



AGENDA

MEETING: Regular Meeting (Hybrid)
DATE/TIME: Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Council Chambers, 1st Floor of the Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
ZOOM INFO: Link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/81358095104>
Dial-in: +1 253 215 8782
ID: 813 5809 5104

A. Call to Order

- Quorum Call
- Land Acknowledgement

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

- October 4, 2023

D. Public Comments

This is the time set aside for public comment on Discussion Items on this agenda.

- Written comments on Discussion Items must be submitted to Planning@cityoftacoma.org by 12:00 noon prior to the meeting. Comments will be compiled, sent to the Commission, and posted on the Commission's webpage at www.cityoftacoma.org/PlanningCommissionAgendas.
- To comment virtually, join the meeting using Zoom. To comment in person, sign in at the back of the Council Chambers. Where necessary, the Chair may limit the allotted time for comment.

E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals

F. Discussion Items

1. Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program

- Description: Review and consider approving the draft Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022-2023 and Work Program for 2023-2025.
- Action: Review and Approve.
- Staff Contact: Brian Boudet (BBoudet@cityoftacoma.org)

2. Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts Moratorium

- Description: Review the Landmarks Preservation Commission's feedback regarding the proposed local historic district moratorium and consider finalizing a set of



The City of Tacoma does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at (253) 905-4146 (voice) or 711 (TTY) before 5:00 p.m., on the Monday preceding the meeting.

¿Necesitas información en español? Cần thông tin bằng tiếng Việt? 한국어로 정보가 필요하십니까? ត្រូវការព័ត៌មានជាភាសាខ្មែរ?

Нужна информация на русском? Потрібна інформація українською мовою? ☎ Contact TacomaFIRST 311 at (253) 591-5000.

recommendations to City Council, including whether the Commission believes a moratorium is justified, and if so, the scope and duration of such a moratorium.

- Action: Review and Approve.
- Staff Contact: Reuben McKnight (RMcKnigh@cityoftacoma.org)

G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) Agenda for the December 6, 2023, meeting includes:

- Neighborhood Planning Program – Proctor Neighborhood Plan – Recommendation
- Home In Tacoma Phase

(2) Agenda for the December 20, 2023, meeting includes:

- 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
- South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code Update

(3) January 3, 2024 – Cancelled

H. Communication Items

(1) **Status Reports by Commissioners** – Housing Equity Taskforce, Picture Pac Ave, Facility Advisory Committee, and the TOD Task Force.

(1) **IPS Agenda** – The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee’s meeting on November 22, 2023, has been canceled, and the next hybrid meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.; the agenda (tentatively) includes interviews for the Landmarks Preservation Commission and a presentation on the Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program. (Held at 747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Conference Room 248 or virtually at <http://www.zoom.us/j/87829056704>, passcode 614650)

I. Adjournment



MINUTES (draft)

MEETING: Regular Meeting (hybrid)

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Christopher Karnes (Chair - departed at 6:00 p.m.), Anthony Steele (Vice-Chair), Morgan Dorner, Robb Krehbiel, Brett Marlo, Matthew Martenson, Jordan Rash, Sandesh Sadalge, Brett Santhuff

ABSENT: N/A

A. Call to Order

Chair Karnes called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Chair Karnes read the Land Acknowledgement.

B. Approval of Agenda

Vice-Chair Steele moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes

- September 20, 2023

Commissioner Santhuff moved to approve the September 20, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted. Vice-Chair Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Public Comments

Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, reported that five written comments were received – four addressing the STGPD code update and one addressing Home In Tacoma.

The following individuals addressed the Planning Commission:

1. John Wolters, regarding Home In Tacoma.
2. Tim Smith, regarding the STGPD Code Update.
3. Kit Burns, regarding the STGPD Code Update.
4. Heidi Stephens, regarding the STGPD Code Update.

Public Comment ended at 5:13 p.m.

E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals

Commissioner Krehbiel disclosed that he had conversations with the Tacoma Tree Foundation regarding landscaping codes.

Chair Karnes noted that he will leave the meeting early and Vice-Chair Steele will preside over the remainder of the meeting.

F. Discussion Items

1. Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts Moratorium - Debrief

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, provided an overview of the public comments received regarding the consideration of a Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts Moratorium.

The Commission discussed how a moratorium may affect historic tax incentives, the Landmarks Preservation Commission's considerations on equitable distribution, the necessity of a moratorium, the timeline for evaluating a historic district application, and how a moratorium affects Home In Tacoma and vice versa.

2. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) Code Update

Stephen Atkinson, Principal Planner; Maryam Moeinian, Senior Planner; and Adam Nolan, Associate Planner, provided an overview of the STGPD code update, including background; scope of review; a scope consideration; potential code amendments, noting impervious surfaces, landscaping, and high impact uses; and schedule.

Chair Karnes departed here at 6:00 p.m.

The Commission provided feedback on impervious surface limitations, public engagement throughout the process, potentially focusing on industrial zoning districts, identifying periodic reviews and updates to the code, the geographic scope, stormwater retention goals, landscaping standards, and high impact uses.

The Planning Commission recessed at 6:48 p.m. and reconvened at 6:56 p.m.

