



Public Comments

Meeting: Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Submittal: Written comments only; e-mailed received at planning@cityoftacoma.org by 12:00 noon, on the meeting day

Subjects: Comments are addressing the following Discussion Item on the agenda:

#1 – College Park Historic Special Review District

**No. of
Comments:** 14



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October 4, 2022

City of Tacoma Planning Commission
747 Market St # 345
Tacoma, WA 98402

Re: College Park Historic Special Review District

Dear Commissioners:

On June 3, 2022, I provided a letter to the Commission regarding the proposal to establish the College Park Historic Special Review District. In that letter, I addressed the consistency of the proposal with established standards for historic designation. In summary, I indicated the proposal met all legal requirements for the historic designation and the Commission should recommend approval to the full City Council.

Since my letter there have been some comments raising issues of equity, discrimination and consistency with housing goals for the community. Jeffrey Ryan and other members of the College Park Historic District Association have spent much personal time carefully investigating these concerns, relying as background on the nearly four years of careful work identifying the history of the community.

Many housing developments in the state of Washington, including within the city of Tacoma, began with covenants, conditions and restrictions prohibiting sales to minorities. Municipal ordinances of that nature were stricken because they were not legitimate exercises of police power; see Buchanan v. Warley, 245 U.S. 60 (1917). Later, private covenants of that nature were outlawed in the state of Washington in 1969 by the passage of RCW 49.60.224.

No evidence of any covenants based on race or color has been found in the College Park HPRD.

The College Park community was developed largely on a lot by lot basis with no organized community plan. Most lots were developed by individual builders and the community is distinctive from more recent communities by the wide variety of architectural styles and materials, reflecting styles of the time. No events or circumstances have been uncovered in which such outlawed discrimination - on any basis - took place in the College Park community.

February 8, 2022

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Background information indicates that homes built in the College Park HPRD were designed for and purchased by working class residents of Tacoma. The quality of construction, and the care and attention paid to their homes by community residents, has contributed to the continuing quality of the neighborhood.

As pointed out in such cases as J.W. v. City of Tacoma, 720 F.2d 1126 (1983), land use decisions must be based on evidence, not on conjecture. In that case, the Court overruled a decision made by the Hearing Examiner and approved by the Council of the City which denied a special use permit for a group home for persons previously institutionalized for mental health treatment. The Court held that actions of municipal officials "must be justified by reference to some 'adequate determining principle' or 'consideration and regard for facts or circumstances.'" 720 F.2d at 1132 (citing cases). A land use decision may not be based on "popular prejudices based on inaccurate stereotypes." *Id.* at Footnote 7. This language was in turn cited in a Washington Supreme Court case, Sunderland Services v. City of Pasco, 127 Wn.2d 782, 794, (1995) which overturned a decision to deny a group home for abused or neglected children that was based "on *unsubstantiated* fears rather than substantial evidence" (emphasis in original); 127 Wn.2d at 795.

In the present situation, the facts clearly support a recommendation to approve the College Park HPRD and support it before the City Council. The College Park Historic District has been on the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington State Heritage Register since 2017, both following a rigorous process of justification and review based upon objective standards. Similarly, the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission held fourteen meetings to discuss this proposal over ten months, and approved this application. We urge the Planning Commission to accept these three careful reviews and recommend approval to the City Council, leaving the final decision to them.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. Mr. Ryan will be attending your October 5 meeting to answer any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,



J. Richard Aramburu

JRA:cc

cc: College Park Historic District Association

Planning@cityoftacoma.org

Staff Contact: Reuben McKnight (RMcknight@cityoftacoma.org)

Staff Contact: Wung, Lihuang (lwung@cityoftacoma.org)

