



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor & City Council
FROM: Council Member Rumbaugh and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster
COPIES TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Kurtis Kingsolver, Deputy City Manager; Bill Fosbre, City Attorney
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Directing Planning Commission to determine if a Mortarium on nomination and designation of Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts is warranted – June 13, 2023**
DATE: June 7, 2023

I ask for your support for a resolution to direct the Planning Commission, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, to conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on nomination and designation of local Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope and duration.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT:

Resolution/Ordinance Request:

Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.060 outlines regulations for the local Tacoma Register of Historic Places and the nomination and designation process for Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts. The Landmarks Preservation Commission and Planning Commission are both responsible for reviewing nominations and making recommendations. In 2022, both bodies reviewed an application to add a district to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. The Landmarks Preservation Commission made recommendations¹ on April 25, 2022, and the Planning Commission denied the request² on November 2, 2022. During their reviews, both commissions noted concerns about the existing historic district designation process and recommended that a review and potential update to the process should be conducted in the earliest possible plan and code amendment cycle.

The requested review is planned to be included in the upcoming 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update process. However, in the interim the City is still able to accept applications for Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts. It takes a great deal of volunteer and staff time to review these requests, and any review at this time may encounter the same concerns that these commissions have already identified and requested the City address. It may be beneficial to implement a moratorium until the review can be completed and the changes be put into effect.

¹ [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Historic-Preservation/Agendas-Minutes/2022-Packets/LPC%20recommendation%20packet%20pt1%20-%20College%20Park%20Historic%20District%20\(06-01-22\).pdf](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Historic-Preservation/Agendas-Minutes/2022-Packets/LPC%20recommendation%20packet%20pt1%20-%20College%20Park%20Historic%20District%20(06-01-22).pdf)

² https://cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Historic-Preservation/Districts/College-Park-planning-commission-decision.pdf

This resolution requests the Planning Commission, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, to conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on nomination and designation of Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope and duration.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: June 20, 2023

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):

During a recent review of a Historic District proposal, both the Landmark Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission recommended a policy review of the nomination and designation process for historic special review and conservation districts. This resolution follows up on their request, and further seeks their guidance on next steps. Their consideration of a moratorium will be an open public process and will seek feedback from the community.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

The recommendations from the Landmarks Preservation Commission are intended to address equity issues, and includes the following language:

“A. The Historic Comprehensive Plan Element and associated regulatory codes should be reviewed during the next code and policy amendment process to assess and evaluate compatibility with the broad City policy of objectives concerning diversity, equity and inclusion, to identify barriers, gaps in preservation policy, and criteria used by the Commission, and to identify additional tools and incentives for owners and residents of historic properties.”

Similarly, the Planning Commission identified a need to incorporate equity goals into this review and designation process. Their recommendation includes:

“The Planning Commission recommends that Comprehensive Plan policies and regulatory code relating to historic districts be reviewed [and] amended at the earliest appropriate amendment cycle, to include review of consistencies between historic preservation policies and policies elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan relating to housing, equity, and sustainability.”

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

Livability: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

Historic preservation honors the legacy of Tacoma and adds character to neighborhoods, improving perception and overall quality of life. However, preserving history should be complementary to equity access to housing options throughout the City. We heard from our Commissions that they see a need to review code language, and honoring that recommendation will show them they're able to have a positive impact on the community and will build trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

ALTERNATIVES:

Presumably your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives actions for council or staff to take. Please use table below.

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Take no action	Maintain maximum flexibility for applicants to Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts	Divert staff time and resources into a process that Commissioners have already requested we change

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

This resolution directs the Planning Commission, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, to conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on nomination and designation of local Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope. The results of this should be reported back to Council.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend this resolution be passed and the Council hear from the Planning Commission and Landmarks Preservation Commission on how they'd like to proceed with this process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.

If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Lynda Foster at 253.591.5166 or lfoster@cityoftacoma.org.

SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY: 
Council Member Rumbaugh

SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES (2 SIGNATURES ONLY)

(Signatures demonstrate support to initiate discussion and consideration of the subject matter by City Council for potential policy development and staff guidance/direction.)

1.  POS# 5

2.  POS# 1

Mayor's initials 

(Mayor's initials for awareness only to ensure alignment and coordination of emergent policies.)