Tideflats Subarea Plan

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

City Council Study Session
August 12, 2025

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Overview

Purpose: Prepare for upcoming City Council public hearing and 45-day public comment period.

- Background on Steering Committee Recommendation
- Planning Commission Review and Recommendations
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Next Steps and Tentative Schedule

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Background: Tideflats Subarea

- 5,000 acres of waterfront and industrial lands
- Ancestral lands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Port of Tacoma
- Designated Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC)
- Critical saltwater and freshwater habitats
- Located within dense urban context

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Background: Shared Planning

- The Subarea Plan and environmental impact statement (EIS) is a shared planning effort among five participating governments.
  - Guided by adopted Work Plan and Inter-governmental Agreement
- Intended to fulfill state and regional planning requirements, including the Growth Management Act (GMA), Shoreline Management Act (SMA), State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and VISION 2050 compliance.
  - Upon adoption, Subarea Plan becomes element of the One Tacoma Plan.

CITY OF Tacoma
PUYALLUP TRIBE of INDIANS
Port of Tacoma
Pierce County
FIFE WASHINGTON

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Background: Planning Process

We are here

JAN – AUG 2021	OCTOBER 2022	APRIL 2024	DEC 2024	MAR – JUL 2025	SEP - DEC 2025
Community Kickoff and Visioning Process	Council Affirmed the Guiding Principles and EIS Alternatives for Analysis	DRAFT EIS Issued for public comment	Steering Committee Draft Plan Recommendation	Planning Commission Review and Recommendation	City Council Public Hearing and Adoption Process

★ Public Hearing and Comment Periods

Tideflats Advisory Group Meetings

↔ Steering Committee Meetings

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Steering Committee Recommendation

Themes in the Plan
• Balancing Industrial Success with Environmental Restoration
• Indigenous Values
• Comprehensive Climate Action
• Economic and Industrial Adaptation
• Transportation and Infrastructure Innovations
• Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

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Planning Commission Review

Conducted a public hearing and comment period on the following draft documents:

1. Draft Tideflats Subarea Plan (as Recommended by Steering Committee)
2. Proposed Revisions to One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan
3. Proposed Revisions to Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code
4. Proposed Revisions to TMC Title 19 Shoreline Master Program
5. Planned Action Ordinance

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Public Notice and Engagement

Public Notifications:

- 6,000 direct mailings
- Email distribution to 860 interested parties
- 60-Day Notice to the State and Joint Base Lewis-McCord
- Social Media
- Notice to Puyallup Tribe, Steering Committee partners and Tideflats Advisory Group members
- Two information meetings to support community review and input

Public Comments received:

- 35 written comments submitted
- 8 people testified at the public hearing

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Public Comment Themes

Theme	Commission Response
Proactive monitoring and enforcement	Not a code issue; Resourcing issue for Council
Expand Seaport Conservancy zone to include “little marsh”	Commission concurred.
Consider more ambitious employment targets	Commission concurred.
Concern over expansion of nonconforming uses	Commission concurred.
Concern that Planned Action Ordinance* removes permit based SEPA review	Commission concurred. *Staff recommends deferral
Request to incorporate flexibility for public agencies to develop their own forestry plans	Commission did not concur. No change recommended.
Request to remove conditional use permit requirements for clean fuel production	Commission did not concur. No change recommended.
Support for quality-of-life improvements in the Tideflats, remediation of brownfield sites, public access	Commission concurred, no change recommended.

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Planning Commission Conclusions

1. The Draft Plan substantially complies with and fulfills planning requirements of the GMA, SMA, and VISION 2050.
2. Maintains status as regionally designated MIC.
3. The Draft Plan and code supports improved public health outcomes for workers in the Tideflats and nearby communities.
4. The Draft Plan promotes shared economic benefits, climate resilience, and greenhouse gas reduction.
5. The Draft Plan promotes effective transitions between heavy industry and nearby communities.

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Proposed Plan Amendments

Description	Amendment Type
1. Expand Seaport Conservancy Zoning to include the Little Marsh Restoration Site	Subarea Plan – Map Change
2. Employment targets and quality jobs	Subarea Plan – New Policies and Actions
3. Pre-approved plans for critical area buffers and low impact development best management practices	Subarea Plan – New Action
4. Vision Zero/ High Risk Network and Light Rail Stations	Subarea Plan – New Project and Action

Staff Request: City Council determines the amendments to release for public review.