3. Home in Tacoma – Phase 2

Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner, and Deb Guenther, Mithun, presented the Home In Tacoma package, including the revised project schedule and landscaping standards, noting the existing citywide tree canopy, canopy goal, Tacoma's existing landscaping code, what other cities are doing, the tree "credits" concept, required trees/tree credits by zone, required retention of existing trees, fee in lieu, proposed planting standards, and increased soil volume.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the proposals strike the right balance between urban forestry and housing goals. Commissioners requested clarification and provided feedback on how tree credits work, right-of-way trees, "Green Factor", the draft code, fee in lieu, structural soil cells, establishing trees after planting, consideration of trees and building height and how close trees can be planted to the property line, landmark trees, tree character, tree spread, ecological function of trees, and utility standards

Barnett and Heidi Oein, Mithun, outlined the middle housing building design standards – building placement, access, site features – including objectives, form-based code, housing types, standards tables, building placement, access and parking, building size, building articulation, open space, and other standards.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the proposed standards implement policy direction, including consistency with state law changes, entrance orientations and alleys, the requirement for large sites to orient to new connections as they do to streets, habitable space along the frontage, home ownership, housing types, and the allowance of single-family homes.

Commissioner Sadalge moved to postpone the remaining Home In Tacoma topic regarding parking to a later meeting. Commissioner Krehbiel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) Agenda for the October 18, 2023, meeting includes:

- Urban Design Review Program – Recommendation
- Home In Tacoma
- Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program

- (2) Agenda for the November 1, 2023, meeting includes:
- Neighborhood Planning Program – Proctor Neighborhood Plan
 - Home In Tacoma – Phase 2
- (3) Agenda for the November 15, 2023, meeting includes:
- Historic District Moratorium – Recommendation
- (4) Agenda for the December 6, 2023, meeting includes:
- Neighborhood Planning Program – Proctor Neighborhood Plan
 - 2024 GMA Update
 - Home In Tacoma Phase 2

I. Communication Items

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Boudet informed the Commission that Chair Karnes will present at the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee meeting on October 11, 2023, to report out on the Commission's activities and future goals and objectives.

Boudet provided an update on the status of the Landmarks Preservation Commission's recommendation for 1115 East Division Street (Gault Middle School), noting that it is currently being scheduled to be heard at IPS.

J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

**These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*
http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/



To: Planning Commission
From: Brian Boudet, Manager, Planning Services Division
Subject: **Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022-2023 and Work Program for 2023-2025**
Memo Date: November 8, 2023
Meeting Date: November 15, 2023

Action Requested:
Review and Approval.

Discussion:

At the next meeting on November 15, 2023, the Planning Commission will review and consider approving the draft Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022-2023 and Work Program for 2023-2025 (revised draft attached) that highlights the Commission's accomplishments between July 2022 and June 2023 and outlines planning projects to be carried out or initiated during the timeline of July 2023 through December 2025 or beyond.

The Planning Commission discussed an initial draft of the report on August 2, 2023. The revised draft provided here is based on input from the Commission during that discussion, as well as a few recent Council actions. The areas where there are notable changes from the initial draft have been highlighted in this revised version and generally fall into the following categories:

- Items the Council has recently requested, such as the home occupation expansion study and the historic district moratorium consideration
- Items emphasized by the Commission, such as landscaping/trees, streetscape design, code/website improvements, and parks/open space planning in coordination with the Tacoma School District and MetroParks Tacoma
- Clarify and simplify what was previously referred to as the "Emerging and Deferred" category

Background:

Section 13.02.040.L of the Tacoma Municipal Code requires the Commission to *"develop the work program for the coming year in consultation with the City Council and provide an annual report to the City Council regarding accomplishments and the status of planning efforts undertaken in the previous year."*

In developing the work program, staff conducted early engagement and consultation as part of a mid-cycle work program check-in with the Commission in January 2023 and with the City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee in February 2023. Initial thoughts and suggestions provided by the Commission and the IPS Committee have been incorporated into the report.

Upon approval by the Commission, the report will be presented to the IPS Committee for its review and concurrence. That presentation is currently scheduled for December 2023. The work program is subject to adjustments in response to legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget and staffing constraints, or other emerging situations.



Planning Commission
Annual Report and Work Program
November 15, 2023
Page 2 of 2

Staff Contacts:

- Brian Boudet, bboudet@cityoftacoma.org
- Steve Atkinson, satkinson@cityoftacoma.org

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022-2023 and Work Program for 2023-2025 (revised draft)

c. Peter Huffman, Director



Planning Commission Annual Report 2022-2023 and Work Program 2023-2025

(September 13, 2023, revised draft; subject to Planning Commission's review/approval)

This report, prepared pursuant to the Tacoma Municipal Code Section 13.02.040.L, highlights the Planning Commission's accomplishments between July 2022 and June 2023 and outlines the Commission's work program for the general timeline of July 2023 through December 2025.

Part I. Accomplishments 2022-2023

A. Major Projects Reviewed:

1. 2023 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code ("2023 Amendment") (www.cityoftacoma.org/2023amendment)

The Commission reviewed various applications included in the package during June 2022 through May 2023, conducted a public hearing in March 2023, and made its final recommendations to the City Council on May 17, 2023. The Council completed its review and made a final decision on each component of the amendment package in August 2023. The package included the following applications:

