



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

Christopher Karnes, Chair
Anthony Steele, Vice-Chair
Morgan Dorner
Robb Krehbiel
Brett Marlo
Matthew Martenson
Jordan Rash
Payton Swinford
(District No. 4 - vacant)

Public Comments

Meeting: Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Submittal: Written comments received at planning@cityoftacoma.org

Subjects: Comments are addressing the following Discussion Item(s) on the agenda:

F2 – Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Program

No. of Comments: Two



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.

Quite some time ago, PC had strongly instructed PDS to review surrounding municipalities' groundwater/aquifer recharge limitations of impervious surface, but that still hasn't seemed to have been done. An impervious surface policy should have been put in place decades ago, but (when residents brought the oversight to the City's attention) the city should at least have already been reviewing similar policies from surrounding cities. The amendment application had been submitted in 2021, but while other cities and the county are now updating their aquifer recharge critical area policy, Tacoma still has none.

As an example, here is Pierce County's most current Critical Areas code update draft ordinance:

<https://online.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/council/model/otDocDownload.cfm?id=39255868&fileName=O2024-553s%20Ordinance%20with%20Exhibits.pdf>

Considering the immense importance of the South Tacoma Groundwater Aquifer in the near future, Tacoma's protection policy should be even more restrictive than the county's (and Tacoma should have been advocating to the county to protect the outlying recharge areas affecting the STGPD), but at least this example could be a start for incorporating our first CARA protections (which Tacoma has been out of compliance of, for decades).

Instead, from the community's view, it seems PDS proposes their prepared plans for PC to pass (so PDS is essentially acting as pre-decision makers, not as simply staff assistants for PC), and then PDS is able to tell the community that their hands are tied (since PDS must follow the PC approved plan, even though it's the plan PDS, themselves, created).

So, I'm requesting that this commission please bump PDS out its holding pattern, and insist for appropriate examination of Critical Aquifer Recharge Area, impervious surface limitations — not just a consultant's compilation of general information, but actual focused study of this particular geohydrographic environmentally sensitive area, specifically pertaining to and directly supporting any final code update conclusions.

Thank you,
Heidi Stephens