From: [Jodi Cook](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [Woodards, Victoria](#); [Ushka, Catherine](#); [Hines, John](#); [Rumbaugh, Sarah](#); [Walker, Kristina](#); [Diaz, Olgy](#); [Daniels, Kiara](#); [Blocker, Keith](#); [Bushnell, Joe](#); [Myers, Rosheida](#); [Griffith, Allyson](#); [McKnight, Reuben](#); [Johnson, Susan](#); [Hoogkamer, Lauren](#); [Olson, Anneka](#); [Landmarks](#); news@tacomanorthslope.org
Subject: North End Neighborhood Council letter of support for College Park nomination to Tacoma Historic Places
Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 1:49:06 PM
Attachments: [Tacoma Planning Commission Letter .pdf](#)
[NSHD Comments_CollegeParkNomination_09212022.pdf](#)

Respected Members of our Tacoma City Council; City Staff and the Tacoma Planning Commission,

The attached NENC letter supports the College Park nomination, but also addresses a concern regarding the Planning Commissions role, to override the Landmarks Commission recommendation to approve College Park, and stop the process from moving forward for review and consideration by the City of Tacoma Council. The only means to do so has an unrealistic timeline and benchmark level of support to be achieved by CP residents.

Additionally, our letter references the North Slope Historic District's letter to the Planning Commission, and it too is attached.

Lastly, please review the attached article link just published, documenting the City of Buffalo's historic districts positive impacts regarding boosting their local economy and racial equity.

https://buffalonews.com/news/local/new-report-buffalos-historic-districts-boost-economy-racial-equity/article_ec6cbe4e-3ddb-11ed-8b6a-23ed1b6717e9.html

Sincerely,

Jodi Cook,
On behalf of NENC Board

P.S. City webpage did not show an email address for Chief Equity Officer Lisa Woods nor Director of Planning and Development, Peter Huffman. Please forward.

From: [Brett Santhuff](#)
To: [Wung, Lihuang](#)
Cc: [McKnight, Reuben](#)
Subject: Fwd: College Park Historical District comment
Date: Thursday, September 22, 2022 11:11:04 PM

Lihuang (& Reuben) -

Just forwarding this message to you which I received sent directly to me for Commission records. I'm not sure if other commissioners received the same message.

I don't believe I made any comments suggesting any supporters or others commenting on the College Park Historic District as racist, although I know there were some commissioners whose comments ventured into this area. I hope staff have had the opportunity to work with those commissioners to understand their comments and clear up misconceptions. I hope our findings of fact are clear and well reasoned.

Thanks, Brett

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Barbara Cordis-Lowe** <bcordislowe@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Sep 23, 2022, 11:24 AM
Subject: College Park Historical District comment
To: <bsanthuff@gmail.com>

Brett,

It is a shame, by labeling the College Park Historical District supporters RACISTS you have squandered a rare opportunity to work together and bring Tacoma's past and future together. By dismissing this opportunity and any other attempts to come to a common good with your neighbors, I can only conclude that you are in the back pocket of big real estate developers, who could care less about affordable housing. I am not opposed to change or social justice, but your approach is all wrong. It would be great to meet, have a conversation face to face, instead of hiding behind Zoom. But that is not going to happen, so enjoy your spoils as you turn Tacoma into yet another failed big scheme.

Barbara Cordis-Lowe

From: [J Corso](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: College Park: Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your Community
Date: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 10:35:47 AM

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I support the nomination of College Park to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

The City of Tacoma recognizes the value of its neighborhoods and is encouraging Tacomans to proactively make their neighborhood a distinctive destination.

College Park residents have responded with a well-researched nomination to add the neighborhood to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places in celebration of its PNW interpretation of arts-and-crafts, residential architecture.

Place Economics summarizes 24 reasons to vote in support of historic preservation. You can find their report at [https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.placeeconomics.com/resources/twenty-four-reasons-historic-preservation-is-good-for-your-community/!!CRCbkflfVWhap28HXO8u51VLhLKANGstOB1awUkVote9BH99eZ3ONQaRJV_ysO_RjW27Bt7NduNQ72xPPm5yE5RTavpVK8\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.placeeconomics.com/resources/twenty-four-reasons-historic-preservation-is-good-for-your-community/!!CRCbkflfVWhap28HXO8u51VLhLKANGstOB1awUkVote9BH99eZ3ONQaRJV_ysO_RjW27Bt7NduNQ72xPPm5yE5RTavpVK8$)

Please forward the College Park nomination to Council with a vote to add the neighborhood to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,
John Geoffrey Corso
701 N J St.
Tacoma

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Esther Day](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: College Park Historic Special Review District
Date: Monday, October 3, 2022 7:14:51 PM

Dear Planning Commission and Planning Department

I am writing in support of the College Park Historic Special Review District.