- (1) **Mor Furniture Land Use Designation Change:** This proposal is to change the Land Use Designation for a 1.24-acre parcel located at 1824 S. 49th Street owned by Wesco Management, LLC from "Low Scale Residential" to "General Commercial." This would allow the applicant to apply for a future site rezone to develop the site as part of a Mor Furniture Outlet Store that would include four applicant-owned Commercial zoned parcels bordering directly to the north of the subject site along S. 48th Street. *(Not recommended for adoption; Revised version adopted by Council)*
- (2) **Electric Fences:** This proposal would apply citywide in C-1 and C-2 Commercial Districts, as well as the CIX Industrial Mixed-Use District and the WR Warehouse Residential District. Local businesses, particularly ones that store vehicles or other equipment outside, are seeking ways to reduce theft and have posed electric fences as a solution. The draft code would permit electric fences with standards focused on safety and maintaining a pleasant pedestrian experience. *(Not recommended for adoption; Revised version adopted by Council)*
- (3) **Shipping Containers:** This proposal would allow shipping containers to be used as an accessory structure in C-1 and C-2 Commercial Districts and on residentially zoned properties that are operating with an approved Conditional Use Permit (such as parks, schools, and churches). The placement of shipping containers would be subject to certain development standards and, depending on size, may require a building permit. The proposal would also broaden the potential use of shipping containers as a temporary structure. *(Recommended for adoption; Adopted by Council)*
- (4) **Delivery-Only Retail Businesses:** This proposal would apply citywide in zoning districts allowing for retail commercial uses. Staff proposes to address delivery-only food establishments as a commissary kitchen use, and add commissary kitchens as a subset of "Retail" uses in the Tacoma Municipal Code land use tables. This would mean that commissary kitchens are no longer an unlisted use and would be required to meet "Retail" use and development standards (parking, loading, etc.). Additional regulations would add size limitations for commissary kitchens in mixed-use districts and a requirement for an in-person, direct-to-customer sale component for retail establishments located on a designated pedestrian street. These measures would add clarity

around delivery-only retail use and standards in Tacoma Municipal Code. *(Recommended for adoption; Adopted by Council)*

- (5) **Commercial Zoning Update Phase I:** Neighborhood Commercial Design Standards: The commercial zoning update is a City-wide update to our commercial zoning code. Phase I, being implemented as part of the 2023 amendment package, is limited in scope to updates deemed appropriate prior to the expansion of the multi-family tax exemption (MFTE) program to neighborhood commercial nodes. Phase 2, as part of the 2024 Periodic Comprehensive Plan update, will further assess necessary code updates to commercial areas throughout the City. Phase I updates focus on clarifying the applicability of existing standards to more clearly articulate which standards apply to single- and mixed-use multi-family development in the City's commercial zoning districts (C-1, C-2, PDB, T). *(Recommended for adoption; Adopted by Council)*
- (6) **Minor Plan and Code Amendments:** Proposed by the Planning and Development Services Department, this application compiles 7 minor and non-policy amendments to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code, intended to keep information current, correct errors, address inconsistencies, improve clarity, and enhance applicability of the Plan and the Code. *(Recommended for adoption; Adopted by Council)*

2. South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) – Moratorium and Code Update

On June 28, 2022, the City Council adopted Amended Substitute Resolution No. 40985, approving the Work Plan for STGPD Code Amendments, as part of the 2022 Amendment. The Council also requested that “the Planning Commission will conduct a public process to develop findings of fact and recommendations as to whether a moratorium on heavy industrial uses and storage of hazardous materials within the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District is warranted, and if so, to recommend the scope, applicability, and duration for City Council consideration within 60 days of the effective date of this resolution.” The Commission made its recommendations regarding the moratorium in August 2022. The Council adopted the moratorium in March 2023. Additionally, the Commission initiated the project to review the STGPD code provisions with discussion about the project context, background, related policy and environmental work, and the potential scope and schedule. The Commission is expected to make recommendations to Council on the STGPD code in 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/MoratoriumSTGPD)

3. Tidelands Subarea Plan and EIS

In recognition of the regional significance of the Tidelands, the City of Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, City of Fife, and Pierce County have partnered to develop a Tidelands Subarea Plan and EIS that would establish a shared, long-term vision and a coordinated approach to addressing development, environmental review, land use, economy, public services and facilities, and transportation in the area. The Commission has received periodic updates since 2019 and will continue its review through 2023 and into early 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/TidelandsPlan)

4. Home in Tacoma Project – Phase 2

Home in Tacoma Phase 1, which was recommended by the Commission in May 2021 and adopted by the City Council in December 2021, set the stage for significant changes to Tacoma's housing growth strategy, policies and programs to increase housing supply, affordability, and choice for current and future residents. The subsequent Home in Tacoma Phase 2 was launched in July 2021 and includes development of zoning, standards, infrastructure actions, and other implementation programs. The Commission has been reviewing Phase 2 since August 2021, conducted a public scoping hearing in April 2022, and will continue its review through 2023. The Commission is expecting to finalize our recommendations to Council in early 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma)

5. Design Review Program

In early 2019, the City launched an effort to develop a comprehensive Design Review Program to enhance the quality of the built environment throughout the City. The work was put on hold in early 2021 due to staffing changes. New staff were hired in late 2021 and assigned to complete the design guidance documents, develop administrative procedures, prepare land use code amendments, and potentially establish a Design Review Board. The Commission reviewed the project throughout 2022

and 2023 and is expected to make recommendations to the City Council in the next few months. (www.cityoftacoma.org/UrbanDesign)

