

Public Services & Parks

Existing Conditions Analysis

Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Public services provided within the study area include fire and emergency services, police services, schools, parks and open space.

Figure PSP-1 shows the locations of public service facilities in the study area. Descriptions of public service providers are included in the following sections.

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Services

The Tacoma Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency services in Tacoma, including the study area, and in Fife, Fircrest and unincorporated areas within Pierce County Fire District No. 10. The Department has joint service agreements in place with Pierce County Fire District No. 10 and the City of Fircrest (City of Tacoma Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2014).

Resource inventory

The Department operates out of 15 staffed stations. It has 13 fire engines, four ladder trucks, five medic companies, two squad companies and three battalion command vehicles. An on-duty hazardous materials response team is located at Fire Station 12, in Fife. A cross-staffed technical rescue team is located at Station 8, in South Tacoma. Cross-staffed marine emergency response fireboats are operated out of Station 14, in North Tacoma. As of 2015, the Department had 389.5 full-time equivalent staff (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2015).

Station 7 and Station 8 are the closest fire stations to the study area. They are located at 5488 S Warner St and 4911 South Alaska St, respectively (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

Performance

During 2014 the Department responded to 41,904 incidents. Of these, 1,029 were found to be fire incidents, 28,877 were found to be emergency medical services (EMS) incidents and 11,993 were found to be other types of incidents (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2014). Examples of other types of incidents include hazardous conditions search and rescue and responses for automatic fire alarms (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2015).

The Department monitors the time elapsed from when it receives a 911 call to when the first response unit arrives on-scene at an incident. This is referred to as total response time and is considered to be an industry best practice in performance reporting. The Department tracks total response time for different

types of areas including urban, suburban and rural areas (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2014). The study area is in an urban area. The total response time goal for this area for fire and EMS is six and a half minutes. Current total response time performance for this area is roughly eight and a half minutes for 90 percent of critical incidents (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2015).

Fire Department Planning

In 2011 the Department completed a comprehensive assessment of its facilities needs with the goal of more effectively mitigating risk to the community and as part of its Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) reaccreditation effort. It found that the Department needs to replace and remodel existing facilities and create a campus facility to improve operational efficiency. Seventy-two percent of existing fire stations and facilities are 40 to 100 years old and many are well beyond their useful life expectancy (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2011). Based on the Department's facilities assessment, the two stations closest to the study area are in need of improvement. Station 7 needs replacement and Station 8 needs remodeling.

Funding to carry out the Department's Facilities Master Plan has not yet been secured. City staff had planned to propose a multi-year levy or capital bond to help finance new facilities but this was put on hold due to the Great Recession. Also due to the Great Recession, funding for the Department has decreased in recent years, which has led to reductions in staffing and the closing of one fire station located in the City's tideflats (1015 E F St) (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014). The Department has been focused on identifying and implementing operational efficiencies to help balance current resources with projected increases in demand for services (City of Tacoma Fire Department Fire Department, 2014).

The City's 2015-2020 Capital Facilities Program includes plans for maintenance and renovation of existing fire facilities. It also calls for major improvements to the Marine Security and Operations Center and construction of facilities in the tideflats that can be used to base first responders (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

POLICE

Services

The Tacoma Police Department provides law enforcement in the City of Tacoma, including the study area. The Department's services include patrol, investigations, special weapons and tactical response, marine services, traffic enforcement/investigations, special investigations (narcotics and vice), animal control and compliance, officer training, youth education, crime prevention and community-oriented policing (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014). The Department has a contract with South Sound 911 to provide regional dispatch and records management (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014). As of summer 2015 the Department was in the process of renegotiating its jail service (City of Tacoma, 2015).

Resource Inventory

The Department is organized into three Bureaus: Administrative Services, Investigations and Operations. The Administrative Services Bureau oversees divisions that are responsible for the investigation of police

conduct and citizen complaints and that manage hiring, accreditation, finance, crime analysis, information technology and community relations. The Operations Bureau includes a Patrol Division that provides 24/7 patrol coverage and a Community Policing Division that focuses on prevention and crime reduction through collaborative efforts with the community and public and private entities. The Investigations Bureau conducts follow-up investigations of crimes against persons and property (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

The Department's inventory of facilities includes Police Headquarters, six substations, a warehouse that houses Fleet Services and Police Special Operations, and a firing range (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014). All facilities are within Tacoma city limits. The City's 2015-2016 Adopted Biennial Operating and Capital Budget provides funding for 375.5 full-time equivalent Police Department staff, including ten new positions in Community Oriented Policing Services (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

The study area contains Police Headquarters and the Department's warehouse. These facilities are located at 3701 S Pine St and 3639 S Pine St respectively (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).



