

City of Tacoma

# Economic Development Strategic Plan

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# Executive Summary

## Why did the City of Tacoma develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan?

With strong economic growth and fundamental shifts in its mix of industries and occupations in recent years, the City of Tacoma needed an updated understanding of its economy, a re-examination of its economic goals, and a plan to move it toward those goals. The results of this effort - a five-year Economic Development Strategic Plan for the City of Tacoma including short-term, actionable, high-priority items to guide its immediate first steps - are presented in the following sections of this document.

## What will this Plan accomplish over the next five years?

The Plan is organized around eight (8) primary economic OBJECTIVES and corresponding MEASURES, summarized below, that will be used to benchmark and assess progress toward achieving the City's economic goals in the next one to five years. Underlying these objectives are a set of values that will shape and guide the City of Tacoma's approach to its economic development activities. First, the City's efforts will be collaborative and coordinated with the numerous other departments, agencies, and organizations involved in economic development in the City and region; next, economic equity and prosperity for all Tacomans will be reflected in specific actions to be taken by the City; finally, work undertaken by the City in coordination with its partners will be implementation-focused and action-oriented for maximum impact in the near term.

### 1 Strengthen and Diversify the Local Economy

**Measures:** Business Retention & Expansion visits; Leads generated in target industry companies and number of customized proposals produced.

### 2 Develop Authentic and Emerging Industries

### 3 Create a Trained, Future-Ready Workforce

**Measures:** Number of program participants served by workforce initiatives.

### 4 Build Increasingly Vibrant Neighborhoods

**Measures:** Number of trainings and workshops provided or facilitated by CEDD.

### 5 Promote Downtown Tacoma as the Center of Commerce for the South Sound

### 6 Support Employment-Generating Activities and Office / Industrial Product

**Measures:** New loans generated.

### 7 Implement Premier Customer Service

### 8 Choose Tacoma in Which to Live, Work & Explore

**Measures:** Marketing materials created & distributed.

## How will this Plan move the City of Tacoma toward equitable, collaborative, and implementation-focused economic development?

This Plan proposes to move the City of Tacoma toward achievement of its economic development objectives by addressing each through a set of coordinated, phased, and place-based STRATEGIES. Each STRATEGY is designed as a cohesive approach toward achieving an objective, consisting of interrelated and mutually-supportive ACTIONS.

The below diagram presents an overview the STRATEGIES crafted to address the Plan objectives. In total, the Plan consists of 37 STRATEGIES and 124 ACTIONS over a five-year period. These are presented in detail in Section 4 - Detailed Strategies and Actions - where they are supported by case studies, success stories, and exhibits.





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### 1 Business Retention, Expansion & Recruitment Objective: Strengthen and Diversify the Local Economy

#### Action 1A.1 Implementation Status ☐

Collaborate with partners on periodic events to connect the business community to consulting, City permitting & license assistance, real estate, financing, workforce, and other services.

#### Action 1B.3 Implementation Status ☐

Identify and conduct outreach to firms within Tacoma's targeted sectors, including utilizing the EDB's target cluster teams in Healthcare, Aerospace, Technology and Logistics.

#### Action 1C.2 Implementation Status ☐

Actively participate and strategically pursue projects with regional partners (e.g. Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County, Greater Seattle Partners (GSP), Port of Tacoma/NW Seaport Alliance and World Trade Center) to leverage new business and sectoral recruitment opportunities and engage with companies worldwide.

#### Action 1D.3 Implementation Status ☐

Promote the creation of satellite office locations for mid-sized and large companies within co-working and other types of curated office spaces to leverage the trend of remote working and increase local presence.

#### Action 1E.3 Implementation Status ☐

Identify Infrastructure Issues that inhibit business growth and advocate on behalf of commercial & Industrial zones.

#### Action 1F.3 Implementation Status ☐

Work closely with Public Works to develop a City-wide, comprehensive coordinated parking strategy.

### 2 Small Businesses & Entrepreneurship Objective: Develop Authentic and Emerging Industries

#### Action 2A.1 Implementation Status ☐

Expand the City's business retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts to include micro, small, and mid-sized businesses.

#### Action 2A.2 Implementation Status ☐

Enhance education and outreach to existing micro, small, mid-sized, and minority businesses on the array of Small Business support resources, including business planning, market research, financing, incentives, workforce and other assistance.

#### Action 2B.1 Implementation Status ☐

Facilitate providing additional assistance to businesses in areas of the city experiencing or projected to undergo gentrification and displacement of legacy businesses, such as lease consulting, third-party master leasing ground floor mixed-use retail space, and expanding customer base.

#### Action 2C.2 Implementation Status ☐

Engage in one-on-one conversations periodically with individual businesses in Tacoma to keep abreast of ongoing and new issues or challenges facing the small business and entrepreneurial community.

#### Action 2D.1 Implementation Status ☐

Leverage Tacoma's supply of Class B & C office space to engage local, regional and national co-working firms for recruitment and continued development of co-working spaces citywide in Tacoma.

#### Action 2F.2 Implementation Status ☐

Streamline City lending processes to enhance accessibility to small business financing - including translation of loan applications and marketing materials - and aggressively promote the utilization of related programs.

### **3 Workforce Development & Human Capital** Create a Trained, Future-Ready Workforce

#### **Action 3A.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Work with local colleges, universities, community colleges and technical schools, and the Tacoma School District to coordinate training and education for local industries by developing real-world occupational feedback loops around needed skills, automation, apprenticeship and other factors.