6. Neighborhood Planning Program

In response to a desire for more equitable delivery of services and to provide a grassroots response to neighborhoods' concerns, the City Council provided funding in 2021 for a pilot Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) and permanent funding in the 2022-23 biennial budget. The goal of the NPP is to support neighborhood identity and vitality. The Council also identified McKinley Hill and Proctor as the first two neighborhoods representing different locations on the spectrum of neighborhood development between growth creation and growth management. The planning effort kicked off in McKinley in early 2022. The Commission provided its recommendations regarding the McKinley Hill Neighborhood Plan in February 2023, which Council adopted in March 2023. The Commission has also been involved in the Proctor Neighborhood Plan effort, which is still in the planning phase. (www.cityoftacoma.org/NeighborhoodPlanning)

7. Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS – “Picture Pac Ave”

In recognition of the significance of Pacific Avenue as Pierce County’s first Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) line, the City of Tacoma, Pierce Transit, and the State Department of Commerce have partnered to fund and develop a subarea plan and programmatic EIS for the 4.5-mile-long portion of Pacific Avenue between I-5 and S. 96th Street. The “Picture Pac Ave” subarea planning process will create a shared long-term vision and more coordinated approach to development, environmental review, and strategic capital investments along the corridor. The Commission began to review the project in June 2022 and will continue its review through 2023 and into 2024. (www.cityoftacoma.org/PicturePacAve)

8. College Park Historic Special Review District

The City received a petition in May 2021 to create a new local historic overlay zone in the "College Park" neighborhood that forms an inverted L shape bordering the north and east edges of the University of Puget Sound campus. The proposed area is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the College Park Historic District, designated in 2017. After a year-long review, the Landmarks Preservation Commission forwarded its recommendation to establish the College Park Historic Special Review District to the Planning Commission on April 13, 2022. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on June 1, 2022. After reviewing community input and further deliberations, the Commission completed its review and denied the proposed local historic district in November 2022.

The proposal for the College Park Historic Special Review District was re-submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in March 2023, who then forwarded the nomination to the Planning Commission. In accordance with the Tacoma Municipal Code, the Planning Commission conducted an initial assessment of the application to determine whether the proposal should be accepted for review. The Commission voted to decline to consider the resubmitted application, finding that issues raised during the first review of this proposal and resultant recommendations made by both the Landmarks and Planning Commissions have yet to be implemented. (www.cityoftacoma.org/CollegeParkHD)

9. Capital Facilities Program (CFP)

The Commission reviewed the proposed update to the 2023-2028 CFP in May 2022 and conducted a public hearing in June and made a recommendation to the City Council. The Commission also requested staff to improve project mapping and update the project prioritization criteria for future CFPs. The Commission, in December 2022, also received an update regarding the 2023-2028 CFP and projects that received funding in the 2023-24 Capital Budget.

(https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/office_of_management_and_budget/2023-2024_biennial_budget_development.)

10. Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG)

The TODAG was a broad-based advisory group established by the City Council in April 2019 (per Resolution No. 40303) to review and make recommendations on various projects impacting regional and local public transportation facilities in neighborhoods and business districts where there are significant TOD opportunities. The TODAG was tasked to review Sound Transit’s Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), Pierce Transit’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and the City’s Puyallup Avenue Design

Project. Commissioners Karnes actively participated in the TODAG, representing the Commission's interest. Former Commissioner Strobel also served on the group, but as a representative from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. (www.cityoftacoma.org/TODAdvisoryGroup)

11. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The Planning Commission has been, in coordination with the Transportation Commission, tracking and engaged in Pierce Transit's BRT planning, including the Pacific Avenue BRT project (Stream 1) and the Stream System Expansion Study (SSES). This included providing recommendations in June 2022 and receiving a briefing in July 2022. (www.piercetransit.org/BRT)

12. Local Historic Districts – Potential Moratorium

On June 20, 2023, the Tacoma City Council adopted Resolution No. 41226, directing the Planning Commission to conduct a public process to determine whether a moratorium on local historic district creation is warranted, and if so, to recommend a scope and schedule. The Commission will be holding a public hearing on the potential moratorium, coordinating with the Landmarks Preservation Commission to get their input, and making a recommendation to the City Council in late 2023.

13. 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

The Commission initiated review for the state-mandated periodic update of the City's Comprehensive Plan that is due in 2024. In January and March 2023, the Commission began discussions about the general timeline, phases, scope considerations, and potential key projects and priorities. The project is expected to get into full swing in late 2023 and be a significant work item throughout 2024.

B. Meetings Conducted / Attended:

1. Commission Meetings:

The Commission held 23 regular meetings and canceled 1 meeting between July 2022 and June 2023. The Commission also held one special meeting in April 2023 to participate in safety training. The Commission also conducted the following public hearings:

- 6/1/22 – Proposed College Park Historic District
- 6/15/22 – 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Program
- 4/5/23 – 2023 Annual Amendment Package

2. Community Meetings:

Individual Commissioners have been actively involved in various community groups, meetings, open houses, and events, including but not limited to the following:

- Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG) meetings
- Design Review Project Advisory Group meetings
- Housing Equity Taskforce meetings (jointly with the Human Rights Commission)
- Home in Tacoma Project Informational Meetings
- Tideflats Subarea Planning Project Community Meetings
- 2023 Annual Amendment Informational Meeting (March 29, 2023)
- Historic Preservation Month 2023 – People Saving Places (May 2023)
- McKinley Hill Neighborhood Planning Program Events
- Proctor Neighborhood Planning Program Events
- South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District meetings
- Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC)

In addition, the Commission has initiated discussions about forming a joint task force with the Transportation Commission regarding transit-oriented development and to facilitate coordination between the two commissions on key projects, as Council requested in Resolution No. 41195 (adopted May 9, 2023). We expect that joint task force to be up and operational in the next few months.