Thank you,
Esther Day

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: alexfazekasboone@gmail.com
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: College Park Historic District
Date: Thursday, September 29, 2022 6:57:01 PM

Hey Tacoma Planning Crew!

I am the owner of 1102/1104 N Pine St, which is a duplex we own and rent, boring in every way architecturally, but located in the proposed historic area. It is not one of the homes with brick or Tudor character in which the district is trying to protect. I don't feel like it's fair for this home to be included in the newly proposed area as we literally sit right on the dividing street, and we are not part of the homes that the folks are trying to preserve. This house is an ugly 1966 duplex and I would hope that we would not be made to preserve the terrible design. If our home is included in the district it will make doing things like upgrading siding, windows, roofs, etc much more difficult for us, and much more expensive which is not fair to us nor the intent of the district. Thanks for your time.

-Alex Fazekas-Boone
2533763875

From: [Ken J. Johnson](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [Crabtree, Mary](#)
Subject: Fwd: College Park District Proposal - Comment
Date: Sunday, October 2, 2022 2:49:51 PM

Hello,

With the meeting on Wednesday Oct 5th, I wanted to follow up to make sure my previous comments were included as they are still the same opinion of both myself and my wife.

Please see original email below.

Thank you,
-Ken

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Planning** <planning@cityoftacoma.org>
Date: Mon, May 23, 2022 at 8:41 AM
Subject: RE: College Park District Proposal - Comment
To: Ken J. Johnson <kenjjohnson@gmail.com>

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson,

Thank you for the comments, which I will include in the Planning Commission's public hearing record.

LIHUANG WUNG

Senior Planner

City of Tacoma – Planning & Development Services (PDS)

(253) 591-5682

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From: Ken J. Johnson <kenjjohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 21, 2022 3:26 PM
To: Planning <planning@cityoftacoma.org>
Subject: College Park District Proposal - Comment

Hello,

We are residents of the College Park district. My wife and I would like to **firmly reject** the proposal to establish the College Park Historical Special Review District.

We have many reasons for being against this proposal and designation, from issues with the organizers of the proposal, to all the missing details of such a proposal.

One of our biggest issues is quite simple, if we want to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to enhance our absolutely nothing special property, how does a review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission help this already lengthy and cumbersome process?

Please, know your neighborhood before you start imposing more requirements on individual property owners investments.

Thank you,

Ken & Kendra Johnson

From: [Brett Santhuff](#)
To: [Wung, Lihuang](#); [McKnight, Reuben](#)
Subject: Fwd: College Park Historic District Nomination
Date: Saturday, September 24, 2022 10:45:40 PM

Lihuang, Reuben - Forwarding this email which appears to have been sent to all commissioners but not copied to staff.

Thanks. Brett

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tom Lowe <tlowebroker@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Sep 25, 2022, 2:33 AM
Subject: College Park Historic District Nomination
To: <bsanthuff@gmail.com>, <TPCDorner@gmail.com>, <strobelski@gmail.com>, <alyssatorrez5@gmail.com>, <robb.krehbiel@gmail.com>, <assteele@msn.com>, <brettmarlo18@gmail.com>, <chris.tacoma@gmail.com>, <matthewgmartenson@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I'll be blunt. I believe you are disconnected from the community. Intentionally or not, this commission is now using Zoom to hide from the public. Zoom meetings that silence outside comments are not *public*. If you were in front of the people, you'd hear how unpopular some of your views are. I am so tired of members of this commission using whatever the prevailing equity trope is without evidence. If you read the College Park Nomination (have you??), you will understand why these buildings are worth the effort of a Historic District's protection. As a community, with the support of the Landmarks Commission, we can protect this history for future generations and keep our diverse housing as a place of interest in this historic city.