#### **Action 3B.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Coordinate with Workforce Central and local educational institutions to develop a list of skills that are in greatest demand by employers in Tacoma's target sectors and in accordance with Workforce Central's Strategic Plan objectives and programs.

#### **Action 3C.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Utilize Anchor Institution Collaborative in coordination with the City Manager's Office.

### **4 Neighborhood Business District Revitalization** Build Increasingly Vibrant Neighborhoods

#### **Action 4A.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Regularly monitor properties for sale or rent and engage in direct recruitment of small businesses that are a good fit for specific neighborhood identities and retail/service gaps.

#### **Action 4B.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Facilitate training for NBDs similar to the Main Street Program regarding administration, operations, finance and design.

#### **Action 4C.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Work with Business Districts to inventory and solicit ideas from local businesses and property owners regarding temporary utilization of vacant local properties for activities such as restaurant or retail pop-ups, art displays and advertising.

#### **Action 4D.1**



Implementation Status ☐

Conduct an inventory of vacant or underutilized property and connect businesses looking for space and lease options with appropriate parties to explore the temporary utilization of such properties in NBDs, including co-siting with existing businesses.

#### **Action 4E.1**





Implementation Status ☐


Conduct outreach to absentee property owners to identify specific barriers to activating their vacant or underutilized property.

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### **5 Downtown Tacoma** Objective: Promote Downtown Tacoma as the Center of Commerce for the South Sound

**Action 5A.1**  Implementation Status   
Actively work with the Downtown Tacoma Partnership on policy and regulatory improvements related to new and re-development, visitor and customer support, urban design, programming, marketing and other factors critical to the success of a vibrant Downtown.

**Action 5A.2**  Implementation Status   
Support the Downtown Retail Advocate's workplan in the Downtown Tacoma Business Improvement Area, develop relationships with stakeholders, and identify prospects for infill development in the Downtown.


**Action 5B.1**  Implementation Status   
Continue to identify and recruit key anchor tenants for catalytic Downtown sites with the greatest potential for leveraging additional private sector development and job growth.

**Action 5C.1**  Implementation Status   
Facilitate historic restoration and renovation of Old City Hall for mixed use development to help anchor the St. Helens District.


### **6 Commercial & Industrial Property Activation** Support Employment-Generating Activities and Office / Industrial Product

**Action 6A.1**  Implementation Status   
Work closely with City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services and the University of Washington - Tacoma's Campus Planning and Retail Services division to facilitate new development on campus where substantial additional capacity exists and growth is anticipated.

**Action 6B.1**  Implementation Status   
Create and maintain a database of key properties in Tacoma with high economic potential that are underutilized.

**Action 6C.1**  Implementation Status   
Implement elements of SHB 1746 providing for targeted sales and property tax incentives to developers who build or renovate commercial office space.

**Action 6D.1**  Implementation Status   
Work closely with the Manufacturing Industrial Council for the South Sound and Port-related businesses to ensure that they remain viable within the City of Tacoma (Port or Nalley Valley), especially as the subarea planning process proceeds.

**Action 6E.1**  Implementation Status   
Actively participate in an economic analysis of the Tideflats subarea planning process.

## 7 Business & Development Climate

Objective: Implement Premier Customer Service

### Action 7A.1



Implementation Status ☐

Use monthly coordinating meetings with the Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD), Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), the Economic Development Board of Tacoma-Pierce County (EDB), the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, Pierce County, Travel Tacoma-Mt. Rainier-Tourism & Sports, and Manufacturing Industrial Council representatives to discuss policy and program issues of mutual interest.

### Action 7A.2



Implementation Status ☐

Participate in Planning and Development Services (PDS) review panel meetings to identify projects that need follow-up assistance.

### Action 7C.1



Implementation Status ☐

Participate on the Permit Advisory Task Force to identify opportunities for reduction and streamlining; consider further expanding priority processing of permits for key properties.

### Action 7E.1



Implementation Status ☐

Work with City of Tacoma departments including Planning and Development Services, Public Works, Environmental Services, Tacoma Public Utilities and the City Local Improvement Districts (LID) administrator to identify opportunities and mechanisms to assist with Infrastructure, environmental and related development costs.

### Action 7F.1



Implementation Status ☐

Conduct property owner outreach regarding key properties to facilitate development, and work closely with the community in areas of the city that could attract Opportunity Zone investment to facilitate positive impacts and mitigate for unintended consequences.

## 8 Placemaking & City Image

Objective: Create Tacoma in Which to Live, Work & Explore

### Action 8A.1



Implementation Status ☐

Build off successes and recent developments in arts, entertainment and cultural assets through direct recruitment of synergistic businesses or organizations to those areas.

### Action 8C.1



Implementation Status ☐

Develop a narrative describing why Tacoma is an advantageous place to live and work with the power to resonate regionally and nationally and work with other agencies to produce and regularly update marketing and promotional materials.

### Action 8E.1



Implementation Status ☐

Participate in an analysis of current and projected parking needs within the City and develop comprehensive and broad-based strategic approaches (see also Action 1E.4)

### Action 8F.1



Implementation Status ☐

Align City communications efforts with local and regional economic development partners' efforts, and spearhead a multi-channel marketing campaign.

### Action 8F.3



Implementation Status ☐

Create a suite of customizable materials, and print and digital content to market Tacoma's assets.