Police Headquarters

Performance

The Department has a number of metrics that it uses to track performance. A selection of these metrics is provided in Table PSP-1, including the Department's 2014 performance level and 2015 target.

Table PSP-1. Police Department Metrics (Citywide)

Metric	2014 Actual	2015 Target
Average Response Time Average police response time to emergency calls	3:54	4:00
Citizen Complaints Number of citizen complaints about police conduct	142	122
Crimes Against Persons Includes homicide, sex offenses, assault and abduction	21.1 per 1,000 residents	19.6 per 1,000 residents
Crimes Against Property Includes arson, burglary, destruction/vandalism, fraud, larceny, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property	101.1 per 1,000 residents	102.1 per 1,000 residents
Case Clearance Rate for Group A Offenses Calculated by the number of incidents and the cases cleared by arrest or exception	20%	27%
Fatal Traffic Accidents Number of fatalities resulting from traffic accidents	9	6

Source: City of Tacoma 2015-2016 Adopted Biennial Operating & Capital Budget

The Department tracks crime statistics including information on the number of crimes against persons, crimes against property, crimes against society and non-fatal traffic accidents. Crimes against persons and crimes against property are defined in Table PSP-1. Crimes against society include narcotics, pornography, prostitution and weapon law violations. Non-fatal traffic accidents include those that result in injuries as well as those that do not (City of Tacoma Police Department, 2016).

The population of the study area is approximately 3,800 (3 Square Blocks, 2016). In 2015, the Department recorded 185 crimes against persons and 1,710 crimes against property in the study area. This translates to 49 crimes against persons per 1,000 residents and 450 crimes against property per 1,000 residents. These ratios are much higher than the Department's 2015 targets and indicate that criminal activity is a challenge facing the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

Over the past five years in the study area, the number of crimes against persons has decreased and the number of crimes against property has fluctuated but remained relatively constant. The number of crimes against society has decreased. The number of non-fatal traffic accidents has increased (Figure PSP-2). Trends in the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (RGC) mirror those of the study area.

Police Department Planning

The majority of Department facilities are in good condition. This is partly due to the fact that in 2002 voters approved a bond that funded construction of a new Police Headquarters, construction of four new substations and a remodel of the warehouse facility (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

The City's 2015-2020 Capital Facilities Program includes plans for improvements to the two law enforcement facilities located in the study area. For Police Headquarters, there are plans to provide Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) improvements. For the warehouse, there are plans to conduct building site and interior improvements and to replace rooftop heating/ventilation units that have reached the end of their useful life. The Capital Facilities Program also includes plans for improvements to a substation located in the Eastside Neighborhood (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

The City's 2015-2016 Adopted Biennial Operating and Capital Budget lists major Police Department initiatives for 2015 – 2016. One of these is to develop a new strategic plan. Other notable Department initiatives include working towards Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Reaccreditation and working to reduce crime through operational tools such as predictive police software (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

SCHOOLS

Services

Tacoma Public Schools is the third largest district in Washington State serving more than 28,000 children in kindergarten through grade 12 in the City of Tacoma and the greater area, including the study area. In partnership with parents and the community, the District provides a comprehensive educational program designed to be rigorous, individualized and to enable students to contribute to a changing and diverse world. In addition to educational services, the District offers student support services and community resources (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).

Resource Inventory

The District has 35 elementary schools, nine middle schools, five comprehensive high schools, 14 alternative learning sites and a number of facilities used for support services and other purposes. These facilities are located throughout neighborhoods in Tacoma and Fircrest. The District has more than 5,000 employees (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).

The District has two facilities in the study area: the Madison School and the District Bus Center. The Madison School provides programs including Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Family Literacy, Head Start and Indian Education. The District Bus Center is where buses are stored when not in use. The two facilities are located next door to each other at 3101 S 43rd St and 4002 S Cedar St. There are no elementary, middle or high schools located in the study area. Based on current District attendance areas, students living within the study area attend Reed Elementary School (1802 S 36th St), Giadrone Middle School (4902 South Alaska St) and Foss High School (2112 S Tyler St) (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).



