City of Tacoma Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services
Brian Boudet, Acting Director, Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan Update
DATE: August 6, 2025

OVERVIEW:
On August 12, 2025, Planning and Development Services staff will present an overview of the Planning Commission's review and recommendations pertaining to the Tideflats Subarea Plan and related implementing amendments to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code, TMC Title 19 Shoreline Master Program, and the Draft Planned Action Ordinance. This presentation is in preparation for a resolution during the City Council meeting on September 9, 2025, to set October 28, 2025, as a public hearing on the Subarea Plan and related amendments to the TMC.

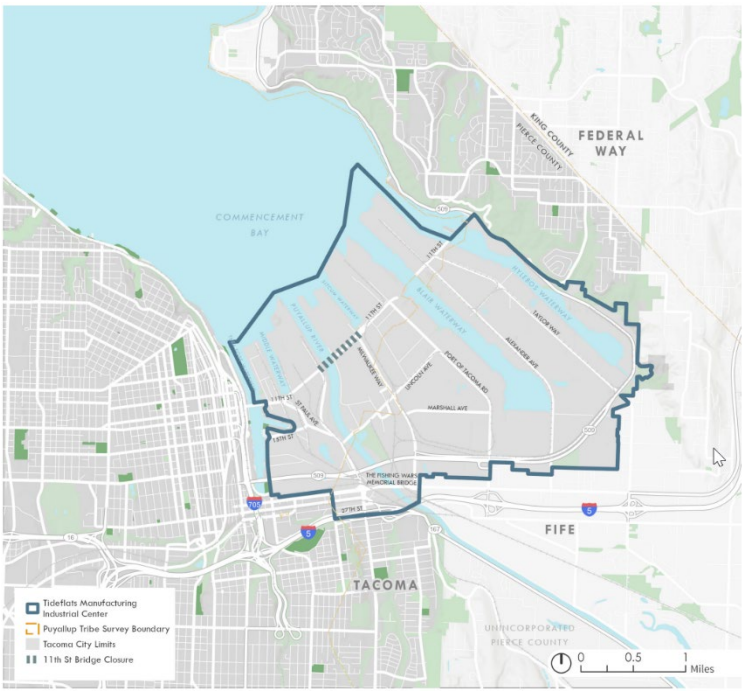
The presentation will also include staff from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCH), including Director of Public Health Chantell Harmon Reed and Healthy Community Planner Erin Dilworth. They will provide an overview of the Tideflats Subarea Plan Health Impact Assessment (HIA) conducted by the TPCHD.

WHAT'S IN THE TIDEFLATS SUBAREA PLAN?
The Tideflats Subarea Plan is a shared long-term vision supported by goals and policies that provide a roadmap to achieve the vision. The Subarea Plan is intended to create a more coordinated approach to development, environmental review, and strategic capital investments in the Tideflats. The Plan was developed through intergovernmental collaboration and community engagement and is guided by the vision and guiding principles that came out of this process. The five participating governments who co-developed the Plan with community are: City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Fife, and Pierce County. The Plan's vision, goals, and policies supports economic prosperity, strengthens existing center assets, expands transportation choices, and improves environmental quality. The Steering Committee members unanimously recommended the draft Plan on December 5, 2025. Specific aspects include:

- Balancing Industrial Success with Environmental Restoration: Plan policies called for coordinated actions and investments to restore ecosystems, improve water quality, and protect biodiversity alongside industrial development.
- Indigenous Values: The Plan honors both the natural and cultural landscapes of the region. Policies and action recognize the Puyallup Tribe's rights and interests in the Tideflats and ensure that any development respects their cultural, economic, and environmental connections to the land.
- Comprehensive Climate Action: The Plan's policies integrate climate resilience strategies, with specific actions around decarbonization goals, adaptive measures for sea-level rise, and restoration of natural habitats.

- Economic and Industrial Adaptation: The Plan supports economic flexibility by preserving core industrial uses and encouraging industries that meet environmental goals and facilitate innovation in clean energy. It demonstrates how a world class port can thrive alongside growing urban neighborhoods.
- Transportation and Infrastructure Innovations: The Plan takes a holistic approach to transportation infrastructure, promoting proactive investments in multimodal transportation systems that support both the industrial sector and the surrounding community. It also incorporates green infrastructure solutions to mitigate pollution and improve the urban landscape as well as public access to the waterfront.
- Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement: The Plan was developed through a seven-year long collaborative process that set up ongoing dialogue among local governments, tribes, businesses, and residents, fostering shared accountability and coordinated problem-solving for long-term implementation.

