Promoting Economic Development Through Upfront SEPA Review: Lessons from South Downtown Tacoma
2030 City-wide Targets:
• 60,000 new jobs
• 70,000 new people

Based on growth allocations from PSRC and Pierce County
Final design (2016-2017)

**Advance design, art:**
- Public review and comment on design plans for stations and tracks.
- Public provides input on permanent station names and station art.
- Lead artist joins design team.

Pre-construction (late 2017-early 2018)

- Stations and track design.
- Define construction schedule and methods.
- Continue to partner with City of Tacoma and Pierce Transit.
- Obtain project building permits.
- Coordinate with private utility providers.
- Project update open houses.
- Outreach to local businesses and residents.
- Award light rail vehicle contract.
The Growing Transit Communities Partnership was funded by a three-year grant from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Three main goals:

- Attract more of the region’s residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit
- Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit
- Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities

The South Downtown Plan and EIS are one of three demonstration projects.
The four Sound Transit LINK station areas located in South Downtown are all designated as the “Stimulate Demand” type.

The high priority strategy categories associated with the “Stimulate Demand” type are:

- Promote economic development to retain and expand job base
- Long-Range capital facilities plan with phased infrastructure and public realm investments
- Affordable housing assessment and preservation
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments
**Union Station**

**AREA DESCRIPTION**

The Union Station transit community, located in the City of Tacoma, has been served by Tacoma Link light rail since 2003. Current land use is a mix of commercial, light industrial, and civic uses including the University of Washington Tacoma Campus and four museums. Residential uses are along the eastern edge of the transit community. Union Station has a walkable environment, with small blocks and fully built out sidewalks.

The Union Station transit community has a population of 3,075, half of whom are minority. About 8,500 jobs are located within a half mile of the transit station. Compared with the region and with other transit communities, Union Station has a very low median household income and very high rates of poverty.

Housing in the transit community is overwhelmingly multifamily and renter-occupied, with a high percentage of subsidized units affordable to households earning less than 30% of AMI, the majority affordable at less than 10% of AMI. Market rate housing that is affordable to households earning less than 80% of AMI is in short supply relative to regional need. These data suggest potential risk of displacement.

**LOCAL PLANNING**

Union Station is located within a regionally designated Regional Growth Center and as such is expected to accommodate a significant share of Tacoma’s population and employment growth. It is also located within the South and North Tacoma Downtown planning subareas. The City of Tacoma is currently developing a subarea plan and programmatic EIS for the South Downtown subarea. With these actions, the city hopes to foster a transition from primarily industrial and commercial uses to a mix of retail, residential, and services, as well as to facilitate the implementation of the UWT master plan and campus expansion. The city has estimated that, under current zoning, undesignated properties in the South Downtown subarea could accommodate 30,000 more people and 40,000 more jobs in a transit rich environment.

**PEOPLE**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY INCOME LEVEL**

**TOTAL HOUSING UNITS**

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Union Station V2
- 12th Ave Strip
- Land Use Categories
  - Mixed & Infill Development
  - Commercial
  - SF Residential
  - Low Rise
  - Park and Open Space
  - Downtown
  - Transportation and Utilities Industrial
  - Natural Home Park

**PEOPLE PROFILE**

Communities with potential displacement risk have weak market strength and therefore do not face imminent displacement. However, they also exhibit numerous community risk factors that suggest needs for community stabilization efforts to avoid future displacement risk should market forces change. Limited access to opportunity indicates barriers in attaining resources for households to thrive.

**PLACE PROFILE**

Communities with higher TOD orientation have a physical form and activity level that support a dense, walkable and transit-supportive neighborhood. Weaker real estate market strength suggests there is not high pressure for new development in the near- to mid-term.

**IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH**

**STIMULATE DEMAND**

Stimulate Demand transit communities are smaller employment centers, mostly in older city centers at the terminals of the light rail corridors. These communities have good physical form and activity, but moderate demand at this time for TOD. Key strategies focus on economic development strategies and investments to expand the local job base, fulfill development potential, and expand opportunity. Lighter communities are categorized as Stimulate Demand (including five current Tacoma Link stations).

**KEY STRATEGIES**

- Promote economic development to retain and expand job base
- Long-range capital facilities plans with phased infrastructure and public realm investments
- Affordable housing assessment and preservation
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments

The Growing Transit Communities program is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. For more information: visit psrc.org or contact Ben Bakken at 206-971-3286 or bbakken@psrc.org.
South Downtown Subarea
About the Project

• Subarea Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
• Planning Target: 30 million sq. ft. of new development
Project Goals

• Maintain basic eligibility for federal, state, and regional transportation funding

• Accelerate public investment in downtown through a series of coordinated actions, e.g. utility/multi-model street upgrades and Freighthouse Square-area upgrades

• Gain a competitive advantage for new private and public sector investment through a streamlined project approval process, more flexible zoning, and public/private partnerships
“Transit-Infill Review” Upfront SEPA

The City proceeded under the “Planned Action” and “Infill Exemption” Upfront SEPA forms recognizing that RCW 43.21C.420(5)(a) and (b) (“Transit-Infill Review”) include a sunset provision.
Non-Project EIS

- Not subject to SEPA-based appeals at project level
- Jointly sponsored by the City of Tacoma and the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) with the City of Tacoma acting as Lead Agency
- A non-project document as it addresses a 600-acre area of South Downtown Tacoma and presents a cumulative impact analysis for the entire subarea
- Transit Infill Review
- No project/EIS consistency test
- Provides certainty and predictability to developers and investors
- Streamlines permit review process
Transit-infill review requires extensive mailed notice and upfront public participation provisions.