C. Membership Status (July 2022 through June/July 2023):

Council District / Expertise Area	Commissioner	Appointment
District No. 1	Andrew Strobel / Jordon Rash	Commissioner Strobel served through June 2023 Commissioner Rash appointed in July 2023
District No. 2	Morgan Dorner	Commissioner Dorner appointed in January 2022
District No. 3	Brett Santhuff	Reappointed in January 2022
District No. 4	Alyssa Torrez / Sandesh Sadalge	Commissioner Torrez served through February 2023 Commissioner Sadalge appointed in July 2023
District No. 5	Robb Krehbiel	Commissioner Krehbiel appointed in January 2022
Development Community	Anthony Steele	Appointed in January 2022 Reappointed in July 2023
Environmental Community	Brett Marlo	Appointed in July 2022
Public Transportation	Christopher Karnes	Appointed in September 2019; Elected Vice-Chair in October 2021; Elected Chair in July 2022 Reappointed in July 2023
Architecture, Historic Preservation, and/or Urban Design	Matthew Martenson	Appointed in July 2022

Part II. Planning Commission Work Program for 2023-2025 (Attached)

Attached is the "Planning Commission Work Program for 2023-2025". The Work Program contains projects and planning activities slated for completion or substantial progress during the general timeframe of July 2023 through December 2025. These projects and activities are primarily mandated by legislation or initiated by the City Council and are within the Commission's review and recommendation authority. The Work Program is subject to adjustments in response to legislative requirements, community requests, Council priorities, budget and staffing constraints, or other emerging situations.



Planning Commission Work Program (2023-2025) Planning Commission Recommendation (September 13, 2023 revised draft; subject to Planning Commission’s review/approval)

Expected Completion in 2023

- **2023 Annual Amendment Package:** *Council Action August 2023*
 - Mor Furniture Land Use Designation and Areawide Rezone (private application)
 - Shipping Containers for Storage (Sub Resolution #40955, 5/10/22)
 - Electric Fences – Expanded Allowances (Sub Resolution #40955, 5/10/22)
 - Delivery-Only Businesses
 - Commercial Zoning Update – Phase 1 (includes items in Ordinance #28798)
 - Minor Plan and Code Amendments
- **Proposed College Park Historic District (2.0)** *Commission Declined Review August 2023*
- **Design Review Program** *Expected Commission Recommendation October/November 2023*
- **Potential Historic District Moratorium** *Expected Commission Recommendation November 2023*
 - Resolution #41226 (6/20/23)
- **Proctor Neighborhood Plan**

Expected Work Program for 2024 (preliminary)

- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Proctor Neighborhood Plan**
- **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Phase 2 (Code Update)**
- **Home in Tacoma Project – Phase 2:** zoning, standards, affordability, anti-displacement, infrastructure, and programmatic components (includes zoning-related items from ADU Accelerator discussion, evaluation of shipping containers for housing, etc.)
- **Tideflats Subarea Plan and EIS**
- **GMA 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (potential key issues):**

Note: The extent of the 2024 Comp Plan Update, including whether all of these issues will be addressed and/or to what depth, will be partly dependent on available staff and funding resources, which is not fully determined

Plan Updates:

- Coordination/integration with Tacoma 2035 Strategic Plan update (in coordination with CMO)
- Growth Targets and Consistency with VISION 2050 (including new affordable housing targets)
- Transportation Master Plan Update (in coordination with PW)
- Tribal Lands Coordination and Compatibility
- 20 Minute Neighborhoods and Performance Measures
- Economic Development Element (in coordination with CEDD)

- Mixed-Use Centers Policy Updates (including Core/Pedestrian Street review and height bonus program)
- Commercial Zoning Policy Updates
- Climate Action Plan Integration (including GHG Targets and Implementation Actions)
- Watershed Plan Elements (in coordination with ES)
- Historic Preservation Plan Update and Integration (including policy/code review on local historic districts)
- Level of Service Standards and Priority Project Lists (multiple)
- Health, Equity and Anti-Racism Policy Updates (in coordination with TPCHD, OEHR, Housing Equity Task Force, etc.)
- Downtown Subarea Plan integration (including street designation review)

Code Updates:

- Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance Update (including biodiversity corridors)
 - Mixed-Use Centers Code Updates
 - Commercial Zoning Update – Phase 2
 - Landscaping code improvements – flexibility, planting guidelines, tree preservation (in coordination with ES)
- **Pacific Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan and EIS (“Picture Pac Ave”)**
 - **Design Review Program** (program launch)
 - **Neighborhood Planning Program – South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan**
 - **Cushman/Adams Substation Reuse Study** (in partnership with TPU)
 - **2025-2030 Capital Facilities Program (CFP)**
 - **Additional items from Home in Tacoma** (such as the Eastside View Sensitive District, commercial uses in mid-scale areas, and the Passive Open Space areas)
 - **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District – Moratorium** (potential extension)
 - **Home Occupation Expansion** (Resolution No. 41259)

Expected Work Program for 2025 (*very preliminary*)

- **2025 Amendment Package** (including private applications)
- **Implementation of Senate Bill 5290 – Consolidating Local Permit Review Processes**
- **Further Implementation of House Bill 1110 – Middle Housing Bill**
- **South Tacoma Economic Green Zone – Subarea Plan** (pending budget consideration)
- **Home in Tacoma Project – Implementation and Refinement**
- **Design Review Program – Implementation and Refinement**
- **Neighborhood Planning Program – Implementation and Additional Planning Efforts** (pending budget consideration)

