To: Planning Commission
From: Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division
Subject: Tacoma Mall Regional Center Subarea Plan and EIS
Meeting Date: November 4, 2015
Memo Date: October 29, 2015

At the November 4th meeting, staff will present updates on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan and EIS. This presentation follows significant public outreach and input through the four-day design workshop held at the end of September. The presentation will include a process update, policy background and key issues, outreach and public input, and high level discussion of draft goals, concepts and opportunities that will direct the planning effort moving forward. The presentation will also cover the illustrative vision plan created during the design workshop. This design seeks to create four distinct quadrants linked together to create one functional neighborhood by using a place-making approach. Staff welcomes discussion and guidance on all these topics.

Building on the success of the three downtown Subarea Plans/EIS’s, the City has now initiated a similar planning and environmental review effort for the 485-acre Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center. This project will bring much-needed attention and resources to this important area, focused around a community-driven process to develop a vision, goals and actions to achieve the area’s potential as a thriving, multi-modal growth center. The effort will result in programmatic environmental approval that will help catalyze development in the area, and will fulfill Tacoma’s obligation under Vision 2040 to plan for designated Regional Centers. This work is being funded by a $250,000 National Estuaries Program Watershed Protection Grant, administered jointly by the State Departments of Ecology and Commerce.

The Subarea Plan and EIS is a community forum to collaboratively develop a vision, goals and strategies to guide growth and development, identify environmental impacts up-front on an area-wide basis, and target mitigation measures and other implementation steps.

Attached is a draft of the presentation that will be reviewed at the November 4th meeting. If you have any questions, please contact me at 591-5389 or elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org or Molly Harris at 591-5383 or mharris@cityoftacoma.org.

Attachments (1)
c: Peter Huffman, Director
Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan
Planning Commission
Project Update

November 4, 2015

Project Area
Policy background

• GMA and Vision 2040
• Regional Growth Center
  – Density, transit, jobs & housing, livability
• Growth Targets:
  – Additional 7,555 jobs & 8,079 people
• Tacoma Comp Plan – Urban Mixed-Use Center
• Community concerns, negative perceptions
• Watershed Protection grant

Project Approach

• Placemaking for identity & neighborhood structure
• Smart growth approach to improve:
  - Quality of life, safety, livability, health
  - Water quality, green infrastructure
  - Air quality (decrease greenhouse gas)
  - Investment climate
  - Development quality
• Circulation, mobility & plan for transit-oriented development
• Programmatic environmental review and mitigation
• Prioritize actions – capital facilities, projects, partnerships
Process Update

- Initial public outreach complete
- Developing high level policy framework
- Next steps:
  - Vet draft policy framework with key stakeholders
  - Define EIS Alternatives
  - Develop Draft Goals, Policies, Subarea Plan

Outreach to Date

- Stakeholder interviews
- Health department focus groups
- Public meetings
- EIS Scoping meetings
- Design workshop
- Web site input
- Mailings and signage
Key Issues from public input

- Lacks identity/no sense of place
- Not walkable or bikeable
- Public health and safety/crime
- Lacks open space, play space and schools
- Lacks local-serving businesses & healthy/affordable food access
- Growth occurring haphazardly
- Lacks green features
- Equity and empowerment

Neighborhood Structure

4 quadrants with distinct characteristics

1/4 mile radius
5 minute walk
**4 Quadrants**

**Existing Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Land Use &amp; Character</th>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Block Size</th>
<th>Urban pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mall Area</td>
<td>Regional mall, big box retail, hill in center, dispersed residential</td>
<td>Discontinuous public streets, no streets in mall area</td>
<td>Up to 50 acres</td>
<td>Large commercial buildings &amp; parking lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Mall</td>
<td>Single family, multifamily</td>
<td>Mostly neighborhood scale grid pattern with alleys</td>
<td>4 -12 acres</td>
<td>Single family, townhouse, 3 story apartments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Quadrant</td>
<td>WW2 era 1-3 unit residential and big box development</td>
<td>Discontinuous and curvilinear</td>
<td>2.5 - 15 acres</td>
<td>Small residential &amp; large commercial areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Quadrant</td>
<td>Heavy commercial/ light industrial, public facilities</td>
<td>Large block grid</td>
<td>Up to 15 acres</td>
<td>Dispersed development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Draft Goals for Neighborhood Structure**

**Develop coherent, cohesive neighborhood structure**

Common to all quadrants:
- Coherent, cohesive urban form
- Walkable everywhere
- Parks, public places, transit access
- Linked with bike/ped loop
- Safe & livable
- Improved image, access & investment climate
- Strategic investment to capture multiple benefits

Distinct to each quadrant:
- Character & identity
- Internal connectivity
- Gradations in height, scale & form
- Focal points
**Illustrative Vision Plan**

Legend:
- **Existing Buildings**
- **Development**
- **Parking/future infill**
- **Public facilities**
- **Infill in existing grid**
- **Parks, Open Space, Schools**

**Parks, Open Space & Circulation Concepts**

- **Park and public gathering place in each quadrant accessed from internal bike/ped connector loop street**
- **Primary throughput on 38th and Pine**
  - Internal bike/ped connector loop street connects 4 quadrants
  - Reconnect grid with complete streets; LRT on Pine
Stormwater Opportunities

Green Street Concept
NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE
Scale Transition Concept

Existing Zoning Potential in Project Area

Current Zoning allows infill development of up to ten stories and a variety of uses in most areas of the neighborhood.
Less responsive to scales and character.
Disperses development activity and economic potential.

