

Environmental Review Summary



Overview

The City of Tacoma is issuing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with the Home In Tacoma project, consistent with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

The purpose of the EIS is to inform decision-makers and the public regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposal by analyzing the probable impacts of reasonable alternatives and identifying potential mitigation measures that could avoid, minimize, or otherwise counter adverse impacts.

The EIS evaluated 3 alternatives:

1. Baseline Alternative (represents the No Action Alternative) - 3,840 new housing units
2. Lower Zoning Alternative - 25,660 new housing units
3. Higher Zoning Alternative - 53,620 new housing units

The action alternatives are defined primarily based on the number of new housing units likely to be developed under new zoning designations, over an approximately 30-year horizon (out to 2050) and include changes to allowed land uses, permit processes, and development standards.

All growth alternatives are anticipated to be consistent with the regional growth targets adopted under the **Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050**.

Conclusions

- HIT will impact the environment but **will not have any significant adverse impacts**.
- Implementation of HIT will require trade-offs, with some benefits to the environment and some potential harm.
 - **Positive:** HIT will help the City of Tacoma achieve its housing and land use goals and make efficient use of existing land/infrastructure.
 - **Negative:** HIT will increase demand for public services and infrastructure.
- For **all elements of the environment**, the EIS identifies allocating additional funding and utilizing various funding strategies, including impact fees and fee-in-lieu options, to address the potential adverse impacts of the proposal.
- EIS also identifies potential mitigation measures that could be implemented to further reduce potential adverse impacts or improve environmental conditions in the table on the next page.

Element	Potential tools for addressing impacts
Plants & Animals	Proactively plant trees.
Water Resources	Update the Critical Areas Code
Air Quality / Green House Gas Emissions	Update the Construction & Demolition Code, adopt additional emissions standards, further promote green building certification
Land Use	Monitor & adjust to the pace of growth and extend residential development standards to other zoning districts.
Housing	Implement anti-displacement strategy, establish equitable homeownership targets, and provide additional funding for deeply affordable and special needs housing.
Transportation	Build active transportation network, implement Vision Zero Action Plan, and adopt additional parking management strategies.
Public Services / Utilities	Update Standards, allow shared solid waste service, require solar readiness, and address increased demand for water, sewer, power, and public services (schools, fire, and police).
Parks & Recreation	Invest in Pedestrian safety and strategic land acquisition.
Historic, Cultural &	Proactively protect and update design guidelines and standards for designated Special Review Districts and Conservation Districts.

See full table with more information in the **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** document.



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Environmental Impact Statement Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

- **According to WAC 197-11-400**, the primary purpose of an environmental impact statement is to ensure that the state and local environmental policies (as set forth in the State Environmental Policy Act – SEPA) are an integral part of the ongoing programs and actions of state and local government.
- An EIS provides impartial discussion of significant environmental impacts and informs decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives, including mitigation measures, that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance environmental quality.

What is a “significant” impact?

WAC 197-11-794 provides that an impact is “significant” if there is a reasonable likelihood of more than a moderate adverse impact on environmental quality and is based on both context (physical setting) and intensity (magnitude and duration). The severity of an impact should be weighed along with the likelihood of its occurrence.

How is an EIS used?

An EIS is more than a disclosure document. It is used by agency officials in conjunction with other relevant materials and considerations to plan actions and make decisions. The EIS looks at alternative decisions and provides information to decision makers regarding the impacts of each proposal as the preferred alternative is decided upon.

- An EIS analyzes impacts of a proposal
- The EIS is generally limited to adverse impacts that are probable and significant, though other subjects may be added
- The EIS should also analyze potential for mitigation to minimize impacts to a non-significant level, or to avoid impacts entirely

What are the steps in the EIS process?

- Determination of Significance/Scoping
- Final Scope/ Preparation of Draft EIS
- Issuance of DEIS, review/comment period
- Response to comments, issuance of Final EIS
- Council vote

How are mitigation recommendations included in an EIS?

Per WAC 197-11-660, the recommendations are:

- Incorporated into policies, plans, rules, or regulations formally designated by the agency
- Related to specific, adverse environmental impacts clearly identified in an environmental document on the proposal and shall be stated in writing by the decision maker
- Reasonable and capable of being accomplished
- Proportional to the adverse impacts

What does the EIS not do?

- Authorize any development
- Enact any changes in policy or regulations

Any changes in policy or regulations must be adopted following the legislative process. Mitigation under the EIS would be contained within the legislation and written into policy and code. Any development must be reviewed in alignment with adopted code (and policy); those permits carry any mitigation conditions with them.

SEPA provides information on appeals in RCW 43.21C.075 and identifies certain actions that are not subject to administrative or judicial appeals at RCW 43.21C.495.