The Nomination has a neighborhood majority (53% support by Landmark Commission count) in a community that was recently proven to be one of the city's most diverse and densely populated areas. Please see the 2018 University of WA study here:
<https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/maps-race-tacoma.shtml>

I take great pause at Rev. Anthony Steele's equity comments made during the September 7, 2022, PC meeting. Offensively, he equates building preservation with anti-equitable practices. The UW study proves his statements are without merit. College Park is the exact opposite of what Commissioner Steele claims it to be.

My neighbors and I have done everything in the City's charter calls for to protect these historic buildings and forward the Nomination to the City Council for final approval. Our efforts have been a community effort - door-knocking, phone calls, postcards, *and actual* public meetings on the UPS campus. The Nomination is recognized Nationally and by the State. We have majority support. If you don't follow the rules, I have to ask, what else are we supposed to do?

Please follow your charter and pass the Nomination on to the City Council.

Thank you,

Tom Lowe
1002 N. Junett St.
Tacoma, WA 90406
323-791-7705



Tacoma Planning Commission
747 Market St. #345
Tacoma, WA 98402

Date: 10/3/2022

Re: College Park Historic District Nomination

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The NENC has supported numerous historic nominations at the City, State and National levels -- both residential districts and individual buildings, both commercial and public, and public spaces. While recent examples are associated within our neighborhood council's boundaries set by the City of Tacoma, our pride is in the history and extraordinary historic architecture of buildings in neighborhoods throughout the city. It's what makes our city unique and brings future residents and visitors to experience what today's residents appreciate.

Of equal significance are the efforts by community nonprofits such as Historic Tacoma, which researches the history of buildings and those who once dwelled in often modest homes, residents whose life efforts served to make Tacoma a better place for people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. It also works with families whose heritage is connected to Tacoma and their forefathers' and mothers' contributions to the city. It is why Historic Tacoma successfully nominated buildings to the Historic Register, such as the Hilltop's Nettie Asberry House, and has led efforts to identify and inventory similar historic properties representing this diverse history in neighborhoods all around the city.

Newer revelations of our lost history (which were not acknowledged and thus not honored in the past) include the contributions of indigenous peoples whose lands we all reside and work upon, and all people of color. Embracing Tacoma's history in all its forms, good and bad, will only continue to enrich our "Grit City" heritage and guide our continuing evolution as "The City of Destiny" for all.

Regarding the College Park Historic District nomination, the NENC board is reiterating our previous support for this collection of homes to become designated as another Tacoma Historic District. Indeed we hope to support many other historic nominations in the future from throughout the City, of all kinds.

Of concern has been comments by some past and present Planning Commissioners, associating historic preservation with racism. Attached is a letter from the North Slope Historic District dated 9/21/22, outlining concerns that the NENC board also shares, and we ask for the Planning Commission and City leadership to respond to the points raised.

We are also requesting that the Planning Commission vote on the merits of the College Park nomination based upon standing rules outlined in the Municipal Code that govern historic preservation policy in Tacoma, just as the Landmarks Commission did in its 4-1 vote in supported of the nomination following an exhaustive and thorough review. The Planning Commissioners job is to ascertain if new zoning changes, e.g. the Home in Tacoma Plan, might be curbed if historic preservation status were to be approved. We remind you that Principal Planner for Home in Tacoma, Elliott Barnett, assured the Landmarks Preservation Commission when this question was raised that this would **not** be the case. As City staff have indicated time and again, approval of the College Park Historic District nomination would have no bearing and no impact on the implementation of the Home in Tacoma Plan. For Commissioners to say otherwise would misrepresent the facts.

Another concern is the higher authority role that the Planning Commission is taking with respect to another City commission, i.e. the Landmarks Preservation Commission. This is atypical, when comparing other Commissions, that may seek input from others but who ultimately have their recommendations forwarded directly to the City Council for a decision. Based on comments made by some Planning Commissioners, it is apparent any expertise they have on land use planning is not similarly evident with respect to historic preservation. It may be unrealistic to expect the hardest working city commission, overseeing the complicated subject of planning and development to also be experts in historic preservation. This is why the Council has established the Landmarks Preservation Commission's role.