On-going Planning Issues

- Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program
- Joint Planning Commission/Transportation Commission TOD Task Force (per Council Resolution)

- Joint Meetings of the Planning Commission with appropriate groups (e.g., the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Transportation Commission, and Community Council)
- Transportation Master Plan Implementation, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., impact fees study, transportation network planning, streetscape design guidance, **such as Tacoma Ave.**, signature trails development, etc.)
- Light Rail Expansion projects (including the Hilltop Links to Opportunity Program, ST3 Tacoma Dome Link Extension, Tacoma-TCC Link Extension, Sounder Station Access Improvements, etc.)
- Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan, Stream System Expansion Study (SSES) and Pacific Avenue BRT Project
- Historic Preservation, in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (e.g., Historic TDR, integration of Historic Preservation Plan with *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan, historic districts process and standards, preservation incentive tools, educational programs, etc.)
- Subarea Plan Implementation (and potential review/updates) – North Downtown, South Downtown, Hilltop, and Tacoma Mall Neighborhood
- Citizen Participation, Notification, Language Access, and Public Outreach Enhancements
- Proactive Equity/Social Justice/Anti-Racism integration in policies and programs
- Schuster Corridor Trail
- Fossil Fuel Tracking and Council Reporting
- Urban Forestry Implementation (landscaping and planting guidelines, tree preservation, open space, etc.)
- **Zoning Code conversion to web-based, linked format**

Regional and Cross-Jurisdictional Issues

- Regional Transportation Issues, in coordination with the Transportation Commission (e.g., Tacoma LINK and Central LINK Light Rail Expansions, Pierce Transit Long-Range Plan and BRT Project)
- PSRC Regional Centers Framework Update, Vision 2050 implementation, GMA review
- PCRC County-Wide Planning Policies, County-level Centers Update, Population Allocations, Buildable Lands, Annexations and Pre-Annexation Planning
- Regional/Countywide Climate planning and coordination (Pierce County Climate Collaborative)

Emerging Issues

These items are generally not integrated into the current work program and are dependent on future program space, priorities, funding, etc.

- Health Impact Assessments (*in partnership with TPCHD*)
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy and code review (*potentially coming out of Crime Prevention Plan*)
- Corridor Plans, focused on TOD corridor planning, such as 19th Street, Portland Avenue, 6th Avenue, etc.
- Station-Area Planning, such as Portland Avenue/I-5 area and “Four Corners” at James Center/TCC Mixed-Use Center
- Mixed-Use Centers Implementation Programming, Action Strategies/Master Plans
- Parking Update - RPA, refinements along light rail, Mixed-Use Centers, design, etc.
- Potential Local Historic Districts, such as Stadium (*coordinated with LPC*)

- Street Typology and Designation System Review
- Tribal Planning Coordination, including with their upcoming Comprehensive Plan
- Wildfire Adaptation and Mitigation (*from Sustainable Tacoma Commission*)
- Urban Heat Island review/considerations (*from Sustainable Tacoma Commission*)
- Parks and Open Space Planning (*in coordination with MetroParks Tacoma and Tacoma School District*)
- Subarea Plan review/updates – North Downtown, South Downtown, Hilltop and Tacoma Mall Neighborhood
- Sign Code Update
- Pre-Annexation Planning – Browns Point/Dash Point, Parkland/Spanaway (*with Pierce County*)
- Self-Storage Code Amendments - zoning and standards
- Pre-Approved Plans for ADUs (and possibly other middle housing types)
- Transfer of Development Rights program review
- SENCO SNAP review/integration
- Unified Development Code
- Institutional Master Plans
- “Dark Sky” lighting standards (*from JBLM AICUZ study*)
- Trail-Oriented Design Standards



City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

To: Planning Commission
From: Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer
Subject: **Recommendation: Proposed Moratorium on Nomination and Designation of Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts**
Memo Date: November 8, 2023
Meeting Date: November 15, 2023

Action Requested:

Debrief Landmarks Commission response; adopt recommendation.

Discussion:

At its meeting on November 15, 2023, staff will present to the Planning Commission the feedback of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the proposed local historic district moratorium. The Planning Commission will be requested to finalize a set of recommendations to City Council regarding the proposed moratorium, including whether the Commission believes a moratorium is justified, and if so, the scope and duration of such a moratorium.

Background:

Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.060 outlines regulations for the local Tacoma Register of Historic Places and the nomination and designation process for Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts. The Landmarks Preservation Commission and Planning Commission are both responsible for reviewing nominations and making recommendations. In 2022, both bodies reviewed an application to add a district to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. The Landmarks Preservation Commission made recommendations on April 13, 2022, and the Planning Commission denied the request on November 2, 2022. During their reviews, both commissions noted concerns about the existing historic district designation process and recommended that a review and potential update to the process should be conducted in the earliest possible plan and code amendment cycle.

The requested review is planned to be included in the upcoming 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update process. However, in the interim, the City is still able to accept applications for Historic Special Review and Conservation Districts. As noted by Council in the Resolution:

- It takes a great deal of volunteer and staff time to review these requests, and any review at this time may encounter the same concerns that these commissions have already identified and requested the City address.
- It may be beneficial to implement a moratorium until the review can be completed and the changes be put into effect.