Potential Scale & Form Transition Concept for West of Mall Quadrant

Potential Neighborhood Transition concept allows higher-density mixed-use infill transitions to minimize impacts to existing residential areas.
Concentrates development activity to create more cohesive place.

Neighborhood form – key actions

- Create attractive and livable mixed-use neighborhoods
  - Recent growth not perceived as adding value
  - Over-zoned relative to anticipated growth
- Retain and build on neighborhood structure where present; establish structure where absent
- Differentiate form and scale between quadrants
- Strengthen human scale to build sense of place
- Establish hierarchy of streets & bike/ped thoroughfares
- Public gathering space for events & celebration
- Achieve multiple goals (open space, stormwater, connectivity, urban form)
Transportation - key actions

- Reconnect the grid
- Complete streets retrofits & improved right-of-way design
- Incorporate linear park and green features into street system
- Improve access for regional and local traffic
- Create an internal bike/ped circulator loop
- Direct I-5 access to Tacoma Mall Boulevard
- Plan for consolidated Sound Transit LRT/Pierce Transit station
- Explore potential for Sounder Station on South Tacoma Way
- Mixed use walking streets – 38th, Steele, Pine
- Connect to other neighborhoods/bridge barriers
- Coordinate with transit service providers
- Develop design elements for 3 major corridors

Natural & Built Environment - key actions

- Green infrastructure system for water quality & amenity – treatment & infiltration
  - Potential regional stormwater approaches
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions with compact, mixed use walkable neighborhood
- Increase access to parks, play spaces & nature
- Increase area-wide tree cover and landscaping
- Infill on existing paved areas & reconnect street grid
Economic Development – key actions

• Leverage prime location while improving development outcomes & capturing the benefits of development
• Improve investment climate and development quality
• Make phased, strategic investments in streets, infrastructure, the public realm & sites
• Better calibrate zoning to respond to contemporary markets, lifestyle preferences & housing needs
• Leverage transit station(s)/parks as hubs
• Recruit businesses & facilities in desired locations (including local-serving retail and services)
• Respond to changing retail dynamics – integrate with neighborhood, broadened range of activities and uses
• Upfront SEPA review and project lists

Mall Quadrant

• Public gathering places, outdoor dining & entertainment
• Public & private street network
• Infill with mixed-use, residential & structured parking
• Education, health care & employment potential
• LRT station on Pine west of Mall
• Public park on top of hill
• I-5 direct access to Tacoma Mall Boulevard
• Large scale development appropriate in this context
• Post Office may be catalyst site for redevelopment
West of Mall Neighborhood

- Transition scale from about 8 stories on 38th to lower scale to south (3-4 stories)
- Retain existing neighborhood block structure
- Revise development standards for private open space, parking and building street frontage
- Allow local serving retail & service
- Re-integrate Madison School into neighborhood
- Complete streets, green streets & neighborhood park

NW Quadrant New Gateway/
Potential TOD Development

- Redeveloped area with new street pattern
- Oriented to concept of new Sounder Station on South Tacoma Way
- Large scale development pattern
- Take advantage of hillside for structured parking
- Use stormwater facilities as major new street/park character elements to establish highly urban district
NE Quadrant

- Transition wartime housing to low to medium density residential development; can occur over time while retaining key characteristics
- Potential to use curvilinear street pattern
- Oriented to topography
- Neighborhood parks create neighborhood places and separate area from more intense development to north & south
- Mixed-use industrial area north of S. 35th Street

Key Actions – Summary

- Create neighborhood organizational structure for desired results (street networks, block size, parks & public spaces, scale)
- Carefully leverage all public investment & actions for multiple strategic benefits
- Plan for Light Rail & Sounder stations
- Regional stormwater facilities & green streets
- Complete streets/transportation projects – major change to arterials, local circulator street, new street alignments
- Coordinated actions by Metro Parks and Tacoma School District & the business community
- More directive zoning for desired results
Key actions – land use & zoning

- Fix the random, disjointed development pattern
- Consider regulating plan code vehicle to identify specific locations of street networks, parks & public places
- Require new streets with redevelopment
- Ensure that design standards promote goals
- Create more nuanced building scales and heights in different districts
  - Retain existing residential characteristics of West of Mall and NE Quadrant
  - Concentrate large scale mixed use development on 38th, in Mall & NW Quadrants

Potential Zoning Map

Existing Zoning Map  Potential Zoning Map & Street Grid
Next Steps

- Consultation with stakeholders
- Define EIS alternatives
- Refine and build on concepts as draft policy framework