THE TACOMA TIDEFLATS SUBAREA



The Tideflats Subarea is comprised of over 5,000 acres of waterfront and industrial lands. The area is designated as the Port of Tacoma Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC) and is home to Tacoma and Pierce County's highest concentration of industrial and manufacturing activity. The Tideflats Subarea is also a unique environment container river delta, tidal creeks, and freshwater and salt marshes. Over 1,000 acres of this vital saltwater and estuarine habitat is home to several species of salmon, shellfish, and other marine life. The Tideflats also serves as an important location for the cultural traditions of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the continued practice of their tribal treaty rights.

ACCOMPANYING CODE REVISIONS

The following revisions are included alongside the Tideflats Subarea Plan to integrate the initial Plan recommendations into the TMC. These changes are recommended to ensure that new development that occurs within the Subarea is consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations from the Draft Plan.

Revisions to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan	These proposed revisions would modify the Future Land Use Map in the One Tacoma Plan to integrate new Land Use Designations for the Tideflats Subarea, recognizing the status of the area as both a Container Port and regionally designated MIC.
Revisions to the TMC Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code	These proposed revisions would integrate the zoning and land use regulations from the Subarea Plan into the TMC, establishing the new Seaport Zoning Districts. These changes are proposed concurrent with the Subarea Plan to ensure that new uses proposed within the Subarea are consistent with Plan.
Revisions to TMC Title 19 Shoreline Master Program	These proposed revisions would modify the City's Shoreline Master Program to establish a new Seaport Shoreline Environment Designation, modify the existing Urban Conservancy Designation to distinguish marine and freshwater environments, update the prohibited uses to reflect Plan recommendations, and replace the Shoreline Zoning Districts with proposed Seaport Zones.
Planned Action Ordinance	The Planned Action ordinance is a proposed modification to the City's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, streamlining project level SEPA review for qualifying projects that demonstrate consistency with the Subarea Plan and whose project impacts are addressed through the regulatory code and mitigation requirements. The Planned Action Ordinance maintains project level air quality review for industrial projects.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Planning Commission's Letter of Recommendation, Findings of Fact, and proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code are all available for public review at the following webpage**:** tacoma.gov/tideflats.

- Letter of Recommendation
- Findings of Fact and Recommendations
    - Attachment 1: Proposed Amendments for Council Consideration
    - Attachment 2: Draft Tideflats Subarea Plan
    - Attachment 3: One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

  - Attachment 4: TMC Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code
  - Attachment 5: TMC Title 19 Shoreline Master Program
  - Attachment 6: Planned Action Ordinance
- Public Comment

HIA

HIAs inform decision-makers and the public of the potential health outcomes, both beneficial and harmful, of a proposed project, policy, or program. HIAs provide recommendations to increase potential public health benefits and reduce potential harms to public health. The City commissioned this HIA to provide a tool to evaluate the health impacts of the Tideflats Subarea Plan.

The TPCHD reviewed the Tideflats Subarea Plan's proposed priority action items, transportation investments, and land use zoning map and code, and assessed how they might improve or harm public health in terms of air quality and water quality. In their recommendations, the TPCHD:

- Created a tiered prioritization for the Plan's action items and transportation investments.
- Identified land use code changes proposed in the Plan that could promote improvements in public health.
- Suggested amendments to the land use code and zoning map, including additional special use standards, performance measures, and prohibitions that could further promote improvements in public health.

Read the HIA here: https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Tideflats-HIA-Report-August-2025.pdf

TENTATIVE NEXT STEPS AND SCHEDULE FOR ADOPTION OF THE SUBAREA PLAN

Target Date	Meeting	Milestone
August 26 , 2025	**Committee of the Whole**	• **Identify potential Plan or Code amendments to include in the public hearing**
September 9, 2025	**City Council**	• **Resolution to set public hearing**
October 28, 2025	**City Council**	• **Public Hearing** • **45-day Public Comment period per Intergovernmental Work Plan**
Nov/Dec 2025	**City Council**	• **Study Session Debrief** • **First and Final Reading of Ordinances**

STAFF CONTACTS:

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