On September 20, 2023, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing to receive testimony regarding a proposed moratorium on the nomination and designation of local historic and conservation districts. The public comment period ended on September 22, 2023.

On October 4, 2023, the Planning Commission reviewed the comment record and identified several questions and issues for the Landmarks Commission to address. The response received from the Landmarks Commission is attached to this memorandum. The topics included whether a moratorium is necessary, whether there would be negative effects anticipated if a moratorium were to go into effect, and if a moratorium were to be adopted, what the recommended scope and duration should be.



Public Feedback

As briefed to the Planning Commission at its October 4 meeting, comment received at the public hearing was largely opposed to the moratorium. Of the 30 comments received by the comment deadline, 26 were opposed, with 3 in support and 1 that discussed other issues.

Comments in support of establishing a moratorium cited known issues with the current code and process relating to historic district creation, noted the fact that policy and code amendments that may affect how historic districts are created and managed are pending the 2024 Annual Amendment cycle and suggested that it is not appropriate to adopt districts with such amendments anticipated shortly, and that in their present form, historic districts are exclusionary.

Most of the comments received were in opposition to the moratorium. Key points included statements that a moratorium is unnecessary, that historic districts are an important part of Tacoma and that a moratorium would cause harm to the city and its residents, that a moratorium will not per se improve equitable outcomes, and that historic districts are not an impediment to the implementation of the zoning reforms contained within Home In Tacoma.

Landmarks Commission Feedback

On October 25, 2023, the Landmarks Preservation Commission was briefed on the Public Hearing comment record as well as the questions posed by the Planning Commission (letter from the Landmarks Commission Chair is attached). In general, the Landmarks Commission concurred with many of the comments received in opposition to the moratorium regarding necessity and potential impacts and voted to adopt a position in opposition to the moratorium as well.

The Landmarks Commission noted in its response that nominations for local historic districts generally require significant volunteer time both in research and in gathering community support, and thus tend to be infrequent. The Commission also noted that because of this front loading of volunteer effort, a moratorium could have the effect of “chilling” such neighborhood-driven initiatives.

Further, the Commission stated that it believes it possesses the capacity and tools to review any submittals in the near future, and that consideration of a nomination would not hamper its ability to also review and make recommendations for policy amendments as anticipated for the 2024 cycle.

Regarding potential harm resulting from adoption of a moratorium, the Commission did not agree with some statements that it would jeopardize the City’s use of existing historic incentives for existing City Landmarks, or existing local historic districts. However, it could have a negative effect on future proposals. Lastly, as noted previously, the Commission believes there is potential for negative outcomes resulting from public perception that the City does not support local historic districts.

In terms of duration and scope, the Landmarks Commission recommended that any moratorium should be aligned in duration with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Annual Amendment timeline. In addition, although the Commission does not support creating a distinction between commercial and residential districts, it does support exempting boundary adjustments and expansions of existing districts from the moratorium scope should one be adopted by Council.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.05.030.E *Moratoria and Interim Zoning* defines the process for reviewing a request for moratoria, as follows:

1. City Council-initiated moratoria...shall be referred to the Planning Commission for findings of fact and a recommendation prior to action.
2. The Planning Commission shall address duration and scope and note if a study, either underway or proposed, is expected to develop a permanent solution and the time period by which that study

would be concluded.

3. Moratoria or interim zoning may be effective for a period of not longer than six months but may be effective for up to one year if a work plan is developed for related studies requiring such longer period.

Review Schedule:

The schedule below outlines the steps for this review in coordination with the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The schedule anticipates a recommendation at the November 15 meeting if appropriate.

The schedule is as follows:

DATE	FORUM	SUBJECT
September 20	Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public hearing on moratorium
October 4	Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief on hearing testimony • Summary of issues • Identify key questions for LPC input
October 11	Landmarks Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review testimony • Adopt response to Planning Commission
November 15	Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPC feedback presented to Planning Commission • Finalize recommendations to Council
TBD	Council Study Session	
Jan-Feb 2024 TBD	City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution on moratorium (TBD)

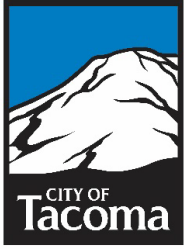
Staff Contact:

- Reuben McKnight, rmcknigh@cityoftacoma.org
- Brian Boudet, bboudet@cityoftacoma.org

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Landmarks Commission response to Planning Commission

c. Peter Huffman, Director



Landmarks Preservation Commission

Planning and Development Services Department

October 25, 2023

Chris Karnes, Chair
Tacoma Planning Commission

Dear Chair Karnes and Members of the Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, I am transmitting this letter in response to the request for feedback and recommendations regarding the proposed moratorium on local historic districts as directed by Council Resolution 41226. The Landmarks Commission has reviewed the public testimony as well as the questions posed by the Planning Commission and used both to guide our response, which we would request be sent as an attachment to the Planning Commission's recommendation when transmitted to Council.

As the City's subject matter expert on historic preservation, it is essential to first state our opposition to the proposed moratorium, as we believe it is not necessary. While the Commission appreciates the support of City Council, it is our position that a moratorium is not warranted given the relative infrequency of historic district nominations, and believe that any benefit is likely outweighed by potential negative consequences both practically and by perception. The Landmarks Commission also notes that a strong majority of respondents to the Public Hearing on September 20 were opposed to the proposal.