Madison School

Performance

Graduation rates are a common performance measure for school districts. Tacoma Public Schools has been working to address low graduation rates over the past decade and set a new target of 85 percent in 2012 (Tacoma Public Schools, 2014). This target was significantly higher than the 2011 graduation rate of 62 percent and the 2010 graduation rate of 55 percent (Tacoma Public Schools, 2013).

In 2014 the district-wide graduation rate was 78 percent, the highest since the state began officially tracking the statistic in 2003 (Tacoma Public Schools, 2014). Foss High School, which students from the study area attend, had a graduation rate of 74 percent (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).

Another performance measure for school districts is how students fare on standardized tests. In Washington State, the Measurements of Student Progress (grades 3 through 8) and the High School Proficiency Exam are used to test students. According to the District's 2013-2014 Performance Report, students in the District scored lower than the state average in all areas of these assessments (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015). Foss High School students scored about the same as the district average in all areas except for End of Course (EOC) math and biology, where they scored lower. Giadrone Middle School students scored at the same level or higher than the district average in all areas. Reed Elementary School students scored worse than the district average in all areas except 3rd Grade reading (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).

School District Plans

The Tacoma School District is currently in the process of updating its strategic plan and long range capital facilities plan (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015). These plans will guide future District services and construction activities.

The District is currently replacing and modernizing 14 schools and making nearly 200 other improvements to District facilities using bond funds approved by voters in 2013. The 14 schools planned for replacement or modernization have an average age of 74 years and are located throughout the

District. None of the schools in the attendance areas for students living in the study area are planned for replacement or modernization, but they are planned for improvements and safety upgrades (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015).

In 2015 the District launched a boundary review and adjustment process to redraw elementary and middle school boundaries to accommodate the 2016 reopening of Wainwright Intermediate School, located at 130 Alameda Ave in Fircrest. This could potentially impact the attendance areas for students living in the study area, given that the adjacent elementary and middle school attendance areas contain Wainwright Intermediate School. As part of the boundary review process the District may also alter boundaries for the future reconstruction and reopening of Hunt Middle School, which is tentatively scheduled for 2020 (Tacoma Public Schools, 2015). Hunt Middle School is located about a mile north of Wainwright Intermediate School in Tacoma.

PUBLIC PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Services

Metro Parks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma work in collaboration to provide active parks and passive open spaces in Tacoma, including the study area. Active parks are intended to meet community needs for a wide range of recreational activities, such as participating in cultural and recreational programs, playing team sports, practicing individual physical activities such as running or bicycling, and playing on play equipment. Passive open space, on the other hand, is intended to be left primarily in its natural state with minimal facility improvements such as soft surface trails and benches. Both Metro Parks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma provide cultural and recreational programming for community members at their facilities (City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services (PDS), 2016).

Resource Inventory

There are approximately 1,480 acres of active parks and 3,900 acres of passive open space within the City of Tacoma (City of Tacoma PDS, 2015). Park and open space areas are distributed throughout the City.

There are four public parks and open space assets within or intersecting with the study area (Figure PSP-3). Lincoln Heights Park is a neighborhood park of about two acres in size with basketball, picnic and play equipment located in the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood north of Costco, in the RGC. The 40th Street Community Garden is a new community garden a third of an acre in size located next to the Madison School. South Park is an active park located partially within the boundaries of the study area along South Tacoma Way between S 43rd St and S 48th St. It continues south of the study area. The portion of the park in the study area is about four acres and includes landscaped areas, trees and utility buildings. The portion just south of the study area includes play equipment, a sprayground, a community center, gardens and tree stands. The Water Flume Line Trail runs through South Park and follows the western border of the study area along South Tacoma Way. The Trail is a bicycle and pedestrian facility, and provides opportunities for physical activity.



Lincoln Heights Park



40th Street Community Garden

Other notable green spaces near the study area include the privately owned Tacoma Cemetery and Oakwook Hill Cemetery. These two facilities are located adjacent to each other just south of the study area, next to South Park. They provide visual access to nature and are open for walking during certain hours.

There are at least two private spaces which serve an open space function to some degree. The Tacoma Mall has begun to provide outdoor gathering space through a recent expansion to the south side of the building. The expansion added an outdoor plaza area which serves as an entrance to the Mall as well as a place for social interaction and access to fresh air. The Friends Church maintains a Peace Garden which to some degree is accessible to immediate residents.