Our request is that the Planning Commission base its decision to move forward on what governs Tacoma's historic preservation rules today. By introducing the idea that today's residents of College Park are somehow "racist" whereas Narrowmoor on the West Slope, having acknowledged their racist Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCRs) is not, is not only illogical and unfair, it has no relationship to the actual history of Tacoma's pre-WWII neighborhoods. Unlike Narrowmoor for example, there is no evidence whatsoever of any exclusionary CCRs or deeds in College Park. It was not a "planned" subdivision guided by CCR's built by a developer and often managed by exclusionary homeowner associations. Moreover, homes and neighborhoods built in Tacoma's pre-WWII era like College Park are on the smallest lots and have the highest density when compared to more recently developed areas, e.g. North East Tacoma.

College Park's residents look to honor the architectural history that these homes represent, for today and tomorrow's residents, whomever they might be.

Sincerely,

The North End Neighborhood Council

Peter Bennett, Chair
Brad Stave, Vice Chair
Alex Morganroth, Secretary
Jodi Cook, Treasurer
Joe Tieger (absent)
Georgette Reuter
Tye Minckler
Jill Jensen



North Slope Historic District

908 North M St.
Tacoma WA 98403

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MELINDA GORDON
ALEX STRAUB

September 21, 2022

Tacoma Planning Commission
747 Market St. #345
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: College Park Historic District Nomination
Response to Commissioner Comments at September 7 Meeting

Dear Commissioners:

After listening to the presentation and comments regarding the College Park city historic district nomination at the last Planning Commission meeting, we wanted to provide some comments in response.

First, the contention that restrictive covenants affected the development of College Park is unsupported. There is no evidence that the College Park neighborhood ever had restrictive covenants, as some other Tacoma neighborhoods did. In particular, there is no evidence that College Park and the North Slope neighborhoods had the “same type of covenants” as the restrictive covenants used in the West Slope neighborhood, or that they had any type of covenants. If the Planning Commission has this type of evidence, we would be interested in seeing it. We have looked and have not found any.

Second, in the absence of such restrictive covenants, there is no evidence that people of color were legally “not allowed” to live in the College Park and North Slope neighborhoods. Homeowners were certainly not prevented from discriminating in whom they sold or rented to, and we agree that that happened. However, there was no legal document that prevented selling or renting to people of color as there was in the West Slope and some other Tacoma neighborhoods that had restrictive covenants.

There is also no evidence that the HOLC maps prevented people of color from living in College Park or the North Slope. By the time the maps came into use for lending, both neighborhoods were largely built out. Both neighborhoods were nonetheless included in those maps, and while College Park had favorable designations, the North Slope was designated mostly “yellow” or “definitely declining.” The notes to the HOLC map say that this was based largely on the presence of recent immigrants and on the fact that the houses were older and not in

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the best condition. In addition, nine blocks were designated “red” or “hazardous” because three Black families lived on those blocks. We have evidence that other Black families lived in the neighborhood beyond those blocks. In fact, Black families lived in the North Slope since at least 1889 when Black leader John Conna and his family built their house here. In contrast to the North Slope, the College Park neighborhood was mostly designated “blue,” which meant that although the neighborhood was “desirable” it was mostly built out by that time. Despite these differences, the fact that both neighborhoods were largely built out by the time the HOLC maps were created supports the conclusion that those maps had little if any influence on the racial diversity of the neighborhoods.

Lastly, the evidence provided to the Planning Commission on August 3 sets out the current racial makeup of the College Park neighborhood and how it has changed between 1950 and 2020, and compares it to the North Slope neighborhood, the City of Tacoma, and Pierce County. See pages 201-207 of the August 3 Planning Commission packet. This information shows that Census Tract 607, which includes College Park, went from nearly 100 percent White in 1960 to just under 75 percent White in 2020. Census Tract 607, which includes the North Slope, went from nearly 100 percent White in 1960 to 78.3 percent White in 2020. We ask that this information, already in the Commission’s record, be reviewed by the Commission in its consideration of College Park’s nomination.

