



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services *PA*
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee; Michael P. Slevin III, P.E.; Cathy Satava
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 Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services
 Carrie Wilhelme, Transportation Planner, Public Works
SUBJECT: One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update
DATE: February 14, 2024

PRESENTATION TYPE:
 Request for recommendation to the City Council.

SUMMARY:
 On February 14, 2024, Planning and Development Services staff will present an overview of the proposed scope of work and schedule for the periodic update of the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan. Staff will also request affirmation of the proposed scope of work. The Comprehensive Plan update is expected to be completed in mid-2025.

BACKGROUND:
 Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan, [One Tacoma](#), is the City’s official statement concerning its vision for future growth and development. It identifies goals, policies, and strategies for maintaining the health, welfare, and quality of life of Tacoma’s residents. The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of numerous individual elements, including elements addressing such important issues as urban form, design and development, environment and watershed health, parks and recreation, housing, economic development, and transportation and infrastructure.

The City of Tacoma amends its Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis as permitted by Washington State law. In addition to these regular amendments, the [Growth Management Act \(GMA\)](#) requires counties and cities to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plans and regulations to bring them in line with any relevant changes in the GMA, and to accommodate updated growth targets. [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 36.70A.130](#) establishes the review procedures and schedule for Comprehensive Plan amendments and periodic review. Tacoma last completed such a “periodic update” in 2015 and is mandated to undertake and complete another “periodic update” in 2024.

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.

ISSUE:
 The City must finalize the general scope of work for the periodic update of the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan. As part of this update the City is required to bring the Comprehensive Plan into conformance with the updated Vision 2050, new legislative requirements in the GMA, the best available science, as well as recent and applicable case law. Based on initial scoping and resource discussions, the Planning Commission recommends a scope of work focused on the mandatory update elements, as summarized in the following planning submittal checklists, and new State planning requirements from House Bill (HB) 1220:

- [Department of Commerce Checklist](#)
- [Vision 2050 Checklist](#)
- [HB 1220 – New Housing Requirements](#)



The attached Table 1 provides additional information on task elements that are currently committed as part of this update.

ALTERNATIVES:

In addition to the planning requirements, the City may consider other tasks that are responsive to local planning initiatives and community input. Table 2 (attached) provides a summary of these optional tasks. The City has an extensive long range planning work program, including both current project commitments and deferred projects awaiting funding and resource allocation, which were presented to this Committee on December 13, 2023. With the current level of resources and timeline to complete the work, it will not be feasible to address the full list of deferred projects. Instead, the Planning Commission assessed this project list and recommended tasks that would be feasible to accomplish. Staff is seeking this Committee’s concurrence with the Commission’s recommendation and prioritization of projects on the deferred list.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed scope of work is based on current resource commitments, including a Department of Commerce grant to support the periodic update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is seeking a recommendation to the full City Council for a study session in March 2024.

ATTACHMENT:

Comprehensive Plan – Scope Overview

One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

SCOPE OF WORK – Recommendation Overview

The City of Tacoma is updating its Comprehensive Plan, One Tacoma, to provide City Council, Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, City staff, City residents, and the business and development community with a comprehensive, internally consistent and legally defensible tool to guide the City's decision making and development over the next 25 years, to the year 2050. The updated plan will help establish or confirm existing policies and priorities for coordinated development/redevelopment and necessary infrastructure consistent with the State Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050 and Transportation 2050, and the City of Tacoma's ongoing Strategic Plan process.

Proposed Focus Areas for the 2024 One Tacoma Plan Update

The following draft focus areas do not represent broad themes for the update that will be considered throughout the scope of work. Each element would be updated to improve responsiveness to these themes.