Performance

The City's draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan establishes level of service standards for active parks and open space. One of these standards is that there should be an active park within three quarters of a mile of all residents. Gap analysis conducted by 3 Square Blocks shows that there is a small area in the southeast corner of the study area that does not meet this standard (Figure PSP-4). There is no park in the center of the study area, the closest parks are near the edges.

Another level of service standard for parks in the City's draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan is that there should be 3.0 acres of local park space for every 1,000 people. There is a total of six acres of local park space in the study area, for a current service level of 1.6 acres of local park space per 1,000 people (3 Square Blocks, 2015). This is less than the City's standard and indicates that the study area is underserved by park facilities. There is a much lower level of service for the RGC alone, 0.5 acres of local park space per 1,000 people.

Parks & Open Space Planning

Metro Parks Tacoma's Green Vision 2030 provides long-term strategic direction for providing parks and open space services and achieving its mission to create healthy opportunities for community members to play, learn and grow. The Parks and Recreation Element of the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides the same type of direction for City-provided parks and open space services. Both plans call for increasing access to parks, environmental stewardship and providing programming that supports cultural vitality.

Metro Parks Tacoma and the City have identified a need to maintain and expand parks facilities in the future. Metro Parks Tacoma has over 70 capital projects planned for the time period of 2015 to 2025, according to their current Capital Improvement Plan. Planned projects include improvements to existing facilities and construction of new facilities. One of these projects is for the Lincoln Heights Park and consists of fencing, irrigation, field improvements, playground upgrades, pathway accessibility upgrades, landscaping and signage. Another project is for South Park and includes building upgrades, parking lot lighting, landscaping, site furnishings and drainage improvements. The timeframe and funding sources for these projects have yet to be determined (Metro Parks Tacoma, 2014).

The City of Tacoma 2015-2020 Capital Facilities Program includes ten parks and open space improvement projects as well as over 30 non-motorized transportation and streetscape projects. Two of these projects are for connectivity and access improvements to the Water Flume Line Trail (City of Tacoma OMB, 2014).

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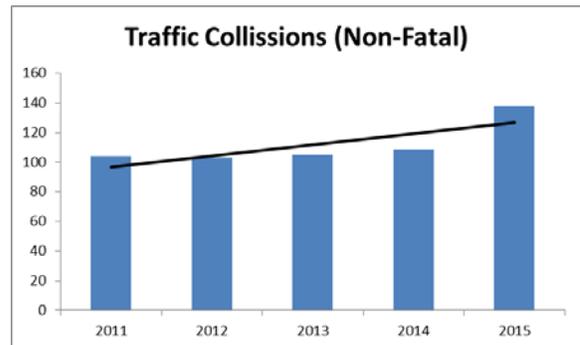
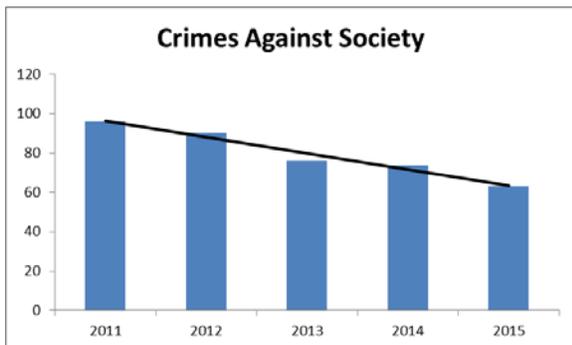
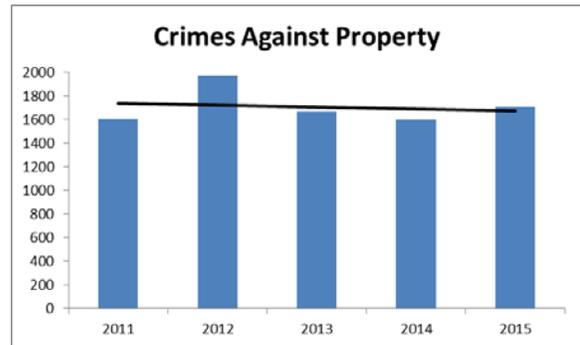
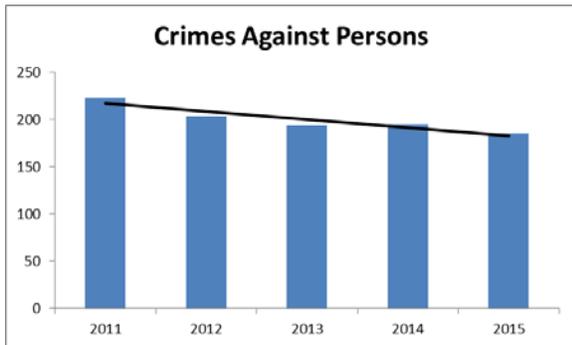
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Figure PSP-1. Public Service Providers and Parks



