



Spotlight on South Tacoma

Winter 2024

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On January 25, 2024, City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services hosted the first of three meetings in South Tacoma intended to better understand the community's questions, concerns, and vision for the future, and to identify ways that the City can collaborate with residents on making that vision a reality. The event was held at the STAR Center, with roughly 52 attendees. A free meal from Empanadas Colombianas Luis Panes was provided, as well as a kids' craft. The event agenda included a Q&A panel with representatives from the City of Tacoma's Planning and Development Services (Long Range Planning and Current Planning) and Public Works departments, as well as District 5 Council Member Joe Bushnell and District 3 Council Member Jamika Scott.



An informational handout detailed South Tacoma initiatives currently being undertaken by Planning and Development Services, the Office of Historic Preservation, Neighborhood Planning Program, Public Works Department, and the Office of Environmental Policy and Strategy, as well as external initiatives led by Metro Parks Tacoma, Sound Transit, and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. Key information was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. The meeting was intended as an opportunity for community members to voice concerns and ask questions about upcoming projects and actions in South Tacoma; future meetings in the Spotlight South Tacoma series will provide space for collective visioning and action.

What We Heard

At the meeting, we asked attendees to submit questions for panelists through PollEverywhere, a live, interactive online polling platform. The poll was pre-populated with questions from a pre-survey available online during the week prior to the event. As participants submitted additional questions from their mobile devices, attendees were asked to prioritize topics for panel discussion by upvoting

responses that reflected their key areas of concern; downvoting was available to indicate disinterest. Some participants chose to submit questions on paper. Questions with the greatest number of net votes, as well as questions that reflected panelists' areas of expertise or broadened the scope of the conversation, were read aloud by the meeting facilitator for response by the panel:

QUESTION	NET VOTES	UPVOTES	DOWN-VOTES
What is the City doing to address traffic safety issues for people walking and biking in South Tacoma, and to limit impacts from truck traffic?	21	21	0
Why didn't the City of Tacoma stop the Bridge Industrial Warehouse Project, even after hearing that the community didn't want it? What changes can happen to limit this kind of project in the future?	19	24	5
What is the City doing about the impacts of crime for local businesses?	18	21	3
What will mitigate the impact on air quality and traffic from the Bridge Industrial Warehouse project?	18	19	1
Why hasn't a health impact assessment happened for South Tacoma sooner, especially after the City adopted "Health in All Policies?" What about the Economic Green Zone?	17	18	1
Why is the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District code update project taking so long, even after hearing that this was a community priority?	15	16	1
With all the unused or abandoned spaces in the South Tacoma region, why not redevelop those areas into usable space versus building upon a natural aquifer? If these are protected areas, wouldn't it serve us all to protect those areas?	11	14	3
What are the main projects that are currently being considered or prioritized in the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan?	9	10	1

Due to time constraints during the meeting, several questions weren't introduced for panel discussion, but will inform future meetings in the Spotlight on South Tacoma series:

QUESTION	NET VOTES	UPVOTES	DOWN-VOTES
What is the city doing to provide South Tacoma with the same amenities as north Tacoma? I.e. benches, plants, green space, crosswalks, pool?	9	14	5
What is the city doing to increase green economic development in South Tacoma?	9	10	1
How is the city going to address low air quality in South Tacoma? Instead of putting this warehouse in our green spaces?	8	9	1

QUESTION	NET VOTES	UPVOTES	DOWN-VOTES
Are there any projects directly addressing houselessness?	8	11	3
What is the city doing to make the streets safer for pedestrians, especially children?	8	10	2
What is city doing about crime in the neighborhood, mail boxes being broken into?	7	10	3
Why is the South Tacoma Way Neighborhood Plan focused on the business district area at 56th and South Tacoma Way?	7	13	6
How is the city going to correct the low tree canopy in South Tacoma (which would correct air, water, soil, light, noise issues)?	6	7	1
Bridge: how can location be legal given the aquifer is viable and the water belongs to Tacoma and aquifers and wetlands are federally protected.	6	8	2
What is the city doing for south Tacoma's houseless neighbors?	6	10	4
How can any of the improvements discussed tonight possibly off-set the devastation that the mega-warehouse will bring?	5	7	2
Sidewalks on orchard between 56th and 74th	4	7	3
Is this event being recorded and available for others to view later?	4	11	7
What is being done to protect residential home owners concerned about over population, lack of tree coverage, no parking and high density dwellings and multi family cottages being built in our neighborhoods?	3	7	4
When will this neighborhood project construction start	3	6	3
What is the city doing to address the speeding on 66th St and other streets with limited stop signs and crosswalks, especially with the additional traffic the megawarehouse will cause?	2	2	0
Why are citizens crime, graffiti response less than businesses	2	2	0
Why is the city starting this process over without having ever followed through on the many issues previously identified in the 1985 and 1999 Strategic Plans which still haven't been addressed?	2	6	4
Will there be air quality monitoring and standards required?	1	1	0
What is the City of Tacoma going to do to increase access & education to the AVERAGE WORKING South Tacoma resident on city decision making?	1	1	0
Regarding zoning... how can an area on top of an aquifer be zoned for commercial use?	0	1	1

QUESTION	NET VOTES	UPVOTES	DOWN-VOTES
What is the plan for the overcrowding of people and cars, etc. that the Bridge Project?	0	4	4
Are there initiatives to provide housing and/or motels for our houseless neighbors?	0	5	5
If built, what measures would be taken to recharge the aquifers with much needed groundwater?	-1	0	1
Planning project timelines?	-2	3	5
Where in Tacoma do the city directors on the panel live?	-2	1	3
when will the bridge industrial project construction be finished	-3	3	6
Why does everything have to be digital? I do not have a smart phone.	-4	4	8
What can or what is the city doing about illegal encampment? And what are they doing about illegal panhandling?	-4	2	6
Please do not have bike lanes. Can there be wider sidewalks for bikes and people. Bike lanes are dirty and not bikeable	-5	3	8

Key Themes

Of the 43 total questions submitted, the key topic areas that emerged were:

- Environment and Sustainability
- Transportation Impacts
- Public Health and Safety
- Community Amenities

KEY TOPIC AREAS	
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Concern about Bridge Industrial Warehouse • Protect the South Tacoma aquifer • Increase tree canopy • Impacts of industrial development on air, water, and soil • Access to parks and greenspace • Green economic development • Support for South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District code updates
TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk connectivity • Need for crosswalks, stop signs • Speeding • Traffic congestion • Potential impacts of freight traffic on pedestrian safety
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Impact Assessments, particularly associated with the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) • Homelessness • Crime, impacts on local businesses • Access to education
COMMUNITY AMENITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public seating • Business district “curb appeal” • Timeline and scope of South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan

Event Photos