- **Sustainability:** This effort will support a transition to a green, sustainable economy by promoting and accelerating the decarbonization of industrial sectors and transportation systems to meet our adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- **Equity:** This effort will evaluate the current Comprehensive Plan and recommend actions the City can take to implement anti-racist systems transformation goals.
- **Public Health and Safety:** This effort will coordinate land use and transportation plans to ensure they support an accessible and thriving City for all ages and abilities while, addressing the overall reduction of harmful air emissions, both greenhouse gas emissions and toxins, with a particular focus on our frontline and most vulnerable populations.
- **Opportunity:** This effort will better align capital plans and investments to create and expand opportunity in low opportunity neighborhoods and help to ensure city services are being delivered equitably.
- **Actionable Goals and Performance Measures:** This effort will give particular attention to identifying key metrics and performance measures to demonstrate progress toward meeting the goals and policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Communications and Engagement:** This effort will communicate how the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are expected to improve or otherwise affect the lives of community members and the way they experience the City; and ensure that plans and policies are developed with the community in a culturally appropriate and equitable manner.

Table 1: Committed Tasks for the Comprehensive Plan Update

	Sponsor	Status	Previously deferred?	Level of Effort	Geographic Scope	Staff Notes
Integration with Tacoma 2035 Strategic Plan Update	Staff	Committed	No	Medium	Citywide	Staff is coordinating the Comprehensive Plan process in conjunction with the update to Tacoma 2025, with Office of Strategy, to better align the overall goals of the Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan. This includes coordinated engagement and communications.
Update Growth Allocations	State/County	Mandatory	No	Medium	Citywide	This is a required component to update the City’s growth assumptions and planned distribution of growth across the City. Updates will need to address recent permit and development trends as well as land use changes under consideration through Home in Tacoma and the Pacific Avenue Subarea Plan. This data is utilized for traffic analysis both locally and regionally and to identify impacts to transportation facilities.
15-Minute Neighborhoods Integration and Performance Measures	City Council/ Planning Commission	Committed	Yes	Medium	Citywide	This is based on a key action item in the Climate Action Plan and relates to the health and equity in all policy review.
Equity Assessment and Policy Audit	State/City Council	Committed/ Mandatory	No	High	Citywide	Implementing “Equity in all Policy” and HB 1220.
Critical Areas Code Review and Updates including South Tacoma Groundwater District	State/City Council	Mandatory	No	High	Citywide based on specific critical areas	Critical Areas updates are a required component of the update. This work includes a Best Available Science review and possible updates to both policies and regulations. This will be closely coordinated with the South Tacoma Groundwater Code review.
Tribal Coordination and Plan Integration	State	Committed/ Mandatory	No	Medium	Significant	This is a new focus area in GMA as well as a City commitment to coordinate with the Puyallup Tribe’s Comprehensive Plan. The level of effort will include a chapter-by-chapter review and consultation with Tribal staff.
Historic Preservation Policy and Code	Planning Commission	Committed	No	Medium	Citywide	The Commission identified this as a key priority based on recommended moratorium and Home in Tacoma review. The task will focus on better integration of the Historic Preservation Program into the Comprehensive Plan, consideration of code amendments to address the process and criteria for designating historic districts.

Open Space Corridors Overlay District	City Council	Committed	No	High	Significant – based on Biodiversity Corridors and Park and Open Space Land Use Designation	This is a City Council commitment to designate and improve management of Biodiversity Corridors and Park and Open Space areas. This task will likely include both map amendments and regulatory amendments and establishment of an overlay zone.
Health in all Policy Review utilizing Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Healthy Planning Toolkit	City Council	Committed	No	High	Citywide	Based on “health in all policy” resolution and focus area in Vision 2050. The Tacoma Pierce County Health Department has been instrumental in developing toolkits for local jurisdictions to use to consider health impacts in the Comprehensive Plan.
Element Updates for Consistency with VISION 2050 and Countywide Planning Policies	State and Regional	Committed	No	High	Citywide	While there are specific tasks included in this table pertaining to high priority updates, each element of the Plan will require review and update to ensure policy consistency with Vision 2050 the multicounty planning policies as well as countywide planning policies. This review will include a broad range of subject matter from economic development policy to housing, stormwater management, and open space management.
Transportation Master Plan (TMP)	State, regional, City Council	Mandatory	No	High	City wide	<p>Updating performance measures for evaluating the TMP progress toward its goals</p> <p>Updating the City’s travel demand forecast model using regional and city-specific data to understand growth impacts to travel citywide.</p> <p>Evaluate and update the City’s transportation level of service (LOS) standards to a multimodal LOS (MMLoS) that will include consideration of people trips (pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders) as well as general purpose vehicle delay.</p> <p>Updating the transportation modal plans in GIS Developing a new functional element that includes goals and policies related to curbside management, urban goods delivery, shared mobility, people-focused streets. Identify system deficiencies and mitigation opportunities</p> <p>Develop a 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan prioritization approach and implementation plan</p>