Figure PSP-2. Crime Trends in the Study Area



Source: City of Tacoma Police Department, 2016

Figure PSP-3. Public Parks and Open Space

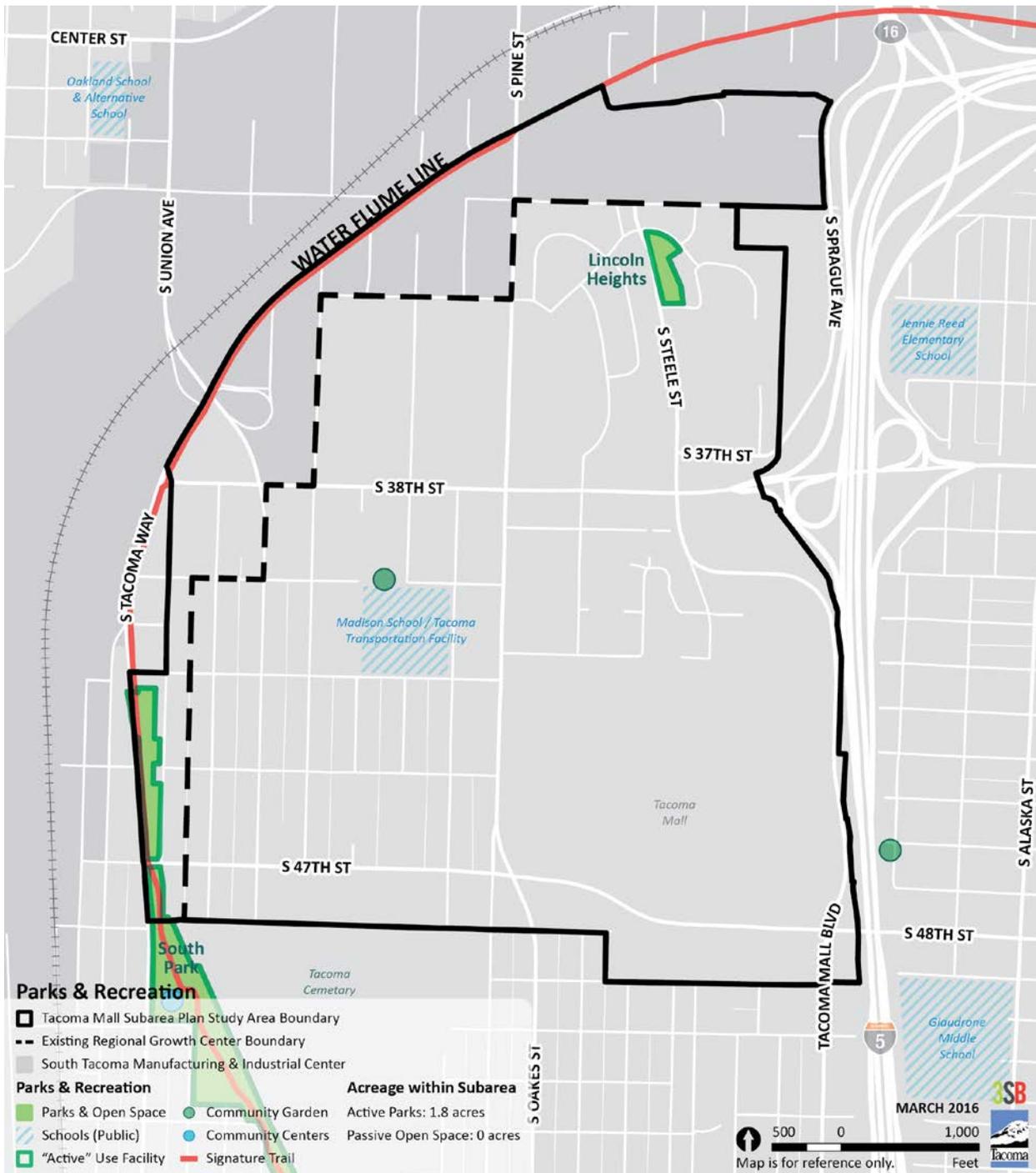


Figure PSP-4. Active Parks Gap Analysis