Calling an entire neighborhood “racist” based on historical practices that predated the current residents by decades, and that very likely post-dated and did not influence the development of the neighborhood, not only ignores facts but is highly divisive. Please include these comments in the Commission record regarding the College Park nomination.

Sincerely,

/s/

Deborah L. Cade
Chair, NSHD Board of Directors

Geoff Corso
Treasurer, NSHD Board

Julie Turner
Secretary, NSHD Board

Marshall McClintock
Member, NSHD Board

From: [James Reuter](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: We Support the College Park Nomination to Become Designated as a Tacoma Historical District
Date: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 11:59:36 AM

Planning Commission,

As long time residents in the Proctor area (and having relatives living here dating back over 100 years), we value the historical significance of this area.

And we applaud our City's past efforts to save such historical buildings as downtown's Union Station and our neighborhood's Washington Elementary School.

Of equal importance to preserving these buildings are our neighborhood's historically relevant houses within our City. And one such significant neighborhood is College Park.

After reading about College Park on the Historic Tacoma website, it's clear that the residents of College Park have gone above and beyond in collecting data to support their nomination to be a Historical District. In fact the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) "lauded the College Park nomination as one of the best and well-documented it had ever received and considered".

Some oppose this nomination because they say that as a Historic District, future housing growth will be prevented. Yet, the City of Tacoma's Planning and Development Services Department Historic Preservation Office brochure states that "Historic Districts do not, however, freeze a neighborhood in time or prevent change from occurring or restrict the uses allowed by zoning."

In closing, we fully support College Park's nomination as another one of Tacoma's unique Historical Districts.

Georgette and Jim Reuter
Tacoma Residents

From: [Gayle Rieber](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Facts support College Park as Historic District
Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 8:47:03 PM

I'm a longtime resident of the College Park district. I've been following the discussion of our application among Planning Commission members. I've observed a climate of hearsay in conversation about the CP application. I would like to see evidence of fact-checking and consideration of data.

1 COLLEGE PARK SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A HISTORIC CODE DESIGNATION AS SPECIFIED IN TACOMA'S MUNICIPAL CODE (13.07.060)

- A majority of owners support the CP designation
- The application contains a catalog of each dwelling in the district, giving its history with illustrations.
- The district abuts the Buckley Addition Historic District and thus satisfies a recommendation in the Code.

2. DIVERSITY AND DENSITY.

A UW study shows that the CP district is one of Tacoma's MOST DIVERSE and densely populated areas of the city.

The UW study of the census entitled "MappingTacoma Race and Segregation" reveals that the CP district has a larger population of nonwhites than ANY census block in Tacoma except for one census block in the Hilltop,

Based on this data, I believe a fair-minded person would support the designation of College Park as a Historic District in Tacoma.

Gayle Rieber
2902 N 20th St
98406



October 5, 2022

Tacoma Planning Commission
Attn. Lihuang Wung
Planning and Development Services Department
747 Market Street Room 345
Tacoma, WA 98402

Re: College Park Historic Special Review District, Written comments for the October 5th meeting of the Planning Commission

Dear Planning Commission members,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the commission in support of our nomination efforts.

I am writing you in the hopes of correcting misleading statements made at the September 7th meeting of the Planning Commission, regarding the demographics of our neighborhood and suggestions of restrictions based on race within our community. Demographic information has been provided to both Landmarks and Planning Commissions over the course of this review process and there is no evidence of any restrictions within our neighborhood based on race in the past or currently. We would like these misstatements corrected for the public record.

At the September meeting, It was suggested that demographic information was not provided to the Commission, when in fact this information was provided by city staff in their August 3rd TPC packet. Similar information was also supplied within our letter to the Commission on June 1st, along with supporting documents as part of the Public Hearing process and in the hopes of answering outstanding question by the Commission. This information was readily available for your deliberation and discussion on Sept. 7th.