The outreach efforts included providing project updates and overviews of the Plan and EIS to neighborhood councils, interested parties, monthly meetings with the Steering Committee, quarterly meetings with a Council-resolution-formed Working Group, periodic stakeholder meetings, and business group outreach.

Participants were encouraged to voice concerns, provide suggestions, and discuss particular issues throughout the entire process.
The City pre-approved the entire UWT Campus Master Plan.

UWT campus was established in 1990 and the UWT campus has undergone an extraordinary transformation earning numerous awards for the adaptive reuse of several century-old, brick railroad-era structures into modern classroom facilities.

UWT’s plans for continued expansion will be a major economic driver for the area-current students 5,400.
Located ½ block from 6.4 acre catalyst site at 21st Street and Jefferson Avenue

The project connects the Foss Waterway, downtown destinations and regional bicycle and pedestrian networks via a safe, comfortable and accessible multi-use pathway.

Trail corridor and linear park now acts as economic catalyst and important community resource.
2017 Brewery District Current and Planned Development Projects

- **Planned Affordable Housing**
- **Napoleon - 135 Market Rate Apts**
- **Micro Development 104 Units MU**
- **New YMCA**
- **New Academic Building (3-7 Years)**
- **7 Seas Brewery**
- **Town Center Development (Fall 2017)**
- **Micro Brewery**
- **Biotech Incubator**
- **City of Tacoma Property**
- **Surge Incubator**
- **S 25th St & Jefferson Ave**
- **Pacific Brewery**
- **Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center**
- **Convention Center Hotel Planned Marriott Ground Breaking - Summer 2017**
- **UWT Tacoma Paper Stationery**
- **Holiday Inn Express**
- **Brewery Lofts & New Office Building - Summer 2017**
- **Sam's Tire (For Lease)**
- **City of Tacoma Property**
- **Aero Precision**
- **Tree Furniture (Nisqually Pump Station)**

City of Tacoma | Community and Economic Development
Future Home of Pacific Brewing
Due Diligence
City of Tacoma
Property
City of Tacoma
Property
Horizon Brewery-Phoenix Lofts
Sam's Tire for Lease
Biotech Accelerator In Contract
City of Tacoma Property
Prairie Line Trail
RAM Brewery
TACOMA CT
TACOMA AVE S
S 27TH ST
S 26TH ST
S 25TH ST
S 24TH ST
S 23RD ST
S 22ND ST
S 21ST ST
S DELIN ST
PACIFIC AVE
HOLGATE ST
MARKET ST
SOUTH TACOMA WAY
S HOOD ST
JEFFERSON AVE
COURT E
COURT D
COURT C
FAWCETT AVE
COMMERCE ST
TACOMA AVE S
TACOMA CT
S 18TH ST
S 19TH ST
S 20TH ST
S 21ST ST
S 22ND ST
S 23RD ST
S 24TH ST
S 25TH ST
S 26TH ST
S 27TH ST

Brewery District Map

Potential Utility and/or Developer Work
- Associated with Commerce LID (Storm, Sanitary and Water)
- Potential Future Water and Sanitary Sewer Project
- Prairie Line Trail Project (Storm, Sanitary and Water)
- Public Works Grant Project (Storm, Sanitary and Water)
- Water Lead Project (Includes Sanitary)
- Town Center Developer Sanitary and Water Improvements

Current and Potential New Developments

Status
- Completed
- In Progress Projects
- Potential Projects
- Parcels

Map Date: 8/18/2017
Source: Science and Engineering Division, Environmental Services Department City of Tacoma
326 East D Street, Tacoma WA 98421
(253) 591-5568
19 sites completed, in construction, planned or on the drawing board

1238+ new multifamily units
- 267 – Dome District
- 971 – Extension
- 110 new affordable units on extension route
Dome District TOD

1. 304 Puyallup – in contract, in design – submittal anticipated fall, 2017

2. 415 E 25th, DMG Capital Group & Pierce Transit (above)
Theater District

3. William Reilly Opportunity sites, 4th – 7th St on Broadway

4. McMenamins

5. Union Club

6. Dystopian State Brewery
8. The Elan. 171 luxury infill apartments and streetscape improvements just north of 6th Avenue, on St. Helens

7. Infill site acquired next to Alfa Romeo

9. 51 affordable housing units by YWCA
St. Helens/Stadium Way

10. The Grand on Broadway

11. Site acquired. Fronting Broadway & Stadium Way
Stadium

12. Titus Will redevelopment

13. Stadium Apartments

14. Encompass
15. TCRA RFP sites

2 RFPs – one for market rate and one for senior affordable housing on this site just north of People’s Park.
Hilltop

16. Hilltop Mixed Use TOD

17. Kellogg, Sicker, Pochert mixed use

18. Hilltop Lofts

19. Valhalla Hall
Thank you

Contact Us:  
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