



## Historic Preservation Code Amendments

City Council Study Session  
October 7, 2025



1

## PURPOSE



Overview of the Planning Commission's recommended amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code relating to historic preservation (HP):

- Amendments to the nomination process and criteria for local historic districts and individual City Landmarks
- Exemptions for certain review requirements within residential historic districts
- Creation of a new Community Heritage Register
- Expansion of the Special Tax Valuation Program to include National Register listed properties
- New owner consent requirements in compliance with changes to state law
- Incorporate mitigation guidance into the demolition review process

2

2

## POLICY PRIORITY GUIDANCE

### General

- Establish new framework for nomination processes, including addition of inclusive criteria for nomination processes, clarification of commission roles, and incorporating changes to state law.

### District nomination process

- Align historic district process with other zoning amendments



3

3

## POLICY PRIORITY GUIDANCE

### Design review

- Consider ways to reduce burdens in residential districts

### Demolition review

- Incorporate changes to state law (compulsory nominations not permitted in most cases)
- Incorporate Director's Rules



4

4

## Tacoma's HP Program



### Goals, policies and regulations:

- Historic Preservation Plan
- Ordinances included in the Tacoma Municipal Code

### Functional Areas

- Identification of historic sites (historic survey)
- Administration of the Tacoma Register of Historic places
- Design review and cultural resource review
- Approval of historic incentives
- Events, outreach programming



5

5

## Recommendations



### 13.05.030 Zoning

*This section outlines the Planning Commission process for considering zoning requests, including local historic districts.*

#### Recommended amendments include:

- Clarifies that historic district requests are zoning requests
- Sequential review with Landmarks Commission (LPC) followed by Planning Commission (PC)
- LPC reviews for historic significance, PC reviews for compatibility with land use policy framework
- Recommendations of both commissions are forwarded to Council as with other zoning recommendations



6

6

## Recommendations



### 13.05.040 Historic Preservation Land Use Decisions

*This section outlines the requirements for historic design review for properties listed on the local historic register or within local historic districts.*

#### Recommended amendments:

- Exempt religious properties from historic review requirements
- Exempt ordinary maintenance and repairs
- Exempt window and cladding changes in residential historic districts that are not on prominent façades or located on prominent parcels
- Remove outdated requirements for paper submittals



7

7

## Recommendations



### 13.07.040 Tacoma Register of Historic Places

*This section describes the eligibility criteria for individual properties.*

#### Recommended amendments:

- Change minimum age for eligibility from 50 years to 40 years
- Add new eligibility criterion for culturally significant events, individuals and themes that are underrepresented in the existing register for both individual landmarks and historic district nominations



8

8

## Recommendations

### 13.07.050 Nomination of Individual Properties

*This section describes the nomination review steps for individual nominations to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.*

#### Recommended amendments include:

- Owner consent is required for properties less than 125 years of age
- Clean up of process (removed “threshold criteria” review)



9

9

## Recommendations

### 13.07.060 Nomination of Historic Special Review Districts

*This section describes the review process and requirements for local historic district nominations for the LPC.*

#### Recommended amendments include:

- Language added to clarify the roles of the PC and LPC (parallel to Tacoma Municipal Code 13.05 recommendations)
- Language modified and additional assessment criteria added, including guidance language regarding repeat submittals
- Clarifies that historic district nominations are zoning applications
- Submittals require relevant social and indigenous history if applicable
- Review conforms to PC workplan process/schedule



10

10



## Recommendations

### 13.07.065 Community Heritage Register (new section)

*This new section would create a community heritage register.*

#### Recommended amendments include:

- Community Heritage Register established for historic and cultural sites that may not meet Tacoma Historic Register criteria but have community significance
- Emphasis on recognition and not on historic integrity
- Non-regulatory and commemorative in purpose



11

11

## Recommendations

### 13.07.085 Special Tax Valuation

*This section describes the eligibility and approval process for historic property tax incentives.*

#### Recommended amendments include:

- Modification of an existing historic incentive to increase access
- Amendment makes National Register listed properties eligible for program (currently only locally listed landmarks and historic districts)



12

12

## Recommendations

### 13.12.570 Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources

*This section describes the requirements and review process for certain demolition permits as well as cultural resource review.*

- 13.12.570.A (cultural resources review) is being reviewed under the Tideflats Subarea Plan implementation
- 13.12.570.B modified for compliance with changes to state law
  - Exempts properties under 125 years of age from demolition review
  - Incorporates Director's Rule 04-2021, requiring discussion of feasibility
  - Provides mitigation guidance



13

13

## Upcoming Schedule

| Date             | Action                                     |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| October 14, 2025 | First Reading of Ordinance                 |
| October 21, 2025 | Final Reading of Ordinance                 |
| November 2, 2025 | Effective Date                             |
| November 5, 2025 | Expiration of historic district moratorium |

14

14



## Historic Preservation Code Amendments

City Council Study Session  
October 7, 2025