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Non-Project Action Review	State	Mandatory	No	Medium	Citywide	The City is required to conduct a SEPA review of long range planning initiatives. The City anticipates that this review will require coordinate with the environmental impact statement (EIS) work undertaken for Downtown, Home in Tacoma, Tideflats, and Pacific Ave.
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Table 2. Assessment of Optional Tasks and Planning Commission Recommendation

Optional Tasks on the "Wish List" for the Comprehensive Plan Update	Sponsor	Status	Deferred list?	Level of Effort	Geographic Area	Level of Project Impact on Key Goals			Planning Commission Recommendation
						Climate	Affordability	Health/Equity	
Freeway Buffer/Sensitive Use Overlay Zone - establish limitations on residential or other sensitive uses adjacent to the freeway.	City Council	Optional	No	Medium	Significant - likely following I-5 and HWY 16.	Low	Low	High	Accept in Scope of Work. This task has been highlighted as a community concern and public health concern. Will require area focused engagement.
Downtown Plan Integration: Updating Downtown element for consistency with 3 adopted Downtown subarea plans, ensuring consistency among all 3 subarea plans, and updating as necessary for SEPA Planned Action.	Planning Commission	Optional	Yes	High	Focused but significant area	Low	Medium	Low	Defer as a standalone project for future work program. The Downtown Subarea Plans are nearing their 10-year anniversary and will likely require a significant periodic review and update to extend the SEPA Planned Action ordinance.
Climate Element: Establish new climate element for consistency with HB 1181. Incorporating both greenhouse gas emission reduction sub element and climate resiliency sub element.	State	Optional	No	High	Citywide	Medium	Medium	Medium	Defer for future Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle pending receipt of state grant funds. At this time, the postponement of this work will not likely adversely affect the City's planning as significant work has already been completed by the Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Strategies, which fulfill many of the current planning requirements. The City is not required to comply with HB 1181 until 2029 and can expect significant state grant resources to support that effort.

<p>Commercial Zoning Update: Improving consistency between Future Land Use Map and Zoning, update commercial land use typologies, consider area-wide rezones and retail/commercial equity; Food desert review.</p>	Planning Commission	Optional	Yes	High	Significant - Project is area specific but scattered citywide, applying to all commercial zones.	High	High	High	The Planning Commission identified this task as a high priority pending future commitment of budget resources to conduct the work.
<p>Green Economy/ Economic Development Chapter Consideration of how the City's Economic Development policies can support the transition to a green economy.</p>	City Council	Optional	No	Low	Citywide policies but with focus on industrial areas.	High	Medium	High	Accept as part of scope of work for Comprehensive Plan update - Integrating the Green Economy Strategy into the Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Chapter.
<p>Mixed-Use Centers Height Bonus Program Minimum Density/Height Ground floor retail/residential New Center Designations</p>	City Council	Optional	Yes	High	Significant – this would apply to all of the mixed use centers citywide	Medium	Medium	Medium	Defer as a stand-alone project for future work program. Will require consultant resources, including financial feasibility analysis, and significant public engagement citywide.
<p>Park and Recreation Zoning - Consider need to establish Park and Recreation Zone to implement the Future Land Use Map</p>	Planning Commission	Optional	Yes	Medium	Citywide to park and recreation facilities	Low	Low	Low	Defer - recommendation is that this topic does not have the same level of urgency and responsiveness to community health and equity concerns.
<p>Major Institutional Campus - Consider establishing master planning requirements and/or Institutional Campus Zoning District to implement Future Land Use Map</p>	City Council	Optional	Yes	Medium	Citywide to High Schools, Higher Education, and Hospitals	Low	Low	Low	Defer - recommendation is that this topic does not have the same level of urgency and responsiveness to community health and equity concerns.