As an architect that has focused much of my career in working with existing and historic structures, I have been researching Tacoma's history and its built environment for over 35 years. As a resident of the College Park National Historic District, I have been gathering information on the history of this district for over 25 years. In that time I have found no evidence of racism specific to this area of the city. No evidence of any housing restrictions by ordinance or deed. No covenants attached to the land or structures recorded with the County Auditor's office. No restrictions based on race in the College Park area or the surrounding older neighborhoods within Tacoma.

Based on my research, restrictive covenants began to show up in Tacoma in the late 1930's in what were then the newer housing developments in the city. Of the twelve plats found to date, with restrictive language based on race, all were established between 1939 and the early 1950's in large scale developments. None have been found in the neighborhoods established early in the city's history. By 1937, the last year of the streetcars in Tacoma, 85% of the homes within the College Park area were already in place, prior to these kinds of restrictive covenants appearing within the city.

I was surprised, as many, to hear the comments made at the September 7th meeting. Comments made with no reference of supporting documentation or justification. A series of misleading

statements made by a City Officer for no apparent reason or cause, these statements were hurtful and not helpful in discussing the merits for the creation of a historic district in Tacoma. In the week that followed the meeting, I reached out to Commissioner Steele, through multiple sources including the city, to discuss these issues in more depth and to assure him that our efforts and the history of this area are not as he has asserted. It was my hope to fully understand his thoughts and reason for making such statements, but we have not received any reply to date. This is unfortunate and a missed opportunity for an open dialog on the subject.

Our history, our community, our area, our nomination are not racist as Mr. Steele stated. Were these statements done to discredit our nomination efforts or perhaps historic districts in general or was he simply misled on the history of our community? We unfortunately do not know the reasons for his claims, but these statements are not supported by the history of this area, its current demographics or the thoughtful people that live in this neighborhood and surrounding community.

Based on a University of Washington's study, a review of US census information over time within Tacoma and Pierce County, noted in our previous letter, the demographics of our area shows that we have one of the highest population densities in the city and a diverse population that has been growing more diverse with each census. While I don't agree that demographics alone should govern approval of an historic nomination within the city, we clearly meet the baseline for approval suggested by those who have tried to make this an issue against our nomination.

We prepared our nomination for this area based on its history, context and character. A nomination that met the high standards and review required of a National and State listings and submitted this nomination to the city based on the stated requirements set by the TMC. These are the same requirements noted for any city neighborhood wishing to be listed on the local historic register within the city of Tacoma. We have shown that we have the community support for our efforts and we have shown that we meet the city's stated goals and requirements. We simply are looking for a fair review of our nomination based on facts not misinformation or personal bias.

We look forward to your recommendations and hope that you support our community effort for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. Thank you for your time and consideration of our nomination. Please take the time to read the nomination and supporting documentation provided by both city staff and our past letters to the Commission. I hope to be in attendance in person at the meeting on the 5th of October, if you have any further questions regarding our nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Jeff Ryan, Architect
College Park Historic District Association

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

City of Tacoma Planning Commission

Via Email: planning@cityoftacoma.org

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I am writing, again, today concerning the proposed College Park Historic District in North Tacoma.

As I have expressed in prior correspondence to the Planning Commission and the City Council, **my spouse and I very much support the designation for our historic neighborhood.** We are among the **majority** of residents in our district who favor this nomination.

We have lived at our home on North 19th Street (between Alder and Cedar) for more than six years. We searched for many months before finding just the right home in Tacoma. We chose the North End because of its rich history and proximity to my mother-in-law in Ruston.

Contrary to what has been said about our neighborhood by some designation opponents, we are *not* an affluent, white neighborhood trying to protect our low density and spacious backyards. (In fact, at least on our block, no one has a large backyard.) Our district has a history of non-white residents dating back a century, as noted in a [University of Washington study](#).

It is time for the Planning Commission to endorse the College Park Historic District designation. **The neighborhood should not wait any longer.**

I look forward to favorable action at tonight's meeting.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

James Alexander Strautman
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