

## Assessment Report

### Application #2008-07 – Design Review Project

#### A. Summary of Application

<b>Type of Amendment:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Plan Text Change <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Intensity Change <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Code Text Change <input type="checkbox"/> Area-wide Rezone
<b>Applicant and/or Affiliation:</b>	Community and Economic Development Department
<b>Contact:</b>	Brian Boudet, 573-2389 Reuben McKnight, 591-5220
<b>Location:</b>	Citywide
<b>Current Land Use Intensity:</b>	n/a
<b>Current Zoning:</b>	n/a
<b>Size (parcels and/or acres):</b>	n/a
<b>Description of Amendment Request:</b>	Amend the existing policies of the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the design goals and vision for the City; potentially create a new Urban Design Element for the Comprehensive Plan; and amend the Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapter 13.06, pertaining to Design Standards and a Design Review Program.

#### B. General Description of the Proposed Amendment

The objective of the Design Review Project is to develop a model design review program, including goals, design standards, guidelines, design review process, implementation strategies and administrative requirements for its integration into the regulatory process. The purpose of the program is to better ensure that new development is consistent with the long-term urban design vision and goals of the City, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. The preliminary scope for this project, as directed by the City Council, includes design review for industrial, commercial, mixed-use, multi-family and single-family plat development throughout the City and could include some additional analysis relative to accessory dwelling units and single-family in-fill development.

The guiding principles for this project are to develop design review procedures that:

- Improve upon the City’s existing design review programs
- Support quality, sustainable, compatible development
- Support growth and development
- Are administratively practical

- Are user-friendly and understandable
- Are flexible and promote innovation
- Are predictable
- Encourage public involvement
- Are integrated with other existing City processes

A key part of this project is a review of the existing urban design policies and goals of the City, an evaluation of current development against those policies, and a community conversation on the most important urban design issues for the community and the most appropriate process to address those issues and achieve those goals. From a policy and procedural standpoint, the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and Tacoma Municipal Code are highly dependent on that research and the input of the community, Planning Commission and City Council.

The proposed changes could include amendments to the existing policies of the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the design goals and vision for the City; the creation of a new Urban Design Element for the Comprehensive Plan to emphasize these goals and provide clearer direction, background and support for a design review program and future design efforts; and amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapter 13.06, to enhance the City's existing design standards and create appropriate administrative guidance and procedures for a design review program.

**Additional Information:**

On October 25, 2005 the City Council passed Substitute Resolution 36685 (attached), expressing the Council's support for the potential development of a citywide design review process, and directing the City Manager to present the budget and staffing requirements to the Council for the 2006-2007 budget cycle.

The Community and Economic Development Department has contracted MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design to assist City staff with this project.

**C. Assessment Criteria (TMC 13.02.045.F)**

**1. Determining if the application is complete or what information is needed to make the application complete.**

The proposed amendments are initiated by staff in response to direction from the City Council. No application was filed.

**2. Determining if the request is site specific (i.e., a land use intensity or a zoning change for a specific parcel(s) likely to be under one ownership).**

The Design Review Project is focused on evaluating the appropriateness of a citywide design review program and is not site-specific.

- 3. Receipt prior to the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline (a large volume of requests before the deadline may necessitate that some requests be reviewed in a subsequent year).**

Not applicable.

- 4. Study of the same area or issue within the last year (this may be cause for the Commission to decline further review).**

The staff and Commission initiated its review of this subject at the end of 2006, however, this project was designed to be a multi-year process. Outside of this particular project, this type of citywide design review program has not been studied by the Commission recently.

- 5. Amount of analysis necessary for the Commission to reach an initial determination (if a large-scale study is required, a request may have to be delayed until the following year due to work loads, staffing levels, etc.).**

The amount of analysis associated with this project is significant given the citywide scope and complexity of the project. This project necessitates considerable work to address process and procedural issues, gather appropriate community and stakeholder input, review existing design-related policies of the Comprehensive Plan, evaluate recent development in the City, research and analyze programs and policies from other jurisdictions, evaluate and address the administrative requirements of such a program, assess impacts on development, and ensure any program stays within applicable legal parameters. The City has contracted for consultant assistance in order to complete this significant planning effort.

- 6. Available incorporation into planned or active projects (if a request can be incorporated into a planned or active project, it may receive immediate consideration).**

There are currently no other projects addressing the potential use of a citywide design review program. However, there are a number of other projects that are dealing with design-related issues, including the Second Phase of the Mixed-Use Centers Update and the Residential Zoning Code Update. While those projects are not focused on evaluating the use of a citywide design review program, it is likely that there will be significant coordination between this project and these (and potentially other) projects that are touching on design issues.

#### **D. Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the proposed amendments pertaining to the Design Review Project be included as part of the 2008 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code.

