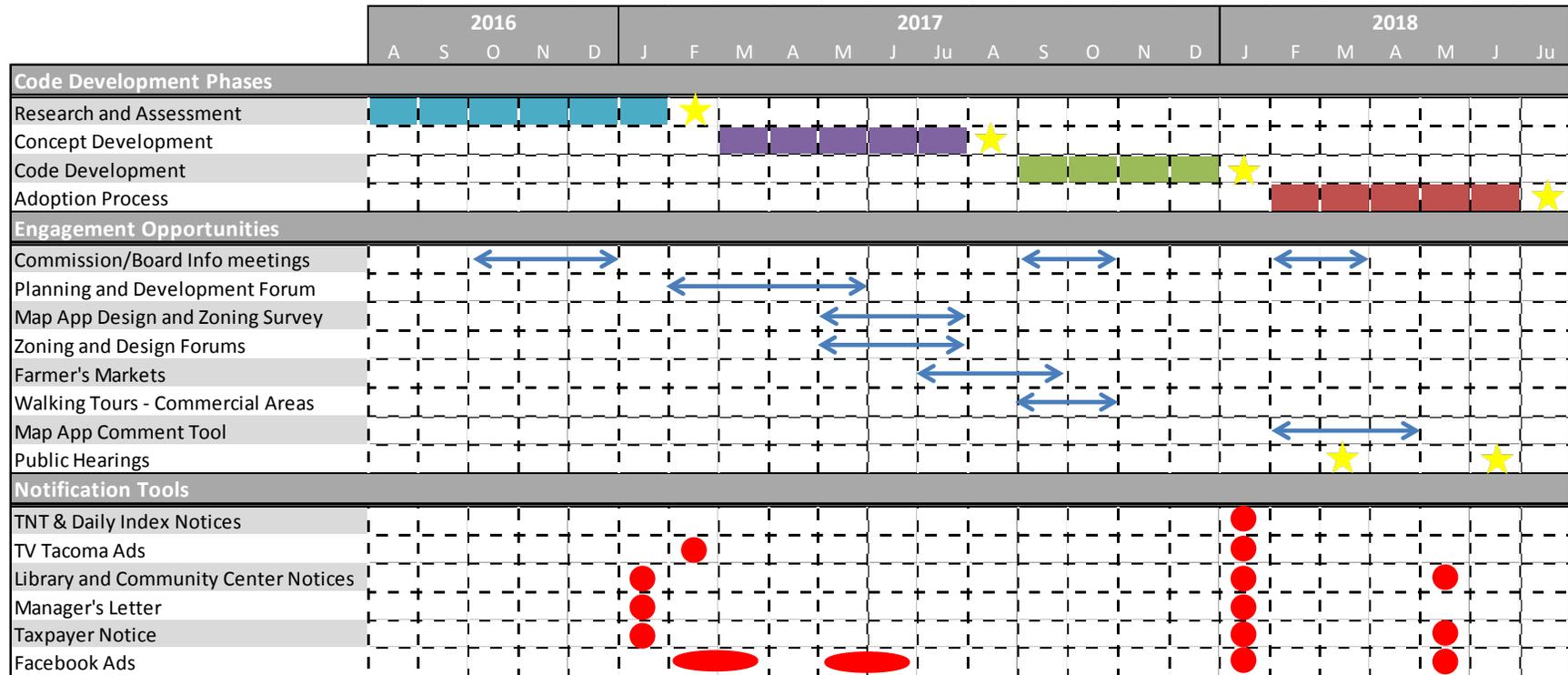
As part of this public involvement plan, staff will be responsible for gathering and disseminating the public's input to decision makers and back to the public at large. This is a necessary component for a successful project. Staff will compile public comments throughout the planning process. Comments will be integrated into ongoing work and reported to the Project Advisory Committee. Staff will brief the Planning Commission and City Council on the progress of the plan, results of outreach efforts and public input. Commission and Council decisions will be communicated to stakeholders and the general public through the website, electronic/hard copy mailings and local media outlets.

### **Public Involvement Evaluation**

Evaluation of the public involvement will be completed upon completion. Tools for evaluation will include:

- Informal feedback from stakeholders
- Short questionnaires following events
- Planning Commission feedback following recommendation
- Team debriefs following meetings and events to discuss needed adjustments

## Project Schedule





CITY OF TACOMA  
 EQUITY &  
 EMPOWERMENT  
 Achieve Equity  
 Advance Empowerment  
 Attain Excellence

### WHAT IS EQUITY?

Equity is when **everyone** has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential

### VISION

Our vision is for Tacoma to be an inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play

### MISSION

Our mission is to achieve equity in our service delivery, decision-making and community engagement. We will do this by identifying and eliminating the underlying drivers within our community that perpetuate racial inequity and provide opportunity and advancement for all

## PRIMARY GOALS

If our proposed framework is successful, we believe that our municipal workforce and community will achieve five goals:

- 1 **City of Tacoma Workforce Reflects the Community it Serves**  
 Actively work to eliminate racial and other disparities and provide accommodations for people with disabilities in hiring, promotion, retention and contracting
- 2 **Purposeful Community Outreach and Engagement**  
 Work with community partners and businesses to promote equity and inclusion within Tacoma and throughout the region, producing measurable improvements and disparity reductions
- 3 **Equitable Service Delivery to All Residents and Visitors**  
 Provide guidance, education and assistance to all departments as they develop sustainable methods to build capacity in achieving equitable outcomes and services
- 4 **Support Human Rights and Opportunities for Everyone to Achieve Their Full Potential**  
 Promote, support and build capacity for compliance with civil rights laws, ordinances and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, within the city of Tacoma
- 5 **Commitment to Equity in Local Government Decision-Making**  
 Be transparent and collaborative with internal and external individuals and groups, holding ourselves and our partners accountable for measurable improvements and outcomes

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