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Proposed TMC Amendments

Description	Amendment Type
5. Nonconforming residential/institutional uses in the Seaport Core Zoning Districts	Title 13
6. Nonconforming Heavy Industrial uses in the Seaport Transition Zoning Districts	Title 13
7. Transit Oriented Use and Development Standards in the Seaport Transition Transportation Oriented Development District	Title 13
8. Minor Code Cleanups – in response to public comments.	Title 13 and Title 19

Staff Request: City Council determines the amendments to release for public review.

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Tideflats Subarea Plan HIA

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Erin Dilworth, Healthy Community Planner

Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

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HIA

Do

- Inform decision–makers and public of the health outcomes (both beneficial and harmful) of a proposed project, policy, or program.

Do not

- Stop permit approval or reverse a previous permitting decision.
- Assess the impacts of a project, policy, or program that has already begun.
- Have regulatory power.

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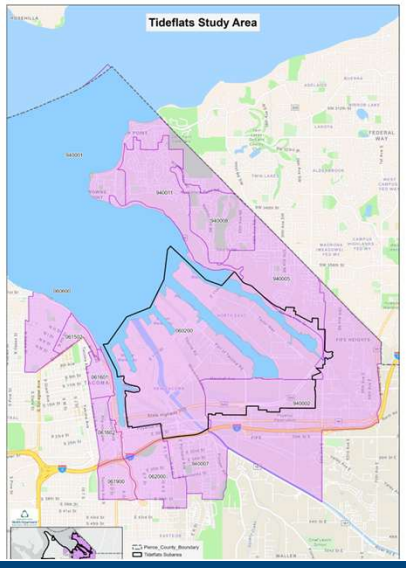
Current Health Conditions



	Tideflats Study Area	Pierce County
% people of color	45.0%	39.7%
% who speak English "less than well"	5.3%	3.8%
% living in poverty	11.3%	8.9%
% households without a vehicle	8.4%	5.2%

	Tideflats Study Area	Pierce County
	Rate per 10,000 ED Visits	
Asthma-related hospital ED visits‡	625.0	548.0
Respiratory illness ED visits‡	1,523.9	1,477.3
	Incidence Rate per 100,000 New Cases	
Colorectal cancer*	22.6	15.4
All cancer*	512.0	460.0
	Rate per 100,000 Deaths	
Years of potential life lost before age 65*	5,002.3	4,441.7

*Significant differences exist when comparing the Tideflats Study Area data to Pierce County ($p < 0.5$)
‡These datasets are the actual rates of hospital ED visits.

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Support and Prioritize

Action Items

- ✓ Reduce air pollution.
- ✓ Promote better air quality.
- ✓ Better understand risks of air and water pollution.
- ✓ Lessen contaminants entering Commencement Bay.
- ✓ Promote healthy housing.

Transportation Projects

- ✓Reduce traffic congestion and freight idling.
- ✓ Move heavy freight routes away from city centers.
- ✓ Increase access to public transit.

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Land Use Considerations

- Most protective public health approach is to limit:
  - Sensitive receptors near industrial and traffic-related air pollution.
  - New facilities or expansions that would add to cumulative health risk.
- Proposed land use zoning and regulations could promote better public health.
- To balance multiple interests, additional protections could mitigate some public health risks.

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Recommended Protections

✓Adopt air filtration standards for new residential.
✓Establish a residential use buffer.
✓Expand prohibitions on certain industrial discharges to surface water.
✓Cover/enclose certain uses and stockpiles of bulk raw materials.
✓Pave roads/driveways to reduce dust track-out and dispersion.
✓Implement source testing for certain air pollutants.
✓Implement leak detection systems for certain uses.

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Questions?

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Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

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Public Review Package

For Public Review: List and Description of Potential Amendments to the following Ordinances	
Ordinances	**Description**
Tideflats Subarea Plan	**As Recommended by the Steering Committee**
One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan	Revising the Future Land Use Map
Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code	Revising the Zoning Map and incorporating new zoning districts, land use tables, and development standards
Title 19 Shoreline Master Program	Revising the Shoreline Environment Designations and incorporating new zoning districts, land uses, and development standards

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Tentative Schedule

Target Date	Meeting	Description
September 9, 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

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