Both the Landmarks Commission and the Planning Commission have previously identified the need for improvements to the policy and code framework that governs the City's historic preservation program. Nonetheless, we believe that the Landmarks Commission currently possesses the tools to review and make recommendations for discretionary applications such as historic nominations. Our comments are limited to the merits of a proposed moratorium, and are not intended to speak to future code updates or the merits of any specific proposals.

The specific questions posed by the Planning Commission and our answers are incorporated into this letter below.

Topic: Necessity of a moratorium

1. Are there pending or anticipated historic district nominations within the potential period of a moratorium?

The Commission agrees generally with the observations from many commentors that community driven historic district nominations require extensive time and resources, often done by volunteers. This work involves not only research and documentation but also extensive outreach to generate support. Because of these factors, historic district nominations are relatively infrequent, and the Landmarks Commission is not aware of any current efforts aside from the recent College Park nomination that are currently in development.

Because of the lead time in creating local historic district nominations, Commission is concerned that a moratorium could result in a "chilling effect" that would have a "knock-on" effect that could negatively impact district creation for some time following the end of a moratorium, if one were to be adopted. For example, if a community group decided to begin the process of researching a

nomination at this time, the Commission typically would not expect to see any formal submittal for a year or more. A moratorium could be interpreted by residents to mean that historic district proposals are not viable, and thus discourage any future efforts even long after the moratorium is concluded.

2. Does the Landmarks Commission believe that a moratorium would assist the Commission during the upcoming comprehensive plan review?

The Commission believes that because historic district nominations are infrequent, there is unlikely to be a review of any new historic district proposals within the timeframe leading up to the Comprehensive Plan amendment process in 2024. If such a proposal is received, the Commission believes it possesses the capacity to review and make a recommendation in addition to its present workload.

3. If there was not a moratorium and a new nomination was submitted, does the Landmarks Commission believe that it could review the nomination at the same time it is working on improving the code and comprehensive plan policies, particularly regarding improving equitable outcomes?

The Commission appreciates concerns with its workload and capacity. However, due to the infrequency of historic district nominations, the Commission finds this scenario to be unlikely. The Commission believes that it has the capacity to review incoming nominations concurrently with its planned policy and code review.

4. If there was a new district nomination submitted now, does the Landmarks Commission believe that it currently has appropriate guidelines and criteria that would enable it to make a recommendation, and is there adequate guidance for establishing appropriate design guidelines for new development and redevelopment?

The Commission believes that while the current code framework needs improvement, this does not render the existing process and code non-functional. Consequently, the Commission believes that it currently possesses adequate tools to review and make recommendations for historic district nominations.

Topic: Potential negative effects of a moratorium

1. Will a moratorium prevent historic tax incentives from being available for historic projects?

The establishment of a moratorium will not affect local tax incentives for existing local districts or Federal tax credits, as applicable for current and future National Register Historic Districts.

However, for future proposed local residential districts there may be a delayed effect from a moratorium that slows or discourages development of new local historic districts, for the reasons stated previously. This is particularly concerning for future neighborhood efforts in underserved areas of the city, as it could diminish the viability of the local historic district as an enhancement tool for future neighborhood planning.

In addition, while individual listing on the historic register is always an option for property owners, many older “character” buildings in Tacoma may not meet historic significance criteria individually. However, as a collective group of period buildings, they could still be considered an important contributor to a district. Put succinctly, in historic districts the sum is often greater than the parts.

2. Are there other negative effects on historic resources that would result from a temporary moratorium on historic district creation?

The Commission is concerned that a moratorium could be interpreted as a signal that the City does not support or places a low priority on local historic districts at a policy level, which could make the management of existing districts, particularly in terms of permit compliance, problematic.

Topic: Duration and scope of a moratorium

1. Is the current scope (all locally designated historic and conservation districts) appropriate, or should it be limited or defined (for example, a comment noted that there may be interest in expanding existing districts near University of Washington Tacoma)?

If a moratorium were to be adopted, the Commission recommends that expansion or alteration of boundaries of existing districts be excluded from the scope of the moratorium. However, the Commission does not support distinguishing different types of districts, such as “residential” versus “commercial” areas, as this suggests that one type is more important to the City than the other.

2. If a moratorium were recommended, does the Landmarks Commission have input on duration? For example, should the end of the moratorium coincide with the adoption of revised Municipal Code and Comprehensive Plan policies in 2024, or are there other considerations?

Although the Landmarks Commission does not support the proposed moratorium, if one is adopted, the Commission believes that it is critical to align it with the planned Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle, which to our understanding would conclude in late 2024. A six-month moratorium likely would not benefit the City in any way, and would likely create additional confusion and complexity if it terminates in the midst of policy amendment discussions.

In addition to the above comments, the Commission also believes that a moratorium will not improve equitable outcomes. While the planned amendments to the current policy and code framework will assist the Commissions in addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in the nomination review process, such amendments *per se* will not resolve systemic and long-term issues, which will require ongoing effort beyond amending the code or comprehensive plan. Working towards improved outcomes is critical, but this is not a basis for adopting this moratorium.

Lastly, as a land use tool, the Commission believes that moratoria are generally more appropriate to address emergent issues with “by-right” development; that is, proposals that a City must approve by code even if known to be contrary to public welfare or policy. In this context, a moratorium can be appropriately used to pause permit review while the problematic regulations are addressed. For historic nominations, the review is discretionary, and both the Landmarks and Planning Commissions, and City Council, currently possess the authority to deny such applications without a moratorium.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our input and recommendations in this process.

Sincerely,



Kevin Bartoy, Chair

